

## EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

McDowell County Schools will develop self-directed, motivated learners who demonstrate the skills and knowledge are fundamental to becoming successful adults in the digital world. The West Virginia Content Standards define the understandings, attitudes, skills and habits of life that will be developed through the experiences provided for children. The WV College and Career Readiness Standards for Technology and Computer Science will be utilized, which include information, communication skills, thinking, and reasoning skills. McDowell County School students shall:

Master skills needed for reading, writing, speaking, and computing;

- Develop and maintain the ability to form ideas, to think, to reason, to create and have a positive attitude toward learning;
- Acquire the skills, understanding, and appreciation necessary for relating to and working with other people;
- Acquire knowledge and understanding of society's social, economic, and political systems, and shall acquire an understanding of personal relationship to them;
- Acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for leading a healthy and safe life;
- Select and prepare for a job appropriate to the personal needs and abilities and the changing needs of society;
- Acquire a sense of self-esteem through and understanding and appreciation of his/her abilities, needs, interests, and goals;
- Acquire the knowledge, habits, and attitudes of a responsible citizen;
- Acquire the ability to develop basic values and ethical principles and apply them to life;
- Develop an understanding of an appreciation for people from other social, cultural, ethnic, and national groups both past and present;
- Develop the skills for effective living in a democracy, using the democratic process and deep conviction of the values of a democracy.

In an effort to develop these capacities within the student population, the Superintendent, with assistance from staff, students and citizens has described the mission and core beliefs of the McDowell County School System in their Strategic Plan as follows:

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission is to provide schools where we unleash the potential of every student and ~~every teacher~~ every day.

### **Core Beliefs:**

The McDowell County Schools believe:

- a clear and focused mission to support learning for all;
- instructional leadership that fosters age-appropriate high yield instructional strategies that lead to student achievement;
- establishing high expectations in an environment where all students can learn and succeed;
- a positive and safe environment where diversity is embraced and appropriate behaviors is expected and supported;
- equitable opportunities for students to be provided meaningful learning aligned to state standards with timely feedback to support individual student growth;
- monitoring student progress utilizing a variety of data guide instructional decisions and
- purposeful relationships and share responsibilities between families, community and the school to support students' academic, social-emotional, and physical needs.

In addition to our mission statement and core beliefs, there are other characteristics of a highly effective school program which will be demonstrated in McDowell County. The school system seeks to establish programs which will enable every individual to achieve his/her highest potential through a developmental sequence of learning experiences from early childhood through adulthood. Every child in the McDowell County School system shall encounter conditions and situations maximizing personal development. Desirable physical, mental and social development of the child is dependent upon the integration of experiences provided by the school system. Each programmatic level will focus on the pedagogy for grades Pre K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

#### **Early Childhood Education (Grades PK – 4)**

The Pre-Kindergarten program will provide opportunities for the development of early literacy and numeracy skills by utilizing the state approved curricular frameworks and assessments to inform and individualize instruction. Teachers will build on what children already know in order to consolidate their learning and foster acquisition of new concepts and skills through hands-on active exploration of their learning environment, problem solving, communication, creativity, and use of their imaginations. Learning environments shall be print rich and reliant on manipulatives for hands-on learning in mathematics. In addition, teachers will incorporate meaningful ways of communicating with and involving parent/guardian/family. Through this program all students are expected to be ready to enter the regular school program at the kindergarten level. By enriching the experiences of students at an early age, children are better prepared to learn.

Children in Kindergarten through 2nd grade span a broad spectrum of development. The developmental level of each child is significant in the offering of daily instruction. Teachers shall utilize a variety of teaching strategies, including the integration of technology, to assure that all children are mastering the content standards. For intermediate elementary students, daily classroom instruction will be based on a variety of assessments that provide for the individualization of instruction. Schedules for intermediate elementary students shall allow the flexibility necessary to provide additional time and instruction for students who are below mastery in Reading and English Language Arts, and Mathematics. Teachers in intermediate elementary classrooms shall utilize a variety of instructional strategies, including the integration of technology, to assure that all students reach the performance level of mastery or above on the West Virginia content standards. Strategies for early detection and intervention to correct student deficiencies in Reading and English Language Arts and Mathematics shall be employed throughout the instructional term in each of the primary elementary and intermediate elementary grades.

#### **Middle Childhood Education (Grades 5-8)**

Middle level education builds upon the results of early childhood education and transitions students into the adolescent education program. Middle level education provides unique, age appropriate educational opportunities that challenge all students to use their minds well, providing them with the curriculum, instruction, assessment, support, learning skills, technology tools, and time they need to achieve rigorous academic standards. Students are provided opportunities for both independent inquiry and learning in cooperation with others. Middle level programming is challenging and engaging, tapping the young adolescents' boundless energy, interests and curiosity through rich exploratory experiences. Students learn to understand important concepts, develop essential skills and apply what they learn to real world problems. The creation of small learning communities of adults and students produce stable and mutually respectful relationships.

#### **Adolescent Education (Grades 9-12)**

Adolescent education provides students the 21st century intellectual, social/emotional, physical, and technological capacities needed for successful entry into adulthood. McDowell County's adolescent education program will provide challenging and rigorous courses in the programs of study that will enable students to achieve high levels of competence so they can complete graduation requirements and be prepared to successfully enter and compete in the workplace and in post-secondary education. In grades 9-12, the curriculum will be designed around the concepts of career clusters and career majors. Students will be provided opportunities to explore and select career goals and participate in learning activities that result in effective decision making. The Ten Key Practices of High Schools That

Work will be followed in the delivery of the curriculum. All students with special needs are accommodated. Placement of special needs programs are geographically designed to meet the needs of all students.

### **C. THE OPERATIONS PLAN**

The learning environments will be designed to comply with all state and federal regulations. Through site-based management, day-to-day operational and curricular decisions will be made by the professionals at the school level through the strategic plan process. McDowell County School teachers and administrators will work hard to provide a safe school climate that will promote student success while providing services to all students in the least restrictive manner. This will include implementing an instructional management system that promotes student learning and maximizes time on task. Flexible scheduling will be utilized considering a time as a variable to best meet student needs. In addition, a classroom management system that foster a climate conducive to student learning will be implemented.

The McDowell County Schools will be encouraged to form partnerships with business and industry. The learning environment will acquire and added dimension vital to the survival of public education if this is done effectively. Links to the community and the family will be made to enhance the learning environment, raise the achievement level and provide and education in tune with the future. The learning environment will be designed and equipped to be a part of today's and tomorrow's technologies and computerized society. Administratively schools will be managed with the aid of computer systems and analysis, to prepare students for today and tomorrow.

#### **Alternative Education Programs**

Alternative education programs for disruptive/non-traditional students encompass a range of program options such as: in-school suspension, a separate part-time/full-time alternative education classroom; a school-within a school; a school on an alternative site; an after school class/night school program; or a combination academic/work-based program. McDowell County Board of Education shall have broad flexibility in developing the type of or types of alternative education program options needed to meet the needs of students. The goals of such programs will be to:

- Assist students in developing self-discipline and a sense of personal responsibility;
- Provide students a safe learning environment;
- Provide students a flexible curriculum;
- Assist students in improving academic grades;
- Encourage students to develop a positive self-concept;
- Assist students in recognizing barriers that inhibit learning; and
- Enable students to obtain re-entry into the traditional educational setting.

Adopted on August 24, 2011

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