**T. Clay Wood AC and PTO School Council Meeting – May 15, 2025:**

• **Welcome & Introductions**:
Lindy Mannion, the outgoing AC president, opened the meeting and introduced the incoming president.

• **Approval of Previous Minutes**:
The minutes from the April 2025 meeting were approved by Julia White and Ms. Hanover.

• **Student Update (Alice)**:
• Last week was Teacher Appreciation Week; thank-you cards were distributed.
• Leadership team applications were due last Friday.
• Interviews for the Lighthouse Leadership Team took place today, and decisions will be made tomorrow.

• **Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) – Presented by Mr. Johnson**:
Mr. Johnson, the administrator intern, discussed the school’s CIP, which focuses on:
1. **Learning and Achievement**: Emphasis on the Virginia Literacy Act; professional development for teachers; adoption of new instructional materials (HMH, UFLI).
2. **Positive Climate and Culture**
3. **Family and Community Engagement**
Monitoring of instructional quality is done via classroom observations
4. **Instruction & Learning**:
• **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)**:
• 100% of classroom observations showed teachers and students using HQIM.
• In ~60% of observed lessons, students were actively engaged (working) at least 50% of the time, indicating improved student participation over teacher talk time.
• **Academic Goals & Progress Monitoring**:
• Goal: 85% proficiency on year-end Reading SOLs; current rate is ~75% with some makeups and retakes still pending.
• HMH unit assessments aimed for 75% mastery; current average is in the low-to-mid 60% range.
• Reading specialists support teachers via weekly collaborative team meetings and classroom coaching on using HQIM effectively (e.g., HMH and UFLI).
5. **Positive Climate & Culture**

• **Attendance Initiatives**:
• Target absentee rate: ≤5% (95% daily attendance); goal has been met.
• Chronic absenteeism (missing 18+ days): 40 students (~7%) as of May 9.
• Efforts include counselor-led incentives, positive school climate efforts, and weekly Attendance Committee meetings to review students with 10–15+ absences.
• Conferences are held with families at 10 absences to emphasize the academic impact; at 15, an interagency meeting is held, involving district attendance officers and potentially triggering legal consequences.
• Automated district system notifies parents after specific absence thresholds, bypassing manual school contact.

**3. Family & Community Engagement:**
(Note: This section was just beginning in the notes; more detail may follow in future meeting segments.)

• The school achieved **20 out of 20 indicators** for a high-functioning Advisory Council, as defined by a district initiative. The final indicator added midyear was **offering translation services** to families.
• These indicators were based on state and district priorities to ensure Advisory Councils are active and effective.
• The current Advisory Council structure has been strong, with good alignment to expectations, and a new **Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)** will be developed by **end of June**, with updates shared in **September**.

**Reflections & Feedback (End-of-Year Wrap-Up)**
Participants were asked to reflect on:
1. **What worked well**
2. **What didn’t work well**
3. **What could be improved**
4. **Ideas for guest speakers next year**

**Key Feedback:**
• **What Worked Well:**
• Combining PTO and Advisory Council into one meeting created a “one-stop shop” for busy parents.
• Zoom meetings were convenient for parents with busy schedules.
• **What Didn’t Work/Needs Improvement:**
• Zoom meetings felt **less personal**; engagement was lower due to cameras off and multitasking.
• **Limited community involvement**, despite high turnout at school events like Bingo Night, many parents don’t realize Advisory Council members represent specific neighborhoods.

• **Suggestions for Improvement:**
• **Neighborhood introductions**: Use back-to-school night to introduce Advisory Council reps via short video clips.
• **In-person meetings**: Hold 2–3 in-person meetings per year for deeper connection.
• **Later meeting times**: Consider moving meetings to 7:00 PM to better fit family schedules.
• **Clearer roles & responsibilities**: Assign **specific projects or small tasks** to members to boost participation.
• **Parent engagement challenge**: Encourage members to invite neighbors or post in community groups.
• **Topic-based parent nights**: Bring in school counselors or other experts to discuss relevant issues like mental health or SOL prep.
• **Ideas for Guest Speakers:**
• School counselors on mental health, test prep, and other timely topics.
• Local officials or specialists related to education and family well-being.

 **Advisory Council Engagement and Communication**
• **Neighborhood Reps’ Role:** Members should actively gather input from families in their neighborhoods, acting as a “sounding board” for questions or concerns to bring to meetings.
• **In-Classroom Introductions:** One rep introduced herself at Back-to-School Night to raise awareness about the Advisory Council and invite parent input.

**In-Person vs. Zoom Meetings**
• **Zoom Benefits:** Convenient for both parents and staff, especially after work hours.
• **Zoom Drawbacks:** Less personal; limits connection and engagement.
• **Suggested Hybrid Approach:** Consider increasing the number of in-person meetings (possibly three per year) while retaining Zoom for accessibility.

**Suggestions for Improved Communication**
• **Advance Notice for Events:** Parents request earlier communication (more than a few weeks in advance) for school events like concerts and gifted nights.
• **Website Enhancements:** Post PTO goals and contact info on the school website.
• **Improved Newsletters:** Suggest using clickable hyperlinks for easier navigation of topics (e.g., attendance, upcoming events).
• **Short Informational Videos or Audio Summaries:** Consider brief updates or “audio newsletters” summarizing Advisory Council and PTO activities—useful for busy parents.

**Ideas for Increased Engagement**
• **Neighborhood Outreach Challenges:** Each rep could invite 5 parents to the next meeting or post reminders in local community groups (e.g., Facebook, Nextdoor).
• **Special Projects for Members:** Assign small, specific tasks to members to boost involvement.
• **Back-to-School Video Intros:** Record short video introductions of Advisory Council members to be shared online or via newsletter (instead of during the live event).

**Teacher Appreciation Week Recap**
• Week filled with catered breakfast, lunch, specialty drinks, etc.
• Staff were very happy; PTO welcomes additional feedback (public or private).

**Upcoming PTO Events**
• **Chuck E. Cheese Spirit Night:** Scheduled for this Friday; Chuck E. will visit the school in the afternoon. Advanced notice was emphasized due to past low participation.
• **Cold Stone “Teacher Scoop” Night (End of May):** Volunteers needed for three time slots. Staff encouraged to sign up.

**Budget and Fundraising Updates**
• Current PTO bank balance: **$33,989** (up from $21,000 at start of year).
• Major spending:
• **$3,200** on Teacher Appreciation Week.
• **$20,800** on teacher gift cards (funded largely by Boosterthon earnings).
• Leftover principal-requested funds were reallocated to gifts for teachers.
• Major fundraiser: **Boosterthon raised $29,000**.
• **Spring SEP fundraiser** underperformed due to using a private company.
• **Bingo nights** were very successful and could be expanded next year.
• **Spring Paper Fundraiser** not held this year but suggested for March 2026.

**Spirit Wear and Yearbook**
• New spirit wear store is live with 20% off until end of May.
• Yearbook is nearly complete and will be distributed at school before year’s end.

**Next Year Planning**
• PTO is starting to plan 2025 events and budget.
• Request made to get on Dr. B’s calendar for coordination.
• Spirit nights and fundraiser goals are being finalized early.

**Supply Kits**
• Production is underway; marketing materials will be distributed soon.

**Proposed New Event: Family Dance Proposal Discussion**
• **Event Concept:** A *family-inclusive dance* (not a drop-off event), likened to bingo night.

**Superintendent’s Advisory Council**
• Addressing **student behavior policies**.
• Reviewing **Code of Behavior** and discussing updates with the school board.

**Principal’s Updates (Dr. B)**
• **Attendance Reporting:** Official absences tracked; patterns of excessive tardies/early dismissals are also monitored and followed up on.
• **Important Dates:**
- **May 16:** PTO Chuck E. Cheese Spirit Night
- **May 22:** 2pm High School Senior Walk (smaller group expected)

**-May 26**: Memorial Day – No school
-**May 30:** Field Day & Cold Stone Spirit Night (Staff Scoop)
- **June 4:** Strings Concert 6:30 pm

-J**une 9:** Hooray for K 5:30 pm

- **June 10:** Read-Out Picnic (modified due to lunch regulations)
- **June 11:** 5th Grade Promotion at 6 PM
- **June 12:** Last Day of School (half-day)
- **August 18:** First Day of School (2025–26 year)

• **Guest Speakers Planned:** **November:** Marisa Miranda (Virginia Literacy Act & reading assessments).
• Future: Potential presentations from school counselors and testing coordinators.
• Dr. B invited suggestions for additional topics or speakers.

**Meeting Format Discussion**
• The group agreed to **start the year with the proposed meeting schedule** (three in-person, others via Zoom).
• Open to **revisiting the format at the September 4th meeting** if adjustments are needed.
• Flexibility to switch Zoom meetings to in-person later in the year.

**Advisory Council Info**
• **Council contact details** (names, emails, etc.) will be published on the school’s website under the Advisory Council tab.
• Members were asked to **confirm or correct their email info** (sent via email earlier) if needed.

**Principal Updates (Dr. B)**
• Encouraged **new members** to consider submitting short intro videos over the summer (e.g., who they are, which neighborhood they represent).
• Confirmed that the **June 12th half day** is for **all students**, not just elementary.

**Closing Remarks**
• Multiple team members expressed thanks and appreciation for the collaboration.
• Everyone wished each other well going into the summer and next school year.

**Guest Speaker Ideas**
• **School Counselors:** Talk about mental health, SOL prep, or timely parent-related topics.
• **Education Experts:** Address changes in testing, student growth tracking, or new state policies.

**Standardized Testing Discussion**
• New state assessments and accountability changes may impact elementary students in the coming years.
• Some concerns exist among staff and leadership about over-testing and the alignment of current assessments with actual student performance.

**PTO Updates & Feedback**
• PTO is actively planning next year’s budget and programs.
• Feedback from this discussion will guide future events and priorities.
• A possible **PTO survey** may be conducted to gather more structured feedback from families.
• **Teacher Appreciation Week Recap:** Included themed meals and treats each day, organized by PTO board