



200 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, West Virginia 25311-2119 (304) 348-7732 Fax: (304) 348-7735
Thomas E. Williams, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent

April 21, 2021

Chelena McCoy
722 Daverton Road
Charleston, West Virginia 25303

Ms. McCoy,

On Sunday, April 18, 2021, you emailed me stating that you felt compelled to reach out to the news and tell them about the waiver to testing due to COVID-19. I have attached your email. You were told prior to talking to the news that we would accommodate requests for not testing in large groups but that we were not going to broadly announce to parents and students that they did not need to test or that testing is optional. Testing, per the West Virginia Department of Education, should not be perceived as optional, although parents are not penalized for refusing to test. As I told you in an e-mail on April 19, 2021, we need kids to test in order to better help their achievement during this difficult academic time. You have also been told on numerous occasions that we would provide accommodations to students who did not feel comfortable testing in person at the school. Yet you went on the news and stated misinformation about what the county is doing, stating "They [are being told they] have to send their kid in to this public school environment even though they have been keeping them at home for safety reasons. They are being told words like 'it's mandatory,' 'it's required'...."

Ms. McCoy, you are the counselor, it is my understanding that you yourself have been working with the students and parents to provide accommodations for testing so you know that we are providing accommodations to families who have concerns about testing. You know that this year while it is not mandatory that the District meet the 95% testing threshold, it is still a requirement for our students to test. Further, you know that our goal is specifically to accommodate students to test as much as possible so that we can better help assess and therefore serve our students. You know this because you were told this by both your principal and Mr. Duffy, the Director of Counseling Services, before your interview, as well as myself on Monday.

You misrepresented what the school and county is doing in regards to testing accommodations and our communications to parents. Further, you were directed by multiple supervisors that it was the county's position, regardless of the waiver, to encourage testing through accommodations and that we would not broadly be encouraging people to not test by telling them it is optional this year, which is inaccurate. You have the right to speak on matters of public concern, you do not have the right, however, to misrepresent information you specifically know is incorrect. This was not appropriate and was insubordinate. If you are going to be providing information to the news in

your capacity as a counselor for Kanawha County Schools, I expect that you provide information that is accurate, especially after you are repeatedly told what the accurate information is.

This letter serves as a formal letter of reprimand.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thomas E. Williams, Jr. in cursive script.

Thomas E. Williams, Jr., Ed.D.

cc: **Mellow Lee, Assistant Superintendent**
Ron Pauley, Executive Director Human Resources
Personnel file