

## **In Session with the “Oriole” Superintendent**

By, Kim Caudell, Principal Parkview Elementary

### **Elimination of the Portables and Safety Concerns**

As the principal of Parkview Elementary, I have the pleasure of interacting with our students, their parents, other principals in the district and the wonderful teachers and staff of Parkview.

Lately the conversations have circled around the upcoming Bond Proposal details and how this will affect our students and staff. More specifically I’ve been asked about the portable situation and school safety.

Unfortunately, we are living in an age where we must be diligent in regard to who visits our schools; how they access the office, inner classrooms and most importantly, our students. Safety is an extremely important factor that we all take very seriously.

To that point, you may be aware that two of our schools use portable classrooms for both specials and regular class activities. Our student population is growing. While this growth is a positive reflection on the district and the community, it has forced increased use of these portables.

There are several factors that affect safety and comfort for both the students and the staff when providing a portable-hosted class:

- Some of the portables do not have running water. This means students are required to walk outside and back into the building if they need to use the restroom. The teacher has to inform the building that a student is on their way. Another staff member has to escort the student. While we are providing for the safety of our students as best as possible, this still requires them to go outside to use the restroom.
- In buildings where they do have running water and bathrooms, the students are still required to walk outside to class or if they need to leave the classroom for any reason—posing a safety risk.
- If there is a lockdown, students would be forced to stay in the portables during that time period.
- Portables isolate teachers from the rest of the team and limit their ability to effectively teach our students by eliminating opportunities to interact and discuss learning strategies.
- The current portables are showing their age and need updates—meaning extra costs for the district.

The district has taken measures to lessen the reliance on the portables, however there is still a need—especially for the special classes like music and others—to utilize the portables for space.

Our district is growing. Portables have been an answer to accommodate that growth. While this has worked in the past, as mentioned above, there are certain safety issues that are inherent

with the current portable situation. Our student's safety is important to us. We take every measure to ensure this safety and are constantly looking to the future.

Go Orioles! Oriole Pride!!