

**FLAGLER SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

Employees:	<i>Donelle Evensen</i>	Worksite:	<i>Bunnell Elementary School</i>
		Position:	<i>Principal</i>
Date of Birth		Date of Report:	<i>September 1, 2023</i>
Contract Status:		Investigation By:	<i>Michael Rinaldi / OPS</i>
Length of Service:		Committee Rev.	

Pertinent History:

The Office of Professional Standards has not investigated any other incidents involving Ms. Evensen.

Allegations:

1. It is alleged that Bunnell Elementary School held two assemblies on Friday, August 18, 2023 for only African American students in Grades Four and Five in which the sole criteria was based on the race of the students in attendance.
2. It is alleged that Donelle Evensen, School Principal, approved the aforementioned assemblies and reviewed the content.
3. It is alleged that the content of the assemblies was inappropriate for both the intended audience and the general school setting.
4. It is alleged that there was no parent notification provided by the school prior to student participation in the assemblies.

Legal Sufficiency:

If substantiated, the above allegation would constitute violations of School Board Policy 676 Professional Ethics, School Board Policy 606 Unlawful Discrimination and F.A.C. 6A-10.081 the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in that they would be guilty of the following: (1) The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity. (2) Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety. (3) Is aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct. (4) Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program (5) Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement (6) Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation or social and family background and shall make

reasonable effort to ensure each student is protected against harassment or discrimination (7) No person shall be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity.

Investigation:

On August 22, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met with Donelle Evensen, Principal of Bunnell Elementary School.

Ms. Evensen explained the timeline of events leading up to the assemblies held at Bunnell Elementary School on Friday, August 18, 2023. She stated that during the 2022-2023 school year Mr. Anthony Hines, 5th Grade ESE Support Facilitation Teacher, started a mentoring group with both male and female African American Students. The mentoring program was academically focussed and stressed goal setting for higher achievement and success in the classroom.

In May of 2023, Ms. Evensen explained to this writer that Mr. Hines approached her (Ms. Evensen was Assistant Principal of BES in May of 2023) and Marcus Sanfilippo (Principal of BES in May of 2023) to pitch a mentoring type program for African American students to increase academic achievement and success in 2023-24 which would be a related version of his successful mentoring program he had during the 2022-2023 school year. Ms. Evensen said that the data from testing had been talked about all year with teachers (ESSA subgroups) and Mr. Hines realized from these data meetings the need for more academic support for the African American students that represented one of the ESSA low performing subgroups.

Ms. Evensen stated to this writer that the initial discussion that Mr. Hines had with her and Mr. Sanfilippo in May of 2023 was to have a mentoring and support program that targeted low performing African American students in 5th grade and Mr. Hines would conduct goal setting activities and incentivize the students to increase academic achievement. Ms. Evensen said that she and Mr. Sanfilippo suggested that Mr. Hines reach out to Ms. Steed, 3rd Grade ESE support Facilitator Teacher, to ascertain if she would be interested in helping out with the mentoring program to assist with mentoring the female students.

Ms. Evensen explained to this writer that on August 2, 2023 the entire Bunnell Elementary Faculty participated in a School Improvement Focus meeting that illustrated the areas of student achievement that needed attention and introduced associated goals for improvement. She said at this presentation ESSA subgroups were discussed and each subgroup's reading proficiency as a sub-group was reviewed. Ms. Evensen stated that after this meeting Mr. Hines had a conversation with Mr. Sanfilippo and her (Ms. Evensen) and he suggested that a way to possibly help raise the test scores for the African American sub-group would be to implement the mentoring program that he wanted to expand, because he had positive results with his small group that he mentored during 2022-2023. Ms. Evensen said that Mr. Hines suggested to them that he would like a way to have all of the African American students to learn more about his program to increase achievement on the standardized tests, and he would like to meet with as many of the African American students that he could to motivate, establish academic goals and provide them with additional adults they could go to for support. She stated that Mr. Hines asked to start with 4th and 5th grade students only. Ms. Evensen said that Mr. Sanfilippo suggested that in addition to him and Ms. Steed he could also get Mr. Gabriel, In-school Suspension Teacher to assist with the program. Ms. Evensen stated to this writer that she told Mr. Hines that he should put a plan together and give it to her for review and approval.

Ms. Evensen stated that on August 9, 2023 Mr. Hines sent the proposed 4th and 5th grade presentation slideshow to her for review and approval. She explained to the writer that Mr. Hines initially assumed that it would be one assembly for all 4th and 5th grade African American students but she (Ms. Evensen) explained to Mr. Hines that the students should not be pulled out of their core classes, but instead should be pulled out of their special area classes to attend the assembly. This would necessitate two separate assemblies, one for 4th grade and one for 5th grade. Ms. Evensen said that the 4th grade African American students would have their assembly during their special area classes and the 5th grade would as well. Ms. Evensen said to this writer that she understood that Mr. Hines wanted to include as many of the African American students because goal setting was positive for everyone, not just low performing students. Ms. Evensen stated to this writer that she approved that all African American students in 4th and 5th grade would be invited to the assembly.

Ms. Evensen said to this writer that on August 15, 2023, she notified Mr. Hines that she approved the slide show and associated assembly which would be held on a Friday, August 18, 2023 during the special areas of the 4th and 5th grade. On this same day she (Ms. Evensen) sent an email to the 4th and 5th grade teachers notifying them of the assembly and the date, time, location and purpose. Ms. Evensen stated that she sent a follow-up email to the 4th and 5th grade teachers on August 16, 2023, providing them with lists of names of the students that would be involved in each assembly for 4th and 5th grade, and when they should be released from class to attend the assembly.

This writer asked Ms. Evensen if she attended the assemblies on August 18, 2023 and if she heard any of the discussion that Mr. Hines had with the students that were not on the slides that she approved, and she stated that she attended a few minutes near the end of the 5th grade assembly and she did not hear Mr. Hines speaking to the students about any topics that were not on the slides which she approved.



Rinaldi, Michael <rinaldim@flaglerschools.com>

Fwd: AA Presentation

1 message

Evensen, Donelle <evensend@flaglerschools.com>
To: Michael Rinaldi <rinaldim@flaglerschools.com>

Tue, Aug 22, 2023 at 3:14 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Hines, Anthony <hinesa@flaglerschools.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 16, 2023 at 11:09AM
Subject: Re: AA Presentation
To: Evensen, Donelle <evensend@flaglerschools.com>

Sounds good, thank you. I just need the screen projector to show the PowerPoint presentation.

On Tue, Aug 15, 2023 at 5:37 PM Evensen, Donelle <evensend@flaglerschools.com> wrote:

I just sent the email to teachers of 4th and 5th grade, admin, coaches, and cafeteria letting them know you will hold this meeting with students on Friday this week in the cafeteria during special area for 4th and 5th grade. Please let me know if you need anything else. I have let teachers know to contact you if they have questions. It may work best if you, Ms. Steed, and Mr. Gabriel are posted in different court yards for teachers to send students to you and then take them in the cafeteria and then meet teachers back out in the courtyard with students, but I will let you decide the best way to collect students and get them back where they need to go after. Keep in mind that 4th grade special area is at the end of the day so they will be going to dismissal after the presentation.

On Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 12:39 PM Hines, Anthony <hinesa@flaglerschools.com> wrote:

Hi,
Steed, Gabriel and I will be ready to present this slide show to the 4th and 5th-grade students along with the bracket challenge Google Sheets I sent to you and each one of them as well. We will need to meet at least two more times this year. Once before PM2, and again before PM3 for the new incentive toward the assessment. I am in need of a date/time to speak to them this week or next week. I don't anticipate needing more than 30 minutes. Thanks so much.

--
Donelle Evensen
Principal
Bunnell Elementary School

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Donelle Evensen
Principal
Bunnell Elementary School

On August 22, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met with Marcus Sanfilippo, Former Principal of Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo to explain his knowledge of how the idea for the assembly came to fruition. Mr. Sanfilippo explained that in the 2022-23 school year Mr. Hines started his own mentoring group with African American students that he felt needed extra academic support. Mr. Sanfilippo said that the students in Mr. Hines's mentoring group had improved academics and his program was successful with the small group. Mr. Sanfilippo explained to this writer that the support was focussed on achievement and success through goal setting and rewards for improvement, usually a food reward chosen by the students (pizza, McDonald's Chick-fil-A etc). Mr. Sanfilippo said that Mr. Hines came to Ms. Evensen and himself to see if he could expand the program for the 4th and 5th grade students for the 2023-2024 school year. Mr. Sanfilippo said that he and Ms. Evensen suggested that Mr. Hines reach out to Ms. Steed, 3rd grade support facilitator, as someone who is great with students and would be additional support for African American female students to help expand his mentoring program. Mr. Sanfilippo was asked by the writer if there were any discussions with Mr. Hines over the summer about the mentoring program and Mr. Sanfilippo stated that there was not. Mr. Sanfilippo explained to this writer that during pre-planning he was transitioning to his new position at the District Office and was unaware of any further planning for Mr. Hines's mentoring program. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if Cari McGee, Assistant Principal, had any involvement with Mr. Hines and his meetings with Administration and he said that she did not.

On August 23, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met with Tyonna Steed, Teacher at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Ms. Steed how she became involved in the assembly and she stated that she didn't even know that she was involved until about the 15th or 16th of August prior to the assembly. Ms. Steed explained to this writer that she received an email that was sent to all 4th and 5th grade teachers by Ms. Evensen explaining the upcoming assembly. She said in the email from Ms. Evensen, the email stated that the program would be facilitated by Mr. Hines, Ms. Steed and Mr. Gabriel and that is how she found out she was involved. Ms. Steed explained to this writer that she then contacted Mr. Hines to get information about the assembly and he explained the program was for the 4th and 5th grade African American students to achieve higher achievement on their testing. She stated that Mr. Hines sent her the powerpoint presentation for the assembly and he informed her that she didn't need to add anything to the presentation except for her to introduce herself to the students at the assembly. Ms. Steed told this writer that the next time she discussed the assembly with Mr. Hines was the morning of August 18, 2023 and she said that Mr. Hines said that she should meet the students for the assembly in the courtyard and escort them to the cafeteria for the assembly. Ms. Steed explained to this writer that she didn't introduce herself until the end of the program and she only provided encouragement to the students by offering her academic support or another adult to be able to come to if needed. She said it was just a couple of seconds speaking. This writer asked Ms. Steed if she heard any speakers talk to the students about anything that was not on the powerpoint presentation. Ms. Steed said that Mr. Hines spoke to the students about making good choices and the consequences in life for not doing well in school, listening to your parents and not making good decisions. Ms. Steed added that Mr. Hines just wanted them to make good choices in life. She said Mr. Hines explained the program to the

students as the mentorship not only being about test scores but motivating all students to be successful and to celebrate the students' successes. Ms. Steed said in her opinion, there was a lot of positive energy and the students were very excited in the assemblies.

On August 23, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met with Gary Gabriel, Teacher at Bunnell Elementary School. Mr. Gabriel explained to this writer that he started working at Bunnell Elementary School this school year and he only became involved in the program 2-3 days prior to the assembly. Mr. Gabriel stated that he received an email from Mr. Hines asking him (Mr. Gabriel) if he would attend the assembly for the 4th and 5th grade African American students Friday August 18, 2023 to talk about improving student achievement. Mr. Gabriel stated to this writer that he didn't have to speak but only had to introduce himself to the students and he felt that it was a great opportunity to reach out to the students to let them know who he is and that he is there to support them. This writer asked if he heard any of the dialogue Mr. Hines had with the students and Mr. Gabriel stated that he walked around the cafeteria and moved some students around in different seats that were not paying attention and becoming disruptive, so he wasn't able to hear everything that Mr. Hines said to the students. Mr. Gabriel added that he felt that the assembly was very positive and the things he did hear in Mr. Hines's presentation to the students that might have been off script were very benign and with very good intent.

On August 23, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met with Anthony Hines, Teacher at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Mr. Hines to explain his mentoring program and the events leading to the assembly held on August 18, 2023. Mr. Hines stated that he started his mentoring program during the 2nd 9 week grading period of the 2022-23 school year with 4 African American students. He said he then started to incorporate the mentoring program in the ELA class that he supported to increase student achievement on the FAST test. He said that students would write out attainable goals for testing and if they achieved the goals he would buy them pizza at the end of the year. He said at the end of the 2023 school year many of the students met their goals and he felt that the goal setting program for the students worked really well. At the initial faculty meeting of the 2023-2024 school year held on August 2, 2023, Mr. Hines stated that he saw the ESSA sub-group statistics that were discussed at the meeting and he saw that the African American students were a low performing sub-group. He told this writer that he felt that his program would really be beneficial for the African American students making up this sub-group and approached Ms. Evensen about expanding his program to all 4th and 5th grade African American students. Mr. Hines told this writer that he was told by Ms. Evensen to put a plan together so she can review it and approve it. This writer asked why all African American students were included in the assembly and Mr. Hines said the higher performing African American students would be good examples for all the students and they would help lead the competition when he put them in tournament brackets, and all students can improve no matter how high they are in regards to scores. He said that he knew how to put the students in the competition brackets to compete against each other because Mr. Sanfilippo provided him with testing data in May of 2023 when they originally talked about pushing into classes on a smaller scaled program. Mr. Hines said that once he created the brackets and the presentation he gave it to Ms. Evensen to approve. Mr. Hines explained to this writer that Ms. Evensen would approve the plan and the assemblies but the assemblies had to be on a Friday and the assemblies had to be during the special area class

for each the 4th and 5th grade, which meant two assemblies. It was decided that the assemblies would be on the 18th of August 2023. This writer asked Mr. Hines if he had any discussion with the students that was not on the slides that were approved by Ms. Evensen, and he replied that he did. Mr. Hines stated that he talked about responsibility and following the rules at school and at home with the students. The writer asked Mr. Hines if at any time in his presentation to the students did he reference going to jail, being shot or going to an early grave and he said "yes I did". Mr. Hines said, "what was said was, in my experience the friends and people that I grew up with that made bad choices and didn't do well in school ended up in jail, shot or are not with us anymore". This writer asked Mr. Hines why he would have a discussion with the students that was not approved by Ms. Evensen and he stated to this writer that in the moment he was just spilling his heart out because he felt it would help the students and he shouldn't have said anything that she (Ms. Evensen) didn't know what was going to be said. This writer asked Mr. Hines to explain why the assembly was only for African American students and he stated that the African American subgroup was the only underperforming subgroup in ESSA, and since his program the previous year helped raise student achievement with the African American students he felt it could help a larger group of African American students this year. This writer asked Mr. Hines why the African American students from all performing levels were invited (even levels 3, 4 and 5 which are considered proficient) and not just the lower performing students (Level 1 and 2) and Mr. Hines replied, "it wasn't given a whole lot of thought because I took the level 4 high performing students and put them on stage as academic leaders and heralded them so everyone was included". This writer asked Mr. Hines if at any time during the planning of the assembly did Ms. Evensen or any other administrator question why all of the African American students in 4th and 5th grade were invited and Mr. Hines said that no one in administration said don't invite them all. This writer asked if the assemblies were both the same and Mr. Hines stated that they were both the same.

Flagler County Schools
Witness Statement

Name: (Print) Anthony D. Hines Date: 8/23/23

I declare that the following statement is given freely and voluntarily, without promise of benefit, or threat of use of force or duress, do proceed to state the following:

I Anthony D. Hines intended to incentivize the 4th and 5th grade African American students by placing them in a competitive bracket challenge to compete against similar achieving students for PML. Students who had highest scores would receive a commercial lunch. I ~~grouped~~ grouped all African American students and did not focus on the lower performing students within the subgroup. I also shared at the end of the presentation heartfelt words about individuals I grew up with who chose not to follow rules and take responsibility ended up being incarcerated, shot or involved with gun violence or no longer with us. This was again in regard to students "choices" on and off campus.

I have read each page of this statement and certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Anthony D. Hines
Signature of person giving statement

Sworn to and subscribed to before me
and officer duly authorized to administer
oaths this _____ day of _____
(year).

Page _____ of _____

Owner: Professional Standards

On August 23, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met for a follow-up with Donelle Evensen, Principal at Bunnell Elementary School. The writer asked if there was ever discussion on whether or not the assemblies should have been for all students regardless of race, small groups of students or just lower performing students instead of only African American students in grades four and five and Ms. Evensen said there was not any discussion because we have to do more for our African American student population and we have to figure out ways to support them in a safe place and support them in a different way than we have been, because how we have been providing support hasn't had great results. Mr. Hines's program was a way to give the students another adult connection for support. She added that we constantly do different things for subgroups like SWD and others, but what we have done differently for the African American subgroup has not made a difference so we were just trying something different. This writer asked Ms. Evensen if she heard any of the unscripted presentation to the students by Mr. Hines and she said she did not. Ms. Evensen said that when she entered the assembly during the 5th grade presentation, Mr. Hines was going over the student competition piece and explaining to the students the competition brackets. She said she exited at that point because she thought it was the end of the presentation. Ms. Evensen said she didn't know if the unscripted part was before or after her attendance because she didn't hear about his remarks until after the assemblies were over. This writer asked Ms. Evensen if at any time anyone tried to challenge or question the assemblies being held for African American students only and Ms. Evensen stated that no one challenged or questioned her about it prior to the assemblies.

On August 24, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report met for a follow-up with Marcus Sanfilippo, former Principal at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo how many years he was an employee at Bunnell Elementary School prior to his transition to Coordinator of Special Projects and he stated that he had been at Bunnell Elementary School for 7 years. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if an assembly had ever been held at Bunnell Elementary School during his 7 years that was only for one race of students and he informed this writer that never happened during his tenure at Bunnell Elementary School. He stated to this writer that during his time at Bunnell Elementary School there were assemblies, but they were usually either award assemblies or entire grade level assemblies with all students in a particular grade. The writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if there was any mention of an assembly when he was involved in the discussions with Mr. Hines about the Mentoring program in May of 2023 and Mr. Sanfilippo stated that there was no mention of an assembly. Mr. Sanfilippo continued to explain to this writer that when he was involved in the discussions in May with Mr. Hines about ideas for the African American mentoring, the idea for the program was mainly for Mr. Hines to push into selected classes and provide small group incentives and goal setting for the lower performing African American students. This writer asked if leading up to the 2023-2024 school year Mr. Sanfilippo had any conversations with Mr. Hines about the discussion in May of 2023 and Mr. Sanfilippo said the only discussion he had was the original plan to push in and there was no mention of an assembly. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if at any time during his transition to his District level position had Ms. Evensen ever asked him about the assembly or sought out his opinion on the assembly and Mr. Sanfilippo stated that she had never discussed the assembly or the plan with him. Mr. Sanfilippo further stated that he had no knowledge about the new plan for the program or the

assembly until he read about it on Facebook postings Friday night August 18, 2023 several hours after the assembly had already taken place.

On August 24, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report interviewed Cari McGee, Assistant Principal at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Ms. McGee if she had any knowledge of or participated in the planning of the August 18, 2023 assembly for only 4th and 5th grade African American students and Ms. McGee stated that she was not involved in the planning at all and did not even know that there was an assembly until Friday night August 18, 2023 when she read postings on Facebook several hours after the assembly had already taken place.

On August 29, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report conducted a follow-up interview with Marcus Sanfilippo, coordinator of Special Projects and former Principal of Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if the discussions that he had with Mr. Hines or with Ms. Evensen in May of 2023 about the expansion of Mr. Hines's mentoring program into the 2023-24 school year ever had an assembly as part of the process and Mr. Sanfilippo said that there was no discussion about an assembly, or meeting, or full group, or an introductory meeting. Mr. Sanfilippo stated that the meeting in May of 2023 was more about expanding his mentoring program into the 5th grade because that is the grade that he (Mr. Hines) taught within. This writer then asked about the meeting on August 2, 2023 with Mr. Hines, Ms. Evensen and Mr. Sanfilippo. Mr. Sanfilippo explained that it was not a formal meeting that was scheduled. He said he was in his office after the meeting with the faculty in which the ESSA subgroup data was shared and Mr. Hines came into the office to speak to him. He said Mr. Hines was concerned about the data and thought that his mentoring program might be able to help the students in the African American subgroup in the 4th grade in addition to only the 5th grade. Mr. Hines asked Mr. Sanfilippo for the number of African American students in both the 4th and 5th grade because he wanted to be able to reach them all, but according to Mr. Sanfilippo, not in a whole group setting. Mr. Sanfilippo said that Ms. Evensen came into the meeting and he brought her up to speed on what he and Mr. Hines were discussing about expanding the mentoring program to both 4th and 5th grade and not only 5th grade. During the explanation to Ms. Evensen on what she had missed, Mr. Sanfilippo said he explained that Mr. Hines wanted to incentivize the students based on goal setting for Progress Monitoring #1 FAST assessment (PM1) to Progress Monitoring #2 Assessment (PM2) and through Progress Monitoring #3 Assessment (PM3). According to Mr. Sanfilippo, Mr. Hines would work with the African American students in goal setting on the FAST assessments and purchase food for the students as incentives for positive progress in reaching their goals. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo again, if at this meeting an assembly or whole group presentation was discussed with himself, Mr. Hines and Ms. Evensen and he stated, "there was not any discussion that I can recall for a whole group presentation." Mr. Sanfilippo then said he suggested that Mr. Hines should work with Ms. Steed and Mr. Gabriel on grouping the students after the data of PM1 was collected. This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo when Administration and Leadership meetings were held when he was Principal, and he stated that on every Monday the administrative team would meet in the mornings and the leadership team with administration and coaches would meet on Monday afternoons. This writer asked if there was any discussion or planning in the May 2023 Administrative meetings or Leadership meetings about Mr. Hines's mentor program, the expansion of the program or an assembly for African American students

and he stated that there were no discussions at these meetings about Mr. Hines's program or an assembly for African American students. This writer asked him the same questions about the meetings he attended in August before and during his transition and he stated that there was no formal meeting about Mr. Hines's program or an assembly, and the only discussion would have been about Mr. Hines wanting to work with select students. Mr. Sanfilippo informed this writer that the meeting on August 2, 2023 between he, Mr. Hines and Ms. Evensen was the last time he was ever involved in a discussion about Mr. Hines's program until he was sent screenshots at approximately 7 p.m. on August 18, 2023 of what some parents were posting on Facebook about the assemblies held during the school day.

This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo what the standard operating procedure would be for having an assembly during the school day in the time that he spent at Bunnell Elementary School as Principal, and he said that the protocol is we don't have assemblies, just behavioral expectation assemblies by grade level and "Terrific Kids" awards assemblies. He added that if they needed to have an assembly, the who, what, where, when and why would be discussed at an Administration meeting and based upon the content, a person would be put in charge and this wasn't always an Administrator. He gave the example that "Terrific Kids" awards assemblies are run by the Guidance Counselors. This writer asked if during the time from the meeting on August 2nd with Mr. Hines and Ms. Evensen, until he received the texts with screenshots of the the parents' comments about the assemblies on the night of August 18th if anyone ever communicated to him or with him in regards to the assemblies and he stated, "no one communicated with me at all about the assemblies or the program from the 2nd through the night of the 18th until I received screenshots of the posts". This writer asked Mr. Sanfilippo if during his transition he had any communication with Ms. Evensen or Ms. McGee and he stated that they had a group text with the three of them and he had heard from Ms. Evensen several times for questions involving personnel placements, hiring progress, and morning announcements but never about the assemblies. Mr. Sanfilippo said that when he received the screenshots of the posts about the assemblies on the evening of August 18, 2023 he immediately sent the screenshots to Ms. Evensen to provide information about what was being said about the assemblies.

On August 29, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report conducted a follow-up interview with Cari McGee, Assistant Principal of Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Ms. McGee again if she had any knowledge of the assemblies held for all 4th and 5th grade African American students on August 18, 2023 because the email sent by Ms. Evensen explaining the 4th and 5th grade meetings for all 4th and 5th grade African American students was copied to her (as well as other teachers associated with the 4th and 5th grade) and Ms. McGee stated that she missed the email. She further explained that after her first meeting with this writer she went back through her emails and saw that she was copied on the email. She said to this writer, "I missed it. I can't explain." The writer asked about the standard operating procedure for assemblies in regards to Administration meetings and Ms. McGee informed this writer that the parameters of the assemblies would be discussed and then it would be assigned to either an administrator or another individual handling the assembly, but there were not a lot of assemblies held historically at BES. This writer then asked if Ms. Evensen ever followed up Ms. McGee about the assemblies that were held and she stated that Ms. Evensen never said anything to her about the assemblies. Ms. McGee was then asked if there were any Administrative meetings held this year in which the assemblies could be discussed and

she said that there have been no administrative meetings and only a leadership meeting on the 14th of August but there was absolutely no discussion about the assemblies at this meeting. Ms. McGee informed this writer that she had no knowledge of Mr. Hines's mentoring program during the 2022-2023 school year and had no knowledge nor was she involved in any conversations about the program this year (2023-2024). This writer asked Ms. McGee if any teachers approached her before or after the assemblies with concerns and she said "no" but looking back she said she remembered that at the end of the school day on the 18th of August she passed two teachers that were having a discussion in the hallway. Ms. McGee said that she did not know what the discussion was about but heard one teacher say something like "That was weird or what was up with that" but the teachers did not seem to be visibly mad or upset so she kept walking and didn't give it much thought. Ms. McGee said the first time she heard about the assemblies was when she was sent screenshots of parents' comments on the night of August 18, 2023 and that is maybe what the teachers were discussing but she didn't know for sure, neither teacher stopped Ms. McGee to talk to her and said she can't really remember exactly who the teachers were. She said on Monday, August 21, 2023 Lead Teacher meetings were held with Administration and Ms. Evensen discussed the Assemblies with the team leads. Ms. McGee informed this writer that it was a brief discussion and no teachers had any questions and there were no discussions from the team leads.

On August 29, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report conducted a follow-up interview with Anthony Hines, Teacher at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Mr. Hines to explain how the idea for this program and related assemblies came to be and Mr. Hines explained that in the 2022-23 school year he was implementing a mentoring type program through the ELA class that he was assigned to provide Support Facilitation. He said that he had the students write attainable goals for their performance on the FAST PM3 and said that he would buy them pizza at the end of the year if they achieved their goals. Mr. Hines informed the writer that about 65% of the students achieved their goals and improved their scores from PM2 to PM3 and he bought them pizza at the end of the year. He thought that his mentoring program was working and he decided to have a conversation with Mr. Sanfilippo, who was the Principal of BES at that time, to see if he could expand his program for the 2023-24 school year. He stated to this writer that it was not a formal, scheduled meeting but rather just a pop in conversation with Mr. Sanfilippo at the end of May 2023. On August 2, 2023 the Bunnell Elementary School teachers were presented testing data for the ESSA subgroups at a faculty meeting. Mr. Hines stated that after the meeting he went to Mr. Sanfilippo's office to have a discussion about how to expand his program because he really felt that it could help the African American subgroup and their testing performance. Mr. Hines said that he was asking Mr. Sanfilippo for the numbers of African American students in 4th and 5th grade to see if he could expand his program. While having this conversation with Mr. Sanfilippo, Ms. Evensen walked in and Mr. Sanfilippo explained what Mr. Hines wanted to do in regards to the mentoring program. Mr. Hines stated that Mr. Sanfilippo said that expanding the program was a "good idea" and Ms. Evensen thanked Mr. Hines for his passion in helping students. Mr. Hines was asked by this writer if the discussion at this meeting was to have an assembly with all the 4th and 5th African American students and he stated to this writer that at that point he really didn't know and that he was just trying to get as many students involved in the program as he could. He added that he wasn't sure what the size of the group he would be meeting with from the 4th and 5th grade African American students would be and he wanted as

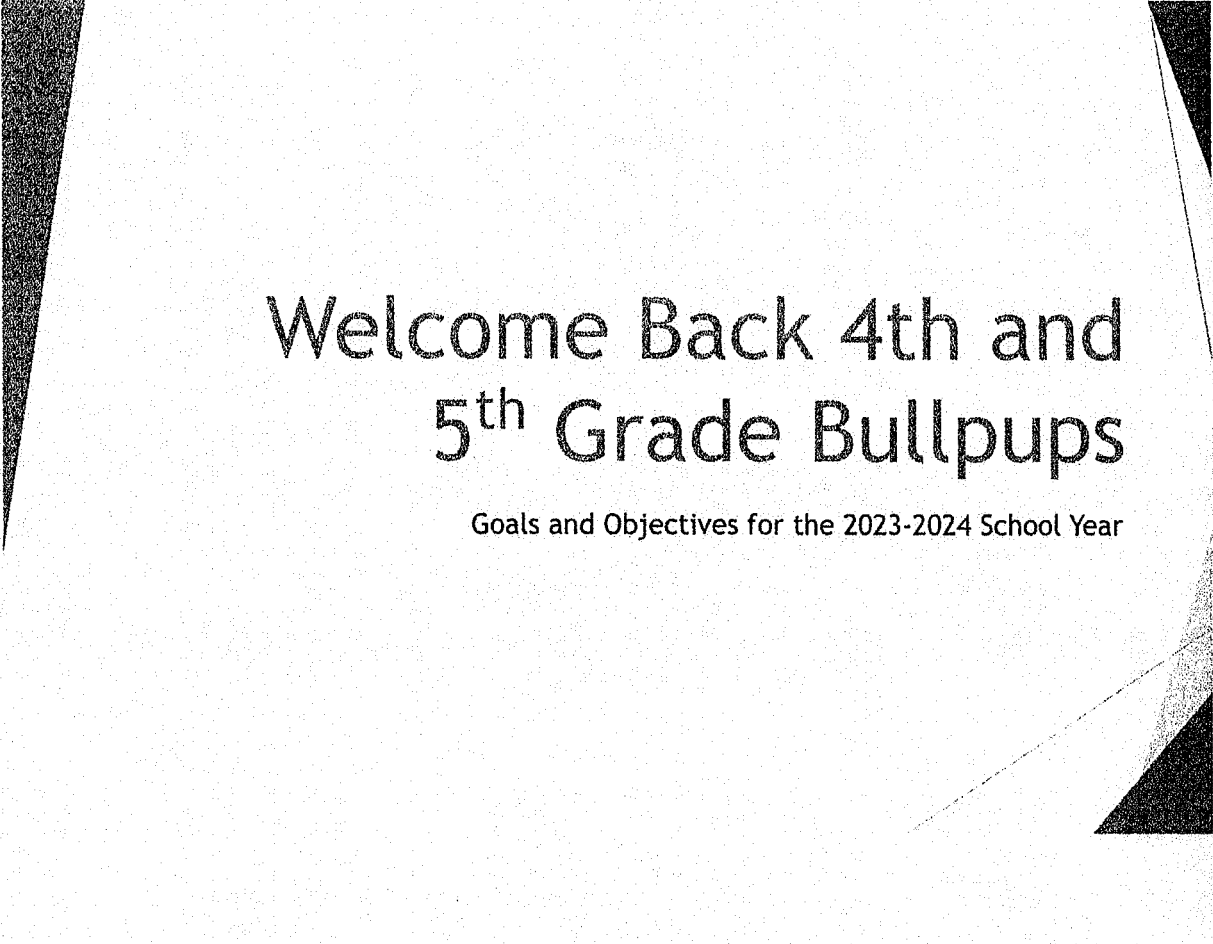
many as possible and anticipated that it could be all, but didn't know until the emails went out from Ms. Evensen to the 4th and 5th grade teachers with the lists of students on August 16, 2023 that he would have all of the African American students in 4th and 5th grade. Mr. Hines provided that he sent the power point for his presentation (for whatever size group he would receive) to Ms. Evensen on August 9, 2023. After the 5th grade team meeting held on August 15, 2023, Mr. Hines said that Ms. Evensen pulled him aside and informed him that she had reviewed the powerpoint and the meetings would be held with the African American students on Friday and one would be for 4th grade and one would be for 5th grade. Mr. Hines said that Ms. Evensen said she would send an email out to 4th and 5th grade teachers about the meetings.

On August 29, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report conducted a follow-up interview with Donelle Evensen, Principal of Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Ms. Evensen if the mentoring plan was supposed to be an expansion on Mr. Hines's mentoring plan during 2022-23 and have Mr. Hines pushing into more classes in the 4th and 5th grade for the 2023-2024 school year and Ms. Evensen said that she was not aware that the push-in to classrooms was the plan. Ms. Evensen said that in both informal meetings between Mr. Sanfilippo and Mr. Hines, she walked in after they had started and she was given a "recap" of what had been discussed up to the point that she entered the meeting. Ms. Evensen stated that she was never under the impression from the meeting at the end of May 2023 or the meeting on August 2, 2023 that Mr. Hines would be pushing into classes for the plan. She explained to this writer that Mr. Hines wanted to mentor as many of the 4th and 5th grade African American students that he could mentor, but in order to make that happen he wanted to introduce the program to all of the students at the same time and Ms. Evensen added, "it was my understanding that we would have an assembly for the 4th and 5th grade. Mr. Hines wanted an introductory meeting with all 4th and 5th grade African American students". Ms. Evensen said the plan for the program was goal setting, incentives, and competition as she understood. She said at the August 2, 2023 meeting is when she first heard McDonalds or Chick-fil-A as food incentives. At this same meeting Ms. Evensen said that Mr. Sanfilippo asked her if it was still good to move forward with this plan since she is the new Principal and Ms. Evensen said she replied "Yes". She said that Mr. Sanfilippo suggested that when Mr. Hines meets with the African American students, it needs to be before PM1 so that they can use the scores from PM1 to set goals for PM2. Ms. Evensen said that she said that they would have to look at the calendar and set a date and the meeting ended. This writer asked Ms. Evensen to explain how the assemblies came to be after the meeting with Mr. Hines, Mr. Sanfilippo and her on August 2, 2023. Ms. Evensen explained that she had no further discussions with anyone about the plan and program until she was sent the powerpoint of the presentation by Mr. Hines (This writer verified that the email with the presentation was sent from Mr. Hines to Ms. Evensen on August 9, 2023) for review and approval. Ms. Evensen said she reviewed the presentation and then saw Mr. Hines in passing in the hallway (confirmed by this writer to have been August 15, 2023) and informed him that she looked at the powerpoint and it "looked good". She then informed Mr. Hines that they should have the meetings (assemblies) on Friday the 18th during special area classes for the 4th and 5th grade. Ms. Evensen said that she then sent an email to the 4th and 5th grade teachers informing them of what the presentation on Friday, August 18, 2023 would be about, but did not include a list of students that should attend. She said that she needed to get the most accurate list of current African American 4th and 5th

grade students from Skyward before she sent it out. Ms. Evensen said that Ms. Melissa Anderson came to her at some point on August 16, 2023 and said that the 4th grade teachers wanted to know exactly which students to send for the presentation on Friday the 18th and Ms. Evensen said she would get the list to her as soon as she could. Ms. Evensen said that she sent the list of students to the 4th and 5th grade teachers later in the day on August 16, 2023. This writer asked if after the general email went to 4th and 5th grade teachers and the subsequent lists went out to 4th and 5th grade teachers if anyone reached out to her with questions or concerns about the assemblies before the assemblies took place and she responded, "No one ever said anything to me or had questions about having it (Assemblies) with just African American students". This writer then asked what the standard operating procedure is at Bunnell Elementary School for assemblies and Ms. Evensen stated that any assembly would usually be discussed at an Administrative meeting and someone would be assigned to oversee the assembly. This writer asked if these assemblies were ever discussed at an administrative meeting and Ms. Evensen said that she didn't remember if these assemblies ever came up because the person overseeing the assembly was already involved, which was Mr. Hines. This writer asked if any other Administrator knew about the assemblies planned for August 18th and Ms. Evensen said that she wasn't sure if Ms. McGee knew about it, but added that to her (Ms. Evensen) understanding Mr. Sanfilippo knew about a plan because he knew about the plan from the beginning, so she assumed he knew.

On August 30, 2023, Mr. Michael Rinaldi, Coordinator of Professional Standards and the writer of this report conducted a phone interview with Melissa Anderson, 4th Grade Team Lead Teacher at Bunnell Elementary School. This writer asked Ms. Anderson why she went to Ms. Evensen on August 16, 2023 after receiving the email from Ms. Evensen the prior day informing the 4th and 5th grade teachers of the assemblies to be held during special area classes and Ms. Anderson explained that when they received the initial email from Ms. Evensen, the email stated that the assemblies would be for African American students with no list attached of which students to send for the assemblies. Ms. Anderson stated that she went to Ms. Evensen and said that some of the 4th grade teachers have come to her because they are not comfortable with which students to send because they didn't have a list and asked Ms. Evensen if she would send a list to the teachers. Ms Anderson said that Ms. Evensen stated that she was getting the most accurate list from Skyward and she would send a list of which students to send to the assemblies as soon as she could.

The following is the presentation powerpoint submitted by Mr. Hines to Ms. Evensen on August 9, 2023 and approved by Ms. Evensen on August 15, 2023.



Welcome Back 4th and 5th Grade Bullpups

Goals and Objectives for the 2023-2024 School Year

Introductions

- ▶ Mrs. Steed-3rd grade Support Facilitation
- ▶ Mr. Gabriel-All Grades- In School Suspension
- ▶ Mr. Hines-5th grade Support Facilitation

The Problem

- ▶ AA have underperform on standardized assessment for the last past 3 years.
- ▶ We only have 32% of our students who are at a Level 3 or higher for ELA/Math.
- ▶ We are supposed to have at least 41%.

The Solution

- ▶ Each student will commit to earning at least a Level 3 or higher on all standardized assessments.
- ▶ Each student will concentrate on passing all curriculum based assessments with at least a 75% or higher.
- ▶ Each student will commit to maintaining high iReady scores within their individual track.

F.A.S.T. Challenge

- ▶ Progress Monitoring 1 will be in September and all students who win their individual matchup will have a meal from McDonalds.
- ▶ Each student will be competing against their opponent in both ELA and Math. The student with the highest Level and/or Standard score will win the matchup.
- ▶ Winners will be emailed to you (Check your ipad) (Brackets)