

Employee Council Minutes - 9/21/2020
Virtual Meeting

- Welcome - Amanda Thompson
- District updates - David Ray, Board President
 - Interim Superintendent Process
 - The other big rock out there is returning elementary students to full time 5 days a week in-person learning. We set a target date at the last BOE meeting. Director Ray stated that we now need to have deep conversations with employees and look at logistics. We want to gather qualitative and quantitative feedback to determine the comfort level of staff in returning after fall break. These decisions are difficult. We cannot make a decision to please everyone. We are really reliant on data to make a decision. At the secondary level, we have a whole different set of data, particularly when we are looking at the number of people who are quarantining. Secondary is in a different bucket.
 - Director Ray closed by saying that he has faith in our employees during these insane times. He stated that the BOE is seeking answers and needs the help of employees. The BOE is looking forward to working together on next steps.
- Feedback sessions
 - Elementary Return to in person learning
 - There have been some rumors that e-learners may be able to return after fall break. Is this true? This information would be forwarded on for further clarification. There are no specifics on whether changes will be permitted. There are a lot of logistics that would need to occur to bring everyone back. Classrooms would need to be rearranged and the curriculum between e-learning and in person learning is different and would need to be aligned.
 - There is a question around class sizes and many schools lost classroom teachers due to e-learning students. What will the impact be here?
 - There was an understanding that e-learners could not change prior to the end of the semester. A pre-school survey went out asking parents who will be coming back into the classroom.
 - Nancy Ingalls stated that leadership felt it was possible to bring back pre-school. Pre-school staff will also have an opportunity to give their feedback.
 - There is confusion why when our COVID numbers are going up in Douglas County and we are entering the cold and flu season, why we are considering bringing students back to in-person learning. This employee stated that she appreciates the data approach, but it seems like the data is showing that numbers are going up, so this doesn't make sense.

- There has been talk of some schools starting back to full in-person as early as next Monday. It doesn't seem that all departments are involved in these conversations. This includes NUTS and Transportation. An EC member stated that Ted Knight said at the last BOE meeting that the last thing we want to do is come back before we are ready; and there is concern that if we allow schools to make independent choices, we could end up in a situation where we have to change return dates again.
- There is a worry about the timing in opening up after fall break. There is concern that teachers and principals are exhausted as they didn't get a spring or summer break and now we are looking at potentially working through fall break. Employees need a break!
- Some families are saying they don't want their kids in school full time, so there could be students leaving the classroom. Teachers have been told this will be handled on a case by case basis. They need clarification on movement between e-learners going to in-person full time and hybrid learners going remote.
- A HS teacher asked how the switch between e-learning and hybrid learning would work at the secondary level. Would changes only be made at semester break?
- There is concern about resources and the social distancing piece in bringing back students full time in-person. Teachers are struggling with how to social distance classes of 25 students.
- There is a concern about supporting students from a SPED perspective. It will be challenging to meet the needs of both the in-person students and the e-learners when we shift from hybrid to 100% in-person.
 - Nancy Ingalls stated that Principals will reach out to their staff to get feedback from teachers. Nancy spoke with SPED Coordinators today; and they will also be reaching out to their schools. Some schools will have an easier time in scheduling than others. They will collect input to ensure they make appropriate decisions.
- There is wondering in regard to information that is being told to our communities about deep cleaning. These preventative cleaning measures may not be happening the way that was communicated out.
- Another theme is are there particular staff members who were worried about hybrid learning, that may be really uncomfortable in coming back full time. What options do these employees have?
- The elementary level started as hybrid and are likely going back to 100% in-person. There could be bouncing back in forth from 100% in person to e-learning due to COVID. Are there systems we can put in place that would make the bouncing back in forth smoother for parents and staff?

- The sooner staff can get a date on when they are returning, the sooner staff can plan and get ready for the shift. Is there any time available for planning from an educator standpoint to make this shift?
- Having e-learners returning mid-stream is going to be really difficult. We want the kids back; however, it will be an enormous struggle to make that happen. It would be better to make this change at semester break.
- It is important that we have consistency across the District. It is difficult in this time when some schools do things one way, and others do things differently.

- Employee Guide review of draft - Cathy Franklin
 - FFCRA - new policy
 - The timeframes on leave are not defined. Should they be?
 - Bereavement
 - Is there any limits on how many times you can take bereavement in a year?
 - Comp Time
 - Do employees need approval to work comp time? Should there be language in the guide about this?
 - Appendix Sections
 - No feedback
 - Other
 - No feedback

Feedback on the draft EE guide will be provided to legal for consideration.

- Compensation for extra responsibility - Kate Kotaska
 - When we opened up the school year, HS leaders said there was a burden for teachers to take on additional responsibility. As a result, leadership has been looking at ways to compensate employees. Below is the proposal:

- CARES Fund
 - Additional pay for teachers taking on additional sections (e-learning and hybrid).
 - Teachers taking on students who are under the e-learning model and taking on hybrid as well will be paid \$150 per student/per semester.
 - Teachers serving as content experts. Supporting both students and staff outside of their content area. In this case, employees will be paid \$2,100 a semester.
- This was discussed with the BOE in September. Principals have been determining which buckets teachers fall into. The plan is for pay to be given to employees in October. Retro pay will have to be provided.
- Kate is working with SPED team to determine which employees are supporting e-learning and hybrid students to get them paid correctly.

Employee Feedback:

- Extra pay for administrators and classified is being held up. Why is this happening?
 - Kate said this conversation is still in process. It was originally proposed as a change in FTE. This didn't seem like a fair and equitable way to do this. Working on trying to find out what the calculation should be to determine extra responsibility pay.
 - Can Principals tell staff they can be paid; or should nothing be communicated now.
 - Kate said nothing should be communicated now as it is still being finalized.
 - A Preschool employee stated that this was the first she had heard about this, and wanted to make sure Preschool was not forgotten in this.
 - What will happen next semester if funds run out? How will we compensate these employees?
 - Kate said there are ongoing conversations about this. CARES funding does expire on 12/31; but she is looking at grant funding to see what can be done.

- One employee said could Employee Council talk about how to support staff during this turbulent time. Ways to encourage and support more will be added to the agenda for October.
- Adjournment of meeting - next meeting October 26, 2020 - we postponed for one week due to wanting to check in on how things are going after fall break.