

Employee Council Minutes - 1/11/21 Virtual Meeting

- Welcome - Mr. Wise welcomed everyone to the meeting. Elementary schools are back full in person. Mr. Wise thanked all employee groups for their hard work in getting us to this point. Mr. Wise stated one of his goals is to be more visible and to communicate more. Part of this is to share the current state and what we are working towards. Mr. Wise stated he welcomes different viewpoints. Mr. Wise stated the options for returning to school are remote, hybrid or in person. "In looking at this school year, there is no perfect method. Hybrid has served a purpose and still does with middle school and high school. We originally were looking at two separate dates for the return of middle school and high school. We are now looking at bringing middle school and high school back at the same time." Mr. Wise stated we are looking at the new strain of COVID and the status on when employees can be vaccinated. To date, Centura has been the leader with the vaccines. Governor Polis originally had teachers in the 1b group. They have now been moved to the March timeframe. Mr. Wise then opened the group up for questions.

Questions/Feedback:

- Two high school teachers expressed grave concerns about going back full in person. "There was a struggle with quarantining when high schools were hybrid. We weren't able to sustain it; and now we are talking about going back full in person." There is worry about making promises about in person learning; and when it doesn't happen, people are upset. "One of the pros of the hybrid model is teachers have more control over what is going on in the school. Most students who contracted COVID, got it outside of school. If we have all 2,000 kids, there is no way we can protect kids. We need to take this idea off of the table. We are opening ourselves up for more cases in the schools."

Mr. Wise stated that he has concerns as well. He stated that in the hybrid model teaching synchronous and asynchronous has been a struggle.

- There was a question about where O&M is on the vaccine timeline. Ms. Thompson stated that individuals 70 and over can sign up now for vaccinations through Centura or Kaiser now. Ms. Ingalls stated that a communication coming from the State may have created some confusion. Educators were moved to the top of the list at the end of December, but were then divided into two groups. Some employees are eligible to sign up now (i.e. nurses, EAs). Other employees (classroom teachers, O&M, Transportation) are eligible to sign up effective March 1st.

- There is a question around the new quarantine guidelines. Will teachers be asked to teach remotely and in person at the same time? It is possible that the teachers may have to teach in both formats. If a situation occurs where a student gets a COVID test on day 5 or later, and gets a negative result, and can return on day 8, they may be told not to return to day 11.
- A concern came from a middle school teacher stating If we go back full in person, there is concern that parents will pull their kids to go full online. “Parents were of the understanding that we would either be remote or hybrid. If we go full in person, they may pull their kids from Douglas County schools.”
- Strategic Plan Theme 3 - Positive & Supportive Culture

Mr. Wise discussed the importance of the employee guide and stated it has been updated and improved from where it has been in the past. “It is now more comprehensive, and helps to move us forward.” Ms. Thompson stated that in order to ensure we have enough time to go through the new policies and to hear everyone’s feedback, we would like to schedule a work session next Tuesday, January 18th at 4:00. Ms. Thompson asked the group if they would be amenable to this. The group agreed.

- Ms. Thompson asked the group for feedback on ways to honor and value staff. Ms. Thompson stated that she would add this topic to the February Employee Council meeting.
 - An elementary teacher said that her heart is with the middle and high school teachers, and wanted to give them kudos for pivoting multiple times this year and doing an outstanding job.
- Ms. Thompson thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting.