

Classified Rep. Notes October 20, 2020

Melanie Kranz: Opening Comments

Called the meeting to order.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: September's Question of the Month

"What can all stakeholders do to help improve employee retention?" See page 10 for responses.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Retention Data

2019/2020 School Year Retention Data

Certified

- Retention 88.37%
- #1 Reason for leaving: Moving
- #2 Reason for leaving: Retirement

Classified

- Retention 83/3%
- #1 Reason for leaving: Other
- #2 Reason for leaving: Better Pay

Millard House, Director of Schools: Comments

I just want to run past a couple things that I want to make you aware of. First off, at the last meeting we talked about a mid-year financial review to see where we are as a school system financially. To see if it would be feasible to move forward with a step increase or raise. The plan has not changed, I review will occur around the midyear mark. No guarantee that pay increase/step will happen, but we will review with hope of doing so. The legislature does plan to hold school systems financials harmless for this school year. If that is the case, it may allow us to do something

There has been a rise in COVID-19 cases in the country and Montgomery County. In Montgomery County about 1,000 more cases in the last 5 weeks. It has been interesting to look at the data, I look at data for about 2 ½ hours per day not just COVID data but data as a whole. We have had some spots one in particular is Rossvie Middle School. Some spots of COVID increase which also has increased the number of quarantines. When we close a school down or send a school into remote status we do that not necessarily because of COVID cases but the number of quarantined employees. Example, at Rossvie Middle we had between 11-15 quarantined employees and you know where we are with substitute teachers. That makes it very difficult to fill substitute position and operate. We have even had some employees hospitalized, we don't know how they contracted it. Whether it was in a school or elsewhere. Bottom line is they needed to have some medical treatment. Both employees are home and doing well. It is important to sometimes see the why, especially when we see things in the media about cases and quarantines.

On a positive note, we have closed, signed, sealed and delivered the necessary contracts and paperwork for middle school #8. They are actually moving dirt on the Kirkwood campus. Which is about 2 ½-3 miles east of the Rossvie Campus. We also have three additions that are being constructed at three separate elementary schools. Oakland, Pisgah and Rossvie each are 12 classroom additions. The Rossvie addition should be available for utilization the last 9 weeks for the school year. The other two will be ready at the start of the 2021/2022 school year. In speaking with collages across the country, we are missing 1,000s of students. What we have learned here in Montgomery County, we were expecting to grow by 600-1,000 students. We have stayed stable and only grown by about 50-60 students and expected to

grow by a lot more. I don't think it is that the students have left, but in a given year we have about 250-300 homeschool kids in our county and this year we have 700. We still were expecting more growth, so that means there are still some kids out there that we are looking for.

As much as we can we are going to focus our efforts on our strategic work, yes it may look a little bit different because many of our kids are virtual right now. We are going to teach kids in Montgomery County. Some of our latest data that we have gotten back from our universal screeners has indicated that we haven't seen the kind of learning loss that was expected across the state that you have heard about across the country. We will continue to push our kids to learn. Governor Lee has taken a stance on assessments and accountability. That stance is simple and all schools in the state of Tennessee will take end of year assessments. What won't happen is the accountability sides, teachers won't have that accountability in terms of their evaluations being tied to test scores and school systems won't have test data used against them. There will be final approval through the Legislator and State Board. We want our kids to test to get as much good data as possible to use as we drive instruction. We will ensure every student 3rd grade and up will test. That data will be important and we are utilizing some of our own data. I mentioned universal screeners earlier. We have a pretty good idea of how are kids are doing now, that end of year data is going to be really important for us as well.

Last question I have for you just to get an understanding, how many by raise of hand have you been affected, had a family member or friend by COVID-19? Looks about 80% of the people in the room. I only say that because we are dealing with an unprecedented time we can still operate effectively and will ensure our students will still get what they need. A question that came to me from a classified staff, are we going to get a chance to finish the school year with our kids in person? To answer that question, I don't know. I hope so. What I can tell you is the data is rising. It tugs at my heart in a very difficult and special way when it affects people and all of you. Every decision we make as a school district and as a director, I keep in mind the people and the faces. We will continue to watch over the next three weeks. Many travelled during fall break, after Labor Day there was a spike three weeks later. Will do what is in the best interest for are staff, students and community.

Sharing a positive story from your school/location

New Providence Middle: Our kids have been phenomenal with the masks, they have been wearing them and keep them on.

Education Foundation: Want to thank everybody for contributing. We beat last year's total even despite the pandemic by 5%. The foundation under Robin Burton's leadership is doing a lot of great things. Appreciate all of you that sponsored the Education Foundation.

Questions and Rumors

Question: When will the market analysis take effect?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Market analysis was placed on hold this school year because of our budget. It is something we will add into the budget recommendations for 2021/2022 school year with potential effective date of 1 July 2021.

Some of you might have seen in the newspaper that our substitute teacher pay will be increasing. We continue to have a shortage of substitutes and are hopeful this will help with recruitment and retention.

Question: Are there any plans to bring recycling back to the district?

Answers: **Jim Sumrell, Chief Operations Officer:** This wasn't our choice to do away with, it has always been sponsored by the landfill which is a government county agency. I think because of the effects of COVID on the global economy, most of the recyclables were sold to China, they can no longer sell the recyclables. The landfill was actually losing money by hiring the people and buying the trucks to handle all that recyclable material. They just ended the program.

The Educational Foundation came around that and found a way to recycle cardboard at around 20 schools. The Education Foundation went out and got sponsorships like Wal-Mart that pays \$35 a month to have the dumpster on a school campus. You might have seen the dumpsters at your schools they are marked by the company that is sponsoring the dumpster. That is not only available to you but to the public. We are taking the first steps forward. We definitely couldn't afford to keep it going and the landfill held on to it as long as they could.

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer: The plan is to continue to expand. Robin Burton the Executive Director of the Education Foundation is working with parents and they are a little task force working with different businesses with the goal of at least cardboard and paper at all schools.

List of school with cardboard recycling containers:

- Burt Elementary
- Minglewood
- Moore
- Northeast High School (it will serve the whole complex)
- Montgomery Central High School (it will serve the whole complex)
- Rossvie Elementary School (it will serve the whole complex)
- Richview Middle
- Sango Elementary
- Northwest High
- Kenwood Middle (it will serve the whole complex)

Question: Is there a way to email each classified staff something like a "Survey Monkey" monthly? This will allow us to submit our questions and choose to identify ourselves if we choose to? Not necessarily to be anonymous, but so each person can get their questions/concerns in to the same source and answered? Also, it gives each of us the opportunity to inquire without feeling like it may cause conflict/issues with others for asking.

Answer: **Amanda Smith, Classified Representative Meeting Coordinator:** When sending out the monthly minutes, I will include a Survey Monkey link. The classified representatives for the schools/locations will forward the link along with the monthly minutes to the classified employees for their school/location. The employee will not have to state their

name but will have to list what location/department they are representing. We will give this a try, if it doesn't work we will go back to just submitting questions to your representative.

Question: What the status is of classified of the year from last year receiving their certificate? Also, since our luncheon got cancelled due to COVID will we be able to attend this year (if they have it)? And lastly will we be recognized at all for being classified of the year last year?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We had to cancel that event. When we closed in mid-March we hadn't received all the recommendations. The ones we did receive we just put on hold. At this time we haven't made any plans for a luncheon this spring. We will continue to look at the options for this event.

Question: We were talking about our name badges if they weren't fairly new than the faces are really faded out to like a blob is there anything we can do about getting IDs that don't fade out so quickly. So you can actually see the person's face? Thanks

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We will continue to use the machine and supplies we currently have. We have not budgeted to purchase new equipment. If you know someone that has a faded badge all they have to do is e-mail Jacob, William.rougemont@cmcss.net, and request a new badge. If he has a picture on file he will send them a new one and they will send the old one back.

Question: What are the steps for an elementary school to take if a student withdraws and hasn't turned in the laptop? We have a student that has moved and can't be contacted. We have called, emailed and mailed a certified postal letter. This student has been entered as a Drop Out on Power School.

Answer: **David Holman, Chief Technology Officer:** Will be answered during the November 17, 2020 meeting.

Question: Will the \$300.00 bonus count on our retirement?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** No, it will not. The reason it will not is because it was not sent out to all employees. It was only sent to those that qualified. Any new employee hired after July 1, 2020 did not qualify for the \$300. It is considered a bonus and not included as income for the purpose of TCRS.

Question: Will the district be doing the ELTR again this year and if so can we get some information on this program?

Answer: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** Will be presenting on the pathways options at the next classified representative meeting, November 17, 2020. Currently we have ELTR, EMTR, Lipscomb teacher resident and Nashville State teacher resident. Always send out information to all classified employees in January. This will be our third year offering this opportunity.

Question: Is there any way that we can get a list detailing what each deduction acronym means on the pay stubs?

Answer: **Marcia Demorest, Chief Financial Officer:** Yes, thank you for that question. We had started on that prior to that question. In the last newsletter we had some information about W2s to make sure your federal income taxes are coming out at the level you want them to because the IRS did change some things this past year. When talking about that we started talking about this and employees being able to read and understand everything on their pay stubs. We are working on something that will give you both deductions and pay type. Will not have all the garnishments but will list all the basic deductions. We almost have that put together. Then we will work with technology to post on the website. Hopefully, will have it out soon.

Question: At what percentage of teachers, staff and/or students need to be out before the school is sent to remote?

Answers: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** It isn't a certain percentage but do we have staff available to run the schools. What we do is get together as a communicable disease team with the health department and the principal to determine if the school is sent to remote. We look at the connectedness of the cases that could lead to a spread and will go remote to stop the spread.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: There are different factors we consider. How many tested positive, is there an outbreak at a location, how many are out due to family members testing positive or has the family member been tested and are awaiting the results? When are people coming back from FFCRA? Does the school already have staff out on FMLA?

Question: Why do ELL assistants make more than CDC assistants?" The most assistants for ELL don't speak another language but we as CDC assistants change diapers, wipe noses, take care of young girls on their cycles, help potty train, and deal with all kind of behaviors that most assistants don't ever see.

Answer: **Erica Christmas, Classified Employees and Substitutes Coordinator:** Most educational assistants are a grade E. ELL assistants and Sign Language Interpreters are a grade F. We don't just establish those grades. Our grades are established and subsequently moved based on our external consultant through market analysis. That is based on a review of the job description and various aspects.

Question: Why do CDC Teachers get an extra \$85 a month in their pay check and CDC Educational Assistants don't?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** CDC teachers are special educational teachers and are part of the differentiated pay plan. State law requires the school district has to have a differentiated pay plan for teachers where we provide additional income for certain qualifying reasons. One of our reasons is for hard to fill positions. Our special education, math and science teachers are teachers that qualify for differentiated pay.

Question: Is anything being planned for proms and graduations this year?

Answer: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** Dr. Evans is constantly talking with the principals. Proms is in the spring and graduation near the end of the school year. We're about to go through a spike and it is all about health and safety. The first thing to come

up celebration wise in high schools is homecoming and was the first discussion to come up since it is in the fall. Homecoming did go on, it wasn't traditional there was no dance but the courts did go on and were recognized. That was the first level of dialogue that came up. They are having discussions, all discussions can change based on outbreaks. We can say we plan on a traditional graduations right now but if it isn't safe to do we won't do it. Have been talking about athletics, booster clubs and events as they come up. Committed to providing the best experience possible. Anything we plan goes through health and safety. I wish I could give a definite answer, wish I could tell you we will have traditional prom and graduation. Can't provide that answer, will continue having the dialogues.

Question: In the event that we have to go remote, will classified staff still be paid? Those that can work from home, will there be some type of training they will receive to know what to do and how to do it? Or will staff still report to the building?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** The expectation is that all employees will report to their building and continue to provide a variety of support to students. All Rossvie Middle employees reported to work today. We have been fortunate that we have only have had 1 school at a time remote. If the entire district moves to remote a communication will be provide to employees in regards to work expectations.

Question: How will we know if the parent has chosen a different option for Virtual or Traditional the 2nd semester? Will it be on Power School like last time? What happens if a parent/guardian a week later changes their mind?

Answers: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** This morning a survey went out and parents/guardians have until November 2nd to say if the student will be going traditional or virtual. The data will be recorded the same way as last time. If a parent changes their mind, the same process used at the beginning of the year will be used. I hope we will get that information and it won't change. November 2nd gives time to get that information to counselors a chance to change schedules and transportation time to change routes.

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer: If you're talking logistically, it is being run the exact same way, Eric programed it the exact same way as before as an electronic form. You should be able to see in PowerSchool that there is a specific link they can use should they chose to change it after you confirm they are the primary guardian. If you have any concerns with that you can reach out to Eric Salyer.

Question: Are we going to be more firm about students changing during the semester?

Answer: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** We have a lot of kids doing virtual that didn't mesh with it, then you're left with do we punish the family because they change their mind or do we service the kid? In some areas we don't have that opportunity, like in high school it is real hard to change those masters' schedules. Where in an elementary school it is more adaptable. The message for the elementary level director is if you know you have kids out there that aren't learning that are virtual, do what is best for the kid. Everything is not fixed and we are never going to be in a position to say absolutely no unless it is a masters' schedule. We are letting principals make the decision, the hard part is with the high school.

Question: Has Mr. House seen the "protective" Plexiglas that's placed in front offices on counters for protection from those coming into the building? They really aren't made to protect anyone or anything. Can these be looked into and possibly something else be done for more protection?

Answer: **Jim Sumrell, Chief Operations Officer:** We built them and put them up, we provided 5,000 to the schools to use in classrooms where the situation forces students because of furniture to face one another or share a table. All it is intend to do is act as spit guard to provide a barrier between our staff and the public. If everyone wears the mask that is the #1 solution if you have someone that is sick but doesn't know it. The mask is the best thing and this is just an additional piece where we know our employees are constantly in contact with the public that may or may not be wearing a mask. I don't know about doing more. That is what we saw out in the market place at retail establishments. We provided 2-3 to every front office and 1-2 to the media center where there is a constant exchange between students and staff or between the public and staff. We spent a lot of money on it but it is not a money issue we looked at a lot of different things and tried to provide the best environment under the circumstances. They are raised up some to allow the exchange of paperwork. We do have some translucent barriers with a cardboard frame available if that would be a better solution for your space. If that would be a better solution, just ask we have them either at the warehouse or your school. If that would be better for you we would be happy to get those.

Question: If "snow days" will now become "remote learning days" what does that mean for the classified staff? Will they be required to come in to work? Will they still get paid if they can't come in? Will those Educational Assistants that received laptops be required to do some sort of remote assisting? What about the office staff and nurse?

Answer: **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We will be developing a supplement to current inclement weather policy to cover the uniqueness of this year as we respond to COVID with remote learning.

Question: Custodians want to know what is going to happen next semester when we have more traditional students. They are short staffed already here and the amount of work that have to do this year has increase. Which they understand why, but they were wondering if you all plan on hiring more custodians and add an extra person to each school? More traditional classrooms means more sanitizing on top of their everyday job.

Answer: **Jim Sumrell, Chief Operations Officer:** I think that is a real concern for us, what Sean and I have worked out was that we have two people on the operational staff. The custodians work for operations when we are out of school. We have two people that are probably in the best position to have the high level look at what is going on with the custodial workforce about 200 employees. I know all of us have been disrupted from this pandemic but maybe not as much as our custodians who are really carrying a heavy load and working under very difficult situations. I think all of our schools are not the pristine places we are used to them being but we have directed the custodial effort away from buffing and shining and those things. We have very strict cleaning schedules for bathrooms and high touch surfaces, then staying after everyone is gone and using a special misting spray disinfectant to keep the school as healthy as we can. I have asked Jason and Steven to develop a communication that will allow custodians to report every day the status of their crew. A high school might have 8-9, middle school 5-6 and elementary 3-4 custodians.

They look at that all the time. How you can impact that is if you see a real shortage in your building tell the principal, Jason or me. So we take that look and try to balance to make sure we have enough people in there at night that are able to wipe the surfaces down and then spray. It doesn't do any good to spray a dirty surface with the disinfectant, you have to clean the surface first. I'll brag on them a little bit, don't have any evidence that the children are getting sick on the schools buses or at the schools. The indication is that they are getting sick elsewhere and coming to school with it. I am proud of our custodians for the work they're done there. But it is important and we are watching it every day, 2-3 e-mails will go to the academic side of the house state that we need to move custodians. With Rossvie Middle going remote this week those custodians were moved to different schools.

Question: Why is it taking so long to get a laptop for brand new students?

Answer: **David Holman, Chief Technology Officer:** If you're ever in this situation let technology know. In the situation that was brought to us we looked it over and reviewed it, there was a problem we had missed something with that school. We then check other schools and found two more that was affected. We started working on it yesterday to get it resolved. Bring it to our attention it shouldn't have slipped through the cracks like it did. Normally what we do is not being doing in any normal fashion and so we think we got the procedure/process changed to the way it needs to be. Then someone didn't get the memo or we didn't think something through with all the right people, then we have to make adjustment to correct this types of things.

Question: How are we going to handle absences when students couldn't log-in or had computer issues at the first of the year?

Answer: **Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** The first couple of weeks we had a lot of grace for attendance with virtual students due all the technical problems we were having. We communicated that to the principals who should have communicated that to the attendance administrative assistant. You do have some virtual students that aren't engaging and if they're not engaging they are going to be treated like an attendance issue. That is the only leverage we have as there is compulsory attendance in the state of Tennessee for schools. So we do take that seriously, the first couple weeks it wasn't a lot of the student's fault they were getting knocked off or they didn't have a working computer. Those first couple weeks nobody should be going hard and fast with that attendance.

Dr. Angela Huff, Chief of Staff: We gave grace the first couple of weeks. After those weeks, we began to look at who was not turning in assignments and who had not shown up; those we considered as being absent. The Virtual program does have guidelines in the handbook regarding how to count student attendance.

Question: On the schools COVID dash board, how can we have 10 active documented while only 8 quarantined?

Answers: **Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer:** When we get the data from the Montgomery County Health Department there is a little bit of discrepancy as for the quarantine. The definition for that is those who are quarantined because of exposure to a positive. The positive is assumed to be quarantined. Technically, that means there are

18 that are quarantined. The quarantined number isn't going to match the exact same as the positive. The quarantine, we have that definition on the [CMCSS COVID-19 Dashboard](#), just means those that have come into contact in the school environment causing them to have to quarantine. The staff member or the student could have either been exposed by a staff member or student causing them to have to be quarantined. The student numbers just reflect the students in the school environment, doesn't include the virtual students.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: If you scroll down there is the data on the FFCRA leave and that is what really shows the real impact of employee absences due to COVID-19 on the district. We have had over 900 employees since July that have been on COVID leave and have returned.

Question: Can an employee without kids enrolled in CMCSS opt in to receive the parent/guardian e-mails? So I can know what correspondence is going out for when parents/guardians call with questions?

Answer: **Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer:** No, employees are not able to opt in. During the summer we started to send communications to parents and employees. If you are not getting those at some point you might have unsubscribed to the e-mails. Just let us know if you find out others are getting e-mails but you're not. In the situation today, the communication was just going out to parents because of specific links. What should have happened was another communication sent out to front office employees and moving forward we will ensure we do that.

October's Question of the Month

What can all stakeholders do to help improve employee retention?

I do not believe we have any problems with employee retention, with all the benefits we receive nobody wants to leave.

Benefits- Insurance is wonderful.

Summer break.

Schedule.

Time-Off