Classified Rep. Notes February 15, 2022

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Welcomed everyone and introduced Patti Koloski, Employee Relations Specialist.

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

"Feedback on proposed budget items." See page 11 for responses.

Dr. Angela Huff, Interim Director of Schools: Comments

Good Afternoon everyone. The zoning recommendation was made to the board last week and also with that zoning information there were a few opportunities for persons to provide input as it related to the zoning. Zoning information is also available on the district website at <u>cmcss.net/zoning/</u>. Thank you to those who participated in the director of schools search meetings and providing any input. A summary report and selection criteria was presented to the board on February the 8th. The board is considering all of that information and will talk about it further at the February 22nd meeting. Also the information that was compiled by TSPA is available on the school website for you to view (<u>https://www.cmcss.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CMCSS_InterimReport_2022.pdf</u>). COVID numbers are trending downward and we are very excited about that. Student positives as of today was 18, student exclusions 397, and employee positives 27. Last thing I want to mention is we have been participating in discussions with our parents and staff relates to an increase in student behavior. Want to let you know we are talking about that and looking at different things we may need to put in place. Also looking at things we already have in place.

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CMCSS disciplinary log entries with the keyword "fight"					
Grade level	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022		
Elementary	138	24	6		
Middle	494	269	487		
High	188	74	158		
Total	820	367	651		

Last year we only had about 60-70% of students in the school buildings.

Zero Tolerance and Remandment to Alternative School						
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022		
Zero Tolerance	93	88	68	77		
Alt School	531	305	61	133		
Total	624	393	129	210		

I wanted to share that data with you so that you would know as a senior staff we are studying everything that we can to make sure we are doing that things that we need to do. Also looking at the student code of conduct to see if there are any changes and updates that we need to make. Student Code of Condcut is being reviewed at this time by all the different groups.

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer: ESSER 3.0 Update

Sending out an email this afternoon with information regarding ESSER 3.0 employee compensation. January 26th we received final approval.

Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer: Proposed Budget Update

I am going to answer the question everyone wants to know will we get a step and what will our COLA be. Right now what we are doing is collecting all of the budget request from the different department heads and chiefs. On January 31st, Governor Lee did his big statement and didn't mention a specific increase amount. I anticipate there will be some. I have reached out to the state requesting that information. What our revenue and expense are going to be, which influence what our step and COLA will be. Timeline looks like:

Mid-Late March – One on One presentations to the board members.

April - Board approval

May – Present to the County Commission

June – County Commission votes on approving the budget

With 88% of our expenses being tied to salaries and benefits it is a priority to look for step and COLA increase is important.

Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer: Enrollment & Zoning Update

Link to PowerPoint presentation: <u>https://www.cmcss.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/CMCSS_01-04-21_compressed.pdf</u>

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Classified Staff Appreciation Day February 16th- Maintenance

Sharing a positive story from your school/location

Kenwood Middle: Mr. Winn, a teacher resident was featured on CBS News for his impact on students. Link to story: <u>https://www.cbsnews.com/video/tennessees-teacher-residency-program-aims-to-grow-next-generation-of-educators-and-combat-shortages/</u>

Kenwood Middle: Students up in proficiency in math and English from last year.

Alternative School: Grateful for payroll always being wonderful in fixing time clock errors.

Questions and Concerns

Question 1. Why is it that the Educational Assistants, the ones that work with the students with IEP's do not attend/ have input in IEP's?

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: Case manager is certified with a teaching degree to create the IEP. The educational assistant works under the direction of the case manager. Sometimes a 1-on-1 aide will be invited. An educational assistant can be a part of the meeting but it is dependent on the case manager and/or parents. Case manager is the one responsible for creating and implementing IEPs. Educational assistants can't be there without the case manager. If an educational assistant has something that maybe the case manager isn't aware of they need to collaborate with them before the IEP meeting.

Question 2. Why do custodians fall under principals instead of operations on a daily basis?

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: In this district we don't have 12-month principals, so it is a collaboration with operations to ensure the buildings were turned around when principals are not in the buildings. A principal can see where the work needs to be directed during the school year. When the principal is not in the building we need the assistance of operations to ensure supervisory when the principals are not at the schools. Operations also helps with ordering cleaning supplies.

Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer: Operations is here to assist the principal in anyways that they ask. Also on the days the principal isn't at the schools (snow days,

breaks) that is times operations will supervise the custodians to ensure the building is ready and accessible when school starts back up.

Question 3. With all the funds that are being provided for school improvements. Why has none of the funds been designated to improving the school nurse clinics? We are doing everything possible to keep students and staff safe, but some of us don't even have a bathroom for kids to vomit in. Clinics are full of falling apart office equipment and we are trying to do our best keeping sick students away from healthy ones, due to the office space available and no staff. Having funds to for example provide each nurse office with a rolling medication cart would make a world of difference. During the time of a pandemic the nurse and our clinics should be a priority to help give the safest care we can. Yet we are prioritizing getting new water fountains put in (which should be installed in or next every nurse clinic), before improving the work area of the school nurse.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Safety and Health Department has funds available for nurse clinic equipment and supplies. Nurses were provided a GoogleForm for any specific requests and needs. We are also working to get an additional allocation for nurses to order supplies this school year. Water filling stations are being installed at schools that do not have access to water due to original water fountains being shut off.

Question 4. When is the district going to inform parents on a wide scale that attendance is tracked by the nurse related to anything illness, medical, or COVID? When are they going to inform parents of documentation needed for a valid home test? Why hasn't there been a mass communication sent out with guidance? Why is it that with the influx of home testing/ lack of availability for testing at MD offices/ and the HD in MC passing out home tests instead of doing nasal swabs are employees not able to get paid for a positive with COVID leave with home tests?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: For students a picture of a valid at home tests should be submitted with name and date of test administration. Guidance has been sent out by the district over the past two years. Please see the following link for all district updates related to COVID-19: <u>CMCSS COVID-19 Dashboard</u> If you are having issues at your school, please get with your administrator to send out important reminders to parents.

In regards to COVID-19 pay, please review the <u>COVID-19 Related Leave Policy</u> for specifics on leave. CMCSS is not required to offer COVID-19 leave; however, CMCSS opted to do so.

Question 5. Why are we allowing vaccinated staff and children to come to school if they have household contact with positive family or contacts? Almost 90% of all vaccinated that come into contact with this new virus at my school are testing positive. They are coming to school sick but allowed to come because they are vaccinated. Then a few days later testing positive themselves after spreading it to coworkers and or other students. Most of the parents are sending them without bothering to test them, knowing they are not feeling well. This is spreading like wildfire, and it seems the lack of knowledge about this virus is putting everyone in danger. Why aren't the nurses on the ground, being asked what can be done to slow the spread of this? We see daily how this spreads and what seems to help. If TDOH is leaving the decisions up to the school system about covid, why are we still following guidelines that don't work?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: The District monitors COVID-19 data daily by school location. The 90% statistic mentioned above is not consistent with data reported by TDH nor local transmission rates.

Per TDH/CDC, Individuals that are up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines do not need to quarantine when exposed unless they have developed symptoms. Please see snapshots below of this guidance relating to "who does not need to quarantine at home" and "who needs to quarantine at home". The Communicable Disease Team which includes the MCHD Public Health Director, Joey Smith, meets weekly and discusses any changes in guidance from TDH/CDC as they occur.

Who DOES NOT need to quarantine at home?

CDC recommends that close contacts do not need to quarantine if they meet any of the following:

- Are ages 12 or older and have received all <u>recommended vaccine doses</u>, including <u>boosters</u> and <u>additional primary shots</u> for some immunocompromised people.
- Are ages 5-17 years and have completed the <u>primary series</u> of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (tested positive using a <u>viral test</u>) and remain without COVID-19 symptoms.

Who NEEDS to quarantine at home?

CDC recommends that close contacts should quarantine if they meet any of the following:

- They are not vaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series.
- They are ages 12 or older and completed the <u>primary series</u> of recommended vaccine, but have not received a <u>recommended</u> booster shot when eligible.

CDC recommends that close contacts should quarantine regardless of whether the case was symptomatic.

Question 6. On the days when the HOA's are being used as the school nurse, can we get a pay adjustment? We make half of what the nurses are making. If the HOA's are doing the same work as the nurse would do for that day, can we get an additional hourly pay increase on those days?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: When an HOA has been asked to "cover a school" without the nurse being present, they are not being asked to complete any nursing skills (that would not be allowed because they are unlicensed) they have been minimally pulled only as a last resort when we had no nurses available, and were only asked to help with same duties within job descriptions: handling HSR or assisting with only oral medications which they have been trained to do. If this is not happening, please notify Brittney Kirk, brittney.kirk@cmcss.net.

Question 7. When is the district going to reach a point where temp closure with remote learning is an option? We know numbers are not reflected properly on the COVID dashboard, due to vaccinated student illness no longer coded properly per Health and Safety guidance.

Dr. Angela Huff, Chief of Staff: We are continuing to closely monitor student and employee absence data. When absences are high specifically due to COVID-19, we have evaluated COVID-19 Relief Waivers from the Commissioner of Education to allow continuity of instruction via remote learning for individual classrooms or schools when inperson learning hasn't been feasible. Per state law, we can only apply for waivers on a school-by-school or classroom-by-classroom basis and cannot request a blanket district-

wide waiver. We have applied for 5 waivers at 4 different schools based on their COVID-19 absence data during this academic year; all have been approved. As always, we continue to monitor overall student and employee absences for operational considerations. Over the past two weeks, both employee and student overall absences have significantly decreased. Safety and Health updates return to school/work guidance in collaboration with the Montgomery County Health Department based on the guidance from the Tennessee Department of Health.

Question 8. If the nurse is allowed to send home a notification of multiple confirmed cases of a communicable disease like strep throat and or lice for example. Why can't a notification for multiple covid cases within that same guideline be sent? It would help stop the spread just like it does with all the other illnesses.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Response from Tommy Butler, Safety and Health Director, the District's communicable disease policy indicates that "parent notifications of confirmed cases of COVID-19 or exposure will be made in collaboration with the Montgomery County Health Department." This school year the MCHD is not confirming positive cases or its quarantine communications for those exposed to the District. We are entirely relying on self-reports of parents with no confirmations. The District letter referenced also indicates "two or more confirmed cases." In addition, the letter indicates that a child may have been exposed which is definitely not something we can confirm. Due to FERPA we should not be sending out the communicable disease letter or other communications based upon a self-reported positive in an individual classroom as those students could be easily identified and the District would be violating FERPA and the District not have the backing of a MCHD confirmation of positive as we did last year.

Question 9. Is it possible to get another large copier for our school? We have over 1600 students and have 3 new housing developments still in construction (in our zone) with at least 200 houses each. That combined with the lack of textbooks, means more papers are needed and some of the money that went to textbooks, can hopefully go toward another, much needed copier.

Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer: It is district policy to provide one copier per school and it is up to the principal's discretion if they want another one, the cost will come out of their ISA funds. If you feel a need to have another copier at your school that is a conversation you need to have with your principal. The average cost of a copier per month is \$700.

Question 10. Would it be possible to raise the wage for new employees? I believe it would boost interest and get more people to apply.

Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer: A lot of our entry level positions did go under market analysis. We are in the process of evaluating that. It all comes back to the impact on the budget and matching revenue and expenses. There probably is some opportunity, will continue to evaluate that and update you later on.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Once we have an approved budget, we have to live within that budget. The labor shortage started to hit us this fall when the budget had already been approved. So we would not be able to go in and adjust the budget for this school year, since the budget had already been approved.

Question 11. How can a new employee be hired and almost make as much or more than an employee who has been with CMCSS for a long time?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: The only way they can make more is if they are given experience credit. If your position has had market analysis you will move up a higher grade and your steps will decrease but you will be making a higher hourly rate. This will allow you more years of growth. (Reference <u>HUM-A046</u> for Classified Compensation Plan Policy.)

Question 12. Two others and I work late buses every afternoon. On snow days we all get paid for the remainder of the day. That being said, all other EAs leave an hour or more before us. So we are just losing our extra time for staying while everyone else gets to leave? I feel like we should have the extra time added for comp or pay.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: If you were asked to work extra on an inclement weather day you should have received some type of adjustment. If you feel you should have receive an adjustment and didn't reach out to Erica Christmas, Erica.crhistmas@cmcss.net.

Question 13. Why are we getting Technology Charge Notification letters a year or more after students have transferred out of our school?

David Holman, Chief Technology Officer: Manager has reached out to the school to find out more information since it doesn't seem like it is correct and we need more information.

Question 14. WOW-----someone with NO bookkeeping experience is now a FT bookkeeper at the new school? Standards?

Erica Christmas, Classified Employees and Substitutes Coordinator: This questions seems to come from someone questioning a recent hire. Just to recap the minimum experience for a bookkeeper is:

Two years of college with a minimum of twelve semester hours in accounting and a minimum of two years bookkeeping or related experience. Additional years of related experience may be substituted for each year of the college requirement; or a Bachelor's degree with 18 semester hours in accounting coursework.

I think there might have been some misinformation here that someone wasn't qualified.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: When someone does put in a transfer someone in HR does look their experience and educational level if required. The employee may have only been with us for a year but came with experience or degrees that others may not be aware of. If you have specific concerns, please reach out to Erica Christmas, Erica.christmas@cmcss.net.

Question 15. CMCSS provides a lot of opportunities to staff that helps them further their education to becoming a teacher. Is there a possibility that CMCSS could have tuition assistance programs that allows classified employees to pursue any degree such as electrical, accounting etc.? That added benefit might help with retaining more classified staff.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Right now we do have that benefit as part of our budget. What we do have is the Teacher Residency Program, which is a feeder program for individuals to become teachers. We haven't found that much of a shortage in classified positions to that level that there has been for teachers.

Question 16. Why are positions created for supervisors, admin.... when the schools are in great need? (Too many chiefs and not enough Indians, lol.)

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Over the years the number of teachers and counselors has increase. This year a big group that we added was permanent subs, health office assistants and others. Additions are made and the first thing we look at is student growth to determine how many additional employees are added to those schools. A few assistant principals have been added also.

Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer: It may seem like we are hiring more but if you go look at our open positions, there are a lot of positions open at the schools. The perception might be they are seeing people get hired for district and admin positions but there are a lot of school level positions that are open.

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer: A little less than 1% of positions in the district are administrators. Less than 5% of positions at central offices.

Question 17. I was told that teachers that deal with CDC classes get hazardous pay? Is this true and why does it not apply to sped educational assistants?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: No, this is not true. The confusion might be that we do have what is called differential pay that is mandate by the state of Tennessee for our teachers. We have to have a differential pay plan for teachers. Focus is on positions that when it was created were considered hard to fill teaching positions (Special Education, Science, Math, ELL, etc.).

Ouestion 18. Almost a full year has gone by since I initially asked concerning adding mid-level leadership roles for the custodial staff. I am encouraged to see that has come to fruition. I do however want to address the real issue from the last classifieds meeting. I don't believe it was either asked or answered to an adequate degree. All custodial staff, if they have been in this system for longer than 3 months, knows we only have a limited number of floats. We all may not know the exact amount but obviously 2 isn't currently adequate. We know the amount; we know that's too much coverage for them to handle. What the question should have been, "Is the school system addressing this?" What are you going to do about it? The custodians are exhausted, cleaning 40-50,000 square feet just to earn the right to get overtime pay. We have to be at 50% manning for over time that means we are cleaning two areas at a minimum and NOT keeping up day after day. We are not just exhausted we are tired of folks giving us their sympathies on how bad our job is right now. I love my job, I am doing my best, but let me be clear, and I am close to breaking. I am breaking, my custodians, even ones I certainly consider stalwart people, are breaking. The pay isn't enough to keep custodians, I personally have lost 4 in the last 6 months to other jobs that pay more. I realize this is being looked at, if we had done the raise when Jason Hodges suggested it be done, over years now, then we wouldn't be in the spot we are now, having to wait until July. We are not talking about struggling through one or two days of being short, but weeks or months of being short, cleaning 50,000 square feet a day. We are trying our best to get someone to hear us, but I hear a lot of beautiful words but no one is actually doing anything about it. We just want help.

Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer: Staffing and coverage is a challenge in every single department at CMCSS. Right now we are 24 custodians short. When we hire new custodians we are not putting them on a float team but putting them at the schools that are critically short. Float custodians are asked to cover 38 schools and 5 support buildings. Lead custodian can reach out to operations custodial manager if there school is struggling and they will prioritize the needs of the schools. Right now the floats cover many different schools a day. Doing the best we can with the resources we have. Have implemented <u>OPS-P012</u> which allows us to offer overtime pay instead of comp time as an incentive.

Question 19. Why can't we use a temp service for custodians?

Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer: We have used temp services before with constructional jobs to help us turn that building over. What we have learned with temps is that they often don't have the appropriate training or backgrounds to fill custodial positions. If there were trained and qualified temps, we wouldn't let them stay temps and would hire them. CMCSS is engaged with a temp agency with another department and was recently told that due to staffing shortages, they were no longer going to be able to provide temps. Staffing and coverage is a challenge in every single department at CMCSS and the county. At a senior level we have been discussing the long term impact of the larger generational group retiring.

Question 20. When will the employee calendars for next school year be posted online?

Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer: February 28th is the expected date to post.

Question 21. When a market analysis is done, are we compared to the same jobs out in the public sector or only compared to the same jobs within other school districts?"

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: For our classified positions we are looking at our area, since generally that is the area we will be competing with for employees. For David's group in technology we are competing with employers in Nashville. Administrative assistants, education assistants and custodians were are more competing with Clarksville employers. The consulting group we work with looks at 3 different factors; all industries in Clarksville, public education in Clarksville and regionally/Nashville with more weight given to comparisons. On this last one we asked them to look more at the fast food industry. Market analysis movement letters will go out in May. We have to wait for it to be a part of our budget and for the board to approve it. The letter does state it is pending budget approval with the county commission. This year child nutrition, bus drivers, custodians, textbook-warehouse, and nurses were sent for market analysis.

Question 22. I'm trying to keep this professional but it's really hard. What are your plans to come up with Hazard duty pay for behavior team members who are getting punched, kicked, bit, spat on, and other acts of violence performed upon their person on a regular basis?

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: There has been no discussion of hazard duty pay/bonus pay.

First you do discipline the student. We do have many kids have advocacy with 504 and IDEA as a manifestation of their disability they do go back to their functional behavior assessment and make adjustments. Level directors are going to talk to principals this Wednesday, there has been a lot of isolation related to COVID for health reason. We have isolated parents and students from the building over the last couple of year. We are getting

the students to realize they are not just themselves but part of the school community and family. When you don't feel a part of anything it is really easy to act out. Also have some resources through ESSER. Just added two district social workers. When we have our mid-year review with principals there number one request was more social work support at the school level. We have a partnership with Mental Health Co-op that can help the students if they don't have insurance. March 2nd the Lead Counselors will introduce the social workers to the school counselors. There is a new navigator position that will provide mental health support along with forms of support (laundry services, gas cards for family in need) that will be filled in June. This is some stuff we are working on when we see some of these extreme behavior cases.

Question 23. What kinds of updates in policy are you looking to make when it comes to suspending students who are assaulting students and staff on a regular basis?

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: The student code of conduct this time of year has gone through elementary teacher advisory, middle/high advisory, and in April through parent advisory. In May the first reading will be submitted to the board. One area that teachers felt was a misalignment was with vaping and felt it was too loose and wanted to update the consequence. Another adjustment was for tardiness. In relationship to assault currently in the code of conduct at middle and high school infraction consequences can range from ISS, out of school suspension, or alternative school remanded depending on the severity and the number of incidents. When you talk about elementary you have to consider developmental appropriateness. Staff zero tolerance offenses they would be out of school for a whole calendar year if they meet the criteria under the code of conduct. For 504 and sped by law have to have a manifestation. An adjustment that can be made is removing ISS as an option, I will bring that back to my committee.

Question 24. What do you plan to do to help staff from leaving education because it's becoming unsafe due to escalated behaviors from children and lack of support from parents and admin?

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: Part the RTI2 Coordinator position includes the parent relations piece is important. HR and instruction are looking at a product that researches employee retention and survives all employees in their areas which gives us a diagnostic profile per school. The company also provides coaching to see what type of action plan we can create to ensure you got components in place the best as possible to maximize teacher retention. The other part is parent engagement we had shut the door due to health related concerns, we have to get that door back for active parent engagement. The more you can get parent involvement the more they can understand what is going on and be partners with you.

Dr. Angela Huff, Chief of Staff: The senior team did meet and talk about this, so it is something that not just the senior team and cabinet can do by themselves. Is our whole family putting this together to make sure we are taking care of the needs our students and adults have. Not just one groups role to do.

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer: From the data presented, we have seen increasing over the past few years. I have a conversation just today with law enforcement and they have seen an increase in citations, if you take out the vaping citations it looks like a pretty normal year. The number of runaways this year is more than I have seen in the last 12 years. Juveniles involved in pretty heinous crimes. We are seeing that as a community as a whole and not just in our schools.

Question 25. We talk about childhood ACEs and what contributes to them including actions by fellow classmates. What actions will you be taking to keep these kids safe and reduce their childhood trauma from aggressive children like those that destroy classrooms, those that get violent and hit their classmates regularly? Because what's in place is NOT working.

Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer: ACEs is adverse childhood experiences. There are a number of them and once you reach a certain level you are traumatized. You tend to conduct yourself in that fight or flight stage. We have done professional development over the past 3 years on ACEs. Like I said principal at mid-year review really hit on social workers hard and wanting more boats on the ground in the building. The reality of the job market that if we put 20 social worker positions in the budget, we couldn't find 20 social workers in the community. At the meeting on Wednesday we are talking to the principals at each level to see what having a social worker really means and what are they really needing help with? Because if we can't do it with a particular social worker can we do it similar to how we do the mental health co-op with some educational assistants. We want to be broad in our approach to get to the heart.

Question 26. Is there a way that we could have digital badges for sporting events, restaurants, businesses, etc.? It will prevent people from losing their badges at these places, and also keep random people from constantly coming up to you asking questions about a school that you don't work at.

David Holman, Chief Technology Officer: I need more information to do research about digital badges.

Question 27. Heard a rumor they are going to take the SROs out of the elementary schools?

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Not aware of any plans to remove elementary SROs.

Question of the Month

Feedback on proposed budget items.

- Please take into account the extreme cost increase of custodial supplies and instructional supplies. We are seeing increases of 30% and higher. Those budgets need to account for this.
- We need to pay our professionals better so that we can keep qualified staff. From Custodians to administration,
- Would like to have a furniture budget, school is over 20 years old and some of the furniture is in need of replacement.