

## **Classified Rep. Notes March 15, 2022**

### **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Questions of the Month**

“What feedback do you have on the Code of Conduct?” See page 8 for responses.

“How can the district ensure that all employees are heard?” See pages 8-9 for responses.

### **Dr. Angela Huff, Interim Director of Schools: Comments**

One thing with asking those questions is the data doesn't lie. You take data you have to accept the data and put some action into the data. I cannot believe we are in the middle of March. I was telling someone today that it is almost high school graduations. Our COVID numbers are down, students and employees are in single digits. Kirkwood middle is about 70% complete, will start setting up tours for our board members and city officials. The high school is about 1.3%. We are real excited about that complex because we know we need to have that. Started spring schools visits and very excited to see what is going on in the classrooms.

### **Matthew Slight, Director of Social Emotional Learning: [Student Code of Conduct](#)**

As you know there really has been a shift in the student code of conduct. It really came out about 2018-2019 and look at a more appropriate form of response to students and behaviors. Behaviors have escalated exponentially over the last two and half years because of some the conditions we have been through. The shift in the student code of conduct couldn't have come at a better time in terms of how we deal with students' behaviors and what the root causes are.

We are not going to be able to punish our way out of the behavior issues that exist today. We sent out a survey to principals and assistant principals to get their feedback on the current student code of conduct. The survey was sent to about 40 teachers in the district to see what is working and what isn't working. As a result, there has been a lot of great conversations brought to the table in terms of what needs to be adjusted in the student code of conduct. There were many different areas identified, from addressing tardiness and alcohol, to appropriate counselor interventions. Tomorrow in the principals meeting I will be going over all the recommendations that have been made so far. When we ask for feedback we ask, what do you see needs to be fixed and what do you purpose to fix it. There are some adjustments still needed in terms of the flow from category to category as well as clarification on remandments to the alternative school and expulsions. We are now looking more at providing appropriate interventions to address student behaviors prior to an expulsion from school.

### **Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer: Classified Staff Appreciation Day**

March 16<sup>th</sup>- Education/Media Assistants and Vocational Assistants

#### **Sharing a positive story from your school/location**

Central Services: Academic awards this week and 870 in attendance. Getting closer to our new employee assistance plan that is being funded with ESSER 3.0.CMCSS employees attending job fairs for teachers outside of TN and within TN. Frist 3 year cohorts graduating this May and will start teaching in August. We will celebrate numerous CMCSS employee retirements this May.

Beginning of Christmas break we got 3 really great subs and appreciate them.

Kenwood High: Before Spring break has a prep rally. A little girl's microphone went out and everyone turned on their cell phone lights and started to sing with her. Really good to see that positive moment.

## Questions and Rumors

Question 1. Is anything being looked at for the middle school admin assistant position that is actually a registrar? The registrar position is more than what's listed on description and the pay should be looked at.

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We don't have a job title that is registrar but have one that is administration assistant-attendance. About five to six years ago we worked with the principals to look at different titles and at that time they indicated they would prefer to keep the administrative assistant title. We can look at it again. Erica and I will put that on our list.

**Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer:** We have a registration continuous improvement team and looked at it in about 2016/17 and similar to what Jeanine said some schools did have an admin assistant doing it part-time, some full-time and other a shared responsibility. It was done very differently. With the opening of the enrollment center has reduce some of that responsibility. At that time 5 out of 7 had someone from their counseling office who did the registration part.

Question 2. Some registrars are inconstant in registering students. Can all registrars be retrained?

**Dr. Angela Huff, Interim Director of Schools:** That does happen and all have been told exactly what they are supposed to do and not do. Mary Davila will find out one school enrolled a child and the other school didn't because they followed the exact protocol. Once Mary finds out then they correct it.

Question 3. What is the plan for HOA's next year? Some HOA's have plans to continue working in other positions in the district if this position will no longer be available and are unsure when it is okay to apply to other positions for next year.

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** HOA are the health office assistants funded under the ELC Grant and it ends in June. When they were hired they knew it was only until the end of the school year. Not sure it is will be extended for next year. As of right now it ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. We have some HOAs that are LPNs that have applied for open LPN positions and allowed them to qualify for transfer.

**Erica Christmas, Classified Employees and Substitutes Coordinator:** Granting internal transfer rights even though their hire date will show that they haven't completed their probationary period. HOAs need to go on the CMCSS website and submit an application for a position they are qualified and interested in. We will flag that as an internal application and Jacklyn Winegarden will contact the hiring principal/supervisor that this person is in a temporary HOA position and guaranteed an interview for this position that you have posted. This is to help our HOAs apply for other positions even though they don't have internal transfer rights.

Question 4. What kind of improvements are there being made to ensure students and/or parents are responsible for student behavior on the bus? The communications between principal and driver is broken or not being held to a high enough standard. How are write ups supposed to get back to the driver?

**Dr. Sean Impeartrice, Chief Academic Officer:** I know that Ron Garner communicates with principals and AP's when lead drivers have concerns about discipline. It is my understanding that the process has been working well. If Ron feels he is not getting the support he needs at the school level, I would happy to be involved.

**Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer:** Working to address issues for some time. The most improvement we have made is writing the [TRN-F054](#) which is a conduct report

for major safety offenses on school buses. It identifies behaviors that we cannot be tolerant of on a school bus and carries a mandatory suspension for unsafe behavior (see [TRN-F054](#)). Our drivers are carrying 3 times the amount of students in a classroom. There are some things we cannot tolerate because it can endanger the student, other students, and bus driver. The infractions carry a minimum 3 day bus suspension to make the parents responsible for their child's behavior. Principal discretion for is set forth in [TRN-P013](#). The second thing to improve safety and discipline on the buses is at the beginning of the school year transportation meet with all the principals to develop the [Transportation Safety and Discipline](#) trifold. It aligns with the student code of conduct. This should be a good resource for administration, transportation, front office staff and parents. It is the driver's responsibility to submit any bus conduct reports that require administrative support to the front office. Normally a box in the front office where those documents are exchanged. We encourage our drivers to check that box daily.

Question 5. Why doesn't Sped assistant get hazard pay?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We don't offer hazard pay to any position. Hazard pay often gets confused with the differential pay for special education, math, science and ELL teachers.

Question 6. Why can't we have the option of saving our comp time if it is under 20 hours?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Assuming this is in reference to the comp time that will be paid out that was earned before July 1<sup>st</sup> from ESSER 3.0 funding. We are using those funds to pay out our employees because it will help the district to not have to carry that debt. If you earned that comp time after July 1<sup>st</sup> it will still be there. Only if it was earned before July 1, 2021 will it be paid out.

Question 7. What happens if we earned more comp time after July 1<sup>st</sup> and used some of our comp time?

**Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer:** Comp time is first earned first used. Any comp time earned after July 1<sup>st</sup> will remain on the books.

Question 8. Being classified staff how many students are we allowed to have in a classroom without another staff member?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We have a BEP ratio that we follow for our teachers. So if you are filling in for a teacher it would be just like a substitute teacher and our substitute teachers are classified employees. There is nothing that says a classified employee can't be in a classroom with a certain number of students.

Question 9. What plans if any do you have to help teachers and Ed assistants with children that are consistently aggressive and violent?

**Dr. Rosalyn Evans, Director of High Schools:** Principals are constantly talking about that and looking at the data that we need to do something. Jamie Holder was hired (ESSER 3.0 Funded) to look at some other professional development for classified employees. Some strategies have been offered online through staff development with Tina Smith. That is the hope that with having Jamie Holder will help classified staff and other staff in dealing with aggressive and violent children. We have to make sure we are following the student code of conduct and working with the special education department to see what it is that they can help us with.

**Matthew Slight, Director of Social Emotional Learning:** In February one of the things I did was go back and look at all the resources that already existed to help address SEL behavior. We made sure to make principals aware that in ClassLink there is a behavior toolbox and there are hundreds of interventions that are available for teachers and staff to

address student behavior. It is understanding what is already in existence and learning how to utilize it.

- Question 10. What do you plan to do to correct the schools that are becoming unsafe to work in due to staff being hit, kicked, bit, spit on, chairs and desks thrown at them on a regular basis? Will you actually put pressure on Admin to do better?

**Dr. Rosalyn Evans, Director of High Schools:** Starting this school year as you all know we just jumped in to an exciting year. The principals need to get in front of the kids. The kids need to know what the expectations are. Need to talk about what will happen if this behavior accrues.

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** If you feel like your building administrator does not share these expectations or supporting you, please reach out to your level directors, Dr. Sean Impeartrice or myself to investigate and look into it. This goes back to if we don't know what schools are struggling and no one shares that with us, we have no way of helping. There are ways for us to investigate without your name being called out and that is done on a regular basis.

- Question 11. What do you plan to do to help staff from leaving education because it's becoming unsafe due to escalated violent behaviors from children and lack of support from parents and admin?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We are looking for additional trainings for classified staff. If the staff is not feeling safe and supported by their administration to let Instruction or Patti Koloski, Employee Relations Specialist, know. We are hoping next year to have a new tool that will help us with retention and employee engagement.

**Dr. Rosalyn Evans, Director of High Schools:** We look at the data of why students are fighting to strategize. Principals will give some examples of occurrences and then we brainstorm those behaviors. I always tell people you can't take things like they are about you, it isn't about you it is about those people functioning around that building with you. We have to use those things to get better.

- Question 12. We talk about childhood ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) and what contributes to them including fellow classmates. What policies will you be looking at to correct 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?

**Matthew Slight, Director of Social Emotional Learning:**

In December of 2021, during the principals' mid-year review, principals shared similar concerns regarding student behavior. Principals expressed the need for social workers and additional SEL supports to address the growing disciplinary and mental health related issues being seen in schools.

We are addressing these concerns in the following ways:

1. The 22-23 budget has an emphasis on hiring social workers to provide schools with additional resources to address the growing behavioral and mental health needs. Social workers will be utilized to support students when needs extend beyond the school counselor's scope of work. Social workers will also connect with parents and provide supports in the home, as well as identifying community resources.
  - a. Currently CMCSS has two district-level social workers who are working with lead counselors to develop policies and procedures for accessing social workers as they become available in the 22-23 school year.
2. SEL curriculum supports are currently under review. SEL curriculum will be provided to schools as a Tier I support for positive behavior. Once the curriculum has been

narrowed down then parents and community stakeholders will have the opportunity to review the materials before a final selection is made. Policies will be developed to support the buildings with implementation and use of the selected material.

3. Integrating SEL into instructional practices will be a growing area of professional development across the district. Engage22 has several SEL related trainings that are available K-12. Additionally, work is underway to provide an SEL playbook to be used as a resource by educators across the district.
4. Student Code of Conduct is currently under revision. The code of conduct underwent a major revision at the end of the 2018-19 school year to address growing concerns over disproportionality. As a result, the code of conduct moved from a punitive based system to a trauma informed approach to student behavior. This also included moving from a 'points based' system to a 'category based' system. Furthermore, opportunities for school counselors to provide behavioral interventions to students became a focus as well.
  - a. 2022-2023 revisions to the policies and procedures in the CMCSS Student Code of Conduct are still underway. Principals, assistant principals, parent advisors, student advisors, and numerous teachers have provided feedback to the Code of Conduct review team. As a result, there are several proposed changes for the 2022-23 code of conduct to reinforce appropriate student behavior, support schools and clarify behavior expectations.
5. Mental Health supports will continue to be a focus for the 22-23 school year. In addition to our current supports (Centerstone, MFLC, and Mental Health Cooperative) and the hiring of additional social workers, we are looking for additional mental health providers to partner with to provide students with quick and equitable access to mental health care.

Question 13. Will the nurses get to review the completed market analysis as requested before? I am not talking about the paper that will be sent out showing movement, but the actual market analysis itself. Also if a market analysis shows for example a \$5.00 dollar an hour raise should be given, is it required to apply/submit for that \$5.00 dollars an hour? Or can it be adjusted any specific amount, or a lower amount than the market analysis showed? Basically is it mandatory to request for the higher paying amount shown with the market analysis?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** With market analysis the consultant will indicate where the market is for positions under review. We as a district very rarely will be able to meet the market value when competing with private sector. The employee compensation policy ([HUM-A046](#)) provides information about how adjustments are made. Our budget generally does not permit providing a \$5 per hour increase for one group of employees. Our hourly rate doesn't take into account the value of our benefits. If you look at our benefits and private sector benefits there is a significant difference. If an employee wants to review the market analysis they can reach out to Erica Christmas once the Budget has been approved.

Question 14. Does CMCSS have a clear cut plan for a significant departure of school bus drivers the first day of school next year?

**Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer:** I think this question is in reference to the resignations of bus drivers, which I hope does not continue. Staffing remains a concern not only for transportation but the district as a whole. We continue to monitor and adjust daily, we have all our office staff and maintenance driving buses daily to maintain services to students. Working on the weekends at job fairs and training opportunities to get people into the pipeline. Have a pilot in place for teachers and staff who assist. Our plan is to continue to offer services as best as we can with whatever resources we have available to

us. Bus drivers' job description went under market analysis this year. So trying to make it so people will want to work here.

- Question 15. Some schools' student populations (over the last decade or so) have nearly doubled, but yet we still have the same number of administrative assistants. We keep getting more and more things to do, but not anymore help. When will the district look into getting more administrative assistants?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** We look at the feedback from our school principals in regards to our administrative assistants. We have added to the elementary level in the last couple of years. With a new middle school opening, some middle schools will reduce the amount of students, which should help with population.

- Question 16. When will the district be reevaluating the reimbursement for in county mileage? With the current prices of fuel and services continuing to increase, .47 cents a mile is barely covering the cost of fuel and even then it depends on the type of fuel that your vehicle takes. According to the current mileage form, it has remained .47 cents a mile since Aug 2011.

**Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer:** Yes, there is going to be a fuel adjustment and right now analyzing the impact on the budget. The fuel mileage rate is connected with the state of TN and has indicated there will be an increase.

- Question 17. I am tired of hearing about how new employees don't feel like they are getting paid enough. There is not much incentive for the people who have been here for years to stay when we hardly make much more than what the new people are getting.

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** I assume this is in reference to market analysis. If your position had movement, your hourly rate of pay would have went up but your steps would have decreased. We know that creates some compression and have adjusted the policy for next year and you will not move down more than two steps. Understanding that if you were to keep the same step when we did market analysis, we would get to a point we would not be able to implement market analysis due to cost/budget impact.

- Question 18. A lot of jobs on the outside now pay much more than most classified jobs in the system no matter how long you have worked for the system. Will there be COLA every year or was that just for last year? Will there be an overhaul of the step increase pay chart or do we have to keep waiting every 5 years for a market analysis?

**Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer:** Being responsible of the budget one thing I always look at is a COLA and step increase. That is always calculated into the budget, then we have to balance the needs of the students. Eighty-eight percent of my budget is salaries and benefits. Even 1% is an impact to my budget it always depends on what the county and state are going to give me. I can't say with certainty that we will always have a COLA and step increase, but I can say is I plan to look at it and evaluate it. When implementing a COLA increase for every \$50 paid to an employee the school district pays \$32 (social security, employee benefits, etc.). If I implement a COLA and step increase than our revenue doesn't come in we have to let go of employees. Not a scenario we want to be in ever, so those are just things we have to weight. I will tell you things are looking good this year. We do realize it is getting very complete in the labor market and next year will look more at the system.

- Question 19. Could we please police up the vehicles that park in the no parking zone between the two docks in front of Gracey? A semi-truck recently backed into the dumpster and demolished it. For those of us that have to utilize those docks daily it is just a constant hazard because there is very limited room to move commercial vehicles in that space. There are personal vehicles and CMCSS vehicles that park there for no purpose other than shortening their walk into the building. Thank you.

**Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer:** CMCSS warehouse manager will be monitoring safety issues. Notified all the operations managers and law enforcement that operate in that area to remain them of the importance of keeping a clear access to the loading docks. Signs says that vehicles will be towed at owner's expense.

Question 20. Why are there only 5 behavior trained members in a school? Wouldn't it make more sense for all Sped employees to be trained for this team each year? Whether it be because other team members are out sick, or already have time off, or if an incident was going on the closet Sped workers could assist if needed.

**Dr. Rosalyn Evans, Director of High Schools:** Every offense and infraction that happens is looked at state and local level. Restraint is one that is recorded to ensure it is done properly by trained employees since you can bring on harm to students. We could do some more training, along with other types of training to help. SPED department is looking into more training options.

Question 21. Teachers meet each week with their grade level; the sped teachers meet, too. Why are there no meetings with the whole Sped team ever to include Sped Educational Assistants? We are a part of the student's education, too. Whenever we have questions about a student's behavior (could be something that happened that day or an ongoing issue), parts of their plan, or incentives used for them, because there's actually no time in our schedule to try to stop, find and talk with one of our teachers/leads; we are resorted to having to then work off the clock. Whether that is coming in early to talk to them, staying later to talk to them, using our own lunchtime to talk to them, or trying to sit down and write out a long email to try and explain what exactly is going on and then waiting for them to get back to you, it's all done on our time when we're not getting paid.

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Classified employees should not be working off the clock. If you are working off the clock let Erica Christmas, [Erica.Christmas@cmcss.net](mailto:Erica.Christmas@cmcss.net), know so she can resolve that.

**Dr. Rosalyn Evans, Director of High Schools:** Adding this to the principals' agenda. The educational assistant can be included in the meetings. A school has to be very creative on how they schedule this type of time on a case by case or regular basis.

Question 22. Looking at the past notes and it talked about the ESSER training for classified employees. I will be working during the summer with the schools, will there be a time I can complete some of this training?

**Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Professional development will be communicating all the different training opportunities. Most will be in-person. The goal for that was for employees to have the option to attend quality professional development that is applicable to their position and also earn additional money during the summer when they are not working.

## Questions of the Month

### What feedback do you have on the Code of Conduct?

- Maybe a video would help explain the discipline. The attendance video really helps me explain the policies to parents. So maybe parents would be more likely to watch a short video instead of reading the entire code of conduct book.
- More training
- Go over roles in classroom and go over with staff that we should always be on our feet checking on students and attending to them.
- Have the students ever been read the code of conduct? So they know what it is? What is expected of them at school, a bus stop, on a bus?
- It's not enforced.
- Not enough protection to all employees concerning students bad conduct
- We need to improve these children behavior before they reach Junior High or High School.
- Contains great and necessary information that isn't covered thoroughly. Parents/students just sign saying they read it to check a box. If we could take more time to review the most critical rules with students each year, they can't say "I didn't know" when it comes to certain things.
- Parents are just checking the box and not actually reading the student code of conduct, so they are not aware of the actual code and disciplinary process.
- Many view the code of conduct as a guide in the schools. If you look it will say leave it to the principals and it not implemented equitably at every school.
- More primary modified classrooms to help with students conduct. Some students become stressed and act out when they can't complete their schoolwork.
- It is hard for some parents to read the whole student code of conduct online. It wouldn't be cost effective to print the whole thing, but can we get a condensed version to hand out?
- Bullying.
- Point system different for special need students.
- What do points look like after an explosion?
- Bus discipline. Getting suspended from a bus doesn't always allow for students to get to school.

### How can the district ensure that all employees are heard?

- Schools could use a suggestion box for employees' questions or concerns. Maybe put one next to the time clock. This way no one has to worry about any repercussions. It can be totally anonymous.
- Show that we are valued as employees, listen or ask feedback from the employees that actually do the job on a daily basis.
- Keeping communication open for all employees
- Review all the questions and take them all into consideration.
- By providing a safe environment
- Ask each employee. The ones that desire to be heard will reply
- They have monthly surveys sent through the email. Maybe have the school representative send a questionnaire out on paper at the school and the employees fill it out.
- By actively listening to concerns and actually doing something about the real situations we are facing. Stop telling us to self-care and give us jeans coupons. Give us a safer work and learning environment.
- Speaking with all staff more often per school to find out real ISSUES
- Better communication among school Administrators.
- Regular anonymous surveys maybe. Giving feedback on areas that could be better worked on.
- Let us do 360s on other department supervisors not just the principals and assistant principals.
- Do exit interviews with all employees that are leaving the district.

- Maybe department heads could meet in small groups with school based employees.
- District does a great job of asking for feedback. Sometimes I don't see the "How" of the discussions made after feedback collected. Would be nice if they shared more results of the data collected, if possible.
- Fear of someone finding out who the person is and repercussion for reaching out.
- Fear that the surveys are not anonymous.
- Surveys and classified representative meeting is a great way to ask questions/raise concerns.
- Having a classified representative is a great way for employees to ask questions because they don't have to stand up in front of everyone to ask.