

**Classified Communications Group Minutes  
October 17, 2023**

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Classified Staff Appreciation Day  
**October 18, 2023**  
Onsite and Volunteer Recognition

**Dr. Jean Luna-Vedder, Director of School: Comments**

Hope you all enjoyed fall break. Just a couple quick updates that you might be hearing going on. One is we just came out of a rezoning meeting. We are opening Kirkwood Elementary next school year. We have already done the middle and high school rezoning. We have that elementary opening next fall and are looking at purchasing land near Outlaw Field area. If all goes well we can potentially open our 26<sup>th</sup> elementary school in the year 2026. So we are looking at all of that rezoning. It will be going out to the public and there will be lots of meetings so people can start providing feedback. Just to set the reminder that we continually want to hear from you. If you are in a school make sure your school principal is hearing your feedback or in a building continue to provide that feedback about how we can continue to improve here at CMCSS. Thank you for all you do and let us know how we can help.

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

**Kenwood Middle:** Half of Kenwood Middle’s science teachers outscored the district on CUA testing scores, two ELA teachers outscored the district on the Unit 1 CUA testing and one social studies teacher outscored on 2 of the CUA testing.

**Middle College:** We are 2023 National Blue Ribbon School.

**West Creek High:** Thank you for adding preferred name to PowerSchool, it is very nice and helpful.

**Transportation:** I would just like to say on behalf of the bus aides and drivers, thank you all for the great appreciation last month. It was greatly appreciated.

**Classified Questions**

Is there a way for the elementary to get proof of address for their 5th grade students after March 1st? This would help with pointing to the correct schools and maybe transitioning to middle go smoother.

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** Since students can move from March 1<sup>st</sup> until enrollment in middle school, it has been determined that we will continue to request this during 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Why did the district decide not to enforce proof of residency for 6th grade students?

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** That still stands and has not changed.

Why aren’t the classified staff allowed to walk in with the teachers during graduation? I know several classified staff who make a positive impact with students more so than teachers. With that being said, why aren’t CMCSS employees allowed admission into graduation with their badge?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** Please speak to your building level principal about this. These are not district level decisions.

Why isn't there an ASL interpreter at graduation?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** An ASL interpreter can be provided if requested by a student and/or their family. Typically, seniors are asked to request special accommodations prior to the event so that these accommodations can be made along with handicapped seating and parking. If an ASL interpreter is needed for a student or family, please ensure the school counselor and senior assistant principals is made aware.

I really like the ticket idea for graduation. For once we can actually hear and watch the graduation without all the foot traffic. However, the admission process at graduation is not consistent, most people still got in without tickets. Something needs to be done to make the admission process consistent throughout the district.

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** The district prints the tickets and arranges for set up of the graduation ceremony. Anything else is considered a building level decision. Please discuss this concern with your principal.

This has been asked before but wanted to check back. Since Kirkwood Middle housed the high school, will the high school house the elementary school?

**Norm Brumblay, Chief Operations Officer:** Typically, we will use adjacent schools to house a school under construction for administrative functions. Operations builds the building and the principal builds the school. Before a school opens a principal has some duties that need to be completed before the start of school such as hiring. A high school principal has a lot more moving parts they are not just staffing a school but building a culture with students, staff and families long before that school opens up. They have to put a football team on a field that doesn't even have grass. Then have to hand out the football and cheerleading uniforms. Those are the things we did at Kirkwood to utilize the space at the middle school that you might not see with the elementary. If there is room for the principal at Kirkwood Middle or High they will be there or they might be housed at a different location.

It's been told that SPED aides have coverage with substitutes when they are out since they are involved in the classroom. Therefore, is there any way that library assistants can have substitutes as well since they are a vital part of the library running smoothly daily? They all have sick days and personal days to use, therefore, why don't we have coverage for library assistants as well?

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** Library assistants do not have subs assigned because their schedules are more flexible than a SPED EA. This is similar to regular aides also not having substitutes when they are absent. Once our substitute pool is large enough to accommodate the daily absences, we can review positions needing subs to see if more should be added.

Please explain in full detail why an EA that has been working for the district for many years makes the same amount as a new EA to the district. This is very discouraging to those that have worked many years. Even if it is because of step increases the employee with a number of years should still be making more.

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** As a leadership team and in partnership with our compensation consultants, we annually review our compensation policies. Changes have occurred recently in response to step decreases related to market analysis. As a result, an employee loses no more than two steps when the position has movement to a higher grade. We

also revised our policies so that when movement occurs, upward or downward, the employee does not fall below Step 2.

For other increases, this is calculated based on our compensation plan. The question asks for full detail but that is not possible without more information. New employees start at Step 1a, so no new employee without prior experience should be making more than an employee with a number of years with the district.

Anyone who has questions about compensation should contact Erica Christmas in Human Resources for more details about pay.

What can be done about reevaluating EBS? What can be done by the district to address the process for providing consequences for the extreme behaviors of students with and without IEPs? A change or be evaluated for a change? The extreme behaviors in the regular school setting are largely impacting student achievement, the overall moral of the building, and the wellbeing of other students.

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** The Extended Behavior Support (EBS) program is intended to support students with the application of positive behavior supports and interventions that address students' behaviors and provide a means to help students become more socially and academically successful. As the implementation of these intervention strategies indicates progress, students gradually learn with their typically developing peers in a regular classroom setting. It is the goal of CMCSS to provide all students with high-quality services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). All students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) require data collection and progress monitoring towards academic and behavior goals to determine the level of necessary support for students. The IEP team utilize the data to adjust student's plan. The EBS program and support is evaluated based on individualized student's needs.

CMCSS has worked hard to ensure our Code of Conduct is clear and provides options for students with all levels of behavior. Please review the Code of Conduct for consequences for behaviors which range from detention to expulsion from school. You are welcome to give feedback on the Code of Conduct online starting in February/March.

Is someone looking at a more appropriate placement for the Synergy programs when the behaviors are so severe and dangerous to students and staff in the building?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that each school district provides a continuum of placements. A continuum of services is available at all levels from general education to special education with special education interventions being the most intensive. There are a range of interventions, specialized instruction, and related services that are determined by individual needs and are not defined by specific locations or programs. The desired outcome of the IEP is for students to progress to their highest possible level of independence and participation in general education instruction. Please reference the [Tennessee Special Education Framework](#) page 51 (Figure 1.1) for more information about continuum of services. The Synergy program is intended to support students with the application of positive behavior supports and interventions that address students' behaviors and provide a means to help students become more socially and academically successful. The goal of the Synergy program is that students will receive behavior support that allows them to eventually return to their least restrictive environment, the regular classroom setting.

Why do we take open enrollment for schools that are already crowded?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** Please reference documents [STS-A004](#) and [STS-P003](#) for Open Enrollment Policy which outlines the process for this as required by law. To answer this specific question, building capacity is determined by the Senior Instructional Team and the building principal prior to initiating the open enrollment application process. This is accomplished by the level director and building principal discussing student:teacher ratio, the number of available rooms, and enrollment projections for the next year on or around December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Will the district be considering new job description for CDC EA's?

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** Supervisors are responsible for updating job descriptions. HR reviews all job description changes, as requested by the supervisor or department chief.

When will the registrars be moved up like some of them have been told (making more money instead of Comp hours)?

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** Registrar is a term used in individual schools and not at the district level. Most assistants with registrar-like duties are Administrative Assistant IIs. These positions saw growth to a higher grade, effective July 1, 2023. If an AA II is accumulating COMP time, he/she should meet with the principal to determine how to better manage the work load.

In reference to Staff Development days schedule for Classified Staff: Per Jaime Holder:

“District staff development days run from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM for ALL schools, elementary, middle, and high. The district has to be on a universal start time to accommodate all of the combined learning happening across the district. Classified staff will clock in at 8:00 AM and out at the end of your contracted work hours. The only exception may be administrative assistants with front office duties...you will need to speak directly with your principal to ensure you are on the right hours. If you are coming to CSS for training, you can clock in there. This allows district learning for all staff to occur between 8:00-11:00. Classified staff clock in times begin at 8:00 and end at the conclusion of your contracted work hours. If you do not know your contracted work hours, please check with your bookkeeper. If you have scheduling issues with working that time, please speak with your principal – I am not able to approve different times for you that is an administrative decision. Also, please make sure to mark your schedules for future staff development days – each one will begin at 8:00 am across the district. Here are several work day hour examples:

6 hour employee – 8:00-2:30

6.5 hour employee – 8:00-3:00

7 hour employee – 8:00-3:30

7.5 hour employee – 8:00-4:00

Clocking In Places – If you are attending training at Central Services South, you will clock in right before 8:00 am here. If you are completing online trainings, you will report to your individual school and clock in at 8:00 am there. If you are attending trainings in a different school in the district, you will take a TIMESHEET with you when you report there at 8 am and fill that out for the day. Timesheets should be turned into your bookkeeper at the end of the day Monday so that they can put in your appropriate hours. If you need a timesheet, please see your bookkeeper.”

For employees who were hired for an earlier schedule i.e. 7 AM - 2 PM or 6:30 AM - 2 PM, this makes it difficult for those with childcare issues and other jobs after their regular schedule. These employees are required to stay over 1- 1.5 hours past their normal schedule. If the employee cannot stay till the extended time, will they need to take leave time for the 1 - 1.5 hours they miss? Do they not get paid? Either seems unfair. It also seems very odd that even when doing staff development courses online at the school building that the 8-3 schedule would still be required when the online courses are not time sensitive. We would request more specific details on how to handle the time of those unable to stay and that this not be the required schedule when employees are doing online courses at the school building.

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** We set that 8-3 timeframe because for a lot of our trainings we pay people to come in and bring in a lot of training opportunities for our classified staff. Having those set hours really help us. However, if you have some extenuating circumstance in your family please talk with your building level principal. Also if you are a 6.5 hour employee the expectation is that you are still working 6.5 hours, if you are a 7 hour employee you work 7 hours. If that time is messing you up in some way please talk to your building principal.

If Admin schedules a classified meeting before or after my scheduled shift can it be made mandatory to attend?

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Yes it can be. There are going to be times you need to get everyone together and in classified positions you have varying hours. There are times everyone needs to come together, it shouldn't be happening frequently. If there is a situation where there is going to be a meeting that you cannot attend, communicate with your principal or supervisor. If you are asked to be there you will get paid for that, if it is earlier than you start time or after your end time, you will get comp time for the meeting. If it is something happening every week and you are being asked to stay for a meeting that is something we want to be aware of.

Why do we not get paid for full weeks off & all holidays? I understand that we all have a certain number of ""in calendar"" days, but if the building is closed & we don't have a choice to come in then why can't we be paid for the holidays & ""out of calendar"" days? It makes it extremely hard on those of us whom live paycheck to paycheck when we have some pay periods where we get as little as 7 days out of 10 paid. Especially during the holiday season & when returning from summer break.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** If you look at your [employee calendar](#) it breaks it down by month and shows you how many days you are paid for. Calendars consist of the days in the building, and built in vacation days and holidays. Days are spread throughout the calendar to help even out the pay periods. Fall break three days are vacation days. If they were to pay you for five days, it would pull days from say spring break. We are not able to get paid for more days than we are contracted for. Can't use comp time to make a longer week. There are a lot of different positions to explore if you are wanting more days. Positions be compensated for more days than in your calendar.

Does HR ever make rounds thru the schools to check in with employees?

**Staci Sohn, Employee Relations Specialist:** I have been visiting all the schools. At the beginning of the school year I sent out a link to all the principals to select an HR Outreach day. Every week I visit two different schools. With 40 plus schools it takes some time and I'm booked until February. Before visiting the schools, I will send an email the week prior to all employees at that school to schedule a 15 minute appointment to discuss benefits, leave, retirement and any concerns you have. If you would like to know your date please email me [staci.sohn@cmcss.net](mailto:staci.sohn@cmcss.net) or ask your

administrator. If I have visited your school and would like to meet with me please contact me at [staci.sohn@cmcss.net](mailto:staci.sohn@cmcss.net) or 931-920-7804 and we can schedule a time to talk.

Why do Sped Educational Assistants have to sub in classrooms and cover teacher lunches on a regular basis? When is it to the point that it is not legal?

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** Right now it is an all hands on deck to help with classroom coverage. Schools manage it differently according to what resources they have. Say a 1:1 educational assistant's student isn't at school, then they can be used to cover a classroom. There is nothing illegal about asking an EA to cover a classroom. It is at the discretion of the principal and falls under the other duties assigned. The expectation is that during your work hours you help the school out in that capacity.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** If an IEP student isn't getting their required services that is a legal concern. If an EA is getting pulled from that are they receiving the service from other supports? There is nothing specific that this person has to provide those services. That is the responsibility of the person pulling to ensure the student still receives the required services. You might also be asked to cover the class if the teacher is pulled for an IEP meeting.

The tutoring program has classified pay based upon if the individual has a degree or not. Why is it not like this throughout the school year?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:**

Pay for tutoring programs is as follows anytime during the school year:

\$15 HS/college tutors

\$16 classified employees who work in extended day

\$20 degreed classified employees who work in extended day

\$30 certified

Will the district train employees for CDL license to have for future use? For example to possibly work in the warehouse and you need your CDL to drive.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** If a person is recommended for a position that requires a CDL, the district will provide the required training.