

## **Classified Communications Group Minutes January 23, 2024**

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Classified Staff Appreciation Day  
February 21<sup>th</sup> – Maintenance  
March 20<sup>th</sup> – Educational, Media and Vocational Assistants

**Dr. Erica Christmas – Director of Classified Employment and Patti Koloski – Director of Certified Employment:** Recruitment and Retention Efforts  
See pages 5-18 for presentation.

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

**District Office:** Thank you to all our custodians and operations personnel for all their due diligence and hard work to clear the snow/ice from our schools and buildings to allow us to open on Monday.

### **Classified Questions**

With all the different areas for Educational Assistants, will there be a title change & pay increase in the new budget for those that run a full RTI schedule? RTI Assistants receive training, hold instruction, progress monitor, & play a vital role in the growth of student development & achievement. RTI Assistants did not receive the pay increase that other departments received, yet obtain responsibilities that more than qualify them for the pay increase.

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** Human Resources does publish all the job descriptions but they are created in partnership with other departments. As far as educational assistants those are going to be written in partnership with our Instruction department. We do not have an educational assistant position that is primarily focused on RTI. One thing that crossed my mind regarding this question is to have that conversation with your building principal to see if it is possible to have a discussion with their level director to identify if this as an area of need for the district or particular to their school. If there is a need then does a new job description need to be developed?

Clearer job descriptions need to be in place for retention purposes. Many staff are not told during interviews that we will be covering a CDC or 1:1 with a possible violent child and that's unfair to staff as well as that you could be a substitute every day you work. Being told it's under other job duties is unacceptable because its misleading.

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** We sympathize and empathize with those of us who are hearing stories of those being pulled from their regular duties to help in classrooms and how tough that can be. I don't want to gloss over the importance of the concern here. We are seeing improvement in hiring and retention. Also, seeing great increases in our substitute pool. We are 46% larger in our pool than this time last year. We are 96% larger than two years ago. We can commit to looking at those job descriptions and making sure they are clear and that people applying for those positions understand that they might be pulled to help in other classrooms or with different students. It is the principal who makes the decisions on where to pull employees based on the needs of the school that day. As for feeling misled or not enough transparency, HR would want to hear that so we can address that. We don't want anyone feeling like they were misled. That is something we can address in our principal training to ensure they are being transparent in what the job entails.

Is there any way we could move the return day for the front office person who is 196 days in January (which is the day most classified staff returns after Holiday Break) this is a DOC for them. If it could be moved to perhaps another staff development day. We have so many parents enrolling, phone calls, etc. This takes away from other office employee's duties as they are interrupted throughout the whole day.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Employee calendars are discussed by district and department leadership and that is something that can be reviewed. Keep in mind that it would apply to anyone that falls under that calendar. So it would have to be something that would need to be deemed appropriate for all levels. This is something we can review and see if that would be beneficial.

This question is concerning 12 month classified staff employees. A few years ago, 12 month classified employees heard through the 'grapevine' that they might be able to receive the same benefits as a Certified Teacher concerning state college tuition discounts. Was or will this ever be a possibility? From my understanding, teachers' children get a 20% discount for attending state colleges and they only work 8 months out of the year. Please verify.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** That was legislation that was brought up last year but that has not gone through. It is not something that the district decides. We would be in support of every employee in the district having the ability to utilize that discount, but it is not something we have say over. It is something that the state determines.

Why are teacher residents getting paid \$2.00 less than an Education Assistant but are expected to substitute for teachers and have to be the teacher for extended periods. How is this fair to the TR's especially the 3rd year residents that are bounced around throughout the building?

**Dr. Erica Christmas, Director of Classified Employment:** The teacher residency positions were reviewed last year in market analysis and TR's are not supposed to be consistently pulled to replace a teacher for an extended period. If this is something that is occurring in your building, you need to reach out to Lisa Baker, [lisa.baker@cmcss.net](mailto:lisa.baker@cmcss.net), for guidance. There are times that there are all hands on deck type days and some coverage might be needed.

Custodians are questioning why they didn't receive comp hours for the week in December when everyone else was off but they still had to come in and work their regular shift.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** The district was not closed and that was the misconception. The offices were closed to the public, but every 12 month employee was working. Unless the whole district is closed then comp on top of your regular hours will not apply.

I've noticed that since Christmas break, the time clocks no longer work in the "View my timecard" function. Is this something that can be fixed? I know many of us use that to double check our hours. The clocks must have updated the software or something.

**Leighton Brown, Systems Specialist:** Two important things has happened since that question was answered. One the software has been updated again and Business Affairs is taking over administration of the Kronos. I know they have already sent out information to Kronos managers with more information coming. The good news is the newer system has more capabilities and offers a lot to employees.

A CMCSS Spectator Policy exists now for athletic events. Why isn't that policy or a similar policy being implemented for theatre productions, band and chorus concerts held on school grounds and that are open to community members?

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** We meet with our local law enforcement and emergency management system partners four times a year to discuss certain trends, safety policies and procedures to take place. This was a recommendation they made to the group last year which has become a common practice at stadiums and big events. Our high school stadiums can hold thousands of people versus auditoriums that can only hold a couple hundred. That is why our community partners were really interested in making that change for that group. If this is something you are interested in doing for your school for your theatre programs, you will just need to discuss that with your principal. As for a district we are just doing that at the larger school events.

School Security Audits are conducted quarterly at schools. One of the measures requires: School Staff to stop the auditor and ask for an ID. Approximately, how many did not stop the auditor and ask for an ID? This is similar to a secret-shopper type program. This school year I have been a gate worker at high school football and basketball home games. Many parents say that XYZ school (another CMCSS school) doesn't enforce the clear bag policy or the no re-entry policy, so why does your school enforce it? Is there any way that a School Security Audit could be conducted for each middle and high school ONCE during football season and ONCE during basketball season to see what schools are abiding by the CMCSS Spectator Policies (clear bag policy, no re-entry policy and no cash policy-tickets must be purchased using GoFan)?" "During the inclement weather week of 12/11/2023-12/15/2023, bookkeepers were required to come to the schools to complete duties. I understand that some areas were not affected, but some schools and employees were. Some schools incurred damage, had no power, or internet which caused bookkeepers to have to have to complete their required duties elsewhere. Bookkeepers were originally told that we would at least be able to earn some comp time during this week, since we were being required to come in, while all other employees did not have that requirement. We later were told, after already coming to work, that we had been given misinformation and that the staff that had been required to come in to work would not be earning additional comp time per policy HUM- A021.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** As for how your school performed, you can talk with your principal. They receive an audit report after every audit is performed. As for an audit at sporting events, we can discuss that and the feasibility of it as a group.

In this policy it states for less than 12 month employees: "If schools are closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, classified staff (less than 12-month calendar and assigned to a school location) do not report to work."" the only exception that should make an employee who is less than 12 month would be if they are considered "" Mission Essential"". Since we were, again, required to come in when no other employees were, I would think that this would deem us as ""Mission Essential"". Per the policy "" Mission essential employees are those who are determined by District Leadership as being critical to the response and correction of effects or damages from a natural disaster, inclement weather event, or system failure that results in school or district closure"". Also in the Policy it states: "" If classified personnel are required to report to a work location after the entire district closure is announced, they will receive pay for their regularly scheduled day, plus compensatory time equal to the time they are required to work beyond the closure announcement. "". District offices were closed to the public. We were told to speak to our supervisors for complaint, who then were directed back to speak to the ISA team who had communicated that we were no longer being given comp time. I would like better understanding of how this does not go against the policy that we were all referred to.

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** The district was not closed. Closed to the public is different from full district closure. During that time we had a lot of different employees going to

different areas to help support our response plan. When you have the district open to the public you have to have at least one employee for each department/area available to assist and employees to support the front desk. Sometimes we have to make the decision to close to the public to allow employees to be utilized in other capacities. Prior to policy change, if we had a weather or other emergency day you had to use personal, comp time, or day without pay. With the update you get 5 days whether the district is closed or not. The key factor is that district closure and district closed to the public are not the same.

In the September Classified Minutes, the question arose that the need for two full time bookkeepers at the Middle School level had not been requested, stating ""This request was not included in FY24 Budget. There has not been a submission request this year for additional bookkeepers. Once we get a request it will be evaluated and discussed."" I spoke to Admin who stated that they put in an official requisition to the Director of Middle Schools. Has this request made its way to the Business Affairs department? If not, what further steps need to be taken if this is desired by the school level admin?

**Chris Reneau, Chief Financial Officer:** No, this has not been requested. We are going through the budget process right now and this request has not been submitted for consideration.

How are grievances handled when you feel that you have no one on the admin team to confide in without fear of retaliation? Are the people that handle the grievances checked to make sure that they do not have any familial relations or have a known friendship to the people who filed the grievance or who the grievance was filed against? For employees that are put on action plans, how come the admin team waits until it becomes a bigger problem, instead of letting the employee know right away so that they have a chance to correct that action/ behavior?

**Melissa Izatt, Chief Human Resources Officer:** Grievances are handled by the HR department. There are multiple supervisors within our department that are equipped to handle grievances. So if there were a case to come up with any conflicts of interested then the grievance investigation would be assigned to another supervisor.

**Dr. Schanda Doughty, Chief Academic Officer:** It is important the principals and school leaders address concerns in a timely manner. Oftentimes they will try informal means before moving to formal methods. However, ultimately that falls at the discretion of the principal to determine the action that would be best suited for that employee.



# Classified Rep Meeting January 23, 2024

# CMCSS Certified Department Recruitment and Retention Data

- 2022/23 Retention Rate: 85.5%
- 2021/22 Retention Rate: 82.4%
- 2020/21 Retention Rate: 85.9%
- 2019/20 Retention Rate: 88.37%
- 2018/19 Retention Rate: 87.7%
- 2017/18 Retention Rate: 87.2%
- 2016/17 Retention Rate: 88.2%



# Certified Onboarding

23/24  
= 522

22/23  
= 605

21/22  
= 459

20/21  
= 310

19/20  
= 193

18/19  
= 414

# Certified Hard to Fill Areas



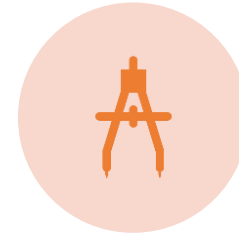
SPECIAL  
EDUCATION



SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR



ALGEBRA I &  
II



GEOMETRY



BIOLOGY



# Recruitment Efforts

<b>5 Star Media</b>	<b>APSU</b>	<b>Lee University</b>	<b>University of Memphis</b>
<b>University of AL</b>	<b>MTSU</b>	<b>APSU Job Embedded</b>	<b>UT Chattanooga</b>
<b>WKU</b>	<b>CMCSS Job Embedded</b>	<b>Union</b>	<b>Freed Hardeman</b>
	<b>TN Tech</b>	<b>University of Louisville</b>	<b>University of North Alabama</b>
<b>Murray State</b>	<b>UT Knoxville</b>	<b>University of Ky (Virtual)</b>	<b>Ft. Campbell</b>
<b>CMCSS December Hiring Blitz</b>		<b>CMCSS Spring Teacher Job Fair</b>	

# Alternative Licensure Pathways

- Permit (Temporary)
- Job Embedded Opportunities
  - University pathway to Masters
  - Credential-only programming

# Temporary Permits

Permits	19/20	20/21	22/23	23/24
	4	49	159	215

Elementary-93 Middle-56 High- 45

Twelve have transitioned to job embedded this year.

- One year validity
- Minimum of Bachelor's Degree
- Praxis
- Permit teachers are expected to enroll in an educator preparation program by spring.
- Transition to Job embedded by spring (3 year)

# Teacher Residency Program

122 Current Residents -  
34% minority

145 Residents Completed  
Program - 32% Minority

Placements:  
75 Elementary School

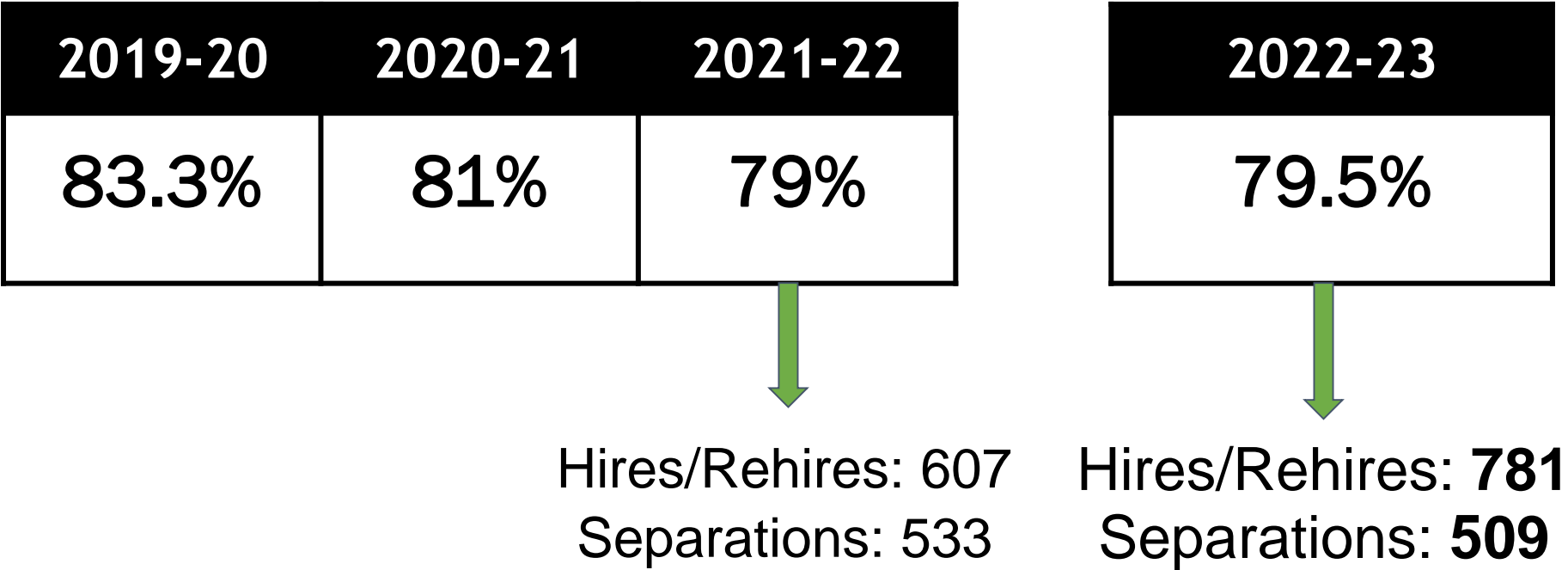
45 middle School

2 High School

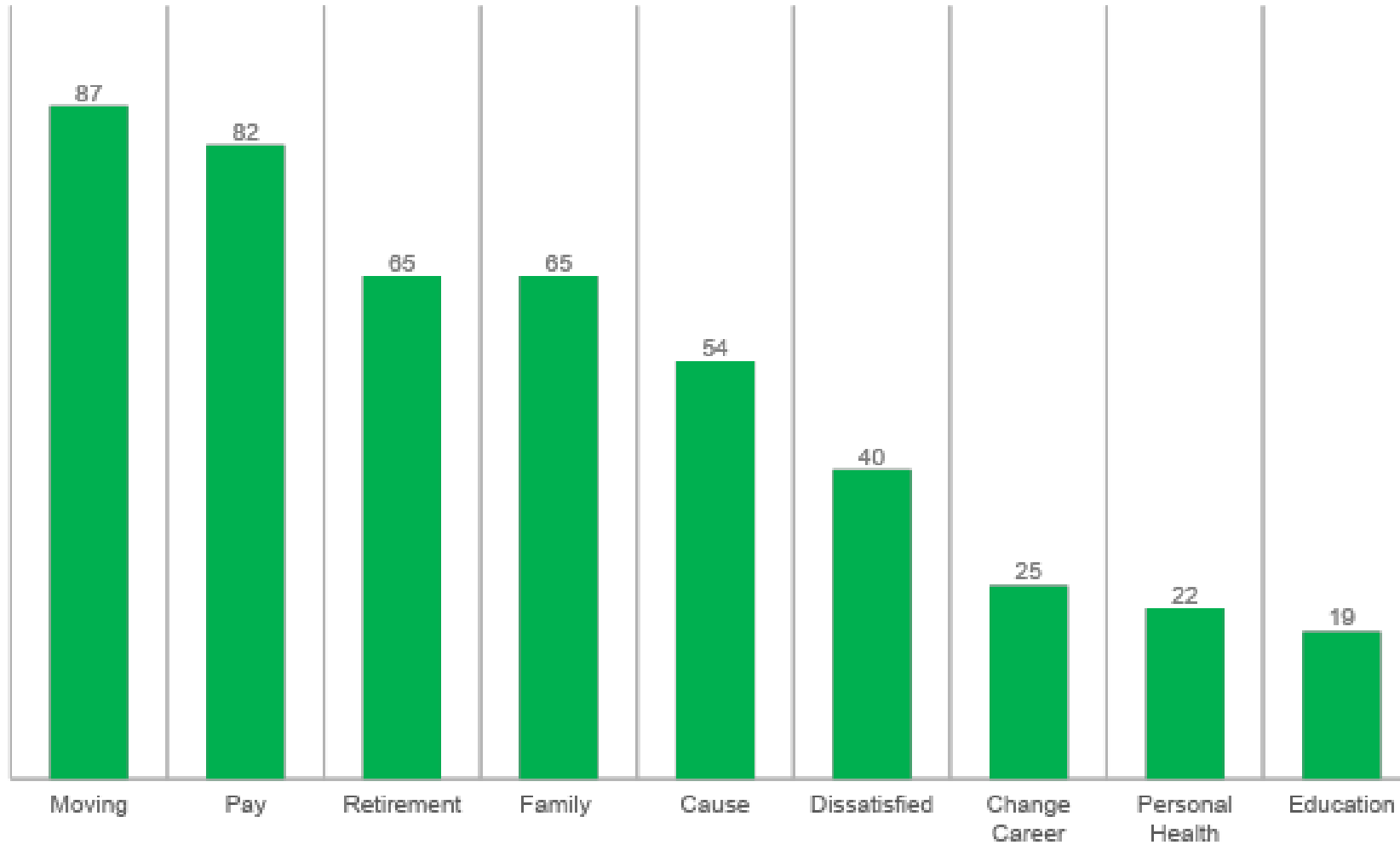
# **Classified Employment and Retention Data**



# Classified Retention Rates



# Classified Employee Separation Reasons (2022-23)



# Current Year Classified Data

July 2023 - December 2023

New Hires	Separations
<b>500</b> (This time last year 416)	<b>184</b> (This time last year 156)

23/24 Trending Top Reasons for Separation

- Family Issues
- Better Pay
- Moving

# Classified Recruitment Highlights

- Internal Recruitment Success
  - . Substitutes to full time certified & classified positions
  - . Workforce Development Partnership
  - . In-House Job Fairs
- Bus Driver Incentives
  - . Driver Sign-On Bonus
  - . Referral Bonus
  - . Trainee Program

# Workforce Development Program

TN Dept of Labor approved certificate program with CMCSS Adult Education dept

Must complete course to be eligible to interview for hard to fill positions of: bus drivers (must meet age and other TDOT requirements), custodians, and food service assistants

One grade below peers who have a HS diploma or equivalent

While not required, the employee will move up one grade upon successful completion of high school equivalency diploma under the continued instruction and support of the Adult Education dept.