

Parent Communications Notes
February 6, 2014

Textbook Adoption

Dr. Sallie Armstrong, Curriculum and Instruction Director, talked to the group about the textbook adoption process which is regulated by the State Department of Education. The public is invited to view the textbooks that are on the adoption list for this upcoming year and provide feedback. The local Textbook Committee, which is made up of teachers, will meet and review input from the public and other instructors. Social studies textbooks for grades 6-12 that are on the state adoption list may be reviewed on February 12 from 1-3 p.m. in the Board room at central office.

Zoning Plan for 2014-15

Chief Operations Officer Jim Sumrell presented information on the process used each year to consider zoning for the district. Reviews are done each year by a project team and are based on enrollment for the 40th day of school, which historically averages the highest point for the year. The capacity of each school (how many students the building was planned to house) is compared to the enrollment experienced on the 40th day. If enrollment exceeds capacity, the group looks at how best to resolve that issue. Last year thirteen portable classrooms were added to Rossvie Elementary. The project team knew already at the beginning of this year that Rossvie Elementary would be over capacity. Other areas needing attention include St. Bethlehem Elementary, Barkers Mill, and Northeast Elementary. As the team studied the problem, several “unknowns” came into play including a land purchase made by Dow Chemical as well as Hankook Tire announcing a new plant opening in Clarksville which could affect enrollment in this area in the near future. In addition, CMCSS is planning to construct Oakland Elementary to open in the same area within the next two years. The project team determined it would not be in the best interest of students and families to adjust zone lines this upcoming year and possibly be faced with rezoning again in the following year or two.

Rather than change any zone lines, the recommendation for the 2014-2015 school year is to move 5th grade from Rossvie Elementary and house them at Rossvie Middle. The students would be in a separate wing and would still be considered part of Rossvie Elementary. Portables would be added to Rossvie Middle if needed. In addition, 3rd grade will move from St. Bethlehem Elementary to Burt School. The project team feels the zoning recommendation addresses the following concerns:

- limits disruptions to students and families
- minimizes the possibility of multiple re-zonings
- balances capacity in the specified school zones
- addresses student safety
- provides additional time to understand impending industrial and residential growth

Open Enrollment

Dr. Worthington talked briefly about open enrollment. Applications for open enrollment are available now for the next school year. Open enrollment is only available in schools that have room, not at every school. Details are on the CMCSS website.

Substitute Teacher Program

Human Resources Director Cydney Miller discussed the proposed plan to bring the substitute staffing program back into the CMCSS Human Resources Department. Substitute staffing was handled by the district prior to 2005. In March 2005 the process was outsourced to Kelly Services. Mrs. Miller explained that due to changes in technology and administrative changes at Kelly Services, it would now be not only feasible for the district to provide their own substitute program, but would save the district money. Plans are underway to allow the district to initiate an in-house substitute staffing program beginning in August of 2014. This will include the addition of four staff members. It is estimated that CMCSS could see cost savings in excess of \$600,000 over the first two years.

Inclement Weather and Makeup Days

Dr. Worthington discussed the process used to determine the number of snow days and the plan to make up days as needed. Students are required by law to attend 180 days. CMCSS students stockpile 13 days by going 30 extra minutes per day. Four of those days are used for staff development, and the three early-release days equal one additional staff development day. That leaves 8 remaining days. The School Board “forgives” or allows for 3 days to not be made up. That leaves the 5 days that a plan is established to make up. February 17 will now be a school day rather than a day out of school.

Dr. Worthington explained that the decision to close schools due to inclement weather situations is not made by just one person. There are a number of people that actually go out and drive the roads in all areas of the county to see conditions first hand. The decision is made as early as possible, even the night before if appropriate. Dr. Worthington stressed that school/student safety is always a priority along with considering parent and family situations in planning for school closures.

The extreme cold this year has added new areas of concern. Dr. Worthington described how the very cold weather this year had affected the operation of buses and buildings and was a contributing factor in some of the school closing decisions. He discussed what the district has learned about how it can help conserve energy for the power grid. The district learned that buildings can start being heated less than two hours ahead of opening time and still be warm enough for students and help conserve energy. There had been some concerned calls about the day the message was sent to schools to turn off unnecessary lights and other electronic equipment. This was at the request of CDE as they reported a tremendous strain on the power grid. With the cooperation of the schools and district buildings, CDE reported the situation turned around within an hour and probable power outages were avoided. Dr. Worthington stated his belief that it is important for the school system to be part of the larger community and assist when possible.

School Year Calendar

There was brief discussion of the criteria used in planning a school year calendar. The calendar criteria are looked at each year by CMCSS communication groups. Dr. Worthington stated that it is very important to high school students to have exams before Christmas break. Semester exam dates then drive the school starting date. He also noted keeping a fall break in the calendar has become important to all groups.