

Parent Communications
April 7, 2016

A Parent Communications meeting was held on April 7, 2016 with approximately 21 parent representatives and ambassadors attending.

Dr. Worthington welcomed the group and briefly discussed the agenda for today's meeting.

Budget

Dr. Worthington shared that the 2016-2017 budget is working its way through the approval process with the County Commission. He stated that a balanced budget was submitted which has been the case for the past several years.

Technology/Budget

Dr. Worthington talked about textbook technology and how differently things will look next year in terms of an increase in student access to computers in the classroom. Technology has not been an area where the district has been able to spend a lot of money. Teachers have expressed their desire to have something more aligned using technology. In addition, one-time money is available to further invest in technology and plan for future growth as well. One-time money will also be used to replace very old lockers in some schools as well as classroom furniture and GPS systems for school buses.

David Holman, Chief Technology Officer, continued by explaining the technology budget in more detail. \$6,000,000 would be required for a replacement cycle every five years because of the size of the CMCSS district. Over the past seven years, we have spent less than \$600,000 on a budget that requires \$6,000,000 which has resulted in our inability to keep up with technology replacement. A lot of preparation during the past year has been put forth into finding enough money to blend textbooks and technology in order to get to where we need to be. The plan is to replace between 7,000 – 10,000 computers that are five to eight years old. In addition, there is another 7,000 – 8,000 we would like to add to that replacement number. If this doesn't happen, we will experience a major problem with the assessment testing online in future years. An approximate 90% saturation rate is expected in high schools. Middle schools will be at 80% and elementary 60%. By increasing these percentages, we are working toward approaching one-to-one for students. Students will not be totally dedicated to a computer all day long as that approach is not the goal. The computer is a tool that is used for teaching and would give a student immediate access versus having to search a textbook for information. Introducing technology at this rate will not be an easy transition for teachers or students.

TNReady

Dr. Kimmie Sucharski, District Data Analyst, shared a brief update on TNReady. Tests finally arrived and the assessments have been given. Dr. Sucharski commented the students did great which shows a lot of stamina on their part in light of all the disruption throughout the process. Expected arrival Part II of the assessment is the week of April 18 and the last week of the assessment will be May 2 – 6. Part II of the test looks different as it will be more multiple choice and fill in the blanks. There will be four tests (English language arts, math, science and social studies) involving grades 3rd through high school.

Going forward the state has not decided how they will address testing (online or paper). That information will be shared as soon as a decision is made. The issues of the past several weeks had nothing to do with the state or school districts. It was the fault of the testing material supplier.

Grade 11 will be tested on the ACT April 19 which is their college and career readiness. A score of 21 is used for college entrance and usually a score of 24/25 is considered for scholarships. ACT prep is being offered in some of the after-school programs. Tennessee offers the initial test for free to all students. If a student is enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program, they are allowed to take the test a second and third time if necessary at no cost. However, all other students will pay \$75 to retake after the first test if required. Students can obtain ACT scores online through their AP portal around June 15 which is much sooner than the district will have access to them. If there are high school students in advanced placement, this testing will also take place in May.

Parent Communications

April 7, 2016

Page 2

A question was asked about students opting out of testing. Dr. Sucharski explained that there are two Tennessee laws which read there is no opting out for state assessment tests. The law further states the parents of Tennessee students have an option to educate their children one of three ways: private school, homeschool or attend a public school. All three choices remain accountable to the rules that govern testing. Under ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), it states that school districts must assess 95% of their population and must be assessed in math and reading. It is correct the State can be more restrictive than Federal in the assessment world.

Pre-Registration Program

Esperanza McCrary shared a poster and dates of pre-registration for the school year 2016-2017 which will be June 29, July 6, and July 13. www.cmcss.net/students/registration.aspx

Engage TV

Check out our new video on attendance which explains our general population policies.

https://cmcssfocus.net/2015/03/19/engage-tv-episode-3-attendance-for-military-children/?relatedposts_hit=1&relatedposts_origin=1297&relatedposts_position=0

The last parent ambassador meeting will be May 18. Esperanza will send a reminder email. If any ambassador wants to continue serving throughout the next year, you should connect with your principal and let them know your intentions.

Parent representative responses to the Question of the Month: "Are CMCSS schools successfully preparing all students for college or careers? If not, what are your concerns?"

1. Yes. I think kids are being prepared.
2. Time management needs to be pushed.
3. In my opinion, yes!
4. I believe that CMCSS schools are preparing students for college or careers. I believe that the academies are a vital tool for preparing the students.
5. I feel for the most part that CMCSS does a great job preparing students. However, I feel as if they could do more outside activities such as learning about earth and community by taking care of it.
6. Yes, we are headed in the right direction. We should try to have more career days, job expos, actually viewing a work day in a particular field, resume and interview skills.
7. Yes, I think they do a great job. I also feel that it is the responsibility of the parents.
8. For most students, yes. However, there seems to be a lack of programs for the exceptional students. I think the district is large enough to accommodate an "academy" geared to those students who are at the top of their class who will attend college.

Notes from each parent meeting are posted on the website which describes topics of interests and concerns (<http://www.cmcss.net/students/parentgroup.aspx>). This is a very informative tool to reference when engaging with others parents. For questions regarding meetings and postings, please contact deborah.cummings@cmcss.net (931-920-7808).