

## **Parent Advisory September 23, 2021 – 11:30 AM**

*There were 18 participants in attendance.*

### **Dr. Huff began the morning with the Director's Update.**

- As of last Friday, enrollment was 37,857.
  - 1,200 students above where we were this time last year.
- We are short about 100 bus drivers. We are experiencing some delays as a result, and our Operations Department is working to implement some policies to retain drivers, like incentive pay plans.
- We are also experiencing a teacher shortage, which you will hear more about today.
- There are a few discipline issues you may have heard about, such as a TikTok challenge not long ago for students to steal items from the schools and post them. We have this under control. We are discussing this behavior with parents to let them know that is considered theft according to the Code of Conduct.

### **Questions: Director's Update**

- Are teachers or other employees included as part of the incentive pay opportunities due to the shortage of drivers?
  - Yes, there are opportunities for other classified employees to participate in receiving the stipends who have additional responsibility as a result of the driver shortage.
- Please consider adjustments to the school volunteer policy. I understand the attempt to limit visitors as a strategy to lower the spread of COVID-19, but there are a lot of things volunteers could do to help with some of the shortage issues. Kids could really benefit from that extra caring adult in the room.
  - Thank you for that feedback. We will bring this back to our SLT/CDT meetings.

### **Jeanine Johnson, Melissa Izatt, and Erica Christmas shared some information with parents about district strategies to recruit more employees.**

#### **Jeanine Johnson – Chief Human Resources Officer**

- Shared the breakdown of the different employee groups within the district:
  - Certified - 2,503
  - Classified - 1,990
  - Administrators – 283
  - Substitutes - 197 (206 as of that morning)
- The substitute shortage is a particular one we have struggled with in recent years.
- There are controls in place to hire employees
  - Background checks and screenings
  - Employment history, academic background
- Onboarding is the process of getting new employees in and acclimating them to the school district. We schedule onboarding meetings every week. All of our paperwork is electronic now, which has been a great innovation for the district and a huge point of efficiency.
  - Retention is tracked every year. So far, for 20-21, retention is 85.9% for certified and 81% for Classified.
  - The district places a high focus on retention; we know that if we can retain, we don't have to recruit as much.
  - Another recruitment struggle has to do with competition from other industries and higher starting pay.

## **Melissa Izatt – Director for Educator Quality**

- Recruitment has changed significantly over the last several years. We moved to a lot of virtual events last year, and even in normal years, we always had a hard time establishing Clarksville as an area.
- We always do internal job fairs. We know those are our candidates that are truly interested in CMCSS.
- Our virtual job fair has been incredibly successful - typically we average about 30 people in terms of on the spot hires.
- We continue to watch for University job fairs.
- We have hired thousands of teachers from our internal substitute program.
- We have received a little flexibility from the State on granting teacher permits.
  - Last year we had 3 permits, and this year we have 33. It's just an alternative pathway for people to become teachers.
- SPED Endorsement Pathway - right now, the state is covering this endorsement. Teachers can complete it online, and it's grant funded.

## **Dr. Erica Christmas – Human Resources Coordinator**

- Classified hiring has focused a lot on social media and pushing out those stories about why people love their jobs.
- We will be implementing a bus driver sign-on program and referral program for the Transportation Department.
- We are also engaging in targeted outreach with some of our positions on the benefits of substitute teaching:
  - Parents
  - Coaches
  - Approved applicants who have not yet been offered full-time positions
- Hourly wage competition is a tough thing. We are an area with several new industries, but that presents a challenge for us when they pay higher salaries.
- We have also seen a huge increase in higher salaries for fast food, signing bonuses, other benefits.
- There are also some people that just are not comfortable right now going back to work based on the pandemic.

## **Questions and Comments: Employee Recruitment**

- Do you do anything to tap into the military?
  - Yes, we do whenever we can. Tennessee state licensure also allows military preference so they can expedite their approval.
- Is there a financial incentive for people to get support with getting that additional certification/endorsement?
  - Yes, the district can and does help with that depending on the area of interest.
- Is there a demographic that is more retained?
  - Generally, we just have a lot of open slots. It really is not in just one area where we are seeing more retention/open slots in most cases.
- We use the edTPA standards in TN, and I know that's portable across states. Do we experience issues with portability?
  - The state just passed a law so that if you had a professional license somewhere else, you could get a professional license here. That has been a huge help for us. There are still 3-year provisions for new teachers.
- Do you know of universities that when a teacher graduates from there, they have accreditation for all 50 states?
  - Very few programs do that. Generally, you have to get accreditations one state at a time.
- Do you touch on the benefits of teaching? Summers off, benefits?

- I do not always touch on summers off, because if that's a main reason that you get into teaching, it is not always a sure thing that you will stay. However, we definitely hit on the benefits.
  - We are also trying to reach our kids earlier and earlier - we have a teaching academy.
- Since this is such a widespread issue, what are some other districts doing? Is there an entity that has studied why people are not going into the profession?
  - Salary is a huge issue, but sometimes it has to do with perceptions about the profession based on people they know who are teachers.
- You mentioned that the US is struggling with this - is that the case in other countries? And then, what can we spark in the classroom with kids now to help them be teachers?
  - We all certainly play a role in that - in helping our kids see the value of teaching.
- Totally agree with your thoughts that it is a calling – I have seen four of my kids come through the school system, and I know kids can be really tough. My hat is off to you all for taking the initiative to do these programs.
- I know ensuring that teachers have autonomy would be a big step in the right direction - making sure teachers are respected. That may be a reason that more people are not going into teaching.

The full presentation from the Human Resources Department is accessible [here](#).

**Ashley Dale spent a few moments sharing a proposed Social and Emotional Learning resource for teachers to use with students.**

- Social and Emotional Learning – it has been part of our strategic work for a few years.
- Promotes responsible decision-making, being self-aware, being socially-aware, how you build relationships.
- The message that I (we) try to give, at the end of the day, is that we all deserve to be loved and respected.
- This is also about promoting a healthy school culture, a healthy/supportive classroom culture.
- Shared the proposed SEL Resources - Second Step for K-8, and School-Connect for 9-12.
- Parents can review those resources and provide feedback.

The proposed resources that Ashley Dale shared are accessible below:

- [K-5 – Second Step](#)
- [6-8 – Second Step](#)
- [9-12 – School Connect](#)

**Please review these proposed resources so you may provide the district with feedback on them. To share your feedback, please contact either Ashley Dale ([ashley.dale@cmcss.net](mailto:ashley.dale@cmcss.net)) or Matt Slight ([matthew.slight@cmcss.net](mailto:matthew.slight@cmcss.net)).**

**Dr. Sean Impeartrice shared about the District's Grow Your Own pathways.**

- This work began with a grant in 2016-2017 to improve the diversity of our teaching force.
- We have both degreed and non-degreed programs. It is a residency/apprenticeship model, similar to what you see in industries and medicine.
- Students have the opportunity to earn their teaching certification and/or a degree on an accelerated timeline with no debt.
- Residents are paired with a Level 5 teacher as a mentor.
- We provide wraparound supports for students in our programs:
  - Tutoring
  - Note-taking strategies
  - Mentor teachers
  - Critical reading
  - Liaisons in Lipscomb and Austin Peay

- Currently, we are 40 positions short, but will roll out 75 teacher candidates from this program.

#### **Questions: Teacher Residency Program**

- My principal wondered why the class sizes cannot be bigger for students that are 2-3 year residents?
  - They usually are. We actually have a class size waiver, which is permission from the state to make our classes bigger for Grow Your Own models.
  - I request that for them - when we have grade levels with residents, we look at that when we do staffing in the summer, and our grades with residents go beyond the average.
- How are 1-5 ratings determined?
  - It is through the teacher evaluation system - the TEAM rubric. 50 percent of a teacher's score is determined through classroom observations, and the other 50 percent is determined through student testing data.
- Apprenticeship - with the involvement of the apprenticeship funding from the federal government, will there be any sacrifices to the program?
  - No, the thing that would have been sacrificed potentially, which is our competencies, is already approved.

Dr. Impeartrice's full presentation is accessible [here](#).