

Parent Advisory Committee

Oct 27, 2022

There were 13 participants in attendance.

Dr. Luna-Vedder delivered a Director's Update.

- Enrollment is about 38,900 students.
- We are continuing to look at what that means for our buildings and our capacities. We know we have some buildings that are extra full. Since that is the case, we are thinking that we will build Kirkwood Elementary a year early.
- It will go before the County Commissioners for a vote in their November meeting.
- Any families will receive communication this week if they have been rezoned.
- Parent survey data has come back. We are working on compiling that data and we will have some information for you at either the next meeting or two.
- As we continue to get more students, we are working in partnership with the city to continue and make progress for walkability of our cities. They are investing about \$5 million toward sidewalk projects.

Matthew Slight delivered an update on the District's work in Social and Emotional Learning.

- This team has been formulated for about the last year. Part of our work this year is to provide quality interventions to meet student academic and behavioral needs.
- We have a real problem with homelessness in the city of Clarksville, and we have a team of people working with Families in Transition - 484 students enrolled who are classified as homeless. Since August, we have enrolled over 700 who fall under that category, and over 100 of them have already transferred out.
- We have been working to streamline the processes to get families in transition enrolled in schools.
- Foster Care Team is another group that we have working in the district to provide critical supports. Moving students from one building to another takes a lot of coordination, and moving between schools can also be very challenging. There are about 168 students we serve who are in foster care.
- They ensure there is not a break in service and that they are placed accordingly
- We also partner with the enrollment center to make sure students have what they need and that there is a centralized place for DCS to enroll students.
- We also have a team of Student Success Coaches and social workers. This is the first year we have had social workers within the school systems. These are district-based social workers. Last December, our administrators were talking about behavior challenges and the supports they needed. As a result of that, the District prioritized that in the budget.
- Social workers have extensive knowledge to address social issues, emotional issues, and expertise to get into students' homes to provide the support they need.
 - There are 9 social workers in the District that serve 5-7 school campuses.

- Since we have had this in place, we've received 365 referrals across the district for support from our social workers.
- We have 6 student success coaches, and they have been paired with the social workers. They support areas such as dropout prevention, mentoring, etc. If a counselor determines that a student needs additional support.
- Our district works hard to provide academic supports to students, and we have been that way for a long time. However, we know now that some of the barriers to learning are not academic barriers. They are social barriers.
- If you or anyone you know needs these services (social work), you can contact your school counselors and they will put in a referral for our services.
- We are working on a new program in partnership with Tennessee Voices where we will provide seminars on parenting techniques, strengthening the family, etc. It will be at Norman Smith.

Questions:

Who utilizes this team?

- Counselors and Social Workers can do very similar things, but the social worker may have more time and connection to resources than a counselor would have. Counselors may have other responsibilities in academic counseling. It may be that the counselor has been working with a student around behavioral issues, but the student needs a deeper level of support.

Parent mentoring program at Norman Smith - if it is successful, will it possibly continue with other schools?

- Yes, that is the goal.

There was no accompanying PowerPoint for Mr. Slight's portion.

Jeanine Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer, and her team delivered an update on the Human Resources Department and their work on retention.

- We report on retention every year, roughly around December.
- We are experiencing some unusual trends the last two years.
- CMCSS is the largest employer in Montgomery County, outside of Fort Campbell.
- We have 2603 certified positions, 2169 classified employees, and 312 administrators (this classification includes positions that are not actually supervisory, such as Curriculum Consulting Teachers). We have 225 substitutes.
- Certified retention was trending upward until 2019-2020, but then it began to drop from that point forward. Overall, we're about 6 percentage points below where we were at our highest point. That retention drop combined with the shortages we're experiencing on the recruitment side has compounded into a perfect storm on filling classrooms.
- Typically the most common reasons are consistent - moving, retiring, spouse relocation. We are seeing an increase in changing careers, teaching in other districts; that is why we have been focusing on retention so heavily.

- As of October 1st, we have had 62 resignations to date with 526 new hires. We've put 132 teachers on permit.
- Some challenges we are experiencing include a decrease in teacher education participants, lack of education-specific hiring opportunities, and a lack of SPED candidates, along with retention challenges.
- We also have several initiatives underway as well that we are working on - recruiting diverse teaching candidates, expanding job fairs to all careers, and alternative licensure options.

Classified Employee Retention

- We lost about 533 of our 607 new hires last year.
- We see the Other category a lot more than what we see on the certified side in our exit survey data.
- We do not require people to give us a reason for why they are leaving. We do follow up with an exit survey, and if we get a response from that we can get a little more information.
- Many of our separations are due to receiving better pay in another job. Dissatisfaction was higher this year than it has been in previous years. We also saw more retirements than we typically do.
- To date, our new hires are 416 and our separations are 156.
 - Retirements and dissatisfaction are dropping off somewhat compared to last year.
- Many of our challenges revolve around hourly wage competition, rise in general dissatisfaction, and the end of the ESSER/ELC grant funding that funds many of our positions.
- We are conducting a pay study this year that is going to look at all of our classified positions to see where we can close gaps with market trends.
- We are also hosting our own job fairs.
- For schools that have custodial vacancies, we are working on providing more opportunities to provide part-time work for our custodial positions. They often have other jobs.
- Our Transportation Department has done several things to target drivers - referral bonuses, paid driver trainee programs, stipends for extra work or routes.
- We have hired a new position in our Transportation Department who is totally devoted to solving issues with student discipline, which is a main concern among our drivers who resign.
- The employee assistance plan is something we're working on to provide free services to our teachers - work-life balance, childcare, mental health support, etc.
- Upbeat is a survey that we're administering to get a sense of school culture.

Questions

Does opening a new school play into that (retention numbers)?

- Yes, and a lot of those positions come from internally and we have to backfill positions in other schools. We really only have to replace what we call a “core” set of teachers, and the other positions come from schools that have a decrease in population.

Changing Careers - do we know if it is an issue of teachers who are unsure what they are getting into?

- We anticipate our grow your own candidates will have stronger retention because they are more aware of how the classroom is and what they are getting into.
- Generationally we also see a lot of differences - more of a desire for remote work, more of a desire for flexibility, etc. among younger employees.

Could one of our selling points be that teachers can move around places, that they can grow professionally, that they could move into a coaching position (academic, consulting teacher, etc.)

- Absolutely, and that is a huge selling point for us.

What can we do to take the lift off of teachers?

- That is a tough balance, because we want expectations to be consistent across our schools academically for students. We also know that the perception of the teaching profession, that the kids are not the same anymore, the challenges are much different than they were before, is just a reality we are all working to navigate.

Can teachers transfer if there is just a certain school that is not a good fit?

- Yes, there is a transfer process that opens up in January. We always stress to teachers that they should talk to their principal before initiating that process. We try to stress to our administrators that we want to think about district recruiting, rather than just school recruiting.

Retention correlates not only with COVID, but also with the political environment and the challenges that they face from that perspective. Is that anything that we try to address in our recruitment?

- Not really that specifically; we try to focus on the supports we offer, the benefits we provide, etc.

What do you do with the survey results once you receive them?

- This group (upbeat) will have a coach who can provide them with insights on what they can improve in their buildings.

What can we do to help promote this for you all?

- Fill out the surveys, let them know that Patti (patti.koloski@cmcss.net) is a resource available to them

How does inter-district movement affect the Teacher shortage?

- It does have an effect, and we try to be strategic with how we post positions so that it does not have too profound of an effect.

For the full presentation from the HR team, please [click here](#).