

**Knox County Schools**  
**Teacher Advisory Committee Notes**  
West High School Library Classroom  
Tuesday, November 18, 2014



**Attendees**

Dr. Jim McIntyre, Superintendent  
Mark Duff, Halls High School  
Jessica Holman, Inskip Elementary School  
Tanya Coates, KCEA President  
Eric Aguilar, Chilhowee Intermediate School  
Lindsay Bell, West High School  
Annette Benson, Corryton Elementary School  
Jannice Clark, Kelley Volunteer Academy  
Kelly Clemmer, Gap Creek Elementary School  
Denise Cross, West View Elementary School  
Jessica Fine, Cedar Bluff Middle & Hardin Valley Academy  
Wanda Lacy, Farragut High School  
Jessica McDonald, Vine Middle Magnet School  
Ryan Milani, Career Magnet Academy  
Valeta Norris, Central High School  
Kristi Pell, Powell High School  
Dr. Kitty Pruetz, Northwest Middle School  
Suzanne Sherman, Hardin Valley Academy  
Heidi Walsh, Christenberry Elementary School  
Karla West, A.L. Lotts Elementary School  
Vanita Williamson, Farragut Middle School

**Visitors / Guests**

Dr. Elizabeth Alves, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer  
Gail Byard, Chief Technology Officer  
Terry Hill, Board Member, District 6  
Dr. Rodney Russell, Director of Human Capital Strategies  
Beau Stanley, IT Specialist  
Stephanie Jeffreys, Superintendent's Office

**Aspen**

- Beau Stanley explained we are working with vendor to make process smoother for Elementary Related Arts
- Exploring the possibility of option to update ALL post columns so you can post all classes at one time
- Why so many steps with grade posting?
  - First step copies grades from Gradebook into Marking Period
  - Grades are not posted yet to give a chance to tweak grade
  - Not solely calculated by the computer
  - Puts power back in teachers hand

- Training & Professional Development Support
  - ASPEN answers
    - Every 7 to 10 days give little helpful tidbits, a little at a time to help digest
    - Housed on the knoxschools.org site in a link
  - 5 training sessions offered
    - Sessions held at Powell High School, Central High School, Cedar Bluff Elementary, Bearden High School and South-Doyle Middle Schools
    - Each of 3 sessions already held has had no more than 15 attend
    - No limit on how many can attend each session
    - Training sessions had two-pronged approach
      - Walk through using Grade Book
      - Q&A session to allow us to go over specifically what the attendees need to know
      - Hard to articulate what they need help with, but we need to let them know it is okay to reach out and ask for help
      - For the most part, attendees have left training feeling more confident with using the system
- Want teachers to feel comfortable with the gradebook first before we focus on pages
- Aspen is not as simple / intuitive as some systems we have in the past
- Some new teachers have adapted more easily because they have nothing to compare it against
- Concern was expressed for Special Education students who are confused because grades they see on the parent portal look different than what they receive
  - Beau Stanley agreed we need to revisit the best way to post grades for Special Education students
- Concern expressed about accounting for students in first period that are not in Homeroom who do not get attendance taken
- Several people trying to use app on iPad and it is not working
  - The app was broken during last update
  - Vendor expects to have fix with next update scheduled for Spring 2015
- Encouraged to contact our Helpdesk
- Main Number 594-1830 or email helpdesk@knoxschools.org
- Can also find contact information for school specific Support Specialists on site under "For Staff" section
- Send email if you have student that has been de-provisioned
- Gail Byard will follow-up on a default password for Media Specialists

### **Substitutes**

- How is the current strategy working? Suggestions for other strategies?
- Concerns regarding statements reported from Teaching Assistants that they may quit and be a substitute to get more pay and less work
- Hard to fill school reported 3 new substitutes showed up and stayed all day; had really positive interactions; pleasantly surprised
- Some have heard substitutes say they are not going to sub here, but will sub where they get paid more

- Had been receiving calls 3 to 4 times a week to get coverage, and now have not been called at all and our subs have been retired teachers
- At school surrounded by others with 15% or less fill rate and the substitutes are going to those schools for increased pay
- One teacher noted their school is probably not on the list of hard to fill because we had 4 administrators calling constantly to get coverage
- Reports that there is a perception that you can work less days and make more money if you don't need benefits-no evaluations, no RTI
- Inquiries from some retired teachers about how it affects retirement
- At one school not on hard to fill list, struggling with new morning routine; Opening AESOP and pick and choose who is getting the subs who showed up; deciding which kids are going to get a sub today, and which will be in split classes.
- Encouraged about the substitute recruitment fair
- Can someone not be locked out in AESOP once they accept a posting so they cannot move around? Are there technological structures we can put in place?
- Some High School substitutes believe they do not need to come in until 10:00 am if first period is plan period, should be there for full day
- With schools like Christenberry and Inskip, consider if we drew the line in the right place
- Considering for any certified substitute teacher, the rate be higher no matter where they go ; hoping to increase and shift the pool
- If this current strategy is working and having intended outcomes then keep it, but identify the unintended consequences and how to resolve those now early in the process
- Some additional suggestions from Human Resources to consider:
  - After a substitute has a subbed 5 days, pay \$68 to reimburse cost of class
  - \$300 bonus for those teachers who do not use a sub day?
  - Help make it more convenient, hold class and orientation all in one day
- Human Resources is making a concentrated effort to recruit more substitutes
  - Substitute Fair on December 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Human Resources staff has also been going out to University, setting up in the commons area during lunch
  - Made an effort to participate with general job fairs for colleges
- Potential suggestions and questions from TAC members:
  - Could we consider using a sliding scale to pay certified teacher if they teach in their field?
  - Does the \$300 bonus create the problem of people coming to school sick?
  - Does the \$300 bonus penalize those with children or circumstances that cause more need for using sick leave?
  - Can there be a middle ground? Something non-monetary like only a half day in-service?
  - Not sure we should get rewarded \$300 for doing something we are supposed to be doing
  - Give bonus money to teachers who covered for absences
  - Give bonus funding to principals to use as an additional carrot to incent substitutes to come
  - Offer some form of attendance incentive
  - Would it be possible to offer training fee scholarship or sponsor? If we know someone who wants to be a substitute, but cannot afford the upfront fee, could we sponsor them and get the reimbursement after they sub 5 days?

## **Professional Development**

- Dr. Alves addressed the Committee regarding plans to form a group of teachers and principals to focus on the future of Professional Development
  - How do we personalize and make more user friendly?
  - Network with other districts
  - Conduct a needs assessment
  - Help us in the planning moving forward
  - Spend time in the summer-what do we need in place
  - Representative sample of teachers across district, different grade levels, and different areas
- Some would love the opportunity to have our Professional Development the first week of teachers return to school. Would be of great benefit at beginning of year
- That second week we need to get in the classroom working to get ready for kids. Doing it the first week would be a way to have everyone be accountable and have choices on what you need
- If we do move to balanced calendar, work block and then take one week of break for Professional Development and then have the rest of my time
- Some felt our in-service sometimes becomes insular, and would love to have some outside perspective
- Consider forming committee to select the group
- It could be useful to have a few members of the Teacher Advisory Committee participate and bring conversation back to this group
- Notify Stephanie Jeffreys if you are interested or have suggestions on how to select others

## **APEX**

- We did 16 teacher listening sessions when we started APEX
- Pulled in teachers to lead those conversations and serve on the design team
- 6-7 months of time to re-design and build on this working knowledge
- Look at what we have done and what else is out there
- Do what is best for students and teachers
- What is the best way to tap into teachers?
- What is the best way to solicit feedback?
- How do we best get feedback from teachers?
- Something that does not require a lot of time, convenience, possible webinar
- Teachers feel most comfortable talking to other teachers that they teach with
- School based conversations
- Various groups Elementary, Middle, High
- Go to Leadership Team, represents entire school
- Get something from each school, consolidate at Elementary, Middle, High School levels
- Here are all the things we all agree on and can work on year 1
- Needs to be real conversation amongst peers
- Offer survey to those who cannot come to meeting
- We had a 73% return rate on survey before
- May need to use different tools at different points as we consolidate information
- Convenient & focused discussion and/or survey
- For Elementary, consider utilizing teacher meetings already scheduled, would give us 4-5 areas of focus for discussion; then give that feedback to Leadership Team

- Probably wouldn't have same set up for Elementary, Middle, and High
- Teachers feel more valued when you ask our opinion
- In school-level departments, when a survey is received, teachers often talk about it, creates good conversation
- Requested to include those people who are not teachers; librarians, guidance counselors, etc.
- Consideration from TAP schools? Not currently eligible for APEX incentive because eligible for TAP. How do we gather some input from those who are now TAP, but have worked with APEX?
- What does the future of TAP look like?
- Need to look at TAP when considering the design of APEX
- Concern stated that first year teachers don't have chance to have leadership roles

### **Upcoming Agenda Items**

- RTI
  - Doing tier 3 math, no time to do re-teaching, class scores going down
  - Given no training on the image and vision math, constantly going to resource teacher on how teach these concepts and the other kids are getting busy work
  - RTI 101-foundation setting
- SAT-10: concerns about effectiveness scores going down
  - Without SAT-10 more teachers will be relying on school-wide growth
  - Have these issues been thought through?
  - Will you be thinking about using Portfolio?
- Free and Reduced Lunch/Community Eligibility
  - Reports that cafeteria is making enough food for every student to get one of everything on menu (i.e. pizza and a hot dog), but throws out what is not eaten
- FEE waiver; sent out a revised allocation to High Schools, a lot closer to where we were last year
  - Possible that band directors not getting that communication
  - Circle back to see if revised allocation is helping
  - Ask Band Directors to check with principals and Dr. Davis
  - Separate issue from Community Eligibility
- ELL Population
  - Brand new student from Korea, cannot speak English; don't know effective strategies to teach that student and manage time
  - 5 different languages in one class
  - How do we teach growing ELL population and still educate all students?
  - Legal implications of ELL?
  - What are other systems doing?
  - Bring in ELL representative to discuss
  - ELL thought of as immersion
  - Some feel it seems unfair to grade ELL students against the same standards
  - Suggestion parallel ELL with Special Education-some of the same issues
- Professional Learning Communities
  - Circle back & discuss so any clarifications / additional guidance can be sent

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2014