

**Teacher Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes  
9-19-2019**

**Present:**

Bob Thomas – Superintendent  
August Askins - Holston Middle  
Elishia Basner - West Hills Elementary  
Dave Brooks - Adrian Burnette Elementary  
Tanya Coats - KCEA  
Amy Cox - Halls Elementary  
Sherry Fischbach - West Valley Middle  
Anthony Hancock - Bearden Middle  
Tiffany Holmes - Lonsdale Elementary  
Lucius Irvin - South-Doyle Middle  
Doug James - Austin East High  
Michelle Keaton - Paul Kelly Academy  
Stephanie Lewis - Gap Creek Elementary  
Whitney Parson - Farragut High  
Stacey Reece - West High  
Lynn Shuryan - Norwood Elementary  
Laurie Smith - Cedar Bluff Elementary  
Michelle Staal - Northwest Middle  
Ali Umbarger - Sunnyview Primary

**Guests:**

Superintendent's Direct Report Staff Members:  
Jon Rysewyk - Superintendent of Curr. & Instr.  
Russ Oaks - Operations Manager  
Carly Harrington - Communications Director

**Not Present:**

Rachel Evans - South-Doyle Middle  
Natalie Dowling - Carter High  
Megan Christian - Bearden High

**Superintendent Bob Thomas**

- Superintendent Thomas welcomed new members and thanked returning members.
- The TAC selection process was explained.
- Superintendent Thomas introduced the Minority Educators Advisory Council Member representative, Anthony Hancock.
- Council members were encouraged to view this council as a comfortable atmosphere for open conversation. The information discussed is meant to be shared with their schools.

**Introduction of Council Members**

- Each Council Member introduced himself or herself.
  - When introducing herself, Tanya Coats expressed her gratitude, and encouraged council members to do the same, for recent 4% teacher raise.
  - Superintendent Thomas responded to Tanya Coats's expression of gratitude and encouraged all that the thanks should be expressed to Mayor Jacobs and County Commissioners for the increase and for the school initiatives. He lauded the mayor's presence in schools and emphasis on reading.

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**Introduction of Guests**

- Each Superintendent Direct Report Staff Member present introduced himself or herself and spoke briefly about their role in Knox County Schools.
- Superintendent Thomas gave a brief description of the roles of Chief of Staff Renee Kelly and Chief Financial Officer Ron McPherson who were both unable to attend due to other commitments.
- Jon Rysewyk explained the Micro Team structure and how central office personnel intends to be a resource to schools by working with principals and assistant principals to support and implement specific programs and goals as directed by administrators of each individual school.
- Members expressed appreciation of explanation of how this works.

**Member Discussions**

Superintendent Thomas asked members to express what they feel Knox County Schools does well and what can be improved upon:

**Responses on areas needing improvement included:**

- Consistency in policies and the enforcement in each school: Discussion ensued with some positive comments on seeing a movement in the right direction with better top down approach, but more needs to be done.
- With so many program initiatives there are too many meetings and no time to determine if the new programs even work. Administration needs to slow down and determine which are and are not working.
  - Jon Rysewyk addressed concerns about Knox Advances, Knox Support and Knox Reads Initiative goals that members felt were established and then no further movement. There is now more direction to bring groups back together and also include community wide support. This will be more of a movement than a program with an official launch.
- Too much shifting of principals: With so much moving around of administrative teams, schools are not able to set and achieve goals.
  - Central Office Staff Response: acknowledged a lot of changes this year especially due to many principals and others accepting retirement incentive. The goal is to assemble a strong administrative leadership team and then leave that team in place.
  - Members Response: in some instances, these changes are necessary to improve school culture.
- The need to continue and expand Newcomer Center and Recovery High School was touched on.
- Members shared concern with the increase in the SPED caseloads in schools as budgets and resources are being cut.
- Members expressed feelings of inequity from school to school in the level of instructional services available.

**Responses on areas KCS is doing well:**

- Autonomy in schools to offer specialized courses and project-based learning benefitting students who are growing from the opportunities.

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- Members who are also parents of Knox County Schools students commented that communication in schools is improving. Carter schools, positive Referrals and communication at Sunnyview Primary and kindergarten were given as specific examples of this.
- Contract with Helen Ross McNabb Center is helpful – although many parents of students who would best benefit from the services will not give written permission.
- Summer training for teachers extremely beneficial.
- Knox County Schools Portfolio is outstanding and other school districts look to KCS's advanced training model.
- Maintenance response in the schools is excellent.

### **Group Discussion**

Members met in groups of Elementary, Middle and High. Using the Strategic Plan, groups discussed what talking points and agenda items should be included in this year's council. Due to time constraints, groups will continue at next meeting.

### **The council came back together to plan and decide on Agenda topics for October 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

- Elementary: Behavioral Support
  - Members felt that what is needed is not more training but strategy and support options.
  - Are there solutions and program resources available that are free?
- Middle School: Increase in Student Achievement
  - RTI is it working toward student achievement?
  - How does it fit in with Cambridge and AP?
  - What should Math Proficiency look like?
- High School: EPSO – CTE - Are programs competing?
  - Consistency
  - Evaluation System-TIGER vs. TEAM

### **Wrap-up**

Superintendent Thomas thanked the members for attendance and input and closed with the following reminders:

- ❖ **The Council will be introduced to the Board of Education at the Work-Session Wednesday, October 2, 2019, 5:00PM, Large Assembly Room, C&C Building. (Park in the Dwight Kessel Garage and bring your ticket in for validation.)**
- ❖ **The next TAC meeting will be Thursday, October 24, 2019.**