

**Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting
Knox County Schools
Tuesday, October 28, 2015**

Attendees

Dr. Jim McIntyre, Superintendent
Dr. Rodney Russell, Director of Human Capital
Gloria Deathridge, School Board Member, District 1
Lauren Hopson, KCEA President
Eric Agular, Chilhowee Intermediate School
Merry Anderson, Karns Middle School
Chris Beatty, Powell High School
Annette Benson, Corryton Elementary
Tanya Coats, Farragut Intermediate School
Laura Davis, West High School
Rebekah Ellis, L&N STEM Academy
Kelly Farr, Mount Olive Elementary
Jessica White, Cedar Bluff Middle School
Jessica Helman, Vine Middle Magnet School
Jessica Holman, Principal, Inskip Elementary
Beth Howard, AP, Hardin Valley Academy
Wanda Lacy, Farragut High School
Ryan Milani, Career Magnet Academy
Jarrod Pendergraft, Halls Middle School
Dr. Kitty Pruett, Northwest Middle School
Laurie Price, Bearden High School
Lee Anna Wright, Northwest Middle/Ridgedale
Jennifer Sullivan, Administrative Assistant

Not in Attendance

Jannice Clark, Kelley Volunteer Academy
Heidi Knapczyk-Walsh, Christenberry Elementary School

Greeting & Introductions

- We had great things happen this past year (strong academic progress, Exemplary School District status, increase in graduation rate, etc.)
- Expectations were raised and educators and students rose to meet them
- Congratulations went out to the members and gratitude was expressed for making time to serve on this committee
- Important for teachers to be able to voice their perspectives and concerns, and to see appropriate follow up
- Each person introduced themselves, where they work, what they teach, and named their biggest teaching influence

Purpose & Expectations

- Much has been learned since inception of TAC and it keeps getting better and more productive each year
- Our purpose is to continue to have a robust and constructive conversation to help enable and support our educators in the work they do for kids
- Try to make sure we have a diversity of voices providing insights
- Several returning members from last year who helped select members for this year; did a fabulous job with the selection process; it was a lot of hard work and took a lot of time to consider applicants and nominees; know you were selected by your peers
- Superintendent was not in the room during selection deliberations
- Superintendent simply adopted the recommendations of the Nominating Committee (several prior year TAC members) for the 2015-16 TAC membership
- These meetings will generate very productive conversation that are intended to lead to greater student learning and success
- Try to meet monthly and try to have a rough agenda, to help be prepared however, sometimes issues will arise and take precedence in our conversations
- Members are encouraged to solicit information from peers and represent your colleagues, and certainly articulate your own perspective
- Expect members to attend meetings, engage, and participate
- We think you have an important voice to bring and love to hear from you to help us make decisions for greater student learning and success
- Be candid and courteous. When we don't have consensus, be professional
- We will take notes during the meeting. A member of the group can take notes if the group prefers that approach
- Consensus: Superintendent's Office staff will take notes, members will report out to School Board

TAC Website

- Pictures, Bio, Email addresses are posted on the Knox County Schools website
- If you want to change anything, let us know
- Email addresses are posted on website so people can get in touch with you to contribute to robust conversation

Brief History of the TAC

- The Teacher Advisory Committee grew out of some concerns and challenges that were brought forth by educators
- The Board of Education and the Superintendent determined that a group of teachers needed to be formed so that they could express their concerns in a safe place and then discuss solutions to recommend to the Superintendent
- Important for Superintendent and district leadership to be able to hear directly from educators about their triumphs and challenges, and understand insights from the school/classroom perspective
- TAC determined concerns we could address in the short term, and any we could plan to take on and address in the long term
- Returning members generally feel that the Superintendent is very open to hearing about teacher's issues and there has been a level of trust earned over the past years
- Issues are being resolved as a result of the TAC, which creates an exciting and positive atmosphere
- There are always going to be issues and challenges to address so it is good to have a diverse group to discuss in this forum
- The returning members also voiced that they found it useful when "experts" from the district came in to address issues and clarify
- *Refer to handout outlining Purpose, composition of the group, Term definition, Selection Process, Meeting times, Expectations*

Ground rules

- How best to structure discussions? --- Learning from the past 2 years there needs to be a balance between factual information presentations and deep dialogue
- What are your expectations as participants as we begin the dialogue?
- How do you control a conversation with 20 people without going off on tangents?
 - Superintendent was a good facilitator and helped keep us on task
 - Does the group want an individual from within the group to be facilitator?
 - Liked that Superintendent encouraged those members of the group we did not hear from to contribute
- Consensus: Keep Superintendent as discussion facilitator
- Ground rule should be that TAC is focused on being solution-oriented
- These are very real, honest conversations. Therefore, nobody is called out by name in the minutes but rather, the substance and tenor of the discussion will be captured
- Having these discussions to make things better for the students and the teachers, with the end result being what is best for students.

- Continue to think about ground rules. Can develop as we go along as necessary. Some ideas included: inclusion of KCEA president, send questions ahead of time to presenters to make sure they cover certain material, make sure new members get their voice heard
- Important to TAC members to not make the meeting open to public so as to encourage a candid dialogue; and important to continue expectation about no recording devices
- Designated a "time keeper" to keep the agenda on track, if a discussion warrants more time it will be decided by the committee whether it will be tabled until the next meeting or if it is important enough to push the agenda

Topics for Agendas

- Broke into smaller groups, initially
 - Discussed what are the important topics we need to be addressing and digging into
 - Shared with the group
 - Elaborated on the pain points
- **RTI²**---Tier 1 kids, students who are not in groups and what to do with their advancement, researched based interventions, balance teacher autonomy and consistency throughout the district, universal screener, overwhelming amount of paperwork
- **TNReady**---(priority)---accountability for teachers, anxiety over infrastructure, layers of support needed, new standards, Quickscores and what their role is now, implementation concerns over technology, legislation ideas and which direction we are headed
- **Substitutes**---shortage issues, compensation strategies implemented last year, paying teachers for covering during planning
- **Evaluations**---with and without APEX (per member email), also, Classified Evaluations added on to school personnel @ very time of year
- **Funding Schools/BEP**
- **Special Education Issues/Support**---stress and burn out are concerns, filling positions, retention of current teachers, how this affects the regular education classroom, age appropriate software for high school
- **Staffing issues/support**---especially for Special Education and Mathematics
- **ELL Focus**---how to better equip Regular Ed teachers with the understanding, differentiation, grading, etc., challenges of implementing ELL in the classroom (per member email), resources
- **Professional Development**---(per member email) at the beginning of the year and inservice days
- **Autonomy**---testing vs. standardization, block scheduling vs year round, consistency issues

- **New standards** ---adequate materials, one teacher expressed challenges regarding social studies, 3rd grade curriculum (overwhelming amount of curriculum), maybe have Judy Newgent speak

How is the year going thus far?

- Some feeling overwhelmed and uncertain regarding TNReady, change and lack of details
- Some teachers felt evaluations are not a significant concern or issue at this point several years into the new system
- One member feeling like nobody knows all the answers around TNReady-- very big feeling of uncertainty
- Frustration over lack of information from state, those that should know
- Great Professional Development on TNReady but then doubts creep in when back in classroom executing...probably due to so much change
- How do we make TNReady meaningful for kids when they find out it doesn't count this year (quick scores not to be integrated except perhaps at HS if it helps grade) and explaining it to parents
- Some educators are feeling frustration with the amount of time that teachers have to be in meetings. Some are feeling the need for more planning time.
- TNReady---kids are not only going to have to learn content but they will have to be able to apply it----a good number of teachers are nervous about the new assessment this year

Closing remarks

There has been a lot of progress made within the committee and we need to think about how we can best support our teachers, and ultimately best serve our students with the TAC structure. Thank you for your commitment and service.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2015