

**Teacher Working Group Meeting
West High School Library Classroom
Monday, January 13, 2014**

Attendees:

Lynne Fugate, Board of Education Chair
Dr. Jim McIntyre, Superintendent
Eric Aguilar, Chilhowee Intermediate School
Jekia Allen, A.L. Lotts Elementary School
Glenn Arnold, L & N STEM Academy
Abigail Buczynski, Cedar Bluff Middle School
Kelly Clemmer, Gap Creek Elementary School
Tanya Coats, KCEA President
Mark Duff, Halls High School
Jessica Holman, Inskip Elementary School
Lauren Hopson, Halls Elementary School
Robby Howard, South-Doyle High School
Wandy Lacy, Farragut High School
Tenisha Marchbanks, Bearden Middle School
Jessica McDonald, Vine Middle School
Valeta Norris, Central High School
Suzanne Sherman, Hardin Valley Academy
Lindsey Stinnett, West High School
Heidi Walsh, Christenberry Elementary School
Vanita Williamson, Karns Middle School

Introduction - Ms. Fugate

- The Board of Education's January 21, 2014 work session will focus on teacher survey results, this working group's discussions and TVAAS data information

Discussion Regarding Teacher Evaluation/Observations

- The State requires one announced observation and one unannounced observation; KCS opted for 2 unannounced observations for 2013-14 school year
- Some believe that recent teacher survey results show the majority of teachers do not want two unannounced observations
- Some teachers would prefer a choice between having 1 announced and 1 unannounced or 2 unannounced observations
- Some administrators prefer 2 unannounced observations
- Some members of group feel giving teachers a choice may immediately improve morale
- Alternative to giving teachers a choice could be to provide a specific window of time their observation would occur
- Some evaluators feel changing to an announced observation mid-year would be hard, but window may be possible

- State allows for level 5 teachers to have 1 unannounced observation and 2 walk-throughs (instead of a second observation); this may be an immediate option that would take pressure off administrators
- It may work better if walk-throughs for level 5 teachers are considered for next school year since formal observations were already completed during the fall semester and would require different documentation than what was completed
- Some administrators tend to observe level 4/5 teachers at the beginning of a semester; some tend to complete those observations at the end of a semester
- Lots of discussion about how teachers feel; administrators and lead teachers need to be considered
- If observation is announced, must also have a pre-conference
- Perhaps pre-conference could be an option for level 4/5 teachers
- Some belief that pre-conference helps some teachers as much as the actual evaluation
- Some support for distinction of who gets support not being the evaluation level; level 5 teachers need support as well – should be a choice
- Some administrators make sure every teacher is getting support they need by having discussion during mid-year conferences
- Some administrators would like to see change during this current school year to boost teacher morale, but to force everyone to go back to 1 announced observation would be almost impossible
- Some suggested giving teachers a 2-week window of when their observation would occur; some suggested a 3-week window; some suggested a 4-week window
- Some teachers feel that 2 unannounced observations give them less control over their scores
- TEAM and the evaluation rubric should not be “one size fits all”
- Some teachers have the misconception that every point of the rubric has to be hit in every lesson, this causes some to use the rubric like a checklist
- The TEAM rubric should work differently for different teachers; changes could be made to allow for those differences
- Some teachers feel administrators use the rubric and/or evaluations to “go after them”
- Different administrators may score differently; scoring should be more consistent
- Some feel it would be more authentic if principals would just “drop-in” and observe
- Some teachers feel it would be good to have same lead teacher/evaluator from year-to-year because of knowledge needed for areas of refinement
- Some administrators feel it is more challenging to do 1 announced and 1 unannounced observation and that teachers tend to score higher on unannounced observations
- Some administrators may feel it is worth the trouble to do 1 announced and 1 unannounced observation if it makes teachers feel better

- The organizational challenge it may present to make a change this current school year (such as giving teachers a choice and/or window) may be worth the gift it would be for our teachers
- A decision regarding how to proceed this school year needs to be swift; some administrators have already started completing their unannounced observations for this spring semester – if something changes, it may not be fair to those teachers
- For next school year, group would definitely like for administration to consider either giving teachers a choice about whether they want a second observation to be announced or unannounced or offering a window of when their unannounced observation would occur
- Need to check with the State to make sure that a window would be allowed for unannounced observations
- Some belief that modifications need to be made for evaluations of educators that are not regular classroom teachers (special education teachers, librarians, etc.)
- If KCS were to change to 1 announced and 1 unannounced observation for 2014-15, which one would teachers prefer for fall semester and which for spring? Some teachers would prefer the unannounced in the fall to get it over with, but some feel because of required pre-conference it may make more sense to complete the announced observation in the fall
- If recommended changes may take some time to put in place, could evaluators be instructed to go ahead with their teachers that have to have 4 observations this year to provide some time for a decision to be made

Discussion Regarding Teacher Survey

- Concerns regarding results of teacher survey showing that a majority of KCS teachers do not feel they have autonomy
- Some teachers feel the TEAM rubric makes educators feel that way
- Recent changes to Board Policy IBAF “Selection of Instructional Materials (Other Than Textbooks)” made some teachers feel they are not trusted
- Some schools choosing to “team” lesson plan makes some teachers feel they don’t have autonomy
- Some teachers don’t want a “flip chart” or “script” telling them everything to do
- Most teachers want freedom to try new things/techniques
- KCS pacing guides may also make teachers feel they do not have autonomy; some feel they can’t slow down if that’s what is best for their class
- In elementary setting, teachers schedule certain things to happen during a certain time each day, but every day is different and not always on schedule; observers coming in do not seem to understand give teachers lower scores for not being on schedule – this makes some teachers scared
- Combination of all these things may make some teachers feel that they cannot “think outside the box”

- Some teachers feel that even though KCS is a large district, it must be more flexible and/or innovative
- Some teachers do not like the interventions/programs KCS has in place
- KCS tries to make good decisions on program purchases, but some things that work at some schools, may not at others; system-wide decisions can be very hard
- Some feels communication is still an issue – teachers need good professional development opportunities; good teachers never

Wrap-up

- Preference for this group to keep meeting with Dr. McIntyre for rest of this school year
- May want to include “Interventions” as a future topic of discussion
- If some advisory group of this type will be considered going forward, may want to consider developing a different process for how the members are selected
- Level of trust has been achieved within this group
- If this group meets the rest of this year, and someone cannot attend a meeting, could a substitute be sent? Group consensus that it would be very hard for someone to catch-up
- Group agreed to attend the Board of Education January 21st work session for discussion/presentation
- Ms. Holman, Mr. Howard, and Ms. McDonald volunteered present with Dr. McIntyre at January 21st Board work session

Next meeting time/location will be determined at a later date