

Knox County Schools
Teacher Advisory Committee West
High School Library Classroom
Thursday, April 9, 2015



Attendees

Dr. Jim McIntyre, Superintendent
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
Karla Fultz, A.L. Lotts Elementary School
Jessica Holman, Inskip Elementary School
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 Pruett, Northwest Middle School
Suzanne Sherman, Hardin Valley Academy
Heidi Walsh, Christenberry Elementary School
Vanita Williamson, Farragut Middle School

Visitors / Guests

Dr. Elizabeth Alves, Chief Academic Officer
Amber Rountree, Board Member, District 9
Dr. Rodney Russell, Director of Human Capital Strategies
Millicent Smith, Executive Director, Curriculum, Instruction, & Professional Development
John Beckett, Director of Research & Evaluation
Stephanie Jeffreys, Superintendent's Office

SCORE Teacher Leaders Fellowship

- Valeta Norris was selected and has been serving in this prestigious program this school year
- Contact Valeta Norris if interested
- Year-long fellowship, slated for July-July
- This year actually started September and should end in May
- Try to select approximately 20 educators from across the state
- Deep discussion about classroom instruction, school reform, education policy

- How to deliver your message with different audiences; parents, Media, elected officials, School Board

EOC Conversion Scores

- Local EOC raw scores are scaled using the same methodology the state uses for state EOCs. Why? Do the scaled scores reflect mastery?
- Concern from World Language department
 - If the conversion is so broad then at what point is the test useful?
 - Some students passed because their conversion score was high, but they are floundering in their second year
 - Suggestion was that it would be better to convert the second year instead of the first
- John Beckett presented information, data, and methodology
- We scale local EOCs in part because the state scales the State EOCs
- Why does the state scale / curve?
- Goes back to about 3 years ago when we had a technology change and standards changes, KCS rewrote and reintroduced these assessments
- When teachers re-wrote the local EOCs at an extremely rigorous level, large proportion of students failed the new assessment in courses like Geometry (even those who teachers believed had learned and mastered the content)
- A sense that the assessment was not accurately measuring student mastery of content and skills
- There were kids that were borderline or even failing the course when they should not have been based on teacher knowledge of their having learned the material
- Our local EOCs are written by local teachers, based on what our teachers felt was the appropriate content in those areas
- In regards to the state EOC and the local EOC, is it fair to scale one and not the other when both count for 25% of the grade
- The assumption is that like ACT, tests were written at an exceptionally high level of rigor, and like ACT may need to be scaled to reflect where students truly are
- Concern about whether we have a local EOC for second year language
- One teacher's experience: in chemistry a kid had a 30/40 all year in class then score 70 EOC
 - Difficult to explain to parents why grades throughout the year were so significantly lower
- Should we have local EOC? We are one of the only large system that does local EOC and we don't have to?
- Some members thought they would rather not have local EOC; each school has a different population and we could do common assessments in the school
- Some members expressed interest in continuing and a concern about going to varying decisions about assessment, as it could potentially lower expectations for our students in some of our schools
 - More a question of grading practice

- How do we grade in a way to help parents and students understand?
 - Worry about the quality of what we write locally, like the state EOC
- A teacher noted that the remedial and college prep EOC for Chemistry is very close for local EOC, but the state one did not line up; kids who had an 80 class usually had an 80 on the local EOC
- There is probably no one solution that will solve everyone's problem
- The way question was worded was at the proficient or advanced level and the kids did not understand which topic to apply
- Some members expressed support for local EOC, but don't want someone to make an excuse for children and lower expectations; we should always push them to achieve
- Feel good about the alignment to standards, but we are missing the psychometric expertise to set the level of rigor that would automatically equate to 70 = proficiency.
- Some would like have an expert come in to see if the quality of questions are on the right track
 - Not just with EOC, but with module tests too
 - Refine the assessment to make sure we have high quality questions
 - Provide us training to help supervisors and teachers to craft good psychometrically sound questions; help us recognize and guide that process
- Previously there was not consistency across the district
- Everyone can come and look at the local EOC assessments
- Would like to know that kids at each school are getting just as good an education at one school as another
- Some concern about when teachers go to see the test it may set them up to teach to the test
 - Some worry that when they start running out of time, they start pushing to work on something that they know is on the assessment
- Maybe teachers should not write the tests
- Several year ago some of us were called in to sit down with UT faculty and were taught test writing
 - How to write the questions and answers
 - It was very beneficial
 - Each of us had to write 75 questions and they selected the questions
- Consistency throughout ability levels with local EOC helps maintain consistency with Special Education students
- This may be a Professional Development opportunity to consider
- We do want as many folks as possible contributing, but it becomes an issue of scale
- Can we look at this issue with transparency with parents and make it easier for teachers to not look like the bad guy?
- The test is only a quarter of the grade and if they pass in the end, they would have to be fairly close to passing

- Need to look at the rigor and make sure we get that right
- We have tried level 2 and 3 exams and we had trouble with where do you stop
- We started to lose quality of assessment and we paired down to one level
- Acknowledgement of the complexity of this issue and the importance of having assessments that reflect mastery of concepts and content at a rigorous and appropriate level.

APEX Redesign Update

- Options and concepts that are being considered for a redesigned strategic compensation plan were presented by Dr. Russell and the APEX Redesign Committee
- Look at our Strategic Plan and we have to invest in our people to be effective at Goal 1
- The school districts that we compete with for great teachers are not just surrounding counties but other metro areas as well
- Looking to incent teachers for above expectations performance
- Teachers performance at or above expectations at difficult to staff schools
- The average salary for a person in industry with a math degree person is \$46,000-\$54,000, but much more with a Masters
- Teachers who take on additional instructional and leadership roles
- 95 % meet or exceed expectations (teachers and administrators)

Break Out Groups

- High Needs / Priority schools: enhanced compensation for teachers in hard to staff positions, such as:
 - 1) Priority schools
 - 2) Special education
 - 3) Math
 - Suggestions/Feedback
 - If retention is goal, give "signing bonus" that pays out more the longer the teacher is in the position, with highest bonus at year 3
 - Increase but divide it up over several years
 - 2.75 is too low
 - Creates tension if you pay someone new a bonus to come teach at high needs school, unless the structure does something for the people for already at that school
- Bonus pool
 - Teachers evaluated on the TEAM rubric
 - All teachers at effectiveness level of 3 or higher are eligible
 - With observation pool what your score is would determine how much of that pool you receive

- Individual growth score would be a factor how much of that pool you would get
- System-wide building level would get double for those teachers who do not have individual growth scores
- Suggestions/Feedback
 - Think some schools will get into some sticky situations with the amount allotted
 - The way it is currently written we don't know what the max bonus is
 - Struggle to understand the ins and outs of this from a budget perspective
 - Does the bonus under the TAP model make sense?
 - Concerned with this scenario; If I am a high performing teacher in my school, then my pay out would be greater if there are fewer higher performing teachers in my school
 - Might that negatively impact collaboration?
 - Good idea to incorporate a team score to help incent collaboration

- Leadership
 - How can we acknowledge & reward teachers that are doing things that support the school but not showing up on the current leadership rubric?
 - Application for teachers to apply with a committee of teachers to review those
 - There are people who are doing things that strengthen the school's community, but not currently getting credit as APEX only recognizes instructional leadership
 - Suggestions/Feedback
 - This becomes cumbersome and a challenge because different people have different perspectives
 - Need for consistency: one principal may consider something a 5 and another principal may consider it a 20
 - Perhaps add some student support roles in the leadership rubric

- Alternative Salary Schedule
 - Could potentially affect new employees / proposed to begin in 2017-18
 - Could add to it if you are shown to exceed
 - One perspective: rewards your effort and respects your effort
 - There is not a cap, you can keep earning a pay bump
 - Every discipline is equally important
 - 2 lanes instead of multiple lanes
 - Steps are there regardless, but can earn a "distinguished" step for excellent performance

- We thought giving a little something as recognition, but add reward in salary as opposed to a bonus
- Would recognize that our teachers have been through a lot of change, and builds financial rewards for success into the base salary
- Easier to manage
- The distinguished steps incorporate into salary ongoing and you can continue to accumulate
- Recommended wording: "based on the composite"
- If you are below expectations you would not earn a step at all
- We have 9 at doctorate, we have 99 at EDS
- When we look impact of below expectations, 6 who would not have received less than a half step
- We are out there getting the work done and the data shows that
- Please fill out the forms and give feedback
- Will continue the conversation, committee will do focus groups and teacher meetings, and refine their potential recommendations

Upcoming Agenda Items

- Unscheduled In-Service Hours
- Consistency/Autonomy
- Evaluations
- Special Education
- Social and Emotional Learning Programs
- Please think about the selection process for next year's Teacher Advisory Committee

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 7, 2015**