

**Teacher Advisory Committee  
Knox County Schools  
Thursday, December 10, 2015**

**Attendees**

Dr. Jim McIntyre, Superintendent  
Tracie Sanger, Board Member, District 2  
Dr. Rodney Russell, Director of Human Capital  
Eric Aguilar, Chilhowee Intermediate School  
Merry Anderson, Karns Middle School  
Chris Beatty, Powell High School  
Annette Benson, Corryton Elementary  
Jannice Clark, Kelley Volunteer Academy  
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 Holman, Principal, Inskip Elementary  
Beth Howard, AP, Hardin Valley Academy  
Heidi Knapczyk-Walsh, Christenberry Elementary  
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  
Jessica White, Cedar Bluff Middle School  
Lee Anna Wright, Northwest Middle/Ridgedale  
Jennifer Sullivan, Administrative Assistant

**Not in Attendance**

Lauren Hopson, KCEA President

**Guests**

Dr. Elizabeth Alves, Chief Academic Officer  
Gail Byard, Chief Technology Officer  
Theresa Nixon, Director of IT  
Missy Massie, Exec. Dir. Of Student Support Services  
Carrie Crook, RTI<sup>2</sup> Facilitator

## Greeting & Introductions

- Everybody introduced themselves, including guests.
- Reviewed topics for discussion and given time to adjust timing on the calendar as necessary. The calendar is a draft and is fluid if necessary.
- There were a few additions and changes made to the calendar regarding topics for discussion. An updated version will be provided to members.
- Review of tentative schedule of which member was scheduled to report to the Board of Education and on which date.
- Thank you to those that reported at the last board meeting on behalf of TAC

## RTI<sup>2</sup>

- Working for struggling students, need to make sure that high-achieving students are benefitting from intervention time as well, programs that students use are decided upon at the building level
- Each school has the autonomy to arrange their time and grouping structures
- Guidelines for group sizes state that groups should be 1-12 students for middle school and 1-6 in elementary school
- Question in regard to teacher's obligations when the students in their group are absent, if the teacher finds themselves with few or no students for that period of time, could they be utilized in another group?
- Some asked if they were allowed to mix 2 groups together, but studies typically show that kids are more successful when the groups are kept small
- The group shared that RTI<sup>2</sup> teams look differently at each school: Some have teams that make the decisions on placement, some have their entire staff in on the process, some have a designated person to facilitate. Each school decides how to structure the team.
- Some stated there is confusion in their school because they only have bits and pieces of the big picture, not sure how they fit in or how kids transition from one tier to the next
- All agree that it is a time consuming process, but it is working as far as showing growth
- Comes down to communication within the schools and knowing what state "rules" include flexibility and which ones are rigid
- Placing kids in the correct tier for the correct interventions is often a time-consuming process but there are guidelines:
  - Universal screener
  - Team structure to place those with a deficit
  - Math deficits w/different intervention programs (Voyager, Aspire, etc.)
- Focus should always be on the child's needs and not the process

- Students who need additional help, teams can choose to accelerate their interventions
- Students who are below grade level do not necessarily have a learning disability
- As we roll up to High Schools, teachers and leaders are going to get help with screeners and interventions for the future
- They will be using an early warning system with appropriate weighting
- Meetings for the high school implementation will begin in January, discussions on what it will look like at the high school level and whether we decided to roll it out school wide or just a few grades at a time.
- The district is researching ways to streamline paperwork with options possibly online
- Some expressed concern over the consistency and timeliness of records catching up with kids who have moved within the district. A group within KCS has been set up to research a solution---perhaps going electronic which would make the information immediately available.
- Some feel they don't often have enough information to help with solutions to make this easier because they don't have their "hands" in it deep enough to know enough.
- Some feel that they wish they had some of their intervention time back to teach the students in their own class. They feel like they know their kids well enough to know what they need
- For tier 3 math in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, some feel the resources are limited or they move too fast
- The state is aware that there needs to be more math intervention material
- Most feel that RTI<sup>2</sup> is working for our struggling kids
- Many would like the opportunity to collaborate and share best practices when implementing in the high schools
- There are rules and regulations to follow but there is some flexibility in implementation
- A suggestion was shared that it may be a real problem that these kids are being scheduled out of their elective classes to go to intervention. The special class (elective) may be the class the student enjoys most each day so we don't want to take away that motivation for engagement and attendance.
- If time and money were not a factor:
  - Members would want Core Extension groups to be split even further with educators to support each group
  - Every school would hire a specialized group of qualified interventionists
  - At High School level, take time from each block to send kids to teachers that can support all students

## Technology in the Classroom

- Instructional technology can be a great teaching and learning tool, that has been found to be beneficial in personalizing learning for students, particularly in our 1:1 technology schools
- Can any of the money from the recent Haslam donation be funneled toward technology? Each of our traditional high schools will receive \$100k which they can use for academic support, potentially including instructional technology
- How do we find more money for instructional technology, short of winning the lottery?
- To go 1:1 in the High Schools is relatively reasonable from a cost perspective these days, the problem lies in the maintenance and tech and instructional support to follow the devices
- How are the schools integrating technology?
- We want to make sure that we are not just using technology for technology sake...it must be meaningful
- KCS looks at the SAMR model for reflection S=substitution (which just replaces a chalkboard with a smartboard, for example, but still use it like a chalkboard), A=augmentation (beginning to utilize the tech to do a bit more instructionally), M=modification (begins to change how content is presented, taught and learned), R=redefinition of strategies and instruction – which transforms teaching and learning, and where we want to be.
- Teachers are finding that it is not about the specific device or even software being used but instead, how it is being used--- to change how the learning process is engaged in
- Suggestion that teachers also need differentiation in technology training so that they “buy” into it, they will use what they understand and what is meaningful to them
- Rather than rushing to go 1:1 with district devices, has using personal devices been discussed? Some trepidation over this idea at the district level---equity, equality, and usage control are all issues that need to be resolved, but we are exploring the possibility of allowing some Bring Your Own Device scenarios
- Request that if a new technology is going to be used district-wide, introduce it early in the year so that teachers are open to implementation. Considered a lost opportunity when something is introduced in the middle of the year when lessons are already planned and underway
- Most feel that there needs to be a stipend or staffed Building Level Technology Coordinator (BLTC) at every school to handle the technology needs

- Teachers should have the ability to update their own basic software programs rather than wait for someone with administrative access to get to their needs
- It was pointed out that there are some updates that school staff can do on their own but they're not always aware what they can do through self service: potential communication issue
- In order to empower teachers to do more, instructional technology needs specifics in order to:
  - Find out if it's a lack of communication
  - Find out if there is hardware needed
  - Share a solution from one school to a problem that might also be happening at another
- Teachers encouraged to take advantage of all the help that is being offered such as the "Byte size Learning" newsletter with little snippets that could help classroom teachers.
- In order to help with some of the smaller technology issues that teachers are having, it was suggested that Technology Department develop some kind of drop down menu on School Dude which would take them through some initial diagnostic steps before being able to make a tech help request (i.e. restarting a machine, checking for updates, making sure hardware is plugged in, etc.)
- To ease a backlog or time delay in tech issues being taken care of, perhaps "deputize" some of the more technologically-experienced teachers at each school to act as "BLTC jr." or "TPaCK jr." and giving them administrative access to help other teachers
- Another suggestion was the consideration of not taking a great teacher out of the classroom to act as a BLTC but instead hiring someone from a tech school or someone with an Associate's degree for the position. We may save on salary and save the tech savvy teachers for the classroom
- Clarification that BLTCs are typically unpaid positions, but some MSs and HSs have a tech support person who is a teacher that they have provided with a class or two or release time
- Re: Itinerants and their needs. Because they travel often it is difficult to get their technology needs met many times (i.e. hooking up printers, changing passwords, etc.)---consider a technology specialist just for the itinerant teachers
- Other concerns re: technology in the classrooms were:
  - Replacing older, obsolete devices---one suggestion: invest in software called "Neverware" which is designed to extend the life of older devices or software
  - Concern as to enough infrastructure to support testing. If 60 students are testing in one area, such as a cafeteria, access points can be overtaxed---one solution: each school is well-equipped with enough "hot spots" but they cannot be overloaded in one area.

Spread the devices out amongst the “hot spots”, maximize use of resources

- Sustainability---the district continues to work toward budgeting for sustainable updates

**Closing remarks**

- We didn't get to the last topic on this month's agenda, *Teacher Autonomy*, so it will be the first item on the next month's agenda
- Thank you to all for your exemplary service to children!

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2016

Proposed agenda items: Teacher Autonomy, School Funding/BEP, Evaluations