**District Liaison**

**November 28, 2023**

The half day on 11/22 was greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Dr. Ricca and the WPCSD Board of Education for making it possible.

Thank you for the ongoing dialogue regarding health, safety, and support staffing.

**Paid Family Leave:** The Association would like to see progress as we begin our discussions on this important item.

Dr. Ricca – We’ll have an ongoing discussion about this as we approach negotiations next year.

**American Education Week:**

Our schools host various activities throughout the year, inviting families to participate. While some buildings hold workshops, others extend invitations for families to observe a lesson/activity. This sometimes results in unintended consequences, such as students feeling upset if a family member cannot attend or disruptions in the classroom.

Is it possible to reimagine American Education Week?

Dr. Ricca – There are some safety issues about opening up schools to the public for a whole school day, or multiple. I’d like feedback from faculty at each school about how they can maintain the spirit of the day or week. For example, middle school does an assembly.

**Professional Development & Coverages:**

We are appreciative of the professional development opportunities offered to staff members. We have heard great feedback about the CORE training.

* Will general education teachers also be CORE trained?
* Is it possible to be mindful of the master calendar when planning these trainings as it leads to issues with providing coverages. For example, CORE training for all ICT teams, CT teachers, and 3-5 interveners was held on the same day as Math PD. This required close to 20 teachers to be out before contending with absences. As result, TAs, ENL teachers, STEM teachers and other specialists were pulled to cover classes which results in the loss of ENL and other vital services.

Dr. Ricca – I’m happy to hear that CORE training is popular and more training is wanted, however coverage for these trainings are challenging.

**Secondary Progress Monitoring:**

* Implementing progress monitoring at the high school has been a struggle. The teachers say it would be helpful to have a meeting with the MS and HS teachers to share and discuss SMART goals for progress monitoring. Sharing information vertically would help with writing effective IEPs with goals that are appropriate for the respective settings.
* A model bank of goals would be a great starting point for staff to use for their reference when creating goals.
* The high school instructional structure is different from Highlands as there aren’t teams at WPHS, so they need support with implementing a system that works for students and staff.
* Highlands also has it on the minutes with concerns regarding time, training, and implementation.
* Both buildings are connecting with each other to try to problem solve on their own while still hoping to get the support they are requesting from the department. Eastview should also be a part of this work.

Dr. Ricca – As teachers struggle to work through the challenges of completing progress monitoring, they may develop strategies that will streamline the process. We cannot allow for a dropdown menu because the nature of smart goals is that they should be individualized. Districtwide articulation meetings between HS and HL are not part of district planning and would be difficult to arrange coverage for that amount of staff.

Kara – The contract allows for a ½ day of planning for teachers if they choose to do so.

Dr. Ricca – If a small group of teachers wants to see if they could get together to share ideas, that would be more manageable.

**ELL students:**

* Has our Title III funding increased along with the increase in our ENL population?
* How is the district working with the buildings to analyze the programs to support the needs of our ELL students?
  + Will more DL classes be open to accommodate the increase in our ENL population? Dual language classes are currently the largest classes on each grade level at GW.
  + Will there be more staff hired to accommodate the ENL program?

Dr. Ricca – The number of students fluctuates, districtwide from year to year. Increasing sections of DL is difficult with our current resources. We should focus on building language proficiency, work towards having students pass the NYSESLAT and move them into ELA classes.

**Dual Language Materials:**

* Given that Science 21 is not in Spanish, can a plan be made for the district to provide the Spanish materials to all dual language teacher across the district?
* The curriculum materials should be available to teachers before the beginning of the year. We know Kathy Barpoulis has agreed to help a few CSS teachers who have asked for support.
* We request that this support be equitable across the schools by providing all the Spanish zone teachers with the Spanish language materials.

Dr. Ricca – Spanish Language Resources are available in Science 21.

**Special Education:**

* What are the plans for ICT classes moving forward? Will the program be maintained/expanded within buildings where the program currently exists? Will the ICT program be expanded to other buildings?
* At the elementary level, ENL teacher and reading teachers are being pulled to do coverages for CSE meetings and trainings which impact the delivery of services.

What is the district doing to recruit more substitute teachers?

* Staff members have asked for clarity regarding the protocol for when it is appropriate for a staff member to put hands on a student. An example of this would be when redirecting a student or encouraging the student to stay in a seat. When a district administrator was asked this question, the member was told that this is a building decision. Please advise.

Dr. Ricca – Ideally, ICT would be in every building, however, certain programs that exist at certain buildings compete for program space and staffing with ICT. We need to do nuanced planning as placement is considered.

Dr. Ricca – If people are utilizing and relying on their training, using their best judgement considering their own safety and the safety of students, of course they will be supported. It’s impossible to generate a specific list of responses to student’s dysregulated behaviors because, by their nature, they are unpredictable and often unique. Untenured and tenured teachers will be equally supported. No staff member should feel that they should not or cannot report an incident.

**Technology:**

What is the plan and timeline for replacing Ron Velez?

Teachers are worried about rosters, Clever, and apps being updated for assessments.

Dr. Ricca – we are casting a wide net as we search for the next MIS/CIO.

**Email Responses:**

* While we are reminded about responding to emails in a timely manner, we ask the central office staff and administrators be reminded about the importance of responding to emails.
* Out of Office Reply: What is the rationale for asking only the PPS staff members to put on the out of the office reply?

Dr. Ricca – There is no districtwide mandate, but its common courtesy and may be expected by parents/guardians in these times to know if someone is unavailable for more than a day.

**Eastview ELA: Please see below.**

ELA Curriculum

* We are asking for release time or paid time for a few teachers to write curriculum for Reading and Writing classes with administrative support/feedback.
* Per the contract, Article X B: The board shall have the responsibility for establishing curriculum for the school district and teachers will teach within that curriculum.
* Dr. Hand’s response to the elementary teachers was the following. “Through the years (not just reactively), we supplement the TC Units with the Wilson Fundations program and more recently Heggerty Phonemic Awareness. Our teachers have also worked with the TC Units to adapt them to meet the needs of our classrooms through years of curriculum development projects.”
* This is NOT the case at EV. We were given TC books by our former coordinator and told to teach them without any adaptation or curriculum development projects.
* We have been writing curriculum as we go for the past 2 years and have not been compensated or given the time to do it.
* We need time to develop TC, since it is not a curriculum, but a resource. We need to adjust it to fit our student’s needs, while adding vocabulary, grammar, etc. to supplement it.

*\* Mr. Dixon has said he will give members the time. Mr. Cronk and Ms. Benitez have said that they will support the department in this endeavor. We would like to see this happen as soon as possible.*