

Teacher Advisory Council
Q&A
October 13, 2015

Can EOC conversion scores be lowered to meet/align better with our new 10 point grading scale? Old: Level 3 = 80+ grade. Suggested new: Level 3 + 60 grade

DPI has re-aligned and will be providing the new scan program for us to use. I am unable to share until more info released to us, probably later in October.

– Renee Harris

Can we make one of the high schools a technical school? This way we can focus and concentrate on helping the students that will probably not go to college. I feel we can better service these students that want to learn a trade.

This is certainly an idea worth discussion. There are a lot of moving pieces to a puzzle like this. Any creation of a technical high school would need to take place in the larger discussion about district alignment. Thanks for putting it on our “thought table.” – Larry Cartner

I feel that change is a good thing. It gives you a fresh start. Have you given any thought to moving assistant principals or principals around? Note this is not because I have issues with mine. I feel we get too comfortable if we stay in the same position too long.

We are constantly assessing the needs of our district in terms of student achievement and leadership. I will always make the decision regarding leadership changes with the best interests of students, the school, and the district in mind. – Larry Cartner

How can teachers get more support on how to teach their special ed students? We are faithfully provided with testing accommodations for all students with IEP's and 504's, but often know nothing of their diagnosis. We generally feel that what we're given does not support us in how to best educate these students.

PD will be created and offered to general education teachers regarding how to modify instructional practices to incorporate various modifications and accommodations for students with IEPs and 504 plans. Collaborative processes will also be developed and shared with EC and general education teachers to ensure effective sharing of information regarding EC student needs. – Lisa Ewers

Can all schools use the official ECPPS calendar (<http://www.ecpps.k12.nc.us/pages/ECPPS/Calendar>) to help avoid scheduling conflicts between buildings?

Yes. Each school has a web manager who maintains the school page. The web manager can link dates from the school's calendar to the district calendar. School events posted to the district calendar will require approval from the Community Schools Office, but that is a simple process. I will communicate with the school web managers regarding this process. – Tammy W. Sawyer

When TA's are hired, will the TA's be placed in schools that demonstrate the greatest need?

The Board worked diligently to provide a TA for each kindergarten and each first grade classroom in the district. This is a total of 52 TAs. The current group of 26 TAs will be restored to 39+ hours per week on student days only. The TAs to be hired will be for 30 hours per week on student days only. This will allow schools some flexibility in assignments while providing support in the areas of most need. – Larry Cartner

National Board Certified Teachers were acknowledged at the Convocation. Does the district have any plans to support teachers who may be interested in applying financially in the form of scholarship or using Title I money for professional development?

There is money set aside in one grant to provide some assistance to NBCT when they pass the test for the first time. We have not had anyone request to use these funds, but encourage anyone who is interested or wants additional information to contact Tracy Davenport for the details. – Dianne Meiggs

Clarification is needed on how to earn the annual leave days for perfect attendance. Is it determined by pay period, by month, etc.?

Certified staff can earn 3.5 hours annual leave per pay period with perfect attendance in that pay period. Your payroll clerk can provide you with the dates of the pay period. For the purposes of this program, if a teacher is away at an approved professional development event, that is counted toward perfect attendance. The accrued time can be used when annual leave days are built into the calendar. It can also be used on optional work days with your principal's approval. This information has been shared with your principals. – Larry Cartner

Can we go back to a shorter day? Since they added the 20 minutes staff and students seem unproductive at the end of the day. Maybe a shorter day would be more effective?

The reason for extending the day was to provide additional academic support for our students. No matter what time our day ends we hope all time at school is productive for students and staff. – Dianne Meiggs

The law requires 185 student days or 1025 hours. The additional 20 minutes was added in order to offset the time lost to inclement weather. Reducing the hours places us in danger of having to make up weather days. – Larry Cartner

Can we look at possibly letting the middle schools out before the elementary school, or at a closer time frame, so that the older students will get home first to help with the younger siblings?

We will research the question. Sometimes there are reasons for the way we operate or why bus routes are the way they are. Most of our buses do a double run each day -one elementary and one secondary. We also transport Pre-K from home to their home school then to SHES the Pre-K site. – Dianne Meiggs

Is there a check and balance system in place for money reimbursement from professional development so that money is disbursed within a reasonable amount of time? Also, what is considered reasonable?

Employees attending professional development events are required to complete an SD-1 Form with the relative information for the event and have their immediate supervisor sign off on the form. The SD-1 Form also serves as authorization for the employee to be off site. Upon completion of the professional development event, the employee has 30 days from the last date of travel to submit their travel expense request form to the Finance Department. The employee's travel expense request form must reflect accurate expense information such as mileage, meals, registration fees, hotel room cost, etc. Receipts for expenses other than mileage and meals are required to be included with the travel expense request form. When the employee's travel expense documentation is received in Finance, the appropriate staff members review the information for accuracy and completeness. Corrections are made to calculations as necessary and contact is made with the employee requesting travel pay if any required documentation has been omitted. When the verification process has been completed, the documentation is processed for payment. The timing of the payment is subject to the funding source. State and Federal funds must be requested from DPI and takes 3 & 5 days, respectively, to receive the funds. The overall responsibility for ensuring that travel expense payment request documentation be submitted timely and accurately is that of the employee. Processing of travel expense payments is typically made within a week of receipt.
– Doug Hale

Why are becoming a top heavy administration with lots of central office staff and wasting Title 1 dollars that could be better spent on pd and supplies/funding for SIP?

One of the things that was very clear from our teacher surveys was a need for teacher support in teaching and learning. This is where any additional personnel have gone. Last year, a large share of Title 1 dollars were spent ineffectively, some not at all, and some too late in the year to benefit students. Middle schools did not have a dedicated funding stream prior to this year, when they were included in Title 1 funding. In the reorganization at the district level, three positions were added in instruction. All the others were already in place in the district – their roles were simply expanded. Overall, decisions were made to change the results we are producing as a district. I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about anything that is perceived as a waste. The district is moving from a model of a central office working on administrative matters to one of central services supporting the efforts of teachers and schools.
– Larry Cartner

I think we need to reconsider field trips in the district. Many of our students don't have these experiences and field trips should not be limited to an amount but looked at individually for quality.

Field trips fall under the purview of the principal. Principals have to balance requests for time away from the classroom with the quality of the experience. – Larry Cartner

Is it possible for MS/HS to start before elementary school next year? It would make it so the K-5 students didn't wait for the bus in the darkness in the winter, would mean MS/HS students could be at home to receive their siblings after school, would allow the many sports teams to end rehearsals earlier in the day, etc.

This is a puzzle with a lot of moving parts. One of the challenges of a small district is providing transportation services in an efficient yet equitable manner. With our buses running multiple routes, trying to keep younger and older students separate, and knowing what research says about later start times for high schools, it would be very difficult to reverse start times. – Larry Cartner