

Editor: Nina LaPine

October 27, 2009



WDEA's meeting with the Superintendent.

SOLVING EMPLOYEES CONCERNS

S.E.C.

Follow Up Items

NOTE: Dr. Cook was not available for this meeting because of medical issues. WDEA met with the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, Dr. Lyn Bailey and the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, Janet Sullivan.

Excess Regulation

WDEA shared that IBN gave feedback and further direction to the Working Conditions subcommittee. The changes are being processed by the subcommittee and will be forwarded to the Superintendent's office in early November. The intention is to share this new regulation with staff members before Winter Break.

Copier Concerns

WDEA reiterated the desire to cease tracking copies. In the event that it is necessary to continue because there is not conclusive data to drive purchasing decisions, we would ask that the window of time before teachers have to reenter codes be extended and that there be one code for all types of machines. We would further suggest that the employee number be used rather than computer passwords which are more complex.

Dr. Bailey will speak with Dr. Cook to get an update. If more information is needed to drive future decision-making, she will investigate the feasibility and costs involved in our other suggestions.

Field Trip

WDEA shared that there is still considerable confusion regarding the field trip process. This includes getting the concept approved, not just the logistical details of planning. We would like to see a very simple step-by-step process and would like to assist in the development. In addition, we feel that reminders regarding flexibility as we try to

improve this process and increase opportunities is vital. The more that there can be flexibility at the District level, we believe it will translate to less stress at the sites.

Dr. Bailey assured us that she can continue to send messages encouraging flexibility. She supports the concept of a simplified process to assist people. She shared that it is the desire of the Governing Board and the District to encourage equity in opportunities across the district. They will be working on creating not only a list of suggested options by grade level that will support curriculum and avoid repetition of trips, but they want to create "packages" that any school can access which will reduce the work load on teachers and support staff planning trips. She also let us know that this work will be done collaboratively by reconvening the Field Trip Committee, but new members will be welcome.

Transportation

WDEA shared examples of concerns that are still be reported regularly. Some are from within the department, while others are frustrations from staff impacted by issues that still exist.

Dr. Bailey emphasized that things are improving. She encourages people to bring forward specific concerns, so they can be addressed. She also reiterated that the district has hired a consultant. This consultant has already begun his work. His next step is to conduct focus groups.

New Items

New Positions

WDEA asked about recent positions approved by the Governing Board that are designated as new. We are aware that the classified positions related to special education are likely driven by the IEP process, but there are concerns about the system adding positions when we were unable to support raises and positions had to be eliminated.

Janet Sullivan shared that one position was added to her department. The Instructional Coach position is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant that was recently submitted. This position is dedicated primarily to supporting teachers on improvement plans. In addition, these positions are intended to assist the system in increasing our capacity to increase overall student achievement. Although we have not received ARRA funding yet, the list of teachers requiring assistance exceeded the capacity of the two coaches already in place.

Dr. Bailey shared that the addition of a detention monitor at John Jacobs was a result of the needs identified in a rubric developed ___ years ago. The needs of this school have significantly changed and the school submitted a revised rubric that qualified for this position. The addition of a 6th grade teacher at Ocotillo was part of the leveling process. This will likely be the last position created by leveling. It was too late in the school year to consider closing a section and transferring a teacher from another site. She also noted that neither of the two remaining RIF teachers were qualified for this position.

Math Pacing Guide

WDEA shared examples of extreme frustration with this document. Many of the concerns centered on teaching skills before students have the necessary prerequisites. The organization of the document was also a concern. It's implementation seems to vary greatly from site to site. At

some sites, they are making modifications collectively by grade levels. At other sites, there is more rigid adherence to the document. In all cases, staff are expressing an inability to keep up.

Janet Sullivan assured us that not only is this document not set in stone, but that the whole state is experiencing similar frustrations that stem from such a fundamental shift in the curriculum. She said that sites should be encouraged to make modification collectively. She also reminded us that the guides have spaces at the back for input and suggestions. She strongly encourages staff members to document specific concerns and possible solutions. There will be a committee this summer that will use this information to revise and improve the pacing guide. She did want to remind us that having some guide and goal was definitely preferential to having none.

WDEA suggested that schools be reminded to gather feedback throughout the school year. In addition, a concerned effort could be made in the late Spring to consolidate and gather all the comments and suggestions while teachers experiences are still fresh.

Janet will implement these suggestions.

DO Staff

WDEA suggested that as a gesture of support and to assist with morale at the sites, that district office staff with current teaching certificates could volunteer to substitute. We shared various potential benefits as well as the acknowledged limitations (i.e. many department do not have certified teachers).

Both Dr. Bailey and Janet Sullivan expressed reservations about the feasibility of doing this, but also acknowledged the potential benefits. They will revisit this topic in November.

Informational

Tuesday , March 2nd—Read Across America
Wednesday, March 3rd—Education Day

Next year AIMS is scheduled to be moved another week later. Janet Sullivan continues to advocate in this area on behalf of the students and teachers in WESD.

Pending Issues

Duty Regulation: Meet with Principals from Washington Principals Association (WPA)

RIF Regulation: Monitor Changes Required if Changes Signed by Governor Take Effect (11/24/2009)

Professional Expectations: Review Draft

Personnel (G) Section: Timeline for Finishing Revisions

S.E.C.

The S.E.C. is published by WDEA for the benefit of all Washington District Employees as a summary of meetings between the Superintendent and members of the WDEA Executive Committee on Solving Employee Concerns. Contact your WDEA Building Representative if you need a concern addressed.