

PERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Perry Schools Discussion Notes

February 18, 2016

PTEC Room 210, 4:10PM:-5:00PM (Approximate Time)

ATTENDANCE

Administration: Barb Brouwer (SHS), Rhonda Jones-Jointer (PTEC), Vicki Carpenter (PTEC), John Ralston (PMA), David Rohl (PMMS), Whitney Wilkowski (ALE), and David Henriott (RPE)

PEA: Sue Buscemi (WV), Cathee Cullison (SHS), Steve Dawson (PMHS), Kyle Hanefeld (GV), Matt Henninger (PMHS), Neil Linville (PMHS), Mark Madden (ALE), Rebecca Rissel (GV), Nancy Tatum (PA), and Diane Turpen (PMHS)

Special Education Program Changes

Vicki Carpenter shared changes in district locations for special education programs effective next year; the changes will save bussing costs and allow students to attend a school that is closer to home..

- At the high school level, one CIP class will be held at each high school.
- CY will have 2 autism classes and no self-contained classes.
- AL will gain CIP classroom, losing 2 mild classrooms.
- SE will lose 2 CIP classrooms. Students will go to either CY or AL.
- Changes in locations for speech pathologists will be based on case loads.

SIOP Expectations

Administration wants to get as many teachers as possible trained in SIOP strategies to support learning of the growing population of EL students.. To protect instructional time, trainings have not been held during the school day. Training with a stipend has been offered during breaks, but some cannot attend due to family commitments. Trainings during breaks will continue to be offered. In April, training for up to 30 staff members will be offered during the contract day; no stipend will be available. SIOP training will also be offered to building staffs as needed.

Each building has a SIOP expert. Lisa Netsch is the district SIOP coach, a position funded by EL funds. Online SIOP support is available for a refresher in SIOP strategies but does not provide enough support to be officially considered SIOP trained.

Substitute Teachers

Having enough substitute teachers is an ongoing issue, which was examined at a previous Discussion Meeting. Neil Linville stated that he attempted to form a committee to discuss this topic again more thoroughly with administration and work toward a solution and to let PEA membership know that the issue is being addressed. At the elementary level when a substitute teacher cannot be secured to cover a teacher absence, sometimes the students are divided up and distributed to other classes. This procedure is less than ideal for the students since the classroom teacher who is subbing for the absent teacher does not know the needs of the additional students as well, may have different classroom procedures and may have different plans for the day. At the secondary level, teachers give up prep periods to teach classes for which a substitute teacher was not available. Rhonda Jones-Jointer relayed that Jenny Thompson of AESOP (substitute teacher placement service) says that the placement problem is more severe at the elementary level since the school day starts later and substitute teachers have already been placed in secondary buildings where the day starts earlier.

Whitney Wilkowsky stated that she has had problems securing subs and that at one time, she had ten openings with only one sub to use. She also stated that she didn't see the issue revolving around certain days of the week, such as Fridays or Mondays. It is widespread. Barb Brouwer followed up that elementary schools may be experiencing more of a drought with subs because the secondary schools are able to secure them sooner; secondary schools start their day earlier.

Another issue is the quality of the substitute teachers. Some substitute teacher work better at one site over another. Some substitute teachers are tagged as "do not return" by some buildings. Substitute teachers who are new to working in Perry Township Schools attend an orientation conducted by Human Resources and rules of teacher conduct apply to them. An orientation is held every two weeks.

Linville stated that a shortage of substitute teachers was not as much an issue 3-4 years ago as it is now. He stated that the law has changed and so teacher morale is down. The issue of teacher shortage in Indiana has been on the news recently and low teacher morale is a huge issue statewide.

To alleviate the problem, Jones-Jointer says she raised substitute teacher pay from \$65 to \$70 to be competitive with other districts as well as had conversations with other school districts and Kelly Services about substitute teachers. Administration has staggered teacher training during instructional time and avoided planning training sessions on Mondays and Fridays to reduce the need for substitute teachers on any one day or around a weekend.

Rhonda Jones-Jointer explored employing Kelly Services. Kelly Services guarantees screening and recruiting, but is more costly than the current system. Additional funds for substitute teachers would come from General Fund. She stated that when MSD of Washington Township schools started using Kelly Services, they went from a 65% to a 90 % fill of substitute positions. **(Note: This would cost significant dollars to implement in Perry Township, approximately \$400,000 annually.)**

Rhonda Jones-Jointer suggested looking at incentives for teachers who cover classes of absent teachers. In the past, Perry Township Schools maintained the policy that teachers could not take off the day before or after a break to avoid a substitute shortage around breaks. Barb Brouwer stated that she uses support staff to cover classes. **Another idea for generating a larger pool of substitute teachers was to work with the schools of education at Indiana universities to create a substitute teaching field experience for pre-service teachers or to advertise substitute teaching as a part time job** option. Perry Township Schools could also employ a set number of substitute teachers full time and offer benefits so that elementary schools are not getting leftovers, BUT this would cost significant dollars.

Neil Linville stated that he would have been more willing to discuss substitute teachers' salary increases and/or incentives (things that will cost money) during bargaining if administration could show data concerning reasons that teachers are missing school and why there is a decreased pool of viable substitute teachers. He had a committee ready to work on this issue, but it did not appear that administration was ready to sit down to discuss this issue. **(Note: Until PEA leadership and administration sit down to really identify the problems and come up with thoughtful ideas to combat them, we can't entertain/discuss any ideas that would essentially take away dollars from the money set aside for teacher salary increases.)**

Performance Grant Monies

Neil Linville communicated the indignation of many PEA teachers concerning how DOE distributed the Performance Grant funds to school corporations and in the way Perry Township Schools administration awarded the money to teachers. The amounts from the state are lower, which Mr. Linville calls "pathetic." However, he reports that he and many PEA members are upset at the unilateral decision by administration to award teachers rated "highly effective" double the amount of those rated "effective." Mrs. Jones-Jointer stated that the law dictated how the funds were distributed.

Mr. Henninger was quick to respond that the Indiana statute requires a differentiation in what the two groups of teachers (Effective and Highly Effective) receive from the grant; however, the school corporation administration is at liberty to decide what that monetary difference will be. Further, PEA should have been included in deciding how the funds would be divided up, as it occurred last year.

Mrs. Carpenter apologetically and clearly stated that the administration will include PEA in the decision-making process for dividing up grant funds next year. Including PEA as a partner in the decision making process helps keep a good working relationship between teachers and administrators.

Mr. Henninger stated he appreciates the quick distribution of incentive funds to teachers once they were received.

Next meeting will be held March 17 at 4:10 in PTEC room 210.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Turpen