

HES PTA meeting 2/1/17

Mary Kingston Roche—BOE

Dinora Hernandez—BOE

Cesar Pacheco—Assistant Director, Security Services

Theo Cramer—Executive Director, Human Resources

Deirdria Hudnell—Substitute Office

Robin Welsh—Executive Director, Monitoring, Accountability & Compliance

Robert Gaskin—Chief, Human Resources

Herman James—Director, Human Resources Operations and Staffing

[did not catch his name]—Executive Director, Superintendent's Office?

Dr. Fossett—Area 2 Instructional Lead

Dr. Helen Coley—Instructional Director

Deni Taveras—County Council

Alonzo Washington—State Delegate

ART TEACHER

Roche and Hernandez are going to find out how much .4 of an art teacher will cost to make sure it is available in the overall budget.

PTA can't pay for salary or purchase positions, there are no grants for paying teacher positions; so no creative funding opportunity.

Gaskin provided timeline of budgeting process:

PGCPS budget must be finalized and submitted to County Executive by March 1

April/May student-based budget released for each school and principal and instructional director, with input from school community, develop budget

By June, all school budgets are approved

Gaskin stated that it is too early in process to be advocating for this position as school budget not yet available.

HES parents reiterated importance of a full-time art teacher for a school in the arts district, trying to get ahead of issue, that funding goes to specialty schools and it's not too much to ask for .4 of an art teacher, and that an assistant principal for a school of 560 students is necessary as well—shouldn't have to choose between the two.

SUBSTITUTE ISSUE

Substitute Office is holding substitute teacher job fairs monthly. They are looking for quality candidates with a BA or higher degree, but the minimum requirement is 60 college credits so they can also tap into energetic college students. They are trying to get to 6,000 substitutes in the system.

In April/May, the county has a reassurance meeting with subs to see if they plan on returning for the upcoming school year. Based on that meeting in 2016 and the upcoming changes in reporting that took place in the summer, they saw the need to aggressively hire, so they hired 1000 additional substitutes.

She acknowledged that there is some apprehension/fears people feel about working for PGCPs.

As numbers of teachers on leave increased, they have seen need to hire more subs, so they are holding job fairs.

There is a new database system. She acknowledged there is a need to work with specific schools to find long-term subs and that HES has a low response rate. Other options to improve system is building a cadre of subs for individual schools; perhaps assigning subs to a cluster of schools would be helpful.

They have also raised the mandatory number of days to be a sub in the county from 25 to 45 days but there is push back from subs, so she doesn't think they will be able to do more.

For the retiree rehires, they have to be out of system for 45 days and then can come back.

Discussion about whether lowering the number of days (from 16 consecutive for 1 teacher) needed to get long-term sub rate could be helpful in making that more attractive.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 5145

PGCPs administration is adamant that the policy 5145 has not changed but the heightened focus, training, and direct reporting to CPS have increased number of reports.

PGCPs Security Services handles internal investigations and works hand-in-hand with CPS and Employee Labor Relations. Pacheco stated that if a case rises to a criminal level, it goes to the police and Security Services shadows them. He stated that they have increased staff to 8 full-time investigators and 22 part-time investigators. The part-time investigators are actually the security services staff located in each high school in the county, but he has trained them in investigation as well to help.

7 years ago, there were only 250 cases in the entire school year; he has 700 cases as of today and believes they are on track to reach 1200 cases for the year

Employee Labor Relations has now started (ca. December) to make a determination of whether staff should be placed on paid administrative leave up front so teachers can be paid while the investigation takes place. This means that PGCPs is now paying teachers on administrative leave, the substitute, and all the additional investigators. They have also very recently implemented a database for tracking cases.

Helen Coley stated that her office saw they were not doing a good job communicating with parents when a teacher was placed on leave, so they have formatted a standardized letter to go out to parents in the affected class when a teacher is placed leave.

PGCPs staff and parents agreed that maintaining privacy of teacher and the pending investigation is important; parents reiterated the need for communication.

Process now is that when report is made, it goes to CPS who must complete investigation. Then Security Services has to review the case; they cannot close the case until CPS makes decision. The decision is then relayed to the Area Instructional Leader and Principal. CPS has found most of the reports to not be abuse or even reportable. While the new reporting policy ensures that no incident is ignored, not everything needs to go through CPS but could be left to the principal for disciplinary action or training. Pacheco admitted they NEED TO STEM THE OVER-REPORTING.

Roche asked what is being done to improve training to address the problem of over-reporting. The administration in attendance said that principals just had another training. There is some conversation about developing additional teacher training modules. Mrs. Bey indicated at the next HES staff meeting, they were going to discuss reporting.

SOLUTIONS

HES provided some ideas for solutions to close gaps:

Fingerprinting—there was some discussion about how changes in fingerprinting and requirements for background checks made it more difficult for parents to volunteer

Purchasing software that used to be available—PTA is purchasing First in Math licenses for HES

Getting UMD students to tutor