

Parent Communications
January 12, 2017

A Parent Communications meeting was held on January 12, 2017, with 29 parent representatives and ambassadors present.

Dr. Worthington, Director of Schools, welcomed the group and introduced Dr. Phyllis Casebolt, Director of Education Quality.

Dr. Casebolt spoke to the group about recruitment of teachers and the process. Each year between 270 – 370 classroom teachers are hired. The primary reasons for these large numbers are student growth and teachers of military spouses' relocation/leaving the district. National teacher shortages are impacting our entire school district. The value of working with our military teachers from multiple diverse backgrounds is that this provides additional collaborative opportunities and strategies that benefit our students. Dr. Casebolt commented CMCSS uses a lot of strategies to recruit teachers. Human Resources travels to university-sponsored career fairs across the state, partners with APSU, and attending out-of-state career fairs (Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana) where we know from research-based practices those areas have impressive educator preparation programs. The challenge is our state Department of Education has changed licensure requirements for out-of-state teachers. In the past, teachers were often granted a license to teach in TN if they had a license from another state. Now, they are required to take TN assessments which are through ETS (Educator Testing System). It is costly when someone has recently graduated from college and they have to spend hundreds of dollars to be employed in the state of TN. This year for the first time we have opened the door for a unique type of license called "Job Embedded License" which includes our elementary education teachers as well. We have used this licensing practice in the past for secondary difficult-to-fill positions such as the sciences, math, and special education. A minimum requirement for those candidates interested in following this pathway is a bachelor's degree and a partnership with a state approved university. If someone is interested in the most convenient teaching path, we will refer them to APSU where they would speak with a certification officer. The officer reviews the transcript and makes recommendations for the content area to teach based on the transcript. For example, if someone was interested in being an elementary teacher, they would review for minimum content competency and a content specific assessment would be required. It is critically important that teachers in our classrooms know and understand content very well because this is an area that we really do not have a lot of time to fully teach internally. In summary, if an applicant has a bachelor's degree and a connection with a state approved university, we could consider an agreement that our district could hire that person and they would begin teaching at the same time. In the evenings or weekends, they would take courses to gain that pedagogy or learn about how to become a teacher. If you or a friend have a desire to teach but never really thought about this as an employment opportunity, please contact our Human Resources department. Question: If you are currently in the process of earning a master's in education, would this program be a possible fit? Answer: Absolutely, if it is with a state approved university like APSU. Contact Jana Hatcher, APSU certification officer, hatcherj@apsu.edu or 931-221-6182 and ask specifically about the Job Embedded License.

Dr. Worthington mentioned utilizing our school marquees to advertise for bus drivers. Jim Sumrell, Chief Operations Officer, commented the district is about 20 drivers short per day and stated anyone or someone they know might be interested in driving a school bus, please pass along. There are benefits associated with driver positions as well.

Dr. Worthington referenced recent discussions regarding the study on changing school start times and provided a copy of Williamson County's report from the Tennessean. Williamson County halted their study for many of the same concerns as our district one of which seems to be there is little support to collaborate the study completely. Another was the timing of bus transportation for the elementary kids. For now, the study has been tabled but probably will resurface at some point in the future.

Dr. Kimmie Sucharski reported on the new ESSA plan (Every Student Succeeds Act). With this plan, the federal government is allowing states to take back more control over education. There are 3 entities that have influence, impact and input into this plan: Legislators, TN Board of Education, and TN State Department of Education. At the end of this presentation, a link will be provided for direct feedback to the state which is very important if you would like to voice your opinions and concerns regarding this plan. The deadline for feedback is January 31, 2017.

ESSA was signed into law December 2015. States have one year to create a plan for ESSA to be implemented for the 2017-18 academic year. Currently, the states are now in the driver's seat and make decisions regarding assessments, goals and accountability standards.

ESSA Compared to Tennessee Policy

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
Standards	Challenging academic standards	PC 423 (2015) TN established an extensive and thorough standards review to insure the state set rigorous standards align to preparing students to be successful in higher education and the workforce.
Assessments	Assessments in math and reading for 3 rd – 8 th and once in HS; assessments in science three times between 3 rd and 12 th . 95% participation rate required	TNReady assessments are administered every year 3 rd – 8 th for math, reading, science, and social studies. High school assessments are administered for <u>ENG I</u> , <u>ENG II</u> , <u>ENG III</u> , <u>ALG I</u> , <u>Geom.</u> , <u>ALG II</u> , <u>Biology</u> , <u>Chemistry</u> , and <u>US History</u> . HS 11 th grade also required to complete the <u>ACT</u> HS complete a civic's test before graduation. 95% participation rate required

1. Less time on testing does not equate to less tests. ESSA provides the opportunity to rethink testing and reduce the “number” of standardized assessments. ESSA requires a total of 16 standardized tests from 3rd through HS. Tennessee currently administers 35 standardized assessments not including the 2nd grade assessment or student portfolios.
2. ESSA does not require ACT. The norm referenced ACT does not match the construct and annual goals of the criterion referenced course and content specific EOC. The ACT score is based on speed and accuracy and designed to provide insight to students success in **College English I, College Algebra I, College Biology, and Social Science**. Meeting the benchmark means a student has a 75% chance of making a C or better in the **aligned college courses**.
3. Both the number of tests and the inclusion of the ACT distract from instructional time.

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
Teacher Evaluation	Leaves to the states to determine teacher effectiveness.	Tennessee utilizes the “ <i>Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model</i> ” (TEAM) which is based on 2-4 observations (based on licensure and LOE), constructive feedback, student data and professional development. Current updates to TEAM include the use of portfolio growth models for teachers in non-tested grades.

1. Legislated in the state of Tennessee: Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-617 and State Board rule 0520-01-03-.06(d). The Tennessee Teaching Evaluation Enhancement Act of 2015 (T.C.A. § 49-1-302).

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
District Accountability	Academic achievement for reading and math annually. An additional state-determined student growth indicator. Graduation rate ELL proficiency At least one additional indicator of school success or student support	Beginning with the 2015-16 AMO data will move from ETT data, and achievement measures will include: 3 rd - 8 th and HS Math 3 rd - 8 th and HS English Graduation Rate ACT Composite Additionally: Measures growth for Black, Hispanic, Native American (BHN, economically disadvantaged (ED), English Language Learners (ELL), and students with disabilities (SWD). Provides for 3 pathways to demonstrate performance for both achievement and gap closure components. Acknowledges student growth from below basic to basic and from below proficient to proficient. Currently Tennessee does not have an indicator to address ELL proficiency and is working to identify the school success indicators.

1. The assessment impact to an 11th grade student is weighty in the Tennessee Plan with most required to complete the English III EOC, Algebra II EOC, Chemistry EOC, US History EOC, the ACT, and the civics test (our district administers in the civics test in the 10th grade at the completion of Government, most districts in the 11th grade). This does not include Advance Placement exams or dual enrollment exams the student may have as well. The ACT and civics test are required for graduation (legislated).

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
Achievement targets	Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) are not part of ESSA.	Tennessee has an AMO framework that addresses academic achievement and graduation rate.
	States must establish interim and long term goals for all students and each subgroups tied to academic achievement, graduation rates and ELL proficiency.	Tennessee currently does not have goals for English Language Learner proficiency.
Identifying low-performing schools and student subgroups	Identify bottom 5% defined by both academic and non-academic factors.	Tennessee currently identifies: Priority schools, which are the bottom 5% based on academic achievement. Focus Schools, which are the 10% of schools with the largest subgroup achievements gaps.
	Identify HS with graduation rates under 67%.	Currently Tennessee does not have a process to measure school quality and student success.
	Identify schools where subgroups are underperforming.	

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
English Language Learners	Strong emphasis on ensuring EL students are served well. States identify the interventions they plan to use.	Currently Tennessee does not have a proficiency target for English language learners.
Interventions and school turnaround	Districts must design and implement evidence-based turnaround plans for schools identified in the bottom 5%. If school is not turned around in 4 years, state must intervene.	Tennessee is currently gathering feed back on school turnaround approaches. Currently the state is utilizing a mix of approaches to include the Achievement School District (ASD) and district iZones (innovation zones) Both programs are designed to move schools from bottom 5% to top 25%.

Topic	ESSA	TN Policy
Reporting requirements	State must publish annual report cards on districts' performance. These report cards must also include subgroup performance (ethnicity, SWD, ED, and ELL). Must include the percentage of English language learners achieving English language proficiency. Must include other indicator(s) of school quality or student success such as: School quality, climate, and safety, suspensions, expulsions, chronic absenteeism, and more States must meaningfully differentiate schools.	Tennessee has a report card process providing information for both districts and schools and including subgroup information. Does not include an A-F grading system which the TDOE and SBE are working on. There are four district determinations: In Need of Improvement, Progressing, Achieving, and Exemplary. Some non-academic indicators on the Report Card are attendance, suspension rates, and highly-qualified teachers

- All schools will receive a grade A-D based on the following success indicators: (1) achievement, (2) growth, (3) maximizing success, (4) readiness, (5) opportunity to learn, and (6) ELPA. Schools performing in the bottom 5% of absolute achievement will receive an F.
 - The Readiness component {Ready Graduate} of the calculation is based on graduation rate x the percent of students scoring 21 or better on ACT...or...percent completing EPSO/Industry Certifications. This becomes an issue of equity and access. EPSO = Advance Placement, Cambridge International Examinations, College Level Examinations Program, Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate, Local Dual Enrollment, Statewide Dual Enrollment, Industry Certification (all are fee based on some level, require access to teachers with appropriate credentials, some require specialized equipment and materials, and space for providing the opportunities in the post secondary environment.)
 - Opportunities to Learn component looks at chronic absenteeism K-8 and 9-12.
 - ESSA's intent was to *Empower Districts* and reduce federal footprint.
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K-8 School Example

Indicator	All Students		Subgroup	
	Grade	Weight	Grade	Weight
Achievement	A	40%	B	35%
Growth	A	40%	C	35%
Opportunity to Learn	D	20%	B	20%
ELPA*			B	10%
Weighted Average	B	100%	B	100%
All Students Grade	B	60%		
Subgroup Grade	B	40%		
Overall School Grade	B	100%		

HS School Example

Indicator	All Students		Subgroup	
	Grade	Weight	Grade	Weight
Achievement	A	35%	B	30%
Growth	A	35%	C	30%
Opportunity to Learn	D	10%	B	10%
Readiness	D	20%	B	20%
ELPA*			B	10%
Weighted Average	B	100%	B	100%
All Students Grade	B	60%		
Subgroup Grade	B	40%		
Overall School Grade	B	100%		

* For schools that do not have an English learner subgroup, no weighting will be applied to ELPA. Thus, the weighting for All Students and Subgroup averages will be the same.

ESSA Timeline in Tennessee

Kick Off	Stakeholder Input	Writing the Plan	Stakeholder Feedback	Approving the Plan
May 2016	June-August 2016	Sept.-Nov. 2016	Dec. 2016-Jan. 2017	Feb.-March 2017

Link to TN ESSA draft:

https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/ESSA_Draft_Plan_Full.pdf

Feedback link (closes January 31):

- https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/essa_draft_plan_feedback

Question of the Month – January: Does the current Student Code of Conduct reflect our community’s values and expectations for ethical and lawful conduct and responsible citizenship? Parent comment: I believe our student conduct is a great guideline that needs to be reviewed and updated throughout the years as everything routinely should be. I believe a step could be towards “uniforms” as Davidson County does. This would eliminate so much unnecessary structure issues in the schools and allow more concentration on education.

The next Parent Communications meeting is scheduled for February 2 in the Boardroom at 11:30 a.m.

Question of the Month - February: Is the school system progressing in the right direction? Are the actions and strategic work of the district in line with its mission and vision? If not, what are your concerns?

If you have comments, please send those to Deb Cummings (deborah.cummings@cmcss.net).

The meeting notes from each month (another useful tool to share with parents and principals) are posted on the CMCSS website under the “Students & Parents” tab.