

May 27, 2008 CCEC Meeting

QUESTIONS: Unedited (Double space indicates a separate responder.)

Can superintendent applicants be thoroughly and adequately investigated and interviewed by July 1? It seems like a very brief time.

RESPONSE: *The Christian County Board of Education set July 1st as the target date, but has stated several times publicly that, if necessary, an interim superintendent would be named to fill the position to avoid the board feeling pushed into a rushed decision.*

What about adding students to the coalition?

RESPONSE: *Students are welcome to be a part of the CCEC. They need only to indicate their interest and provide means of contact such as e-mail and mailing addresses.*

I am curious as to how the SBDM parent will be chosen. I have just been elected to the SBDM council @ Holiday Elementary. I am volunteering myself. Thanks,

RESPONSE: *The CCEC Steering Committee plans to discuss how the selection of the School Based Decision Making Council (SBDM) representative will be made at its June meeting. This selection process was overlooked at the time the Steering Committee drafted the CCEC By-laws. An amendment to the By-laws will be made defining the selection process. Thank you for expressing your interest. The Steering Committee membership will be advised of your willingness to serve.*

Have we looked into the model discussed in the 1st summit from Ft. Riley, Kansas?

RESPONSE: *As far as we are able to determine the Christian County School System has not looked into this model. You can find a profile of Ware Elementary School in Ft. Riley, Kansas at <http://www.achievementalliance.org/files/Ware.pdf>. Ware received one of Education Trust's Dispelling the Myth Awards last year. The reading program used is Success for All developed by Johns Hopkins. School atmosphere changes were modeled on a program taken from the book, Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom. Education Trust staff noted that the "key to the school is not really the programs, though those help, but (is) in the systemic leadership that holds teachers accountable and provides a lot of support."*

How were the members of the CCEC Committee (Steering)) chosen? I have attended every public meeting and I don't recall the selection process being discussed. I also filled out a "Call to Action" card and have received general emails only – not what I signed up and offered to do for the Coalition at the summit. Please consider carefully the demographics of your members. Why are they volunteering? Do they live in Christian County? Are they participating for the right reasons – education for children/students of ALL ages.

RESPONSE: *Mayor Dan Kemp organized the Education Summit Planning Committee and was joined in the effort by the Chamber of Commerce Workforce Education Development Partnership. Because of the tremendous response to the Education Summit, the Education Summit Planning Committee wanted to create a vehicle for helping to sustain the momentum in the community, and subsequently decided to add a parent, a teacher and a youth services representative to its membership. Dan Kemp, in his capacity as Mayor named the newly constituted committee, the Christian County Education Coalition Steering Committee and appointed Co-chairs, who were strongly supportive of public education, but were not tied directly to any one entity. The make-up of the CCEC which the Steering Committee was to lead, was to be all those who registered at the Education Summit in January unless they asked to be removed and anyone else indicating an interest in membership. The thought behind all this planning was that all stakeholders would be on equal footing, for example, government, schools, community etc. Since the formation of the CCEC, the Steering Committee has had three meetings (4/18/08, 5/08/08 and 5/27/08) and the full CCEC membership has met once (5/27/08). Quarterly meetings of the CCEC are planned, with the next one being August 26, 2008.*

Since the Education Summit, all participants have been entered into a database and Call to Action information has been organized. . It is a priority to get volunteers who have signed Call to Action cards or who have otherwise indicated their desire to help our schools engaged with a school. However, school staff has not been designated to fully implement connecting school needs with volunteers. It is also necessary for volunteers who work in the schools directly with the children to have criminal background checks. A staff person within the school system must be assigned to coordinate placement of volunteers with each school. The new superintendent will be asked to assign this responsibility. The CCEC was not formed until several months after the Summit. It is a free standing entity with facilitation provided by the City of Hopkinsville, Christian County Public School and the Chamber of Commerce, but the CCEC has no staff of its own. It is the expectation that the Partners in Education (PiE) effort and community involvement in the schools will be more fully implemented in the coming school year.

Most of the members of the CCEC Steering Committee are there because of the office they hold (ex officio), for example, the Mayor, School Superintendent, Hopkinsville Community College President, etc. There are four at large members. Ms. Janie Tomek, Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Instruction for the schools, was designated by Dr. Lovingood to serve in his stead, and is the only member who lives outside of Christian County. The CCEC's full membership is open to anyone with an interest in and a desire

to support public education at all levels, including early childhood, elementary, secondary, postsecondary and adult education. A copy of the By-Laws was provided those attending the May 27, 2008 CCEC meeting.

How much is this community willing to spend per year per student? I would appreciate an honest measurement of the school district's drop-out rate. I would appreciate a scorecard detailing the goals and objectives of each school and an honest and candid assessment of progress toward those goals and objectives.

RESPONSE: *The total budget for Christian County Schools in 2007/2008 was \$85.2 million. Direct student expenditures totaled \$41,678,268. There were 9053 students. If you calculate cost based on the total budget divided by the enrollment, the cost per pupil is \$9411.00. If you calculate cost based on direct student expenditures divided by enrollment, the cost per pupil is \$4604.00. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) for 2006/07 calculates cost per pupil for Christian County at \$7944.57, which is lower than the state average cost per pupil of \$8318.17. The KDE figure for cost per pupil for instruction in Christian County for 2006/07 is \$4486.01, again lower than the state average of \$4660.32. The 2007/08 figures are not yet posted on the District Profile. Kentucky now spends just 82 percent of the U.S. average per pupil compared to 99 percent among surrounding states, according to a study recently published by the Long Tern Policy Research Center in its publication, **Foresight** (No.51, 2008). Kentucky is a poor state with much deprivation as a result. This takes a toll on the readiness of children to learn when they enter school. Many of our children are already behind when they start kindergarten. Our elected officials have not lived up to the promise of adequate funding for public education at either the elementary/secondary level or the postsecondary level since reforms were passed in 1990 and 1997 respectively. They have been afraid to ask Kentuckians to spend more in order to pay for essential supports for our children. Yet polls have consistently shown that Kentuckians are willing to pay more to educate our young people adequately. Every member of this community is a stakeholder in public education. Its quality, in the end, has an impact on all of our lives.*

The school district's drop-out rate for 2007/2008 was 4.18 %. The drop out rate is derived from a formula developed by the Kentucky Department of Education as a portion of the non-academic data that is required to be reported by each district. The formula is used for all schools in Kentucky which allows comparisons between districts. Other states use different formulas so comparison of states is difficult.

*Each school has a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) that is constantly up-dated and/or revised. These plans are available at the public's request from each individual school or from the Board of Education in hard copy. The CSIPs are also now on-line. Go to <http://www.christian.k12.ky.us/>. Click on "**Short Cuts**" in the left margin. Click on the second menu selection titled **Comprehensive Plans**. Click on **Christian County School Improvement Plans**. All school plans will be available by school name.*

- 1. Would it be possible for the guidance counselors advise all students with a 2.0 or 2.5 GPA or higher their potential for college.**
- 2. Could the school system print on all high school students report card, their total amount of KEES money.**
- 3. Require that a parent must be notified when a student is questioned by a school officer.**

RESPONSE: *It certainly would be possible for guidance counselors to advise all students with a 2.0 or 2.5 GPA or higher of their potential for college and their need to prepare for that possibility by taking appropriate coursework. This expectation would have to be made clear and staff would have to be held accountable. Such action would need to be mandated by the Board of Education (BOE) or by the Superintendent for uniform implementation. At the middle school level, Name and Claim Teacher Advisors are able now to implement specific conversation topics relevant to this as well. The same expectation could be set by the administration or the BOE for the Name and Claim Teacher Advisors. Students and parents are encouraged to schedule appointments with counselors to address questions, needs and concerns as they arise..*

Under the State's present technology system, there is no capability for adding Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) money accumulated by the student to the Report Card. This would be beneficial to students and parents, however. The printed Report Card is a template based on the Kentucky Department of Education's Student Information System. Each school district has a designated administrator who is responsible for reporting student data for the KEES program, regarding the students' compliance or non-compliance. The administrator has also been given authorization to access individual student information on the KEES database, so conceivably this information could be passed on to the students by some other means than the Report Card. However, KHEAA sends an award notification to qualifying students each year to keep them informed of their earnings. In addition, students have the ability to check their KEES award information anytime by visiting Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) website at <http://www.kheaa.com> and logging into Zip Access.

Apparently some schools do notify a parent if a student is being questioned by an administrator. At times there has been found to be no working telephone number in the school's information system. There does not appear to be a rule that parents must be notified. The request for this to be a requirement is being communicated to the school system. It should prove to be very helpful to all concerned.

How are we going to address issues which come up with children with a disability, such as Dyslexia Parents and educators alike need to be educated as to what Kentucky law requirements are. We, as a community need to be made aware of how we can help early on in a child's educational journey.

RESPONSE: *Individual problems should be addressed by first talking to the child's teacher, then principal, and then finally Patty Grable, who is in charge of Special Education for the district. The CCEC can assist with accessing any of these individuals if the person with the problem will supply his/her name and phone number. Staff of the school system responsible for Special Education must know Kentucky law. If it is found that this is not so, the administration must be made aware. Parent understanding might be facilitated by having a district-wide meeting each school year to provide parents of children in Special Education classes with information and education regarding the law and their rights and to encourage questions, with answers provided to the group attending.*

What can be done with student discipline in school when someone is disruptive in class this seems that it is disruptive in learning for others in class especially if that student will not be held accountable for his or her actions.

How can parents be encouraged to become more involved with their child.

Will more money make students learn if not interested in learning?

RESPONSE: *According to Gallup, discipline is consistently ranked as one of the leading problems in U. S. education. Traditionally, school staff has tried to "make" students behave. This reactive approach has been ineffective in changing behavior and has led to bad attitudes, active rebellion, passive resistance and dropping out of school. Last year, the Superintendent's Youth Advisory Committee consisting of high school seniors and juniors plainly said, "Suspensions don't work." All agree that students must be accountable for their actions. Schools are to follow the schools' Code of Acceptable Behavior, which clearly states suggested consequences for misbehavior. Student misbehavior must be corrected calmly, consistently and immediately, by staff observing it.*

Although there are no simple answers, schools can take actions that make a difference. Actions taken do not supersede the Code of Conduct, but are an attempt to set up classrooms that engage students in learning and foster appropriate behavior. One proven researched-based method for doing this is Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). Staff members manage student behavior by setting clear expectations, teaching social skills, and monitoring and reinforcing good behavior. Staff is taught ways to calm students in situations that can get out of hand. There is a tendency to think children who are unruly should just "shape up or ship out." However when "shipped out" these students do not just disappear. The community expects schools to produce responsible citizens. For some students, school may be the only opportunity to learn the social skills necessary for success in our society, not to mention the academic base to function in a job or in college. PBS was implemented in the public schools last year. The next phase of implementation deals with ways that schools can effectively handle the more severe

disruptive behaviors. However, the BOE voted on 6/19/08 to discontinue PBS. It is unknown at this time what the BOE plans to do to improve student behaviors.

Parent Involvement is an on-going issue for schools and districts. We do know that we must seek untraditional methods to reach parents. It is our hope that the CCEC will help us find better methods. The Partners in Education (PiE) effort of the CCEC will be a place to start.

When there is disinterest in learning, it is important to try to understand what motivates students. It is known that success breeds success. Teachers of high quality who understand effective instructional practices that result in students experiencing success must be in the classrooms. Differences in learning styles must be understood as well as ways to address those differences. In order to recruit and retain quality teachers, a district must have competitive salaries; provide continuing excellent and relevant professional development to help teachers refine strategies that lead to success; supply adequate classroom materials and provide adequate numbers of teachers. These are foundational needs that must be funded adequately.