

Professional Council Meeting

4.7.26— 4:45-6:15 p.m. — Ed Center BOE Room

In attendance: Clint Albers, Megan Bricks, Nick Hoffmeier, Chris Pittman, Angie Powers, Trisha Putthoff, Eric Skoglund, Rick Sola, Julia Wenzel, Laura Wiltanger

Meeting begins at 4:45 pm

Agenda:

Follow-up information on VERP & HRA from ONEA

- Analysis of VERP and HRA created by Eric Skoglund presented
 - Started analysis with the question “Are these programs a cost or savings?”
 - Looking at the history, Kansas legislature came up with the “85” number (years of service and age) in the 1990s for KPERs Tier 1.
 - Analysis of the policies based on the information that could be found and reasonable assumptions
 - Two categories of taking using the VERP
 - 1st category- In a stable financial situation and are able to retire; the amount they receive is a support but not a main source of income
 - 2nd category-Rely on the steady income and cannot fully retire at 55 years old & are only able to retire because of the percentage of the VERP compensation
 - Example illustrations provided with a variety of assumptions to provide an estimate of what the impact of the costs would be, whether it would be a cost or savings
 - The examples/illustrations are based on 40 employees retiring in 24-25.
 - To summarize the findings: there is a break-even point where VERP becomes a savings, that is about 40% - “If you believe 40% of people who would be eligible to take VERP actually do, it is a cost savings for the district.” The findings were based on the assumption that would-be retirees would stay five more years if they did not take the VERP.
- Between Friday and end of day on Monday, 81 educators shared anecdotes about the importance of the HRA benefit:
 - 11,325 of accumulated leave; 140 days per educator (range 30-366 days)
 - Gave 5 main reasons why they came instead of using their day: It creates more work for more colleagues; I want to save days for the retirement benefit; preparing for a sub is too much work; students learn better with me than a sub; Feel pressure (from administrators, colleagues, parents) to be there
 - Specific stories shared: “Because I came to work I missed seeing my grandmother before she passed. I was never able to say goodbye. I think about it every year on the anniversary of her death.” From a former kindergarten teacher, “I had a terrible earache during a Fastbridge testing window. My ear drum ruptured- I ended up having to take more days to recover than if I had just taken one day to see a doctor.”

Committees

- Appraisal
 - 4/30, 5/28
- Calendar
 - 4/8, 4/29: Meeting tomorrow, will address updates and finalize calendars to bring to our next meeting; not many
- Conferences
 - Sharing of conference data from the board documents at the April board meeting; shared with conference committee to use along with survey data.
 - 2nd year that the data is collected in the way that it is
 - At the secondary level if a family meets with any teacher, it counts as a conference for that family
 - Megan reported that elementary had a different way of collecting the data this year: submitted just a number of conferences rather than the students' names
 - Question about how the numbers are generated: Would specialists or Special Ed conferences skew that data at all? Will get clarification from elementary administrators.

Response/Questions Regarding Proposals

- ONEA: GBZCDA (Leaves)
 - Blackout Days
 - None at this time
- ONEA: GBZCC (Professional Day)
 - Elementary plan time on four-day weeks
 - None at this time

ONEA Proposal

- ONEA: SPED Paperwork Days
 - SPED resignations are about 36% of total resignations of the total bargaining unit resignations from January – March (according to board documents).
 - Olathe NEA sent a survey to SPED educators in February 2026, 152 respondents: 65% said they are regularly getting their duty-free lunch and personal plan; 35% are not.
 - There is a difference between the elementary and secondary: more secondary educators report to getting both.
 - When asked “When you missed your lunch and/or plan due to an unscheduled student or building need, have you entered the stipend to be paid for that time?” 53 respondents: 94% said no, an increase from 84% in 2024-2025; Reasons given for not entering the stipend: lack of awareness, fear of negative consequences, administrative hurdles and requirement of pre-approval, staffing and student needs, time constraints
 - A shared interest that all educators have their duty-free lunch and personal plan
 - Just as a point of clarification: stipends are entered in Oracle, they do not have to be pre-approved

- Survey question: How likely are you to leave this job after this school year? 57% responded they plan to stay, 37% responded possible, 6% very unlikely; 40% of Autism educators responded “very unlikely” – when comparing the rates of resignations, this is an alarming number
- The April board documents were uploaded today, additional Special Education staff have submitted resignations.
- What are ways that could help with retention of Special Education educators?
 - Look at the number of students on their caseloads, adjustment to staffing-including paraprofessionals
 - Several current open positions, currently there are substitute teachers that are being used to fill in gaps, but this is putting strain on certified educators
 - Time and compensation
 - Supportive and safe working environments
 - Curriculum and resources – Often discussed during district PLCs
 - Transparency and consistency in compliance procedures
- Response from one of the survey respondents shared, in summary, educator had 13 on current caseload with another 3 in evaluation. An IEP writing took approximately 5 ½ hours, ESY application approximately 20 minutes; all this work done on weekends or outside of contract time
- Proposal today to address the area of time
 - Caseloads are projected to increase for many educators
 - Time spent writing IEPs and completing documentation often happens out of contract time in order to maintain deadlines; complex IEPs can require many hours to complete
 - Proposed language to add to Professional Day (GBZCC)
 - Special Education educators involved in writing and implementing evaluations and individual education programs in compliance with the IDEA will be granted up to four (4) days per academic year in which to work and/or collaborate on tasks associated with required paperwork and documentation. If the educator routinely has a sub when absent, a substitute teacher will be provided for the professional employee on these days. The following requirements apply to Professional SPED Paperwork Days:
 - Professional SPED Paperwork Days must be taken in full-day increments. *In the event that two educators in one building plan to share a sub, the Professional Paperwork Day may be divided into two half-day increments taken by each educator in a single day.*
 - The professional employee must work with their home building principal to determine mutually agreeable dates to schedule the Professional SPED Paperwork Days.
 - Professional SPED Paperwork Days must be spent working on special education-related paperwork, student testing for the evaluation process, and/or monitoring progress on goals (i.e. progress monitoring, IEP development, student testing, initial or re-evaluation

paperwork, summary of performances, creating student instructional materials for specially designed instruction, state-required surveys, etc.)

- Professional SPED Paperwork Days must occur at the professional employee's home building or in another district building. The Special Education department will notify staff of the process to request a location and who needs to be included in communication about location before the first full student contact day of each year.
- The intent is to make the implementation of Professional SPED Paperwork Days a collaborative process that supports the professional employee in completing special education-related paperwork, student testing for the evaluation process, and/or monitoring progress on goals. The District will work in consultation with the professional employee to schedule the Professional Paperwork Days allotted to a professional employee as needed to ensure the timely and accurate completion of required processes and documentation.
 - Recent use of a Professional Development day to address IEPs that are not written to state compliance were helpful to educators to have dedicated time to complete the work necessary; there are possible legal ramifications when the documents are not correct; this day provided time to allow educators to complete accurate documents and documentations
- No questions at this time, will review with district leadership, will bring back any questions in future meetings
- Next meeting is scheduled for April 13th: Is it necessary to keep the meeting on the 13th or should we meet next April 22nd?
 - Will talk as teams and check back in and see if we are ready for a meeting next week or not

Meeting ends at 5:36pm

Upcoming Meetings:

- 4th Quarter Negotiations' Meetings: 4/13/26, 4/22/26, 4/28/26, 5/6/26

How We Will Work:

- Quick communication between Council members
 - Listen to understand
 - We all have and should use our voice
 - Consider the scope of our impact as a Council
 - Not shying away from difficult conversations or topics
 - If someone feels that communication norms have been broken, we need to feel comfortable respectfully pointing this out.
 - The Council considers this important to deal with at the time and as a group.
 - Have an open mind, being good listeners, treating each other with respect

Processes We Will Use:

- Note taker (Julia) will send out minutes to all Professional Council members for review within a week, OR prior to the next meeting, whichever is sooner.
- Final minutes are submitted to communications department to be both added to the Professional Council website and included in the “In The Know”
- Meetings are noticed in the “In The Know”
- Agenda will be set by Clint and Angie
- Draft Consensus Folder