Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent

Board Report

August 17, 2021

With the first day of school being one week from tomorrow, staffing and COVID remain the primary focus of everyone in the district.

We currently have 5 certified vacancies with 3 being at the high school, 1 at the middle school and 1 at the Lower Elementary. We are also in urgent need of a substitute for a teacher at the Lower Elementary that will soon be on maternity leave. With the combination of both issues, the approval of the requested waiver for K-4 students is crucial to our ability to provide services. Regardless of our views on the COVID numbers, they are escalating much too rapidly to accommodate without considering the possibility being closed more than 10 days throughout the year. With the combination of weather-related closures and COVID, we could far exceed the makeup days provided in the calendar for June 2022.

The shortage of bus drivers is a tremendous issue that continues in the wrong direction. The transportation department has continued to refine routes with the intention of having a total of 14 regular routes and 3 preschool/special transportation. The routes have been reduced from 21 in the 2017 – 2018 school year. The initial plans for the upcoming year are not going to be possible due to inadequate drivers available to cover the routes. Currently, we are planning for 12 regular routes and 3 preschool/special transportation. The routes within one mile of the campus (town routes) will not be able to be covered. To make matters even worse, today another driver notified the district of plans to take another job shortly after school begins. The change in employment is not in transportation but will provide greater income and benefits to meet family needs. That route will be filled by Speed or Shelly with hopes of training recruiting additional staff.

COVID cases are out of our control but must be managed in the most efficient means possible. Mrs. Beatty compiled the following numbers as of 2:50 today. Our quarantines seem to be increasing significantly and consequently adding to our list of troubles to be managed.

* Lower Elementary has 1 positive staff member
  + - * 1 staff in quarantine
* Upper Elementary has 1 staff in quarantine
  + - * 1 student in quarantine
* Middle School has 1 positive student
  + - * 7 students in quarantine
* High School has 1 positive staff member
  + - 7 positive students
    - 34 students in quarantine
* Transportation has 1 positive staff
* Food Services has 1 positive staff
  + - * 1 staff in quarantine
* Total:  3 positive staff members
  + - 8 positive students
    - 3 staff in quarantine
    - 42 students in quarantine