Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent

Board Report

January 18, 2022

* Staffing continues to be a challenge for the district, which is likely to continue and even become a greater issue for next year. COVID is a contributor but not the sole reason for needed personnel. Currently, positive COVID cases exist with one teacher at the lower, two at the upper, one at the middle, none at the high school and one certified staff member at the Central Office. The current guidance with a 5-day quarantine and return to work with a mask if you have no symptoms is a great help. Hopefully, those returning after 5 days are not contagious. Typical symptoms of COVID are spread throughout the district and I feel confident you know of folks in your community and or families that have possessed the symptoms for a few days and eventually tested positive. The demand for substitutes remains high and not likely to change. Positions in education as well as every walk of life remain unfilled with businesses being unable to remain open consistently for extended periods of time. The middle school likely has the greatest issue in the district at the 8th grade level. We have been unable to fill the science position throughout the year. At one point, we had a candidate to fill the position, but she resigned before working the first day. Another staff member in the 8th grade has serious family health issues that resulted in absences, which may result in a FMLA request. As you recall, even the positions at the Upper & Lower Elementary Schools were difficult to fill at the beginning of school. Elementary positions have historically had lots of candidates. This is not doom and gloom but a reminder of the necessity of planning for the fall.
* The position vacated by Laura has been posted for 39 days. It was first posted internally with a few nibbles on the opportunity with no one following through with an application. It was posted on Indeed (online service) last week which has resulted in several inquiries. In addition, we now have one internal candidate. We will screen the applicants at the end of the week and interview early next week. The internal candidate will be interviewed.
* I fully expect SB1 to become law. The issues addressed in the bill with curriculum has potential to improve results throughout the Commonwealth. The larger the district, the larger the challenge of alignment of the curriculum. The change included for hiring principals has been a challenge since 1990. Superintendents having the ultimate authority to select a principal after consulting a school council, is a definite move in the right direction. Basically, the remaining responsibilities are left with the school council. The opportunity for parents to provide input remains with the SBDM Council.
* The extended relief for superintendents to surgically address COVID issues in a classroom/school or schools provided by SB25 will be a tremendous help as we move forward upon your approval of that option and the Governors’ signature.
* Four potential candidates have contacted me regarding the superintendent vacancy. I shared details of the district and expect them to follow through with the application process.