

## **Parent Communications**

### **January 8, 2015**

The Parent Communications group met on Thursday, January 8, 2015. Dr. Worthington provided an update on common core. He explained that the Governor is asking for feedback on the current standards. The link to the state website to provide feedback is <https://apps.tn.gov/tcas/>. The standards review is to be completed by summer. After the review, a committee will be assembled to review the feedback and determine next steps. If the Governor's plan is followed, there would be a new set of standards in 2016-17 with an accompanying text, TNReady. The 2014-15 assessment and standards will mirror 2013-14.

Dayna Paine, Director of 9-12 Curriculum and Instruction, explained the textbook adoption process to the group. The textbook adoption process is governed by the State. Textbook adoption follows a 6-year cycle. Textbooks to be adopted this year are in math for K-5; 6-8; and 9-12 grades by subject area. Ms. Paine said that in the past, teacher committees decided which textbooks to adopt for the district. Parents have always been able to review the textbooks being considered for adoption. This year, the state is including parents on the committees to make the textbook selections. Applications were handed out for parents to complete if they were interested in doing so. One parent will be included for each level – elementary and middle school, and for subjects in the 9-12 grade group. Textbooks that are adopted may or may not be purchased for the next year depending on budget priorities. It was noted that textbook companies selected for adoption will often tweak their books to suit particular state curriculum requirements. Dr. Worthington also noted that on line resources can also be used by teachers.

Ms. Paine provided information on the high school academies. She commented that recruiting will begin January 26. This year there are approximately 800 freshmen and sophomores participating in the district's academies. Academy themes were selected based on job market analysis and student interest. Dr. Worthington noted that the Health Sciences Academy had received a commendation from the State Commissioner of Health. The greenhouse at MCHS will be selling lettuce and tomatoes back to the child nutrition program. Future plans for the MCHS program will hopefully include raising fish.

A question was asked about dual enrollment at high schools. Dr. Worthington commented that dual enrollment is available at all high schools, but may not be the same courses at each high school. English is offered at all. Dual enrollment requires either the high school teacher to be certified to teach the college level course, or a college/university teacher comes to the campus to teach the course.

Another question was about the difference in academy versus Middle College. Dr. Worthington stated that Middle College applicants often have a life experience that is keeping them from being successful in the regular school setting. Middle College provides an overall college experience.

Academies offer opportunities for some college credits in the field the students are interested in. Academies connect/integrate all classes through the academy theme. Seventy-five students may enroll in each academy.

Advanced Placement English, math, and science are available at all high schools, but classes offered may be different from school to school depending on teacher certification. Online courses are available for all subjects.

Dr. Worthington commented that Business After School would be held at West Creek High School on January 29 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. The Academies will be the feature that evening with presentations from the students.

January 26 is parent night at every middle school in the district and teacher and student representatives from the academies will be at each location. All interested 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents are encouraged to attend these meetings.

Student Services Manager Kathy Phillips addressed the group about student attendance law and district procedures parents should follow to document student absences. A CMCSS video about the compulsory attendance law was shown. The video may be accessed at <http://cmcssfocus.net/2014/02/06/cmcss-attendance> . Mrs. Phillips also discussed details about military dependents and absences that are allowed when a parent deploys or returns and has leave. More information can be found on the CMCSS website under the "Students & Parents" tab, and then select "Attendance Policy". A parent had a concern about a letter received about student absences when the absences had already been documented. It was explained that the letters are required to be sent at five days absences and are automatically generated even though absences may be covered by parent or doctor notes.

Parents discussed and submitted any responses to the January question of the month, "Are schools adequately staffed to meet the system's mission and vision? If not, what are your concerns?"