



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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TO: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent of Schools
District 97 Board of Education

FROM: Michael Arensdorff, Director of Technology
Dr. Alicia Evans, Assistant Superintendent
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SUBJECT: 2016-2017 Back Office Survey Results

DATE: April 26, 2017

Report format: Informational report

Preview of purpose and content of report: Results from 2017 Back Office Survey and department next steps

Budgetary Impact: None

During the past two years our district staff has completed the district back office task survey that included a deep dive into the technology department, business and human resources. This year the survey was open for a month from December through January. All administrative assistants, Cabinet members, Human Resource office staff, Buildings and Grounds staff, Business office staff and Technology staff were invited to complete the survey.

The response rate was sixty-two percent this year - a slight increase over last year's response rate of sixty percent. The results were shared with the District 97 Administrative Team and the three departments (technology, business and human resources) that support the operations of District 97. Below are the key findings and next steps for each of the departments.

Business Office:

The Business Office is responsible for many non-teaching functions that impact students directly or indirectly. For the purpose of the survey, these areas include food service, transportation, buildings and grounds and budget development. The survey provided input about the strengths, opportunities and recommendations made in these areas, some of which, the leadership has already began to address through establishing tangible operational practices and business norms. The business office team reviewed the information as they were integral to creating and continuing the action plans.

Opportunities and Recommendations

The major themes that came from the survey were financial software, communication and staffing. Based on user feedback, the business office has begun the initial investigation in new financial software. First, we have conducted a survey to determine what users desire and their ease of use with the current software. Second, we have contacted other school districts to

determine the software that most widely used. Finally, we collected information from the three major financial software companies that service school districts. The next step is to establish a committee to explore a potential change in software.

The next area for improvement or recommendation is communication. In this area the business office held several meetings with administrative assistants throughout the year to communicate changes to procedures. We've provided training about the financial software and I've personally met with every principal and their administrative assistant to discuss budgeting and other issues. There has been at least three meetings with food service staff. Also there was a mandatory all staff custodial and maintenance meeting. These meeting are conducted as an open forum to provide information, communicate expectations and allow people to ask clarifying questions. I will continue to meet with groups as needed.

Another area is staffing. There was concern about the replacement of the accounts payable and payroll positions because of their institutional knowledge. Most of the concern was about the buildings and grounds position. Most responses highlighted that change should happen at the top of that department. In response this issue, the buildings and grounds position will be posted as a part of reorganization. With the filling of the buildings and grounds position, evaluation, long-term facilities planning and department restructuring will also be addressed.

When comparing 2016 survey results to 2017 survey results,

- 33% felt the department as a whole was markedly improved
- 38% felt the department as a whole was improving
- 29% felt the department as a whole had no improvement with the following statements

Summary Information

In general the leadership in the business office has improved. This change in leadership has improved morale, daily functions and communication. Conversely, the Buildings and Grounds department needs better leadership at the top.

Human Resources Department:

The survey addressed the following areas within the Human Resources Department:

- employee benefits management
- student registration
- recruitment/new hire/onboarding of staff
- substitute management

Respondents indicated that they liked the implementation of AESOP, the new absence management and substitute placement service that was implemented in August of 2016. Recommendations focused on the hiring of qualified subs, increasing sub pay, and providing training to our substitute teachers. This year the HR Department began screening and requiring training for all new subs to District 97. The addition of the Administrator for Substitutes and Substitute Teaching Assistants will help bolster this area of service to the organization.

In the area of student registration, feedback centered around starting the process earlier, making the process more organized and structured, communicating frequently and consistently to parents and staff, and increase the number of staff available to assist families. Our registrar has already reworked the process for this year so that the District has enrollment numbers for the upcoming year earlier than in the past. Kindergarten registration began in March and is concluding in May. Returning registration will begin in May and conclude by the end of the current school year. Families who move over the summer will register on specific summer

registration dates.

The traditional HR areas of benefit administration, recruitment, onboarding, and leave management were also assessed by the survey. Areas of strength included friendly approachable staff, efficient and effective job postings, and the enrollment process for benefits via the Benefits Fair. Areas that needed strengthening included increasing diversity of candidate pool, timeliness of responses, and accuracy. To address these areas, the HR Department has developed action plans for the year which include partnering with the Diversity Council in recruitment efforts, tracking response time for recommendations to hire, establishing expectations for responses to inquiries, and systems for double-checking work.

When comparing 2016 survey results to 2017 survey results,

- 43% rated the department as “markedly improved”,
- 33% indicated that the department was “improving”, and
- 22% stated no improvement had occurred.

The following areas were noted as “markedly improved”:

- More efficient, pleasant, organized, and structured
- Improved leadership, communication
- New structures/systems put in place

Two items were listed as having “no improvement”.

- Hiring process - consistency
- Subs – still not enough /need for better quality

The HR Department was pleased to see that their efforts towards improved service and operations have been recognized. The team meets weekly to coordinate efforts, communicate, and improve service to staff and families.

Technology Department:

As our department reviewed the feedback provided in the survey we acknowledged and celebrated the strengths that were identified and the overall data that the technology department has continued to show improvements, as shown below:

•Markedly Improved

- More efficient, pleasant, organized, and structured
- Leadership continues to improve the department
- Stability and reliability
- Better training

34% felt the department as a whole was markedly improved

43% felt the department as a whole was improving

23% felt the department as a whole had no improvement with the following statements

•No Improvement

- No change, department was already great
- Instructional Coaches new role

From the data our team has also identified the below six data points that we have and will continue to take the actions plans we have created to implement for greater success. Here are a the four areas that came up in the technology section, as well, as actions steps that our department will be taking during the remaining of this year and into the 2017-2018 school year.

- **Support Recommendations**
 - **Streamlined Two-way communication methods**
 - Communication the various ways that many staff communication with our staff
 - Create a guide and short video clip of the various options
 - **Fill the IT Infrastructure Position**
 - Continue to reach out and market for the opening
 - Receiving proposals on managed services and ad-hoc work to continue to ensure uptime remains at a very high level
 - Interview applicants as they apply and meet the criteria
- **Equipment**
 - **Staff Device Life-span**
 - Exploring the option of refreshed for the upcoming technology plan
 - Reviewing and collecting data around the estimated cost of repairs and identifying the residual/trade in value this year vs. next year
 - Identifying the total cost of ownership over the next 3 and four year with a refresh this year vs. next year
- **Network Recommendations**
 - **Apple TVs**
 - We monitor the help desk and have seen a drop in the tickets for this over the last year
 - We have also piloted and then rolled out the upgrade to MacOS Sierra which has also provided an enhanced connection
 - We have and will continue to meet with Apple engineers to support in any changes needed to continue this improved connection and reliability
 - **Access to internet for students that do not have it at home**
 - Explored and provided a few options for the future for the district to explore and provided multiple updates during weekly reports to the board
 - Will continue to reach out to vendors and find additional options for the upcoming year
 - Identify the most effective and cost effective solution for the students who do not have Internet access at home
 - Compile the list of students in need of Internet access at home
 - Communicate and plan informational session and guide around the expectations and how to use the device
 - Create procedures for requesting and receiving the equipment for students/families
- **Software Applications**
 - Request and utilize input on what apps are used now and moving forward
 - We have an app and software request form in place with a vetting process of security and overall functionality.
 - Expand to a team of reviews

- Create a workflow of review/approval procedures
 - Set a regular schedule of review periods for the team
- Will continue to communicate to ensure everyone is aware of the process in place
 - Will do this 4 times a year
 - Start of year and each trimester
 - Post on district website to ensure available for staff and community