



GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 304
FROM THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Craig Collins
Assistant Superintendent - Human Resources

RE: Preliminary 2014/2015 Staffing Plan

DATE: April 23, 2013

As we look forward to the 2014/2015 school year, we begin with these assumptions and realities in assessing our staffing needs:

- Over the past several years we have eliminated, reduced and in some cases, consolidated administrative, teaching and support staff positions in our District. Given our fiscal challenges, these efforts will continue. We have, however, reached the point in certain areas where further reductions are not possible or warranted due to Federal law and new Illinois legislative mandates.
- We are experiencing unprecedented change in the world of education. A recent article in the *Economist* concludes, “America’s schools are getting the biggest overhaul in living memory.” Some of these changes require minor adjustments and cost little; many changes come in the form of unfunded mandates and will cost our District more. To cite just a few examples, the Common Core curriculum initiative, new principal and teacher evaluation requirements, new special education protocols as mandated by federal and state law (RtI), school improvement mandates (Rising Star), the public’s concern for school safety and our concern for the social-emotional health of our students are all having a significant impact on our short-term and long-term staffing needs.
- This past summer, in response to the legal, legislative and cultural changes cited above, the administrative team sought to sharpen our focus on the overarching and essential goals that give direction to our work with children. When all is said and done, we want every student who attends school in District 304 to **become a self-directed, lifelong learner who communicates effectively, thinks creatively and critically, and who in collaboration with others, makes a positive impact on our community, our nation and the world.**

As an administrative team we believe we have identified three strategic goal areas that are the key levers that will help us realize our vision for students:

- An educational setting where teacher and principal quality is expected, encouraged and rewarded

- A safe, nurturing environment where the social-emotional needs of children are affirmed and valued
- A technology program that transforms the learning process and prepares students for the future

Over the past four months, the Administration has been engaged in a process of identifying staffing priorities in each of these strategic goal areas that are responsive to the changes thrust upon us by the Federal government, Illinois General Assembly, Illinois State Board of Education and by societal and community expectations. Based on these deliberations we are making a number of staffing recommendations for the 2014/2015 school year.

1. English Language Learners (ELL)/Bilingual Lead Teacher

Like other school districts in Illinois, District 304 has a legal and ethical duty to teach students with limited ability to speak English. The number of students in our school district who qualify for ELL and Bilingual services has increased over the past several years. We are now providing direct service to 74 ELL and Bilingual students (K-12) in District 304. Starting next year we will also be required to offer ELL services to pre-school students.

Given our growing ELL and Bilingual student populations, the supervision of ELL and Bilingual programs has placed new demands on our administrative team. Monitoring the day-to-day educational needs of limited English speaking students, supervising the administration of specialized testing, ensuring that documents are translated successfully, submitting timely and accurate student data to ISBE and attending meetings of the Bilingual Parent Advisory Council all require specialized knowledge, expertise and cultural understanding.

At the present time the Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching is providing leadership in this area. We are recommending that the day-to-day supervisory duties be taken over by a lead teacher, allowing our Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching to focus energies on Common Core implementation and the development of the student growth component of the teacher evaluation plan. This lead teacher will also teach part of the day at one of our elementary schools. We estimate the cost of this full-time position to be \$55,000.

2. Technology Facilitator

The District currently utilizes three certified teachers to provide direct support to teachers in the area of technology integration. One of the technology facilitators is also responsible for managing and supporting the District's Assistive Technology program for special needs students. Growth in the amount of technology and the expectation for teachers and students to use that technology requires more staff to provide real time professional development, instructional support, modeling of best practices and the time needed to stay abreast of current technologies. The technology capital plan includes proposals for additional portable devices for multiple grade levels, including every 5th grade student, and continued technology support of the Collaborative Teacher Project (CTP). We believe the addition of another technology facilitator who will focus on technology integration efforts at the elementary level is the best way to encourage and support

teachers and students who are eager and enthusiastic about using technology in the learning process.

This recommendation was outlined in the District 304 Technology Plan presented to the Board on April 14, 2014. The cost of adding a full-time technology facilitator is estimated to be \$55,000.

3. Guidance Counselor – High School

This recommendation comes from the work of the psychologist/social work/counseling committee and was among several recommendations made to the Board earlier this month. The following data supports this recommendation:

- Seventy students at Geneva High School are supported through 504 accommodations. This number has doubled since the 2008-09 school year.
- In one calendar year 66 high school students have qualified for homebound services. Over 40 of these students qualified for homebound services due to a diagnosed mental illness or substance abuse.

The psychologist/social work/counseling committee has spent considerable time this past year defining the job responsibilities of the high school guidance counselor, psychologist and social worker. As a result, our student services team at the high school will more effectively respond to students in crisis (e.g. depression, suicide, and substance abuse) or who are experiencing the typical challenges of adolescence. Our mission, as expressed in our vision, is to assist our students to build the emotional, social and intellectual capacity to communicate, think and adapt to a world where they will leave a positive mark. Having greater access to a caring and supportive guidance counselor will assist with building that capacity. The cost of adding a full-time guidance counselor at the high school is estimated to be \$60,000.

4. Teacher Evaluators: Middle School Level

As was shared in the teacher evaluation presentation on April 14, 2014, the new evaluation system mandated by the Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 requires significant time skill, and expertise on the part of building administrators and high school department chairs. The law calls for administrators and other evaluators to work collaboratively and constructively with teachers to improve the quality of teaching which will ultimately enhance student learning. We support this mandate where administrators and teachers are expected to serve as instructional leaders in their respective buildings. It is important to note that this increased evaluation responsibility also comes at a time when administrators are implementing Common Core, engaging in Rising Star, managing a new special education process and responding to a multitude of student social-emotional issues in their building.

Two years ago, after assessing the new teacher evaluation process, the Administration determined that the evaluation load would be highest at the middle school level. Rather than add evaluators at that time, as has been done in some schools in the area, we determined that District

Office administrators should assume some evaluation responsibility to assist the middle school administration. At the present time Patty O'Neil is engaged in the evaluation process with seven middle school teachers, Anne Giarrante is working with six middle school teachers, I am working with six teachers, Andy Barrett is working with two teachers, and Elizabeth Janowiak is working with one teacher. We did this for two reasons: we felt it was important for District Office administrators to "walk the talk" with respect to the teacher evaluation process, and we did not want to add evaluators until we had more experience with the evaluation process.

With two years of experience under our belts we have come to the following conclusions:

- District Office administrators should continue to evaluate teachers, but their efforts should be concentrated on those teachers receiving the lowest ratings.
- District Office administrators must now turn their attention to incorporating the student growth component into the District teacher evaluation plan.
- Reducing the teaching evaluation responsibility among District Office evaluators will shift evaluation responsibility to our middle school administrators who, at the current time, already have a heavy evaluation load.

We are therefore recommending the addition of two 10-month administrators at the middle school level. These new evaluators would assist with the teacher evaluation process in the building; assist with supervising student conduct during the school day; take over the athletic director duties from the assistant principals; and coordinate building operations including student bussing, safety drills, and building use. The cost of adding these two administrative positions is estimated to be \$150,000.

I will provide additional information about all of the positions cited in this memorandum at Monday's Board meeting. I welcome questions from the Board.

Based on feedback from the Board, final staffing recommendations will be made at the May 12 Board meeting.