



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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

FROM: Steve Cummins, Senior Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Roles Committee Mid-year recommendations

DATE: February 2, 2016

During negotiations for the 2014-2018 Agreement, the Board and the OPTA agreed to establish or restructure leadership roles for teachers in the District. These leadership roles are based on recognition of teachers' expertise and belief in the importance of having practitioners in positions of leadership. Specific roles are designed to achieve several purposes:

- greater student achievement
- program development and implementation
- maximum support for the classroom teacher
- innovation
- increase leadership opportunities

The mid-year recommendations that follow below represent the input of the administrative members of the roles committee, with input from other administrators who work directly with leadership committees or staff serving in individual leadership roles.

Professional Learning Committee

This committee is new beginning with the 2015-16 school year. The professional learning committee has assisted in the planning of institute days in this initial year of implementation. It has been articulated through some of the feedback that there is a hope that the professional learning committee could expand beyond teacher institute days to other professional development sessions in the future.

An aspect that is working well is that several members of the committee (IB Coordinators, Librarian, Data Coaches) have the capacity to flexibly schedule within the workweek and commit to initiatives of the professional learning committee. For those in the classroom the challenge is when to undertake work in between meetings. Capacity building and time is needed for these members to serve in this leadership role. Additionally the group can work towards greater blending of the middle school and elementary school needs.

One of the responsibilities of a member of the professional learning committee is to build and maintain a positive rapport with teachers and colleagues. The support from the

teachers as a whole for the professional learning committee is positive. Going forward, a hope would be to generate interest in this committee from a larger number of members within the OPTA to promote more balanced composition representative from all specialized areas. An example of this would be that there are four data coaches. Additionally, two Special Education Coordinators serve on the committee, but the Coordinator responsible for early childhood is not represented.

School Improvement Team Committee

The school improvement teams are continuing leadership roles that have existed in all schools. Feedback from the Principals is that the school improvement teams are working and should continue in their support of school and district goals. As we look to the composition of the school improvement teams in the 2016-17 school year, we can revisit the notion of the number of participants on the team and whether it should be five or six paid committee members per building.

Rtl - School Level Leaders

The Rtl leadership structure evolved from a committee to an individual from each school who meet together monthly. Representation from each building has had a positive outcome. The Rtl school level leaders have been leading conversations in each building, which is a plus. The Hatch Rtl leader, who is a classroom teacher, is experiencing challenges such as their availability during other common team planning times for leading data chats. With no Student Support Specialist at Hatch, the assistance for leading and assisting Rtl is coming from the Hatch Principal. At the Julian, there are three people sharing this stipend, each who are related service staff that have flexible schedules. At Brooks two teachers share the stipend. At the middle school it can also be seen that those with flexible schedules have had a greater ease and capacity in leading data conversations with teams.

The Rtl leaders as a group worked on consistently implementing what is occurring at the building level for Tier I interventions in reading and math. A District Rtl framework; cut scores; and a common document for listing students, interventions and progress data have been established through the group. This has resulted in elementary schools providing a consistent practice. The elementary group has been integral in identifying common academic interventions, and the middle school group has been identifying common behavioral interventions.

Individuals with more flexibility in their schedule are preferred to attend to all Rtl leader responsibilities. However, when a Data Coach serves as the Rtl leader there are some questions regarding clarification of what is the delineation between the data coach responsibilities and the stipend role. Feedback noted the responsibilities associated with the Rtl Leader role could possibly be more than Tier 3, and this may a future organizational consideration.

K-5 Grade Level Chairs

The sessions with Dr. Carry have been the forum where this group is gotten together thus far during the school year. Going forward, the group will look for more meetings, with some time being devoted for leadership development. The Special Ed representative for K-5 needs to be refined further from an organizational structure, for while the other K-5 grade level chairs have a logical interface with the grade level team leaders at each

building, the Special Education K-5 Chair has a different responsibility to interface with special education teachers directly.

PreK to Grade 5 Team Leaders

Team leaders are a new beginning with the 2015-16 school year. The structure of principals meeting with team leaders on a regular basis has been beneficial and insightful. Team leaders provide input on what they are working on within the grade level teams, with a current focus on planning and implementing the ELA resource guide. They are a good resource to articulate what are the needs of teachers in their buildings. Teacher leaders participated in the four sessions with Dr. Carry (K-2, 3-5) along with the respective grade level chairs.

Team leaders can evolve through additional professional development in how to lead colleagues, push thinking, and conduct crucial conversations within their teams as leaders.

Related Service Provider Team Leaders

These leaders have been helpful in organizing the institute days. This has also been a good channel to communicate important information between the special education district administration and the related service providers as outlined in the posting. These individuals facilitate monthly meetings with members in their related service area. Capacity building and clarification has been suggested in regards to the role of mentoring new related service employees specific to their related service duties.

Grade 6-8 Department Chairs

The grade 6-8 department chairs role previously existed and the responsibilities of the position were previously known. Chairs are leading department meetings and meeting with the Directors of Curriculum regarding initiatives and professional learning specific to their department. It has been good to have one person per middle school building sharing the stipend. The shared role creates a thought partner in planning for professional development.

Similar to the feedback from K-5 team leaders it was felt that these roles could evolve through additional professional development in how to lead colleagues, push thinking, and conduct crucial conversations within their departments as leaders.

Grade 6-8 Team Leaders

This role previously existed, however the stipend amount jumped substantially. The team leaders are meeting with the principal weekly, leading team meetings, documenting notes of team meetings, and mentoring new staff members on the team. Feedback was that with the Tier 2 pay that they were receiving that there could be some additional responsibilities. Since they are not leading the curricular aspects of the team, ideas on where to evolve include Danielson training (student engagement, classroom management), differentiated instruction, and goal setting as professional learning that they may lead.

A discussion point for the leadership roles committee is that in the 2015-16 school year there was not an elective team leader. Previously this was a case and the elective team leader would attend building meetings weekly. Currently there is an elective delegate who

sits in on the weekly team leader meetings and passes information onto the elective colleagues.

Department Chairs for Special Areas

The current structure in the OPTA Agreement calls for 8 special areas department chair positions. These positions are held primarily by special area teachers from the K-5 buildings. Several of these individuals are departments that are exclusive to K-5, while other special areas are K-8. Special area chairs for the middle schools are a suggested consideration due to the curricular needs specific to the middle school. Design and world languages each have a middle school department chair for these are required courses within the school day for students. The K-5 special areas leaders in music, art, and PE do not have a corresponding middle school department chair in their disciplines.

Team Facilitators (Special Education)

This was a previous role that was paid hourly; the responsibilities are known and are being performed. A common Google Doc across the District provides a real-time, transparent mechanism for knowing specifically what students are designated for each person's caseload. There is a common set of norms for maintaining this document weekly.

While there is clarity to the role, the manner of compensation is a subject for conversation. The challenge of balancing and not exceeding the contractual maximum has implications for continuity in the role and who is servicing students and families within a building. As a building reaches the maximum of 25 in the contract, and individuals with fewer than 25 students from another building come to a secondary school to facilitate -- there are questions as to who can best facilitate the identification, referral, evaluation, and placement procedures. It will need to be defined how the team facilitator in the building interacts with the team facilitator coming from the other building in this situation.

District Diversity Council

The District diversity council has evolved from the prior structure of those who participated as members of the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN). The responsibilities outlined within the district diversity council application process are being realized in tangible steps being taken by the council in this school year. The council is meeting at least monthly to deliberately plan, analyze and strategize on behalf of the district in pursuit equitable outcomes for all. Trainings in diversity are being planned for upcoming institute days.

PBIS Weekly Mtg Team Members

PBIS teams have been created with three team members that each of the buildings. The group of three is not seen as representative of all voices within the school. Structures are being developed and groups are meeting weekly. Michele Capio, the behavior Intervention Coordinator for the District has trained the PBIS staff members in the use of SWIS monitoring system and was noted by others as a resource contributing to what is working. The SWIS database is being used consistently across the district to as a common management system to identify student behavior incidents in each building. Feedback from administrators was that the structure was inconsistent previously across buildings. Other initiatives that are developing include behavior standards for lunchroom and recess.

Leadership Roles Process Moving Forward

The OPTA agreement calls for a Leadership Roles Committee to annually meet, by no later than April 30 of each year, to discuss whether to recommend that the Board:

- Add, delete, reduce the number or types of roles and;
- Make any adjustments in the Tier Level pay of a specific role based on new initiatives and/or;
- Whether the actual time commitments made by teachers in a specific leadership role exceeds or falls short of the initial estimated time commitments.

The Roles committee consists of two (2) OPTA members appointed by the OPTA Executive Board (the 2 OPTA Vice Presidents) and three (3) members selected by the Superintendent (who are Steve Cummins, Angela Dolezal and Todd Fitzgerald).