

Horry County Board of Education



Human Resources Committee Meeting **Monday, March 9, 2015**

Board members present:

Janice Morreale, Board Member for District 5, and Human Resources Committee Chair
Ray Winters, Board Member for District 3, and Human Resources Committee Member
Pam Timms, Board Member for District 6, and Human Resources Committee Member
David Cox, Board Member for District 8, Vice-Chair, and Human Resources Committee Member
Sherrie Todd, Board Member for District 2
Joe DeFeo, Board Chair

Staff present:

Rick Maxey, Acting Superintendent
Edward Boyd, Chief Officer for Accountability and Information
Daryl Brown, Interim Chief Officer for Support Services
Carolyn Chestnut, Chief Officer for Instructional Support Services
John Gardner, Chief Financial Officer
Kenneth Generette, Staff Attorney
Addie Swinney, Chief Officer for Human Resources
Rhonda Snowden, Executive Assistant

1. WELCOME

Janice Morreale, Human Resources Committee Chair, welcomed those in attendance.

2. ACKNOWLEDGE COMPLIANCE WITH FOIA

As required by SC Law 30-4-80, local news media were informed of the date, time, place, and agenda of this meeting. Copies of the agenda were posted at the District Office and distributed to the schools for posting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Winters made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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A motion was made by Mr. Winters to approve the Minutes of the December 10, 2014, Joint Human Resources/Finance Meeting. The motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Middle School Attendance Clerks

Ms. Morreale shared a concern that we have 11 middle schools, and five of those have above 1,000 students enrolled. The next lower number is 812 in enrollment. We have one data quality clerk/attendance position per school. We may need to look at allocating another position to those schools whose enrollment exceeds 1,000. We look at numbers when allocating other positions in the schools, and we may need to do the same when allocating data quality/attendance clerks. The high schools have separate allocations for data quality clerks and attendance clerks. The middle schools with more than 1,000 students enrolled may need the same.

Dr. Maxey shared that we do allocate extra days to the elementary and middle schools that the principal can assign to the clerical staff where needed. The additional days were given with the intention of assisting with attendance and registration. Mr. Gardner added that the high school data quality clerk is 220 days, the middle school data quality clerk is 205 days, and the elementary data quality clerk is 190 days. Thirty extra days are given to the elementary schools and 15 extra days are given to the middle schools to provide assistance to the schools. There is also an item in the 2015-16 budget to give approximately \$250,000 for additional days. Staff will come up with a plan for distributing the days. Dr. Maxey shared that this looks only at the number of days versus the volume of students enrolled, and the additional days may not address the volume issue. Mr. DeFeo suggested we look at the effect of adding these positions along with others that have been suggested, such as ESOL, and determine the impact on the budget as a whole.

Ms. Morreale suggested we speak to the principals of the five larger schools to request their input. Dr. Maxey said that there is a Principals' Cabinet that meets on Wednesdays before A-TEAM. Mr. Gardner and Dr. Swinney can come in to get input from those principals. Dr. Maxey suggested that if we are considering adding positions, that we make it a part of the formula versus just adding staff to these five schools this year. Ms. Morreale would like to see the extra clerical position added for schools once they reach 1,000 in enrollment.

Mr. Gardner shared that the middle schools with more than 1,000 in enrollment receive two secretarial positions, whereas those below 1,000 receive one secretarial position. That, along with the additional days being requested in the budget, may help address the concern. Mr. Gardner shared that they would speak with Principals' Cabinet to get more specifics. Ms. Morreale added that she would like to know the feedback from the principals.

B. Recruitment Bonuses

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Ms. Morreale pointed out that Charleston County is starting this year to give recruitment bonuses. This is being provided as information only. No action is being recommended at this time. Dr. Swinney shared that people want to come to Horry County. However, in the future, we may want to consider offering bonuses to get people in our schools that are away from the beach. Mr. DeFeo stated that we used to do this in our District, but we stopped this when the economy crashed. He also added that the fact that Horry County Schools already pays more than most Districts in the State, that is already a bonus. We may want to add a stipulation if we offer the bonus that the employee must stay a minimum number of years at a particular school. Mr. Gardner stated that we used to offer bonuses in the critical needs areas.

C. Salary Schedules

This was discussion about how to respond when a paraprofessional continues their education and receives a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree. Do we leave them at their same level or do we give an increase because of attaining a degree. Dr. Swinney shared information that was gathered by her staff regarding how other school districts in the State respond when a paraprofessional employee gets a degree. Most of the districts that responded to the survey do not give an increase in salary because an employee gets a degree. Mr. DeFeo stated that the system of giving experience in our District has been grossly abused. We have given a person 23 years of experience credit and they had just graduated from college. This has caused many problems with employees who have been here for a longer period of time and a new person is hired and they make the same or more than an employee who has been working for the District for many years. Mr. DeFeo would like for this Committee to look at how we assign experience and where we start new employees off on the pay scale. He referenced other careers where the starting salary is the same for all new employees, without regard for their previous experience. He does not want Horry County Schools to be a second career for people. He does not want this to apply to teaching positions. He thinks if this Committee does not come up with a recommendation, then the Board will because this has been discussed for some time. Mr. Cox shared that at his place of employment, the younger generation is starting out at the same hourly rate as the older generation because of their skill set. Mr. DeFeo added that we can find employees who are out of college and ready to make a career in Horry County rather than hiring people who want to make a high salary and get a second career here, then retire again after five years or so. We do not have to hire people with extensive experience and pay them at a higher salary. There are people available who would like to make a career in Horry County. Ms. Morreale said this can be added to the next agenda to discuss this topic.

At the present time, if an employee gains a degree, they have to apply for other positions if they wish to change jobs and possibly earn a higher salary. We do not automatically give a raise because they earned a degree, nor do we automatically promote to some other position because they earned a degree. Mr. Cox shared that he would like the District to continue the current practice. Ms. Morreale added that we could revisit this at a later date if it becomes an issue.

D. Review of Principal Hiring Process

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A copy of the "Outline of the Principal Interview Process" was provided. Item B. 6. was added after the last meeting to allow Board members to sit in on the screening process. The other change was that the Support Staff person sitting in on the Interview Committee, Item C. 4. will be the Support Staff Employee of the Year from the school. Also, it needs to be stated under section C. 3. that the peer principal shall be from a non-adjointing attendance area. Mr. DeFeo added that he would like for Board members to take ownership of their voting by knowing who they are voting for by having been a part of the process as an ex-officio member at the point of the second level interviews. He would not like to be a part of the discussions during the selection process. Dr. Maxey stated that because this is a new suggestion today, he would like the opportunity to mull this over, adding that at this point, candidates are nervous. He would like to think about the impact a Board member's presence might have on the candidates. Mr. Cox added that the Board does not wish to micromanage, and he does understand that a Board member might have an impact on the outcome of the process. Ms. Morreale said that the Committee will come back to this at a future meeting

E. Benefits RFP – John Gardner

Mr. Gardner shared that we have an RFP out for employee benefit and communication services. When a new employee is hired, they have approximately 30 days to make decisions on the type benefit coverages they want. There are State offered benefits and there are also benefits offered through local providers, such as AFLAC, Colonial, etc., offering types of insurance coverage such as accident, disability, cancer, heart attack, whole life, universal life, etc. It can be difficult for an employee to make those decisions on their coverage and communicate that with or return to the District Office to sign up within the 30 days allotted. We are hoping to find a company who will represent several different products and who will meet with employees at their place of employment, which we believe will be a service to our employees. A service such as this is at no cost to the District. Larger districts like Charleston, Greenville, Richland One, and Beaufort are already offering this type of service for their employees. A District committee of employees including principals, teachers, and staff, will select the products that will be offered, and this company will be responsible for finding the best product(s) for the price. We may include a higher end and lower end product so that employees will have a choice. The company will meet with the employees and share information about the State offered benefit; as well as, these ancillary types of policies. No action is needed by this Committee and this was shared as information.

F. Discussion of Budget Items

Ms. Morreale would like for this Committee to discuss a couple of items that are human resources related that are in the budget. One item is the 2% salary increase for employees not eligible for a step at a cost of \$1.8 million from the general fund. Ms. Morreale asked for feedback. Again, this is for employees who are not entitled to a step and who are already at their highest level. This is a District request and is not a mandate. Mr. Gardner shared that a majority of those employees to whom this applies are not eligible for retirement. It can be the hourly employees such as the bus drivers, cafeteria workers, teacher's aides, etc., as well as administrative employees. It was added that we did not provide an increase last year nor the

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year before for those employees not entitled to a step increase. Mr. DeFeo stated that he thinks the Board will reject this again. Mr. Cox shared that he would like to mull this over, as he does have sympathy for those employees who earn the lower salaries, and yet have not received a salary increase for some time. They may have been with the District for twenty years, worked hard, and are tapped out, yet over the past twenty years his actual income has decreased 30%, and they are at an age that they cannot go anywhere else. Mr. Gardner added that the people that we are required to give a step increase for next year is teachers. This is a mandate. Dr. Maxey stated that all employees have faced an increase in the cost of their retirement and insurance, and therefore, those who have not received a salary increase have faced a decrease in their take home pay. This affects approximately 25% or one-fourth of the District's employees. Mr. Gardner added that as relates to assistant principals, they are placed on step 20 of the salary scale to make the salary competitive to move out of the classroom. If they have been in that role for 8 years, they are maxed out. Mr. DeFeo stated that this is what is wrong with the salary scale. If we continue to do this, our budget would be at \$5 million dollars more than it is now. We have teachers in this District who make \$85,000 per year and he feels that is too much. Mr. DeFeo stated that he has been told that you cannot give a raise to some and not the others. Mr. Gardner stated that would be difficult and he added that we could consider giving a cost of living adjustment, which would index the salary schedule. Until we can do this, the Board could give a bonus for want of a better term, so that it is not a continuing budget issue. Ms. Morreale said that this was offered previously and there was a concern of tax implications and how it would impact retirement. Mr. Gardner stated that it would not count towards retirement. After further research, this is an available avenue for the Board to consider. Ms. Timms asked how difficult it would be to break down the groups of employees not entitled to a step. She understands this the Board has said no for two years, but like Mr. Cox, her heart goes out to those employees who earn less, with the rising cost of living. Those folks struggle. Mr. Gardner deferred to Mr. Generette, asking if the District can give a raise or a bonus to certain groups of employees. Mr. Generette stated this could cause all kinds of implications and we will have to look into this. Mr. DeFeo shared that maybe we could give a COLA every three or four years, adding that he sees a little bit of the other side, but as Mr. Poston previously stated, they signed on knowing that after 28 years, they were not ever guaranteed getting another raise. Ms. Timms added that 28 years ago, those employees did not know what they would be paying in health insurance and other living costs. Ms. Morreale stated that Mr. Generette can do his research and this will be put on another agenda. Mr. Cox added that if there is some way that we could assist folks with their health insurance – to impact not so much their gross income as their net income. Mr. DeFeo added that he would like to see all of the options.

Ms. Morreale addressed the school-based technology support staff. Since the Board has voted to only provide PDLs to the 5th grade at the elementary level, that we will only add the support person at the middle and high school levels. Mr. Gardner stated that recommendation will be shared with the Board tonight at the Board meeting.

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Ms. Morreale shared that as relates to ESOL teachers, we are proposing eleven per year. The second paragraph of that budget item addressed adding a coach position. Ms. Chestnut shared that was a split funding request, because presently we have the two coaches that the State allowed us to hire out of our Title III funding. Because of some planning issues with those Federal funds, we are limited in how we can use that. If their salaries were split between General Fund and Title III, it would really open the door for a lot more. Ms. Morreale stated she would rather we have more ESOL than even half of a coach. Mrs. Chestnut added that the role of ESOL coaches today is quite different. We have to have training for the regular education teachers to use accommodations just like in special education. That was not a requirement in the past, but it is now. The coaches provide the training for regular education teachers who work with ESOL students. In order to keep the two coaches we already have, the District will have to pick up a portion of their salaries.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Cox and seconded by Ms. Timms to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and Ms. Morreale adjourned the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Snowden
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
and Horry County Board of Education

Approved:
