



Human Resources Committee Meeting
Monday, September 10, 2018
4:00 PM, District Office, Room C-300

Board members present

David Cox, Board Member for District 4, Committee Chair
Chris Hardwick, Board Member for District 9, Committee Member
Janice Morreale, Board Member for District 5, Committee Member
Pam Timms, Board Member for District 6, Committee Member
Neil James, Board Member for District 10
Shanda Allen, Board Member for District 11
Sherrie Todd, Board Member for District 2
Ray Winters, Board Member for District 3

HCS Staff present:

Dr. Rick Maxey, Superintendent
Mary Anderson, Chief Human Resources Officer
Velna Allen, Chief Student Services Officer
John Gardner, Chief Financial Officer
Kenneth Generette, Staff Attorney
Boone Myrick, Chief Academic Officer
Dustin Bishop, Director for Payroll and Benefit Services
Roger Gray, Director for Human Resources
Merri DuRant, Administrative Assistant for Human Resources Chief Officer
Lisa Bourcier, Director for Communications
Helen Smith
Ken Richards
Media Representative

Welcome - Call to Order

Chairman David Cox called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Acknowledge Compliance with FOIA – David Cox

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 schools for posting.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Chris Hardwick and seconded by Shanda Allen to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Shanda Allen and seconded by Pam Timms to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2018, meeting as presented. The motion carried.

Discussion

At-Will Employees

Chairman Cox stated it has been brought to board members attention that there have been at-will employees not recommended for employment that apply for positions at other locations and are selected as the best candidate. He asked for clarification in case this continues to come up.

Dr. Maxey advised that last year was very challenging for staffing. The District has been following the Boards past direction concerning at-will employee justification. A justification process is required for all at-will employees being recommended to return to their position. Employees that are not recommended to return may apply for a position, but they must go through the interview process, compete with other applicants, and emerge as the most qualified candidate. We do not have a specific number on how often this occurs. The interview committee makes the hiring recommendation so not just one person makes the decision. Some positions in critical needs areas were not posted last year. The number of at-will employees this year is nominal. Dr. Maxey shared the meeting minutes and action form concerning at-will employees from the January 23, 2012, board meeting. This set of guidelines has been followed since January 2012. Copies of these documents are available upon request.

Mary Anderson stated that the District cannot discriminate due to age. An at-will employee may be the most qualified, but still must apply for the position, interview and emerge as the most qualified candidate through the interview process.

Chairman Cox stated the TERI program was originally created for teachers but changed at some point to include all employees. There has been some push back from at-will employees that are in non-teaching positions that are not recommended or rehired, but these positions have larger pools of candidates.

Janice Morreale stated that some principals tell employees that the position must be posted, but if they will just apply they will be given the job. Principals do not like change and may recommend an at-will employee even though some of the positions are not in critical needs areas.

Mary Anderson responded that is not our expectation for that type of communication to occur. The committee interviews and makes a recommendation as a safeguard so there is not just one hiring manager making the decision. In the past, every position was posted, but this year was critical. If an employee, classified or professional, was recommended through the

justification process and all levels agreed, the request was approved without posting the position. There were 10 or less at-will recommendations that were turned down.

Shanda Allen stated that we are bombarded by local Horry County graduates that apply for jobs but are not hired so they seek employment outside our district. She would like for the local applicants to be given extra consideration when they apply. Let that be a plus for locals. We could instruct the principals or hiring managers to look for someone founded in our community.

Kenny Generette advised that this would be difficult to do. We try to encourage college students to look at alternate levels of certifications. Sometimes the areas in which they are being certified has a large number of candidates which makes it difficult for them to go through the interview process. Going into areas of critical needs gives them a better chance.

Janice Morreale asked about social studies teachers. We still have five on the at-will list, and social studies is not a critical needs area. We could hire five Coastal students to fill these positions.

Mary Anderson advised that the social studies teachers also have specialized skill sets such as the IB or AP certifications and teach those classes.

Janice Morreale would like to have the at-will list updated to reflect the special skill sets of the social studies teachers.

Chris Hardwick believes that we have reduced the at-will employees to a nominal level. We have 5879 employees and only 122 or 2% of them are at will. We had a tremendous need this year.

David Cox agrees that the number is nominal.

Ms. Morreale asked if there are other Districts that require a lower salary for at-will employees.

Ms. Anderson advised that this varies as each district approaches this in a variety of ways. The rational that has been used in Horry County Schools is if we hired an at-will employee from another outside the District, we would give them full credit for their experience. If we do not do that for our own employees, we are punishing them for coming back to our District.

Dr. Maxey noted that we are building capacity in Horry County Schools. All principals, with the exception of one, that have been hired since he has been here are not at-will. They have come from within the system but were not hired at-will. This year was an exception. Certificated and support staff together total 5,879 employees and only 122 are at-will which is barely 2%. He does not want to put us in a position of discriminating due to age or experience.

We will emphasize to principals and hiring managers that we are looking for the most qualified candidates and building capacity. Two of his Chief Officers are retired and employed at will, and he does not know what he would do without them. He could not do the work required of this huge organization of 44,000 students and close to 5,900 employees without them. There may be others with degrees and experience, but they do not have the same level of executive experience to help him with the job. Executive experience is very critical for these positions. These are things that must be considered when looking at the whole picture. He will have conversations with Principals to make sure everyone understands the requirements for hiring at-will employees and will strive keep the number at a nominal level. Also as Superintendent, he will continue to protect the system and make sure we have qualified teachers in the classroom and leadership in place so this huge system can continue to operate.

David Cox stated they understand there are positions that require a specific skill set, but there are people that are in administrative pools that are being bought back because maybe the Principal likes them, etc. Those are the ones they are referring to and not the executive level positions. We may have 5,879 employees but the Board has roughly 300,000 constituents in Horry County they must answer to.

Leave Donation

Chairman Cox opened the discussion by referencing the employee that was retiring and had a sick leave balance they would like to have been able to donate for the use of other employees. When an employee is out of leave and has a devastating event occur, such as cancer or sick child, is there a way other employees could donate unused leave to them. What would be the financial and legal impact on the District and District Policy? Other districts may be offering this, but they are very limited. More research will need to be done to see what other districts are doing.

Shanda Allen agrees that there must be a devastating event and suggests that each situation should be considered on a case by case basis.

Janice Morreale would like to see the rules expanded to family members and not just the employee. We try put family first and want to support our staff members in time of crisis. Some retirees would like to donate their unused time to someone else to use. She would like to see some information on what other districts offer.

Kenny Generette advised that there are some complications embedded in this concept. There is the policy piece to work through, and a financial piece at stake. A very limited number of Districts do this, and we need to research.

Dustin Bishop advised that employees give one day of sick leave per year to be a member of the sick-leave bank.

John Gardner stated that the sick-leave bank is not actually a bank of days. It was originally set up as short-term disability to get employees to long-term disability or disability retirement for catastrophic illnesses. Employees can be awarded up to 70 days. The cost to the employee is a donation of days and not money. The cost to the District is the cost of a substitute for that employee. Last year we used 1200 sick-leave bank days, and the total cost of the days to employees was approximately \$250,000. The cost to the District was \$125,000 which was the cost for substitutes. If we expanded the rules to include family members, these numbers could double or triple.

Dr. Maxey agreed that we should look into this. We are very interested in the concept. We would need to define what constitutes a family member? Will there be a cap on the number of days due to the size of our system? How will this be funded? Some of these programs have IRS tax issues. The IRS can tax a person that makes a donation. If we develop a system and encourage employees to do this, they could have tax burden later. We certainly want to help our employees, but there are a lot of things we need to look at before we consider making any changes.

Sherry Todd mentioned that there will be those that try to abuse the system. The District could control the abusers by requiring some type of proof or documentation of the devastating event.

Chairman Cox concluded the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn at 4:43 p.m. The motion was made by Chris Hardwick and seconded by Janice Morreale.