

One Team. One Mission. One Rock Hill.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN



ROCK HILL
Schools

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Dear Rock Hill Team,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Rock Hill Schools employees for the work you do each and every day to benefit students in our community. Each of you continue to use your gifts to make this an amazing place that remains focused on doing what is best for our students every day. It has been a joy to observe the level of student engagement during my visits to each school, and I continue to be impressed by the outstanding educators in our school district.

We continue our Focus Five for the 2018-19 year which serves as the foundation for our work, and will be embedded into our continuous improvement efforts, our Strategic Plan, and our district's AdvancED accreditation. The areas are:

1. Safety & Security
2. Recruitment & Retention
3. Student Achievement
4. Organizational Culture & Effectiveness
5. Communication with All Stakeholders



Aligned with the focus on communication and as an essential part of my entry plan as superintendent, I continue hosting monthly Listen & Learn sessions with teachers representing each school in our district. We have held seven sessions, and I have enjoyed being able to hear from our teachers about successes and areas for continued growth for our district, as well as share important information about what is taking place across our district. Responses to questions can be found on the following pages. These responses are not all-inclusive, and we would certainly welcome the opportunity to further discuss these questions and other relevant topics in more detail within specific levels and school settings. If you have follow up questions or desire more information, please contact one of our Cabinet team members. You may find an organizational chart with contact information on the next page.

Our schools and district will benefit from this open dialog regarding the needs that exist for our students, staff, and organization overall. District leaders and I will conclude our Teacher Listen & Learn series in April for the 2018-2019 school year. It has been a joy this year to meet with representatives chosen by the principals of each school. Our final Teacher Listen and Learn session will take place on Friday, April 12.

Working together as One Team on One Mission for One Rock Hill, we will move our district forward to be the best in our state!

Sincerely,
Bill Cook

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ROCK HILL SCHOOLS DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM



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In the following pages, questions raised at the most recent Teacher Listen & Learn are answered. Due to the nature of some questions, we are not able to provide a complete response since we may not be aware of the context in which the question or concern is shared. If you desire additional information or have additional questions, please contact a member of Cabinet. Our team members are ready to assist you with more information.



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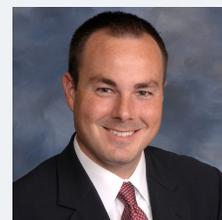
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How can we prepare our 4K children for 5k? What is most important?

Central Child Development has a great reputation in preparing students for 5K, and beyond. Additionally, our 4k classes throughout the district are very child-centered and offer much success. As evidenced this year by the implementation of new curricula that even focuses more clearly upon the SC Standards, it is clear that efforts at CCD and other 4k classes are determined to closely align the total 4K program with best-practices and resources. It may be beneficial to establish a district 4K-5K transition team that communicates with both programs on how preparation of students can be improved continuously. Also, our AdvancED visit evaluated our 4K program and certainly can offer areas of improvement that can benefit these efforts.

We would like some info/clarification... We are wondering what the DISTRICT's policy is on re-testing & scoring in elementary school. We are asking as 3rd grade teachers who re-teach & then allow students who score below a 70% to re-test, and can then score up to 100%. What is the District's policy in regards to the highest possible score on a re-test for elementary students?? We have had some conversations & feel like the highest possible score should be a 75% because if we are allowing them to re-test & score up to the full 100%, then we are not giving parents an accurate picture of what their child is truly able to do. We also understand that there is a 'high score' on re-tests in middle school, so what is the District's policy for elementary (3rd- 5th grade)?

The current District Grading Guidelines were sent to all elementary schools on Friday, March 15 to gather stakeholder input. The conversation will be facilitated by administration at each Elementary school asking for input regarding additional clarification needed to the existing Rock Hill School District Grading Guidelines Document. APs from each Elementary school, began this conversation in the fall and information was shared with principals. Principals and APs have been guided in the process for collecting feedback during March monthly meetings. Currently, the portion of the document referring to Reteach/Retake is very general and noted as to be defined by the school. This is certainly one area where input would be welcomed. We look forward to hearing your feedback. In addition, Secondary will be providing guidance on how this is handled at the Middle School level for us to look a vertical alignment.

When looking to align data points (specifically MAP and SCREADY) why are students with IEPs, and 504s, NOT receiving the same testing accommodations for/during both assessments? (Small group testing environment, Math MAP read aloud to students with IEP in Reading/ELA, frequent breaks, etc.) Teachers are not getting a clear picture of a student's math abilities if the student is unable to read the questions. Students who struggle in Reading but are great at Math are becoming discouraged because of their MAP scores.

The question of testing accommodations for formative assessments and summative assessments have been a discussion for a long time. The bottom-line answer comes from IDEA for students with disabilities and testing accommodations. All testing accommodations recommended in an IEP/504 plan must be consistently implemented on all State and classroom tests/quizzes in accordance with the testing conditions and implementation recommendations documented in the student's IEP/504 plan. The discussion of attempting a criterion referenced assessment, without accommodations to get a clear picture of a student's abilities, is a determination that must be discussed at the IEP team. If the decision is to not use accommodations during any assessment, it must be clearly documented in the IEP/504.

Classroom teachers have found the elementary math pacing guides in Canvas to be extremely helpful when looking ahead to 4th quarter. Several have asked if a similar guide will be provided for ELA?

ELA Coaches have not pursued developing a district-wide Pacing Guide to date— other than the District Curriculum Map for ELA. We have many schools who are implementing Units of Study in Reading and all schools have the Writing Units, so those tend to serve as pacing guides. Also, many of the ELA indicators are not intended to be addressed in a linear manner; they are cyclical and continuously addressed. The ELA Coaches can certainly review this possibility and consider whether this would be helpful for our teachers.

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Immersion Question: Parents are bringing up the concern that the current immersion model does not offer students the ability to have a core class in 7th grade and beyond in their target language. Students go from receiving 505 minutes in their target language per week in 6th grade to 210 in 7th and 8th grade. We are already finding that it is a stretch to include all of the necessary targets for the students to get HS credit in the time that we have. How will reducing this time help the already difficult situation?

Rock Hill Schools adopted and has always followed the Utah Model since the inception of the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program. Information about Rock Hill Schools' immersion programming is available on the district's World Language website. The State of SC requires a minimum of 120 hours in a course in order to receive a high school credit. In both 7th and 8th grades, students will receive 139.5 hours, which is 19.5 hours more than what is required.

PBIS: Teachers throughout the district have shared that PBIS isn't working due to the fact that consequences are inconsistent AND teachers do not feel supported. How can we improve this program?

PBIS is a systemic process that will only work when the implementation is done with fidelity.. This begins with the school leadership, the PBIS school team and the buy-in of the adults on staff at each school. Within Rock Hill Schools, we have a large number of elementary, middle and high schools that have a solid tier 1 PBIS system, with classrooms that are following the minors and majors, students and staff are using positive language that promotes a safe, nurturing culture and climate. There are two PBIS assessments that are required to take a look at the reality of the status of PBIS practices at each school. The window for the Self Assessment Survey (SAS) started on March 18 and your PBIS Coordinator should have sent the link to all staff at your school. The survey is anonymous and it is the time for each staff member to answer the questions honestly. These responses will go back to the PBIS Coordinator and they are to bring the compilation of responses to the District-wide PBIS Training on June 10. It may be that PBIS practices at your school will need to "step back" and start on the basics to revitalize and promote the foundational systems for positive behavioral intervention supports. Starting again, with input from the staff, will revitalize the PBIS foundation and provide a new systemic structure for consistent and effective discipline/behavior strategies and interventions. Should your schedule allow, please consider participating in the June 10 district-wide PBIS Training. For additional support, contact Dr. Nancy Turner.

Will AP Spanish and French be offered next year in all schools, and if so, will they be 1 year or 1 semester long?

Our district drive is to ensure all courses in the Rock Hill Schools High School Course Catalog (see <http://bit.ly/RHScatalog> for next year's catalog) are made available to every student in the district. At individual schools, offerings are sometimes limited by teacher availability and student enrollment. AP Spanish, AP French, and AP Chinese are on the schedule for next year. Generally, these courses are semester-long.

Is there a plan in place as the number of students with such behavior problems continues to increase each year? I realize that some kids are coming to our schools from other districts, but we need to plan for that.

Our district continues to seek resources and supports for students who are encountering behavior issues. From providing strategies for students with adverse childhood experiences to seeking grants and programs that assist, we are continuing the ongoing work of evaluating behavioral issues within the schools and assisting with solutions. This work will continue, and please do not hesitate to provide any feedback to Dr. Nancy Turner (ESE), Dr. Missy Brakefield (Elementary), Ms. Jen Morrision (Secondary), and Dr. Keith Wilks (Student Support Services).

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What are the district's next steps in the creating an intervention structure (for remediation and enrichment) that establishes consistency across schools?

We will measure and evaluate the success from this year's intervention models, look at funding and resources for the upcoming year, and we will be strategic in intervention provided through staffing, curricula, and resources. The district will also continue to support schools with their intervention models.

Why are teachers pay scales are frozen at 25 years?

The South Carolina minimum teacher salary schedule includes 23 years of service. Salary schedules of surrounding districts range from 23 to 26 years of service.

When will we find out the major impact for education concerning our state with regards to pending legislation?

The last day of the regular legislative session is May 9, 2019. We will not know the impact of H.3759 or S.419 Education Reform bills until the General Assembly approves the bills. H.3759 has been passed by the House and now must be deliberated in the Senate. H.3759 is currently in the Senate Committee on Education. S419 is still being deliberated in the Senate Committee on Education.

- Information on H.3759 can be found at <http://bit.ly/hb3759>
- Information on S.419 can be found at <http://bit.ly/s419info>

Will we be getting new iPads for Elementary schools?

The Technology Council will be forming a sub-committee with K2 instructors to select the device to replace the aging iPads. There are now alternatives to iPads that may fit in better in that environment. Criteria will include scalability, performance, and manageability. The ability to efficiently handle testing must also be considered.



Noting the teacher recruitment and retention shortage that we have faced, what incentives, if any, does the district plan to put in place to recruit and retain alternative certification teachers?

Administration is discussing options of recruitment and retention during our FY 2019-2020 budget discussions. All budget needs / requests for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding.

When will elective grades count in middle school, when will we stop giving grades to students for doing no work?

The district's Instruction Department is undertaking a review of the current grading guidelines and we will be sure to consider how middle school electives are reflected on student report cards. Teachers are not restricted from assigning a score of zero for individual assignments. However, minimums are in place for nine week cumulative grades to ensure grades are content-based measures of what students are able to demonstrate and provide appropriate and accurate feedback to students and parents.

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How long does a teacher have to record and document for these children before anything can be done?

Our system's goal is to provide readily-available resources for teachers and schools to use with students immediately or as needed. Collecting data and documentation is required for students to qualify for certain programs and this is usually determined through the a team approach to meeting and discussing the student. Data collection times should be appropriate in length and communication through the teacher, principal, and specific support services of the school district. To discuss this further, please contact Dr. John Jones (jjones@rhmail.org) or Dr. Nancy Turner (nturner@rhmail.org).

When is the next time we can give opinions (support) for standards not being aligned with students' developmental/age stage?

The standards are provided from the state, but each Instructional Specialist and Instructional Coach participates in our state organization. If there are concerns, teachers can email the content area Instructional Specialist or Instructional Coach and they will act as the liaison between teachers and the Dept. of Education.

Why can't students be allowed to get two vegetables or get one vegetable and one fruit? Students are told that if they can only receive one vegetable or one fruit. Let's say a student wants broccoli and carrots, well the said student is only allowed to receive one. We aren't talking about an extra entrée, but fruit and vegetables.

It is the policy of the Food Service department that students are allowed as many fruits and vegetables as they would like. Students are not limited to only one vegetable or one fruit.

Are there any plans to provide more adequate mental health support to students?

Our district continues to seek resources and supports for students who are encountering behavior or social and emotional issues. From providing strategies for students with adverse childhood experiences to seeking grants and programs that assist, we are continuing the ongoing work of evaluating behavioral issues within the schools and assisting with solutions. This work will continue as a district as we will look to offer help within the least-restrictive environment for all students, and please do not hesitate to provide any feedback to Dr. Nancy Turner (ESE), Dr. Missy Brakefield (Elementary), Ms. Jen Morrision (Secondary), and Dr. Keith Wilks (Student Support Services).

How is the district preparing to ensure continued practice of both LDC and MDC in the classroom now that the initial 3 year training and support period is over this year?

LDC and MDC practices are well-aligned to the district's LEAP instructional model and we are lucky to have been able to partner with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) over the last three years to gain extra support across schools in relation to LDC and LDC planning and practices, particularly the workshop model. District and school leadership are considering how instructional rounds in all schools (not just those which participated with LDC and MDC) will look and be most useful to teachers and administrators at all levels next year, but we know look fors will include strong literacy- and math-based practices.

Is the district considering student-to-teacher ratios specifically in 3rd grade with the demands of Read 2 Succeed in mind? If so, what is the plan moving forward?

As we begin our budget process and conversations, we will engage in class size conversations. With a limited budget, we don't always get to implement all that we would like to.

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For schools with high student numbers, meaning higher demands and personal interactions of front office personnel, will adequate staffing (based on student enrollment) be provided for such schools in the coming school year?

Any additional positions for FY 2019-2020 will be part of the district's budget considerations. All budget needs for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding.

District tutors have been a great addition to meeting the needs of our students. Will they continue to be provided? Also, will schools have to ability to place tutors where needed most in order to best meet the needs of students?

This will depend on the academic success measured from this year's provision of tutors and funding levels for 2019-2020. The district believes in the benefits of tutoring for students. 4th and 7th grades were selected this year as a result of data analysis. We are glad that this has been a positive addition to the schools. Many thanks to principals and teachers who are making this occur successfully within the total school environment.

How are third-grade teachers being supported with Read to Succeed? Are there plans to increase academic assistance for these students identified as not reading on grade-level by third grade?

Each school has a School Based Literacy Coach provided by the State to assist with Read to Succeed. As with any additional positions for 2019-2020, added positions would need to be part of budget considerations as related to Instruction, Personnel and Finance providing funding is available. Elementary Principals have submitted a request for budget considerations for 2019-2020.

When is mental health going to be addressed in the schools? We need more mental health support. The major behavior problems across the grade levels are due to mental health problems.

Students that are living with trauma, violence, and chronic stress or adverse childhood experiences are in classes of all grades, including preschool through high school. In Rock Hill Schools, during the 2018-2019 school year, there have been and continue to be a variety of immediate resources for all certified and non-certified staff such as ACE's awareness training, 321 Insights (on-line modules) Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training, Book studies on Teaching To Strength, PBIS foundational systems in each school as well as trained behavior management assistants to work with students in crisis. This is just the beginning. All teaching staff and administration must form strong relationships with all children, drawing from each students' strengths and capacities to develop the skills, competencies and confidence to be active learners, critical thinkers, and invaluable members of their class and school. It may call for creating a classroom and school environment where everyone is seen as already capable, already learning and already contributing.

What is the financial policy for fundraising? Are we allowed to fundraise? If so, how is that money used? Does it go into the specific account that it was intended to fundraise for, or does it go into the general fund? If it goes into the general fund, what are the proper channels to have it go into the intended fund?

Schools must follow Board policies and Finance procedures when fundraising. The following board policies and administrative rules relate to fundraising: JJE, JJE-R, JJE-E, EFE, EFE-R, EFE-R-E1, EFE-R-E2, EFE-R-E3. The fundraising guidelines located in the Finance Business Procedures Manual can be found in section 3.7 and 3.15. Your bookkeeper can provide you a copy of these sections. Any money raised from fundraising must be deposited and recorded in a specific account within the school's pupil activity fund. The money and the related fundraising expenses are not to be recorded within the General Fund.

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Our Career and Technical programs, and alternative programs in the District rely heavily on students having transportation to be able to participate in real world work experiences (Co Ops, Internships, Apprenticeships, Clinicals, Shadowing, interviews etc). Policies and procedures are in place for being as safe as we can to eliminate risk and promote safety. A rumor has surfaced that students may be stopped from driving to and from ATC and all students taking a class on campus will be required to ride the buses. Is a new policy being seriously considered, and if a policy that is this specific to a certain population of students is considered, will we be asked for input?

Currently, this is being considered and discussed. Input would be sought from principals and schools for this to be considered. We do ask the school leadership to communicate with us if there are consistent issues regarding articulation of arrival and departure schedules between the campuses. Mr. Tony Cox and Mr. Kevin Wren are working with our high school principals and ATC director.

Can we have a District wide calendar of events for all three high schools and ATC for the 2019-2020 school year so that we know what is coming up?

The Marketing and Communications team is working toward the development of a comprehensive district calendar that will be inclusive of school-level events and important dates. The format (i.e. printed or web-based) of the comprehensive calendar is not yet finalized, but you can expect to have this resource available for the 2019-2020 school year.

What is our district's plans for the Alternative Student Services? Will the budget reflect the myriad of emotional and academic needs of this cohort of students? Will the disciplinary programs split from the non-disciplinary programs? Do you believe that these programs are an essential part of our school district's initiative to build relationships, to build a collaborative culture and to build community partnerships?

A behavior specialist will be added to the alternative program. We believe these programs are essential to the effectiveness of the district. Any additional positions for FY 2019-2020 will be part of the district's budget considerations. All budget needs for next year will go through a prioritization process and is dependent on available funding.

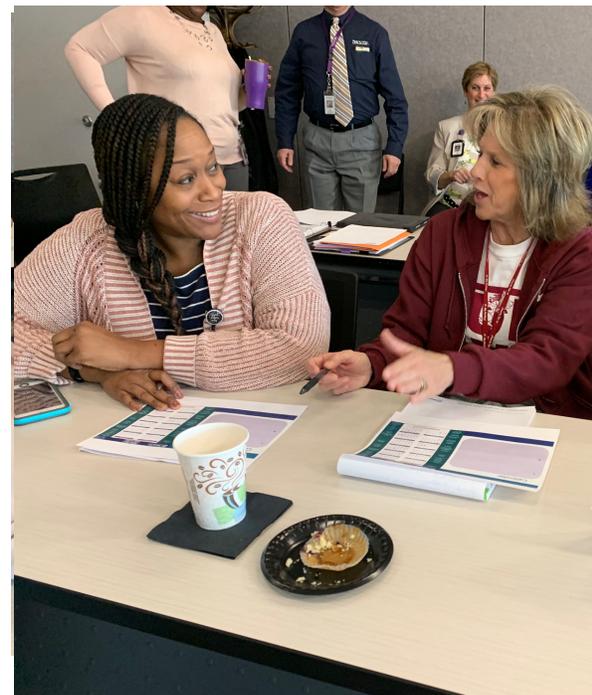
There is much talk about the importance of school culture but little talk about specifically what that means. Of course, each school will have its own unique culture, but as a district what would the Central Office like to create in terms of school culture that can be applied to all school regardless of status or level?

It would be to reflect on our Theory of Action developed with involvement from each school during the 2017-2018 school year.

Relationships and Culture

If, as educators, we build positive, nurturing relationships with all students, sustaining a welcoming environment where all students reach their highest potential

Then, students will create, design, and collaborate in a safe, secure environment where employees, volunteers, and community partners are committed to ensuring that all students can learn, grow, connect and thrive.



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How will the new passed legislation on education affect us (mostly I care about the possibility of a salary increase, but you can say the read-to-succeed stuff, too)?

It is important to remember that the Education Reform Act - while it has passed the House - it is still a bill being discussed and debated in the South Carolina Legislature. Nothing is in stone until the act passes. That said, salaries for new teachers would increase and it does attempt to strengthen the current Read to Succeed law. You can see the specific on SC Legislature Online at <http://bit.ly/edu-reform>. If the General Assembly approves a 4% increase for teachers that are paid on the state teacher salary schedule, the district is required to increase our teacher salary schedule by 4%.

Why are we still printing progress reports when we have limited paper supplies and we are pushing CANVAS as a resource for parents?

Not all families have access to the internet at home. Progress reports are printed as a baseline communication method to make certain everyone has convenient access to the information.

When will salary be reviewed and evened out according to experience and education as it is listed in the salary table online?

The salary schedules listed on the district's website are the current salary schedules. The teacher salary schedule is based on the state minimum teacher salary schedule and salary studies that have been conducted of surrounding districts.

Often administration faces copious demands on their time, from the central office, parents, students, teachers, and the community. Best practices tell us that effective leadership demands visibility, which is often lacking due to the demands on administrators' time. We not only need more teachers (due to the teacher shortage) we also need more administrators. Is there a plan to address this in the budget?

There is not a plan to add additional administrators at this time.

Can we increase substitute pay so we can have a larger pool of substitutes?

Increasing substitute pay is a line item that will be discussed during the budget process. The budget is very limited and there must be prioritization during the budget process. Kelly Services is also exploring a variety of incentives on their end that will help with the sub shortages.

Teachers at my school would like to know if there will be any 4.0 trainings coming up. We have many teachers who were previously evaluators, and now they are not trained with the new system.

The SCTS 4.0 Evaluator Training will be conducted at the Rock Hill Schools Central Office on June 6-7, 10, 2019. In order to participate, teachers must have completed at least one full year on continuing contract and be recommended by their principal. Please contact your principal if you are interested.

Years ago, student-to-teacher ratios were set by our district. What plans are in place to re-balance current student-to-teacher ratios?

Schools are allocated teachers based on the district class size ratio. Principals have discretion, based on school goals/priorities and using the total number of teachers allocated from the district, to make adjustment to their grade levels. Also keep in mind, as the year progresses and students move in and out of schools, this may skew class size ratios. Please speak with your principal regarding your specific concern.

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