

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 six 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 look forward to continuing this Listen & Learn series each month throughout the year, meeting with representatives chosen by the principals of each school. Our next Teacher Listen and Learn session with teachers will take place on Friday, March 22 with questions due from your teacher representative by March 15.

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

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

ROCK HILL SCHOOLS DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM



DR. BILL COOK
SUPERINTENDENT
WCOOK@RHMAIL.ORG

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.



DR. TANYA CAMPBELL
CHIEF OF PERSONNEL
TCAMPBEL@RHMAIL.ORG



DR. JOHN JONES
CHIEF OF ACADEMICS
& ACCOUNTABILITY
JAJONES@RHMAIL.ORG



DR. LUANNE KOKOLIS
CHIEF OF STRATEGIC PLANNING,
ENGAGEMENT, & PROGRAM
SUPPORT
LKOKOLIS@RHMAIL.ORG



TONY COX
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
ACOX@RHMAIL.ORG



TERRI SMITH
CHIEF OF FINANCE
TRSMITH@RHMAIL.ORG



BRIAN VAUGHAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF FACILITIES
BVAUGHN@RHMAIL.ORG



DR. KEITH WILKS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
STUDENT SERVICES
VWILKS@RHMAIL.ORG



DR. JOYA HOLMES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
& SCHOOL CHOICE
JHOLMES@RHMAIL.ORG



JOHN JAMES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF TECHNOLOGY
JJAMES@RHMAIL.ORG



DR. MISSY BRAKEFIELD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
MBRAKEFI@RHMAIL.ORG



JENNIFER MORRISON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
JLMORRISON@RHMAIL.ORG



MYCHAL FROST
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
& COMMUNICATIONS
MFROST@RHMAIL.ORG

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

How can the district address “traveling issues” regarding equity among high schools? Differences in schedules between schools (the time classes begin/end, plus “flex” or Rtl days/times) can cause problems. Students may arrive late to classes because of travel time, which causes issues with attendance record keeping. Schools do not appear to be able to access files of students enrolled at the other high schools; students are unable to log into teachers’ Canvas pages at the school they travel to. These do not seem to be issues for students traveling to the ATC.

Need more specifics, what are the students traveling for? Which schools cannot access student records? Need more information to determine where the issue is.

What are we doing and/or what can we do differently to help ELLs succeed?

We have current goals and strategies to help our EL students succeed. We are considering such initiatives as revising the intake process, offering more staff development and support to ESL teachers, closer monitoring of EL class failure forms at the high school, implementing the SC Seal of Biliteracy, etc. Continuous improvement is a target in this area.

If the District has approved "Dress Down" for Fridays for staff, why is it that some schools are not able to participate in the "Dress Down" Fridays?

Dress down days are site specific, the district does not have an approved dress down policy for Fridays. The Central Office does not participate in dress down Fridays.

Is it possible to have consistency in the retake policy like in the middle and high schools for the elementary level? For instance, students have become accustomed to not putting forth their best effort the first time, due to knowing they can retake the test several times. For example, a middle school policy is that they are only allowed so many retakes per quarter and can only receive up to a 70. Elementary would like to see some standards guidelines, because this effects the triangulation of data. Also, does the district honor a 70 as mastery? If so, can this be considered the cutoff for retakes?

Beginning in March, conversation will be facilitated 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 will be 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 which 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.

Are there certain circumstances for when the district attendance policy is not followed? If so, is there a list that is available to teachers? At what point if you are at a school of choice and can not get there are they required to go back to your home school?

Whether school of choice or zoned school, there should be an attendance intervention plan in place for not adhering to attendance policy. Truancy at any school should be addressed with an intervention plan and possible referral to family court.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Third grade is responsible for implementing and managing the Read 2 Succeed State Law, and the teachers have inquired about having smaller class sizes due to the additional individualize instruction needed to prepare those learners. This is also the year that students go one-on- one with technology; also impacting the importance of smaller numbers.

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.

The school administrative support staff expressed concerns about the lack of additional support staff members. Meaning that Middle and High school office staff members are greater in number for the same number or less number of students. They are given an extra personnel position to help ensure that the office operates efficiently. This extra position would also be most beneficial to the elementary school office support staff; especially with the need for additional school security.

Any additional positions for 2019-2020 school year would need to be part of the budget discussion / prioritization process providing funding is available. Currently, there is discussion about normalizing a ratio for staffing.

Classroom management, particularly student behavior, has been expressed as a concern. Class size, as well as so many student needs in one group often creates chaos. Could there be PD offerings to help train teachers in this area?

Based on feedback and observations, the district's Professional Learning Plan will reflect more opportunities to support teachers in areas that impact instruction to include classroom management, creating positive and productive learning environments, and building community. The district did purchase this past year a license for each school to use 321 Insight as part of their PD plan.

As a school serving three separate high schools and serving well over a thousand students daily, shouldn't ATC have a full time nurse on campus?

We are working with our lead district nurse to ensure adequate nurses are being provided at each of our school locations. This has been discussed and/or supported at our safety and security listen and learns and is being considered.

Is there any plan for a long term, alternative setting for middle students who disrupt learning on a daily basis? Six weeks at Raven is not a fix for the behaviors these students exhibit.

Depending upon the behavior, a long term solution is possible at Raven. We need to review each student's circumstances on a case by case basis. Staffing would need to be addressed for long-term solutions.

What is district planning to do to address sub shortages? I know as a former sub that RH sub pay hasn't increased in 20+ years, and Kelly Services has a site coordinator/policies that are running off subs as well.

We recently met with Kelly Services to address substitute shortages. Increasing substitute pay is a line item that will be discussed during the budget process. As you are aware, the budget is very limited and there must be some prioritization during the budget process. Kelly is also exploring a variety of incentives on their end that will help with the sub shortages.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Concerning Facilities: Specifically for RHHS and NHS. I believe our buildings have been in place since 1971. Is there a plan to improve our electrical systems in these two schools? In most classrooms we have very limited electrical outlets. The shortfall in electrical outlets adds to the possibility of folks piggybacking extension cords etc. which isn't safe. Also, are there any plans to improve our network servers/WiFi to better support the new technology being made available to students and faculty?

NHS and RHHS were constructed in 1972 and 1977, respectively, and are equipped with systems in compliance with building codes. There are no current plans to modify these systems. Further information will be gathered on what the additional plug loads are needed. Additional outlets were not planned for the addition due to 1:1 computing since policy and procedures require students to bring laptops to school fully charged. The core network servers located at the Flexible Learning Center's Technology office were replaced in January. Please enter a tech request for technology issues in order for us to track patterns with the network/WiFi.

Has the district considered adding back a Fine Arts Coordinator at the district level to be a voice for all the fine arts teachers in our district?

We are very interested in supporting all subject areas to the best of our ability with specialists and coach support. We have been thinking of ways to support our wonderful fine arts teachers. We continue to look at the budget and resources to seek ways we can make this happen. Know that this is on our minds as well.

Teachers are having to cover a lot of classes for absent teachers. Kelly Services has been unable to fill many positions and almost daily teachers are being asked to fill in. If we aren't paying subs from Kelly could that money be used to give teachers stipends to maybe make it less frustrating.

The substitute budget is a district-wide budget. That budget is not large enough to cover substitute costs if all the teachers used all of their earned leave days in a single school year. Teachers that are asked to cover classes for an extended period of time (i.e. nine weeks or semester) are compensated for doing so. Teachers that may be asked to cover a class period occasionally are not compensated by the district. The district will continue to evaluate options during budget discussions. Personnel continues to have conversations with Kelly Services to address the shortage of substitutes.

Kelly Services has been our sub provider for a long time. I know they have high standards and expectations for their subs. This is understandable but I know of several occasions where subs were let go from Kelly because they couldn't do every Friday. We lost a good music sub due to this but his Friday commitment was only a handful of Fridays. Kelly still felt they could have him stay employed by them. We have many retired teachers that would love to come sub for certain teachers or schools and have certain days they can't but the Kelly standards make it so they can't do that. Have we considered other options to securing subs?

During a recent meeting with Kelly Services, we outlined a process to allow former Rock Hill teachers to substitute for only a specific teacher(s). If you would provide your principal with your name and the retired teachers name, Dr. Campbell will work with Kelly and your principal on the process. With regard to a substitute's availability on Friday, the expectation is that they are available as many days of the week as possible. Recognizing that Monday and Friday are high volume days, the availability on those days are a preference.

What is the likelihood that all schools will receive academic interventionist positions next school year?

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 was available. We will include in budget discussions.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

How can we access the work that we completed during the PLC days back from the summer and in January? What is the plan for next year's PLC conference? Is there a way that teachers will have an opportunity to choose to participate in PD that would interest them as the district has done at one time? It seems that the work that we've done in the past has not been as beneficial as we would've liked for it to be. A lot of our work seems to be very repetitive and teachers are not getting as much out of the PD as we would like.

The work completed during the PLC Conference has been accessible in the PLC Conference Canvas course; the work from January will be uploaded there as well. Many different options for the structure of the PLC Conference are being considered. Additionally, the district will continue to revisit previously addressed topics, in different ways, of course, where we find implementation areas in need of improvement.

Research tells us that language exposure is a major predictor of reading ability in elementary grades. What is our district doing to help with community outreach and parent education to help lay the groundwork for literacy in later years?

Support for parenting is fostered from both the district and school levels. The district is involved with such initiatives as Rock Hill Reads, which is done in cooperation with the mayor's office. The district seeks means and ways to support students, families, and parents. Schools are involved using either federal funds for assistance or instructional funds. Schools are to develop plans for addressing parent engagement /involvement at their schools. Each of our Title I schools operates a Pre-K program as well as Central Child Development Center that offers an additional early learning opportunity.

What plan is in place to ensure that schools that aren't school of choices and are high poverty schools aren't forgotten and don't become what seems to be to many as a form of segregation.

The superintendent and district administration team are monitoring enrollment at all schools, meeting with principals, as well as visiting schools, in order that plans and strategies remain "active" and relevant within the district's strategic planning, and working to support all schools and aim for success with the administration, faculty, and staff of all. District staff is conducting a study and cost analysis of all schools per request of the school board to study enrollment and other demographic trends.

A critical part of our district's focus is safety first. This should include emotional as well as physical safety. We are becoming more aware of the mental and emotional needs our students so desperately need and the glaring reality that we do not have the resources in place to adequately provide them. It is my belief, as a veteran teacher who has served our district for over 35 years, that we need an additional school counselor at each elementary school to help address our students' needs. This is especially crucial for our larger Title 1 schools to successfully meet the emotional needs of ALL of our students, thus providing an emotionally safe environment. The ASCA Model, the model that school counselors follow, states that the ideal student-counselor ratio should be 250:1. If our school had two counselors, more students would be seen daily, counselors could run more small groups, and they could more adequately address any crises that arise. -School counselors are often charged with tasks that decrease the time they can devote to students who need more time and attention. Having two school counselors could improve this. Will the additional counselor at each elementary school be something our district will be willing to invest in next year?

Any additional positions for 2019-2020 school year would need to be part of the budget discussion / prioritization process providing funding was available.

To maintain teacher retention in the critical needs content areas, have the district develop an action plan to provide monetary supplements to motivate teachers to remain in the current position.

We have engaged in conversation around the topic of incentives for current and future employees. This is still a conversation in progress and is heavily dependent on the budget.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Does the district have any plans or programs to promote teacher leaders? As many have aspirations to become administrators, it would be nice for the district to develop a program to promote leadership and growth. We have great leadership among our teachers and it could be a great way to promote teachers within the district who have the ability to lead.

Rock Hill Schools believes in the leadership and voice of teachers. This is, in part, shown by the district's investment in PLCs and PLC leaders, as well as the district's teacher advisory committees and teacher listen and learn events. As the district moves forward, attention will continue to be paid to how we provide leadership development for teachers seeking to enter traditional and non-traditional pipelines within the district.

Does the district have a program for students to upload assignments and/or paper to determine plagiarism? There has been an major increase of plagiarism among students with written assignments and uploading the some document as other students. This causes more time to investigate and handle any consequences, if any, rather than focusing on other priorities during the day.

The district has supplied "Turn It In" for students participating in certain high school level courses and schools may purchase plagiarism checking software using school budget money. Please communicate with your principal if this is an important budgeting need so he/she may advocate for this software at the school and/or district level. In the meantime, it is important to teach students about plagiarism in the current internet environment and help them develop the needed skills to navigate the internet ethically and effectively.

Does the district have technology available to teacher to view what is on the screens of their students laptop? If so, then why don't teacher have access to it? While laptops have some benefit, a major consequence is the amount of time and management needed to monitor all students devices.

We have HP Classroom Manager that is a set of tools for the teachers to manage the students' laptops. We are installing it in the elementary schools first. The current version relies on the teacher to add students and then drop them for each class. The next version will tie to PowerSchool to handle this automatically. We are on the list to beta-test it. There are some secondary teachers that are using HPCM; please check with your school tech if you are ready to use this version.

Will the Kindergarten report ever be updated so that parents and teachers are able to understand it?

The K-2 Draft Report Card will be distributed to all schools mid-February for final review. Elementary Principals and Elementary APs have seen the draft based on input from all K-2 teachers conducted at each individual school and grade level in the fall. The overall response from administrators has been very positive. Furthermore, administration at each team will facilitate conversation within their buildings around the K-2 drafts for any additional input during mid-February. The K-2 Draft Report Card Draft was designed to streamline the process for teachers and administrators making it user friendly as well as making the Report Card available in a parent friendly, standards-based format. The K-2 Report Card beginning 2019-2020 will be accessible via PowerSchool which was an initial goal.



TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Could kindergarten classes postpone “official” assignments of teachers for a week or so, so the teachers could get a handle on behaviors/ abilities/ etc... and ensure that all classrooms are balanced and one classroom is not filled with more “issues” than another. After kindergarten, students are placed in more balanced classrooms... why not allow this to happen in kindergarten?

We are currently researching how other neighboring districts are providing Kindergarten screening opportunities prior to the school year to allow for a more “wrap-around” screening process (speech, hearing, vision, etc.). We did something similar last year as a District with K-4 screening, and it was well received. This topic was discussed at our January Principals’ Meeting and will be on the agenda for the March meeting with principals.

With the increased awareness of ACEs and the number of students dealing with trauma, what are we as a district doing to help teachers manage the extreme behaviors that are being manifested in classrooms?

As this question comes from the elementary level, you are probably well aware that the district has implemented behavior management assistants in all elementary schools to help with behavior difficulties at the classroom level. 321 Insights provides training and direction for teachers in dealing with adverse childhood effects in the classroom. The system continues its partnership with Catawba Mental Health, and grants are being written and submitted to seek additional funds and support with behavioral issues. PBIS also remains a steadfast tool and training in the school system.

Securing substitutes constitute a significant concern across the district. In many schools, teachers have to cover classes during planning. As a result, this creates challenges in many ways for teachers and takes away planning time by state regulations. Can the district consider allowing payment out of the school’s substitute accounts if they cover classes during planning?

The substitute budget is a district-wide budget. That budget is not large enough to cover substitute costs if all the teachers used all of their earned leave days in a single school year. Teachers that are asked to cover classes for an extended period of time (i.e. nine weeks or semester) are compensated for doing so. Teachers that may be asked to cover a class period occasionally are not compensated by the district. The district will continue to evaluate options during budget discussions. Personnel continues to have conversations with Kelly Services to address the shortage of substitutes.



What is the district view of Math Proximity Learning? How do stakeholders feel about not having a certified teacher in the class teacher?

The district is supportive of South Pointe’s partnership with Proximity Learning to ensure math instruction in classes which still have vacant teacher positions. The district recognizes the importance of have a consistent, talented, standards-oriented teaching presence in every classroom in every subject. South Pointe and the district are working hard to ensure consistency and quality of instruction. Proximity is a new resource we are currently utilizing. South Pointe’s leadership is monitoring Proximity services carefully, and the district will assess its effectiveness in supporting high levels of student learning at the end of the semester.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Have you thought about increasing pay for the difficult to fill positions?

We have considered providing incentives for those critical needs areas. We will continue to discuss.

As the district realigns and develops inquiry-based STEM/STEAM pathways, is there a plan to ensure that learners have a parallel middle and high school of the Arts to attend. For example, students enrolled in the Northside School of the Arts are not given a pathway that is related to their foundation.

Alignment of programs is something we continue to explore. When looking at choice programs, we always consider the K-12 continuum and aim for what the profile of the graduate in the choice program will be. Budget certainly plays a role in this, and we are mindful of our desired outcomes in choice when expand programs.

When will teachers have an opportunity to apply for Clear Touch Panel Boards?

We are planning to release the application next month with the goal of supplying the panels at the start of 2019-2020.

What are we doing about the teacher and student laptop shortages?

We are constantly watching our laptop inventory to ensure that teachers and students have devices. Please contact your school tech if you are aware of anyone without a device.

Is the district looking into the technology issues that we have with wireless and Internet access? I know some teachers that use their phones as personal hotspots to allow them to finish tasks. It seems it was "fixed" a year or so ago, but it seems to be worse rather than better.

Please enter a tech request when you experience an issue with the WiFi. We will be able to establish a pattern and be able to take the appropriate corrective action.

Is it possible to put Make-Up days at the end of the year?

It is possible to place make-up days at various places within the school calendar. Each year, a committee representing schools and stakeholder groups including district employees, students, and parents is convened to develop future calendars. There is always rich discussion about the placement of make-up days. State law recommends scheduling, when possible, the make-up within the semester in which a day was missed. Recognizing this is not always possible, we have historically distributed the required three make-up days in the spring semester. For 2019-2020, the make-up days are set to be Monday, April 13, 2020, Friday, May 22, 2020, and Friday, May 29, 2020. In the event April 13 is not needed, spring break will be extended by one day for all students and employees. Similarly, if May 22 and May 29 are not needed, the district will be closed. Looking ahead to the 2020-2021 school year, make-up days are set for Friday, October 16, Monday, February 15, 2021, and Friday, May 21, 2021.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Has the district considered early dismissal/release once a week like they do in some schools in the US?

A number of years ago the district included in its calendar several "late start" days. The practice was ended in 2012-2013. Recognizing situations change over time and the growing need to identify opportunities to for improvement, we sought stakeholder feedback on this very question earlier this year on the district calendar survey. In it, 45% of the respondents indicated support for an "early release" option. At this time, district administration is seeking clarity in how we re-introduce an adjusted schedule that would "create more time" to allow teachers to participate in professional learning opportunities.

As a district, is there any current consideration for rezoning students among schools?

We are always looking at the numbers of students in schools and school capacity. At the present time, we are conducting a demographic and school planning segment study at the request of our Board of Trustees. Information from the study will be shared with our Board of Trustees at a future board meeting.

What are plans to retain teachers when student behavior is so bad?

All schools are participating in Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, or PBIS. This is a systems approach for establishing the social culture and individualized behavioral supports needed for schools to be effective learning environments for all students. It is the 3rd year for our school district and all schools have a PBIS Coordinator and PBIS team to work with individual teachers as they learn to approach a variety of situations that involve students with challenging behaviors. There are other resources available for every staff member at each school. An on-line program, 321 Insights, is available for all staff to learn, hands-on- about how to de-escalate a student in crisis, how to avoid power struggles, and best practices in behavior management. School staff are provided opportunities to learn the fundamentals for working with children in crisis. When students are unable to de-escalate, all elementary schools now have a Behavior Management Assistant (BMA) to assist our teaching staff with students that may be in crisis. The BMA's are trained to work with the student so they can eventually come back to class and resume learning. There is at least one staff member from each school that is participating in a book study on Teaching to Strength: Supporting Students living with Trauma, Violence, and Chronic Stress. These staff members are also available to offer insights towards interventions and strategies for our teachers to become better equipped for classroom behavior management on a daily basis. We want to retain classroom teachers that work in Rock Hill Schools.



NEXT TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN WILL BE FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2019
SUBMIT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS TO YOUR SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BY MARCH 15

STAY CONNECTED



@ROCKHILLSCHOOLS

📍 386 E. Black Street
Rock Hill, SC 29730

✉ communications@rhmail.org
🌐 www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us

☎ 803.981.1000 (phone)
803.981.1094 (fax)