

One Team. One Mission. One Rock Hill.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN



NOVEMBER 22, 2019
CENTRAL OFFICE



ROCK HILL
Schools

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Dear Team Rock Hill,

As we prepare this week for the Thanksgiving holiday, I remain thankful for our Board of Trustees, cabinet, administration, teachers, support staff, and all who are part of the Rock Hill team. We are each blessed to work with and love our 17,617 students. Your passion and commitment to improving student outcomes each and every day continue to impress me. Thank you for helping to make a difference in our community as we work together as One Team on One Mission for One Rock Hill. 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 during the first quarter, and I continue to be impressed by the outstanding educators in our school district. I encourage you to continue our focusing on our shared vision to improve learning outcomes for all students.



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

Aligned with the focus on communication with all stakeholders, I, along with my administrative team, look forward to again hosting the monthly Listen & Learn sessions with teachers representing each school in our district. We will hold sessions that will allow everyone to hear about successes and areas for continued growth for our district. Cabinet members also share important information about what is taking place across our

district. Responses to questions from our November 2019 session 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.

I am confident our schools and district will benefit from this open dialogue regarding the needs that exist for our students, staff, and organization overall. If you would like to represent your school at an upcoming session, you are encouraged to talk with your principal. The full schedule of future Listen & Learn sessions and past response documents are available on our website, www.rock-hill.k12.sc/tll.

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! Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family! Enjoy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Biele Cook".

Superintendent

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

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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I have noticed a significant difference in the social/emotional health of our students over the years. As a district, how are we planning to increase our mental health awareness and meet our students in a place that will allow them to learn how to express their emotions in a constructive way? How are we planning to help our children to become more in tune with their emotions and in control of their responses as a result?

In the spring of 2019, Rock Hill Schools partnered with the National Center for the School of Mental Health, University of Maryland - School of Medicine, and through a grant, implemented their Social-Emotional Learning Foundations (SELF) Curriculum with all of our elementary schools. The SELF is an evidence-based curriculum that is aligned with lessons, activities, providing the structure and process for adults and students to develop fundamental emotional and social competencies and experiences. The goals of the SELF are to:

- understand and manage emotions;
- set and achieve positive goals;
- feel and show empathy for others;
- establish and maintain positive relationships and
- make responsible decisions.

These areas are aligned with CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning). All elementary and preschool teachers as well as administrators have a copy of the SELF Curriculum. The District has offered and continues to offer training on the SEL curriculum. As recent as November 18, 2019, Professional development on the SELF was available, presented by the NCSMH.

In the last two years, Rock Hill Schools have put behavior management assistants (BMA's) in all elementary schools and CCDC, hired 5 Rock Hill School Mental Health Service Providers, serving pre-school through high school-aged students along with 17 Catawba Mental Health Service providers. ACE's Awareness Training has been provided to all school staff as well as other mental health advancements in the last 3 years. The Rock Hill School Board along with Dr. Cook have determined that Mental Health is part of the School District's focus for 2019-2020 school year. Rock Hill Schools has also organized and hosted Mental Health Symposiums, and ACE's Conferences.



Is the retention bonus that we received this year a one time bonus or will we receive that again next year?

The recruitment and retention bonuses are dependent on the development of the 2019-2020 budget. Any bonuses for the next fiscal year will be determined in June.

Is there a specific timeline for when renovations to schools will be made? Will special area teachers whose rooms will be rebuilt be able to give input in how those rooms are structured?

The current timeline for each school renovation can be found in part 6A of the Master Plan draft, located at <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/domain/2047>. Projects on the list continuously evolve to meet the needs of the school district, and the master plan may be updated as it is still in draft form. All schools' faculty, parents and leadership will be engaged in the construction planning and design of the authorized projects using our charrette stakeholder process.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

One question to add on the form when you register from an employee. I work as an assistant all day M-F and Challenger 4.5 hours M-F. Challenger is not counted as over time but a separate job. I think it is unfair that the Challenger employees (who only work 2 – 3 hours) got \$500 just like me. They should have either gotten less or I should have gotten more. I am doing 2 jobs both for long periods of time.

Additional parameters on who will be eligible for a retention bonus, if available next year, will be communicated during the budget process in June.

As I am relatively new to the district, please explain the reason(s) that Rock Hill Schools decided to eliminate their special education classrooms, especially self contained. In addition, please explain why there is little to no special support for students with a significant degree of autism (full time shadows, a special education classroom dedicated specifically to autistic/Asperger students to serve as the students' home base where they are taught things like how to initiate interactions, to respond to the initiations of others, to maintain eye contact, to share enjoyment, to read the non-verbal cues of others, and to take another person's perspective. These same students could then be mainstreamed into classrooms for a part of the day. Many of us spent 4 years obtaining our elementary education degrees and were lucky to even have a semester long introduction class to special education. We did not, for varying reasons, choose to spend 4 years obtaining a degree in special education, however, we have now been asked to teach these students with little more than 45-minute segments in a faculty meeting here or there on how to work with these students.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, students with special needs are entitled to a least restrictive environment (LRE). For most students with disabilities, the LRE is the general classroom with supports. General education teachers must have a variety of instructional approaches, differentiated learning strategies, and foundational knowledge of best practices as they work with students that have disabilities, mental illness, English as a Second Language, gifted and talented as well as other students that may be “outside the mainstream” of general education. The understanding that our children with disabilities are “general education students” first is also an important concept that is taught at the college level and should be reiterated throughout a teachers’ educational career. Working together with colleagues that teach one of these subgroups will assist in the learning curve required to reach all students.

Rock Hill Schools has a full continuum of services for our children with disabilities that require a myriad of supports (resource, co-teaching, intensive resource services, self-contained, etc) determined by the IEP team. Students with disabilities are no longer grouped into self-contained programs driven by their “category”, the supports and programming for our students with disabilities are based on their specific learning needs and unique circumstances.

Does the district have future plans to more effectively support those with special needs by employing more school level special education teachers?

Dr. Campbell and Dr. Turner are working together to recruit and retain special education teachers for Rock Hill Schools. Recruitment trips to universities across the nation will provide access to new graduates to hear more about Rock Hill Schools and be able to receive early contracts if they are a good match for the special education positions needed in our school district. This year we added six new special education teachers at the beginning of the year. Since school began, we have added two new special education teachers to our staff of teachers. We will continue to add teachers as students are identified.

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Why can't school nurses check blood pressure and/or blood glucose levels to ensure they are fit to work?

School nurses are hired to serve the students. Of course, in emergencies they do and would assist adults where needed.

In regular education classes, why are resource students placed in one class, and why are GT students placed in one class?

The administration, along with the school team, will determine the most appropriate placement for all of the students enrolled in that school, unless the IEP team determined that a more restrictive environment is needed due to the unique needs and circumstances of the student with disabilities. Scheduling for students accessing the general classroom, which teacher in each grade level, is an administrative/ school team decision. Each summer the list of identified GT students are shared with each administrator to assist with creating class rosters. Administrators may cluster GT students when appropriate due to service schedules and instructional needs. GT numbers across schools vary by grade level and school. In addition, staff placement varies based on the number of GT students to be served so their individual and specific learning needs can be addressed in their area(s) of qualification.

Is there a possibility of having the "no recess when it is colder than 40 degrees" rule revisited? Most, if not all, of our students have warm coats. And if not, we have additional coats available. They play outside at home when it is colder, and days of indoor recess impedes learning and amplifies behavior issues.

We use the Children's Weather Watch chart shown below as a guide. This takes temperature and wind chill into consideration and then provides guidance via green, yellow and red zones. Outside recess should be avoided during red zone days and caution used during yellow zone days. This chart has been shared with administrators.

Understand the Weather

Wind-Chill



- 30° is **chilly** and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is **cold**
- 0° to 15° is **very cold**
- 20° to 0° is **bitter cold** with significant risk of **frostbite**
- 20° to -60° is **extreme cold** and **frostbite** is likely
- 60° is **frigid** and exposed **skin will freeze** in 1 minute

Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered **comfortable**
- 90° beginning to feel **uncomfortable**
- 100° **uncomfortable** and may be **hazardous**
- 110° considered **dangerous**

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)											
Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph										
	CALM	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40		
	50	50	48	40	36	32	30	28	27	26	
	40	40	37	28	22	18	16	13	11	10	
	30	30	27	16	9	4	0	-2	-4	-6	
	20	20	16	4	-5	-10	-15	-18	-20	-21	
	10	10	6	-9	-18	-25	-29	-33	-35	-37	
	0	0	-5	-21	-36	-39	-44	-48	-49	-53	
	-10	-10	-15	-33	-45	-53	-59	-63	-67	-69	
	-20	-20	-26	-46	-58	-67	-74	-79	-82	-85	
	-30	-30	-36	-58	-72	-82	-87	-94	-98	-102	
Comfortable for out door play Caution Danger											

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit)																		
Temperature (°F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)																	
	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90		
	110	108	112	117	123	130	137	143	150									
	105	102	105	109	113	118	123	129	135	142	149							
	100	97	99	101	104	107	110	115	120	126	132	138	144					
	95	91	93	94	96	98	101	104	107	110	114	119	124	130	136			
	90	86	87	88	90	91	93	95	96	98	100	102	106	109	113	117	122	
	85	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	93	95	97	99	102	
	80	76	77	77	78	79	79	80	81	81	82	83	85	86	86	87	88	
	75	71	72	72	73	73	74	74	75	75	76	76	77	77	78	78	79	

Child Care Weather Watch was produced by the Iowa Department of Public Health, Healthy Child Care Iowa. This guide was produced through federal grant (MCJ19T029 & MCJ19KCC7) funds from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Maternal & Child Health Bureau. Wind-Chill and Heat Index information is from the National Weather Service.

TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Concerns with discipline issues, struggles for ESE students, science benchmarks

The district continues to promote Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), which provides a systems approach for establishing the social culture and individualized behavioral supports needed for schools to be effective learning environments for all students. When PBIS is utilized with fidelity at a school, there are successful strategies that will prevent problem behavior with most students. There have been a plethora of resources, as continuation of PBIS, that are available for all teaching staff such as 321 insights, Teach Town on-line modules will assist our students with social skills, and ABA Pro modules to assist our ESE teachers with skills that focus on socially significant behaviors including communication, social skills, academics, reading and adaptive living skills. Other areas are included such as gross and fine motor skills, toileting, self-help, safety, play and socialization skills.

Science Benchmarks, along with greater teacher support in the use of Science kits and hands-on learning, are intended to increase our teaching of Science content. Benchmarks also serve as a measuring tool by which we can predict student learning needs prior to SCPASS. During the summer of 2014, teachers from each grade-level (K-5) were called together to write benchmark tests for each grade-level, taking into account the new SC Science standards' emphasis on the Science & Engineering Practices. The tests are 20-25 questions each and 80% have a picture to accompany the question. Since this time, all of the benchmark tests have been revamped/reorganized/rewritten to some degree to better suit student learning goals, and teacher needs as far as administration.

Concerns with behavior in the classroom, classroom management, class sizes, and communication

Class sizes are monitored on a regular basis. When we have a situation where a class size has grown beyond the district's ratio, district administration works with school administration to find a reasonable solution based on numerous factors.

As a language immersion teacher, I wonder if there are plans to work with teachers and families to evaluate the language skill and continued commitment to the immersion program at some point in middle school?

Students' language skills are assessed formally through the STAMP assessment. Based on the students' results from this assessment, we continue to refine our instructional and programmatic needs. Rising sixth grade students receive a letter of intent which asks parents to indicate their intentions to transition to Sullivan. Once our first cohort reaches the eighth grade, we will send out another letter of intent to parents asking them to indicate their intentions to transition to high school.



TEACHER LISTEN & LEARN

Are there any plans from the district to purchase and expand the use of Fastbridge beyond the universal screener, so that other grade levels could use the MTSS resources that the program provides?

Fastbridge Universal Screening has a variety of tools that accurately identify instructional groupings and will eventually maximize instructional time and resources. The District MTSS team will continue to review and discuss the use of Fastbridge beyond K-1 as well as the programs that Fastbridge has to offer. In addition, adding grade levels would be a budgeting item for consideration in 2020-2021.

RHSD is currently short 3 special education positions. What strategies is the district putting in place to fill these positions? Can itinerant positions be used to fill these roles until replacements are hired?

The District has posted positions, contacted Universities that have special education programs and are doing their best to recruit certified special education staff. ESE has four itinerant staff that are responsible for 7-8 schools each, which include oversight of ESE students and ESE staff in resource, self-contained, and general



education classes that have challenging students (academic and behaviors). The District's ESE Itinerant staff are in schools and classrooms, each day, they assist in facilitating IEP meetings, work with new ESE teachers, and certainly assist with long term substitutes. When four expert ESE Itinerant staff are assigned to 4 classrooms, then 29 schools, 200 special education teachers and 3000 students with special needs would not have the supports, as needed, throughout the week. These positions are aligned with our Math and Literacy coaches. All of these staff need to be available to offer support to all staff and children throughout the district.

Do you foresee a change in policy where the safety and educational opportunities of an entire class will outweigh the educational needs of one violent/disruptive student?

Changes in programming, instructional approaches, strategic behavior management, meaningful outside resources, site-based mental health services, etc. will help guide the need to determine the needs of each student as well as the entire class. As teachers and administrators work together to make decisions about each child, at no point should one child outweigh the learning needs and safety of the class. All children are required to receive a free and appropriate education. District staff should be included in decision making conversations to assist with strategies and placement decisions.

Why do Kindergarten teachers have to administer Kindergarten screening, KRA and the Universal Screener?

The original intent of the Kindergarten Starting Point was to provide a tool to be used by administrators for gathering information to assist in creating rosters for kindergarten classes prior to the start of school. It also provides valuable data for the classroom teachers.

KRA and the Universal Screener are currently required by the state. The State Department is having conversations about if there is a need for KRA and universal screening is necessary. As of now, a decision has not been made to eliminate either.

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Why is York Tech Math dual credit (MAT 120) not being offered on ATC campus next school year?

We have had students and parents express great concern. The newest version of our state Uniform Grading Policy requires that dual credit courses accepted for credit by the district be approved. Dual credit courses planned for 2020-21 underwent the same review process as all other high school courses proposed for 2020-21.

Our goal with dual credit coursework is to fill any gaps in Rock Hill Schools advanced studies course offerings. If we already have an advanced course (Honors, AP, or IB) in a particular subject area, then also offering the same course as a dual credit course is redundant and reduces enrollment in already existing courses. For 2020-21, Rock Hill Schools already offers two advanced statistics options: Honors Probability and Statistics and AP Statistics (which can lead to college credit). ATC staff are in the process of scheduling a partner class for the dual credit English Composition 1 class already on the schedule so students can take advantage of state lottery funds to pay for the courses. Selection is being made based on student interest and course transferability.

As the district continues to improve the technology equipment used in our schools, the internal wiring of many of our older school is not being updated and thus causes interruptions and other issues. What is the plan for this, knowing there is a bigger decision about remodel or rebuild for many of these same schools?

Repairs and upgrades to network components including cabling, servers, Wi-Fi access points and other components has been ongoing over the past several years, and will continue under the new Master Plan and the new Five Year Technology Plan. We also need our school faculty and students' help to exercise proper user security protocol and practice good digital citizenship, as improper use of district devices, cyber-security threats and other actions remain a substantial cause of network interruptions.

The Applied Technology Center name seems to be outdated. Any thoughts on renaming this facility?

Naming of schools is a stakeholder process under Policy FF, Naming Facilities. Planning for the facility began in 1966, and as a result of the district obtaining funds under the Model Cities Program, the Career Development Center opened in 1973. The school served initially offered 18 courses and was the first vocational center in South Carolina to be approved with space for special education students. It also incorporated and housed offices for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The facility provided a new direction for vocational education for students attending either Rock Hill or Fort Mill School Districts. A 24,000 square foot addition opened in 1978 making the Career Development Center the largest vocational facility serving secondary students in South Carolina. The Career Development Center was renamed the Applied Technology Center in 1997 to reflect an emphasis on modern technology and updated curriculum. Currently, the Applied Technology Center offers more than 30 courses and serves more than 1,000 students each semester from Northwestern, Rock Hill, and South Pointe. As programs and services offered to students evolve, a name change would need to be a community-led effort following the process outlined in Policy FF.

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Preparing staff for next level positions was one of the core missions, as best I remember. The recent selection of folks to participate in the classes seemed to cause a lot of "parking lot" conversation at our high school. What are the plans for more opportunities in the future for those interested? What communication did you have with those not chosen because obviously this could leave a bad taste, so how do you smooth that over and keep their attitude positive and be sure they know they are valued?

Principals were encouraged to share with applicants that anyone wishing feedback is welcome to contact Jen Morrison, Joya Holmes, or Missy Brakefield. Personalized feedback regarding the applicants' scoring on the rubric used to assess applications is being provided to applicants upon request. We received over 100 applications for 5 available slots for each academy. Those not accepted into this initial cohort will have future opportunities to apply and we encourage everyone to do so. To ensure the success of the leadership academies in this first year, we intentionally kept the number of slots available low in order to guarantee success of participants and those providing instruction. The Rock Hill Schools Leadership Academies are a new initiative; as we proceed, we will be reviewing the application, selection, and enrollment processes. In no way does not being accepted into this year's cohort hinder an employee's ability to apply for leadership positions in the district. Our goal in the district is to offer many leadership development opportunities across roles; the Leadership Academies are only one of those opportunities.

Has the district considered naming rights or sponsorships as an alternative source of income?

Yes. The district is actively working to develop a facility sponsorship strategy that could generate additional revenue to support the district's capital fund. A preliminary outlay of facilities that could be available for naming rights opportunities has been developed and includes spaces from stadiums, courts, and fields to performing arts spaces, classrooms, and courtyards. District Policy FF - Naming Facilities and its accompanying administrative rule and legal opinion, would set the framework for sales, agreements, terms and rights. We believe a move into sales would align with the existing district "anchor partners program" that generates additional funding annually through fixed signage at District Three Stadium and District Three Stadium South. Any employee with an interest in learning more about this work should contact Mychal Frost, Director of Marketing and Communications at MFrost@rhmail.org or 803-981-1008.



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