

2/21/05 Labor-Management Cooperation Committee

Present: B. Ludeman, L. Herbst, C. Vento-Bente, C. Probst, S. Nass, C. Lehman, D. Linse, J. Miller, J. Butler, K. MacDonald, K. Wachholz, D. Beyer, K. Popa, K. Shepardson, T. Dayne

1. Units: Wachholz – Questioned our members' lack of trust in the "Negotiations Team"; Ludeman responded that they are concerned about the disconnect that there appears to be between the responses from the Association & then the message that is being given in practice; Miller noted some of the comments that she has heard from teachers that they feel the Association team got "taken in" by the District, particularly when good unit proposals are being rejected.
 - Wachholz sees one disconnect occurring in the perception that there are volumes of unit proposals that have not been approved; Wachholz asked for examples of those that have not been approved & asked if we could share some of that information. Ludeman did not feel that we characterized this as volumes, but talked about some pretty serious concerns that people have had; it is felt that there isn't an appeal process in place because teachers get the feedback & their proposal has already been signed off on with a change noted by the Administrator

Ludeman gave several examples:

- foreign language teachers who are taking a trip to Europe with their students were told they couldn't count the time spent in Europe toward units; the reason given was because there is reimbursement for travel from the District it can't be counted; this does not consider the amount of time spent teaching students while on the trip
- revision to Guidance Counselors' proposal regarding student meetings; they requested 2 units for 45 to 67 hours meeting with students & their parents; they felt this was a legitimate request for units because they differentiate among the individual students' needs; they were told they could only receive 1 unit
- special ed proposal to relate transition activities to standards & benchmarks with numerous related activities & the number of units requested were rejected
- one teacher was told that the proposal was similar to one being submitted by another department & the teacher would need to "link up"; was also told that proposals submitted this year are supposed to be completed this year; was also told that a personal reflection would be needed for each component
- one teacher was told that units could not be obtained for attending a workshop until a student product component could be incorporated; sometimes we are unable to carry out something in a workshop, but plan to carry it out in the future
- two teachers who take a camping field trip with their students submitted a proposal that was denied
- general concerns about the expectation for time being spent outside of the school day

Wachholz felt that the concept was designed to recognize the people who are going above & beyond the expected responsibilities of their job & that there seems to be a disconnect about that

The charge of the District was to determine what wasn't being approved & what were some of the areas that the District had questions about following the Association's notes provided at the February 8 meeting

Examples given by the District:

- teacher allowed a high school student to come into the classroom & observe her teaching; the teacher was advised that there would need to be some of examples of how she worked with that student
- if there is no outcome, a reflection log has been expected to discuss how the proposal will be used back in the classroom
- a teacher was making flashcards for an adaptive PE class; it was re-crafted & then approved
- a PT who is doing partial weight-bearing with a student wanted a unit; this is part of the expectation of her job, so it was not approved as written; if a piece is added whether this process was successful or not by keeping data, then it would be accepted
- building proposals were pre-approved so that teachers could get into them right away; other proposals were developed by the principal based on building goals & shared with teachers
- in the beginning, 2 out of 17 schools had principal-generated proposals; now there are 17 out of 17 schools who have developed principal-generated proposals
- a binder is kept to reflect all of the proposals that have been approved; there are numerous teacher-developed units

- one high school's foreign language department is taking a trip out of the country & has had a unit proposal approved for having the students come back & develop a travel brochure; what you do with the information learned & how you implement it back in the classroom is the most significant piece
- the teachers who wanted approval for the camping field trip that they take with their students has been approved

The District continues to feel that this is a guided practice year & it was expected that there would be some issues; we need to review what has been tried with respect to communication about units

- District worked with Association to use email communication as a Q&A response forum to answer questions that had been raised; a hard copy was given to Building Reps & was emailed to them, as well
- Association held a Units Listening Session in order to hear what types of concerns were out there & to reassure teachers that they were being heard; it is felt that teachers had a better understanding of units after talking to individual members of the Team & were reassured that they were being heard
- Association dedicated several RAs specifically to units & related discussion; it was later reported at the Unit Workshops that some people had never received information (or were unable to recall receiving it) back at their buildings; it is clear that the message was not communicated to everyone, & there need to be more opportunities where everyone can hear the same message
- It is significant to note that face-to-face meetings are so helpful; when letters go back & forth, a meeting is far more beneficial to getting a resolution to address people's needs
- Proposals have been written by teachers with a great deal of thought; wonderful examples of what people are doing are being compiled in binders & are indicative of what is going on throughout the District
- Unit Workshops were held in January to attempt to clarify concerns; some indicated that their questions remained unanswered, while others have stated that they were extremely beneficial
- Unit training with principals & helping them to understand the process well has been positive; this is so important because they are often in the position of instructing teachers
- Unit forms are now available at the District website under Curriculum & Instruction
- Unit forms are now available at the Association website where they can be more clearly accessed by teachers
- The role the Communication Model played at the buildings generally was effective; where it has impeded the process has been in situations where there are people who may be adding to the general confusion; the role of the Head Building Rep is integral in sharing information back at the buildings, & there isn't always that dynamic occurring as is needed; the teachers in a building need to make sure to select someone who will be representative of everyone in that building; face-to-face meetings need to be held between the building reps & the other teachers on the staff as a conduit for the kind of information that needs to get out; there needs to be a situation where the building reps can truly be working with their building principals; Association leaders also need to be reminded that BRs should not be bypassed when questions are brought forward at a building; the communication between BRs & building principals need to occur
- Significant growth has occurred with administrators who have taken responsibility for generating unit proposals for teachers in their buildings or who work with teachers to develop their proposals

2. Retribution/ Retaliation – the District would like to establish the extent of these concerns

- Concerns were expressed that a building principal told a teacher not to talk to other teachers about whether there was any dissatisfaction with the units process because it would result in bigger problems; certain types of questions were being perceived as being negative
- Teachers stated that there were probationary teachers who were afraid to voice dissent or even attend the Association Listening Session because they were afraid of retribution
- There is a fear that there is no reason for the District to approve any units because it is ultimately a way to control people's wages
- There was a concern expressed that if retribution did occur, the Association would be powerless to do anything about it; there was further discussion that, indeed, the Association can & will take action if there is a documented case of retribution

3. The District wanted to make some comments about this issue & has put some information together as a piece for the next step. Wachholz called a special meeting of building administrators together which included instructional people, as well. They were asked to complete a written survey to provide unit feedback; addressed

concerns that they have heard at their building level, concerns that they personally have, questions about units, & suggestions that would be helpful. As it was everyone's intent that this year serve as a guided practice year, it is normal to spend time reviewing feedback & determining what needs to be addressed.

- A lot of things were left open-ended; we agreed to move forward with a plan that was going to evolve & we knew this was the case; we didn't want to pre-determine what was going to happen
- Knowing that change is so difficult for some people, leaving things so open-ended may have added an extra level to the confusion; others, however, appreciated leaving it more open
- The District compiled some basic issues for a Units Survey which would allow every Association person to provide feedback as part of this guided practice year process; would provide opportunity for input & ideas; this could be a starting point for what types of concerns are out there

A lengthy discussion followed during which time the survey was reviewed & both sides worked to refine it to provide the most useful information for future decision-making; survey will be distributed within the week

4. Ludeman brought up the question about what will happen to people who are supposed to be moving on the contract, but are at the third cell in a block & must have 3 units earned. Will their contract reflect that? The District is presently working on procedures in order to determine specifically how this issue will be addressed. Wachholz has also inquired about the efforts that people have been making in response to units & anticipates receiving that information.

5. People have been recently been bringing forth Course Approval sheets for courses that they didn't get previous approval on. The District has agreed to establish an "amnesty period": ANYONE who has taken a course during prior years from 2000 to the present date & who didn't complete the blue coursework form for prior approval can get these courses reviewed for approval IF they have been turned in to Human Resources BY APRIL 4. After that date, they will no longer be accepted for review.

Next meeting scheduled for: **Tuesday, March 8 at 4pm at Administration Board Room**
The meeting was adjourned at 3:12pm.

Minutes submitted by L. Herbst