

Grant Wood Area Education Agency Advisory Council
October 17, 2011
Meeting Notes

Agency Advisory Council Meeting Dates

Monday, January 30, 2012 (note –date change from date of January 31)
Friday, April 27, 2012
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Facility Update

Sixth Street Facility

Trace Pickering reported the HVAC system work at the 6th Street facility is progressing nicely. The work will take another four weeks. Several furnaces will kick in the next few days. The heat will level out in the next week or so. Contact Curtis Thomas if an area is too cold or hot.

Trace was asked to look into options for patio seating located in the back of the Sixth Street facility.

Green Policy Guidelines

Trace Pickering stated the intent of the green policy was never to make the guidelines so restrictive that they were unreasonable. The purpose of the review was to look at reducing redundant power such as coffee pots, refrigerators, and personal fans. Crock pots for a party or a few holiday lights are fine.

Vending Machines

The vending machines have had issues with being loaded correctly.

The coffee vending machine often has issues.

George Held stated the coffee machine runs from a computerized program. We are required by law to contract with the Department of the Blind for our vending services. Trace Pickering indicated we will partner with the vendor and do our best to improve the service.

Coralville Facility Update

Trace Pickering reported Grant Wood AEA is in conversation with Kirkwood Community College, University of Iowa, and Iowa City Community Schools to review options for a possible co-facility. The facility would be located on University of Iowa property. Two different locations are proposed with one of them located in the Oakdale area.

The next steps are to schedule a meeting with realtors to talk about marketing the Coralville facility and to meet with staff and administrators to outline the needs and requirements for the new facility.

Budget

Joe Crozier stated this past year was a difficult budget year. Between staff reductions, retirements, and recalls we have less employees this year than last year. After a critical review of the budget, a couple of things came to light. Because we knew the budget was in dire shape, dollars that were in place were not spent (i.e., dollars allocated for travel and technology). We will continue to be conservative, but the dollars that have been budgeted will be spent.

We are using dollars allocated in the technology budget to buy iPads for our staff. We want to spend those dollars on resources that help you do your job better. Students served by SLPs, OTs, and PTs will benefit from the use of the outstanding Apps available for the iPads. We will continue to expand the use of iPads and figure out how the technology will work with the disciplines. We will explore other resources that will help us do the work.

Apps will be preloaded onto the iPads. The process for the initial Apps as well as additional Apps will be clearly defined. The Apps purchased by the Agency will reside on the server. You may download the free Apps. The Agency will not purchase individual iTunes cards. The roll out schedule is yet to be determined.

Question: Is there a “go to” person for every discipline?

Joe Crozier stated at this point recommendations should be sent to Stacy Behmer. An additional staff member was hired and is starting employment today.

Question: Is there a way we can blend the district technology Apps with the GWAEA App installation?

Joe Crozier indicated several AEAs have contracted with a company called Victory Apps to build an App for the staff and schools directory. The App will be a Smart Phone App but it can be added to your iPad. The App should be available possibly as early as next month. An update to the App will be available annually.

Hiring

Joe Crozier reminded staff the AEAs will be cut by \$10 million next year. This cut is ongoing so you can't take it out of your reserves. You need to take it out of your current budget. We will add some staff now and a year out we may need to reduce staff. The legislators have been told that making the \$10 million cut an annual cut will prove to be difficult.

Chief Administrator Visits to the Regional Administrator Meetings

Joe Crozier reported within the past 3 months he visited with each GWAEA management staff member around a protocol of questions, traveled to every district within the Area 10 service area to meet with each superintendent, and individually met with the GWAEA board members. Joe also met with 8-10 community leaders. Joe will now focus on developing a good connection with the GWAEA staff. Joe will begin by scheduling a visit to each region meeting.

Comp Time Guidance

Maria Cashman reported a committee comprised of Liz Hooley, Kim Lestina, Julie King, Jackie Schreder, and Marsha Reitzler are working together to provide guidance on how to administer comp time. The committee has met twice and another meeting is scheduled the end of the month. If you have questions, direct them to one of the committee members. The committee hopes to provide guidance by the end of November.

Blueprint for Iowa Education Reform

Joe Crozier stated the Governor released the Iowa Blueprint on October 3, 2011. The AEAs are charged with providing “a unified, driving force behind implementing high expectations”. The AEAs worked together to identify priority service areas in which the infrastructure and staff within the AEAs can provide focused, sustained support with our educational partners to achieve the learning outcomes for Iowa's children. The proposal was presented to the Department of Education.

The identified areas include supporting the demand for technical assistance, assistance with professional learning communities, mentoring and induction, professional development, supervision and training evaluation, support for SAMS, Iowa Core and the assessment, literacy, spirit of innovation—how could we take a lead and help schools be out in front? (i.e., the iPad project) As the initiative moves forward we will explore how as an Agency we can provide support to close the achievement gaps.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Joe Crozier indicated last May, the State Board of Education adopted the implementation of RtI for Spring 2012. The work at GWAEA will be based on components that have to be included and the Department of Education framework. GWAEA launched IDM on a global basis so the schools are familiar with that. Training and support will be available.

Maria Cashman stated IDM waned around the conversation should Special Ed implement this or should it be a General Ed movement. It became a general education initiative. The roles will be different for RtI. The

consultation piece will most likely continue. GWAEA staff will be encouraged to work with special education and general education teachers around good educational practice.

Pop Fund

George Held reminded the staff due to the contractual arrangement with the Department of the Blind we will no longer receive profits from the vending machines. The current balance in the Grant Wood AEA Employee Account is \$4,822.24. We received generous contributions from Linn Area Credit Union and Hills Bank toward the cost of the banquet so we only had to use \$1,800 from the employee fund for the 2011 banquet. The remaining funds may be enough to pay for another banquet.

George proposed changing the banquet format to an event at the Agency late in the afternoon 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. and serve heavy appetizers.

George also suggested the elimination of individual retirement events held at the Agency sites.

The group was reminded the “What If” posters suggest play, fun, and celebration.
<https://sites.google.com/a/gwaea.org/gwaea-what-if/>

The Advisory Council asked George to send out a survey to gather input from the staff regarding the banquet and retirement events.

Open Forum

A question was posed regarding the approval process for professional leave reimbursement. There have been a few scenarios that have caused confusion, such as:

The form is approved upstairs by our supervisor and then questioned and rejected when it goes downstairs.

Are all expenses that may be incurred to be listed and then reconciled after completion of the travel?

For example, 2 staff going to the same conference, should both employees put down the mileage on the form in case they have to drive separately versus riding in a carpool?

Is a hotel stay an option if the conference is 2 hours away and the meeting starts at 8:00 a.m.?

Maria Cashman indicated the managers will receive additional guidance regarding the hotel policy, professional leave money, etc. We will work to streamline the processes. We want managers to have flexibility to approve things.

Iowa Shares

George met with the Iowa Shares. There are three state-recognized federations: United Way, Iowa Shares and Community Health Charities Iowa. George indicated all three options may be offered but the only one that will available as a payroll deduction is United Way.

Early Separation

A question was raised about the possibility of offering an early separation plan.

Joe Crozier replied the first reading of the Early Separation Policy # 4136 is on the agenda for the board meeting on Wednesday, October 19, 2011. Based on the current policy, the board sets the decision about an early separation plan a year in advance. Last year a decision was made that there will not be an early separation plan available for 2011-2012. Early separation policies are offered to help the Agency if they have problems with finances.

The first reading of the policy recommends the board take no action for 2011-2012 but the board may revisit the language in spring 2012. The revision to the policy language states that when the board votes on an early separation plan it will take effect that year.

Secretarial Staff in Coralville

How is the work assigned to the secretaries in Coralville?

Maria Cashman replied the RAs have an assigned secretary and they are the first decision maker. The link for the secretarial support works as a secondary line. Paul Kiburz is in his first year as the support staff link. Agency-wide assignments may go to Paul. There are times when a request comes through Maria or a PSA.

Send agenda items for January 30, 2012 to Kim Martin

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Recorded: K. Martin