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Leon County Schools Paper Reduction Committee Report

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Committee History

In July 2006, then Superintendent Croteau, in collaboration with school leaders across the district, identified Ms. Cana Nudi, a media specialist at Chiles High School, as the school district's teacher representative to speak on behalf of the district's teachers regarding paperwork and data collection reduction.

In August 2006, a steering committee met to determine how best to approach paper reduction in the district. The committee consisted of Superintendent Croteau, Ms. Nudi, and Barbara Wills, Director of Planning and Policy. The group met to review the report and recommendations of the DOE Paper Reduction Task Force; determine how to best address the DOE charge given to each district to reduce paper and reporting requirements for teachers; and to create a timeline for action.

It was determined that the paper reduction committee would consist of at least one member from each of the following positions; identified according to the volume of paper work they must currently respond to.

- Assistant Principal of Discipline
- Assistant Principal of Curriculum
- ESE Teacher
- Gifted Teacher
- Media Specialist
- Reading Teacher
- Kindergarten Teacher
- Information Systems representative
- Policy and Procedure representative

The planning committee worked with the Leon County Teachers Association, the executive directors of elementary and secondary schools, and the Information Technology and Services Director, to identify committee members. In November 2006, e-mail invitations were sent to these members. The Committee membership was finalized by our new Superintendent, Mr. Pons in May 2007 and the committee began virtual meetings immediately thereafter. In October 2007, membership was expanded to include additional teachers representative of elementary, middle and high school levels. Members discussed issues identified by faculty and staff at their respective schools. The goal of this committee is to allow teachers to focus on students and their achievement. Objectives of the committee remain to:

- Solicit input from faculty and staff throughout the district;
- Identify specific reporting and data collection burdens on teachers that require large amounts of paperwork; and
- Identify ways the district can assist teachers in reducing paperwork required by means of technology, changes in policy and procedure, or other solutions.

Actions of the Committee

- Progress Monitoring – The steering committee discussed methodologies that could be utilized to monitor student achievement and progress without increasing the paper burden on teachers or the district. Special consideration must be given to those that allow time to adjust instruction.
- Paperless School Board Meetings – As a demonstration of the district’s commitment to reduce paperwork, the school board has implemented the paperless automation of board meetings. This system will allow school board staff, administrators and teachers to provide information for the board meetings and review such material in an electronic environment. Staff no longer must use valuable financial resources to print and distribute copies of board materials (sometimes hundreds of pages) to staff and board members. This has also resulted in an extension of deadlines for submission of materials, since the additional time is not required to copy and distribute materials. The district estimates annual savings of approximately \$30,000 in the first year alone.
- Paperless Meeting Structures – In the past few years, the district has gone paperless in several committee assignments where teachers and school site staff serve. Paper copies are no longer prepared and distributed but instead the information is made available on line ready to view at the committee members’ discretion; saving travel time, copying and production time, and paper. In previous years this included the Reassignment Committee and the Paper Reduction Committee. This model was expanded this past year to include the District Advisory Council, the Student District Advisory Council, the Assistant Principals meetings, Leadership Team meetings, and the Athletic Review Committee meetings. The amount of time and paperwork that has been saved by universally applying this method is amazing.
- District Reorganization – Under the leadership of Superintendent Pons, the district has reorganized, making a concerted effort to eliminate elongated chains of command and to stress stronger relationships. This shift mandates direct communication between teachers and principals and between principals and the Superintendent. One of the many benefits of this is a reduction in reports required by the district and by school site administrators.
- Genesis Discipline – An online discipline reporting system that has eliminated paper forms required of the teacher and administrator and logs required at the school site. This system allows the teacher or administrator to make a report online instead of requiring forms of both the teacher and administrator and also eliminates the need for hard copies with signatures and a paper trail.
- Genesis Attendance – An online attendance reporting system that eliminated paper forms required of teachers and administrators and replaces the logs previously required at a school site. This automated system not only eliminates previously required paper forms but also reduces the amount of time required to collect and report such information since now it is more targeted and distribution is automatic.
- Human Resources Portal – The Human Resources and Information Technology Departments have partnered to purchase and implement a software application that will automate many of the paper processes required for payroll, leave and accounting, and other HR functions. The HR Portal is currently in the beta testing stage. Live employee data has been loaded and is being tested by the

HR Portal team within the Leon County Schools' network and firewall but is not yet accessible by other employees. This is planned for roll-out within the next 6 months.

- Parent Portal – A parent portal is currently under development that will allow parents to come to one secure source for information about all of their children's classes, teachers, course assignments, grades, and more. This model is currently being tested at various school sites by the Parent Portal team within the Leon County Schools' network and firewall but is not yet accessible to parents. This is planned for roll-out within the next 3 months.
- Streamlining Site-Based Processes – Schools throughout the district may have different internal procedures and requirements for approving purchase requests, leave, use of substitutes, field trips, etc. The paper reduction committee brought forth ideas from their schools to begin to create a "best practices" for so many of these procedures. There have been many small successes and this review will continue into next year.
- Expansion of PATS – PATS is the Paperless Applicant Tracking System, used by individuals to apply for any job in the district. PATS has successfully automated our application and approval process in the past and is now being expanded to include many supplemental processes including background checks, the interview process, hiring and communication with applicants. It also allows the Human Resources Department to be able to see the status of advertised positions immediately.
- Liquid Office – Leon County Schools uses Liquid Office to manage many business processes internally in order to reduce paper and to expedite our existing management processes. Right now this is being used for personnel action forms and purchase orders and we are looking to expand its use in other areas as well.
- Online Benefits Enrollment – In the past Leon County Schools, along with its benefits providers, have required all employees to come to the district office or one of three schools, for their annual benefits enrollment. This year, for the first time, the district has moved to an online benefits enrollment system that allows all employees to make their benefit decisions at their desk, their school site or even in the privacy of their own home.

The Paper Reduction Committee will meet quarterly throughout the upcoming year and will continue to address issues related to paperwork reduction for teachers and staff. Preliminarily, the committee has identified the following issues to be addressed during the coming year:

- Student information, including contact information, emergency information, and other information specific to each student submitted by the parent or guardian at the beginning of the school year.
- Paperless SDAC Meetings – The sponsor of the student district advisory council will apply the paperless meeting structure model to this group as well.
- Classroom Information – Teacher information provided to the district for required reports and data analysis. During this most recent year the paper reduction committee looked at information that is provided from the classroom to the site administrator such as student attendance, professional

leave from the classroom, grades and student performance information. The committee was able to reduce some of the paper required in these instances with the aforementioned Genesis Attendance segment and the use of online forms and reducing some of the paperwork that was deemed extraneous in certain circumstances. For the coming year, the committee's major initiative is to look at student data that is provided to the district office, such as contact information,

- VPK Requirements – The committee will evaluate ways to more efficiently meet the requirements for VPK providers including support meetings, parent conferences, verification of choice certificates, and others.
- Request for Leave – The Committee will evaluate how to expedite the process for requesting and processing the various types of leave available in the district.
- The Paper Reduction Committee is planning to work with the active Leon County Teachers Association to identify issues for paper reduction that would be most beneficial to our teachers.