Comprehensive CASA Updates

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Striving to always be transparent and keep everyone informed as to not only what is going on, but also what we are doing to address and resolve problems, issues, or concerns that arise, we are providing you with this update.  Your CASA Leadership is committed to being your advocate, making sure that your voices are heard, and ensuring that the rights of all are protected and safeguarded at all times. **As a reminder, our next General Membership meeting will be held this Wednesday, May 15, 2019 beginning at 5:00 PM**, at the CASA Office. Light refreshments will be served.  Since my last communication to you, I wanted to provide you with additional information and/or updates around the following topics:   * ●  Food Services and Providing Adequate Resources * ●  Leadership Coach Interviewing Process * ●  Lindback Award Winners * ●  Principal Leadership Awards (Marcus Foster and Robert Poindexter) * ●  Principal Selection Process * ●  Professional Growth Fund Procedures and Guidelines * ●  School Climate Managers and Discipline * ●  School Police Officers and Line Hierarchy * ●  Unit Clarification Process   While these items are discussed here, it is important that you attempt to attend the **General Membership meeting on Wednesday, May 15,**2019 at 5:00 pm as there is much more to these topics than meets the eye in this communication. Additionally, there are topics that will be on the agenda that cannot be discussed here either because of the sensitivity or depth of the issue. For those reasons, we again encourage you to attend the meeting to learn more and to contribute to the conversation.  Food Services and Providing Adequate Resources  We have been made aware of some startling information... Our colleagues in Food Services are being asked to pay - yes, pay - to drive the District’s vehicles in order to do their jobs and travel to schools and other locations in the field.  CASA takes exception with this practice as no employee should be made to pay to use a company vehicle to carry out the duties, responsibilities, and functions of their job. Furthermore, we take specific issue with this action as we were neither consulted about, nor properly informed about this abrupt change in practice. This is obviously a past practice violation, but for a number of reasons it begs the question: “Is this new practice one that is being applied uniformly and consistently across all offices, departments, and divisions in the District or is this being applied only to CASA’s Food Services?” Keep in mind - today it is them; tomorrow, it could be you.  Leadership Coach Interviewing Process  You wanted it...and we got it! As you know, many hours were spent in conversation with the District to secure the new Leadership Coach positions that were posted recently. CASA championed this cause because we got tired of our members being harmed by a vicious cycle. In the first scenario, a new administrator is hired and appointed to a school, provided with little to no support, and then, when “data” or a “climate audit” or a “complaint” (anonymous or solicited) confirms what was already known - that coaching, professional assistance, or other types of supports were needed by and would have been helpful to the administrator involved, between the months of April and June, the administrator involved is “fast-tracked” to demotion or worse, termination. In the second scenario, an experienced administrator struggles or is overwhelmed because of circumstances beyond his /her control (e.g., lack of cooperation from staff, students with severe social-emotional/behavioral health needs, or being made a target by a superior), with those above knowing the administrator is having difficulties and doing very little to help. Instead of providing the necessary supports, the administrator is viewed as unable to do the job and is then placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) that is haphazardly implemented by the superior officer, which leads to, again, being “fast-tracked” to demotion or termination.  Just as the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) has Consulting Teachers and Academic Coaches for their members, it is our belief that the Leadership Coaches would provide much-needed support to our members who are new or are struggling in their administrative roles. For months, our pleas continued to fall on deaf ears with the District. Instead, they were padding and adding to the brass of central office by way of additional departments for various chiefs (two Deputy Chiefs of Schools, and a new Deputy Chief of Leadership Development were hired to name a few), as well as the creation of several new networks and the appointment of additional Assistant Superintendents, not to mention the hatching of a litany of high level central office-based positions.  When District officials decide that their job responsibilities are too much of a burden and help is needed for them to be effective in their positions, they hop on the elevator and head to third floor where the Chief Financial Officer holding the purse strings gifts them help in the form of additional positions - Deputy Chiefs, Executive Directors, Directors, Managers, and Special Assistants, to highlight just a couple.  All of this was (and still is) occurring while our members in the field continue to beg for adequate resources in the schools, only to be told (1) “This is the job you signed up for...” or (2) “You should be thankful that school counselors and school nurses have been restored to the school buildings...” The best analogy that I can give to this scenario is when parents feed their children bread and water, while they dine on caviar and steak - making them watch them while they eat. Then, when their children complain of being hungry and would like for their parents to share their food with them, they admonish their children for not being grateful for the bread and water because after all, they are surviving, although barely.  The fact of the matter is, once CASA began “digging” - following the money and all of the cushiony extras added to district offices, then and only then, did the District even consider our ‘ask’ for the Leadership Coaches. We requested that CASA be allowed to submit a contract proposal for coaches just as outside entities did and we were met with an astounding NO. We were, however, given the consolation that the coaches would be in place by July and that CASA’s input would be included. This is the typical employer-employee relationship: the employee can always work for the employer for small change, but never own any stock in the company. They would rather outsource any/all contracts as opposed to considering that CASA may actually have the expertise to compete for a contract designed to improve CASA’s own members.  Understanding all of this, brings me to this important update. The hiring process for the Leadership Coach position is now underway. Note that for those members who submitted applications, interviews will be conducted and a performance task will be completed. At CASA’s request, two retired principals will be joining the District’s panel of selectors. A current point of contention centers around the salary for the position. The position has two different salaries and both are lower than the current Principal’s salary. Hopefully, CASA can resolve this issue by week’s end.  Lindback Award Winners  As always, it was extremely difficult receiving the information in a timely manner regarding the Lindback Awardees. The message did not go out until the day before the event at the Prince Theater. As a result, most of CASA could not be on hand to celebrate the honorees. We did manage to put the recipients on our Facebook page where they received many congratulations.  Please congratulate the following 2018-2019 Lindback Awardees:   * ●  April Brown - Laura W. Waring * ●  Shakae Dupre-Campbell - Middle Years Alternative * ●  Nimet Eren - Kensington Health Sciences * ●  Rebecca Julien - Eliza B. Kirkbride * ●  Todd Kimmel - Horatio B. Hackett * ●  Kiana Thompson - Academy at Palumbo * ●  John Spencer - John F. McCloskey   Principal Leadership Awards (Marcus Foster and Robert Poindexter)  CASA was informed by Evelyn Sample-Oates that information regarding the Marcus Foster and Robert Poindexter Leadership Awards was sent to the membership on May 5, 2019 and has an expected return date of May 30, 2019. All principals are encouraged to participate submit an application for a worthy award sponsored by the Freedom Credit Union. Winners will be celebrated at the last citywide Principal’s meeting on June 7, 2019.  Principal Selection Process  We continue to seek clarity around the Principal Selection Process, which remains one that is subjective, ambiguous, and quite frankly, vague. The District has made its position clear as confirmed by Dr. Bird in several emails sent to Principals in the last few weeks -- Dr. Hite has the absolute right to appoint individuals to schools. While we are aware of and respect this point of privilege that is the Superintendent’s right to exercise, we believe in transparency, fairness, and their word of the day: equity. With that, it is our position that there must be a process that is clear, objective, and consistent. It is only those things are included in the process can it be understood and respected by all who seek the role and those will be served by the individual in the role.  Anything else is tantamount to dictatorship and that is in direct controversy to the type of relationship that we seek to nurture with the District; furthermore, it contradicts one of their “Key Messages” to the public:  “Our progress is the result of careful planning and smart execution... The City can have faith in our approach, our teaching, our leadership, and oversight... Our Principals are strong, respected leaders of their school communities.”  In this process, there are considerations that must be taken into account for not just the school communities who our Principals lead, but for all of our members - those who are already Principals and want to move to a new school and those who are not yet Principals and would like to become one. Our members need to know and deserve the opportunity to participate in a fair process where they can compete on a level playing field among their equally-qualified colleagues.  At this time, CASA is seeking answers to the following questions:   * 1. What factors prompt the Superintendent/Designee to make a “direct appointment?” Are these factors iron- clad and able to withstand scrutiny (i.e. consistently considered every time) or are they as mercurial and labile as the appear.   2. Why post schools and convene selection committees if the Superintendent/Designee has already made a “gentlemen’s agreement” behind the scenes, promising schools to individuals to include people not interviewed or recommended by the committee? What is the point in charging a “sham” committee when the decision has already been made anyway?   3. Why is the Office of Talent in general and the Senior Search Consultant specifically,   weeding out qualified candidates to give the impression that a limited number of applicants applied for a particular school when the truth is there were many more qualified applicants who expressed interest and applied?   * 1. What is continuing to cause discrepancies between the number of qualified applicants that apply for schools and the number of sometimes unqualified applicants who are placed before a committee and then funneled up to the Chief of Schools and/or the Superintendent?   2. When stakeholders (e.g., school community members or CASA) question the appointment, why are they rebuffed and told, “We hired the ‘best fit’ for the school?” What constitutes and/or defines a ‘best fit’?”   Professional Growth Fund Procedures and Guidelines  Professional Growth Fund applications for the 2018/2019 academic year may be submitted at this time. If you have not yet submitted your application, early submissions are being accepted. Otherwise, please make certain that you do so no later than Wednesday, June 12, 2019.  As you are aware, there have been several changes to the Professional Growth Fund. While the eligible amount to be reimbursed remains unchanged ($600.00), changes have been made in particular that affect what may be purchased and when, as well as the required documentation that must be submitted along with your application.  Please be reminded that the Professional Growth Fund is a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and Teamsters Local 502 - CASA. CASA serves as the fiduciary agent that oversees the fund, but the money that makes up the fund belongs to the District. It is allocated to CASA, and may only be expended (payed out) as outlined in the guidelines and according to the procedures prescribed by the District.  As a reminder, all allowable purchases must have occurred on or after July 1, 2018 and you must have been an full, active CASA member at the time of the purchase. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask. Most questions can be answered by contacting the union office at 215.236.7222 between the hours of 9:30 am and 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday.  Some frequently asked questions (FAQs) are included below, which you may find helpful.  FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  Q; Can I buy a phone? A: Yes, if you have not purchased a phone in the last three years  Q: Can I finance my product? A: No, in order to be reimbursed, you need to pay outright for your purchase.  Q: I did not get a receipt. Can I create my own receipt? A: No, you can’t create a receipt. It gives off the appearance of fraud.  Q: A relative operates a business out of his home. Can I purchase my equipment from my relative? A: You can purchase from anyone who is licensed and operating legally.  Q: My husband/wife and I share a credit card. Can I make the purchase using the shared credit card? A: The credit card should be in your name  Q: How should I submit my credit card purchase? A: Please make a copy of your name and the last 4 digits of your card that is shown on your receipt.  School Climate Managers and Discipline  CASA has been in conversation with the School District of Philadelphia with reference to the number of School Climate Managers that are being removed and reassigned to central office due to baseless allegations of child abuse. In comparison with other CASA members, our School Climate Managers are ranked number one for being unfairly branded as perpetrators of and subjected to investigations by the Department of Human Services (DHS) for child abuse accusations. We are currently in the beginning stages of strategizing to meet with legislators to discuss the perils of what the Child Protective Services Law, a.k.a., the Sandusky Act, has done in Philadelphia. In the near future, we will need your help as we travel to our State Capitol around this very issue. Here are the rankings of school administrators’ removal based on the District’s interpretation of the Sandusky Act:  1. School Climate Managers    2. Principals   1. Assistant Principals 2. School Police   School Police Officers and Line Hierarchy  Both School Police Lieutenants and Sergeants are both well respected members of our ranks. It is equally as important that everyone understand that we are one and when we work together as one, CASA is stronger as a result. Please note that just as Principals do not supervise other Principals, School Police Lieutenants and/or Sergeants cannot supervise colleagues who hold the same rank. In some cases, District officials have allowed confidential information to be placed in the hands of same rank colleagues. This is totally inappropriate and, for the obvious reasons, a violation, which must cease immediately. Furthermore, it is a dangerous tactic that creates a divide and conquer mentality. It devalues our colleagues when confidential matters are entrusted into the hands of a colleague without the permission of the affected colleague. Please stand in solidarity with our colleagues.  Unit Clarification Process  With so many people making top dollar in the Office of Talent, it would not be unreasonable to expect that they could be like our members and be creative, independent thinkers. Clearly, it is an error in judgment on our part or that of anyone else to think that the brass (Dr. Hite and his Chiefs) could devise original positions that support the work our members are doing in the field to ensure that our children receive the quality public school education to which they are entitled as opposed to duplicating our bargaining unit’s work in the form of revived positions, often with new titles, but usually with a similar body of work. This is, per the language of our collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in Article 4.9, a violation in that, “School District Administrators who are not included in the bargaining units represented by CASA shall not regularly and consistently perform duties that are consistently and regularly performed by members of CASA bargaining units.”  While we take issue with the blatant violation of the CBA, we are even more perturbed by the District’s attempt to steal from us by posting positions as non-represented and denying the right of CASA representation to individuals serving in positions that are clearly covered by our bargaining unit. We have noted quite a few examples of this over the past year, and we continue to be steadfast in our opposition of this poltroon act by fighting and following the process established to ensure that OUR jobs are where they belong - here in CASA. In view of this, the Unit Clarification Process has been put into effect to remedy the situation.  In case you are wondering what unit clarification is, here is an explanation of it: “Unit clarification involves determining whether a position is properly classified in terms of the collective bargaining agreement between unions and employers.”  Five examples of positions - five too many - that have been revived or conceived that rightfully belong in CASA’s shop are as follows:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Former Position (Represented by CASA) | New Position (Non-Represented) | | School Behavior Consultant | School Behavior Consultant | | Response to Intervention Specialist | Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Specialist | | Personnel Recruiter | Recruitment & Selection Specialist | | Director of Assessment | Director of Assessment and Accountability | | Accountability, Assessment, and Intervention Specialist | School Improvement and Data Specialist |   Again, these are just five - a sampling - of the positions that the District has tried, like a thief in the night, to steal from the ranks of CASA. Please look these positions up for yourselves and you will see that nothing about the job description is different other than the name.  I am looking forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at 5:00 PM.  In Solidarity, Robin | n | |  |  |  | | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [https://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/outline-light-facebook-48.png](https://local502casa.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=fcee2b3da3423fe7b66c72c60&id=d07fc85281&e=932ff1bcb6) | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [https://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/outline-light-twitter-48.png](https://local502casa.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=fcee2b3da3423fe7b66c72c60&id=5d4cd682f8&e=932ff1bcb6) | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [https://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/outline-light-instagram-48.png](https://local502casa.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=fcee2b3da3423fe7b66c72c60&id=71e4d2833a&e=932ff1bcb6) | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [https://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/outline-light-link-48.png](https://local502casa.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=fcee2b3da3423fe7b66c72c60&id=9317a8380c&e=932ff1bcb6) | | | | | | | | | |