

Director of Schools' Contract Renewal

This document is designed to provide the school board with information when considering the renewal of the contract for Charles Lawson as Director of Schools in Coffee County Schools. The information in these paragraphs has supporting details listed in categories below.

I have provided leadership during one of the most trying times in the last few decades of Coffee County Schools' existence. The improvement in facilities is greater than could normally be expected in a four year period. The technology hardware capacity for both teachers and students has expanded greatly. The district is now in a situation where a device can be sent home with almost every student and a plan is in place to deliver instruction remotely should that be required. At the board meeting in which my contract was approved in 2019, I was told that one of the first and greatest challenges I had was planning for the purchasing of school buses. This challenge has been addressed. I have overseen the implementation of the regular budget, ESSER funds, and many additional grants. The money has been responsibly allocated without a single audit finding, all while growing the fund balance. I cannot find a period of four years in which employee compensation has grown at a greater rate than over my tenure. In addition to growth in compensation, my work has fixed multiple discrepancies in pay scales that would have only grown with time. Pay scales and pay calculations are far more systematic and logical than at the start of my tenure. In addition to pay increases, employees have also received a series of bonuses over the last three years that total more than any similar time frame I can find. While testing interruptions due to COVID have created some difficulties in establishing solid data, the results that exist display a steady improvement. There have also been many athletic successes during my tenure. I do not want to pretend that I had anything to do with the success of our student-athletes. However, the success of all programs in Coffee County Schools is reflective of the climate in the school district, which is one of my responsibilities.

The following list is not designed to be completely comprehensive. It simply details some of the larger items that have been addressed over the last four years. This document does not contain the details of the day-to-day operations of the district that take up the majority of the director's time.

General

-guided the district through the COVID pandemic, the lawsuit created by the school board's mask mandate, and the continuing utilization of ESSER funds

-provided *Dare to Lead* leadership training for all district and school level administrators in the summer of 2023

-engaged in collaborative conferencing to develop the district's first MOU for teachers

-implemented an online professional development management system for district employees

Facilities

-completion of the expansions and renovations at North Coffee and New Union that were funded before my arrival

-renovation of the pressbox, HVAC installation in dressing rooms, and installation of new fencing at the football stadium

-complete replacement of wooden planks with aluminum and replacement of broken steps on the visitors' side of football stadium

-renovation at CCCHS in which six classrooms were added, all bathrooms were redone, and the auditorium was completely renovated

-concrete pads and new bleachers at baseball and softball fields at CCCHS

-ongoing removal of all carpet in CCCHS and replacement with tile or other flooring

-ongoing encapsulation of all asbestos tile throughout the district

-complete renovation of gymnasium, choir room, STEM lab at CCRA

-paving of student parking, teacher parking, and visitor parking in front of CCCHS

-continuing installation of layered lock system throughout the district, all school campuses now have security camera systems, and multiple intercoms installed/updated

–elimination of windows that were installed prior to 1995 to increase safety and energy efficiency

-continuing to increase/replace exterior lighting on school campuses with brighter, more energy efficient LED lighting for safety and security purposes

-replacement of HVAC units on multiple campuses and the cooling tower at CCRA that were not updated with the transition to the TRANE energy plan

-funding secured and initial bid work to install new CTE shop at CCCHS

-removal of large amounts of surplus/unused equipment, furniture, portables, etc. to beautify campuses and open up functional space

-purchase and installation of hundreds of thousands of dollars in new furniture for classrooms and schools

Technology

-increased technology security by having a 24/7 service monitoring the network and providing an on call security response team

-provided phishing training for all employees of the district to help prevent attacks against the district's network

-ongoing complete overhaul of technology in each classroom - projectors replaced with televisions (secondary), touch panels for elementary

-oversaw the purchase and installation in all classrooms of an enhanced audio system including a microphone for the instructor to ensure that all students can adequately hear their instructor

-provided all teachers with mobile instructional devices (iPads/Chromebooks)

Transportation

-purchase of 16 buses in four years utilizing ESSER, transportation funds, and county funds

-due to the work of county finance, there is a plan in place with the county government for a continuing funding stream that should take care of the school district's bus needs for years into the future

Finances

-worked with finance supervisor to develop and/or manage the regular budget ranging from \$37,282,805 to \$48,649,041 over four years as director

-worked with the finance supervisor and the nutrition supervisor to develop and/or manage the nutrition budget ranging from \$2,366,597 to \$3,698,089 in the four years as director

-overseeing the utilization of ESSER 1, 2, and 3 totalling \$12,905,048.17

-managed a significant increase in fund balance and restricted funds. At the beginning of my tenure in the 2019-2020 school year, the fund balance and restricted funds totaled \$6,818,109. At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, the fund balance/restricted funds should total approximately \$15,200,000.

Employee Compensation

-complete overhaul and increase of the classified pay scale; In the 2019-2020 school year, the lowest starting pay was \$8.71 per hour. In the 2023-2024 school year, the lowest starting pay will be \$12.22 per hour, an increase of 40.3%. While all classified jobs have grown in compensation, one major advantage of increasing this low starting pay is avoiding problems created by future increases to the minimum wage.

-crediting earned experience to classified employees; Coffee County Schools has traditionally limited the experience that classified employees can bring into the district to only five years. A plan has been developed and is being implemented to address this inequity.

-complete overhaul and increase of the certified pay scale;

In the 2019-2020 school year, Coffee County Schools ranged from \$1,633 to \$6,087 **behind** Manchester City Schools on the certified pay scale. In the 2023-2024 school year, Coffee County will range from \$4,207 **behind** Manchester City Schools to \$3,377 **ahead** of Manchester City Schools on the certified pay scale. All teachers that

have topped out the pay scale at 24-25 years should make more money with Coffee County Schools than they would with Manchester City Schools regardless of degree.

In the 2019-2020 school year, Coffee County Schools ranged from \$84 to \$9,114 behind Tullahoma City Schools on the certified pay scale. In the 2023-2024 school year, Coffee County will range from \$96 to \$6,620 behind Tullahoma City Schools on the certified pay scale. While this means that our teachers still make less than they would with Tullahoma City Schools, we have closed the gap.

-rework of pay calculations for principals, assistant principals, supervisors, and multiple other individuals in order to simplify the calculations and make compensation more competitive with surrounding districts

-distribution of \$4,000 to each full-time employee in bonuses over the last three years

Academics

-CCMS has transitioned from an ATSI designation to a TSI designation

-district had one Reward School and now has two Reward Schools

-use of Math Implementation Grant to support the math HQIM adoption

-funding of three additional curriculum coaches utilizing ESSER funds

-oversaw the creation and the first two years of the district's virtual academy, CCVA

-continuing expansion of CTE opportunities at CCCHS, CCRA, and CCMS; including business, STEM, career exploration, construction, etc.

-LETRS training for K-2 teachers, elementary building level administrators, interventionists, ELL teachers and SPED service providers

-EPSO Opportunities

AP offerings:	2019-2020 = 11
	2023-2024 = 26

CLEP classes/exams:	2019-2020 = 1
	2023-2024 = 7

Dual Enrollment offerings: 2019-2020 = 12
2023-2024 = 27

CTE - # of students who passed state approved industry certifications
2019-2020 = 31
2020-2021 = 30
2021-2022 = 191
2022-2023 = 238

Athletics

-CCMS

2019-2020

Boys basketball-Area 6 Champions

2020-2021

Football-CTC Season Champions

Girls basketball-CTC Season & Tournament Champions, 6AAA
Champions, Final 4 State Tournament

Baseball-Season Champions

2021-2022

Football-Undefeated CTC Season Champions & Bowl Champions

Softball-CTC Champions

Golf-CTC Champions & Tournament Champions

2022-2023

Volleyball-CTC Season Champions

Girls basketball-CTC Season & Tournament Champions, 6AAA
Champions

Softball-CTC Season & Tournament Champions, 6AAA Champions,
placed 2nd in state tournament

Baseball-CTC Season & Tournament Champions

Golf-Undefeated CTC Season Champions

-CCCHS

2019-2020

Volleyball-District Champion; Region berth

Girls Soccer-Region berth

Girls basketball-District Champions; Region berth
Boys basketball-Region berth
Wrestling-Boys and Girls state appearance (Girls had highest finish in program history; 5th place)
Swim-Boys and Girls state appearance (Boys had highest finish in program history; 13th place)

2020-2021

Volleyball-District Champion; Region berth
Girls basketball-District Champions; Region berth
Boys basketball-Region berth
Wrestling-Boys and Girls state appearance
Swim-Boys and Girls state appearance (Girls had highest finish in program history; 12th place)
Softball-District Champions; Region berth; Sectional Champions; State appearance (Highest finish in program history; 2nd place)
Track-Boys and Girls state appearance

2021-2022

Cross Country-Boys and Girls state appearances (First state appearances for Boys and Girls in program history)
Football-State playoff berth
Volleyball-District Champions; Region berth
Golf-Region Berth
Girls basketball-District Champions; Region berth
Boys basketball-District Champions; Region Champions;Sectional Champions; State appearance
Wrestling-Boys and Girls state appearance (Boys had highest finish in program history; 3rd place)
Swim-Boys and Girls state appearance
Softball-District Champions; Region Champions; Sectional Champions; State appearance
Baseball-District Champions; Region berth
Boys soccer-Region berth
Track-Boys and Girls state appearance

2022-2023

Cross Country-Boys and Girls individual state appearance
Football-State Playoff berth (1st playoff win in program history)
Volleyball-Region berth

Golf-Region berth
Boys basketball-Region berth
Girls basketball-District Champions; Region berth
Wrestling-Boys and Girls state appearance
Swim-Boys and Girls state appearance
Softball-District Champions; Region Champions; Sectional Champions;
State appearance (3rd straight state appearance is best in program history)
Baseball-District Champions; Region berth
Track-Boys and Girls state appearance

During my tenure, Coffee County Schools has continued to operate through a pandemic, has enjoyed academic and athletic success, has seen employee compensation grow at unprecedented rates, and has experienced significant facility expansions and improvements. At the same time all of this has occurred, the amount of money available in both restricted and unrestricted fund balances has increased more than in any other four-year period in Coffee County Schools history.

While there have been new sources of revenue during my tenure, primarily ESSER, dealing with the conditions that created and were created by these funds illustrate the quality of leadership I have provided. The accomplishments during my tenure are evidence that my contract should be renewed. I look forward to serving Coffee County Schools in the coming years.

Compensation

There are several options when it comes to discussing compensation in a potential contract renewal.

Option 1

The language in my contract states, “the Director receives the same annual percentage increase in salary as is received by other certified employees of the Board of Education.” With the 4% increase provided to certified employees, that means my 2023-2024 salary is scheduled to be \$137,394.

This first option would be to leave my salary at this point. If this is done, my compensation for the 2023-2024 school year will be ahead of Warren County, potentially even with Grundy County, and behind Franklin County and Bedford County. All of the directors in these systems have less experience in the job than I do. I have held my position for 4 years. Warren County’s director has held his position for 3 years, Grundy County’s director has held his position for 2.5 years, Bedford County’s director has held her position for less than 2.5 years, and Franklin County’s director will start in July of 2023.

I intentionally left Tullahoma City Schools out of this comparison just as I did when I looked at assistant principal and supervisor compensation in the spring because of the high level of administrative pay in that district. Just for illustrative purposes, I calculated what I would make as the principal of Tullahoma High School. If I were principal at THS, my pay would be \$139,147 for the 2023-2024 school year, so I would make more than what I am scheduled to make as director in Coffee County Schools.

Option 2

The work that I have put into adjustments to pay scales and calculations has resulted in over \$2,250,000 in compensation for employees that has not been reflected in percentage raises. It costs approximately \$330,000 to raise pay 1% across the district. This means that by working to fix problems in pay scales and calculations, I have used the equivalent of 6.8% to address these issues. If I had ignored these long term problems and applied all of the money to percentage raises, my compensation for the 2023-2024 school year would be approximately \$146,737. Raising my compensation to this level would simply bring me in line with what I would be making if I had done far less work.

Option 3

When I began as director before the 2019-2020 school year, my compensation was set at \$115,000. My predecessor's contract including salary and annuity was scheduled to pay her a total of \$128,177 that same year. The justification for paying me less was that I did not have any experience as a director of schools, essentially starting me at step 0. The following math illustrates how much my compensation would have increased if I had started as a teacher in the district with no experience and then extrapolates that to my starting director salary.

2019-2020 Teacher scale Dr.-0 = \$47,258

2023-2024 Teacher scale Dr.-4 = \$59,198

This increase of \$11,940 represents 25.3% growth. A similar percentage increase to my starting director salary would result in a 2023-2024 salary of \$144,095.

Option 4

If I had come to the district as a teacher in the summer of 2019-2020, my salary would have grown by a greater percentage than it has as a director. The following math illustrates how much my compensation would have increased as a classroom teacher at that point in my career and then extrapolates the increase I would have experienced as a teacher to my starting director salary of \$115,000.

2019-2020 Teacher scale Dr.-23 = \$63,431

2023-2024 Teacher scale Dr.-25 = \$78,854

This increase of \$15,423 represents 24.3% growth. A similar percentage increase to my starting director salary would result in a 2023-2024 salary of \$142,945.

Option 5

If I had been a teacher in the district during the 2022-2023 school year, I would have experienced a significant rise in salary going into the 2023-2024 school year. The following math illustrates how much my compensation would have increased if I was a teacher in the district and extrapolates the increase to my 2022-2023 salary.

2022-2023 Teacher scale Dr.-25 = \$71,240

2023-2024 Teacher scale Dr.-25 = \$78,854

This increase of \$7,614 represents 10.7% growth. A similar increase to my 2022-2023 salary would result in a 2023-2024 salary of \$146,246.

Travel/Expense Allowance

My current contract provides \$6,000 per year “for adjoining or in county mileage/expenses.” This amount is the same as in my original contract. When I joined the district in July of 2019, the state reimbursement rate was \$.46 per mile. The state reimbursement rate is now \$.655 per mile. This represents an increase of 42.4%. If the same percentage increase is applied to my original allowance, the adjusted amount would rise to \$8,543.

This particular contract item is used to pay a director’s local travel expenses, but it is sometimes used to provide compensation outside of the regular salary. Contracts for local directors in surrounding districts treat local travel in several ways: district vehicle provided, mileage reimbursement at the state rate, and allowances that range up to \$9,600. If my regular compensation is appropriate, there is no need to change from the \$6,000.

Work Calendar

Coffee County Schools currently has 17 different work calendars. One of my goals is to reduce the number of calendars and the confusion that so many calendars create. One calendar is the Director work calendar and I am the only person on this particular calendar. All central office supervisors are on the 257 contract day calendar. When comparing contract days, holidays, vacation, etc, the number of days an employee is required to report to work are the same between these two calendars. The Director calendar was created by the language in the existing Director contract. By simply requiring the Director to work from the 257 contract day calendar, the number of days reporting to work in a year remains the same and the district can get rid of one of the work calendars. This is one of the suggestions that I have if a renewal of my contract is discussed.