



Personnel Commission Meeting October 15, 2024

APPROVED MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Chairperson Miller called the regular meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.2 Establishment of Quorum.

Present: Chairperson, Lynn Miller, Vice Chairperson, James Rapoza and Member, Lawrence Lane.

Guests: Chief HR Officer, Troy Cope; Melissa Lopez, Michael Paynter, Nick Inbarra, Lauren Fein, Rishi Lal, Verenise Valentin, Ana De Leon-Romero, Scott Mean-Hill, and Karina Mendez.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES/AGENDA

2.1 The minutes of the Personnel Commission meeting of September 17, 2024 were approved (Rapoza/Lane).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

2.2 To accept the agenda as submitted (Lane/Rapoza).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

3.0 COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS FROM EMPLOYEES OR GUESTS

3.1 None.

4.0 REPORTS

4.1 Chairperson or Member's Report

4.1.1 None.

4.2 Chief Human Resources Officer's Report

4.2.1 Chief HR Officer Cope introduced Ana De Leon-Romero, new Human Resources Technician for the department.

4.2.2 He also discussed the Incident Command Training Level 3 where they prepare with scenarios and how to respond. He thanked Rishi Lal, Director of School Safety and Risk Prevention for his work with law enforcement in providing these trainings to all our districts.

5.0 CONSENT AGENDA

5.1 The consent agenda (5.1-5.5) was approved as submitted (Rapoza/Lane).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

6.0 CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 None.

7.0 OLD BUSINESS

7.1 None.

8.0 NEW BUSINESS

8.1 New Classification—First Reading—Coordinator, Mental Health and Wellness—Action

8.2 New Classification—First Reading—Mental Health Counselor I—Action

8.3 New Classification—First Reading—Mental Health Counselor II—Action

8.4 New Classification—First Reading—Mental Health Counselor III—Action

Background: The Student Support Services and Alternative Education Departments are in the process of both professionalizing the counseling staff and services to reflect increased skill and scope in the mental health services realm, as well as beginning to set up infrastructure for new billing opportunities to generate insurance coverage revenue for those services. These new refinements and capacities will need additional administrative oversight that currently exceeds the existing administrator's abilities and will entail certain expertise that a licensed clinical professional can bring to both therapeutic oversight and supervision on the programmatic level and quality assurance and guidance on the billing front. Having them be a classified administrator also ensures the correct amount of authority for non-clinical directives, which will prevent duplication of management meetings, personnel activities (such as evaluations), and allow other assigned duties related to the overall running of both departments, truly expanding the leadership and innovations. To this end, SSS and Alt Ed are proposing a new Mental Health Counselor Series of job descriptions as followed:

The activities noted above are largely that of the **Coordinator, Mental Health & Wellness** - which falls on the existing classified management scale for Coordinators/Managers. Since this is a management-level position, the recommendation for salary allocation comes from the Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools and Cabinet, rather than the bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Coordinator, Mental Health & Wellness. This constitutes a first reading.

Extending this transformation of mental health counselors at the COE, the addition of new roles called a Mental Health Counselor I, II or III will more accurately describe the expanding clinical expertise required to serve all students in a tiered approach from mild to severe symptoms. The orientation towards increased therapeutic skill and the requisite documentation of those services to seek billing submissions from commercial and Medi-Cal insurance are at the heart of the requested changes.

Mental Health Counselor I would be somewhat equivalent to a Guidance Counselor Tech II in terms of compensation and level of classified staff. It wouldn't require any graduate degrees, credentials or licenses. Rather, this would be a "rehabilitation" level counselor with a BA likely and some years of relevant experience. It could also be overlaid with a Wellness Coach certification, which would enable the billing for this level of staff. For salary allocation, the new classification will be moved forward to the

bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Mental Health Counselor I. This constitutes a first reading.

Mental Health Counselor II is aimed at the intern level staff member who has received a masters or higher degree, registered with the appropriate state board for pursuing licensing and can bill under their intern number. It would also help with long term retention as staff receive higher levels of education and state licensing progress, especially in this area of mental health services, where it can be hard to find applicants as the skill level required increases. For salary allocation, the new classification will be moved forward to the bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Mental Health Counselor II. This constitutes a first reading.

Mental Health Counselor III is the last in the proposed series and replaces an old classified position known as a Family Services Counselor, which was for licensed mental health therapists. Like the MHC II position, it also adds retention ability to the COE in terms of fully licensed and professional staff, which will be increasingly important as billing and commercial insurance revenue generation gets fully underway. For salary allocation, the new classification will be moved forward to the bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Mental Health Counselor III. This constitutes a first reading.

Lauren Fein, Director of Behavioral Health, presented the need for these positions to be created due to new initiatives and grants approved at the state level. Discussion followed.

Motion: To approve the first reading of the newly proposed job descriptions for Agenda Items 8.1 - 8.4 (Rapoza/Lane).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.5 New Classification—First Reading—Coordinator, Student Leadership and Engagement—Action

Background: The Student Leadership and Engagement Coordinator position was created to meet the needs of student-involved programs throughout Santa Cruz County. As the programs facilitated by the Santa Cruz COE have increased in numbers and scope, there is the need for supervisory responsibilities including managing multiple youth leadership group advisors who are currently under the supervision of the Director of Communications and Engagement. As our organizational goals have expanded, there is a need to create the Coordinator, Student Leadership and Engagement as a Classified Management position to oversee the ongoing development and growth of the COE's student leadership programs and partnerships. Since this is a management-level position, the recommendation for salary allocation comes from the Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools and Cabinet, rather than the bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Coordinator, Student Leadership and Engagement. This constitutes a first reading. Nick Ibarra, Director of Communications

and Engagement, presented the need for the management level role to oversee all student leaders and advisors. Discussion followed.

Motion: To approve the first reading of the newly proposed job descriptions for Coordinator, Student Leadership and Engagement (Lane/Rapoza).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

8.6 New Classification—First Reading—Manager, Project ASCEND—Action

Background: The Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) has been awarded a Prop 47 grant for \$7.1 Million, enabling the expansion of juvenile diversion services across the county. The Manager, Project ASCEND position is essential to meeting the grant's requirements and addressing gaps in services, particularly for youth involved in criminal activity and substance use.

Currently, over 2,000 justice-involved students in Santa Cruz County have not had access to diversion programs due to jurisdictional limitations. With the Prop 47 grant, Project ASCEND will provide countywide services, including substance use prevention and treatment, supported by all law enforcement agencies.

The Manager, Project ASCEND will: Coordinate with law enforcement and community partners to screen and place youth in diversion programs focused on prevention and treatment for substance use. Facilitate training for stakeholders to ensure effective, consistent implementation of substance use prevention strategies. Monitor outcomes and ensure compliance with Prop 47, focusing on reducing recidivism and substance-related offenses.

This position is crucial to providing at-risk youth with access to rehabilitation and substance use prevention services, improving outcomes and fulfilling the Prop 47 grant's mission in Santa Cruz County. Since this is a management-level position, the recommendation for salary allocation comes from the Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools and Cabinet, rather than the bargaining unit's Point Factoring Committee. The recommended title will be Manager, Project ASCEND. This constitutes a first reading. Rishi Lal, Director of School Safety and Risk Prevention, presented the need for this management position due to the ASCEND grant received and how it will impact all students in Santa Cruz County. Discussion followed.

Motion: To approve the newly created classification and job description for Manager, Project ASCEND (\$109,943 to \$140,317) at the first reading (Lane/Rapoza).

Ayes: Unanimous

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

9.0 CLOSED SESSION

9.1 The Commission adjourned into a closed session at 2:25 p.m. to discuss the Classified Evaluation for the Chief Human Resources Officer.

10.0 OPEN SESSION

10.1 The Commission reconvened at 2:34 p.m. and reported that the Classified Evaluation was completed.

11.0 SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

11.1 September 17, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Personnel Commission at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room: 400 Encinal Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

12.1 The meeting of the Personnel Commission was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Attest:

Troy Cope
Chief Human Resources Officer

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Dr. Faris Sabbah, Superintendent of Schools
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