



INTRODUCTION

With declining enrollment trends and the planned closure of one its school buildings, the Daniel Boone Area School District (DBASD) wants to examine whether or not its current level of secretarial staffing is still appropriate. To that end, DBASD engaged Antonio Consulting LLC to conduct an independent review and provide recommendations for moving forward.

The Secretarial Staffing Review formally kicked off on July 10, 2017 with an introductory meeting of secretarial staff and administrators from all schools and the district office. Over the next three weeks, thirty employees were interviewed, on-site visits to each school were made, and various source documents were examined. This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations resulting from that work.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the information gathered and subsequent analysis, several key findings emerged regarding secretarial staffing at DBASD.

1. The secretarial staffing models at the school-level are lean to slightly under-staffed.
 - Typical secretarial staffing ratios are 1 secretary per 250-300 students for elementary schools and 1 secretary per 200-250 students for secondary schools. All schools are operating at the high end to outside those benchmark ratios but seem to be “making it work.” Most secretarial teams have longevity and experience which helps make things more manageable.
2. Due to the lean secretarial staffing at the schools, Principals and Assistant Principals report having to pitch in during peak periods, especially when secretary absences occur.
 - If only an infrequent practice, Administrators filling in for secretarial duties is not a significant concern. However, it does reduce the time that Principals and Assistant Principals can spend on higher value activities such as classroom walkthroughs and teacher observations.
3. Several school-based secretarial staff admit to working additional hours “off-the-clock” in order to keep up with work demands.
 - They do not do it based on pressure from their supervisor, but rather, due to a sense of dedication to their job and school team. In fact, a few do not believe they are actually eligible for overtime pay. The practice of working “off-the-clock” should be strongly discouraged and monitored going forward because it violates labor laws.
4. Opportunities exist to improve secretarial productivity through clearer expectations and better defined procedures.
 - Most secretarial job descriptions have not been updated since 2008 and do not accurately reflect the current responsibilities of the job. There is minimal documentation of secretarial procedures with most relying on personal knowledge or word of mouth which, in turn, can reduce quality and consistency of execution (e.g., decentralized student registration). Certain secretarial duties (e.g., classroom attendance reporting and substitute time tracking) appear overly cumbersome and labor intensive given available systems and technology.



5. The school closure of BEC in 2018-19 will eliminate a significant portion of the current school secretary's workload.
 - The BEC building secretary is also supporting the secretarial needs of the BEC Acting Principal in her capacity as Chief Academic Officer. Since this hybrid secretarial role is new, it is unclear what proportion of secretarial duties will be for the school vs. Chief Academic Officer. However, after BEC closes, the role will have excess capacity which can be repurposed.
6. District-level departments have adequate secretarial staffing except for the Athletics Department which appears under-staffed.
 - The athletic secretary's part time schedule and the nature of after-school athletics and activities presents recurring challenges for providing necessary support and coverage.
7. Morale among the secretarial staff both within schools and departments is generally quite positive.
 - All described the generally fast pace of the job during the school year and, especially, the intensity during peak times of the day. However, that is mitigated by the team-oriented, supportive atmosphere amongst the secretarial staff. In addition, most have strong ties to the local community and very short commutes to work which contributes to the attractiveness of their jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings described above, the following recommendations are being made.

1. For the 2017-18 school year, augment the secretarial staffing model for the Athletics Department.
 - Either expand the athletic secretary position to full-time or add a part-time afternoon support position.
2. Clarify and enforce overtime policies with both secretarial staff and supervisors.
 - Seek to eliminate practice of working "off-the-clock."
3. Invest in efforts to improve secretarial productivity through greater job clarity, better defined procedures, and streamlined activities.
 - Update secretarial job descriptions to be more reflective of current responsibilities and expectations.
 - Standardize and document secretarial procedures to ease learning curve for newer staff, facilitate cross-training, and promote consistency of execution (e.g., student registration).
 - Leverage current systems and technology to streamline common secretarial activities. Possible targets include classroom attendance and substitute time tracking.
4. Redefine/restructure the BEC secretarial position for the 2018-19 school year.
 - Replace BEC building secretary duties (which end after the 2017-18 school year) with more project-based and analytical support activities for the Chief Academic Officer.



SECRETARIAL STAFFING MODELS BY SCHOOL

For the purposes of this study, we focused on the staffing model during the school year. During the summer, when school is not in session, all schools operate with reduced staffing hours. It is important to note that the elementary schools are entering Year 2 of a three-year process to consolidate from three to two schools serving Grades K-5 district-wide.

Projected student counts for each school were taken from the Facilities Study conducted by Thompson Associates Architects and Planners in January 2016.

Monocacy Elementary Center (MEC)

SY 2017-18
 Serving Grades K-2
 Projected Students: 479

Staffing Model:
 1.0 Building Secretary
0.7 Guidance Secretary
 1.7 Total Secretary FTEs



SY 2018-19
 Serving Grades K-2
 Projected Students: 577

Staffing Model:
 1.0 Building Secretary
0.7 Guidance Secretary
 1.7 Total Secretary FTEs

Comments:

- A significant increase in student population is expected due to the school consolidation process.
- MEC is the only school with an additional arrival/dismissal cycle at mid-day due to its population of half-day kindergarten students.
- The guidance secretary spends 25%-30% of her time providing secretarial support for 504 and Gifted students for the Special Ed dept. throughout the year. These responsibilities were inherited over the years.
- A typical secretarial staffing ratio in elementary schools is 1 secretary per 250-300 students. Using that benchmark, MEC will be slightly under-staffed (by less than 0.25 FTE) for its projected student population in the 2018-19 school year.

Amity Elementary Center (AEC)

SY 2017-18
 Serving Grades 2-5
 Projected Students: 626

Staffing Model:
 1.0 Building Secretary
1.0 Guidance Secretary
 2.0 Total Secretary FTEs



SY 2018-19
 Serving Grades 3-5
 Projected Students: 662

Staffing Model:
 1.0 Building Secretary
1.0 Guidance Secretary
 2.0 Total Secretary FTEs



Comments:

- The student population is expected to increase about 10% due to the school consolidation process.
- Although the guidance secretary is new, she has worked for several years as a classroom aide in district schools.
- A typical secretarial staffing ratio in elementary schools is 1 secretary per 250-300 students. Using that benchmark, AEC is slightly under-staffed (by less than 0.25 FTE) for its projected student population.

Birdsboro Elementary Center (BEC)

SY 2017-18
 Serving Grade 5
 Projected Students: 149

Staffing Model:
1.0 Building Secretary
 1.0 Total Secretary FTEs



SY 2018-19
 School closed

Staffing Model: N/A

Comments:

- The Acting Principal for BEC is also serving as the District’s Chief Academic Officer.
- The building secretary will also be spending some portion of her time supporting the needs of the Acting Principal in her capacity as Chief Academic Officer.
- With the closure of BEC in the 2018-19 school year, the building secretary is expected to transition to being a full-time secretary for the Chief Academic officer.

Daniel Boone Area Middle School (MS)

SY 2017-18
 Serving Grades 6-8
 Projected Students: 784

Staffing Model:
 2.0 Building Secretary
1.0 Guidance Secretary
 3.0 Total Secretary FTEs



SY 2018-19
 Serving Grades 6-8
 Projected Students: 739

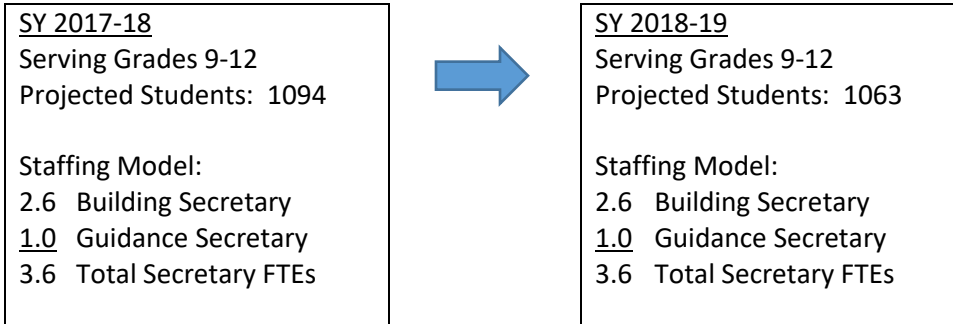
Staffing Model:
 2.0 Building Secretary
1.0 Guidance Secretary
 3.0 Total Secretary FTEs

Comments:

- Secretarial team has ample longevity and experience which contributes to smooth operation.
- A typical secretarial staffing ratio in secondary schools is 1 secretary per 200-250 students. Using that benchmark, the MS is reasonably staffed for its projected student population.



Daniel Boone Area High School (HS)



Comments:

- Secretarial team in transition with some newer team members in place and one open position yet to be filled.
- A typical secretarial staffing ratio in secondary schools is 1 secretary per 200-250 students. Using that benchmark, the HS is under-staffed (by about 0.6 FTE) for its projected student population.

SECRETARIAL STAFFING MODELS BY DEPARTMENT

At least in the short-term, the declining enrollment trends and school consolidation process will not have a significant impact on the secretarial workload levels of various functional departments.

Athletics Department

0.6 Athletics Secretary
 0.6 Total Secretary FTEs

Comments:

- Although physically located in the HS, it largely operates as a self-contained unit separate from the rest of the HS secretarial team.
- The athletic secretary’s part time schedule and the nature of after-school athletics and activities presents recurring challenges for providing necessary support and coverage.

Special Education Department

1.0 Secretary
 1.0 Child Accountant
0.3 Secretary (504 & Gifted)
 2.3 Total Secretary FTEs

Comments:

- Although physically located in the HS, it largely operates as a self-contained unit separate from the rest of the HS secretarial team.



- The MEC guidance secretary spends 25%-30% of her time providing secretarial support for 504 and Gifted students for the Special Ed dept. throughout the year.
- The current secretarial staffing model is fairly lean given a special education student population that exceeds 600 students.

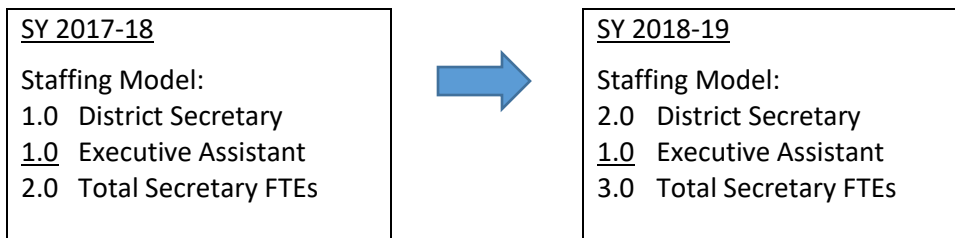
Business Office

- 1.0 Accounts Payable
- 1.0 Purchasing/Fixed Assets
- 1.0 Taxes
- 1.0 Payroll & Benefits
- 1.0 HR/Asst. Payroll
- 5.0 Total Secretary FTEs

Comments:

- Although these employees are generally considered part of the secretarial group, each of their roles is fairly specialized and distinct from a standard secretary role.
- District receptionist duties are primarily handled by the Purchasing/Fixed Assets clerk with back-up coverage provided by other Business Office staff.
- The current staffing model appears reasonable given the scale and scope of their responsibilities.

District Office



Comments:

- This group provides administrative support to the Superintendent and Assistant to the Superintendent and performs various district-wide functions.
- With the closure of BEC in the 2018-19 school year, the BEC building secretary is expected to transition to being a full-time secretary for the Chief Academic officer.



EMPLOYEE INTERVIEWS

Thirty employees across six building locations were interviewed during the course of the secretarial staffing review. Twenty-one employees were considered “secretarial staff” although their formal position titles varied. The remaining nine employees interviewed were administrators with supervisory responsibilities for the secretarial staff. (See Table 1 and Table 2 for a more detailed listing of the employees interviewed.)

Table 1: Secretarial Staff Interviewed

Name	Building	Department	Position	Notes
Leesa Bokosky	Admin	Business	Accounts Payable	
Lori Bracken	Admin	Business	Payroll & Benefits Coordinator	Confidential Secretary
Maryellen Rhoads	Admin	Business	Tax Clerk	
Cherly Tapia	Admin	Business	HR/ Payroll Asst.	Confidential Secretary
Michelle Zipay	Admin	Business	Purchasing/Fixed Assets Clerk	Also, receptionist duties
Lisa Kieke	Admin	District	District Secretary	Confidential Secretary
Kathy McNeely	Admin	District	Executive Asst. to Superintendent	Confidential Secretary
Marie Kinder	AEC	Guidance	Secretary	Starting in SY 2017-18
Brenda Hessels	AEC	Main Office	Secretary	
Jolene Doyle	BEC	Main Office	Secretary	Transitional role for SY 2017-18 (until BEC closes)
Cathy Shutt	HS	Athletics	Secretary	PT (4.75 hrs./day)
Becky Raneiri	HS	Guidance	Secretary	
Jody Rhoads	HS	Main Office	Secretary	
Laura Sjosten	HS	Main Office	Receptionist	PT (4.75 hrs./day)
Debbie Cressman	HS	Special Ed	Secretary	
Rhonda Wolf	HS	Special Ed	Child Accountant	Also, ACCESS duties
Barb Seidel	MEC	Guidance	Secretary	Also, 504 & Gifted duties for Special Ed dept.
Becky Barnett	MEC	Main Office	Secretary	
Beth Williamson	MS	Guidance	Secretary	
Beth Buchanan	MS	Main Office	Secretary	
Theresa Zerr	MS	Main Office	Secretary	



Table 2: Administrators Interviewed

Name	Building	Title
James Harris	Admin	Superintendent
Dane Miller	AEC	Principal
Michelle Cinciripino	BEC	Acting Principal/Chief Academic Officer
Preston McKnight	HS	Principal
Shelly Mieczkowski	HS	Special Ed Director
George Schmidt	HS	Athletics Director
Megan Weber	HS	Assistant Principal
Melanie Hefter	MEC	Principal
Jenny Rexrode	MS	Principal

DOCUMENT SOURCES

In addition to the employee interviews, several documents were examined and provided helpful background and contextual information for the secretarial staffing review.

- Support Staff Collective Bargaining Agreement (2015-2018)
- Compensation Plan for Confidential Secretaries (2016-2018)
- Job descriptions for various secretarial positions
- DBASD organizational chart
- Facilities Study by Thompson Associates Architects and Planners – January 11, 2016
- Elementary Consolidation Presentation – April 11, 2016
- Board Resolution re: Elementary School Reconfiguration – April 25, 2016