

IPS is Willing to Pay in Hopes High School Teachers Will Stay

By Shawnta S. Barnes - August 1, 2017



At the end of June, Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) announced its school closure plan. The district has recommended that John Marshall, which was a high school last year, but has been converted to a middle school this year, and Broad Ripple be closed at the end of this school year. Northwest and Arlington High School are operating as high schools this year, but the district would like to convert them into middle school campuses next school year.

With all the changes and uncertainty, some high school teachers resigned from the district during the summer. Even if you are a teacher who is choosing to remain, the temptation is out there. Other schools have been reaching out to IPS high school teachers. A few high school educators on various IPS high school campuses shared with me they have received emails from other schools inviting them to interview even though they had not previously contacted those schools; I have also been contacted.

On the first day back for students, July 31, 2017, IPS sent the message below outlining a monetary incentive for all high school teachers, not just the ones

teaching at schools recommended to close, to remain with the district for the remainder of the school year.

IPS Negotiates Incentives to Retain Teachers During the Reinvention of High Schools

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) has reached an agreement with the Indianapolis Education Association (IEA) to pay the district's high school teachers a bonus if the Board of School Commissioners votes to approve the recommended high school consolidation.

As the district prepares to reinvent its High School Experience, it is important for students to have stability within the teaching staff. To encourage and support this stability, IPS and IEA have agreed to a financial incentive to recruit and retain high school teachers.

“Reinvented high schools for the 2018-19 school year should not yield a compromised high school experience this current school year,” said IPS Superintendent Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee. “This retention incentive underscores how much we value our teachers and stability for our students and families.”

If school commissioners approve the administration's recommendation to close/convert high schools, IPS will provide eligible high school teachers with a one-time stipend for remaining with the district during the time of transition in the following amounts:

- \$5,000 for those who started their employment with IPS on or before the start of the 2016-17 school year*
- \$2,500 for those who started their employment with IPS after the start of the 2016-17 school year*

To be eligible for the stipend, high school teachers must:

- Receive an effective or highly effective evaluation for the 2017-18 school year*
- Be at work and perform their regularly assigned duties at least 93% of the school year*
- Have worked at least 90 contract days*

The district will pay the bonus to eligible high school teachers at the conclusion of the 2017-18 school year.

“IEA was looking at how the district could give our students’ stability during this time of uncertainty for our high school teachers,” said Rhondalyn Cornett, IEA President. “Our hope is that teachers will feel more confident in the district during this transition and help ensure the reinvention of our high schools is a success.”

School commissioners will vote on the school closure/conversion recommendation at a special Board meeting on September 18, 2017.

I wonder why there is not an incentive for support staff. They are the backbone of our schools. We need them to remain throughout the school year too. Will this be enough to motivate teachers to stay? Money does not fix everything.