

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

When students return to classes in Yantis Aug. 25, they will see more than a dozen new faces — most are secondary staff hired following numerous resignations in late spring and into the summer.

While it's not unusual for districts to lose some staff, especially coaches, due to usual moves during the spring and summer months, Yantis had an usually high turnover rate this year.

Since March, a principal, secretary, an aide and nine teachers have resigned from Yantis secondary campus, as well as others.

According to the superintendent, most have accepted opportunities to work closer to home, a couple are getting out of education to pursue a degree in another field, at least one staff member is going into business with a spouse and another has chosen to stay home with her young children.

“While I am very grateful for my new opportunity to choose to stay at home with my children this year, I resigned from Yantis ISD because I was uncomfortable with decisions being made by the superintendent and school board,” said Julie Alphin, who notified board members in May she would be resigning at the end of the school year as junior high science teacher, a post she's served in for the last 10 years.

One of the resigning high school staff members, who asked not to be named for fear that it will impact her career options with another district, also noted that a job closer to home was not the determining factor in her decision to leave Yantis ISD. She also pointed out the number of staff who resigned along with or after Yantis Secondary Principal Michael Alphin did in May.

A petition asking people to “Support Principal Michael Alphin” was launched in May by Jennifer Ogle on change.org and publicized via individuals' Facebook pages.

The petition stated, “We believe that he is being treated unfairly and want the Yantis ISD school

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

board to know that we are unhappy. Principal Michael Alphin and his family go over and beyond the call of duty for Yantis ISD and the community. Yantis ISD is currently not showing him the same respect that he has given in his 10 years of service here. Please reconsider your support of Principal Michael Alphin.”

How the petitioners believed Alphin was being “treated unfairly” was not specified in the petition, nor did any of the comments from signers specify what occurred to prompt the petition, although many praised Alphin for his service to the district. Alphin did not comment on the matter.

Sid Ivey and Frances McCreight addressed Yantis ISD Board of Trustees about Alphin during the public comments portion of their May 12 meeting.

Yantis High School Secretary Kathy Williamson resigned at the May 12 board meeting.

“I have enjoyed my ten years working with and for Mr. Alphin. He has helped so many students in so many ways and always showed sincere respect and genuine friendship to parents! I have great respect for him as well as for all our teachers! I really cannot believe that the school and community would not want him when he has committed so much of his time and love for Yantis!” Williamson posted in May on the petition website.

Michael Alphin’s resignation was accepted during a special board meeting called May 16.

Cindy Thatcher was hired in June on a 12-month probationary contract to serve as secondary principal.

Another new administrator is Chris Massey; he was offered a 12-month probationary contract to serve as assistant elementary principal with a salary of \$57,000.

“The elementary principal, Mrs. Cheryl Hughes, will be retiring in January. We decided to go ahead and get someone in as assistant principal half the year, and that person will become

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

elementary principal. The board approved him at last month's meeting," Superintendent Penny White said of the elementary principal, who the board approved for a 3 percent raise as well as a one year contract extension during their March meeting.

Joining the YISD coaching staff are Dee Ann Evans and Mike McMinn.

Evans was offered a 10-month contract in May to serve as girls basketball coach. She replaces Tina Carrillo, who submitted her resignation in March as basketball coach and track assistant.

McMinn replaces Ken Butler, who resigned in January as basketball coach. McMinn too was offered a 10-month contract in May; he will serve as athletic director, head boys basketball coach and technology teacher.

Paige Cooksey was offered a 10-month contract in May to serve as the district's new special education and dyslexia teacher. She fills an opening created by Christa Neal who submitted her resignation as special education teacher in May.

Also resigning from the special education department was Wendy Stinson; she submitted her resignation as special ed aide and UIL poetry coach in April.

Ryan Moffitt was issued a probationary contract following the March 20 board meeting to teach high school math for the 2014-15 school year. He resigned in May.

Chris McCarty in July resigned as high school math teacher.

Hired on a 10-month probationary contract July 21 as the new high school math teacher was Rhonda Player.

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

Junior high science teacher Julie Alphin's resignation was accepted May 16.

Judy Jo Johnson was hired June 9 on a 10-month contract as the new junior high science teacher.

Kristin McKinney, junior high school social studies teacher, turned in her resignation in March.

High school business and computer applications teacher Laurie Steward's resignation was accepted at the May 30 board meeting.

Junior high school writing and English teacher Shannon Hague's resignation was accepted May 30 by the school board.

Randy Munoz was hired June 9 on a 10-month probationary contract to serve as the new junior high writing teacher.

High school world history teacher and coach Thomas Copeland handed in his resignation July 16.

Joe Hallonquist was hired July 16 on a 10-month probationary contract as the new high school history teacher and coach.

Also resigning July 16 were June White and high school art teacher Amy Eiken.

Hired July 16 as the new secondary art teacher was Mike Moore.

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

Pre-kindergarten teacher Julie Hill's resignation was accepted at the May 16 board meeting.

Mary Robinson was hired June 9 on a 10-month contract as the new first grade teacher.

"We are able to offer a few classes we didn't have last year. We were doing online Spanish, this year we'll have a Spanish teacher," said White.

Daliana Rodriguez has been hired as the Spanish teacher for the 2014-15 school year, according to information provided by the superintendent's office.

"The year before, the teacher of family and consumer science left to go to administration at another district. She had worked toward administration. She left so late we couldn't find a replacement, so we fixed the schedule so we didn't have it last year. We have a teacher to fill that position this year," White noted.

Belinda Brown was issued a probationary contract March 20 for the 2014-15 school year to serve as the district's family and consumer science teacher; she taught FCS during the 2013-14 school year at Sulphur Springs High School.

"We have filled all of our teaching positions. We just have an aide and cafeteria position to fill. I feel positive we will fill them," White said this week. "Also, the board approved a three percent raise for classroom teachers for the 2014-15 school year."

The school board at their July 21 meeting also approved wage increases for hourly employees, extra duty stipends and a three percent increase for instructional aides. At the June 9 meeting, the trustees also approved a three percent increase for employees with a July 1 employment date. Pay scales for YISD teachers and paraprofessionals can be found on www.yantisisd.net under compensation in the administration menu at the top of the page under the school logo.

New Yantis teachers will report for duty Aug. 12. The rest of the staff will begin reporting for duty

Yantis ISD deals with high staff turnover; 14 leaving

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
Saturday, 02 August 2014 12:04

weekdays starting Aug. 13. Students will return to the classroom Monday, Aug. 25.

The Alphin petition mentioned at the beginning of this story may be accessed online at: www.change.org/petitions/yantis-isd-school-board-support-principal-michael-alphin-2?share_id=XoHFlwUbQq&utm_campaign=share_button_action_box&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=share_petition