



Student Support Services Office Wears Many Hats

TUPELO, Miss. — No two days are the same.

On Monday, identifying attendance zones for prospective parents could be the theme, while on Thursday the focus could shift toward assisting families with legal guardianship or resident/non-resident admissions.

Boredom due to repetition? Never an issue for Pam Traylor and her staff in the Student Support Services department, located at the Fillmore Center. Each day presents new tasks while attracting new challenges.

“Our office is committed to all stakeholders,” said Traylor, who has been with the Tupelo Public School District 24 years, including eight as her department’s director. “We serve as a liaison between schools and various departments throughout the school district to ensure all our students who come into the district have a smooth transition.”

Just because a student doesn’t live in the district doesn’t mean they can’t attend one of the Tupelo-based schools. Each individual case is different, and if requirements are met and proper waivers are approved, they are allowed to enroll at a TPSD school.

And there’s no one factor attracting people. For some, it’s the extracurricular activities. For others it’s art integration. Then there’s the advance classes being offered.

“We just have so much to offer,” Traylor said. “We have students as far north as DeSoto County and as far south as Jackson.”

With most out-of-district students comes tuition. According to the latest figures, there are 453 TPSD students paying to attend class. For K-8 students, the cost is \$272 a semester or \$518 a year. For 9-12 students, it’s \$316 a semester or \$600 a year. Those rates are also currently under review by the board of trustees to see if increases are warranted.

“We’ve charged the same amount for as long as I can remember,” Traylor said.

Other areas of enrollment include those for the homeless, shelter and foster care, shared residency and families facing abnormal circumstances.

Her office also handles certain areas of discipline, particularly with student expulsions, hearings and appeal hearings to the superintendent's office and to the board.

"We want to make sure every student is taken care of and has the opportunity to receive a great education," Traylor said. "That's our No. 1 objective."

That's the one task in the office that does repeat itself every day.

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