

**MINUTES OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
January 31, 2017**

A meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council was held on Tuesday, January 31, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were ten (10) representatives present.

Also present were Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, Mrs. L. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. ABSENT: Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed.

There were no Council topics to be addressed.

Mrs. L. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, addressed the following items:

1. Twelve (12) new buses were purchased and being used for the 2016-2017 school year. Some of the older model buses were taken off the road to be used as spare buses. It is anticipated that additional buses will be purchased for the 2017-2018 school year using any available one-time money.
2. Flu clinics were held in the schools during the Fall of 2016. Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough [pertussis]) clinics will be held during the Spring of 2017. The schools are continuing to inform parents to be conscientious when sending children to school that may have a fever or has had a fever within the last 24 hours.
3. The December 1 Child Count report was provided. There are 1,166 students receiving special education services as of December 1, 2016. This represents 12.78% of the total student population for Pittsylvania County Schools. This number has decreased from past year. The largest group of identified students is in the category of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). The second largest group is the Other Health Impairments (OHI) category. Staff is also monitoring the autism program to ensure appropriate services are provided. The Support Services Department is continuing to serve these students through to graduation. It was noted that 76% of the students with disabilities graduated in May, 2016, with a regular diploma.
4. The Support Services Department has partnered with the Instructional Department to offer training to teachers for a Multi-Sensory Reading Program which provides additional support for students who have reading challenges. Through a partnership with Smart Beginnings, a grant was received to promote Ready for Success which is a behavior intervention program for elementary students with behavior issues. The program provides intervention strategies and a specialized curriculum to address

areas that have caused concern. Training has also been provided with funding from the Danville Regional Foundation for the Incredible Years program to assist the early education teachers in dealing with behaviors for students.

A concern was expressed about the timing of elementary students visiting the middle schools. The exploratory teachers feel the schedule should be staggered so that the same class period is not interrupted for both days. The Instructional Department will review and determine if changes are needed.

Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, addressed the following items:

1. Budget information for the 2017-2018 school year was provided. The Governor is proposing an additional \$2,092,032 for Pittsylvania County Schools. However, \$750,000 of this amount must be used for non-recurring expenses which does not include salaries and benefits. The non-recurring expenses may include purchase/lease of buses and the water tank repair/replacement at Kentuck Elementary School). In addition, the General Assembly passed an increase in the employer share contribution to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) of 1.66% which is \$683,635. The Governor is also proposing a 1.5% bonus for Standards of Quality (SOQ) funded positions. It has been the practice of the school system to provide the same benefit to all employees which would cost an additional \$231,000 over the provided funding of \$535,220. The remaining \$123,000 of new State revenue would be available to use for operating expenditures. The Budget Committee is working on the budget proposal but will await the budget versions from the House and Senate for further discussion. The General Assembly cross-over will be on February 15 when the House and Senate will review each budget, and the adjournment is expected on February 25, 2017. It is the hope to have a proposed budget for School Board review at its March 14, 2017, meeting. A public hearing for the 2017-2018 budget proposal will be held on March 16, 2017.
2. The school division will host its own Teacher Job Fair on Saturday, March 11, 2017. The Fair will be held at Chatham Middle School from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon. All schools will be represented along with a representative from the Career Switcher Program. Also, School Board representatives will be seeking applications for teaching positions by attending four (4) career fairs (Liberty University, Longwood College, Radford University and Virginia State University) and a minority recruitment fair sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education.
3. Intent forms have been received from employees for the 2017-2018 school year. At this time there are 8½ teacher vacancies that were not filled for the 2016-2017 school year which include two (2) librarians, a special education teacher, two (2) family & consumer science teachers, two (2) JROTC instructors, a gifted teacher and a math teacher (1/2). Currently, there are seven (7) teachers who have indicated they will be resigning or retiring at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Vacancy announcements

will be made for two (2) English teachers, special education teacher, art teacher, two (2) elementary teachers, science teacher and an occupational therapist. For classified staff, there are 8 positions that will be advertised for 2017-2018. These vacancies will include cafeteria workers, teacher aides, custodian, mini-bus attendant and administrative assistant. Vacancies will be posted around the end of March or the first of April. Also, it was noted that the school system continually needs substitute teachers, substitute custodians, substitute cafeteria workers and substitute bus drivers.

Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items:

1. The 2017-2018 school calendar was approved by the School Board at its December 13, 2016, meeting and is posted on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website. The July 4th holiday has been scheduled for July 3 and 4, 2017. New Employee Orientation will be held on July 31 and August 1, 2017. Teachers will report on Wednesday, August 2, 2017. A change has been made for August 7, 2017. Teachers will work from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., and Open House will be held on August 7, 2017, from 1:30 - 6:30 p.m. August 8, 2017, is a Teacher Professional Day, and the first day of school for students will be Wednesday, August 9, 2017. Fall Break has been scheduled on October 9, 2017. The Thanksgiving Holiday will include November 22-24, 2017. The Winter Break will include a similar schedule as 2016 (December 21, 2017 – January 2, 2018). Teachers will return on January 4 and 5, for Teacher Professional Days, and students will return on Monday, January 8, 2018. Spring Break will be April 2-8, 2018. The last day of school for the 2017-2018 school year will be May 24, 2018.
2. The Graduate of Merit recognition program will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. at the Averett Convocation Center, Danville, Virginia. There are 138 candidates for Graduate of Merit for the 2016-2016 school year - 31 from Chatham High School; 37 from Dan River High School; 18 from Gretna High School; and 52 from Tunstall High School. Sponsorships are being secured for the students and scholarships.
3. The Summer and Fall 2016 Standards of Learning (SOL) writing assessment results indicate that the four (4) high schools have exceeded the State accreditation requirement and the division exceeds the required pass rate with a county-wide average of 84.11% in writing.

In the absence of Dr. Jeffrey Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items:

1. The process of expanding the use of voice-over internet telephones has begun for the division. It is anticipated that this expansion will eliminate as many land lines as possible as the transition is completed. This expansion will provide a savings for the division.

2. Parents or staff who may have missed the initial opt-in text and would like to receive text messages from School Messenger should text YES to 68453. The telephone number must already be in PowerSchool to register and receive the text messages.
3. The Safety Audit Committee has met to review all of the safety audits for the 2016-2017 school year.
4. School security cameras have been ordered for each middle school. The middle schools will be receiving ten (10) additional indoor cameras and three (3) outdoor cameras which will provide approximately fifteen (15) security cameras for each school. These cameras should be installed before the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Next year will be the final year of the State Security Grants. The school division will apply for this grant for the 2017-2018 school year and, if awarded, will use the funding to add additional security cameras at all elementary schools and the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center.
5. Unannounced lockdown drills will begin in February, 2017.
6. The middle schools will participate in the Secondary School Climate Survey in the coming months. The survey measures student and teacher perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, student engagement in school, and the extent of bullying and teasing at school. The school climate survey is a tool for schools to monitor and improve school climate in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Notifications regarding inclement weather delays or closing are usually provided as soon after 5:30 a.m. or the previous day if possible. Schools have been closed for three (3) days. Two (2) of these days will be made up using banked days already in the calendar. The third day will be made up on February 20, 2017. It was noted that February 17, 2017, will become a full day for students. Students will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 20, 2017, and teachers will remain for an afternoon teacher workday. Appreciation was expressed to the employees who assisted in clearing the school parking lots and walkways in order to open school after the recent inclement weather.
2. The following legislative issues are being discussed in the General Assembly:
 - a. Budget
 - b. Standards of Quality changes dealing with staffing and school facilities
 - c. Standards of Accreditation changes
 - d. Changes in testing
 - e. Changes in graduation requirements
 - f. School security officers being allowed to carry a hand gun
 - g. Student discipline bills regarding expulsions and limits on long-term suspensions for students
 - h. Bullying

- i. Pre-Labor Day bill to allow school divisions to open prior to Labor Day
- j. Allowing private school students to receive public school money to apply toward the cost of private school education (cannot be a religious school or for homeschool program)
- k. Homeschool student participation in VHSL activities (Tebow Bill)

The Superintendent provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the successes and status of the Pittsylvania County School System.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.