

**MINUTES OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
November 27, 2012

A meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council was held on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were thirteen (13) representatives present.

Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Mrs. L. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, and Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, joined the meeting in progress.

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A question was raised about salary increases for school employees. The school system adopts a budget each year using funds allocated from federal, State and the local governing bodies. The school system is expected to operate within this budget. Currently, the budget is approximately \$81 million with 81% of the funds spent on personnel and 19% on operating costs. Pittsylvania County has a contingency fund that allows some flexibility in spending; however, the school system does not have a contingency fund. To improve morale, all school employees received a memorandum explaining incentive proposals approved by the School Board. These incentives included an additional day off at Thanksgiving (November 21, 2012), a holiday in February and the possibility of a one-time bonus for all full-time and part-time employees contingent upon the availability of funds (approximately \$309,000) in March, 2013. The days off are made possible because of banked time included in the school calendar. Many thank you notes have been received expressing appreciation from the school employees.
2. A concern was expressed about outdoor classrooms, safety issues and safety audits.  
A Safety Audit Team will complete safety reviews of each school facility by the end of December. The Team includes Mr. C. L. Scarce, a retired administrator, Mr. Bobby Phillips, Facilities Specialist, and one or two other retired employees. The principal, assistant principal and School Resource Officer join the team to complete the comprehensive review of the school. A follow-up meeting is held with the principal to address any issues or concerns. The outdoor mobile classroom doors are locked during classes and monitored during class changes. The school system has tried

to eliminate as many of the mobile classrooms as possible. Any individual coming into the school building must enter through the school office before going into the hallways.

3. A question was raised about School Resource Officers.  
The School Resource Officers are based at each high school. They do monitor the middle schools on a routine basis and visit the elementary schools as needed. The School Resource Officers are funded through a grant from the Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office and local funds from the school system budget. It was suggested that a School Resource Officer be assigned to each school. This would require additional funding. It was noted that there is a school nurse at each school.
4. A question was raised about the Level I and Level II volunteers at Southside Elementary School.  
There are two levels for volunteers which determine what the individual would be allowed to do in the school. This determination is not all inclusive. There was a situation involving volunteers at Southside Elementary School. A meeting will be held with the principals to discuss the levels of clearance for volunteers. Specifically, the process for special events will be discussed in order to have consistency within the school system. The intent was not meant to monitor the individuals coming to a performance but to ensure the safety of the students and staff in the school.
5. The issue of school lunch balances at the middle school was readdressed. Specifically, in the middle and high schools, students may purchase additional items for lunch. The parents are interested in knowing how this additional money is being spent by the student.  
The parents are encouraged to contact the school cafeteria at any time to receive the balance of their child's school lunch account. Each student should be encouraged to take the responsibility to ensure funds are available for lunch. However, if a student does not have enough funds to pay for lunch, they will be provided a sandwich lunch. There are no letters or cards sent to middle or high school students when lunch accounts are low on funds; however, the cafeteria staff does inform the student of their balance each day. The parents may request an itemized list from the school cafeteria. It was noted that the parent may submit a note with the check for the lunch account requesting a limit on the amount that is allowed to be spent in the cafeteria each day. The lunch account information is not available on the Parent Portal at this time.
6. A suggestion was provided to review recycling programs that may help schools generate funds. The Representative from Union Hall Elementary School provided information from PreServe, a company in Danville. The goal of the company is to have zero materials going to the landfill. The company supplies bins for the

schools with a scheduled pick-up of materials. Any resources would be returned to the schools. Another program, Teracycle, was also mentioned.

The Superintendent indicated that this issue would be discussed with the principals.

7. A question was raised about priorities for available funds and removing all modular classrooms from the schools.

Modular classrooms have been removed from the middle and high schools, Chatham Elementary, Dan River Middle, and Brosville Elementary Schools. Twin Springs Elementary School was also expanded. However, the modulares are used as needed based on student need and enrollment. Construction grant funds were used to make improvements and expand the schools. The State has now placed the construction grant funds under Basic Aid which appeared to provide more money for the school system. This was the same funding placed under one category. The school system could not make any additional plans because there were no construction grant funds. If possible, all modular classrooms would be removed.

8. A question was raised about any priorities for additional construction for the school system.

There was bond money that remained after the completion of the construction project which was used along with one-time available money to complete the renovations at Brosville Elementary School. There are currently seven (7) modulares at Kentuck Elementary School. A new wing could be constructed; however, the school system cannot complete new construction without bond money. Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Retired Administrator, as part of his Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP), will access all facilities for cleanliness and capital needs. This information will be compiled and presented to the School Board. The next phase of building should be renovations to the elementary schools (with the exception of Twin Springs Elementary and Gretna Elementary Schools).

**Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, addressed the following item:**

1. The Information Technology Department is in the process of updating the computers in the high schools. The computers have been shipped, and installation will begin after the Winter Break. The staff is continuing to maintain all current equipment.

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

1. The flu vaccine clinics were held at the middle schools during the months of October and November, 2012. There were 627 participants (including students, staff and community individuals). Appreciation was expressed to the Pittsylvania

County Department of Health for partnering with the school system to provide these clinics.

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

1. The Salary Taskforce has met and discussed tentative priorities for the 2013-2014 school budget. These tentative priorities include the following:
  - Maintain jobs, programs and benefits – increase employer share of insurance premiums
  - Provide raise up to 10% for all employees
  - Reconsider bus driver benefits
  - Consider revising the maintenance/custodian pay scales – put into two separate pay scales
  - If a salary increase is not possible, consider a one-time bonus with the bonus being in a separate check and not the regular payroll check

It was noted that there have been no reductions in force for employees in the school division. The Taskforce will meet again in December and will present recommendations to the School Board for consideration in the 2013-2014 budget proposal.

2. Anyone wishing to make suggestions or provide recommendations for the 2013-2014 school budget will have an opportunity at the December 11, 2012, School Board meeting. There will also be a public session to review all 2013-2014 budget initiatives on January 24, 2013. The deadline to submit all budget requests to the School Board Office is December 14, 2012. Any ideas or thoughts on the budget are encouraged. It is anticipated that the Governor's proposed budget will be received around December 18, 2012. This will be the second year of the biennium which may mean a flat budget. However, if the legislature allows the fiscal cliff (sequestration) to occur, there will be automatic cuts in federal funding (Title I, Title II, Title III and Special Education) ranging from 5-8% for each of the next ten (10) years. Additional budgetary information will be provided at the next meeting of the Advisory Council.

**Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following item:**

1. The Calendar Committee will begin reviewing the proposal for the 2013-2014 school calendar on November 28, 2012. Following this meeting suggestions and recommendations will be requested on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website. The Committee will be reviewing a proposal similar to the 2012-2013 school calendar. Easter 2014 will fall near the end of April; therefore, the Committee will consider a Spring Break in March and a holiday for the Friday and Monday surrounding Easter. The school system has received a waiver from the State to begin school prior to Labor Day. At this time, 2013-2014 will be the last year the school system will qualify for this waiver. There is legislation being reviewed

that, if approved, would allow school systems the autonomy to begin school when needed for the division.

The Representatives provided the following suggestions for the 2013-2014 school calendar:

- a. Increase the school day by one (1) hour to meet the required 990 hours for a school year
- b. Review the possibility of a four-day week - The Superintendent indicated that the Teachers Advisory Council had discussed this as well. It was noted that there are issues to be considered such as children getting on the bus at 6:15-6:30 a.m. and arriving back home around 5:30 p.m. and child care for the fifth day that students would not be in school.
- c. Review the possibility of year round school

Mrs. Vaughan indicated that she would discuss these recommendations with the Calendar Committee.

**The Superintendent addressed the following items:**

1. A copy was distributed of a letter to the editor which was published in the **Star Tribune**. The school system is funded at the minimum by the local governing body; however, the division continues to accomplish great things. The letter highlighted these accomplishments such as collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars for charitable organizations, winning sports teams and meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). There were only 34 out of 132 school divisions in the State that met the AMO this year. Pittsylvania County Schools ranks 29th in the State for the number of students in the division; however, some of the larger, more affluent and well-funded school divisions did not meet AMO. The school system does not accept excuses for lack of performance.
2. The following legislative issues were reviewed and discussed by the School Board at its November 13, 2012, meeting:
  - Potential legislation that indicates the school division must provide continuing education for students that are suspended or expelled. The school system would not be in favor of this legislation.
  - Potential legislation that indicates the school division may not suspend or expel students for disorderly conduct, disruptive or technology behaviors as stand-alone issues. The school system would not be in favor of this legislation.
  - Potential legislation that indicates the requirement for parental notification and due process prior to questioning students by the school administration. The school system would not be in favor of this legislation.
  - Potential legislation that would require a State-wide grading policy that could lower standards and remove local control. The school system would not be in favor of this legislation.

- Potential legislation that would allow students to receive a physical education credit for JROTC. This would create procedural and organizational problems in the schools, and the school system would not be in favor of this legislation.
- Potential legislation that would change the continuing and probationary contract for teachers. The resolution presented by the PEA relates to this legislation. The Board will continue its discussion of this legislation and review the resolution at its December meeting.
- The law relative to the Social Services Child Abuse Registry states that the school system must be contacted if a teacher's name is listed or added to the Registry. The school system has requested this law to be changed to include all employees who work with the students.
- The Delegates believe the legislation regarding the allowance of home-school students to participate in VHSL athletics will pass. If this law is passed, the school system will request that the home-school students be counted in the system's average daily membership (ADM).
- Should the sequestration bill continue to be law, the first impact will be felt in July, 2013. The school system will experience an 8.2% cut in federal dollars (Title I, Title II, Title III and special education) during the first year and at least 6% for each of the following 9 (nine) years.
- Should the legislators consider a possible raise for employees, the Superintendent also asked the Delegates to consider a percentage for the full year (beginning July 1) rather than a phantom raise that would begin on January 1.

Representatives were encouraged to talk with legislators on any of these issues that they would like to make any comments.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. No comments were provided.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.