

**MINUTES OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS  
November 22, 2016**

A meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council was held on Tuesday, November 22, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were eleven (11) representatives present.

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

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

There were no Council topics to be addressed.

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

1. The Information Technology (IT) Department is in the process of delivering Chromebase computers and tables to the elementary schools for the K-3 initiative.
2. The switching updates have been completed at Tunstall High School, Hurt Elementary School, Kentuck Elementary School, Southside Elementary School, Stony Mill Elementary School and Tunstall Middle School. This update should increase the network speed by approximately 10 times. It is anticipated that additional schools will be updated as funding is available.
3. The school safety audits have been completed. The School Safety Audit Teams include the principal, a teacher, a representative from the Fire Department, a representative from the Maintenance Department and the School Resource Officer. Mr. Donald Johnson, Retired Assistant Superintendent for Business, leads each team in completing the safety audit. A review of all of the audits will be conducted by the Safety Audit Team on January 6, 2017. A volunteer to serve on the review team was requested. Ms. Mary Elliott, Representative from Southside Elementary School, volunteered to serve.
4. Monthly lockdown drills are conducted at the schools. Additional unannounced lockdown drills are held twice a year and a report of how well the drill was conducted is provided to principals. The students and staff do a fantastic job with the drills.
5. Students and staff participated in an Earthquake Drill in October. A tornado drill will be conducted in the Spring.
6. Safety updates were discussed. State security grants have been received which have provided funding for security cameras at all schools. Additional cameras were added this year at the middle schools. If the grant is received next year,

cameras will be added at the elementary schools and the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center. The cameras show real-time video surveillance of the schools. The Superintendent, Sheriff's Office and the School Resource Office (SRO) may review the video footage at any time. A recording is made and may be archived if needed. There are 23 cameras in the high schools, 14-15 cameras in the middle school and two (2) in each elementary school. It is anticipated that additional cameras will be installed at the elementary school. There is no audio on the video. There are also cameras installed outside for a peripheral view around the building.

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

1. A schedule of the 2016 flu clinics was provided. These clinics were held in the schools. The number of participants was less than last year. The Health Department was unable to offer the afternoon clinics for community members. The Tdap clinics will be held in the Spring.
2. The following training opportunities have been provided for teachers:
  - a. Incredible Years for K-2 regular education teachers to provide strategies to address behavior for students in grades kindergarten – two which supports the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) initiatives. This training is funded by Smart Beginnings.
  - b. Mandt Training which is a comprehensive, integrated approach to preventing, de-escalating and if necessary intervening when the behavior of an individual poses a threat of harm to themselves and/or others. This training will also be provided to principals.
3. The school system has partnered with ARC to provide workplace experiences for students with disabilities. Currently, there are fifteen (15) students working in this program. The goal of this program is for the students to be ready for gainful employment as they leave Pittsylvania County Schools.
4. The school division is offering an Applied Studies Diploma for students with disabilities. This is a meaningful diploma that indicates the student have certain skill sets, independent living and workplace readiness skills along with reading, writing, social studies, history and math instruction.
5. Twelve (12) new buses were purchased. This allowed for the retirement of twelve (12) older buses which will be used as back-up transportation as needed.
6. There have been no health outbreaks in the schools as of this date. The School Nurse Coordinators provide First Aid and CPR training for the first responders in the schools and facilities.
7. Staff is working on a cost report for Medicaid recovery. This report will be provided to the School Board.
8. The Support Services Department is working with post-secondary transition for students with disabilities. The majority of the special education students in the school division have severe learning disabilities (SLD) or other health impaired (OHI) and are not in self-contained setting. These students are in an inclusion setting and pursuing a regular diploma. Appreciation was expressed to the

Instrument Department for working with Support Services to help these students to be successful.

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

1. Information relative to the development of the 2017-2018 School Board Calendar Proposal was provided. Employees, parents, students and the community have been invited to review the proposed calendar and provide comments or suggestions by November 28, 2016. Representatives were also encouraged to provide suggestions as requested.
2. The Grading and Reporting Committee met recently to discuss the possibility of a change in the grading period from 6-weeks to 9-weeks. Information about current practices in other divisions and teacher and parent surveys was obtained and results were split. After a review of these results, the Committee felt that there was not enough data to change from a 6-weeks grading period to a 9-weeks period. However, this possibility will continue to be reviewed. The Committee members also discussed two other areas of concern:
  - a. There is concern about the timeframe of when report cards are issued after the end of the grading period. It was determined that this timeframe should be shortened because the current timeframe is too close to the issuance of progress reports.
  - b. The grades elementary students in the areas of reading, spelling, handwriting and language arts will be reduced to two (2) grades: one for reading and one for language arts (language, spelling and handwriting).

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

1. Governor McAuliffe will release his proposed budget in December, 2016. This will begin the budget process as the School Board Budget Committee begins to review budget initiatives. The House and Senate will also be working on budget proposals. The School Board will review the results of the recent Compensation Study during the budget process as well.
2. It was noted that Governor McAuliffe had hoped to have additional funds to provide the 2% salary increase. However, the Governor has indicated that the State revenues did not allow for the 2% raise; therefore, this funding was retracted. Pittsylvania County Schools remained committed to its employees and provided the 2% raise for the 2016-2017 school year. The School Board is using \$670,000 from other areas to provide the necessary funds to cover the 2% raise. The School Board and staff will begin working on the 2017-2018 budget proposed to present to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

3. A public input session for the 2017-2018 budget will be held during the School Board meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2016. December 16, 2016, is the deadline for submission of any items to be considered for the budget proposal.
4. The School Board recently met with area legislators (Delegate Danny Marshall, Delegate Les Adams and Senator Ruff) to discuss concerns and issues relative to revenues, unfunded mandates, Virtual School, need for Broadband in the area, and local option for pre-Labor Day opening. The legislators were very receptive to the needs of the school system.

**The Superintendent addressed the following items:**

1. Information relative to school closings/delays was provided. Beginning this year, the school closings/delays will be announced through SchoolMessenger. Attempts are made to notify staff and parents of closings and delays the night before or around 5:30 a.m. if possible. Staff and parents will continue to receive the telephone calls and messages; however, messages regarding school closings and delays will be posted through SchoolMessenger on the website. The browser may need to be refreshed to ensure the message is the most up-to-date information. Staff and parents will be asked to provide feedback relative to the use of the new system later in the year to determine the continued use of this system.
2. Tunstall High School has been recognized as a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School. The school was one of 330 recipients nationwide and the only high school in Virginia to be recognized.
3. The goal for the school system is for more students to complete requirements for a General Education Diploma and to participate and complete the requirements for the Associate's Degree as they graduate. The school system partners with Danville Community College (DCC) to offer a rigorous course of study for students wishing to obtain their high school diploma and at the same time an Associate's Degree. This option creates a savings for the parents and the students as they continue post-secondary education.

The next meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council is scheduled on Tuesday, January 31, 2017, at 1:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:42 p.m.