

**MINUTES OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
September 25, 2012**

A meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council was held on Tuesday, September 25, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were fifteen (15) 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, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The protocol for the meetings was provided. This Council will meet four (4) times per year. The purpose of the Citizens' Advisory Council is to seek input and feedback regarding programs, operations, presentations (public or in-school), initiatives, budget, school calendar, school safety and other items that would be of interest to parents. Representatives are given the opportunity to provide topics for discussion. Generally, these topics would be division-level items. School-level issues should be discussed with the appropriate school principal. If there are issues that cannot be addressed at the meeting, the minutes will be mailed to the Representatives to include any pertinent information relative to these topics. Agenda items may be provided to Mrs. Janet F. Hancock, Clerk of the Board (janet.hancock@pcs.k12.va.us), the Superintendent or the appropriate Assistant Superintendent prior to the meetings so that individuals may be better prepared to answer questions or address issues. The minutes of the meetings will be provided by e-mail or U.S. mail as desired.

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A concern was expressed about the Math SOL scores as reported by the *Danville Register and Bee*. A question was raised about why race would need to be reported for the SOL tests.

Federal requirements include the reporting of race for students. The sub-groups are divided to meet accountability purposes. The newspaper did select the worst scores to publish in the paper. Overall, the school division did very well and was above the State average. There were no schools in school improvement because of the math scores. The *Danville Register and Bee* has been very supportive in the past, and the Superintendent has worked with them to ensure the information reported is as accurate as possible.
2. A question was raised about the accounts payable system for student lunch. Parents do not receive receipts and there are issues with not knowing the balance

in the account. The parent pre-pays for the lunch; however, when additional items are purchased by the students, there are no receipts provided. This makes it difficult for the parent to keep up with the balance in the lunch account.

It is anticipated that parents will have the ability to view the lunch accounts payable system in PowerSchool. However, this system is not in place at this time. At the elementary level, students receive a card indicating the balance in their account is getting low. Elementary students are allowed three (3) charges for their account. The cafeteria manager can print out a letter for the student. The letter is provided to the teacher to put with the student's information in their book bag to take home. There are no letters or cards for the middle and high school students; however, the cafeteria staff does inform the student of their balance each day. The students in middle and high schools are not allowed to charge any food; however, the cafeteria will provide milk and a sandwich if there are no funds in their lunch account. The parents may (and are encouraged to) contact the school cafeteria at any time to receive the balance in their child's lunch account. It was noted that students are always provided a lunch.

3. A concern was raised about field trips for Stony Mill Elementary School. An announcement was made that there would be no more field trips for Stony Mill Elementary Schools.

The Central Office has not cancelled field trips. The teacher and the school administration plan all field trips. The School Board had been funding the transportation costs for field trips; however, with budget cuts, the school and/or student is responsible for payment. By School Board policy, field trips are classified in two (2) categories: curriculum-based trips which must be offered to student free of charge or enrichment trips where the student is charged a fee to cover the costs of the driver and the mileage for the trip.

Any decisions relative to field trips are made at the school level.

It was noted that the PTO at Stony Mill Elementary School may no longer be paying for field trips because they are planning to provide a new marquee' for the school.

4. Concern was expressed about the traffic in the Dan River area.

This situation is being addressed to improve the traffic patterns in this area. It is the hope that the Virginia Department of Transportation will install a turn lane at the store area in order to alleviate the problems. The school division will need to expend funds to address the traffic lane at Kentuck Elementary School. A longer turn lane will be installed to go behind the school and gymnasium. Mr. Mike Hutson, Director of Maintenance & Facilities, is currently obtaining quotes for this project.

5. A concern was expressed about equality in sports teams across the County. A question was raised about any efforts being made to ensure all schools offer the same teams.

The school budget includes money for all sports. However, the school administration can choose to put a program together using money from other sports. There would need to be an interest in the sports being offered. The money in the school budget only covers the coach. There is a process to follow if the schools wish to add a new program. There are also additional costs to beginning a program, such as equipment.

6. A concern was expressed about students having potential in a sport but no opportunity at the school to play if the sport is not offered. A question was raised about the possibility of allowing the student to move to another school in order to play that sport.

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) frowns upon a student moving from one school to another just to play a sport. The Superintendent indicated he would review the VHSL law book and determine what can be done in these circumstances.

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

1. A budget calendar for the 2013-2014 school budget will be presented to the School Board at its October 9, 2012, meeting. The same time sequence will be followed this year. A copy of the approved budget calendar will be provided at the Advisory Council meeting in November. Input will be requested as the budget process begins.
2. A personnel update was provided. There were sixty-five (65) certified and classified employees who retired and forty-two (42) who resigned at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. There were thirty-eight (38) positions cut from the 2012-2013 budget. Employees hired for the 2012-2013 school year included fifty-three (53) certified and fifty-one (51) classified staff members.
3. There were four (4) sessions held at the high schools to complete Volunteer 1 and Volunteer 2 paperwork including State Police and Child Abuse record checks. There were approximately 200 volunteers that completed this process in the schools and fifty (50) more at the School Board Office. The school system depends on volunteers and wants to ensure the safety of the students by making sure those individuals who are around them have completed and cleared these record checks. The School Board pays the costs for these record checks. Volunteer 1 paperwork must be completed each school year. Volunteer 2 paperwork which includes the State Police record check only has to be completed once.

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

1. The State of Virginia applied for a flexibility waiver of the No Child Left Behind accountability system. This waiver was granted with conditions which required the inclusion of college and career readiness standards and changes in the

principal and teacher evaluations with 40% of the score to count toward student academic progress. Meetings have been held with teachers to discuss the new evaluation process. The flexibility waiver also divides students into gap groups and individual groups. There are annual measurable objectives (AMO) that must be met. The objectives to meet for math were not as rigorous as the old standards. There are new English and Science standards for next year. For Pittsylvania County Schools, there were eight (8) elementary, three (3) middle and four (4) high schools that met the AMO. According to the State standards, the school system did a very good job, and teachers are sharing the good things they do across the division.

2. The graduation site selections and dates for the 2013 graduation were provided.
3. Information relative to the graduation audit was provided. This information included a rundown of numbers of students who did not graduate on time (within four years of enrolling in the school).
4. The process for the 2013-2014 school calendar proposal will begin soon. The Representatives were encouraged to provide any recommendations for the school calendar to Mrs. Vaughan or Mrs. Janet Hancock, Clerk of the Board. It was noted that an error was discovered in the 2012-2013 Monthly Planning Calendar. March 31 was omitted from the calendar and Easter is listed on April 7. The correct date for Easter is March 31. Spring Break will be the week of April 1-5, 2013, which is correct on the calendar.

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

1. The school cafeteria at Brosville Elementary School was expanded over the summer to add extra workspace for the cafeteria workers, increased food storage, a larger serving line, a larger walk-in freezer and refrigerator, a restroom, washer and dryer and a mop sink.
2. The softball and track fields at Chatham High School have been upgraded. There was new grass that had to be planted in the track area which is beginning to come up nicely.
3. In collaboration with the Pittsylvania County Emergency Management Department, the school division will participate in the Great Southeast ShakeOut Drill. Everyone will have to drop, cover and hold on for one minute on October 18, 2012, at 10:18 a.m. Students and teachers will be asked to get up under their desks for one minute and then return to class. There have only been about 5-6 earthquakes registered in the Danville area since 1974.
4. The Safety Audit Team will be visiting the schools to conduct a review to ensure that the schools are prepared for any crisis. A lockdown drill will be conducted. Parents will receive an AlertNow call prior to the drill. Any parents in the school

at the time of the lockdown will be required to remain in the school and participate in the drill. These drills are necessary to ensure all staff and students are aware and follow the proper protocol in the event of a real emergency.

5. The internet that comes into the schools is filtered to ensure that the school system is following State guidelines regarding inappropriate materials. There is a new work order system that has been implemented by the Information Technology (IT) Department. Teachers may submit work orders as assistance is needed. An e-mail will be sent to the individual making the request, and the work order is submitted to the appropriate technician to complete the work. There have been approximately 1,200 work orders completed since the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. There are six (6) Information Technology Resource Teachers (ITRT) that assist with technology in the schools, conduct teacher training, consult with teachers and help with projects involving technology.

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

1. In cooperation with the Pittsylvania-Danville Health District, flu clinics have been scheduled at each of the middle schools. The schedule includes time during the school day for students to obtain the flu vaccine. Staff and community members may receive the vaccine after school hours. A schedule of the clinic locations and times was provided. Information relative to Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance billing has been included in the correspondence to community members and staff.
2. The State requires the school system to offer training for insulin and glucagon protocol and the use of the Epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen). This training has been implemented for the schools and appropriate protocol will be used. The EpiPen is now stocked in the school clinics and individuals are trained to use it.
3. A brochure regarding the Project Connect FAMIS program was distributed. Through this program, Ms. Amy Warren Edwards, FAMIS Outreach Worker, helps eligible families to obtain health insurance. Ms. Edwards will be present at the flu clinic sites to discuss insurance opportunities with families as needed. To date, more than 900 families have received information relative to obtaining health insurance with 300 enrolling in some type of assistance program.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Professional dress for staff was discussed. This issue was also discussed with the Teachers' Advisory Council. These comments will be shared with the principals. It is anticipated that a Commission will be developed to review this issue to determine any recommendations for changes that may be necessary. The following comments were provided by the Representatives:
 - a. No jeans should be allowed except on special dates stipulated by the principal

- b. Jeans and/or any other clothing should not look like they were slept in and should not have holes
- c. Clothing should be neat and not distract from instruction
- d. Beach flip flops should not be worn – students are not allowed to wear these types of shoes
- e. The rules for students should be the same for staff
- f. Sometimes skirts are too short – the skirt should be as long as the person’s fingertips and no shorter

A suggestion has been made to conduct a survey to determine the extent of the problem in the schools. This issue will be discussed with the principals. It was noted also that the popular jean style is to look like there are holes in the pants but they are not actual holes. This will also be discussed with the principals. An update will be provided at the November meeting.

2. Information from the State Report Card for Pittsylvania County Schools was provided. Despite all of the challenges of the school system including financial, geographic and transportation issues, the schools exceeded the State average in many areas. The only area where the school division fell below the State average was for English Reading for Students with Disabilities. Pittsylvania County Schools is performing better than most school divisions. There are really good people working in Pittsylvania County Schools, which is the 29th largest division in the State. In addition to the successes in the area of assessments, every school has been recognized over the last nine (9) years at some level of attainment. There has been academic success but also community support. The schools have given over \$70,000.00 to the American Heart Association over the last year and recognized as a Regional Leader. In the past years and during tough economic times, the schools have given over \$375,000.00 to the American Heart Association and \$175,000.00 to United Way. There are many more community organizations that have been the recipient of donations from the schools and the school system. The schools have also excelled on the athletic fields with multiple State championships in football, softball and baseball.
3. Information was shared from Mr. Brian Turpin, new Juvenile & Domestic Court Judge, who congratulated the Superintendent recently for being first or second in the State for student attendance. Appreciation was expressed to the parents for sending their children to school.
4. Information was provided relative to legislation that is being considered by the General Assembly. There is a push for homeschool students to participate on high school sports teams without being a student of the school. The school division does not support this legislation. The current response for homeschool students is that they must be enrolled in the virtual school program and take the appropriate Standards of Learning tests. Other legislation that will be discussed by the General Assembly is the Kinship Care Bill. This bill would allow parents to take their child to a relative so that the student could attend the school in that attendance zone. The only requirement from the parent would be an affidavit

rather than court-appointed guardianship which is required at this time by the school division. It is this division's belief that this bill would not be in the best interest of the student or the school system.

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 2:55 p.m.

