

**MINUTES OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
**September 27, 2016**

A meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council was held on Tuesday, September 27, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were fifteen (15) 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, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The protocol for the meetings will be as follows:

- The 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](mailto:janet.hancock@pcs.k12.va.us)), 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 addressed:

1. A concern was expressed about students arriving after morning announcements and not receiving all of the information they need.  
This issue will be discussed with principals to ensure information is shared with late arriving students.
2. A concern was expressed about a weapon found at Tunstall High School recently. Specifically, the concern was that a weapon would make it into the school.  
The Code of Virginia is very strict on weapons in school and incidents are handled within the school division and the sheriff's department. School Board Policy stipulates that these cases are reviewed by the School Board as an expulsion case; however, the student may have the option to receive instruction through the Regional Alternative School. These types of incidents

are reported to the School Resource Officer (SRO) at the school as well as the administrative staff. The investigation by the Sheriff's Office is separate from the disciplinary actions taken by the School Board.

The schools are very safe. There are some school divisions that have metal detectors as students enter the school. A weapon can still be brought into the school by other accesses (passing a weapon through the window after entry). If anything of this nature occurs, the school division has a strong school structure and would address any issues as quickly as they occur. The staff acts proactively and is concerned about the safety of students and staff. A buzzer system is in place at the front entry doors. Also, the IDENT-A-Kid sign in system will be used for volunteers to access the sex offender registry before they are allowed to be in the presence of students.

It was noted that the notification process from the principal relative to this situation was appreciated by the parents.

3. An issue was expressed relative to the traffic coming into the school at Twin Springs Elementary School. The parents are getting out of the car to pick up children.  
There is only one entrance in and one entrance out at Twin Springs Elementary School. This situation is being reviewed to determine if changes may be necessary.

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

1. There are 17 of 18 schools fully accredited for the 2016-2017 school year based on assessment results during the 2015-2016 school year. Last year there were 16 of 18 were accredited last year. A listing of Standards of Learning (SOL) pass rates by school and subject areas was provided. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has been replaced with ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act. It was noted that there is an issue with Grade 7 Mathematics. Mr. M. Todd Sease, Director of Elementary Education/Lead Director for Mathematics, is working with teachers to determine strategies to help students to be more successful.
2. The school division is constantly looking at opportunities for professional development in mathematics as well as other content areas for the teachers.
3. The site for the graduation ceremonies for each of the high schools has been scheduled at the Averett North Campus, Danville, Virginia. Gretna High School will hold its graduation ceremony on Friday, May 26, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. All other schools will be on Saturday, May 27, 2017, as follows:
  - a. Chatham High School – 9:00 a.m.
  - b. Dan River High School – 1:00 p.m.
  - c. Tunstall High School – 6:00 p.m.Graduation practices will be held on Thursday, May 25, 2017, for Gretna High School at 2:00 p.m. and on Friday, May 26, 2017, for Chatham High School at 9:00 a.m., Dan River High School at 11:00 a.m. and Tunstall High School at 2:00 p.m.

4. During the 2015-2016 school year, all twenty (20) schools in Pittsylvania County participated in PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) training. Part of the training includes a behavior matrix for each school and area, such as cafeteria, bus and classroom, to encourage positive behavior and help reduce the number of referrals to the office. SWIS (School-Wide Information System) will be used to document the number of referrals and processes will be put into place to help students to be successful in both academics and behavior.
5. The organization of the Instruction Department was discussed. There are five directors and a Supervisor of Specialty Curricula Areas. These staff members are assigned to specific schools and help to support school improvement.

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

1. There has been a failure of the PowerSchool Server. The technician has replaced the needed part and the process of restoration of the service is being completed. It is anticipated that the server will be restored by Wednesday. Reports will go out on Wednesday, October 5, 2016.
2. A listing of the summer projects completed by the Information Technology Department was provided. Upcoming projects were also discussed. These projects included the following:

**Summer Projects:**

- Replace administrative computers
- Replace computer projectors
- Install new computer lab at Gretna Middle School
- Install new computers for special education rooms
- Install equipment for IDENT-A-Kid
- Replace teacher computers
- Install security cameras at high schools
- Install cafeteria computers
- Install library computers
- Provide resources needed to support Governor's School & Cybercamp
- Install new hardware to support VOIP phone system
- Install new hardware to support accounting server
- Install new wireless access points
- Install various hardware at schools, printers, smartboards, projectors, etc.
- Replace switching at Tunstall High School damaged in storm
- Moving web site to more robust hosting company which assures sufficient bandwidth for division needs as well as technical support for content-management-system redesign

**Upcoming Projects:**

- K-3 Initiative
- Mini lab at Regional Alternative School and Union Hall Elementary School
- Mini lab at Chatham High School
- Pre-School computers
- New Aerohive Wireless in K-3 wings of elementary schools

- Replace middle school teacher computers
  - Update switching and add wireless access points at Tunstall High School, Tunstall Middle School, Southside Elementary School, Kentuck Elementary School and Stony Mill Elementary School
3. A State security grant has been received for this year. These funds will be used to add security cameras at the middle schools. These security grants have been received in the past and used to install video cameras on school buses, security locks at the schools, at least two (2) security cameras at all schools and additional cameras at the high schools. If the security grant is received next year, the funds will be used to install additional cameras at the elementary schools and the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center.
  4. All schools have access to services from the School Resource Officers. School Messenger is used to send texts, messages and e-mails to parents and staff. A flyer was provided which explains all of the security and safety measures that have been implemented and the different mobile devices that are used to ensure messages are provided to parents (MySchoolBucks, the PCS app, Texts, Parent Portal, etc.)
  5. The IDENT-A-Kid system will be used for Level 1 Volunteers to check against the sex offenders database prior to being allowed access to the school.
  6. Monthly lock down drills and fire drills are conducted in the schools. On October 20, 2016, at 10:20 a.m., an Earthquake Drill will be conducted. A Tornado Drill will be conducted in the Spring. A Safety Audit Team completed a School Safety Inspection (based on a State Safety Checklist) to ensure the schools are safe. The Audit Team evaluates the school to determine if there are any areas that need improvement. A viewing of the school security cameras observations will be shown to the Representatives at the next Council meeting.

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

1. The Support Services Department includes Special Education, Transportation and Health Services.
2. A schedule of the 2016 flu clinics was provided. These clinics will be held at all schools from September 23 – November 9, 2016. Because of staffing issues at the Department of Health, there will not be any afternoon sessions for staff and community.
3. The organizational chart for the Support Services Department was provided, and a review of changes in staff was discussed. Staff includes Mrs. Robin Haymore, Director of Special Education, Mrs. Denise Dawson and Mrs. Ketina Wright, Zone Coordinators, Mr. Jeff Buchanan, Supervisor of Special Education, Dr. Bill Sandidge, Supervisor of Special Education, and School-Home Coordinators, Mr. Jim Tolbert and Mrs. Nancy Lynch.
4. The following programs are being implemented and provided in the schools:
  - i. Ready for Success is a behavior improvement program for elementary students funded through a grant from Smart Beginnings. The student may be placed in the program for 45 days to work on behavior or up to 90 days

if necessary and then returned to the home school or another program in order to ensure success in the classroom. There is also a parent component for this program to help the family be prepared to assist the student with the behavior issues.

- ii. Incredible Years training is provided to Grades K-2 teachers and special education teacher to help students who are having behavior problems (This serves as a Tier I training for PBIS).
  - iii. Equals Math is a program for elementary school students with disabilities (cross-categorical). The program began as a pilot at Brosville Elementary School during the 2015-2016 school year. Ms. Shauna Adkins, Teacher at Brosville Elementary School, is providing the training for the school system. The improvement rate for the students involved in the program is at 167%.
  - iv. Twin Springs Elementary School has implemented a STAR Autism program. It is anticipated that this program will expand.
  - v. The school system has partnered with ARC to provide work place experiences for students with disabilities.
  - vi. Fusion is being offered at the middle schools as a Tier II reading intervention program. This program is funded through a grant from T-TAC for three (3) schools but is being provided at all four (4) middle schools.
  - vii. Read Naturally Live is a Tier III reading intervention program for elementary, middle and high school students.
  - viii. The IXL program is an on-line mathematics remedial program for all schools. It is the hope to expand this type of remediation to other subject areas.
5. After the retirement of Mr. Bobby L. Lovelace, Mr. Kenyon Scott is the Director of Pupil Transportation beginning September 1, 2016. The School Board has purchased twelve (12) buses (10 regular and 2 special education). Cameras have been installed on all buses. There is a need for bus drivers and substitute bus drivers. Mr. Scott is proposing to hold bus driver training during the evening hours to entice more individuals to apply and become certified to drive. Bus drivers must have a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) and the ability to parallel park a bus.
  6. The Health Services Department is involved with the flu clinics in the schools and the training for medication, insulin, and glucagon administration. The School Nurse Coordinators will provide CPR and first aid training to first responders for the schools (2 per school plus the school nurse). Also, it is the hope to have funds available to hire a school nurse at the STEM Academy and the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center.
  7. Mr. Jim Tolbert and Mrs. Nancy Lynch are the School-Home Coordinators for the school division. They work with truancy concerns and the Truancy Multi-Disciplinary Team which includes outside individuals from court services and social services. They also work with the Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) which addresses abuse and mental health issues. The State leaders and

court system has recognized Pittsylvania County Schools for having some of the best attendance in the Commonwealth.

8. Funds are received through MediCaid Recovery. This process allows us to bill for services such as speech, physical and occupational therapy, health services, psychological services and transportation services for students with disabilities. This has provided a return of \$75,000 to the school system.
9. The Support Services Department also works to expand workplace experiences for students with disabilities, enhance post-secondary experiences, promote regular diploma attainment and solicit support to enhance the autism program.

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

1. There were 103 employees that retired or resigned at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. These vacancies have been filled with the exception of a few hard to fill positions (such as Family & Consumer Science, Mathematics and Agriculture. At the current time, there are qualified substitutes in these positions. The school division has also been fortunate to restore some of the positions that were lost due to budget cuts in previous years. There have been 138 new staff members hired for 2016-2017 – 70 certified/teaching and 68 classified positions (aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians and administrative assistants). Special Education Assistants are hired for one year only and must reapply each year. There are approximately 40 special education assistants in the schools. Current vacancies include cafeteria workers, bus drivers, special education assistants, Bus Shop Foreman for the Pupil Transportation Department and a few teaching positions. Many of the teachers that have been hired were educated in Pittsylvania County Schools and they are coming back to teach.
2. Substitutes are needed. Training is conducted for substitute teachers, custodians and cafeteria workers. There were 25 custodians and 25 cafeteria workers completing the training this summer to become substitutes. The application process for substitutes will open in November and fingerprinting and orientation sessions held in December for any substitute wishing to be added to the listing for the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year. The orientation sessions include information relative to the latest protocol and policies for the school division, OSHA training and pertinent information regarding PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports).
3. MySchoolBucks is going well. The cafeteria staff is working hard to provide well-balanced meals. Students are exposed to more variety of fresh fruits and vegetables than they may receive at home. The cafeteria staff ensures that students receive minimum requirements according to the USDA for the breakfast or lunch meal. Breakfast has been expanded to allow students to pick up and take an item with them to the classroom.

**Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, addressed the following items:**

1. Mr. Jason Ince, Agriculture Teacher at Chatham High School, has been recognized as Region VI Teacher of the Year. He was selected from 6,600 teachers in the Region. He will compete against seven (7) other teachers from other regions across the State for the State Teacher of the Year.
2. The school system was recognized by the State Superintendent of Education as the VTSS (Virginia Tiered System of Supports) Trailblazer Award winner.
3. The Precision Machining Technology/Advanced Manufacturing Program at the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center was selected as the Virginia Department of Education Career and Technical Education Creating Excellence Program of the Year for 2016.
4. Chatham Elementary School, Union Hall Elementary School and Tuntall High School received the 2016 Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) Award for meeting all State and federal benchmarks and making progress towards the goals of the Governor and the State Board.
5. A student from Chatham High School was recognized for placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the Eastern Regional FFA Creed Public Speaking Event and placing 1<sup>st</sup> in the Eastern Regional FFA Safe Tractor Operator's Career Development Event.
6. There were six (6) individuals competing at the National SkillsUSA competition.
7. There are lots of good things happening in Pittsylvania County Schools.
8. The Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET) is a program for juniors and seniors to take math, science, English and engineering courses to gain a pathway to college and earn dual enrollment credits. This program is based at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) and is shared with Danville City Schools students.
9. The Governor's School is also based at the IALR. This program provides college level math, science, English and research coursework for the participating students.
10. There were five (5) students graduating in May of 2015 from Pittsylvania County Schools with a high school diploma and an Associate Degree from Danville Community College. The goal is to increase this number. Dual enrollment courses are also offered at the high schools. Completing these courses will also save parents and students money as they continue their post-secondary education.
11. The Ready for Success program has been implemented at the STEM Academy this year. This program provides structure for students in grades K-5 that may need time away to help them to be successful in school. The student may be placed for 45 days or up to 90 days and then returned to the base school.
12. The composite index indicates the percentage of money that comes from the State and the amount from the locality. For Pittsylvania County, the composite index is .25 which means the State provided 75% and the locality 25%. The Governor predicted in early summer that the revenues were not coming in as indicated and the funding for raises would need to be cut. The finance department began to review the budget for the school division and determined that the raises would remain intact. The school system has been able to do many great things on a really tight budget. Pittsylvania County Schools ranks very high on return for investment. The staff members work tremendously hard.

A question was raised about the responsibility of the Citizens' Advisory Council Representative in sharing this information. It was suggested that the Representative interact with the PTO or Booster Club and request time at the meetings to discuss any issues of interest. The Representatives may share this information with principals and be the resource to collect questions from other community members. Representatives were also encouraged to provide topics of interest for future meetings.

The next meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, November 22, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the School Board Office.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.