



# PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 232 • 39 Bank Street S.E. • Chatham, Virginia 24531

**Dr. Mark R. Jones**  
Division Superintendent

## **Support Staff Advisory Committee December 1, 2015 Minutes**

A meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the School Board Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were 16 members present.

Also present were Dr. Mark Jones, Division Superintendent, Dr. Lillian Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Ms. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, and Ms. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

Dr. Holland called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed. Dr. Jones addressed the group and expressed his appreciation for the warm reception that he had received in returning to the Division. An agenda was provided. Dr. Holland invited committee members to add items to the agenda for discussion.

The following concerns were expressed by committee members:

- Insurance premium for the family plan is very high. Are other insurance options being considered? Dr. Holland agreed that the family plan was very high. She informed the committee that insurance quotes are solicited for the Division's health insurance. In 2014 approximately 6 insurance companies responded. Based on coverage, cost and acceptance of insurance by providers, Anthem remained the best value for the money. Insurance quotes will be solicited again the summer of 2016. Committee members were reminded that the School Board contributes \$5,500 for health insurance and an additional \$120 for dental insurance per individual employee. Pittsylvania County Schools is self-insured meaning the premiums go into a fund and bills are covered by that money. Dr. Holland encouraged members to take advantage of wellness doctor visits.
- A concern was expressed relative to dress code and discipline involving Rivermont students riding a special needs bus. Ms. Ann Cassada, stated that rules and regulations are in place regarding dress and discipline for all students. If there are specific concerns bus drivers are to contact Support Services.
- A concern was expressed regarding the availability of substitute nurses. Ms. Cassada shared information with the committee regarding special medication and first aid training that takes place for identified school personnel. Two individuals from each school are trained annually in these procedures. This ensures that there is always someone in the building that has been trained in first aid. She also stated that substitute nurses are always used when possible.

## Reports from Assistant Superintendents

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

Technology update:

- Pittsylvania County Schools recently switched messaging service from Connect 5 to School Messenger. One change to this service is that individuals may now receive text messages. He stated that individuals whose cell numbers are listed in power school should text yes to 68453 if they wish to receive text alerts. There is always the option to opt out.
- Dr. Early stated that Pittsylvania County Schools is in the process of switching over the server to the “cloud”. It is hoped that the transition will be smooth one.
- PCS email users will soon have the option of doing a two-factor log in. This will provide an additional layer of protection for users email account. The two-factor log in will be optional.
- Dr. Early told committee members that may be purchasing a new computer for Christmas about a special agreement with Microsoft. Employees can purchase Office 2016 using a Pittsylvania County Schools email address. Simply email [Microsoft@PCS.k12.va.us](mailto:Microsoft@PCS.k12.va.us) and follow the directions that are provided. The software may be downloaded for approximately \$9 and a DVD may be purchased for an additional \$5. He indicated that is a savings of several hundred dollars.

Maintenance update:

- The maintenance department will soon be replacing fluorescent lights with LED lights at the middle schools. With the savings this will generate, heating systems at three of the middle schools will also be replaced. The maintenance department is also replacing the boiler at Twin Springs Elementary School with a more efficient one. There are also plans to update the air conditioning at Brosville Elementary School. The Board of Supervisors as well as the School Board supports these improvements. Most of these improvements will be done at night.

Safety update:

- Safety Audits at all schools have been completed. The safety team will meet soon to review the information gathered and to make suggestions for updates to the Crisis Management Plan. Dr. Early indicated that practice lock-down drills are still on-going at all schools. In addition, schools participated in an earthquake drill last month.

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

Flu Clinics:

- A summary of the flu clinics held at schools was provided. Ms. Cassada stated that all were well attended with over 2000 individuals receiving the immunization. She expressed appreciate in partnering with the local Health Department to provide this service. She stated that the Division would be partnering with the Health Department again in the spring to offer T-Dap immunizations.

Health Services update:

- Nurse coordinators have been busy providing training to school personnel in first aid, CPR, AED, and medication dispensing.

Transportation update:

- The Division has bought a 78-passenger bus to transport Governor's School and AET students from Tunstall High School to IALR.

Special Education update:

- The Support Services Department has purchased a reading program (Read Naturally) for middle school and high school students. This program can assist with helping students read on grade level.
- The December child count has been completed ahead of schedule. This report impacts the amount of funding that is received for special needs students.
- The Medicaid cost report has also been completed. This is a way to recover some of the Medicaid funds that have been spent to assist special needs students.

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

- The 2016-17 proposed calendar was posted online from November 7-16. A total of 183 responses were received relative to the proposed calendar. The Calendar Committee met again in November after reviewing the responses and some changes were made. Consideration for including 90 days in each semester, having students complete exams and/or SOL prior to winter break, and where to place Spring Break and still allow ample time for students to prepare for SOL factored in to the changes. The additional 12 minutes that had earlier been added to the school day helped allow for these considerations. The proposed calendar will be presented to the School Board on December 8, 2015, for their review and approval.
- Final accreditation results indicated that Gretna Middle School is "partially accredited-improving" and Kentuck Elementary School is "partially accredited – warned". All remaining schools are fully accredited.

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

- A budget calendar was provided. An opportunity for public input will be available at the December 8 board meeting. The Administration Department is working toward a March 8, 2016 date to have a proposed budget ready for The Board. The Governor's budget will be released on December 17, 2015. The school division's budget is generally based on this projected budget. Early indications are that K12 funding will not be cut. It is hopeful that this funding will be increased.
- Dr. Holland shared information regarding a payroll compensation change. Direct deposit for payroll checks and travel reimbursement will be mandatory beginning July 1, 2016 for all employees. Paper paychecks will no longer be available after that time. However, employees will still receive a paper voucher. Debit cards will be utilized in the event that

an employee does not having a bank account. Dr. Holland indicated that staff will be reviewing the possibility of no paper statements (vouchers) for the direct deposit.

Dr. Lillian Holland has served as Interim Division Superintendent since July 1, 2015 and also provided Superintendent's remarks:

- Plans concerning inclement weather were provided.
- The STEM Academy is in its second year of operation. Dr. Holland indicated that things were going well with very strong teachers working with teachers at elementary, middle and high schools to reinforce objectives being taught. Pittsylvania County Schools may consider applying with the Danville Regional Foundation for more funding to help expand the STEM Academy.
- A list of School Board Members for 2016 was provided. Changes in the board were noted. George Henderson will replace Morris Stowe and Wayne Robertson will be replaced by Sam Burton. These changes will take effect in January, 2016.
- Dr. Holland expressed her sincere appreciation to the local Fraternal Order of Eagles Chapter 4420 for their continued support and generosity to Pittsylvania County Schools' students and families. This organization helps with many scholarships for Graduate of Merit recipients. In addition, the organization provided Thanksgiving meals for 25 student's families.
- Dr. Holland hoped employees enjoyed an additional day off on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. She encouraged committee members to thank the Board members for the added holiday.
- The United Way campaign ended in November. Pittsylvania County Schools employees pledged \$15,112.00. This amount is higher than contributions in previous years. The United Way supports many important organizations and civic groups in Pittsylvania County and the City of Danville.

Dr. Holland thanked all committee members for their support and attendance. She wished everyone a happy and safe Christmas. Dr. Jones also expressed his wishes for a Merry Christmas and encouraged all to rest and enjoy their time with family. The next meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. at the School Board Office Boardroom. Minutes from the meeting will be shared with committee members. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.