



**Support Staff Advisory Committee**  
**January 27, 2015**  
**Minutes**

A meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, at 10:30 a.m. at the School Board Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were 19 members present.

Also present were Mr. James McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Ms. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Ms. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed and committee members were given an opportunity to provide topics that they would like discussed.

**Reports from Assistant Superintendents**

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

Technology update – The safety grant received by Pittsylvania County Schools has been used to install cameras at all schools. Currently a total of 49 cameras have been installed including two at each elementary school, and four to five at each high school. The IT staff is working to have them all fully operational by early spring.

Safety update – A safety audit meeting was held recently and audits were reviewed from all schools. Some areas of improvement were noted, but overall, schools received good reviews. One suggestion that was made was to include room numbers on the red and green cards in each classroom. This would enable first responders to know immediately which rooms might need immediate assistance during an emergency. Dr. Early also indicated that additional grant funding would be requested to add further safety improvements at schools. These would include fencing around the elementary school playgrounds, the installation of more cameras for schools and buses, and disaster training for schools. A report will be provided to the School Board at the next board meeting.

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

Flu clinics – A summary of fall clinics was provided to committee members. Ms. Cassada indicated that while the vaccine offered this year may not have provided as much protection from the particular flu strain that has been prevalent, it still offers some protection. Ms. Cassada also stated that hand washing for a minimum of 20 seconds and sneezing into ones elbow is encouraged to help reduce the spread of germs. It is recommended that children and adults with a fever should stay home. Individuals

should be free of fever for 24 hours without medication before returning to school/work.

T-dap immunization clinics have been scheduled for March. Pittsylvania County Schools are working cooperatively with the Health Department to provide these clinics.

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

School calendar - Committee members were given a 2015-2016 school calendar. Mrs. Vaughan stated that Pittsylvania County Schools received a two year waiver for a pre-Labor Day opening. The school calendar for 2015-2016 has been approved by the School Board and is posted on the PCS website. This calendar is similar to the current calendar in that the first semester will end prior to winter break and the second semester will end prior to the Memorial Day holiday. She indicated that over 300 comments were received and thanked all who provided input.

Graduate of Merit - Applications were submitted to all high schools guidance offices in December. Pittsylvania County Schools has 131 students who qualified as Graduate of Merit candidates for the 2014-2015 school year. Of those, 18% are African American and 1 % are Hispanic. She indicated that even though a more rigorous criteria was established several years ago, student participation has not diminished. The Graduate of Merit Recognition Ceremony and Dinner has been set for Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at Averett University, North Campus.

In addition, DCC will offer scholarships to any Graduate of Merit recipient that will be attending DCC. These scholarships will range from \$500-\$3000 each depending on student academic records and need.

Mrs. Vaughan told committee members that Essel Propac will offer four \$5000 scholarships to students in Danville City and Pittsylvania County. There is an application process for these awards and the recipients will be top four who qualify.

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

Recommendations from the Salary Taskforce are:

1. Maintain positions.
2. Provide a 3% raise for all employees or bonus.
3. Maintain current benefits with no increase in employee share.
4. Adjust the steps of all salary schedules as funding becomes available.
5. Address the Teacher Aide salary schedule.

Budget update – On December 17, 2014 the governor’s budget was released. House and Senate versions are forthcoming soon. The Governor has indicated that K-12 education should be protected. A meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, January 29, 2015, for public input relative to the Pittsylvania County Schools budget. The School Board will

review the draft of the 2015-2016 budget at its March 10, 2015, regular meeting. On March 26, 2015 there will be a public hearing on the final budget proposal.

Dr. Holland indicated that State funding will likely be less next year. Based on enrollment projections for next year, Dr. Holland indicated that Pittsylvania County Schools are expecting approximately \$367,000 less revenue from the state. This could force the division to look at other revenues and cuts in order to balance the budget.

The Governor has proposed an initiative to put State money in the Virginia Retirement System to help school divisions reduce the rate being paid which will provide a savings of approximately \$137,000. This could leave a deficit of approximately \$230,000 for the 2015-2016 budget. Staff will review revenue sources and the current budget to determine how to make adjustments for the anticipated reduction in state funding.

Pittsylvania County Schools will ask the Board of Supervisors to provide more than the minimum requirements of funding to schools next year. Supervisors have generously contributed more to the division in the recent past and the School Board is hopeful that the trend will continue.

Employment update - Dr. Holland shared personnel vacancies that are anticipated for next year. Based on intent forms that have been received, 4 administrators, 12 teachers, 5 classified personnel and 1 maintenance worker will retire. Individuals that have indicated that they will resign at the end of this year will impact 5 ½ teaching positions and 1 classified position. She added that there are 7 teachers employed on a 1-year-only contract in the division.

Division Superintendent, James McDaniel told the group that a budget report will be included via email in the next edition of the Superintendents Minute. A chart will be provided which will include expenditures, revenues, and initiative priorities.

He added that early information from the Board of Supervisors indicate that they are discussing a possible pay increase for their employees. The Board of Supervisors helps to fund Pittsylvania County Schools. He is hopeful that they will provide additional funding that will enable Pittsylvania County Schools to give an increase to their employees as well.

### **Report from the Division Superintendent**

Mr. James McDaniel, Division Superintendent, asked committee members for input relative to the automated calls that are made in the event of inclement weather. Committee members indicated that the information that is provided during the automated calls is thorough and easy to understand.

However, one committee member expressed a concern relative to employees being notified of school closings for inclement weather in a timelier manner. Mr. McDaniel agreed that while it may not always be possible to contact everyone before they depart for work, every effort is made to get information out as early as possible. He told the

committee that school personnel are out checking roads early when weather might be a question of safety. In addition, communication is made with local 911 personnel for information regarding weather. Once a telephone message is launched, it takes approximately 20-25 minutes for everyone to receive the call. In the event of a 2 hour delay, principals and other 12 month employees are scheduled to report on time. However, he also stated that employees are encouraged to use their best judgment and to come in when conditions are deemed safe.

Another committee member reported that she received the most recent school closing call, but no message. Mr. McDaniel said that there had been a few problems reported with house and cell phones not receiving the message. Ashley Clowers, Analyst for the IT Department and a member of the Support Staff Committee, shared the following helpful information. She said that if there were any problems with the automated calls, individuals must be sure to report the issue along with complete details to the IT Department within 48 hours. After that time, there is little that can be done to correct the issue. Approximately 10,000 numbers are contacted with each automated call that is made. This number increases to almost 20,000 when calls are sent as an emergency. Calls are sent in three stages. Unanswered calls receive a “re-try.”

Mr. McDaniel shared a STEM Academy update with the committee. He pointed out that the STEM Academy is a grant funded venture. Teachers, classified staff, buses, and equipment at the Academy are possible through funding from the Danville Regional Foundation. Applications will be submitted to the Foundation for continued funding next year. It is stipulated by the Foundation that these funds may only be used for the STEM Academy. Mr. McDaniel stated that the Division would have been unable to launch the STEM Academy without the help and hard work from many individuals and thanked all those who have contributed toward the project.

Mr. McDaniel stated that the Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET) is a program for students at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR). Students are transported to the IALR on county buses. However, there are no extra costs associated because they are transported with the students that attend the Governor’s School. AET students complete two engineering classes provided by Virginia State University. They also take upper level English and math classes that are provided by Pittsylvania County Schools. Grant funds are also used to fund the AET and must be spent at the AET.

General Assembly update - Mr. McDaniel reported on three Legislative Bills that are being discussed that may impact Pittsylvania County Schools. The first deals with seclusion and restraint of a student for their own welfare. For example, if a student suddenly runs from the school building toward the street, he/she may have to be caught and carried back to the school for their own safety. Some say that these measures are inappropriate and training may be necessary.

Another Bill deals with student athletes and corporal punishment. Running laps, extra push ups, etc. has been viewed as a form of corporal punishment by some individuals.

This Bill will allow for certain things such as extra conditioning. The General Assembly is considering a code that allows coaches to apply corporal punishment in these ways.

A Bill that would require 20 minutes a day for physical activity is being considered. This Bill may be incorporated with a similar recess Bill that was passed for elementary schools several years ago.

Finally, there is a Bill being considered that will give school divisions permission to allow an individual school to receive a pre-Labor Day waiver. The Bill states that if a school is not fully accredited, a principal may request from the School Board permission for that school to have its own calendar. This Bill would be difficult to apply for some of our schools that share transportation. For this and other reasons, this Bill is not supported by Pittsylvania County Schools.

Mr. McDaniel thanked all members for their attendance and input. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.