

MINUTES OF SUPPORT STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS November 22, 2016

A meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, November 22, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. at the School Board Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

There were seventeen (17) representatives present. Also present were Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, Mrs. L. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeffrey L. 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. The Representatives were asked if the meeting date and time was convenient for them. The consensus was that the meeting and date and time were satisfactory.

The following items of concern were discussed:

- Prevention and wellness need to be added to the health insurance program. Questions were also raised about receiving discounts for gym membership, receiving nutrition tips and conducting on-site health screenings.
Information relative to wellness and prevention is available on the Anthem website. Any discounts for gym membership or nutrition tips may be options for the school division to offer. These items will be discussed next year for consideration in health insurance program. On-site health screenings have been conducted in the past. Staff will check on the possibility of additional screening opportunities under the current health plan.
- It is difficult to find substitutes for the cafeteria, bus drivers, custodians and teachers. The request for substitute applications is posted on the TalentEd site for interested individuals to complete at certain times of the year. Applicants are continually being pursued for these areas. Substitute training sessions for these areas are scheduled during the school year as well. Substitute bus drivers are required to pass Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) tests, have a Commercial Driver's License for bus drivers and complete training for the school division.
- A concern was expressed about the use of the Ident-A-Kid program for timekeeping for classified employees. There have been issues with the program at Stony Mill Elementary School. The computer freezes up and will not allow the employee's use. It was also noted that cafeteria workers do not have the availability to use this program.
Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, will work with the Information Technology Department to determine the problem. If the school

system continues to use this process for timekeeping, equipment will be installed in the cafeteria area for staff use.

- A question was raised about allowing bus drivers access to the school buildings. At this time, the bus drivers are not provided access through the identification badge. The coded identification badges are provided to individuals that come into the buildings on a daily basis. Bus drivers are not required to enter the buildings each day.
- A question was raised about rate amounts for activity trips. It was noted that rate paid from Dan River Middle School and Dan River High School is less than other schools. It was requested that the school division implement a county-wide rate. Staff will review the current practices and determine if changes are necessary.

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 Health Department was unable to offer the afternoon clinics for community members. The Tdap clinics will be held in the Spring.
2. A new program was implemented at the Regional Alternative School. This program, Ready for Success, is a behavior improvement program for elementary students funded through a grant from Smart Beginnings. There is also a parent component for this program to help the family be prepared to assist the student with the behavior issues.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Twelve (12) new buses with automatic transmission were purchased. This allowed for the retirement of twelve (12) older buses (with manual transmission) which will be used as back-up transportation as needed.

7. The School Nurse Coordinators are continuing to provide First Aid and CPR training for the first responders in the schools and facilities. Also, medication and glucagon training has been provided to appropriate staff. A request was made to provide this training to bus drivers. Mrs. Cassada will determine a schedule for training the bus drivers as appropriate.
8. Staff is working on a cost report for Medicaid recovery. This report will be provided to the School Board.
9. The School-Home Coordinators are helping with Thanksgiving deliveries to identified families. They will also make deliveries for Christmas.

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

1. Information was provided relative to the progress of the Compensation Study for the school division. The process has included orientation sessions, 29 focus group meetings, and an on-line assessment survey. The employee response rate was 44% for the survey. The administrators and supervisors reviewed the survey. Evergreen Solutions completed a market study and are now compiling information to determine how salaries for Pittsylvania County Schools compare in the market. A report on the Compensation Study will be presented to the School Board at its December 13, 2016, meeting.
2. The Salary Taskforce has met and discussed the following tentative recommendations for the 2017-2018 school budget:
 - a. Maintain positions
 - b. Provide a minimum 3% raise for all employees
 - c. Maintain current benefits with no increase in employee share
 - d. Review teacher salary scales
 - e. Review Special Education Assistant pay rates and benefits
 - f. Review teacher aide salary scales
 - g. Provide a copy of the Compensation Study to the Board of Supervisors
 - h. Reclassify attendance clerks to administrative assistantsThe Salary Taskforce will review the recommendations at its next meeting on December 7, 2016, to determine its request to be presented to the School Board.
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. Governor McAuliffe projected lower revenues which 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.

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. The Calendar Committee will meet again on December 1, 2016, to review any comments and recommendations relative to the calendar proposal.
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 for 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).

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

1. The school safety audits have been completed, and reports have been provided to the principals. A review of all of the audits will be conducted by the Safety Audit Team in January and an update will be presented to the School Board. Also, the Board will review the Crisis Management Plan. Unannounced lockdown drills will be conducted during the second semester. The students and staff do a fantastic job with the drills. Staff and students recently participated in the Earthquake Drill. A Tornado Drill will be conducted in the Spring.
2. Employees have the option of a two-factor authentication for their Google Mail account. This process would safeguard e-mail and login information. Any questions relative to this process should be addressed to Dr. Early.
3. The Information Technology (IT) Department is in the process of delivering Chromebase computers and tables to the elementary schools for the K-3 initiative. This equipment is assigned to specific classrooms and should not be moved.
4. 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 e-rate funding is available.
5. Full-time employees of Pittsylvania County Schools have the opportunity to purchase one copy of Office 2016 at a reduced rate. Employees should email

microsoft@pcs.k12.va.us for instructions. It was recommended to purchase the DVD in addition to the minimal cost of the download for Office 2016.

6. The school division is looking at an expansion of the CISCO telephone system. This expansion would replace landlines with digital telephone systems. More information will be forthcoming relative to any changes.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Information relative to school closings/delays was provided. Messages will be provided on television and radio station as in the past. 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. Concerns relative to the timing of the calls were expressed by bus drivers and cafeteria workers. There are times when the bus driver or cafeteria worker may have already begun their route or arrived at school to begin breakfast preparations. It was noted that the messages are posted on the website immediately and calls are made as quickly as possible.
2. The School Board met with three (3) of the four (4) area legislators on October 24, 2016. Delegates Danny Marshall and Les Adams, and Senator Frank Ruff attended the meeting. Discussion included the following items:
 - a. Virtual School – Pittsylvania County Schools (PCS) has more than ten (10) students attending schools virtually in other counties. This is a concern because these students are not counted in the Average Daily Membership (ADM) for PCS.
 - b. Pre-Labor Day opening – Request was made to allow the local school division to determine opening. At this time, a waiver may be requested for the eligibility terms are met (must miss an average of 8 days in 5 of the last 10 years)
 - c. Request for reduction in the number of unfunded mandates (such as Epi-Pens, First Aid/CPR & AED and Personal Finance requirements)
 - d. Request to find the money to fund the 2% salary increase for this year and next year.
 - e. Broadband is needed in the County and assistance was requested to provide funding for this.
 - f. Request to restore the percentage of State operational funds for K-12 education back to the 2010 level (from 28% to 35%)
 - g. Request the General Assembly to review and approve a cost of competing allowance for area counties.
3. The School Board has requested staff to review ERIP (Early Retirement Incentive Program) and the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA requires a 26-week break in service before an employee who has resigned or retired may

return in work in a non-benefited position (such as substitute or tutor). Staff is working with Congressman Robert Hurt's Office to seek a waiver of this ACA requirement. It was noted that the School Board does not wish to eliminate the ERIP program but is required to comply with the ACA regulations.

4. A request was made to implement an option for bus drivers to participate in a 401K program.

A comparison has been made of the benefits offered by surrounding localities. At this time, bus drivers are eligible to participate in a 403(b) program with the school division and are offered the employer share for health and dental insurance plans.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.