



# PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

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

Lillian D. Holland, Ph.D.  
Interim Division Superintendent

## Support Staff Advisory Committee September 29, 2015 Minutes

A meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, September 29, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the School Board Office, Chatham, Virginia. There were 20 members present.

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

Dr. Holland called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed. 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:

- A concern was expressed regarding parents/guardians that consistently do not meet an elementary bus in the afternoon. Dr. Holland indicated that the Division's expectation is for parents (or an adult) to meet the bus. If there are habitual instances of this not happening, names of individuals should be provided to principals so that this may be addressed with the parent or guardian. She also stated that there is a waiver that parents may sign to that will allow the student to be dropped off even if an adult is not present.
- A question was asked relative to why SPED Assistants are not offered benefits. Dr. Holland stated that these positions are posted as full-time, temporary positions with no benefits. The individuals are hired for one year only or while there is a need by a student(s). SPED Assistants are aware of these terms when they agree to accept the position.
- A concern was expressed relative to bus drivers being ineligible for retirement. Dr. Holland said that bus drivers are not eligible to be a part of the Virginia Retirement System in Pittsylvania County Schools. This was a decision that was made many years ago.
- A concern regarding buses and cars entering and exiting the parking areas during the morning and evening at Chatham High School was expressed. Dr. Holland indicated that she will follow up on that issue with the administration at Chatham High School.

- One committee member requested more timely information regarding early school dismissal or school closure for employees that arrive to work by 6:00 a.m. as well as for bus drivers. Dr. Holland stated that every effort is made to get the word out as early and as quickly as possible once a decision regarding school closure has been made.
- A committee member asked why seniority doesn't count when it comes to pay scales (Cafeteria). Dr. Holland informed the committee that pay scales are in place for all positions. Some pay scales (bus drivers) may have a broader range of years per step causing individuals with varying years of experience to earn the same rate of pay. She went on to share that for five years employees received a step but took their annual salary with them which resulted in additional steps without pay difference. For the past two years steps have been frozen, but across the board raises have been given to employees. In order for the division to "catch up" regarding annual salaries, it will take millions of additional dollars in a year to straighten or re-align the salary schedules. We are hopeful that we will be able to work on this in the next five years.
- One committee member suggested that employees would like to be paid twice a month rather than once a month. Dr. Holland stated that the Pittsylvania County Schools pay system is set up for once a month. The payroll department currently runs a substitute payroll in the middle of the month and the regular payroll at the end of the month. With only two employees in the payroll department, it would not be possible to add an additional pay run.

### **Reports from Assistant Superintendents**

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

- Based on preliminary accreditation reports, 16 out of 18 schools in Pittsylvania County should be fully accredited. In addition, 11 out of 18 schools should meet Federal Annual Measurable Objectives (FAMO) in all 9 sub-groups.
- A graduation schedule was provided to committee members. Practices and commencement ceremonies will be held at Averett North Campus for all schools.
- Ms. Petty shared information relative to the 2016-2017 school calendar. The Division should meet the requirements to receive a waiver for a pre-Labor Day school opening next year. Ms. Petty will meet with the Calendar Committee sometime in November or December to begin preparations for next year's school calendar. Suggestions are welcome for additions or improvements to the calendar.
- Schools are participating in professional development with the Virginia Tiered System of Support (VTSS)/Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This system is a framework and philosophy that provides resources and support to help every student to be successful in academics and behavior. It begins with systemic change at the division, school and classroom level that utilizes evidence-

based, system-wide practices to provide a quick response to academic and behavioral needs.

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

- Schools are required to complete an annual safety audit. Teams of individuals visit each school to review safety initiatives. Discussions follow and updates to the Crisis Management Plan are made as needed. Dr. Early informed the committee that schools will participate in an earthquake drill on 10/15 at 10:15.
- Dr. Early indicated that schools are doing a great job with lockdown drills, which are a part of the safety audits. He stated that the largest school can be cleared in five minutes once a lockdown is announced. He also stated that protocol regarding a suspicious person in the area will soon be included in the Division's safety manual.
- Dr. Early shared an Information Technology update:
  - The Division has moved to a new messaging system which enables schools to push out attendance calls earlier.
  - The IT Department has processed more than 800 work orders at this time. He reminded committee members to include an email address when placing a work order.
  - Additionally, computer labs have been updated, and more Smart Boards and laptop carts have been installed in schools.
  - The Division is also in the process of transferring our web-site from a local server to a web-based hosting service. A notice will be sent out prior to the completion of the transition.
- Security grants obtained from the state have paid most of the expenses for the key swipe entries that are in place at schools. This year money from those state grants will be used to install additional security cameras at high schools and middle schools.
- Dr. Early shared remote video surveillances from Gretna Elementary School and Tunstall High School with the committee. This provided more of an insight on efforts regarding school safety and security. The systems provides enlargement, video clip, snapshots, and rewind features. Cameras are operational 24 hours, 7 days a week, and are set to record when any motion is detected. In addition, School Resource Officers have the ability to remotely view into schools that do not have assigned Resource Officers.
- In addition, the Maintenance Department has updated lots of bathrooms in division and with the recent weather, been very busy patching roofs.
- It's All About The Kids (IAATK) is a local organization that provides for the safety of schools and students. IAATK hopes to be able to provide funding for the new Ident-A-Kid system. The new version of the system will include a laser

scanner that will scan an individual's driver's license and connect to the state sex offender data base. The funds provided from IAATK will be used to supply the scanner, software and fees. The school division will supply the computers and internet connections for the systems.

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

- A Flu Clinic schedule was provided. The Division has partnered with the local health department to provide flu shot clinics at all schools. T-dap clinics will also be provided in the spring.
- Medication and glucagon training as well as CPR and AED training has been provided to identified staff at each school.
- Ms. Cassada provided a staffing update. The Support Services Department has welcomed a new psychologist, physical therapist, and speech therapist. In addition, achievement testing is now being provided by Denise Dawson who is based at the ECC building.
- Ms. Cassada expressed her appreciation to Ms. Kim Clifton and the IT Department for their part in updating the Support Services homepage. She also indicated that Support Services are partnering with the Instruction Department to work with VTSS as a model for the state.
- A grant from VDOE has provided for the development of brochures for parents and was also used to purchase a remedial reading program.
- Ms. Cassada also shared a transportation update. The health department is now providing physicals for bus drivers. She also indicated that the Division has purchased eight new buses and training buses so that drivers may receive air brake training.

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

- A proposed budget calendar was provided to committee members. Ms. Vaughan indicated that this schedule will be the same as in previous years. She indicated that there are protocols that are followed regarding budget issues. Input from staff is welcome and appreciated as focus is always on the people as we work through the budget process.
- Ms. Vaughan shared a staffing update and indicated that the Human Resources Department is a very busy department. This year there were 59 resignations, 37 retirements, 40 employee transfers, and over 165 positions that were filled. This number included SPED Assistant recommendations for employment that are required annually.
- Ms. Vaughan shared information relative to substitute orientations. This training was implemented several years ago by Dr. Holland. It has proven to be a very

useful program that helps to train individuals. Mr. Clarke Scott, former Pittsylvania County Schools Director, facilitates the orientations. The workshops cover a variety of information including protocols in schools, how to work with special needs children, how to communicate with principals, and procedures that are established at the various schools.

- Ms. Vaughan also provided information about a new Employee Handbook, which is available online. She stated that Dr. Holland facilitated the organization and completion of the employee handbook. Ms. Vaughan said that this is an excellent tool with information that answers most any question one may have. Sections are included regarding policies, school calendar, licensure information, substitute and part time staff information, insurance, medical information, sick leave bank, jury duty, plans regarding school closings, and much more.

Dr. Holland expressed her appreciation to Ms. Vaughan for filling the role of Assistant Superintendent for Administration during her absence. Dr. Holland is serving as the Interim Division Superintendent following Mr. James McDaniel's July 1 retirement. Dr. Mark Jones has been appointed Division Superintendent and will join Pittsylvania County Schools on December 1, 2015.

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

Dr. Lillian Holland announced that Pittsylvania County Schools is a recipient of an AmeriCorps Grant through the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR). The AmeriCorps program will provide one full-time member based at the STEM Academy. In addition, four part-time members will be placed at the middle schools to assist with STEM instruction. Positions for these one year appointments are currently being advertised. These positions are part-time and individuals with strong skills related to math are encouraged to apply. Individuals that are hired for these positions will be considered employees of the Institute. Pittsylvania County Schools are just recipients of the grant.

Dr. Holland also shared information relative to the Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET). The AET is now in its second year of providing a unique opportunity for high school students who are interested in engineering careers. Pittsylvania County Schools has partnered with the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), Danville Community College, New College Institute in Martinsville, Virginia State University (VSU) and Danville Public Schools in this endeavor. Students who are enrolled in AET attend some of their daily classes at the IALR. The engineering instructor is from VSU. The AET is a grant-funded program.

Dr. Holland indicated that schools had enjoyed a relatively smooth opening to the school year. She expressed her thanks to everyone for their part in ensuring that this was made possible. Tragically, the Division has experienced employee and student deaths already this year. She encouraged schools to continue to remain strong and steadfast in their commitment to providing a quality education for our students.

The next meeting of the Support Staff Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the School Board Office Boardroom. Minutes from the meeting will be shared electronically with committee members unless they wish to receive a paper copy. Individuals wanting a paper copy of the minutes should let Ms. Shari Dudley know. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.