

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
November 30, 2009**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, November 30, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Fifteen (15) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, and Mrs. Cathy Scolpini, Lead ITRT.

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A concern was expressed about the anticipated low attendance on December 21, 2009, which is a make-up day. Also, a question was asked about using bank time earlier in the calendar.

The Calendar Committee worked very hard to develop a school calendar using input from many individuals. There are very few times that schools are closed prior to January. December 21, 2009, will be a 1:00 p.m. dismissal for students. Teachers and teacher aides will be dismissed at 1:30 p.m., and all operations will close at 3:00 p.m. There is always a possibility that schools may close. Closing on November 13, 2009, was unavoidable because of the local state of emergency due to flooding. The School Board approved this calendar and is emphatic that, once approved, the calendar will be followed.

It was noted that attendance on November 25, 2009, (the Wednesday before Thanksgiving) was a little lower. However, there were 11 of the 19 schools (attendance at the Career-Tech is counted at the home school) that had 90% attendance or higher.

A question was raised about attendance being a factor in calculating the Adequate Yearly Progress. Attendance rates could have an impact if selected by the principal for other academic indicators. There are other choices, such as Science, that may be selected. The schools with the highest attendance percentage are recognized each month at the principals' meeting.

2. A question was raised about the date that the parent portal from PowerSchool would be available to parents. There was also a question relative to the possibility of providing lunch fee information on the portal.

There is a program in PowerSchool that will handle fees; however, that capacity will not be implemented at this time because it does not interface with the current cafeteria system. The parent portal will be available to parents beginning with the second semester of the 2009-2010 school year.

3. A concern was expressed about the need for the curriculum pacing guides to be updated. Currently the pacing guides are based on the Scott Foresman series.

This issue has been brought to the attention of the instructional staff. A review of the pacing guides will be conducted in the spring of 2010.

4. A question was raised about the possibility of allowing retiring teachers to provide sick leave days to younger teachers that may need the days.

This issue has been discussed. At the present time, the Virginia School Board Association does not have a policy that allows a teacher to give sick leave days to another individual. The School Board attorney has advised against pursuing this issue. The staff will continue to study and review for any appropriate changes.

Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, addressed the following item:

1. The Salary Taskforce met on October 14, 2009. The Salary Taskforce recommendations included the following:
 - a) Salary increases for employees
 - b) Implementation of a supplement for teachers at the Regional Alternative School
 - c) Retirement benefits for bus drivers
 - d) An increase in the supplement for Master's degree
 - e) Continuation of insurance benefits
 - f) Increase in accrued sick leave pay at retirement
 - g) Placement of elementary assistant principals on the same pay scale as middle school assistant principals
 - h) Reclassification of attendance clerks / place on separate salary schedule
 - i) Maintain jobs and benefits for employees
 - j) Include amount of benefits offered when advertising positions

The Salary Taskforce will meet again on December 3, 2009, to review and finalize recommendations to be presented to the School Board for possible inclusion in the school budget for 2010-2011. Any suggestions should be provided to members of the Salary Taskforce. (PLEASE NOTE: The following budget recommendations were finalized at the December 3, 2009, meeting of the Salary Taskforce:

- a) Maintain jobs

- b) Maintain benefits
- c) Provide a two-step salary increase for each employee eligible for such increase for the 2010-2011 school year)

Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, and Mrs. Cathy Scolpini, Lead ITRT, addressed the following items:

1. Information was provided on the Parent Portal from PowerSchool. Every parent will receive a login and a password. The school will be provided a list of these items to be distributed to the parents. The parent will have to sign a form indicating they want to use this, and they will take custody of this login and password. The information must be provided directly to the parent possibly at a PTO meeting. Parents will have the capability of reviewing grades and attendance, grades history, attendance history, school bulletin, and class registration. Parents may also choose to receive e-mail notifications. The parent may also help the student to put in requests for course registration for the upcoming school year. Parents will only be able to review their child's information. Teachers may post upcoming assignments on the site. This will give parents the opportunity to know when projects are due or tests will be given.
2. Parents and guardians of students in Pittsylvania County Schools will be able to view student progress through PowerSchool, the Division's student information system. The "Parent Portal" of PowerSchool may be accessed from any computer with Internet access. This program provides parents with access to their child's grades, attendance, and complete/incomplete assignments. Parents will access the "Parent Portal" with a unique login ID and password. Information on accessing the "Parent Portal" will be distributed in January.

A concern was raised about the need for the secondary guidance counselors to meet with the eighth grade students relative to registration of courses for the high schools. Communication also is needed for the eighth grade teachers and principals to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed for the student to be successful at the high school.

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

1. The organizational meeting for the 2010-2011 Calendar Committee has been postponed until January. In order to request a waiver of the pre-Labor Day opening from the Virginia Department of Education, the schools must be closed for inclement weather a total of seven (7) days during the 2009-2010 school year. If this does not occur, the beginning date for schools for the 2010-2011 school year would be September 7, 2010, and graduation would occur around June 19, 2010. Representatives were asked to provide suggestions relative to the school calendar. The following suggestions were presented:
 - a. Do not use the Winter Break for make-up days

- b. Consider the economic impact of opening school for one day in week (such as December 21, 2009) and then closing for the Winter Break – Mr. Johnson explained that there was not a significant difference in the costs unless there would be a drastic change in the temperature for the day. Twelve-month employees worked a four-day week during the summer of 2009, which saved the school system approximately \$30,000.00.
- c. The biggest challenge for the schools is after the Standards of Learning tests are completed for the school year.
- d. The Superintendent would like to have a consistent pre-Labor Day opening for school with the first semester ending at Winter Break and hold graduation around the end of May. This would eliminate the need for review prior to exams in January.
- e. A question was raised about using bank time rather than having a make-up day on December 21, 2009. It was noted that the priority of the school system is to provide instruction for the students. Using bank time is not the same as having students in the classroom for a full day.
- f. Include 182 student days in the calendar with the extra two (2) being used for make-up days if needed

Additional suggestions should be e-mailed to Dr. Lillian Holland at lillian.holland@pcs.k12.va.us.

- 2. The Statistical Profile brochure for Pittsylvania County Schools was distributed. This brochure includes the following information: accreditation ratings, a listing of schools achieving No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress (15 out of 18 schools made AYP), Standards of Learning, Scholastic Aptitude test results, Stanford 9/10 results, on-time graduation rate, completion rate for ninth grade students entering high school, textbook adoption schedule, September 30 membership and the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches.
- 3. Information relative to the on-time graduation rate for Pittsylvania County Schools was discussed. The percentage rate for Pittsylvania County Schools was 83.6% which was higher than the State average.
- 4. The SAT scores are not as high as desired; however, there are SAT courses offered in the schools. The Governor's School teachers will also provide instruction in taking the SAT tests to students in Pittsylvania County Schools. The number of students taking the SAT may vary from year to year. Students also repeat the SAT to attempt a higher score.

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

- 1. The Special Education Performance Reports for Pittsylvania County Schools and the State of Virginia were provided. These data are based on the 2007-2008 school year. The State tracks students with disabilities using fourteen

(14) indicators including: graduation, dropouts, participation and performance on Statewide assessments, suspension/expulsion, school age least restrictive environment (LRE), pre-school least restrictive environment (LRE), preschool outcomes, parent involvement, districts with disproportionate representation in special education, districts with disproportionate representation in specific disability categories, timeline for eligibility, Part C to Part B transition, secondary IEP goals and transition services, and post-secondary outcomes. The school system was at or above the State average in all indicated categories. A copy of this report was also provided to all special education teachers.

2. The H1N1 vaccine clinics have been completed at the elementary schools. The clinics at the middle schools should be completed during the week of November 30-December 4, 2009. The plans include completing clinics for the high schools and staff prior to the beginning of the Winter Break. All clinics are dependent upon the availability of the vaccine.

There was a concern expressed that the pre-kindergarten – grade 2 students had to leave school immediately following the receipt of the vaccine. The administration did not provide any directive that indicated the student would have to leave school after receiving the vaccine. The directive indicated that the parent of any pre-kindergarten – grade 2 student was required to be present when the vaccine was given. Dr. Early will follow-up with Stony Mill Elementary School and Twin Springs Elementary School relative to students having to leave school after the vaccine.

Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business, addressed the following item:

1. Individuals will have an opportunity to provide input for the 2010-2011 school budget at the December 8, 2009, School Board meeting. At this time, there is very little information to provide relative to the amount of funding that will be available for the school system. Conferences have been held relative to the budget. Approximately \$1.5 billion was cut from the State budget for 2009-2010. Currently, the State is approximately \$2 million short this year and has used part of the stimulus funding from next year. Tax receipts and revenues are down. The composite index, which determines the wealth of the County, went up. This will mean that the State will provide less funding and the local governing body will have to provide more money. The economic outlook of the State does not look good at this time. The Governor will release his budget around December 18, 2009.

The Superintendent addressed the following item:

1. An update on the use of drug dogs was provided. Drug dogs are continuing to be used particularly at the middle and high schools. The elementary schools have used the drug dogs for instructional purposes. A legal opinion was received from counsel on the use of passive drug dogs

in the schools. These dogs can be used to sniff lockers, cars and empty classrooms (no students). Administrators must have reasonable suspicion in order to use a passive drug dog to search a student. This information has been shared with the principals at the schools.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. No comments were provided.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.