

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
January 28, 2013**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, January 28, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Eighteen (18) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The following Council topics were addressed:

1. A question was raised about the possibility of school uniforms.
There is no division-wide plan for school uniforms; however, individual schools have the provision to submit an initiative that would be based upon best practices, research and goals to accomplish with a uniform dress. This plan would have to be submitted to the School Board for approval prior to implementation.
2. A question was raised relative to the use of drug dogs in the schools.
The schedule for the drug dogs is controlled by the Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office generally comes to the school unannounced; however, the school principal may request the dogs. If a teacher or staff member is aware of someone selling or possessing drugs at school, contact should be made immediately with the school administration.
3. A concern was expressed relative to students in possession of tobacco or alcohol not being charged.
Law enforcement is responsible to file any charges. The school system is responsible for the discipline of students. Criminal incidents are reported to the Sheriff's Office each month. School Board Policy JFC-PC, Student Conduct, allows for a 10-day suspension for alcohol. If there is some type of disruptive behavior associated with the incident, the school administration may file a petition; however, the courts use diversion plans rather than having the student appear before the judge.
4. A question was raised relative to the requirement for bus drivers to receive a routine medical checkup.

All bus drivers are required to have an annual physical completed and results provided prior to driving the bus. Random drug tests are also conducted on bus drivers.

5. Concerns were expressed about County-wide professional development days. A suggestion was made to provide some type of instruction on self-defense and school security. It was suggested that funds spent for professional development could be used for conferences for the teachers.

The Title I program stipulates that a certain amount of the funding received must be used toward professional development for teachers. For the 2012-2013 school year, the funding is being used to provide professional development to incorporate the new teacher evaluation process. February 19, 2013, is designated as a school professional development day. There are only two (2) division-wide professional development days planned in the school calendar which are used for instructional purposes (one at the beginning of school and one in November). The staff will review opportunities to provide more beneficial types of activities and possibly include some type of instruction on safety or self-defense for next year.

Another safety concern was expressed relative to locking classrooms that have glass in the door. An intruder can simply knock out the glass. It was noted that the schools are very safe.

6. A question was raised about the possibility of the \$200.00 bonus being provided to employees.

The possibility of a bonus (\$220.00 for full-time employees and \$110.00 for part-time employees) is contingent upon having the funds available in March, 2013. All available funding will be assessed in March to determine feasibility.

7. A question was raised about an alternate plan for teachers for the February 15, 2013, make-up student day. Also, there were other suggestions: a) use February 19, 2013, as a work at home for teachers; and b) use banked days as the first make-up days for the school year.

February 15, 2013, was designated as a make-up day. If this day was not to be used as a make-up day, the teachers would have been allowed to work at home. However, February 15 is a student day with a 1:00 p.m. dismissal time. A school division must have a minimum number of make-up days in the calendar before banked days are considered.

8. A question was raised about the time that staff is allowed to leave on days when schools have early dismissal because of inclement weather. It was indicated that all schools should be consistent.

The protocol for inclement weather indicates that teachers and teacher aides are allowed to leave after all students have cleared the building

which is set at 30 minutes. However, 12-month employees are only allowed to leave at the direction of the Superintendent's Office.

9. A request was made to allow teachers and other employees of the school system to receive free lunch and breakfast. In addition, the request was to allow the same for students whose parent works for Pittsylvania County Schools.

The School Nutrition Program is an independent business and operates separately from the school division budget. The operation is dependent upon the sale and reimbursement for free and reduced lunches. Employees do not receive any discount because the cafeteria does not receive any type of reimbursement for the sale of adult lunches. The School Nutrition staff has worked very hard to receive an extra six cents (6¢) reimbursement on student lunches served.
10. A question was raised about when the advisory council meetings may be held through video conferencing,

The cameras needed in order to have the video conferencing have been on backorder. As soon as the equipment is received, the Information Technology staff will complete the installation at the high schools and conduct all necessary tests in order to ensure feasibility.
11. A question was raised about the Virginia Pre-School Initiative (VPI) funding.

This funding is received from the State to employ individuals in the Virginia Pre-School program. However, the school division will not be eligible to receive any additional funds from this program because there is no extra space in the schools to incorporate more VPI classrooms. Currently, every elementary school has a pre-school program. There is a protocol to follow for enrollment in the program. Students on the waiting lists are provided the opportunity to be served at another school with available space if the parents are willing to provide the transportation.
12. A concern was expressed about the adult portions for breakfast and lunch in the school cafeteria.

An adult meal priced at \$3.20 includes: 1 entrée selection; all sides offered; fresh fruit and fruit cup; milk; and 16 oz. beverage with 1 refill. The school lunch and breakfast program menus are developed to meet the new USDA meal pattern requirements, portion sizes and calorie limits for each student grade group (K-5, 6-8, 9-12). The Pittsylvania County Schools' School Nutrition Program invites and encourages adult participation (parents, teachers, administrators, and staff members) in school meals. Adults pay higher prices for school meals because student meals are subsidized with federal and State monies. Meals served to adults must be priced so the payment is sufficient to cover the entire cost of each meal. Adults also have the option of purchasing desired food items a' la carte. School Nutrition Team Members have been instructed to provide adults with "generous" servings. If an adult has a concern about a

particular menu not providing him/her with enough food, please see the Cafeteria Manager or contact Mrs. Rhonda Yates, Supervisor of School Nutrition, or Mrs. Kara Scott, Registered Dietitian.

13. Concerns were expressed about the proposed changes by the General Assembly in the grievance procedure and continuing contracts for teachers.

The Pittsylvania Education Association (PEA) presented a resolution to the School Board regarding these changes. The Superintendent has drafted an alternate resolution for the School Board to review at its February meeting. This resolution resolved to support continuing contract laws that extend the probationary period from three (3) to five (5) years to allow for a much more thoughtful examination and development of those teachers being awarded continuing contract status, defining incompetence and streamlining the grievance procedure which will eliminate the fact-finding panel. The principal must recommend the termination of a teacher. Currently, the staff tries to assist teachers and other employees who may need assistance to improve. Teachers who may need to be placed on plans of assistance are identified as early as possible.
14. A question was raised about teachers being issued keys to outside doors at the school and who determines which employees receive a key.

Mr. Mike Hutson, Director of Maintenance & Facilities, has been working with the elementary principals to provide keys for all outside doors. This would allow the teacher to take the students outside and return. One of the recommendations from the Sheriff's Office has been to limit the number of unlocked doors. The Superintendent has discussed with Sheriff Mike Taylor the possibility of issuing key cards that would be swiped at the door for entry. The principal determines the employees that receive keys. It was noted that if an employee loses a key to the outside doors of a school, it is very expensive to rekey all locks to ensure the continuing safety of all occupants.
15. A question was raised about individuals in the school system who received additional compensation for increased workloads. There are other employees with increased workloads that do not receive compensation. It was also suggested that these individuals be excluded should a bonus be issued.

Employees who had a change in position did receive compensation commensurate with the promotion for the 2012-2013 school year. It would not be fair to these individuals to exclude them from a bonus. The workload for every employee has increased because of the budget cuts that have been necessary. The school division operates on State, federal and local funding and sales tax revenue. The local governing body generally approves the minimum local match required. For the 2013-2014 school budget, the local governing body will be requested to provide additional money to fund the school budget to include a 2% salary increase for all employees.

16. A concern was expressed about the roof leak at Stony Mill Elementary School. Mr. Mike Hutson, Director of Maintenance & Facilities, is aware of the roof leak at Stony Mill Elementary School. Work has been done on the roof; however, with the recent rains, the leak has returned. The Maintenance Department is continuing to work on this problem.
17. A concern was expressed about controversial lunch menu items. The School Nutrition Program must follow federal guidelines in the items that are served. There have been certain foods (such as kale chips) incorporated into the menu; however, there is always an option that would be more familiar to individuals. Teachers were asked to model open mindedness so that young children may be willing to develop a taste for these new options. There were many complaints about the string cheese bagged lunch. String cheese is a protein which meets the federal guidelines; however, this lunch option is no longer being offered. The School Nutrition staff provides great meals for the students and staff.
18. The issue of staggered kindergarten entry was discussed. Currently, the pre-school classes in the elementary schools are full-day programs, and there is an assistant in each classroom. However, the kindergarten classes have a staggered entry which is designed to help the student become used to what happens during a school day. There are pros and cons to having the staggered kindergarten entry. The program is being reviewed to determine if the staggered entry continues to be a sound practice for the school division. Discussions will be held with the teachers and principals.
19. A question was raised about the possibility of any retiree incentive plans for this year. There are no plans for any type of retiree incentive plans. There have been incentives for two (2) out of the last three (3) years. Currently, there are very few employees thinking about retirement.

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

1. Information was provided relative to the annual December Child Count report for Special Education. This report shows the number of students receiving special education services. For the 2012-2013, the number of students receiving these services has decreased.
2. A needs assessment survey is being developed to determine what resources may be needed for teachers and to provide resources for postsecondary education for special education students.
3. A copy of the Bus Accident/Injury Administrator Checklist was provided. This checklist has been developed to ensure the safety and welfare of students in the event of a bus accident.

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

1. Information relative to the proposed 2013-2014 budget was provided. The School Board Budget Committee has met and discussed the following issues:
 - a. It is anticipated that an additional \$1.2 million will be provided to the school system in State and local funds. The majority of these funds are being provided to be used for a 2% salary increase and for the Virginia Pre-School Initiative Program.
 - b. Even with these additional funds, it will be necessary to cut the budget. The Budget Committee has determined six (6) priorities items with the 2% raise being the top item. The funding for the 2% raise would only be provided if the Governor's Educator Fairness Act is approved.
 - c. Other priority items include the funding for the Comprehensive Service Act Payment of \$250,000, the 1% Virginia Retirement System (VRS) transition (FICA amount), the installation of ARC flash standards, travel for bus driver training and providing additional funding for substitutes (which has been consistently over budget for the last 3 years).

Other items that will need to be considered for the budget will be the pre-payment of the Governor's School, performance contract with Trane, property insurance and Workers' Compensation insurance which totals approximately \$820,000.

2. Employees will note that the W2 for 2012 included the amount the School Board paid toward health insurance.
3. At the present time, there is no information to share with employees concerning the Health Care Reform for 2014. As soon as information is received, it will be shared with all employees.
4. A schedule of recruitment trips for the 2012-2013 school year was provided. Currently, there are ten (10) teachers who plan to retire or resign at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Also, there are seven (7) positions for the 2012-2013 school year that are being filled with part-time or ERIP personnel. It is anticipated that there will be seventeen (17) certified and six (6) classified positions to fill for the 2013-2014 school year.

Mrs. Wanda A. Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items:

1. The 2013-2014 school calendar was approved by the School Board and has been posted on the website. The calendar for 2013-2014 is very similar to 2012-2013 with the exception of Spring Break which will be a week in March. Students and staff will also be out of school the Friday before Easter Sunday and the Monday afterward. The school division will have one more year to qualify under the waiver to open schools before Labor Day unless there are any legislative changes relative to school opening.

2. The applications for Graduate of Merit are reviewed and all information is verified. The requirements for the Graduate of Merit program are more stringent. There are 112 students that have qualified for the 2013 Graduate of Merit program.
3. Information relative to class sizes and teacher/pupil ratios was provided.
4. The students at the middle and high schools have been participating in an orientation tour of the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center. Because of the recent inclement weather, the tours for Gretna Middle and Gretna High Schools were postponed but should be completed soon. These tours were not conducted during SOL testing.

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

1. The computers for the high school teachers have been received; however, there is an adapter needed for hook-up with the projectors. This adapter is currently on backorder. As soon as they are received, the Information Technology staff will begin installation. Some of the older computers that are being replaced will be put into special education classrooms. A request was made to place a computer in the In-School Suspension classroom at Tunstall High School. It was noted that space may be an issue.
2. Projectors will be installed in the each school.
3. Appreciation was expressed for using the Information Technology work order system so that the appropriate technician may be assigned to complete the work.
4. The Crisis Management Plan is being reviewed. Representatives were encouraged to respond to the principal should there be any concerns or items to be addressed and included in the plan.
5. A question was raised about employees having the opportunity to purchase MicroSoft software. Employees do have this opportunity. Information about the purchase was included in an earlier Superintendent's Minute. Employees desiring to purchase the software were asked to contact Dr. Early by e-mail.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Representatives were asked about the communications received through AlertNOW. The Representatives felt the communication was clear, concise, timely and relevant. It was noted that any employees at the school not receiving the AlertNOW message should check with the school office to ensure their number is included in the system. Emergency AlertNOW calls would go to all contact numbers in the system.

2. A meeting was held with Sheriff Mike Taylor concerning the school safety initiative. The Sheriff's safety plan included seven (7) components. The school staff has prioritized the Sheriff's plan for the school division as follows:
 - a. Put a school resource officer in every school
A question was raised about back-up when the School Resource Office (SRO) is not at school. The Sheriff's Office does not have substitutes for the SRO; however, if aware, someone may be sent to check on the school. State Police and Sheriff's Office representatives are currently coming into the schools to check on things.
 - b. Employ locked entry doors at the front of school with a camera and intercom system that would allow someone at a desk in the main office to see who is there and buzz them in (cost would be \$1,500 – \$3,500 per school)
 - c. Restrict the number of entrances to the schools and make sure all doors are locked. The possibility has been discussed of having some type of keyless entry for teacher access to the school in order to eliminate the key issue (losing or misplacing keys). A question was raised about the garage doors at the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center. It was noted that there are some unique situations that would need to be addressed.
 - d. Continually train staff and conduct emergency actions
There was a SWAT training held at Twin Springs Elementary School recently. It is anticipated that another training will be held at a smaller elementary school. The training would need to include new hires, substitutes and staff relative to the implementation of emergency plans of action.
 - e. Employ anonymous tip lines
 - f. Have surveillance cameras and central monitoring
This item would require hardware installation and personnel to monitor the cameras. A question was raised about classes in mobile units. The goal would include having everyone in the same building with no mobile units.
 - g. Employ metal detectors at some entrances
For our school system, this would be a logistical nightmare because of the number of students entering the building at one time and the need to have someone to monitor this.
3. A Sick Leave Policy Taskforce has been formed and will meet in February.
4. A Staff Dress Taskforce has been formed with at least one representative serving from each school. This Taskforce will also meet in February.
5. There will be very little money to use from attrition next year. The positions that have been reviewed at this time will need to be filled for the 2013-2014 school year. This will be a very difficult budget year. The Governor is putting together components for an actuarial study of the inclusion of school divisions in the health insurance plans. More information will be provided as appropriate.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this

meeting. There were no suggestions for improvement.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.