

MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
October 5, 2009

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, October 5, 2009, 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, 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, and Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology.

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

The protocol and organization of the Advisory Council was discussed. The purpose of the meeting is to share information about policies and programs and solicit input and feedback from the representatives relative to division level issues. School level issues should be addressed with the principal of the school. Representatives will also have the opportunity to provide topics of discussion to be placed on the agenda or addressed at the meeting. Representatives were encouraged to e-mail topics to the Superintendent, Mrs. Janet Hancock or any of the Assistant Superintendents. A notice of the meetings will be mailed to Representatives prior to the meeting date.

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. Concern was expressed relative to an August work order from Gretna Elementary School to install a SmartBoard that had not been completed. The technicians had informed the school not to unpack the SmartBoard, and there is concern at the school that the warranty may run out. The school was informed that technicians were not completing work orders at this time.
Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, was not aware of this situation until last week. The technicians have been informed that this work order should have been completed and will move this item up on the work order list. Mr. Parker also noted that schools should be purchasing Promethean SmartBoards.
2. A question was raised about receiving new projectors.
The high school construction funds can only be used for the purchase of high school equipment. Projectors will be purchased for the high schools, and the old projectors will be removed from the high schools. These projectors will be installed at the elementary and middle schools based upon principals' requests. If there is a mount in the ceiling of a classroom, a projector will be installed. The principals will define the schedule for the installation of the projectors. Appropriate classrooms will be equipped

with a wireless slate, document camera and projector. Also, training will be provided on the use of this equipment. It is anticipated that the projectors will be installed by Christmas.

3. A concern was expressed about the purchase of non-fiction books (using federal funds) for the library at Gretna Elementary School. Specifically, the desire was to order more up-to-date books instead of the non-fiction books.
Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, indicated that this issue would be addressed with the staff at Gretna Elementary School.
4. A concern was expressed relative to individuals who were waiting but unable to receive flu shots.
The Pittsylvania-Danville Health Department received fewer doses of the flu shot based on the anticipation that there would be more access for individuals at drug stores or private physicians.
5. A concern was expressed about not being able to lock classroom doors at the high schools.
The lock cores have not been delivered. As soon as these are received, the locks will be installed.
6. A question was raised about the consideration of not allowing parents to have access to PowerSchool this year because of micromanaging parents. The concern centers around the amount of additional work anticipated when parents have the ability to see specific grades (such as a student receiving a 98 instead of 100).
The schedule for PowerSchool implementation includes a parent portal to be available for the second semester of the 2009-2010 school year. By that time, it is anticipated that teachers will have become more familiar and comfortable with the program. Teachers were encouraged not to wait until the last minute to put in grades. Staff will continue to monitor the PowerSchool/PowerTeacher program, make necessary adjustments and review prior to opening the parent portal.
7. A concern was expressed about the restroom facilities and enrollment at Tunstall Middle School. The school currently has at least 700 students, and it is exploding at the seams.
Tunstall Middle School was designed for 750 students. The purpose of the workrooms was for teachers to use during their planning periods. However, the addition of more programs at the school is taking up space. There are other schools with higher priorities than Tunstall Middle School at this time. The next construction project would be at Kentuck Elementary School. However, Tunstall Middle School may be expanded at some point in the future. There are funding issues as well as priority issues to consider.
8. Concerns were expressed about teachers putting notes on the progress reports and then having to delete these before completing the report cards. It was

noted that teachers are not happy with the PowerSchool program and want to know if it is going to continue to be used. It was also stated that teachers could not review the report card before it is printed. There were also some issues with students being absent and having to make up work.

The current PowerSchool program is the most up-to-date version that is available. Upgrades to newer versions will be completed as they are released. Teachers need to ensure that appropriate information is recorded in PowerSchool. Grades must be recorded by a certain date in order to allow time to upload the information. Teachers will be able to view the grades to determine accuracy. Information has been provided to the principals concerning the deadlines necessary for printing the report cards. After further discussion concerning the time frame to record data and print report cards, it was determined that teachers would have three (3) days at the end of the six (6) weeks to record grades and other pertinent information for the report cards. For a student who may be absent and need to complete make-up work, the system is designed so that the principal may manually open the historical grades for a teacher to make changes. This will also be discussed with principals to ensure that appropriate information is being recorded for circumstances of this nature.

9. A suggestion was made to have a 9-week marking period rather than a 6-week marking period.

There are pros and cons to this issue. Any changes would require a recommendation from the Grading and Reporting Committee to be presented to the School Board for approval. Any changes would affect all schools. The school system would not allow the elementary schools to be on a different schedule than the high schools.
10. A concern was expressed about the Jiffy Pass being used at one of the schools. The teachers are being asked to clock out at 4:00 p.m. regardless of what time they may leave the building.

Dr. Lillian Holland will discuss this issue with the principals.
11. A concern was expressed about too many Styrofoam containers being used in the cafeteria. The teachers also have to assist the students who cannot reach the cups.

The use of Styrofoam containers saves labor on washing trays and water as well as serving time. The students also have the capability to pick up the food they wish to eat. The savings is also realized in the students not wasting as much food.
12. Hurt Elementary School has had network issues and been unable to log into PowerSchool.

Mr. Rickey W. Parker indicated that he had not been made aware of this issue. If problems persist, the principal should e-mail Mr. Parker and provide the times when the system is down.

13. A concern was expressed about the new wing at Tunstall High School not having bathrooms and water. A question was also raised about putting the hand sanitizers back in place.
Hand sanitizers will be installed in the computer labs. Students should be encouraged to sanitize hands and keypads.
14. A concern was expressed about the attendance policy and how it relates to the number of students out because of illness (flu). There are doctors that are asking some students to stay home and not come into the physician's office. This may affect the students who may be required to bring a doctor's note for an absence.
School Board policy states that the school may require a medical note for excessive absences. Notes are required when there are unexcused absences or absences become excessive. The school will need to use discretion in determining whether a note is required in such circumstances. If there are questions relative to this policy, principals should contact the Superintendent or Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.
It was noted that some doctors have faxed a note to the school indicating that the office was contacted concerning the illness and the student was advised to stay home and not come to the physician's office.
15. A concern was expressed about the use of the Sick Leave Bank. There was a circumstance where an individual was in the hospital with pneumonia and was almost denied the use of the Sick Leave Bank. However, there are individuals who have healthy babies that are allowed to use the Sick Leave Bank.
This particular case was originally denied. The individual appealed the decision and was approved to use the Sick Leave Bank. The School Board attorney and the VSBA attorney have reviewed the Sick Leave Bank policy and appropriate revisions have been made. The attorneys have noted that the school system cannot discriminate against pregnancy.
16. A question was raised about the possibility of discontinuing the offer of Algebra I in parts.
No decision has been made relative to continuing to offer Algebra I, Part 1 and Algebra I, Part 2.

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

1. The budget calendar for the 2010-2011 budget preparation was provided. Individuals will have an opportunity to provide budget priorities to the School Board at its December 8, 2009, meeting. Representatives were asked to share this information at their respective schools.
2. High school renovations are continuing. The new classroom additions have been completed at the high schools. All renovations should be completed prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

Appreciation was expressed to the staff for their patience and understanding during this process.

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

1. A listing of the specific positions filled for the 2009-2010 school year was distributed. There were 59 vacant certified positions that were filled as well as 35 vacant classified positions.
2. A comparison of teachers' salaries for surrounding school divisions was provided. Pittsylvania County Schools is very competition at the beginning of the teacher salary scale; however, the division is not very competitive at the top of the scale. The Salary Taskforce will begin looking at salary issues for the 2010-2011 school year.

Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, addressed the following item:

1. State money designated for the high schools cannot be used to purchase equipment for the elementary and middle schools. Therefore, local money will be used to purchase items as needed. The intention is to create a technology-rich environment at the high schools and have consistency across the grades.

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

1. All schools have met the Virginia Standards of Accreditation for the 2009-2010 school year based on the 2008-2009 test scores. Five (5) of our eighteen (18) schools met Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) at 90% or higher in all four core areas. In the past five (5) years, the school system has had 100% accreditation for three (3) of these years. Appreciation was expressed to the teachers, staff and students on this achievement.
2. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report was provided. There were fifteen (15) of eighteen (18) schools meeting AYP. The school division also met AYP. The staff is working hard to ensure that all schools will make AYP. There are plans in place for the schools not meeting AYP to target appropriate areas to be successful. The State average for meeting AYP is 71%; Pittsylvania County Schools had 86% of schools meeting AYP.
3. The on-time graduation rates have not been released for public review. This information will be provided at the November 30, 2009, meeting.
4. A listing of the testing windows for the locally developed school division assessments was provided. A question was raised about allowing students

to write on the assessments. The students would be allowed to write on the assessments this year.

5. The 2010-2011 school calendar was discussed. During past years, the school division has applied for a waiver for good cause (severe weather conditions) to allow schools to open prior to Labor Day. The Department of Education has approved this waiver based on meeting eligibility requirements. The school division at this time does not meet the eligibility requirements to apply for a waiver for the 2010-2011 school year. Therefore, the School Calendar Committee may not have a recommendation for a calendar until later in the schools. Generally, the School Board has approved the calendar prior to March. It was suggested that this information be provided to parents so they will not be expecting an approved calendar before March, 2010.

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

1. The State of Virginia has revised the Special Education Regulations effective July 7, 2009. There were several changes including:
 - a. Developmentally Delayed would be for students in ages 2-6 (instead of ages 2-8);
 - b. Emotional Disturbed (ED) was changed to Emotional Disability;
 - c. Mentally Retarded (MR) was changed to Intellectual Disability; and
 - d. Severe Disability (SD) was removed.Other changes will be addressed with the special education teachers during spring check-outs.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. The school division is working with the Pittsylvania Danville Health Department to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to provide immunizations for students and staff of Pittsylvania County Schools. The MOA will be provided to the School Board for approval at its meeting on October 13, 2009. Immunizations will be given to students in grades 3, 4 and 5 (shot or mist) during the regular school day without the presence of the parents. For students in grades PK-2, parents will be required to be in attendance when the shot is given between 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. A schedule will also be developed for the middle and high school students. It is anticipated that this process will begin on October 26, 2009, at the elementary schools, and take approximately six (6) weeks to complete the immunizations of all students in the school system. There will be 8-9 nurses assisting with the administration of the mist or shot. Immunizations are voluntary and will be provided free of charge to students and staff.
2. Information was provided about the high school reform measures that are being discussed. Meetings will be scheduled at the schools to receive feedback relative to these reform measures.

3. The use of passive dogs in the schools was discussed. Before these dogs are used around the students in the schools, the Superintendent will review all legal issues and examine the procedures. There are differences in opinions of various courts on the use of passive drug dogs. A demonstration of the passive drug dog will be held at the next principals' meeting. Council Representatives indicated that these dogs should be used in the schools.
4. An issue was presented to the School Board recently concerning the need for middle school students to have cell phones. A middle school student was involved in after-school activities and was unable to contact the parent. It was suggested that the student could bring the phone to the school and leave it in the office or provide the cell phone to a high school student that may be involved in the same after-school activity. This issue will be reviewed by the School Board at a later time to determine if any changes are needed in the procedures relative to cell phones.
5. The high school renovations came in at \$6 million under budget. The County has the opportunity to use this money to complete additional projects at the high schools. In addition to the under budget amount, the bonds have accumulated about \$1 million in interest. However, the Board of Supervisors has indicated that these funds would not be reviewed until after all bills from the renovations have been paid. The high school principals have developed a priority list of projects to be completed. Representatives from each high school are appearing before the Board of Supervisors to leverage them to use this money to complete high school revitalization projects.

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 4:02 p.m. Notes from this initial meeting will be provided by mail and will be accessible from the Pittsylvania County Schools' website (<http://www.pcs.k12.va.us/advisory/index.html>). The minutes of all subsequent meetings will be posted on this website.