

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS  
April 2, 2007**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, April 2, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Fifteen (15) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Superintendent, Dr. John W. Amos, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Mark R. Jones, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, and Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology. ABSENT: Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services.

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed. The Superintendent asked the Council members if they felt the need to have a meeting in June. There was no interest in having a meeting in June.

**The following Council topics were discussed:**

1. A question was raised about the possibility of using bank time first for make-up days.  
The Calendar Committee reviews the calendar and takes into consideration time needed for the SOL testing schedule as well as the instructional integrity of the school day. It was determined by the Committee that this time is more needed at the end for instructional time for the SOL testing.
2. Appreciation was expressed for the humor in the most recent Superintendent's Minute.
3. A question was raised about the consideration of a 9-week report card.  
The 9-week report card has been discussed. The next step would be for the principals to review this and bring a recommendation to the instructional team (elementary contact would be Mrs. Rebecca C. Smith, Director of Elementary Education). This recommendation would have to be reviewed by the Grading and Reporting Committee for consideration for implementation for the 2008-2009 school year.
4. A question was raised about the use of professional development funds and the possibility of schools receiving additional funds if other schools are not using the funds.

The funds allocated are based on the number of students at the schools. The smaller schools use funds more quickly. If the school needs additional funds, a request should be submitted to Dr. Shirley Terry, Director of Title I/Homebound, regarding additional funds. Professional development costs have increased; however, the funding has not increased. A new program is being explored called PD 360. This is an on-line professional development program which has many different modules that a teacher may review and participate in the activities. This program will not replace going to a conference, but it is a way to get low cost staff development.

5. A request was made about the possibility of teachers getting paid twice a month rather than once a month.  
Currently, there are two payrolls run each month (regular and substitute payroll). Running regular payroll twice a month would require an increase in payroll staff.
6. A concern was expressed about the amount of accountability placed on teachers for positive results on the SOLs with little accountability placed on the students and parents.  
There is some accountability on the students at the high school level because they must pass the SOL tests to graduate. There is also some accountability for promotion in the elementary schools. The staff may look at strengthening the policy relative to promotion and retention. The SOL test result cannot be the sole criteria used for promotion. Any suggestions for changes would need to be recommended by the principals to the instructional staff to be submitted to and reviewed by the Grading and Reporting Committee. There should be some type of intervention provided for students who are not successful. There has been some discussion about having exams for all students. It was noted by one of the Representatives that requiring another test would not be the best answer.
7. A concern was expressed about the parking and dismissal of car riders at Southside Elementary School.  
Bids for paving are to be received this week. It is anticipated that a driveway will be installed at Southside Elementary School in the area where parents currently enter to continue behind the gym and back around. A parking lot will also be created in the tennis court area. Other paving projects include: Dan River High School, Chatham High School, Tunstall High School, Stony Mill Elementary School and the School Board Office. The number one priority is Southside Elementary School because of the safety issues.
8. A concern was expressed about the information required from Radford University for participation in a recertification class being offered at Blairs Middle School.

The grant funding for this class requires the submission of transcripts from all previously attended colleges.

**Dr. Mark R. Jones addressed the following items:**

1. A copy of the Graduate of Merit brochure was provided. The brochure includes the criteria for application to the Graduate of Merit program, such as grade point average, total courses, course work, attendance, conduct, community service and school activities. There are over 110 candidates for Graduate of Merit. The ceremony will be held on May 24, 2007. Generally, a meeting is held with seniors only; however, a request was made to have the notation of Graduate of Merit on the student's college application. In order for this to be completed, it was felt that a meeting with the juniors was necessary so that they may be pre-approved for the Graduate of Merit program to allow notations to be placed on the college application. Each Graduate of Merit receives a picture, a DVD and PowerPoint of the event, a medallion, a collage of pictures and a plaque. The Pinnacle Award Winner also receives a laptop and a \$500 scholarship. This year, 40 scholarships will be awarded
2. A copy of the Statistical Profile for Pittsylvania County Schools was provided. The Stanford 10 results validate what the teachers are doing in the classrooms. The school system is also offering a SAT preparation program at Chatham High School. Accreditation needs to be reviewed. Two schools lost accreditation based on math scores.
3. The curriculum alignment is going very well. The next meeting will be held on June 1, 2007. More information will be provided prior to that date.
4. A copy of the High School Course Selection Guide for 2007-2008 was provided. A picture of the 2006-2007 Student Representatives has been included on the front of the guide. Other new items in the guide include: First Year Studies Certificate, Two-Year Associate Degree Program and a Career Development Planning Guide for students. Students participating in the Two-Year Associate Degree Program would also have to take classes from Danville Community College during the summer.

A question was raised about the amount of preparation the students receive in high school from the guidance counselors on how to select colleges and stay in school. There are students receiving scholarships that lose them because of homesickness or not being able to cope with the rigors of college. There is a new program offered at the high schools called UVA guides. There are two college graduates working with the Grade 11 and 12 students relative to college expectations. Danville Community College Career Coaches are also working with the Grade 9 and 10 students. The staff has also discussed adding more rigor similar to the Governor's School research requirement. Students planning to attend college should take math in their junior and senior years. A project

required for graduation for students in the junior and senior years has also been discussed.

A concern was also expressed that the school system is graduating SOL tested students and not preparing students to think, write and work independently in order to be successful in the real world.

**In the absence of Dr. Lillian Holland, the following items were addressed:**

1. Sammye W. Shelton Field Day for students with disabilities will be held on May 25, 2007. The raindate is May 30, 2007.
2. First aid training has been completed for the bus drivers. This one-day training was conducted by the School Nurse Coordinators. The bus drivers have been very receptive of the training.

**Dr. John W. Amos addressed the following items:**

1. A copy of the proposed Student Code of Conduct policy was provided. This policy is reviewed annually by the Behavior Management Taskforce. The Taskforce makes recommendations for changes or additions to the School Board for adoption. The changes in the proposed policy include the following:
  - a. Page 1 – changed Statement of Policy to Purpose
  - b. Page 7 – added under Class 2 misconduct – Offsite conduct that is materially disruptive (this may include posting information on a website that may create a fight, other disruptive behavior or a threatening situation that is disruptive to the school environment)
  - c. Pages 10 and 11 – added a listing of offenses to be reported to law enforcement authorities/Superintendent

Any comments or suggestions for changes should be provided to Dr. John Amos. This proposed policy will be presented to the School Board for consideration at its May meeting.

2. A draft of the schedule for the 2007 Summer Institute was provided. The Summer Institute will be held on July 16-20, 2007. Information on the Summer Institute will be finalized and provided to the schools. Lunch will be served each day during the Summer Institute. Recertification credit will be available for participating in the Summer Institute (30 points for the entire week).

**Mr. Donald R. Johnson addressed the following items:**

1. A copy of the 2007-2008 proposed budget was provided. A public hearing was held by the School Board last week. The proposed budget has been submitted to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors must approve the School Board budget by May 1. The proposed budget includes a \$5.1 million (34.4%) increase from the Board of Supervisors. The proposal budget totals \$85.6 million

which is an 8.5% increase over the 2006-2007 budget. A one-percent salary increase requires \$550,000. If the minimum funding required by the State is all that is approved by the Board of Supervisors, there will only be \$1.9 million of additional funding for the 2007-2008 school year. The budget would have to be reviewed to determine if buses will be purchased or salary increases will be approved for employees.

2. Several members of the Board of Supervisors have been discussing the Phase IV capital improvements plan. The Board of Supervisors may be interested in a \$70 million budget for this plan. Originally, the School Board had requested a \$90 million budget; however, this amount has probably increased to about \$120 million because of inflation.

**Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight addressed the following items:**

1. Employment vacancies for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 were provided. These vacancies are the result of retirements and resignations. The listing provided reflects the retirements and resignations approved by the School Board at its last meeting. Additional retirements and resignations have been received and will be presented to the School Board at its April 5, 2007, meeting. Coaching vacancies have also been added to the vacancy listing on the website.
2. A copy of the recruiting schedule for 2006-2007 was provided. The recruiting season has been completed. The pool of candidates was not as large as it has been in the past years. Staff did attend the Great Virginia Teach-In which included thousands of teaching candidates.
3. The staff incentive picnic will be held on June 7, 2007, from 5:00 – 7:30 p.m. at the Averett Convocation Center. Individuals were encouraged to attend. A Spirit Award is being planned again this year.

**Mr. Rickey W. Parker addressed the following items:**

1. Representatives were encouraged to tell their colleagues to report any derogatory comments that may be found on MySpace and/or FaceBook. Principals should be requested to contact Mr. Rickey Parker should this type of information be discovered so that a request may be made to take down the site. This is something that should not continue and staff wants to stop this as quickly as possible.
2. The Division Technology Committee has met to discuss the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The school system is required to rewrite the AUP to include internet safety. Training must be provided for staff and incorporated into the curriculum. Professional development will also be provided on internet safety.

3. Distance learning is being used for Spanish and physics classes. There are also possibilities of field trips around the world that are basically free. Anyone interested in field trips or distance learning opportunities should contact Cathy Scolpini, Lead ITRT.

**The Superintendent presented** the DVD for the home/private school initiative. This DVD will also be presented to the Citizens' Advisory Council, the School Board and then to the parents and students on May 3, 2007, at Chatham High School.

The following comments relative to the DVD was provided from the Representatives:

- Impressive
- Pittsylvania County is agricultural. It would be nice to have scenes from the livestock show with a student receiving a blue ribbon.
- Would there be any mention of the great programs for special education? (Individuals will be present at the meeting on May 3, 2007, to answer questions and provide information.)
- Home school and private schools do not have a lot of opportunity for co-curricular and other activities such as FFA, BETA and JROTC. Should this information be included?
- Will there be parents at the meeting? It was suggested to have some positive parents that are active in the school system now. (The meeting will be limited to one hour. There will be break out sessions. There may be some testimonials from individuals such as Colby Warren, Student Representative.)
- There should be pictures of some of the schools, such as the new middle schools with good landscaping, and some of the high schools showing how well the schools are kept.
- Very excellent and motivating
- The Board of Supervisors needs to be ready to appropriate more money because of the increase in enrollment after viewing this DVD.

The Superintendent stated that the completion of this DVD has been a lot of work. Appreciation was expressed to the staff for their efforts in completing this project. The DVD will also be placed on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website for individuals to be able to view at any time.

Appreciation was expressed to the Representatives for their service and invaluable feedback on this Council.

The Superintendent asked about ways to improve this meeting. There were no suggestions or comments.

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

