

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
November 28, 2011**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, November 28, 2011, 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 following Council topics were discussed:

1. A question was raised about the possibility of having an automated system to contact substitutes for the schools.
This is a budget issue that would require additional funding. Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, has scheduled a meeting with a representative from a company that supplies substitute finders. The current payroll system used by the school division will support a substitute finder program.
2. A concern was expressed relative to the televisions in the high schools being left on at night.
The cost to have an automated on/off system for the televisions is prohibitive. The electrical costs to run a LCD television are minimal. Some of the school custodians have volunteered to turn the televisions on and off. It was noted that this may be public perception issue if the televisions are left on during the night. The Superintendent indicated that this issue would be discussed at the next meeting of the principals and supervisors.
3. A concern was expressed about the new on-line writing prompt test that is required after the official Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment and the need the teach word processing skills in addition to writing to students.
A plan for preparing students with basic keyboarding skills has been provided to the elementary principals. The on-line writing test is a field test and will not count as an SOL score this year. The middle school students learn keyboarding skills through

exploratory classes. The principals have the autonomy to identify individuals to provide instruction and schedule after-school tutoring to teach the keyboarding skills. On-line websites were also provided for elementary students to use at home for practice. The field test is required for any grade taking a writing assessment.

4. A concern was expressed that there was no traditional Thanksgiving lunch served this year.

Since feedback has been received, the School Nutrition Department will ensure that a traditional Thanksgiving meal will be served next year.

5. Concerns and suggestions were expressed relative to the 2012-2013 draft calendar. These included:
 - a. Have a make-up day in March rather than using October 8 as a holiday for students and teachers
 - b. Switch Columbus Day or Memorial Day with the day before Thanksgiving as a holiday
 - c. Concern was expressed about using Spring Break as make-up days

6. If no raise is given, it was suggested that the number of teacher contract days be reduced.

It was noted that reducing the number of teacher contract days would be counterproductive for the school system. With the current calendar, there are not enough days to complete the desired professional development and have collegial opportunities for the teachers. The School Board has liberal policies concerning sick leave and annual leave. Reducing the contract days may open the school system to public scrutiny and reflect negatively on the viability of the organization. The Code of Virginia requires teachers to work a minimum of ten (10) days beyond the 180 school days.

7. A concern was expressed about the loss of special education teachers for the 2012-2013 because of the Federal Jobs Bill funding being cut and what process may be used.

There has been no discussion of reducing the number of special education teachers for the 2012-2013 at this time. The teachers are hired based on the number of special education students in the schools. The number of teachers required is dictated by the State based on enrollment. If a reduction in force is considered, there would be a policy to follow along with a review of State and federal mandates.

8. A question was raised about the continuation of Title I positions. The Title I contracts indicate that the contract is valid only if federal funds are available.

The contracts for Title I teachers shows the funding used to provide money for salaries for these positions.
9. A question was raised relative to band boosters having to pay for bus drivers when they attend competitions. It is understood that the School Board is paying bus driver to drive for athletic competitions.

The school is required to pay for the bus drivers for any approved athletic and band trips. The band is required to participate in two (2) parades with School Board funding. However, if they participate in more than this, the band is required to pay for the associated costs.
10. Several of the schools expressed their thanks to the Board and anyone else responsible for the bonus paid to the employees.

The schools were informed that they may send cards of thanks to the Superintendent's Office for presentation to the School Board. It was noted that the vote for bonus was not unanimous. Mr. Morris Stowe, School Board Member, voted against the motion.
11. A concern was expressed about required duties for teachers before and after school hours (such as bus duty and professional development activities).

According to School Board Policy GCJ-PC, Professional Staff Time Schedules, teachers are to work from 8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. each day. However, the principal may use flexibility in determining a schedule provided it meets the requirements of the policy.
12. It was noted that some schools are allowing teachers to leave early on Friday. The Superintendent indicated that there needs to be a consistency with the schedules. The Representatives were given the opportunity anonymously to indicate if their school allowed the early leave time on Fridays. The Superintendent will discuss this issue with the principals.
13. There was a concern noted about health issues for students with head lice or MRSA. The nurse is informed when students may have these issues; however, the teacher is not informed.

If the situation jeopardizes the classroom, the teacher is made aware. The school nurses do go into the classrooms to check students for head lice or they may be sent to the office by the teachers to be checked. It was noted that according to the health department fumigating rooms for head lice is not effective. When it is known that a student has MRSA, the child is sent home and

unable to return to school until they have a doctor's notice indicating release to return.

14. A question was raised about the absence of new math manipulatives for the math series.

There are a lot of math manipulatives in the schools. Some of these manipulatives were received through training sessions and some with textbook resources. There is no plan at this time to purchase new manipulatives for the schools.
15. A question was raised about the possibility of funding to replace the science kits.

The science kits have been received through grant funding. New science kits would need to be purchased using school funds. There is no plan for an overall replacement of science kits for the schools.
16. A concern was expressed about loading and unloading students on the buses at Chatham Elementary School. The buses unload at 7:50 a.m., and the last students are picked up at 3:30 p.m. It was suggested that the pick up at Chatham Elementary School occur prior to the middle school.

It was noted that the arrival time of 7:50 p.m. was requested by the school principal.

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

1. The Salary Taskforce met on October 19, 2011, and discussed the following topics of concern:
 - a. Concern about Special Education Assistants only receiving \$7.25 per hour
 - b. Increase in pay for all employees would improve morale
 - c. Increase for cafeteria salaries since they are self-sufficient
 - d. Incentive for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 - e. Contract for the Career and Technical Center bus drivers to be for 180 days and not just days worked
 - f. Health insurance (maintain benefits)

The Salary Taskforce will meet again on Wednesday, December 7, 2011. Taskforce Representatives will bring any recommendations received from the schools for discussion and finalization for presentation to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee will consider any recommendations for inclusion in the 2012-2013 school budget.
2. Compensation for unused sick leave days was discussed. All full-time retiring employees receive \$10.00 per day for any accumulated sick leave at the time of their retirement. Any increase in this amount would need to

be presented as a budget initiative for consideration by the Budget Committee.

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

1. The equipment in the elementary computer labs will be replaced. There have been some problems with the replacement because of defective equipment that did not connect to the projectors. This issue has not been resolved at this time; however, upon resolution, the equipment will be installed. The Elmo projectors and document cameras will work with the Hewlett Packard equipment. Nine hundred (900) new computers have been ordered.
2. It is anticipated that State funding for information technology (IT) should remain the same for the 2012-2013 school year.
3. There were several teachers who received new computers but were unable to use their software. The software must be compatible with Windows 7. Elementary teachers will receive new teacher stations. Any newer equipment will also be repurposed. The IT staff is working to install new projectors in all classrooms; however, there have been some difficulties. The maintenance staff is working on resolving these difficulties. The IT department does not provide printers.
4. There are some replacement bulbs for the projectors in stock at the IT department. This stock is being used to fill request for bulbs. However, when the stock is depleted, new bulbs will not be ordered. The maximum life of a bulb is 2200 hours. The bulbs cost \$225.00 each. A budget line will be created to purchase bulbs. It was indicated that teachers would not purchase the bulbs.
5. A question has been raised about the possibility of having multi-media recordings of the School Board meetings. This practice would have to be approved by the School Board.

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

1. The 2012-2013 draft calendar was discussed. The 2012-2013 proposal is very similar to the 2011-2012 calendar with the exception of a holiday for students and teachers on Columbus Day. This would provide a fall break. Students will have two (2) full weeks during the Winter Break. There will be a Spring Break and an Easter Break. Individuals have expressed their dislike of having graduation on May 25, 2013. All concerns and suggestions will be discussed by the Calendar Committee at their

November 30, 2011, meeting for consideration in developing the 2012-2013 draft calendar. A suggestion was made to bring students back on August 9, 2012.

2. The Statistical Profile brochure for Pittsylvania County Schools was distributed. This brochure provides information on how the school division is performing. Information included in the brochure includes: accreditation ratings, achievement for NCLB adequate yearly progress, Standards of Learning, Scholastic Aptitude Test results, Stanford 9/10 results, on-time graduation rates, completion rates for ninth grade students entering high school, textbook adoption schedule (reading, language arts and science are up for 2012), September 30 membership and the number of free and reduced lunches. The Annual Measureable Objectives continue to increase which affects the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). All sub-groups and groups must meet these benchmarks.

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

1. An update was provided on the recent flu vaccine clinics. These clinics were held in collaboration with the local health department at the four (4) middle schools. There were 624 vaccines given. Of this number, 50% were students and 50% were adults.
2. A schedule for the Tdap vaccine clinics was provided. Every student entering the sixth grade must have this vaccine prior to enrollment.
3. A draft copy of the 2012-2018 Comprehensive Plan for Pittsylvania County Schools was provided for review. Each department (business, human resources, information technology, instruction and support services) provided plans for improvement of the school division. Any questions or comments should be e-mailed to Dr. Jeff Early. A draft copy will also be available on-line.

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

1. At this time, there is very little information available concerning budget figures for the 2012-2013 school year. The Governor's Office should provide budget information prior to the Winter Break. The Governor has asked department to cut from 3-5% for the budget. The Standards of Quality have also been rebenchmarked this year which may result in a change in funding.

2. The Safety Audits for the school system was discussed. Mr. C. L. Scarce, retired administrator, and Mr. Bobby Phillips, Facilities Specialist, work with a team consisting of teachers, staff and parents. A schedule of school visits by the Safety Audit Team was provided.
3. A question was raised about the inclusion of chemicals in the MSDS book located in the principal's office and in the science labs.
All chemicals being used at the school should be listed in the MSDS book located in the principal's office.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. The Virginia Commission on Youth is submitting a proposal to recommend that school divisions be directed to enroll children living with anyone who is kin to the student regardless of court appointed guardianship or court appointed custody. The Superintendent has written a response to the Commission adamantly opposing this proposal. A copy of the written response was also provided to the area delegates and State Senator. It is anticipated that this proposal will be discussed at the upcoming General Assembly session. Representatives were encouraged to respond to their legislators regarding their opinions of this proposal.
2. Communication with School Board members was discussed. It was noted that School Board members may be encouraged to be in the schools more often. The schools were encouraged to inform School Board members of activities at the schools. The telephone numbers of all School Board members are public information and may be obtained from the website. The Board members also have e-mail accounts where they may be contacted. The Superintendent will discuss this with the principals at their next meeting.
3. A question was raised about the possibility of the Superintendent visiting the schools for "Conversations with "Mr. Mac." The Representatives stated they would welcome the Superintendent to come into the classes to observe and join in with the classroom.
The Superintendent indicated that he may schedule walk-through events during the second semester of the 2011-2012 school year.
4. A question was also raised about the instructional team visiting the schools.
It was noted that Dr. Lillian Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, would not be opposed to doing some type of walk-through. The Superintendent will discuss this possibility with Dr. Holland.

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 3:45 p.m.