

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS  
January 26, 2015**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, January 26, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting took place virtually with representatives present at the four (4) high schools and the administration staff at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

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

Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division 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 allowing extra days for Spring Break and end of school year if the banked make-up days are not used. The extra twelve (12) minutes each day is being used as banked make-up days. However, the teacher work day was approved by the School Board as 8:10 a.m. – 3:35 p.m. Principals have the autonomy to alter this time for bus duty or other school responsibilities as needed. At this time, no decision will be made relative to any possible changes because inclement weather may occur in February or March. This suggestion will be taken under advisement and may be considered if necessary. The priority make-up days as listed on the calendar will be followed. The integrity of the instructional program must be maintained.
2. A concern was expressed about the steps on the salary scales. The steps are no longer based on experience. The decision was made to not move employee up a step but to provide a 1% salary increase on the same step. This prevented additional steps having to be added at the top of the salary scale in order for employees to reach the top of the schedule at thirty (30) years of service. This process will continue for the 2015-2016 scale with employees remaining on their current step and receiving any raise to be approved by the Board. Employees are continuing to receive credit for years of service with Pittsylvania County Schools and under the Virginia Retirement System where applicable. A great amount of funding would be required to reduce the number of steps on the salary scale.
3. A question was raised about teacher aides being asked to work additional hours without compensation. Teacher aides are employed for six (6) hours per day with ½ hour for an unpaid lunch period. The aides are non-exempt employees and should not work beyond

the scheduled hours. If an aide is being asked to work beyond scheduled hours, the principal and the Central Office should be contacted.

4. A question was raised about teachers supplying their own printers with ink and paper and if a waiver could be signed to allow this.  
School Board policy does not permit personal equipment to be installed in the schools. A teacher should have a discussion with the principal if they wish to donate a printer to the school. Any equipment to be installed must be approved by the Information Technology Department to ensure the device would be supported by our system.
5. A request was made to change School Board policy to include an additional three (3) days of annual bereavement pay that would not count as part of the sick leave pay.  
All employees receive sick leave. Current School Board policy allows an employee to take sick leave for immediate family needs. This suggestion will be reviewed and additional information will be provided at the next meeting.
6. A concern was expressed about blocked internet sites. A request was made to have a way to contact the Information Technology Department for immediate unlocking for time sensitive requests.  
Teachers have the ability to override and request access to an internet site. Categories such as gambling and pornography sites are blocked. However, by requesting an exception, the response would be returned within a 24-hour period. The Information Technology is working on a process to include a return e-mail when requests for override or exception are made.
7. A suggestion was made to provide the green ESL sheets at the beginning of the school year in order to prepare appropriate packets.  
Mrs. Wanda E. Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, will check on this process.
8. A concern was expressed about the use of the Interactive Achievement post assessment being used as part of the teacher's performance evaluation when the assessment is not an accurate depiction of learning.  
The evaluation is not based on just the pre- and post-assessments. The principals and teachers have multiple data over a three-year period to use for evaluation purposes. The Interactive Achievement assessments cover the strands on the Standards of Learning tests. It was also noted that there are wrong answers for the assessments. Teachers were requested to report any wrong answers to Mrs. Cathy Scolpini, Lead ITRT, Mrs. Vaughan or the appropriate director. These answers should be corrected.
9. A question was raised about asking the assigned teacher first before selecting a teacher from a list to provide homebound and homebased instruction.

The Homebound Coordinator works with staff to set up assignments for homebound and homebased instruction. Any interested teacher should inform the Homebound Coordinator at the school to indicate their desire in providing services to the student.

10. A question was raised about the possibility of providing an anonymous link to the recent survey on morale. Based on observations and comments, individuals did not respond because of fear of reprisal.  
An e-mail was sent to all employees with an e-mail account letting them know of the link to go to the survey. The results were tabulated using Survey Monkey. The survey responses were anonymous. The actual results of the survey were provided.
11. A request was made to reinstate the full-time physical education teachers and librarians at all elementary schools.  
The goal is to reinstate these positions as soon as funding is available.
12. A question was raised about a 3% salary increase and if the 1% VRS offset would be included in the 3%. Also, a question was raised about the school system matching any raise above 3% if the State provides a 6% increase.  
The 1% VRS offset would be in addition to a salary increase. The School Board would need to meet the minimum standard based on funding the State will provide for salary increases.
13. A question was raised about the possibilities of receiving a bonus regardless of the raise amount.  
Bonuses are only received if additional money is available to fund the amount.
14. A concern was expressed about the need for a second conference night in the school year.  
The second conference night was removed a few years ago; however, feedback indicated a desire to return the conference night to the calendar.  
Mrs. Vaughan will discuss with principals relative to the number of conferences being scheduled for the second night and determine what may need to be done.  
Discussion on this concern will be continued at the March 30, 2015, Teachers' Advisory Council meeting.
15. A question was raised about teachers having to take the Virginia Local and State Civics Module to complete renewal requirements.  
Teachers with the following endorsements must complete the on-line Virginia Local and State Civics Module and provide the certificate of completion with their renewal form:  
Early-Middle Education K-8, Elementary Grades NK-8, Elementary Grades K-7, Elementary Grades K-8, Elementary Grades 1-7, Elementary Grades 4-7, Kindergarten Elementary Grades 1-7, Economics, Government, History, History and Social Sciences, Middle Education Grades 4-8, Middle Education Grades 5-8,

Middle Education Grades 6-8, Middle Education Grades 6-7, Middle Education 6-8: History and Social Science, and Social Studies-Without History.

16. A question was raised about the appropriate decibel level/exposure time for the fire alarm system at the middle schools.  
The fire alarm decibel level was measured and found to comply with current State codes.
17. A concern was expressed relative to history teachers giving a post test during the 5<sup>th</sup> marking period that includes questions from the 6<sup>th</sup> marking period.  
The post testing has been provided during the 5<sup>th</sup> marking period because of the Standards of Learning tests. Post tests are designed to find weaknesses. Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Director of Instructional Programs/Title I, will review the process to determine if changes are needed.
18. A question was raised about the purpose of Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers and band instructors working extra days.  
The expectation is to allow time for the repair and replacement of equipment, visiting students, supervising summer projects, and special clinics (such as band camp). The CTE teachers are required to provide a schedule with designated activities for the extra days which is reviewed and monitored by the principal and the CTE Director. Band instructors must submit similar schedules.
19. A question was asked about providing compensation to teachers to pay for Praxis tests if they are trying to obtain additional endorsements.  
The teacher should discuss this with the principal to determine if professional development funding may be available. Some principals have provided reimbursement for teachers who successfully completed the Praxis test.
20. A suggestion was made to have an open house for students at the beginning of the second semester at the high school level.  
This would be a school decision. The suggestion will be discussed with the middle and high school principals. It was noted that all schedules may not be complete because all grades and exams may not have been reviewed and determined.
21. A concern was expressed about the heating issues at the Career & Technical Center (CTC) and a request to include CTC when the renovations for heat are done at the middle schools.  
The middle school request was to replace the controllers for the heating system because parts are no longer available. The heat issues at the CTC will be reviewed.
22. A request was made for an assistant principal and a secretary to be hired for the Career & Technical Center.

The Director of Career & Technical Center position was cut out of the budget when the previous principal left and Mrs. Angela Rigney was assigned to serve as Principal of the Career & Technical Center/Director. An ERIP Principal is currently working for twenty (20) days at the CTC to provide release time for Mrs. Rigney to complete director assignments. The Adult Education Administrative Assistant works two (2) hours in the CTC office. The positions for assistant principal and/or a second administrative assistant are not considered for a school with less than 500 students.

23. A question was raised about the head lice policy and not allowing students to go home if they have lice.  
The lice policy indicates that students with live lice cannot remain in the school. However, if the student has nits (egg of a louse), they remain with monitoring by the teacher in the classroom. Pittsylvania County Schools has one of the most restrictive policies in the region. There are no notification letters that are provided to parents in these situations. The School Nurse Coordinators will be asked to review the policy, discuss concerns with the School Health Advisory Board and determine if protocol needs to be changed.
24. A question was raised about the possibility of changing from a 6-week marking period to a 9-week marking period.  
Requests for changes must follow the appropriate protocol. School Board Policy IGBH, Alternative Educational Programs, indicates the following:  
*Proposals for alternative school programs shall be developed by the superintendent or his/her designee and will be submitted to the Board for review and endorsement prior to implementation. Proposals shall include:*
- 1. a statement of justification for the alternative program explaining how it will meet the special needs or expectations of the target population and the community;*
  - 2. a plan which delineates the proposed organizational structure of the program as it relates to staffing and the scope and structure of the total instructional program;*
  - 3. a statement of financial impact identifying all costs, including administration, staffing, equipping, supplying, transportation, support services, and maintaining the program;*
  - 4. a statement of related impact explaining how the proposed program will affect and interrelate with other programs and populations served in existing programs and facilities;*
  - 5. a statement verifying that all aspects of the program are in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and accreditation requirements;*
  - 6. if the proposal presents a potential conflict with existing regulations of the State Department of Education, evidence of authorization from the State Department of Education must accompany the proposal; and*
  - 7. a plan for evaluation that defines anticipated outcomes and*

*establishes criteria and procedures for evaluating achieved outcomes.*

25. A request was made to consider a pre-Labor Day beginning for the start of the school year.  
The School Board has approved the 2015-2016 school calendar which includes a pre-Labor Day opening. Teachers were encouraged to contact their legislators to request that school divisions be allowed to make decisions relative to the beginning and ending dates for the school year. The school division would pursue a waiver for the 2016-2017 school year pre-Labor Day opening if needed. The determining factor will be the number of days schools are closed because of inclement weather.
26. It was noted that the Chatham **Star-Tribune** had reported the budget initiatives being considered included addition of staff and reinstating positions lost due to budget cuts and then a raise for employees. It was stated that it would have been better for employee morale to list the raise before the addition of positions. The staff has no control over the information that is printed in the newspaper. The Budget Committee is in the process of reviewing the budget priorities.
27. A question was raised about the policy and procedures for suspected abuse of a child.  
School staff members are bound by law to report any abuse or suspected abuse of child. Staff is protected by the Good Samaritan Law. If a teacher suspects abuse, they should report this to the principal. The principal will conduct an immediate investigation and then report to the Department of Social Services as necessary. The school system will be held accountable if these incidents are not reported. The protocol includes reviewing the situation and then reporting to Social Services for their interview and determination. It was suggested that principals should be reminded of this protocol.

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

- ◆ The Safety Audits have been completed at the schools. There were a few recommendations from the Safety Audit Committee. These included the installation of fencing at the schools, providing additional digital cameras and placing the room number on the red and green cards that are placed in the exterior windows to assist police in knowing the location should assistance be needed during an emergency.
- ◆ Installation of security cameras should be completed by early Spring. Principals will receive training on the use of the cameras. A camera was requested for the stairwell at Dan River High School. The principal at each school provided input on the location of the cameras.

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

- ◆ Information was provided from the Special Education December 1 Child Count report. For this school year, 13.33% of the total student population is receiving special education services.

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

- ◆ Information relative to the 2015-2016 budget proposal was provided. The budget proposal has been developed using the Governor's budget plan. The Average Daily Membership (ADM) is lower than projected which will result in less funding to be received from the State (\$367,000). The Governor has included a budget initiative to help fund the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) employer rate which results in a savings of \$137,000. The School Board will be looking at a deficit of \$230,000. The School Board will also ask the Board of Supervisors to provide funding above the minimum local required effort to fund the 1% VRS offset and salary increases.
- ◆ A listing of upcoming recruitment events as provided. There are seven (7) different colleges that will be visited and applicants will be pursued for anticipated vacancies for the 2015-2016 school year.
- ◆ The anticipated personnel changes for 2015-2016 were provided. There were seven (7) teachers hired on one-year contracts for 2014-2015. There are seven (7) teachers and classified staff that will resign and 22 employees that will retire at the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

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

- ◆ The 2015-2016 school calendar has been approved by the School Board and is posted on the website.
- ◆ The Graduate of Merit recognition program will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. at the Averett North Campus, Danville, Virginia. There are 131 candidates for recognition. New partnerships have been formed as follows: 1) Danville Community College (DCC) Education Foundation to provide a scholarship for Graduate of Merit candidates attending DCC; and 2) the Essel Propack Manufacturing Excellence Scholarships (4 at \$5,000 each) for students from Danville City Schools and Pittsylvania County Schools.
- ◆ The Summer 2014 and Fall 2014 Standards of Learning (SOL) preliminary writing assessment results were provided. The school division scores exceeded the required pass rate with a county-wide average of 80.64% in writing.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

- ◆ Feedback on inclement weather calls was provided. It was noted that the message did not come through on all lines. The information provided has been sufficient. The Representatives expressed appreciation for the calls providing a specific time that a

decision will be made if school would need to be delayed or closed. If a message is not complete or not received, the information is always posted on the website. The calls made in the early mornings are sent to all emergency numbers in the system. Also, if there is background noise, the message will not begin or will stop.

- ◆ The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Academy program is funded through a grant from the Danville Regional Foundation. The school system will submit a letter of interest to continue the program and request additional funding to expand to include grades 6, 8 and 10 and hire an additional teacher.
- ◆ The following proposed General Assembly bills were discussed:
  - A bill to allow expedited retakes for the middle and elementary grades for all tests with the exception of the writing tests.
  - A bill that would require twenty (20) minutes of recess each day for elementary schools.
- ◆ Feedback was requested on the agenda process for the Teachers' Advisory Council meetings. It was suggested that a deadline be established for requests for discussion items to be provided to the Representatives to allow staff the opportunity to be prepared to respond and present any necessary materials to address the concern. The Representatives were in favor of proceeding with this new process. A schedule to provide discussion items will be sent to the Representatives, and the new process will be in place for the March meeting of the Advisory Council.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. It was noted that with questions and concerns being provided before the meeting may help to determine if the item should be addressed at the building level rather than the Central Office.

The next meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council will be held on March 30, 2015, at 2:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p. m.