

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS  
January 30, 2017**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, January 30, 2017, 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.

Fifteen (15) schools were represented. Also present were Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, and Mrs. Tracey R. Worley, Director of Finance. ABSENT: Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations.

Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions followed.

The following Council topics were addressed:

<b><u>SCHOOL</u></b>	<b><u>QUESTION/COMMENT</u></b>	<b><u>COMMENTS</u></b>
Dan River High	Why do CTE teachers work an extended contract?	The Pittsylvania County School Board continues to support the need for CTE teachers to have an extended contract to carry out instructional programs. The extended contract time is important as CTE teachers are constantly challenged to remain current in industry and related technology changes. Priorities must be established which provide the greatest benefit to students and the instructional program. These extended contract activities are approved to ensure the appropriate CTE equipment is serviced, repaired and maintained, the shop and lab areas are clean and updated with necessary software and equipment, competency records for all students are updated and accurate and completing other activities as requested and approved by the Director of CTE.
Tunstall High	Where are we in the process for consideration of the state initiative for insurance for PCS? What is the timeline for upcoming benchmarks of this process? Are proposed premiums/benefits presently available for public reading?	Many questions have been asked about the proposed State health insurance plan for educators. Senate Bill 364 authorized the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to develop a plan under the local option health insurance plan that is similar to the State employee health insurance plan. The new plan would not be implemented if it were not cost effective. The intention of plan designers is to make the plan as similar as possible to COVA Care and COVA HDHP. To be viable and sustainable, it was determined that 5,000 employees and 10,000 members are needed. The tentative timeline published to study this opportunity is

		<p>as follows:</p> <p>Spring, 2016 – DHRM began outreach to legislators and constituents</p> <p>Summer, 2016 – DHRM developed program rules.</p> <p>August, 2016 – Information webinars were conducted</p> <p>September 14, 2016 – Participants indicated preliminary interest to participate</p> <p>October 14, 2016 – Participants completed data submissions due to actuaries</p> <p>January, 2017 – DHRM will publish preliminary premium rates</p> <p>February, 2017 – Participants will indicate continuing interest in participation</p> <p>August, 2017 – DHRM will complete procurement if needed</p> <p>October, 2017 – DHRM will publish final premium rates</p> <p>December, 2017 – Participants will make binding election to participate</p> <p>May, 2018 – Open enrollment will be conducted</p> <p>July 1, 2018 – The plan will go live</p> <p>The School Board has authorized permission to participate in the data submission portion of this survey. Once the preliminary premium rates are published, the rates will be provided to the Board.</p>
Gretna Elementary	Teachers would like to see the original report from the compensation study that was submitted to the Board at the last meeting.	Information was shared with the School Board from a draft report at its January meeting. The report will be made available electronically for staff review after February 2, 2017.
Chatham High	Raises? There is talk of a large number of teachers leaving for other careers.	We are still waiting for the Senate & House versions of the State budget to see if they include a recommendation for raises. The Governor’s budget did not allow for raises but a one-time bonus in Dec. 2017.
Chatham High	We want to see a copy of the Evergreen Compensation Survey	The report will be made available electronically for staff review after February 2. The link will be provided through the Superintendent’s Wrap-Up.
Chatham High	The newspaper recently stated that the School Board is looking at raises especially for beginning and top pay scale. My two cents would be that the bottom got a huge boost several years ago to stay competitive, I mean pretty substantial boost, while the top of the scale is way below the state average. It is pitiful that on our current scale a 30-year	Thank you for your comments and sharing your concerns. While all employees have received a small raise (1.5 to 2.0%) for the past three years, it is our intention through the compensation study recommendations to address the salary ranges of teachers.

	<p>teacher would not even make \$50,000. I think it would be 46 or 47,000 max.</p>	
<p>Alternative School</p>	<p>On January 10, 2017, there was an article entitled “County finishes compensation study” in the Danville Register &amp; Bee newspaper. The study was conducted by Evergreen Solutions, an independent agency with the goal of helping PCS improve the starting salary and salary scale. Dr. Holland went on to say “implementation would need to be done in one or two years, no more than three years”. The article then went on to say that school board members would meet with Evergreen on Feb. 2 to discuss the findings. The following day there was another article entitled “School Salary fix could cost up to \$4.9 million.” This article went on to give more detail about the salary findings. Salaries for minimum, middle, and maximum wages were all below market levels. Dr. Holland went on to present four solutions that Evergreen Solutions offered to the school board.</p> <p>Is this going to be a priority for PCS to implement as soon as possible, with the number of teachers complaining about the salary scale? How is PCS going to retain the teachers they presently have and attract new teachers if all surrounding districts pay more?</p>	<p>The compensation study is the top priority recommendation from staff to the budget committee and hopefully will be included in the proposed budget submitted to the Board of Supervisors for its review.</p> <p>The Board will have an opportunity to discuss the market study findings from the Evergreen study on Feb. 2. However, I can share with you the information shared with the Salary Taskforce on salary comparisons at the minimum and maximum salary.</p> <p>All employees have to make employment decision on what is best for them and their families. We certainly hope that employees will remain w/PCS as we strive to make improvements in our salary schedules, but we recognize that some may feel the need to leave for their family’s benefit.</p>
<p>Gretna Elementary</p>	<p>Another faculty meeting began with a salesman from</p>	<p>School Board Policy, GBR, Voluntary Savings Programs, indicates that employees may participate in</p>

	<p>Washington National Insurance Co. (2nd time for this company). Teachers should not have to listen to an insurance pitch if we are not interested, but since they speak at the beginning of the meeting we are expected to attend. Teachers at GES have had to listen to no fewer than five insurance salesmen this year. This number does not include Baldwin which we understand is a requirement.</p>	<p>defined contribution retirement plans. The Superintendent's Office approves these companies to be present in the building and to speak to employees before and after school. Employees are not required to speak with the representatives. These representatives should not be invited to attend a faculty meeting. The Superintendent will remind principals of this protocol.</p>
<p>Brosville Elementary</p>	<p>Several teachers have asked what the procedure would be to have sites added to the new Chrome-based machines that have been added to some elementary classrooms. Specific examples include accelerated reader, portaportal.com, coolmathgames.com, mobymax.com and other instructional websites. Others teachers have also asked what the timeline is for the delivery of machines to all K-3 classrooms.</p>	<p>A Google form has been shared with each school to make these requests. Please contact Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, if the form has not been received. All of the Chromebases have been installed except those for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. Those will be installed next.</p>
<p>Gretna Elementary</p>	<p>More space is needed for comments on report cards.</p>	<p>The elementary school report cards will have to be redesigned to accommodate the recent change in handwriting and spelling grades. Consideration will be given to adding room for more comments as these report cards are designed for next year.</p>
<p>Gretna Elementary</p>	<p>Laptop carts are not holding charges. We are unable to get through an IA test without computers dying. There is no way they will be able to be used for SOL tests if batteries are not replaced.</p>	<p>Teachers were requested to put in specific work orders to have these laptops either repaired or replaced.</p>
<p>Anonymous</p>	<p>Why do teachers get so much time during the day (planning and resource</p>	<p>State statute requires planning time for middle and high school teachers. A section of the Standards of Quality, Virginia Code Section 22.1-253.13:2C reads, in part:</p>

	during the week)?	<p>"school divisions shall provide all middle and high school teachers with one planning period per day or the equivalent, unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties."</p> <p>Virginia Code Section 22.1-291.1 provides that: "each school board shall seek to ensure that all elementary school teachers in its employment are provided at least three (3) hours during the students' school week as planning time."</p> <p>During the teacher's planning period, students participate in resource classes such as PE and music which are required by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Standards of Quality (22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives). Resource periods last from 30 – 60 minutes on year-long schedules and up to 90 minutes on block schedules. The amount of time is also dependent upon the school's available staffing resources. Thus, this is the reason Pittsylvania County Schools has established a priority to reinstate close to 100 positions that were lost due to budget constraints in past years with a goal of 10 per year.</p>
Anonymous	Why can't teachers eat with students instead of using teacher aides?	Virginia does not guarantee teachers duty-free lunch. State Board of Education Regulations requires each school division to report "the extent to which an unencumbered lunch is provided all teachers." Virginia Code Section 22.1-291 encourages school divisions to provide duty free lunch. Aides who supervise lunch are provided a separate duty-free lunch period.
Chatham Elementary	A request was sent to the Calendar Committee requesting that the staff development day next year not be on August 8 since that is the day before school starts and it is imperative that teachers be in their classrooms. It was suggested that they move it to one of the work days (Wednesday – Friday) of the previous week. Is it possible that this was considered and/or changed and if so when would we find out?	The Calendar has been approved for next school year and is posted on the website. The Calendar Committee carefully reviewed all requests including this one. Efforts are being made to avoid scheduling full day activities in order for teachers to have at least a half day to be in their classrooms prior to the first day of school. Unfortunately, because there is a limited number of staff development days built into the calendar, some staff may be required to attend more than one meeting depending on their responsibilities. Attempts in the past to add these days to the calendar have been met with much opposition.
Dan River High	Why is the AP exam free for AP online/Virtual Virginia classes but if a student is in a	The State establishes these guidelines.

	classroom with a teacher, the student has to pay for the exam?	
Dan River High	Why is Governor's School on a ten point grading system and the high schools are not? This is not fair when calculating GPAs for those students who do not attend Governor's School.	This inquiry will be submitted to the Grading and Reporting Committee for further research and discussion. This was a collaborative effort with Danville City Schools.
Dan River High	Why do the high schools send all 10 <sup>th</sup> graders back to do a PCTC tour when all students attended the same tour as 8 <sup>th</sup> graders? Why can't the high schools ask those that are interested in attending PCTC to sign-up for the trip? There are 10 <sup>th</sup> graders who already know that they do not wish to attend PCTC in the future as an 11 <sup>th</sup> and/or 12 <sup>th</sup> grader.	The two visits allow the students' exposure to the opportunities provided by PCTC should students' interests and goals change over time.
Tunstall High	On the calendar for next school year, the last teacher professional day is Thursday, May 24 and graduation isn't until Saturday, May 26. Will teachers work May 25 and are we planning to have graduation (s) on Friday evening like we usually do?	Pittsylvania County Schools will follow the same schedule as last year with one graduation on Friday evening and the other three on Saturday. May 25, 2017, is not a scheduled work day.
Gretna Elementary	Could the second conference night be held before Christmas break for elementary schools?	Pittsylvania County Schools has established a requirement of one conference night to be held each semester for progress monitoring. Many schools select dates in October and January like your school.
Gretna Elementary	Could primary teachers send progress reports home on Mondays instead of Fridays? Teachers have a hard time getting children to return anything to school that is sent home on Fridays.	The Instructional Department will take this suggestion into consideration as the report card/progress report schedule is developed for 2017-2018.
Gretna	Another survey for 9-week	Communicating grades is important to both teachers and

Elementary	grading periods should be taken without parent input. Parents can access the parent portal at any time to keep up with student progress. Grading periods should be a decision that is made by teachers, not parents.	parents. The Grading and Reporting Committee did not feel it would be in the best interest of this school division to have a report card distributed on two different schedules due to the confusion that this could cause. In my research, a school division that instituted this practice eventually changed to only have one division-wide grading period due to complaints of confusion. Although many school divisions have switched to a 9-week grading period, overall research does not support one as being any more effective than the other. Frequent communication is the key factor to the success of either. Research actually promotes sending progress reports home every three weeks as opposed to every four and a half weeks, as is the current practice in most school divisions that have switched to nine-week grading periods. The Grading and Reporting Committee noted that not all families have access to the Internet or a cell phone. In remote areas of this County where Internet and cell phone reception is poor, access to the Parent Portal at any time is actually not an option for them. This inquiry will be taken to the Grading and Reporting Committee that will meet again on February 13, 2017. (Results of Grading and Reporting Survey were provided.)
Tunstall High	Why is the PCS gas mileage allowance of 48.5 cents lower than the minimum requirement of 54 cents per mile for business?	The reimbursement of \$.485 per mile for travel is the rate approved by the School Board.

**In the absence of Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items:**

1. Technology updates were provided. Teachers were asked to remind staff to submit the appropriate form prior to applying for technology grants.
2. The process of expanding the use of voice-over internet telephones has begun for the division. It is anticipated that this expansion will eliminate as many land lines as possible as the transition is completed. This expansion will provide a savings for the division.
3. Parents or staff who may have missed the initial opt-in text and would like to receive text messages from School Messenger should text YES to 68453. The telephone number must already be in PowerSchool to register and receive the text messages.
4. The Safety Audit Committee has met to review all of your safety audits for the 2016-2017 school year.
5. School security cameras have been ordered for each middle school. The middle schools will be receiving ten (10) additional indoor cameras and three (3) outdoor cameras which will provide approximately 15 security cameras for each school. These cameras should be installed before the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Next year will be the final year of the State Security Grants. The school division will apply

for this grant for the 2017-2018 school year and, if awarded, will use the funding to add additional security cameras at all elementary schools and the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center.

6. Unannounced lockdown drills will begin in February, 2017.
7. The middle schools will participate in the Secondary School Climate Survey in the coming months. The survey measures student and teacher perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, student engagement in school, and the extent of bullying and teasing at school. The school climate survey is a tool for schools to monitor and improve school climate in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning.

**Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items:**

1. The 2017-2018 school calendar was approved by the School Board at its December 13, 2016, meeting and is posted on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website. A change has been made for August 7, 2017. Teachers will work from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. which will still allow the opportunity to visit other schools as needed. Open House will be held on August 7, 2017, from 1:30 - 6:30 p.m. The expectation is for teachers to be present at the school at 1:00 p.m. to be prepared for the Open House. August 8, 2017, is a Teacher Professional Day and division-level staff development will be scheduled as needed with no session exceeding three (3) hours.
2. The Graduate of Merit recognition program will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. at the Averett Convocation Center, Danville, Virginia. There are 138 candidates for Graduate of Merit for the 2017-2016 school year - 31 from Chatham High School; 37 from Dan River High School; 18 from Gretna High School; and 52 from Tunstall High School. Sponsorships are being secured for the students and scholarships.
3. The Summer and Fall 2016 preliminary Standards of Learning (SOL) writing assessment results indicate that the four (4) high schools have exceeded the State accreditation requirement and the division exceeds the required pass rate with a county-wide average of 84.11% in writing.

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

1. The December 1 Child Count report was provided. There are 1,166 students receiving special education services as of December 1, 2016. This represents 12.78% of the total student population for Pittsylvania County Schools. This number has decreased from past year. The largest group of identified students is in the category of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). The second largest group is the Other Health Impairments (OHI) category. The Support Services Department is continuing to serve these students through to graduation.
2. The Support Services Department has partnered with the Instructional Department to offer training to teachers for a Multi-Sensory Reading Program which provides additional support for students who have reading challenges.
3. The schedule for the IEP (Individualized Educational Program) checkout and the alternate assessments programs are being developed.

**Mrs. Tracey Worley, Director of Finance, provided information relative to the Local Option Health Insurance Plan.** The tentative timeline for the development of this plan was reviewed. The School Board has indicated its interest to participate in this plan. Also, the Finance Department has provided the claims information. The next timeline is January 2017 which is the deadline for the receipt of premium rates. However, as of this date, these rates have not been received. It is anticipated that the rates will be received on January 31, 2017. By the end of February, 2107, the School Board will need to determine if there will be a continuing interest in participation, and a binding election to participate in the plan will be requested in December, 2017. A comparison was provided for the State COVA Care and Pittsylvania County Schools KeyCare 30 12-month Health Insurance premiums. This comparison only includes rates and not plan benefits. The new State group plan will include a large pool of governmental entities and school divisions all over the State of Virginia (approximately 192,000 to date). The School Board is waiting to receive the premium and plan information for review. It was noted that the State pays more toward the employee's premium rate than Pittsylvania County School. Even if this plan is approved, the School Board has not included any additional funding in the budget to increase the employer rate toward the cost of health insurance for employees. It was also noted that the State is not providing any additional funding for this insurance plan. If the information is favorable, the Board will continue to pursue this opportunity. Information will be shared with employees as it is received.

A question was raised about the amount the employee would pay. It seems that Pittsylvania County Schools' employees will still pay more out of pocket than State employees because the school division would not be increasing the amount provided toward the employee's premium rate. The employer amount from the school division is much less than the amount paid by the State toward a family plan. At this time, the School Board has not included any money in the proposed budget to use toward health insurance premiums. Also, it is not known what the rates for the new plan may be (higher or lower). Of the 192,000 that are in the pool of interested participants, some of these may determine not to proceed in the plan once the rates are released. The School Board will determine in February if they have continuing interest in participation in the plan. The School Board will decide in December, 2017, if the plan is in the best interest of its employees.

The Superintendent indicated that Mrs. Worley will share this information with the Advisory Councils this week. Also, principals will receive a copy of the presentation to share with their faculties.

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

1. Budget information for the 2017-2018 school year was provided. The Governor is proposing an additional \$2,092,032 for Pittsylvania County Schools. However, \$750,000 of this amount must be used for non-recurring expenses which does not include salaries and benefits. In addition, the General Assembly passed an increase in the employer share contribution to the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) of 1.66% which is \$683,635. The Governor is also proposing a 1.5% bonus for Standards of Quality (SOQ) funded positions. It has been the practice of the school system to provide the same benefit to all employees which would cost an additional \$231,000 over the provided funding of

\$535,220. The remaining \$123,000 of new State revenue would be available to use for operating expenditures. The Budget Committee is working on the budget proposal but will await the budget versions from the House and Senate for further discussion. The General Assembly cross-over will be on February 15 with the adjournment expected on February 25, 2017. It is the hope to have a proposed budget for School Board review at its March 14, 2017, meeting. A public hearing for the 2017-2018 budget proposal will be held on March 16, 2017.

2. Appreciation was expressed to the teachers for their input and participation in the Compensation Study. The Central Office has worked closely with Evergreen Solutions, and a report has been developed. This report will be presented to the School Board at a special meeting on Thursday, February 2, 2017. The Superintendent's Wrap-Up will include a link for employees to review the results of the Compensation Study.
3. The school division will host its own Teacher Job Fair on Saturday, March 11, 2017. The Fair will be held at Chatham Middle School from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon. All schools will be represented along with a representative from the Career Switcher Program. An e-mail blast will be sent to applicants on TalentEd and to college and universities inviting them to the event. Representatives were also asked to invite any potential teacher to attend this event.
4. Dr. Holland will attend the Minority Recruitment Fair sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education on February 16, 2017. This Fair will provide an opportunity to recruit minority candidates and share news about Pittsylvania County Schools. Dr. Holland and staff will also be attending other recruitment events at Liberty University, Longwood College, Radford University and Virginia State University.
5. Intent forms have been received from employees for the 2017-2018 school year. At this time there are 8½ teacher vacancies that were not filled for the 2016-2017 school year which include two (2) librarians, a special education teacher, two (2) family & consumer science teachers, two (2) JROTC instructors, a gifted teacher and a math teacher (1/2). Currently, there are seven (7) teachers who have indicated they will be resigning or retiring at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. Vacancy announcements will be made for two (2) English teachers, special education teacher, art teacher, two (2) elementary teachers, science teacher and an occupational therapist. For classified staff, there are 7½ positions that will be advertised for 2017-2018. These vacancies will be posted around the end of March or the first of April. Also, it was noted that the school system continually needs substitute teachers, substitute custodians, substitute cafeteria workers and substitute bus drivers.
6. A new licensure requirement will become effective July 1, 2017. Anyone renewing or seeking initial licensure after July 1, 2017, will be required to complete a mandatory Dyslexia awareness training. Teachers whose licenses will expire June 30, 2017, were encouraged to complete and provide all renewal documentation by June 1, 2017 to ensure this submission to the State prior to July 1, 2017. It is anticipated that the Dyslexia training will be an on-line module for license holders to complete.

**The Superintendent addressed the following items:**

1. Notifications regarding inclement weather delays or closing are usually provided as soon after 5:30 a.m. or the previous day if possible. Schools have been closed for three (3) days. Two (2) of these days will be made up using banked days already in the calendar.

The third day will be made up on February 20, 2017. It was noted that February 17, 2017, will become a full day for students. Students will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 20, 2017, and teachers will remain for an afternoon teacher workday. Appreciation was expressed to the individuals who helped to remove the snow from school parking areas and sidewalks. There were no concerns noted regarding the use of SchoolMessenger.

2. The General Assembly is seeing the need for computer skills. Staff will be meeting to determine how to prepare computer coding instruction into the curriculum for students in all grades.
3. The following legislative issues are being discussed in the General Assembly:
  - a. Standards of Quality changes dealing with staffing and school facilities
  - b. Changes in testing
  - c. Changes in graduation requirements
  - d. Changes in student discipline such as eliminating opportunities for principals to suspend students in grades K-5 and limit the discipline that can be meted out to students
  - e. Bills that would permit a school security officer to carry a hand gun on school property
  - f. Require computer science instruction in all Virginia schools
  - g. Bills regarding bullying
  - h. Pre-Labor Day bills to allow school divisions to open prior to Labor Day
  - i. Allowing private school students to receive public school money to apply toward the cost of private school education
  - j. Homeschool student participation in VHSL activities

Appreciation was expressed to the teachers for the job they do each day. The Superintendent has had the opportunity to provide information to civic groups showing how Pittsylvania County Schools compare to other area divisions. The school system exceeds other area divisions in most of the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.