

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
November 21, 2016**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, November 21, 2016, 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.

Sixteen (16) schools were represented. Also present were Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Ms. B. Teresa Petty, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

SCHOOL	QUESTION/COMMENT	COMMENTS
Tunstall Middle	Why can't Google Chrome be installed on our computers? There are several educational apps that the VDOE and professional development courses are suggesting that teachers use with students. However, we are unable to use the apps because we don't have Google Chrome. Many other divisions are using the apps in the classroom on a daily basis. These apps are a wonderful way to formatively assess students, and they promote student engagement. Why does Pittsylvania County always seem behind when it comes to the use of technology in the classroom?	Installing the Chrome browser on Windows based computers poses many security threats. However, there may be some applications that are available through the existing Google Apps for Education suite that we use, now called G Suite. One such application that we are piloting in several middle and high schools is Google Classroom. This allows teachers and students to collaborate on projects as well as share presentations and quizzes with students. Additionally, we are piloting the deployment of Chrome devices at all elementary schools, several high schools, and one middle school. If these pilots go well, we expect to deploy these devices at all schools. Chrome devices will allow teachers to select the applications and websites that will best enhance their teaching. We hope this will lead to embracing Chrome a little more.
Gretna High	Due to an increase in equipment and technology usage, the need for a full time IT/ITRT person at the schools is necessary. When using wireless tablets, connectivity is not consistent. A lot of preparation goes into creating lessons for use on these tablets. When a portion of your class can connect while others cannot, it becomes increasingly frustrating. A serious look at a new setup so that bandwidth is ample must occur so that instruction can be supported properly.	I applaud the hard work of supporting instruction provided by all six of our ITRTs as well the guidance and leadership of our Lead ITRT, Mrs. Cathy Scolpini. As instruction becomes more dependent on technology, the need for ITRTs increases. Hopefully, as the budget increases, we will add more ITRTs. In the coming months we will begin the process of changing our wireless system throughout the division to a much more robust one that will provide better coverage throughout all buildings.
Tunstall Middle	There is a huge issue with school dismissal on Tunstall High Road. As I understand it, car riders/drivers (at the high school) are being dismissed later. This is causing a huge traffic problem on Tunstall High Road. Buses leaving the middle school are not able to leave on time. In	The traffic issue on Tunstall High Road has been reviewed by Mr. Kenyon Scott, Director of Pupil Transportation, and Mr. Bobby Lovelace, Retired Director. During this school year, students at the high school are dismissed first and asked to turn left to alleviate traffic going to the middle schools. Routes of

	<p>fact, on 10/26 second load buses were unable to leave until approximately 3:25. This is causing some bus drivers to make as many as 40 stops (20 additional stops) because they are getting behind the Stony Mill buses and Twin Springs buses. Teachers are teaching up until 3:06, but then we are having to hold students until 3:30 on some days. Teachers at Tunstall Middle School are staying later than teachers at other schools because of this problem. In addition, when we try to leave school, it takes 15-20 minutes to make it to Mt. Cross Road. This makes it difficult for us to pick up our own children and nearly impossible to schedule doctor/dentist appointments after school. Some days the line to get off of Tunstall High Road is backed up all the way to the middle school. This was not a problem until a couple of years ago. How can this problem be solved?</p>	<p>some of the buses leaving Stony Mill Elementary School have also been adjusted. The times for dismissal of students riding the bus is later than car drivers. We will continue to monitor this as the school year continues and will address the increase in student drivers as licenses are obtained during the year.</p>
Tunstall Middle	<p>Why are Math and English teachers required to stay after school for training in inclusion? Middle school English and Math teachers have already gone through this training with TTAC and received recertification points.</p>	<p>This is a local school decision. There was training for inclusion conducted by TTAC. Additional training will be provided to ensure students are receiving the support they need.</p>
Tunstall Middle	<p>There is an unfair amount of instructional time that is being lost due to the County mandated assessments and other activities planned by the County. For example, 7th grade English teachers are MAP testing 3 times a year. Most students are taking 2 class periods to complete the test. In addition, English teachers are giving writing Common Assessments (multiple choice portion and direct writing portion) each six weeks. The direct writing portion takes, at minimum, 2 class periods. Then 7th grade goes to STEM 5 times during a school year and to the Career Expo at the AG center. When combined, we are losing 20 instructional days (at minimum).</p>	<p>According to Memo I-1-16-17, July 1, 2016, it was stated and underlined that <u>Mid-year MAP assessments are optional and will be left to the discretion of the school with the exception of preschool.</u> According to the recommendation from the NWEA, MAP only takes 45 minutes (one class period). Mid-year data is quite helpful if it is analyzed and used to inform and adjust instruction.</p> <p>Please see the comments below regarding STEM visits.</p> <p>It is a best practice to utilize common assessments in order to gauge how students are progressing, especially, in content areas that did not meet the State SOL benchmark, Grade 8 writing, for example. The division pass rate for Writing 8 was 71% which did not meet the State benchmark of 75%. No school met the State benchmark of 75%. School administrators determine the intervals for giving common assessments. Many schools direct common assessments to be given every 2-3 weeks.</p>
Tunstall Middle	<p>Why can't other grade levels go to STEM? Why does 7th grade have to go to the Career Expo? The writing portion of MAP was taken away as a requirement, but then the requirement for Common Assessments was added. Every school is not on block schedule and it is not easy to get these assessments completed in one class period. Students and teachers are becoming burned out by the number of assessments being required.</p>	<p>Please see the comments below from Chatham Middle regarding STEM visits. Also, according to the recommendation from the NWEA, MAP only takes 45 minutes (one class period). This should be a similar expectation for IA (PowerSchool Analytics and Assessments).</p>

Stony Mill Elem.	<p>The proposed calendar for next school year does not have a short workday (8:00-11:00 or 9:00-12:00) after the 9:00-7:00 pm open house?</p> <p>Why has that 3 hour workday gotten eliminated? Why did we have it in the past?</p>	This concern will be taken to the December 1, 2016, Calendar Committee Meeting.
Chatham Middle	Is there a possibility of moving STEM visits from the 7th grade to the 6th grade? On the current semester scheduling, Civics classes are losing multiple hours of instruction time because of STEM visits. There are no semester classes that have an SOL test in the 6th grade.	The goal of the original STEM grant was to provide opportunities for one grade level of students at the elementary, middle and high school level which includes grade 5, 7, and 9. The school division is expected to follow the grant as it was written in order to maintain funding. According to the original grant, the goal is to seek ways to add grade levels.
Dan River Middle	When will the 8th graders be touring the Career and Technical Center?	Middle and high school principals suggested possible dates and submitted them to Ms. Elizabeth Craig, Director of Secondary/Middle Education, and Mrs. Angela Rigney, Director/Principal of the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center, at the Principals' and Supervisors' Meeting on November 10, 2016. These dates are still being finalized and will be provided after confirmation.
Tunstall High	What is the likelihood of the school system converting to a 9-week grading period? Nine-week sessions would allow for a better measurement of a student's performance in class as there would be more opportunity for assigned grades giving students more opportunity to raise class averages; plus it eliminates one of the early dismissal days giving more time back to the classroom.	The Grading and Reporting Committee reviewed this recommendation on November 16, 2016.
Tunstall High	For future scheduling consideration: If possible in the future, please do not schedule a half day on Friday, come on Monday, and be off on Tuesday. Attendance was way down during this time. Students basically took a 5-day weekend. It might work better to have all day Monday and Tuesday or 1/2 day Monday and all day Tuesday. Grades didn't need to be in until Wednesday at 5:00. Surely that would have been enough time for everyone to get their grades in the system.	This suggestion will be taken to the December 1, 2016, Calendar Committee Meeting.
Gretna Elementary	Why didn't Gretna Elementary School have a representative on the calendar committee?	There is a rotation schedule for all division committees. The goal is to ensure representation from each region of the County which includes administrators, teachers/staff, and parents.
Gretna Elementary	A resource teacher would like to know if it is possible to get the 'O' for Outstanding effort back on report cards.	The Grading and Reporting Committee reviewed this recommendation on November 16, 2016. It was determined by the committee that no further action is necessary at this time.
Gretna Elementary	Second grade math pacing guide only follows Envision math and not the curriculum framework. There are some topics that are in pacing guide that are not 2nd grade material.	Math Pacing Guides are being revised during the summer of 2017 to be ready for full implementation for 2018-2019.
Gretna Elementary	Are teachers allowed to give a zero for a grade? Presently, we are supposed to give a 50%. If a	On November 16, 2016, the Grading and Reporting Committee reviewed this concern. It was

	student does not turn in assignments or complete projects, why should they get any credit at all?	recommended that elementary principals meet to review the grading and reporting guidelines that were previously established.
Dan River High	Could we ever consider going back to starting the school year after Labor Day?	This suggestion will be taken to the December 1, 2016, Calendar Committee Meeting.
Twin Springs Elementary	Suggestion - If the county chooses to stay with a 6-week grading period, progress reports should be eliminated and parents encouraged to use the Parent Portal.	On November 16, 2016, the Grading and Reporting Committee unanimously indicated that progress reports are a necessity and will continue because this is in the best interest of the students. Feedback is a best practice. The goal is to continue educating parents about the importance of utilizing the Parent Portal.
Gretna Elementary	Looking at the calendar for next year, couldn't professional development days be scheduled the week before students start? This would allow teachers to be in their classrooms the day before students arrive.	This suggestion will be taken to the December 1, 2016, Calendar Committee Meeting.
Twin Springs Elementary	Is it possible to hire an Art teacher for the County since teachers have to put in an art grade or can we have the art grade removed from the elementary report card?	The Grading and Reporting Committee reviewed your concern regarding the removal of art from the elementary report card. Art is a Virginia Department of Education Standards of Quality requirement. Standard 1: Other Required Programs states that School Boards must implement art, music, and physical education. Therefore, art cannot be removed from the report card.
Tunstall Middle	Why are high school teachers paid extra to teach classes during their planning time? Many elementary and middle school teachers are working during their planning time. They use this time to tutor students, read tests to students, and catch students up after being absent. Elementary and middle school teachers are never paid extra for this time.	<p>These teachers are teaching a class that we either could not find an instructor to fill a vacancy. Or, we do not have enough staff to meet the course needs of students. These are courses in which the student receives credit. According to the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-291.1, Planning time for school teachers, it states that each school board shall ensure that all elementary school teachers in its employment are provided at least an average of 30 minutes per day during the students' school week as planning time.</p> <p>"Planning period" means one class period per day or the equivalent unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties.</p> <p>8 VAC 20-131-240 H. states that each full-time middle and secondary classroom teacher shall be provided one planning period per day or the equivalent, unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties.</p> <p>If a teacher elects to use his/her planning time for an occasional tutoring, that is understandable and I appreciate the teacher's commitment to the success of her students. However, it should not be a regular on-going activity or expectation</p>
Gretna Elementary	Is there any chance of implementing the Sub Finder program next year?	I am reviewing potential vendors for quotes to submit to the Budget Committee for consideration.
Dan River High	Could we possibly have a simple procedure to donate sick days to other teachers without having	We have a sick leave bank policy in place as well as a policy for the voluntary donation of days. These two

	to get special permission?	policies are meeting this need.
Tunstall High	Because substitutes are in such great need, why can't PCS make an online substitute training video? This way people moving into the area, finishing college, or changing jobs could become subs rather quickly. We miss out on available people because the training is offered so few times. They could go to Central Office to watch the training video and be ready to sub as soon as the other requirements are fulfilled. They could also apply for a password to view the training video with a simple test following.	This is a good suggestion and will take it under advisement. However, we are committed to having a quality orientation program in place for our substitutes. We have had 15 training sessions since August 2, 2016. We aim to have substitutes in place at the beginning of the semester. We want some face to face time with the individuals to help them to understand the importance of their role and provide the procedures and protocol that would be unique to the school division.

An additional question was raised about extra pay for a middle school teacher that has no planning period. It was requested that this specific issue be submitted to the Central Office for review.

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

1. Information relative to the development of the 2017-2018 School Board Calendar Proposal was provided. Employees, parents, students and the community have been invited to review the proposed calendar and provide comments or suggestions by November 28, 2016. Representatives were also encouraged to provide suggestions as requested.
2. The Grading and Reporting Committee met recently to discuss the possibility of a change in the grading period from 6-weeks to 9-weeks. Information about current practices in other divisions and teacher and parent surveys was obtained and results were split. After a review of these results, the Committee felt that there was not enough data to change from a 6-weeks grading period to a 9-weeks period. However, this possibility will continue to be reviewed. The Committee members also discussed two other areas of concern:
 - a. There is concern about the timeframe of when report cards are issued after the end of the grading period. It was determined that this timeframe should be shortened because the current timeframe is too close to the issuance of progress reports.
 - b. The grades elementary students in the areas of reading, spelling, handwriting and language arts will be reduced to two (2) grades: one for reading and one for language arts (language, spelling and handwriting).

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

1. Staff has the option for a two-factor authentication for their Google Mail account. Any questions relative to this process should be addressed to Dr. Early.
2. The Information Technology (IT) Department is in the process of delivering Chromebase computers and tables to the elementary schools for the K-3 initiative.

- Teachers should be reminded not to move this equipment out of the classroom. Also, the IT staff is working with the Instruction Department on a method to request and add additional applications and websites to these devices.
3. The switching updates have been completed at Tunstall High School, Hurt Elementary School, Kentuck Elementary School, Southside Elementary School, Stony Mill Elementary School and Tunstall Middle School. This update should increase the network speed by approximately 10 times. If the E-Rate funding is available next year, more schools will be scheduled for similar updates.
 4. A schedule of the updates for PowerSchool was provided as follows:
 - i. Friday, November 18, 2016, at 12:30 p.m.
 - ii. Friday, December 16, 2016, at 3:30 p.m.
 - iii. Friday, January 20, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.
 - iv. Friday, February 17, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.
 - v. Friday, March 17, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.
 - vi. Friday, April 21, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.
 5. Teachers should be reminded to complete work orders for laptops as issues are noted. A post-it note should not be left on the laptop to request repairs. Teachers should enter their own work order and include an e-mail address. This provides the technician the opportunity to communicate with the teacher relative to the requested work order.
 6. Full-time employees of Pittsylvania County Schools have the opportunity to purchase one copy of Office 2016 at a reduced rate. Employees should email microsoft@pcs.k12.va.us for instructions.
 7. The school safety audits have been completed. Additional unannounced lockdown drills will be scheduled during the second semester. A division review of the school safety audits and the Crisis Management Plan will be completed on January 6, 2017.
 8. Appreciation was expressed to the teachers for their participation in the recent Earthquake Drill. A Tornado Drill will be conducted in the Spring.
 9. The school division is looking at an expansion of the CISCO telephone system. More information will be forthcoming relative to any changes.

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

1. A schedule of the 2016 flu clinics was provided. These clinics were held in the schools. The number of participants was less than last year. The Health Department was unable to offer the afternoon clinics for community members.
2. The following training opportunities have been provided for teachers:
 - a. Incredible Years for K-2 teachers which supports the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) initiatives.
 - b. Mandt Training which is a comprehensive, integrated approach to preventing, de-escalating and if necessary intervening when the behavior of an individual poses a threat of harm to themselves and/or others. This training will also be provided to principals.

3. The school system has partnered with ARC to provide workplace experiences for students with disabilities. Currently, there are fifteen (15) students working in this program.
4. The school division is offering an Applied Studies Diploma for students with disabilities. This diploma is available to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and who do not meet the requirements of for other diplomas.
5. Twelve (12) new buses were purchased. This allowed for the retirement of twelve (12) older buses which will be used as back-up transportation as needed.
6. Training is continuing for bus drivers. It is anticipated that additional training times and sessions will be conducted to increase the number of substitute drivers available.
7. Training is continuing for First Aid and CPR for the first responders in the schools and facilities.
8. The School-Home Coordinators are helping with Thanksgiving deliveries to identified families. They will also make deliveries for Christmas.
9. The Medicaid recovery is going well.

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

1. Information was provided relative to the progress of the Compensation Study for the school division. Appreciation was expressed to those who attended orientation sessions, served on focus groups and completed the JAT survey. The employee response rate was 44% for the survey. The administrators and supervisors reviewed the survey. Evergreen Solutions completed a market study and are now compiling information to determine how salaries for Pittsylvania County Schools compare in the market. A report on the Compensation Study will be presented to the School Board at its December 13, 2016, meeting.
2. The Salary Taskforce has met and discussed the following tentative recommendations for the 2017-2018 school budget:
 - a. Maintain positions
 - b. Provide a minimum 3% raise for all employees
 - c. Maintain current benefits with no increase in employee share
 - d. Review teacher salary scales
 - e. Review Special Education Assistant pay rates and benefits
 - f. Review teacher aide salary scales
 - g. Provide a copy of the Compensation Study to the Board of Supervisors
 - h. Reclassify attendance clerks to administrative assistants

The Salary Taskforce will review the recommendations at its next meeting on December 7, 2016, to determine its request to be presented to the School Board.
3. A public input session for the 2017-2018 budget will be held during the School Board meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2016. December 16, 2016, is the deadline for submission of any items to be considered for the budget proposal.
4. It was noted that Governor McAuliffe had hoped to have additional funds to provide the 2% salary increase. However, the Governor has indicated that there is

no surplus of funds for the remainder of this year. Pittsylvania County Schools remained committed to its employees and provided the 2% raise for the 2016-2017 school year. The School Board is using \$670,000 from other areas to provide the necessary funds to cover the 2% raise. The School Board and staff will begin working on the 2017-2018 budget proposed to present to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

Dr. Mark R. Jones, Division Superintendent, addressed the following items:

1. Information relative to school closings was provided. Beginning this year, the school closings will be announced through SchoolMessenger. Attempts are made to notify staff and parents of closings and delays the night before or by 5:30 a.m. if possible. Staff and parents will continue to receive the telephone calls and messages; however, messages regarding school closings and delays will be posted through SchoolMessenger on the website. The browser may need to be refreshed to ensure the message is the most up-to-date information. Staff and parents will be asked to provide feedback relative to the use of the new system later in the year to determine the continued use of this system. Should there be any issues in receiving e-mails or text messages, please contact the Superintendent, Mrs. Kim Clifton, Digital Design/Webmaster, or Ms. Ashley Clowers, Analyst.
2. The School Board met with three (3) of the four (4) area legislators on October 24, 2016. Delegates Danny Marshall and Les Adams, and Senator Frank Ruff attended the meeting. Discussion included the following items:
 - a. Virtual School – Pittsylvania County Schools (PCS) has more than ten (10) students attending schools virtually in other counties. This is a concern because these students are not counted in the Average Daily Membership (ADM) for PCS.
 - b. Pre-Labor Day opening – Request was made to allow the local school division to determine opening. At this time, a waiver may be requested for the eligibility terms are met (must miss an average of 8 days in 5 of the last 10 years)
 - c. Request for reduction in the number of unfunded mandates (such as Epi-Pens, First Aid/CPR & AED and Personal Finance requirements)
 - d. Request to find the money to fund the 2% salary increase for this year and next year.
 - e. Broadband is needed in the County and assistance was requested to provide funding for this.
 - f. Request to restore the percentage of State operational funds for K-12 education back to the 2010 level (from 28% to 35%)
 - g. Request the General Assembly to review and approve a cost of competing allowance for area counties.
3. The School Board has requested staff to review ERIP (Early Retirement Incentive Program) and the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA requires a 26-week break in service before an employee who has resigned or retired may return in work in a non-benefited position (such as substitute or tutor). Staff is

working with Congressman Robert Hurt's Office to seek a waiver of this ACA requirement.

4. The Boys and Girls Club of Chatham recently lost their meeting location and requested space at the STEM Academy to continue their program. The School Board approved this request.

The next meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council on January 30, 2017, will be held virtually with teachers going to the high school closest to their home or worksite.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.