

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
April 19, 2010**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, April 19, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

All schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey B. Early, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, and Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology. ABSENT: Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

The following Council topics were discussed:

- A request was made to replace an English teacher at Tunstall High School for the 2010-2011 school year.
Reductions in staff for the 2010-2011 school year have been based on enrollment figures gathered by the instructional staff.
- A question was raised about having the 2011 graduation on Memorial Day weekend and specifically if this was discussed with parents.
The graduation date was discussed. In the past there have been concerns expressed about using Memorial Day as a make-up day. It was determined that Memorial Day weekend may be a good time for graduation with families already coming home for the holiday. This, however, was not the determining factor for the calendar. The Calendar Committee focused on the instructional program in developing the calendar. The School Board approved the calendar on a 7-0 vote.
- Ms. Kathy Buck, representing the Pittsylvania Education Association (PEA), invited everyone to attend the Board of Supervisors public hearing on the budget. This public hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Buck indicated that the Board of Supervisors responds to the number of individuals who attend the meetings for a particular cause. The support of everyone is needed for public education.
- A question was raised about the work day scheduled on August 12, 2010.
The work day for teachers on August 12, 2010, will begin at 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The open house for parents and students will begin at 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. On Friday, August 13, 2010, teachers will end

their work day at 12:00 noon. Some teachers have expressed appreciation for this schedule because the teachers in the past have generally worked the morning prior to open house.

- A question was raised about using bank days as first priority make-up days and the reasoning for moving the March 25 make-up day in the priority listing. The original calendar proposal had the bank days as number 1 and 2 priority.
The change was made in order to focus on instruction. During the 2009-2010 school year, there were four (4) days missed for instruction (days that did not have to be made up). Banked days would be missed instruction for students. The Calendar Committee felt that February 18 would be a better make-up day than March 25. The intent of the Committee was to have a quality instructional day after a missed day for students.
- A question was raised about how pay periods would be affected by the change in the calendar for 2010-2011.
The pay periods will not be changed. The first check will be issued on the last working day of September, 2010.
- A question was raised about the possibility of a better early retirement incentive in the future.
When the budget process began, there were no thoughts of an early retirement incentive. It was the desire not to cut salaries/jobs or programs for the system. Another goal was added to maintain the long-term viability of the school system. No employee was RIFed. The Early Retirement Health Insurance Incentive Program (ERHIIP) provided an opportunity for qualified employees to receive retirement benefits from the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), ERIP salary and the health insurance benefit from the school system. In the past, retirees have used their ERIP salary to pay for continuing health insurance. This new incentive program allows the ERIP employees to put money back into the economy. The school system will also be hiring new employees to replace necessary positions. There will be additional challenges for the 2011-2012 school budget with possible reductions in Title I, special education and stimulus funding. It is not known if any additional incentive programs would be offered in the future. It is the desire to hold health insurance costs to a minimum for the employee, to keep jobs and instructional programs in place and look at the long-term viability of the organization. The Superintendent and staff were commended for their work on the budget.
- A concern was expressed about the Regional Alternative School students being overcharged for breakfast and lunch. There are also discrepancies in student accounts.

It was noted that Mrs. Deborah Powell, Principal of the Regional Alternative School, should contact Mrs. Rhonda Yates, Supervisor of School Nutrition, to determine what should be the correct charges and to check on current student accounts.

- A question was raised about the decision to eliminate the lead teacher pay but to continue the supplements for the assistant athletic directors.
The School Board had to find \$4.7 million in budget cuts for the 2010-2011 school year. A list of priority budget cuts was developed. ERHIIP will help with the shortage of funding.
- A concern was expressed about employees or students who have vacations planned in August and that comments relative to the school calendar proposal were not considered.
There were over 300 comments received for the first version of the calendar and 168 comments for the second version. All comments were read and considered as the calendar was developed. The School Board recognizes that vacations have been scheduled, and staff will work with employees and staff because of the change in the school calendar. The School Board appreciated the fact that the calendar had been built on instruction and the instructional integrity for the students.
- A question was raised about scheduling a visit to the Career-Tech Center and high schools for Grade 8 students prior to the SOL tests. Specifically, the concern centered around taking instructional time away from the students prior to SOLs.
This information will be taken into consideration as schedules are made for the 2010-2011 school year.
- It was also suggested that a County-wide transitional plan be developed for students going from Grade 8 to Grade 9 to include a more concise way to communicate and provide information to students and parents.
- A question was raised about the possibility of mailing report cards or having parents pick up the report cards at the end of the school year for the middle school students. Currently the sixth weeks report card information is due the last week of May which means there are less than six weeks of instructional work for that period.
There is a cost factor in mailing the report cards. Dr. Lillian Holland will check on the dates for the submission of information for report cards. The PowerSchool grade book should help because the teachers should be keeping up-to-date grades in the system. The teachers indicated that PowerSchool is sometimes down. Mr. Rickey Parker asked that he be contacted if there are any problems with PowerSchool. The Instructional Department will discuss with principals the end of year activities (awards assemblies, field days, etc.) in order to manage and plan these activities appropriately.

Dr. Jeffrey B. Early, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, discussed the following items:

- The Special Education Advisory Committee has decided not to hold the annual Sammye W. Shelton Field Day for special needs students. The Committee will pursue other options for the students in the fall.
- Grade 5 students at the elementary schools should have received information about the Tdap clinics. These clinics will be held at each middle school at the end of April. All rising Grade 6 students must have this vaccination prior to registration for the upcoming school year.

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

- The school system is currently posting vacancies for 34 certified staff and 16 classified staff positions. The classified staff vacancies include ten (10) PALS tutors.
- There are currently 94 employees who have indicated they will retire at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The annual luncheon to honor the retirees will be held on Friday, May 28, 2010.
- The Human Resources staff generally attends 25 recruiting sessions. Only eight (8) recruitment fairs were attended during the 2009-2010 school year because of budget cuts. These fairs included those within the Commonwealth of Virginia at St. Paul's University, University of Virginia, Liberty University, James Madison University, Longwood University, Hampton University, Virginia Union University and Averett University.
- The Student Code of Conduct was reviewed by the Behavior Management Taskforce. The Taskforce recommended no changes to the School Board. The School Board conducted its annual review of the Student Code of Conduct. The same procedures will be followed for the 2010-2011 school year.

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

- The State provides technology funding; however, these funds may only be spent on specific items. The goal of the Information Technology Department is to update the infrastructure in the secondary and middle schools and to have all Standards of Learning (SOL) testing on-line.
- A question was raised about the continuation of United Streaming. United Streaming will be available for use for the 2010-2011 school year.

- The issue of equity in testing at the elementary schools was discussed. Some schools are testing on-line while others are not. There is a fear that there may be discrepancies in the test scores. Another issue includes the tools needed for testing. Practice periods are being provided for the students. These tests are not timed; however, staff is sensitive to the equity issues. The use of laptops presents a problem because the batteries are not reliable. The ideal situation would include more labs at the elementary schools.

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

- The annual Graduate of Merit banquet has been scheduled on May 20, 2010. Scholarship sponsors are still needed.
- A copy of the 2010-2011 High School Course Selection Guide was provided to each Representative. This guide provides every detail necessary for students to plan for graduation. Career planning will be in place for elementary, middle and high schools for the 2010-2011 school year.
- A question was raised about the course offerings listed in the High School Course Selection Guide. All of the courses listed in the guide may not be offered because of low enrollment or lack of a qualified teacher. Some of the courses may be available through distance learning opportunities.

The Superintendent discussed the following items:

- The high school renovations are ahead of schedule, and the schools should be ready at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. The only potential problem may be the gym area; however, the high school principals are aware of this issue.
- Additional money was not received from the Board of Supervisors to help with the high school revitalization plans. These plans included fixing the track/athletic field issues at Chatham High School and adding additional storage buildings at each of the high schools. The school system saved approximately \$6 million in funding because of the lower bids received for the projects. However, the Board of Supervisors will be using this additional money and the interest received from the bond referendum to pay debt service.
- A prioritized listing of budget considerations as discussed by the School Board was distributed. The School Board had to cut approximately \$4.7 million from the school budget. The budget cuts begin with attrition. Once the calculation for ERIP salaries, ERHIIP, and attrition is completed, some of the items listed on the budget considerations may be put back into the budget.

On a consensus of the Representatives, there will be no June meeting for the Teachers' Advisory Council. Appreciation was expressed to each of the Representatives

for their service to the school and the school system. The Superintendent expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Representatives.

The Superintendent asked for suggestions on how to improve the meeting. The following suggestions were made:

1. Alternate the time of the meeting so that Representatives would not miss the same class each time. Some teachers were of the opinion that afternoons work better because of the distance to travel (savings on gas).
2. The Superintendent may plan to conduct a meeting as a distance learning experience during the 2010-2011 school year. Representatives may be asked to come to the nearest high school for the meeting. The first meeting of the 2010-2011 school year will be held at the Central Office with other meetings during the year to be held as distance learning opportunities.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.