

MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
December 6, 2010

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, December 6, 2010, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Nineteen (19) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, 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. ABSENT: Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A request was made to instruct the Sick Leave Bank Committee to follow the instructions of the physicians, allow the usage of the Sick Leave Bank for children or spouses of employees, and allow employees to donate sick leave days to other employees.
The Sick Leave Bank Policy is currently being reviewed. Any changes that are made would require a change in policy which must be approved by the School Board. The Sick Leave Bank is only for the employee's illness and does not cover spouses or children. The Sick Leave Bank Policy is very complicated and has been reviewed by the School Board attorney on several occasions. These suggestions will be taken into consideration.
2. Appreciation was expressed for the repair of the roof in the Cosmetology classroom at the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center.
3. A question was raised about the possibility of accumulating personal leave days rather than reverting to sick leave days.
Eligible employees receive three (3) days of personal leave each year. If these days are not used, they are accrued as personal leave days for a possible total of six (6) days of personal leave available for use during a school year. Any personal leave days above three (3) would revert to sick leave days at the end of a school year.
4. A concern was expressed about the lack of control over the heat and air in some classrooms at the Career-Tech Center and Gretna High School.
The heating and air conditioning system at the Career-Tech Center is older and very difficult to control. The system is not computerized and works on a thermostat. The new middle schools,

the high schools and the elementary schools are computerized and not controlled at the local school. The thermostats are set to go up or down by three (3) degrees. Work is still being completed to regulate the classrooms at the schools. The Career-Tech Center needs a new up-to-date system.

5. A question was raised about the possibility of receiving raises or step increases for the 2011-2012 school year.

It is anticipated that information about the 2011-2012 budget will be forthcoming from the Governor's Office around December 17, 2010. The Superintendent has been requested to compile graphs and charts for budget discussions by the Budget Committee and School Board.
6. A question was raised about the number of bus drivers that should be riding a bus and the safety on the bus.

It was noted that some bus drivers park their buses at the school and ride home together after the morning run to save fuel costs.
7. A concern was raised about Dan River High School students arriving late to the Career-Tech Center. These students are attending advisory meetings two times each six weeks. This creates a problem for some of the programs at the Career-Tech Center that serve patrons or volunteer at nursing homes.

Ms. Ann Cassada, Director of Secondary Education, is working with the high school principals and Mr. Jimmie Tickle, Principal of the Pittsylvania Career & Technical Center, to address these issues.
8. Appreciation was expressed from Ms. Bethany Tucker for the new computer in her classroom.
9. Budget issues and concerns were discussed. Specifically, the following issues were addressed:
 - a. The Federal Education Jobs Bill funding has been allocated. However, these are reimbursable funds, and the school system must spend the money and then request reimbursement. The school system would like to use this funding to save jobs. There are currently 42 positions that are being funded with stimulus money that will no longer be available after the 2010-2011 school year. The Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) and the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) suggested that these funds not be expended at this time. The State has been discussing the possibility of cutting the funding for basic aid which would require school divisions to use the Federal Education Jobs Bill funding for this purpose. At the current time, the school system is waiting for additional information on what the State will approve. The Superintendent indicated that he would like to maintain the 42 positions and provide a bonus for staff members if feasible.

- b. A question was raised about the possibility of hiring staff to fill the positions that were not replaced for the 2010-2011 school year. The Superintendent indicated that the budget for 2011-2012 does not appear to be any better than this year. The Federal Education Jobs Bill funding is one-time money and would only provide the school system an additional year of funding. Staff has been instructed to replace positions in the budget with some of the 42 positions that are being paid from the stimulus funds. Other school divisions have reduced the number of staff members. Pittsylvania County Schools has not added any percentages to the unemployment rate. However, the school system has been cut \$8.5 million in local funding for the last two (2) years. The Governor has asked departments to consider 6%, 4% and 2% cuts in their budgets. A 2% cut for Pittsylvania County Schools would result in a reduction of \$1 million in State funds. The hope of this school system is to put money in employees' pockets, maintain operations and give support in the classrooms.
 - c. A suggestion was made for the Superintendent to visit each school and explain the budget process. It was felt that these presentations have been very helpful. The Superintendent indicated that the staff would be committed to this.
 - d. A question was raised about the possibility of providing teachers a reduction in the number of days required to work if an increase in salary is not available. It was noted that the Code of Virginia requires a teacher to work a 200-day contract.
10. A concern was expressed about employees returning to work in August and having to wait two (2) months before being paid.
Employees were encouraged to sign up to receive 12 paychecks.
However, deductions are set up for 10 months to begin October 1 of each year.
11. A suggestion was made to use an O for Outstanding for students rather than using S, N or U.
12. A question was raised relative to the number of absences during the first semester for faculty and staff.
It is not known if there has been a high rate of absences during the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year.
13. A question was asked about the differences in the differentiated instruction and the standardized testing. It was indicated that teachers teach on different levels when using the differentiated instruction; however, the testing is on the same level.
Differentiated instruction is a positive approach to the different levels in the classrooms. Testing is how students and school systems are measured.
14. A question was raised about the possibility of old computers being offered to teachers.

This is not an option because the school system is restricted to disposal of or selling at public surplus auction any old computers or equipment.

15. The issue of how expo (not exploratory) classes affect family and consumer science classes was readdressed.

The schedule was designed to provide remediation and recovery time and more physical education for students. It was noted that the new schedule does provide the opportunity to incorporate more students into the exploratory classes and gives students more physical education. Dr. Lillian Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mr. Clarke Scott, Director of Middle School Education, and Dr. Brad Bryant, Director of Career & Technical Education, will be asked to discuss the instruction being provided in the exploratory classes to determine how it relates to family and consumer science courses.
16. Representatives were asked to e-mail comments or questions for the Advisory Council meetings to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent with a copy to the Superintendent and Mrs. Janet F. Hancock, Clerk of the Board.
17. A question was raised about a specific special education class at Stony Mill Elementary School.

Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, indicated that staff is currently working with the school to address the issue.
18. A concern was expressed about the cost of health insurance for employees.

The school system is self-insured which means that all premium payments are placed in one pot with the claims being paid from there. Anthem provides the health insurance coverage and based on the claims reported determine the amount needed for the next year. Because of the Health Care Reform bill, Anthem has notified the school system that premiums will increase by at least 1.3% for next year which does not include any additional changes to premiums that may occur. The Superintendent indicated that staff members should review the information on the FAMIS program to determine eligibility. The FAMIS information is available in the school nurse's office.
19. A concern was raised about special education students having classes in trailers and the way students are identified using the 22 point spread between IQ and achievement (some students may fall through the cracks).

Other programs, such as music, are also conducted in the trailers. There are currently only 6-7 schools that have trailers at this time. The classroom assignments would be a school issue. The school system, acting on the State's best practices, reviewed the identification procedures and revised the criteria for special

education. Staff will be meeting with representatives from the State on December 17, 2010, to review these procedures.

20. A question was asked about the possibility of having year round schools in the County.

There are some school systems that are going away from the year round schools and others that are looking at the possibility. The school system would not be able to afford the same type of year round school program as Danville City Schools. The staff has discussed the possibility of a four-day week. However, this would require a cut in pay for some employees such as bus drivers and cafeteria workers. Other concerns are the longer days for students and staff and childcare for parents.

21. A question was raised about a proposed policy that would limit communication between students and teachers to a school telephone or school e-mail.

Teachers should not communicate with students using Facebook. Facebook has not been unlocked for Pittsylvania County Schools. There should be professional guidelines clearly set for teachers. Any correspondence with students should be copied to the supervisor of the student and the teacher. Teachers should be careful in how they communicate with students. A code of conduct for social networking is being considered.

22. A complaint has been made relative to the Advanced Placement (AP) students having to take two exams (the AP mock exam and the end of the semester exam).

The teachers were encouraged to try to have students to enlarge their vision of the long-term dividends of the AP program. The AP, dual enrollment and Governor's School classes save the parents and students money as they move on to higher education opportunities.

23. A concern was expressed about the change in lead teachers no longer receiving a supplement for their duties.

Guidelines were designed by the Instructional Department for the Core Liaisons to follow for the 2010-2011 school year. The elimination of the supplement for lead teachers was a budget reduction. The Core Liaisons do receive recertification points.

24. A concern was raised about the teachers being able to see the students' social security numbers in PowerSchool.

The social security number does not show on the parent portal but is visible to the teacher. This number was necessary at one time for use by the School Nutrition Department; however, the Information Technology staff is in the process of removing the social security number.

25. A request was made to provide locks on the classroom doors in the chemistry department.
The lock company, Best Locks, is working to resolve this issue.
26. A question was raised about a residence issue of a student.
A Declaration of Residence form is required to declare residence for a school zone. There are 17 types of identification listed on the form that may be provided for authorization. Of these 17 items, the parent must provide at least three (3) to declare residence in the school zone. The Superintendent's Office receives calls relative to students attending school in the wrong zone. When it is discovered that a student is not living in the school zone, the principal writes a letter to indicate that the student is not eligible to continue attending that school. Children of employees may attend the school zone in which they work. A written request must be submitted to the Superintendent. Also, there are no tuition costs for children of employees living outside of the County.
27. A suggestion was made to conduct random drug testing for teachers.
It was noted that random drug testing is conducted for bus drivers and any individual holding a Commercial Driver's License. Currently, no testing is conducted for other employees nor student athletes.

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

1. Excerpts from the October 20, 2010, meeting of the Salary Taskforce were provided. The following recommendations are being considered for the 2011-2012 school budget:
 - a. Increase in pay for all employees
 - b. If a pay increase is not possible, provide a bonus for employees
 - c. Increase the supplement already provided for employees who have Master's Degrees
 - d. Provide more assistance with insurance benefits
 - e. Increase sick leave pay when an employee retires
 - f. PEA representative requested that individuals with years of experience step up quicker on the pay scaleThe next meeting of the Salary Taskforce will be held on December 8, 2010. The Taskforce will continue discussions and finalize the recommendations to provide to the Budget Committee for consideration in the 2011-2012 school budget.

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

1. A six-year technology plan must be submitted to the State. On a five-year replacement schedule, the cost to replace computers would be approximately \$600,000, which is the entire technology budget. The State

is encouraging upgrades. The technology department is looking at an upgrade of the elementary school infrastructure. Currently, the Information Technology Department is reviewing possible resources to replace computers.

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

1. At this time, there is very little information to provide relative to the 2011-2012 school budget. The school system hopes to receive additional sales revenue for next year. However, the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) rate will increase by 1.23%, which will cost approximately \$492,000. The Average Daily Membership (ADM) projections are lower than the State projections, which will mean a decrease in revenues. Because of the Health Care Reform, the health insurance rates will increase by approximately 1.3%. Also, the health insurance rates were bought down by the School Board by 5% for the 2010-2011 school year to help lower the cost to the employee. This 5% increase plus any increases in the health insurance premium may have to be paid by the employee for the 2011-2012 school year. The school system will lose \$1.8 million in stimulus funding after the 2010-2011 school year. These funds have been used for 42 positions. The State Appropriations Committee has been briefed regarding the Federal Jobs funding (approximately \$2.4 million for Pittsylvania County Schools) and how these funds may be used to supplant State dollars. The VASS and the VSBA have advised not to expend any of these funds at this time. There is also legislation being discussed relative to the 65% rule which requires a school division to spend 65% of the budget on instruction. Currently, the State level and the school division level are at 61% for classroom instruction. The school system should receive additional information concerning this.

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

1. Information was provided on the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) audit. This is a very complicated issue. The Pittsylvania County School System has never been in control nor received any of these funds. The funds were processed through two (2) agencies: the Family Assessment Services Team (FAST) and the Community Policy and Management Board (CPMB). The Comprehensive Services Act was passed in 1992 to provide funding to assist at-risk or troubled students and their families. The FAST approves services which are governed by the CSA Coordinator (not a school employee). After approval of the services, the CPMB approves funding and would then be responsible to pay the bills for the services. The Virginia Department of Education and the State Comprehensive Services Department offer advice relative to these issues. However, the advice provided by these departments has at times been vague and conflicting. It was stressed that Pittsylvania County Schools has never received any funds to provide the services for these students.

The services were requested and approved by FAST and CPMB. These two (2) groups are charged with the responsibility to determine allowable expenses. Of the \$7.7 million that is being discussed, approximately \$3.5 million was spent for behavior aides in the classrooms. These aides were not employed by the Pittsylvania County School System. For the 2010-2011 school year, there were approximately 25 special education assistants hired to provide the services previously supplied by the behavior aides. These funds were not in the 2010-2011 school budget. The school system has contested the \$7.7 million; however, the Board of Supervisors may request the school system to pay a portion of this amount.

2. The school system has partnered with the Health Department to provide flu vaccines for students, staff and family members. The clinics were held at the middle schools with approximately 500 flu vaccines being administered. If employees did not receive a vaccine, they may contact the local health department.

In the absence of Dr. Lillian Holland, the Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Information was provided on the on-time graduation rate.
2. The proposed 2011-2012 school calendar was provided. The following concerns/suggestions were discussed:
 - a. It was suggested that students return on August 15, 2011. If this change is approved, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving will become a student day, and December 22, 2011, would become the last day of the first semester.
 - b. The Superintendent expressed his desire to not have students in school on Election Day. He also noted that there would be a special election held on January 11, 2011, to fill the vacancy left by Congressman-Elect Robert Hurt. There are three (3) high schools and nine (9) elementary schools that serve as voting precincts. The same safety provisions as used for the November 2, 2010, Election Day will be utilized. There has been no final determination made for the school schedule for that day. Should there be any change in the regular schedule, a letter will be provided to parents and an AlertNOW message will be launched.
 - c. It was suggested that the beginning date for students remain on August 10, 2010.
 - d. A concern was expressed about students returning in January, 2012, for a two-day week. Elementary teachers may not have the opportunity for new instruction in that time frame.
 - e. It was noted that the CTE conference is held the first week of August and career-tech teachers would not have the opportunity to properly prepare for students returning on August 10, 2011.
 - f. A suggestion was made to begin school on August 8, 2010, and have a two-day break in October.

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 4:00 p.m.

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