

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
February 5, 2007**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, February 5, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Eighteen (18) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Superintendent, Dr. John W. Amos, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Mark R. Jones, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Mr. Rickey W. Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Information Technology, and Mrs. Cathleen Scolpini, Lead ITRT.

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A clarification was requested relative to how perfect attendance is determined for students. There are many students checking in and checking out during the school day but are still counted for perfect attendance.

Perfect attendance is recognized by the Central Office with a certificate. However, there had been no consistency for perfect attendance in the schools. Some schools required a student to be present for 3 hours in order to count for perfect attendance; another school may only require attendance for roll call. A memo was provided to the principals during the fall semester of the 2006-2007 school year regarding perfect attendance. All schools are expected to follow the minimum expectation for perfect attendance. Principals were given the discretion to implement the following acknowledgments for student attendance that exceeds expectations:

- Extraordinary attendance – student has been present in school every day, all day
- Exemplary attendance – student has been present in school every day for at least three (3) hours
- Exceptional attendance – student has been present in school every day for at least one (1) hour
- Perfect attendance – student has been marked present in school for a portion of every day as recorded in the SASI system
- 99% Club – student has been marked absent for only two (2) days during the school year as recorded in the SASI system

2. A question was asked about possible raises for attendance clerks for the 2007-2008 school year.

Possible raises for attendance clerks was discussed in the Support Staff meeting and has been included as a budget initiative for the 2007-2008 school budget.
3. A concern was expressed about the lack of heat at Southside Elementary School, Kentuck Elementary School, Gretna Middle School and the trailers at Gretna High School.

Any heat problems should be reported to the maintenance department. At the middle schools, the Central Office can control the heat. The heat is turned down to 55 degrees on the weekend. It may be that the principal should contact Mr. Hutson to adjust the time the heat is turned up on Monday morning to ensure that the building is warmer by the time students and staff arrive at school. For the older schools, there is not as much computerization of the heat. The maintenance department should be contacted regarding any problems.
4. There are some air quality issues at the Alternative School. It is believed that it may have rained or flooded in the upstairs area which is causing some staff members to have a hard time breathing. There are holes in the ceiling of Ms. Majied's and Ms. Clark's classrooms. Whenever it rains, there is a problem. Mr. Hutson has checked on this.

The Superintendent stated that he would follow-up with the owner of the building relative to this problem.
5. A concern was expressed that the ALERTNOW system could only be used once a month.

The Superintendent stated that the administrators had received training in the use of the ALERTNOW system. It was suggested that the system not be used every day. Eventually, the attendance clerks will use it every day for absences. After receiving staff development, the teachers may use it as a weekly calendar, bulletin board or homework hotline to help communicate with parents.
6. A question was raised about any policies relative to delay of school based on cold or wind chill at certain degrees.

The Superintendent stated that there is no policy. The School Board has not provided any direction on this, and it is not included in the inclement weather guidelines. However, the issues to review in cases of this nature would be relative to any problems with buses not cranking or the schools having no heat.
7. There was some concern and confusion on a recent teacher workday. Teachers were not sure if they were to report at regular time and then felt that the Central Office did not seem concerned about the teachers' safety. Specifically, the

teachers were required to come to work at regular time; however, when students returned on the following day, schools were delayed two (2) hours.

If there is no change in the schedule, no announcements are made. The Superintendent tries to make all announcements prior to 6:00 a.m. If school is delayed, staff members, such as custodians, Central Office staff, administrative assistants and principals, are required to report at regular time. There are 4 or 5 people that are out early in the morning checking roads in all areas of the county to determine if schools should be closed or delayed. If it is deemed to be safe for the Central Office staff to report, it is safe for the teachers to report.

8. A concern was expressed about having the same students repeating a course. This issue should be addressed at the school level.
9. A question was raised about the absence of teachers on early dismissal days counting as a whole day instead of a half-day.
When school is dismissed at 12:00 Noon (or earlier or later), the day is counted as a whole day in the calendar, and therefore, would count as a full day of absence. Employees receive a minimum of 15 paid holidays. Twelve-month employees receive up to 24 days of annual leave. All employees receive sick leave. Employees do not have to work during the Winter and Spring Breaks. Teachers are not required to work the full 200 days of their contract. It was suggested that employees may not want to begin counting time.
10. A question was raised about the possibility of closing at 12:00 Noon instead of 1:00 p.m. on early dismissal days. Schools were closed last Thursday at 12:00 Noon. The students ate breakfast, ate lunch and then they were dismissed.
By law, the school cannot begin serving lunch until 9:45 a.m. Schools were dismissed at 12:00 Noon because of safety and the weather conditions. The Calendar Committee has discussed the 1:00 dismissal and feels that this allows for the appropriate instructional time.

Mrs. Cathleen Scolpini, ITRT, addressed the following item:

1. In 2006 the General Assembly passed legislation to integrate Internet Safety into the curriculum. This has now been passed into law and is mandated by the Virginia Department of Education. Information about Internet Safety may be accessed at the Virginia Department Education website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Technology/OET/internet-safetyguidelines.shtml>. This includes information for the teachers, parents and students. It is anticipated that the ITRTs will provide information to the teachers; however, the teachers will have responsibilities when this is integrated into the curriculum. Internet safety training will be provided for all teachers.

Mr. Rickey Parker addressed the following items:

1. The most asked question for the IT Department is “Why is the site that I want to visit blocked?”. The school system subscribes to a service that categorizes sites to be blocked; however, there are lots of sites that may not have been seen. The school system has the option to allow categorized and non-categorized sites to be viewed. Sites that have not been reviewed are not released. For security reasons, sites continually change their addresses to keep hackers from getting into the site. The school system’s software looks for the addresses behind the names to ensure that the site is appropriate for viewing.
2. Channel 13 News will be showing a clip on February 5, 2007, relative to Internet Safety which will include information on Pittsylvania County Schools.
3. A question was raised about the new MicroSoft VISTA program. This program may not help the school system but may assist parents because it includes parental controls.
4. A question was raised about overloading e-mails. The State Department states that the deletion of e-mail is considered shredding. Professionals must maintain e-mail for two (2) years (department heads for three [3] years). Each employee is given 10 mgs of space for e-mail; however, a request may be made to increase this if necessary. Employees are encouraged to delete spam e-mails.

Dr. Mark R. Jones addressed the following items:

1. A copy of the 2007-2008 school calendar was provided. This calendar has been approved by the School Board. A survey is conducted each year to allow individuals an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions for the calendar. There were 74 comments noted for the 2007-2008 school calendar – 19 comments were positive; 13 wanted more time off at Christmas; 10 wanted to use bank time for make-up days first; 6 wanted to have 3 days off at Thanksgiving; 4 wanted two days between each semester and not use these days as make-up days; 7 wanted to look at year-round schools; 2 wanted to have 2 open houses (one during first semester and one during second semester); and several wanted to look at early dismissal time of 11:45 a.m. rather than 1:00 p.m. These items will be used in the discussion of the 2008-2009 school calendar development.
2. A copy of the Graduate of Merit brochure was provided. The students must make application to be a Graduate of Merit which is based on grade point average; total courses taken; coursework; attendance; conduct; community service; and school activities. There are 117 seniors to be recognized for 2007. As part of the Graduate of Merit program, there are scholarships awarded, a Pinnacle Award (recipient receives a laptop), the Superintendent’s 212 Award, and the President’s Volunteer Service Scholarships awarded to eight (8) students. There are many

business and corporate sponsors. The event is catered by Mary's Diner, and Alan Dalton provides photography services. The students receive a collage picture and a DVD from the event. The seniors are not Graduates of Merit until this awards program is complete; therefore, it does not go on the college application. Staff is currently working with juniors to pre-qualify them for the Graduate of Merit program so that notification may be placed on the college application. This is a business/community and school system partnership. The businesses pay \$75.00 for sponsorship. This program is introduced to students at the 9th grade orientation sessions. The guidance counselors should also be providing this information to the juniors and seniors. The ratio of female to male is lopsided (3 to 1); however, it is an application process that must be completed in order to qualify as a Graduate of Merit.

3. The results of the Fall 2006 SOL tests were provided. The results looked very good. The school system would like to have 90% or above passing. The Cortez math lab was implemented to assist the students to be more successful in math. Ms. Seymore stated that the Alternative School had 100% passing for Algebra I, Biology, United States History and Writing tests and 50% for RLR. There were two out of three students who passed the earth science assessment. Ms. Seymore stated that these students did very well this year. The NOVAnet used at the Alternative School has been aligned with the Standards of Learning curriculum to help the students to be successful on these tests.
4. A comparison was provided showing the number of students receiving perfect scores on the Standards of Learning tests since 2004. Students receiving perfect scores will receive a recognition pin.
5. The Statistical Profile for Pittsylvania County Schools was provided. The profile includes information relative to accreditation ratings, Standards of Learning, Scholastic Aptitude Test results, Stanford 9/10 results, report of dropouts and graduation rate, completion rate for ninth grade students entering high school, textbooks adoptions, September 30 membership and the number of free and reduced lunches.
6. There are two schools in academic review with the Virginia Department of Education. These schools are Gretna Middle School and Chatham Middle School. Efforts are continuing to assist the students who have not been successful on the assessments.
7. The School Board has approved new courses for the 2007-2008 school year. These courses include the following:
 - Special Education Courses
 - a) Survey of Earth Science (course code 46101)
 - b) Survey of Biology (course code 46102)
 - c) Survey of World Geography (course code 29961)
 - d) Survey of United States History (course code 29962)
 - e) Survey of United States Government (course code 29963)

- f) Developmental Reading (course code 11800)
- Virginia Department of Education Virtual Advanced Placement School Courses
 - a) AP English Language and Composition (course code 11966)
 - b) AP English Literature and Composition (course code 11956)
 - c) AP Government and Politics-Comparative Course (course code 24506)
 - d) AP Government and Politics – US (course code 24456)
 - e) AP Spanish Language (course code 55706)
 - f) World Mythology (course code 1165)
 - g) Creative Writing (course code 1171)
- Full Year Courses
 - a) AP calculus AB (course code 31776)
 - b) AP European History (course code 23996)
 - c) AP Environmental Science (course code 42706)
 - d) AP Latin Literature (course code 53806)
 - e) AP World History (course code 23806)
 - f) AP Art History (course code 91516)
 - g) Chinese I (course code 5810)
 - h) Fee-based Scholastic Aptitude Test Preparation (course code 15150) (cost to be paid by the school division)

The secondary students will also have the opportunity to complete a first year certificate from Danville Community College and the possibility of an Associate's Degree from Danville Community College at the completion of their high school career. The Governor's School students and a few other students from the high schools may qualify for the first year certificate this school year.

Dr. Lillian D. Holland addressed the following items:

1. The December 2006 Special Education Child Count report was provided. There were 1,379 students identified with a disability. This number represents 15% of the student body. Since 2000, there has been a 15.08% increase in the number of students with disabilities. With the current legislation of IDEA, there is a requirement and a push for a response to intervention. Staff members are encouraged and must provide documentation that interventions are being taken with all children that are having difficulties. A record must be made showing that research-based intervention has been attempted before testing would be completed to determine if a student has a disability. Representatives were asked to communicate this information at their respective schools.
2. The Sammie W. Shelton Field Day for students with disabilities will be held on Friday, May 25, 2007.

Dr. John W. Amos addressed the following items:

1. A survey was completed during the 2005-2006 school session to determine any needs or desires for staff development activities. Recently, the schools received information relative to a Master's Degree program for Differentiation of Instruction being offered by Sweetbriar College. The staff has also been working with the University of Virginia (UVA) to offer a Master's Degree program in

Administration and Supervision. More information relative to the UVA program will be provided.

2. The 2007 Summer Institute is being planned for July 16-20, 2007.
3. The Behavior Management Taskforce, consisting of staff, teachers, parents and students, will begin reviewing the Student Code of Conduct. The Taskforce reviews this policy each year and suggests changes or additions to the School Board. The School Board must approve any changes to this policy. Representatives were asked to submit any changes or suggestions to Dr. Amos or Dr. Holland.

Mr. Donald R. Johnson addressed the following item:

1. For the 2006-2007 school year, the division will receive an additional \$1 million because of increased enrollment. This additional funding will be used for one-time expenditures so that the \$1 million may be carried over into the 2007-2008 operating budget. Budget requests for 2007-2008 were received in December from various groups and departments. The School Board Budget Committee met and reviewed these budget requests and determined that approximately \$5.5 million of the budget requests will be presented to the School Board for consideration for possible inclusion in the 2007-2008 proposed school budget. With the Governor's Budget and the \$1 million in additional funding, the school system will have approximately \$2.3 million of increased funding for 2007-2008. The Senate version of the budget is a little more than the Governor's budget; the House version is a little less than the Governor's budget. All of the requests from the Salary Taskforce have been included in the budget initiatives. These requests include a 4% salary increase. The School Board must approve the budget by April 1 to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors must approve the budget by May 1.

Mrs. Clarissa T. Knight addressed the following item:

1. An update on the Teacher Cadet Program was provided. This is a credit bearing class offered in the four (4) high schools to attract aspiring teachers. The school system hopes to see the fruits of this program in the next 4 to 5 years when the students come back to teach in the division. There were 33 students enrolled in this program during the first semester of the 2006-2007 school year. There were 25 students enrolled last year.
2. A copy of the recruitment schedule was provided. Currently, the division is looking for endorsed teachers in special education, earth science, physics, foreign language (French and Spanish) and higher math.
3. The number of individuals retiring and resigning at the end of the 2006-2007 school year was provided. It is anticipated that this number will increase.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Decisions relative to closings and delays during inclement weather were discussed. The Superintendent and staff consult with National Weather Service, the Sheriff's Department and Mr. Edmund Giles at the Virginia Department of Transportation. Mr. Bobby Lovelace, Director of Pupil Transportation, Mr. Mike Adkins and Mr. Kent Harris from the Bus Shop and the Superintendent ride the roads to check conditions in order to make the best decisions.
2. Teachers have been concerned that students are contacted through the ALERTNOW system and know before they do that schools will be closed or delayed. The ALERTNOW system uses the student information stored in the SASI system. It is anticipated that all employees will be added to this system by the summer. The ALERTNOW system calls the numbers provided on the master list. When a call is launched through ALERTNOW, the system has the ability to call 9,000 numbers in a matter of minutes. However, it takes approximately 45 minutes to complete the calls to all of the students in the school system. As soon as a call is launched, the telephones at the Central Office begin to ring. In order to receive the message from ALERTNOW, the person on the other end of the line must say hello and then there must be silence for the recording to begin. Representatives were encouraged to pass this information along to parents who may have questions.
3. The school system will be resurrecting the *Lamplighter* publication. This publication was provided for many years; however, this was stopped because of budgetary issues and the free publicity the division was receiving from the local newspapers. It is anticipated that a draft copy of the *Lamplighter* will be provided to the School Board at its February meeting. This publication will be multi-colored on glossy paper and will include approximately 6-8 pages of information about the schools. There should be one publication now and another publication in June. It is hoped that there will be 3 publications for the 2007-2008 school year.
4. A video production is being completed for the school system. The purpose of this production will be to reach out to home school and private school students. A draft copy of the video will be available for review by the School Board at its April meeting. The production company, MediaFrenzy, will be in the school system on February 13, 2007. They will be visiting activities and classrooms (focusing on fine arts, the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs) at Gretna High School, Gretna Elementary School, Chatham High School, Dan River High School, Tunstall High School, Twin Springs Elementary School, the Network Operations Center and the School Board meeting. The 12-14 minute video will include some of the Career-Tech video and pictures of the new middle schools (new construction). A production company will have a follow-up visit on

March 1, 2007. The school system is very excited about this video and the possibility of getting more students back into the school system.

A concern was raised about the decisions to close schools. There were other school divisions who made decisions about closing school prior to 6:00 p.m. the night before. The Superintendent stated that he wanted to ensure that the appropriate decision was made to avoid any confusion if two separate calls had to be made (such as a 2 hour delay and then changing to school is closed). The protocol relative to these decisions for other school divisions is not known.

Appreciation was expressed for the teacher work day immediately following the winter break. This day allowed the teachers to be ready for the students returning the following day. There was some concern expressed that this teacher work day was also listed as make-up day. It was requested that this day not be used as a make-up day for next year.

The next meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council will be held on April 2, 2007.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.