

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS  
February 4, 2008**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, February 4, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Sixteen (16) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, 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. John W. Amos, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services.

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

**The following Council topics were discussed:**

1. A concern was expressed about the continuing roof leaks at the Regional Alternative School. Water is dripping through the layer of plastic (specifically in Ms. Majied's and Ms. Clark's classrooms). The water has also seeped down into the computers; however, the computers were not turned on when this occurred. The computers were checked by an Information Technology Technician, and there was no damage.  
The building is owned by Pittsylvania County and not the school system. The school system pays rent to the County for the Regional Alternative School to be located in this building. The Superintendent has worked with Mr. Steve Stone relative to expectations for the building condition. Mr. Stone has invested a lot of money in the building for the recreation center. To replace the roof on the entire building would be very expensive. The Superintendent will discuss this further with Mr. Stone. Other options and locations may need to be considered for the Regional Alternative School.
2. The following recommendations were made for changes in health insurance premiums and salaries: adopt the State employee's health plan (same as the plan North Carolina offers); pay health insurance premiums for retired employees (same as North Carolina); add longevity pay (same as North Carolina); and increase or add a local supplement to all salaries (same as North Carolina).

As a school division, the system is not allowed to join the State employee's health insurance plan.

Paying the health insurance premiums for retired employees would be a local expense. In North Carolina, the state pays for this benefit.

Longevity pay is a budget issue; however, this issue was not included in the budget initiatives for the 2008-2009 budget proposal.

The locality may supplement the base salary which is what is done in North Carolina. The State of North Carolina has a base salary for employees, and the local school division may supplement that salary. However, in Virginia, this is not the procedure.

3. A question was raised about the possibility of providing bonuses to the faculty for schools that achieve accreditation as an option to the SOL division-wide banquet. North Carolina provides bonuses to professionals and paraprofessionals.

Input was requested for suggestions relative to the SOL accreditation banquet. Various responses were received; however, everyone responding indicated that there should be some form of recognition for achieving SOL accreditation (either division-wide or school level). The division-wide banquet costs approximately \$10,000.00. Dividing this amount among 18 schools would not provide much of a bonus. The idea for the banquet is to recognize the accomplishments of the schools. It has been suggested that four recognition dinners be held (one in each of the middle schools).

4. A question was raised about pooling the money for conferences and workshop attendance for teachers so that the smaller schools are not penalized because of the lack of funds to help pay for rooms and meals. A concern was also expressed about the inadequacies of planning time between the elementary and high school teachers.

The budget for allocations for the schools is based on a formula using a flat rate of \$7.00 and the number of students in the school (based on the March 31 ADM of the preceding year). Training allocations are funded through local money. Tuition assistance is also depleted at this time. Additional funding will be available after July 1, 2008.

The Standards of Quality does not address a planning time for elementary teachers; however, the school system has made an effort to provide a planning time for all elementary school teachers at least several times per week. The Standards of Quality does require one planning period per day or the equivalent for middle and high schools teachers (SOQ §22.1-253.13:2 Standard 2C). The division has also looked at staffing needs (such as full-time physical education and music teachers at the elementary schools and guidance counselors) to give principals the opportunity to provide planning time for teachers. Elementary school representatives indicated that planning is provided each day for 40 or 45 minutes. The school system is trying to do what it can to provide planning and funding for teachers. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

5. A concern was expressed about the heat being sporadic at Gretna Middle School. Some wings in the school have heat and some wings do not. The cafeteria is also cold. A question was raised about insulation in the roof or anywhere in the school.

There is insulation in the walls at the school. The heat is turned back at night. There may be times when the heat was not turned on early enough in the morning to warm up the building. There have been problems of this nature in other schools. The heat is set back at night to conserve energy costs. If the problem is not corrected, the school should contact the maintenance department. If there is a problem in the early morning hours, the Superintendent asked that the individual contact his office or Mr. Mike Hutson so that someone from maintenance can fix the problem.

6. A concern was expressed about the greenhouse materials which are currently stored behind Gretna Middle School. These materials are blowing away when the wind blows.

These materials were purchased for the middle schools. The greenhouses have been constructed at Dan River Middle School and Tunstall Middle School. The greenhouse at Gretna Middle School is supposed to be 22' X 36'. Mr. Donald R. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Business, will check on the status of this project.

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

1. E-mails have been received from teachers relative to lost documents. The culprit is typically another student who may have deleted the documents. The IT department is in the process of working out details to provide private independent logins for everyone. The department will be moving away from generic logins. The students will have a private login with a private folder that would be accessible with their own ID and password. This process will, however, require supervision of the teacher. The teacher would have a list of IDs and passwords for each student. The student would not be allowed to change passwords. The representatives were in agreement with this process.
2. The school system is beginning to have problems with e-mail because it is becoming huge. The specifications for the e-mail system have been exceeded. The system is using Microsoft Exchange 2003 which has a limit to the data warehousing size. The system will upgrade to 2007; however, a license must be purchased for each staff member. Some school systems have begun to use a generic based system such as Google Apps. The IT department will review these systems and determine the best and least costly program to use for the school system.

3. Teachers were asked to provide feedback about smart boards, airliners and projectors. Please contact the IT department if these items are not working properly or there are any problems. Work orders should be completed. The IT department completes the work order in sequence and by priority.

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

1. A copy of the 2008-2009 school calendar proposal was provided. The School Board did not accept the recommendation of the Calendar Committee for the 2008-2009 school calendar. The School Board asked to see changes such as no Saturday make-up days. The Board also did not like the 1:00 p.m. dismissals. It was also suggested that April 17 and 18 should be moved in the priority listing for make-up days to be used prior to bank time; however, there was no consensus from the Board members. The calendar proposal has been revised. The revised proposal will be presented to the School Board at its meeting on February 12, 2008. Representatives were asked to provide any comments or suggestions for the calendar proposal.
2. The eighth Graduate of Merit banquet will be held on May 22, 2008, at Averett Convocation Center, Danville, Virginia. There have been 820 students who have been awarded the Graduate of Merit distinction since its inception in 2000. There are currently 145 candidates for the Graduate of Merit for 2008. A listing was provided of the scholarships and awards available for Graduate of Merit recipients. A breakdown of the students by school, gender and race was also provided.
3. A concern was raised about the ratio of male students receiving the Graduate of Merit award. It was suggested that parents need to encourage the students to follow through with the process. It was also noted that the information needs to be provided at the ninth grade orientation sessions.

The student must take the initiative to complete the necessary components to receive the Graduate of Merit award. The information is provided in the Spring to the eighth grade students. Information about the Graduate of Merit program is also included in the high school course selection guide.

4. The results of the Fall SOL tests for the high schools were provided. There were over 6,300 tests administered during the fall. There were 44 perfect scores received. The staff has been very pleased with the success and the pass rates for the division.
5. A statistical profile for Pittsylvania County Schools was provided. This profile gives an overview of how the school division is performing and meeting the areas required by the State and No Child Left Behind. Information in the profile included: accreditation ratings, schools achieving

full accreditation, percent of students passing Standards of Learning (Statewide and division comparisons), scholastic aptitude test results, Stanford 9/10 results, report of dropouts and graduation rate, completion rate for ninth grade students entering high school, textbook adoptions, September 30 membership and free and reduced lunch data. Staff will be discussing the textbook adoption schedule for elementary reading books and how to address changes that may need to be made prior to the 2012 adoption.

**The Superintendent, in the absence of Dr. John W. Amos, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, addressed the following items:**

1. The December Special Education Child Count report was provided to the representatives. The special education population has increased slightly over last year. A breakdown of students by age and category was also provided. The largest population is the specific learning disabilities category. The other health impaired category is the fastest growing population. The case load for special education teachers is dependent upon the disabilities and the amount of time they must serve as directed by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
2. A copy of the current Student Code of Conduct (School Board Policy JFC-PC) was provided. This policy must be reviewed annually. Representatives were asked to provide any comments or suggestions for changes to the policy. Areas to be considered included references to gangs and use of cell phones. Chatham High School is giving three (3) days of in-school suspension for the use/possession of a cell phone. The question was relative to having enough evidence for a principal to search just by being told that another student has a cell phone. The principal may search if there is reasonable suspicion; however, the Superintendent will follow-up on this.
3. A concern was expressed about students coming from the high school to the middle school to complete community service work.

The Superintendent stated that the judge may be sending students to the school to complete community service. The principal must agree to this. Generally, a custodian is assigned to monitor the student while they are in the school.
4. A question was raised about off-site conduct while students are on a school trip. There has been an incident where a suspended student came to the public place where the class was for the trip and was disruptive.

Disciplinary action may occur if the behavior or the results of the behavior may be disruptive to the school setting.

5. The Sammye W. Shelton Field Day will be held on May 9, 2008, at the Hatcher Center, Blairs, Virginia.

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

1. A copy of the 2008-2009 budget initiatives was provided. The Budget Committee reviewed a total of approximately \$10 million initiatives. This list was narrowed down to approximately \$6.6 million. An increase of \$449,000.00 has been included in the budget proposal for operational costs. It is anticipated that the final State budget will be received by March. The Budget Committee held a public input session relative to the 2008-2009 budget proposal. A group of nurses spoke in favor of an increase for school nurses. The initiative for the increase in salaries for school nurses had been deleted from the budget initiatives; however, after hearing the comments from the school nurses, the Budget Committee added this item back to the budget initiatives. It is anticipated that the School Board will approve the 2008-2009 budget initiatives at its February 12, 2008, meeting.
2. A question was raised about the new buses. There were 15 buses purchased from Thomas Buses last year. There have been problems with check engine lights coming on in these buses. These problems are associated with the emission standards. The bus mechanics are working on these problems. A notice has been received that approximately 33 of the currently owned buses will be recalled.
3. An advertisement for bids will be published in the local newspaper on Sunday, February 9, 2008, relative to the addition at Chatham Elementary School. These bids will be due back in March. By the beginning of the 2008-2009 school session, there should be six (6) new classrooms and no mobile units at Chatham Elementary School. In the next several weeks, the School Board and Board of Supervisors should have a contract with an architectural and engineering firm to begin plans for the renovations of the high schools. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the fall of 2008.

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

1. A recruitment schedule was provided to the representatives. The Human Resources department will be attending job fairs to recruit individuals for vacant positions. Currently, the school division is looking for applicants in the following areas: Special Education, Math, Earth Science, Technology Education, Family and Consumer Sciences and JROTC.

2. A listing of anticipated vacancies for 2008-2009 was provided. Additional vacancies are expected as the school year progresses. The list provided included vacancies for teaching positions only.
3. A salary comparison for teachers for all surrounding divisions was compiled and provided. The beginning salary for teachers for Pittsylvania County Schools does compare favorably with surrounding divisions; however, the division drops considerably in the top years of service. There are approximately forty percent (40%) of teachers at the top of the salary scale. The Salary Taskforce has recommended a 5% salary increase for all employees for the 2008-2009 budget.

**The Superintendent addressed the following items:**

1. There has not been a lot of inclement weather this year.
2. The AlertNOW system is working very well. Staff is continuing to update telephone numbers to ensure that everyone receives the calls relative to school closings and delays.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. No comments were provided.

The next meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council will be held on March 31, 2008, at 2:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.