

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
March 30, 2009**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, March 30, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

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

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

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A concern was expressed about the lack of restroom facilities in the new wings being constructed at the high schools. It was also noted that students would have a longer route to the restrooms during the renovations.

The restrooms were not included in the plans to try to come in under the budget for the additions and renovations for the high schools. Even though the project came in under budget, the Board of Supervisors will not allow any additional money to be used for the project.

It was noted that the students will be a distance from the restrooms and out of the monitoring area of the teachers during the renovations. Teachers were again reminded of the inconveniences that may occur during this process.

2. A concern was expressed about using Memorial Day as a make-up day.

The Calendar Committee has a hard job in determining make-up days to include in the calendar. There have been individuals to come before the School Board relative to using Memorial Day as a make-up day. The School Board has approved the school calendar which includes using Memorial Day as a priority make-up day. There is a process that is followed in the development of the school calendar, and opportunities are provided for input. The school division must have a certain number of make-up days in the calendar in the event of inclement weather.

3. A concern was expressed about background checks for construction workers and individuals in the schools during the construction and renovations of the high schools.

Construction workers do not have to complete individual background checks; however, contractors are required to certify that their employees have not been convicted of a felony or any offense involving the sexual molestation or physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child. If it is determined that the contractor has an employee who has been convicted, the contractor would be subject to a loss of their contractor's license. There was a circumstance at one of the schools where a worker engaged in inappropriate behavior with a student. That employee is no longer working at the school.

4. A question was raised about a division-wide policy on check-ins and check-outs for students. It was noted that students will go to the nurse with some type of illness which would be an automatic excused absence.

School Board policy stipulates that a student with more than seven (7) unexcused absences must provide a note relative the absence. Principals have been requested to use this information for check-ins and check-outs. If absences are excessive, the school administration may request a medical statement. Teachers were asked to work with the school principals on these issues.

It was requested that this concern be discussed at the next principals' meeting as a policy issue.

5. A question was raised about allowing the teachers to complete attendance by class period rather than by the day at the high schools.

PowerSchool will allow attendance by class period. However, it was noted that the only way this information would be valid would be through input by the teachers for each period.

6. A concern was expressed about the inconsistency among administrators regarding discipline and suspensions of students.

School Board policy includes a range of options for administrators to consider when disciplining students. The Code of Virginia stipulates that a suspension may be from 1-10 days. The administration of the school determines the level of the disciplinary action. There is no set prescribed response for every infraction in the school system. Concerns relative to the leniency allowed between administrators should be resolved at the school level.

7. A request was made to send notices of the Advisory Council meeting by e-mail in order to save on the cost of postage.

Notices of the Teachers Advisory Council meetings will be sent by e-mail for the 2009-2010 school year.

8. A concern was expressed about moving the Cortez lab and the permanency of that move to the new wing at the high schools. The computers in these labs are the textbooks for the students.

Every effort will be made to have no disruptions in the Internet service for the schools. However, there will be inconveniences and disorganization during the construction at the high schools. There may be some interruptions in services; however, the Information Technology Department will work to ensure these are minimal.

Principals have been asked to try to make moves permanent; however, there may be some classes that will have to move multiple times during the renovations. The final plans for the school renovations and additions are at the schools. Teachers should check with the principals if there are questions.

9. A question was raised about the determination of AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) sub-groups.

The AYP sub-groups are based on the information that is provided in SASI, which is provided by the parent on the registration information. It was noted that PowerSchool will accommodate more sub-groups.

10. A question was raised about the number of hours for a ½ day for a teacher.

A survey will be conducted to determine the arrival and departure times for teachers at each school.

11. A question was raised about the location of the February Advisory Council minutes.

The February minutes are posted on the Advisory Council site on the Pittsylvania County Schools' website.

12. A concern was expressed about the inconsistency of heat in the school buildings.

The heat is controlled by thermostat which provides a 3-degree variance. If problems with heat continue, individuals should ask the principals to contact maintenance.

13. A question was raised about the possibility of creating a rainy day fund for the school system to avoid layoffs and reductions in the school budget.

It is against the law for the school division to have a rainy day fund. The school division is required to spend all of the funds provided by the Board of Supervisors. Any funds remaining at the end of the school year must be returned to the Board of Supervisors or the State.

14. A question was raised about the consideration of front door locks with a buzzer entrance for the schools.

It was noted that a buzzer or a doorbell on the door would only let individuals know that someone is there. There have been circumstances where a parent may have entered a classroom without following the appropriate protocol. A letter was provided to these individuals to indicate that their movement on the school campuses would be limited, and they would have to seek the permission of the principal prior to entering the building. Copies of these letters are provided to the Commonwealth's Attorney and Sheriff's Office. If these conditions are violated, the individual would be prosecuted for trespassing. The intent is to try to keep doors locked with only one entrance to the school.

15. A question was raised about the procedure to allow students to return to school following an expulsion.

The School Board's philosophical approach for readmitting expelled students to has been a loss of credit for two (2) semesters. A re-enrollment meeting is held each June with the principals, parents and students to determine continuing educational opportunities. An articulation meeting is also held with the principals to discuss each student's return. Normally, expulsion cases return to the base school. Some middle school students may be overage and not be recommended for return to the middle school.

Dr. Jeff Early, Director of Special Education, addressed the following items:

1. The Sammie W. Shelton Field Day for students with disabilities will be held on May 29, 2009. The rain date will be on Tuesday, June 2, 2009. **(PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A CHANGE FROM THE DATES PROVIDED AT THE MEETING.)** A concern was expressed about scheduling field day prior to the due date for the VGLA.
2. The Behavior Management Taskforce has met and discussed the Student Code of Conduct. The Taskforce will recommend no changes in the Student Code of Conduct at this time.

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

1. A listing of anticipated employment vacancies for the 2009-2010 was provided. At the present time, the only positions that have been posted include a part-time

custodian and an administrative assistant. Other positions will not be posted until specific needs are identified for the 2009-2010 school year.

2. Currently, there have been 20 certified and 3 classified staff members expressing their desire to retire at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Six (6) individuals (3 certified and 3 classified) have indicated their desire to resign at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.
3. The recruitment schedule for the 2008-2009 school year was provided. Because of budget constraints, the recruitment schedule will be cut in half for the 2009-2010 school year.

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

1. The 2009-2010 school budget was discussed. The school system will receive Federal Stimulus funds for two (2) years which will help in not cutting salaries or positions for the 2009-2010 school year. The Board of Supervisors is cutting \$1.6 million from the 2009-2010 budget. Last year, the Board of Supervisors cut \$686,000 from the 2008-2009 budget. The total budget for the 2009-2010 is \$84,387,003 which is a \$3.1 million reduction in funds. A listing of the items that have been cut from the 2009-2010 budget was provided. These items totaling \$2,441,786 included the following:

Additional Lottery Funds	\$650,000
Title I - Dental/Health Insurance	146,460
Balance of IDEA funds	244,500
Reduce Pagers	3,500
Eliminate Nursing Vacancy	58,000
Cut Lamplighter	14,000
Cut Alternative School Rental	20,000
Cut Vehicle Replacement	35,000
Cut Student Athletic Insurance	8,000
Cut Recognition Dinners	26,043
Reduce Recruiting Trips	2,300
Eliminate Blackboard	28,000
Eliminate Maintenance Position	50,194
Eliminate Administrative Assistant Position	44,160
Maintenance Purchased	700,000
Reduce Bus Lease by 50%	175,000
Local share for textbooks	236,629

As of today, no employees will lose their job; however, there will be no salary increases for the 2009-2010 school year.

Appreciation was expressed to the staff for their openness, honesty, thoughtful and hard work put into the budget process.

2. A computer-generated model of the high school renovations and additions was presented and reviewed.

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

1. The Division Technology Committee has met and approved the submittal of the updated Division Technology Plan to the Virginia Department of Education. At the present time, the amount of technology stimulus money to be received by Pittsylvania County Schools is unknown. Therefore, the Division Technology Plan will need to be rewritten to include a new format and the details relative to spending the stimulus money.

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

1. Information was provided on the 2009 Graduates of Merit Recognition Banquet. The event will be held on May 21, 2009, at the Averett Convocation Center, Danville, Virginia. There will be 146 seniors recognized as Graduates of Merit. Recognitions include scholarships and the Above and Beyond Volunteer Service awards. Mary's Diner will cater the dinner, and Alan Dalton Photography will provide the photography.
2. A copy of the 2009-2010 High School Course Selection Guide was provided. Copies of this guide will be provided to each of the high schools and eighth grade students. The Guide includes information relative to the Governor's Early College Scholars Program, Graduate of Merit program, diploma options, dual enrollment opportunities and a description of all courses available for students. Students and parents are encouraged to review this information to assist in making decisions relative to courses to take and career opportunities. It was noted that there would be a change in the Graduate of Merit program effective with the graduating class of 2013. The points for qualifying as a Graduate of Merit will increase from 155 to 170 points.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. An e-mail was received from a concerned individual indicating that there was no contact information for the Superintendent's Office on the website. This contact information has been added to the website so that individuals would have the necessary information to contact the Superintendent and each of the assistant superintendents.
2. The staff directory has been posted on the Teacher website.

3. Information was provided about high school reform. A High School Reform Taskforce was formed which consists of teachers, administrators and business representatives. This Taskforce has discussed potential changes in expectations for the high schools and has developed four (4) focus areas, which include the following:

- a) Align curricula at all levels to prepare students with the knowledge and skill sets necessary to compete in the 21st Century global economy
- b) Map out essential coursework designed to facilitate the achievement of specific post-secondary educational or career goals
- c) Create better implementation of the existing assessments, make use of results and improve communication so that parents and students can understand assessments
- d) Strengthen system linkages between high schools and post-secondary education

Preliminary objectives and recommendations have been provided from each of these sub-committees. These recommendations will be refined and provided to the School Board for endorsement. Presentations will be made to the staff, parents and students for discussion and debate.

A question was raised about having enough staff to accommodate changes in the high schools.

A question was raised about the possibility of Danville City Schools not continuing its partnership with the Regional Alternative School next year. It was noted that Danville City Schools are committed to continue for next year. However, if the Danville School System should decide not to continue this partnership, Pittsylvania County Schools would need to provide the additional funding necessary to continue the program.

On consensus of the Teachers' Advisory Council Representatives, there will not be a meeting in June. On behalf of the School Board and the Central Office staff, the Superintendent expressed appreciation to the Council representatives for their service on the Council and their invaluable input.

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 3:37 p.m.