

MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
March 25, 2013

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, March 25, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting took place virtually with representatives present at the four (4) high schools and the administration staff at the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

All twenty (20) schools were represented. Also present were Mr. James E. McDaniel, Division Superintendent, Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, and Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. ABSENT: Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration.

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those joining the virtual meeting. He also explained the process to follow in order to communicate appropriately to allow all individuals to speak as desired. Feedback will be requested at the end of the meeting to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the virtual meeting.

The following Council topics were addressed:

1. A question was raised about employees having personal iPads at schools. Bringing personal devices to school would be a violation of the Computer Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Any teacher or employee with questions should contact Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations.
2. A question was raised about the possibility of closing any of the smaller elementary schools in the County.
A possible strategy for cutting the budget has been discussed; however, closing schools was not in consideration as a cut at this time.
3. A concern was expressed about cleaning that was completed at Stony Mill Elementary School which resulted in items being broken. The teachers were unprepared for the cleaning and no compensation was offered for the broken items.
There were some cleaning issues that are being resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. Teachers were encouraged to contact Dr. Early to discuss any broken items.
4. A concern was expressed about the loss of tutors because of lack of funds.
There were no funds cut for tutoring; however, the schools are provided a funding allocation at the beginning of the school year for PALS, remediation and Title I). The principals have the autonomy to allocate funds to other areas if more funding is needed for tutoring (such as travel, training or SOL remediation funds). The allocations for Stony Mill Elementary School are low and may be depleted prior to the SOL testing period in May.

5. A question was raised about the total enrollment for each high school and what can be done with Tunstall High School. Each year Tunstall High School's ninth grade classes become larger.

The Average Daily Membership (ADM) through February has been recorded as follows:

- Chatham High School - 652
- Dan River High School - 644
- Gretna High School - 599
- Tunstall High School - 902

The instructional staff has reviewed the enrollment, class sizes and extra periods taught by teachers at each high school in order to bring about equity and prevent the teachers having to teach extra periods.

6. A question was raised about the make-up day on March 29, 2013, being a half day for students and a full day for teachers. The teachers did not receive the February workday at home because it had to be used as a make-up day for students.

The Superintendent indicated that the February date was originally scheduled as a teacher work day. The following day was scheduled as a school staff development day and could not be used as a work at home day. The School Board expects staff to follow the calendar as stipulated and use make-up days as designated. The 1:00 p.m. dismissal on March 29, 2013, will give teachers the opportunity to complete tasks in the classroom such as grades.

7. A question was raised about the possibility of using banked days before make-up days are used in the calendar.

A certain number of make-up days must be used prior to using bank days. Because all employees received the day before Thanksgiving as a holiday, there are only 179 school days (rather than 180) in the 2012-2013 school calendar. This resulted in the need to count the number of hours of instruction rather than the number of school days for the 2012-2013 school year. The goal is to make up days in order to provide the students the necessary instruction and to preserve the integrity of the program for the students to be successful at the end of the school year.

8. A question was raised about the recovery of salary steps lost during the five-year salary freeze.

This would be a budgetary issue. It would be difficult to recover because of the revenue received from the State and the local governing body. It is anticipated that employees will receive a 2% salary increase for the 2013-2014 school year. Also individuals covered under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) would also receive the additional 1% offset for the member contribution to retirement. The Pittsylvania County School Board will hold a budget hearing on March 28, 2013, and will submit its budget proposal to the Board of Supervisors by April 1, 2013.

9. A question was raised about any anticipated increases in health insurance premiums.

The premiums for the 2013-2014 school year are not known at this time. It is usually early May or June before this information is provided.

10. A question was raised about the promised gift cards from Anthem for those participating in the Wellness Initiative.
There was an interface problem with Anthem and the company that was to issue the gift cards. It is not known at this date when these gift cards will be issued.
11. A question was asked about special education assistants receiving the bonus to be included in the March 29, 2013, paychecks.
Every full-time and part-time contracted employee will receive some type of bonus based on their designation. The special education assistants will receive a bonus of \$125.00.
12. A question was raised about recently passed legislation requiring defibrillator training for every teacher.
The legislation is specifically for bus drivers and does increase the number of people in the schools required to have the defibrillator training. There are currently Automated External Defibrillators (AED) in the schools and employees who have been trained to use it. At this time the School Board has made no determination relative to how to proceed with training requirements. The legislation becomes effective July 1, 2013.
13. A question was raised about legislation requiring the teachers to take a specific history/government class for the next renewal period for their Virginia teaching license. The teachers would also like to know who will pay for the class.
There has been no communication from the Virginia Department of Education Licensure Office. As soon as this information is received, appropriate communication will be provided to all teachers and administrators.
14. A question was raised about the Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Henry County Schools is changing the AP history class to AP honors history if the student is enrolled in the class but does not take the AP exam.
There are no plans to change an AP class to an honors class in Pittsylvania County Schools. Taking the AP exam is not a stipulation to complete the AP class because the exam would be an expense incurred by the student and not the school division. The students in Pittsylvania County Schools are encouraged to take the AP exam.

In the absence of Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, the Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Good news has been received relative to the 2013-2014 proposed budget. Mr. W. Dan Sleeper, County Administrator, proposed a total of \$15,859,178 in local funding for the school system. The Board of Supervisors cut \$229,000 from the amount which leaves a balance of \$15,630,178. With this amount, the school

employees will receive a real 2% salary increase for the 2013-2014 school year. Also, the 1% Virginia Retirement System (VRS) offsetting rate will be covered. It is anticipated that sequestration will cut the school budget by 5.8% which has been included in the funding amount. This news has been very encouraging for the school system. The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 8, 2013.

2. The employees will receive a bonus in their March, 2013, paycheck. The amount is a little higher than was projected in the fall. All full-time contracted employees will receive \$250; part-time contracted employees will receive \$125.00.
3. MyLunchMoney is a program that allows parents to choose to utilize a prepay system for breakfast/lunch for their children, review an online account balance for their children and keep up with how much their children are spending at lunch/breakfast. A pilot program is being implemented at Twin Springs Elementary School, Chatham Middle School and Chatham High School for the remainder of this school year. The fee to prepay will be \$1.95 per school; however, there is no charge for parents to review and check balances online. This system allows the parent to set limits on how much the student can buy per week or per day and will automatically notify parents when the account reaches a certain amount. It is anticipated that this program would be available at all schools for the 2013-2014 school year. Parents may review what items were purchased for the previous fourteen (14) days.
4. Vacancies for the 2013-2014 school year will be posted on the website. The anticipated vacancies include bus drivers, teacher aides, special education assistants, custodians, cafeteria workers, HVAC and teachers with endorsements in mathematics, earth science, special education, Spanish, speech, band, emergency medical technology (EMT) and library media services.
5. There are 16 classified and 13 certified employees who have expressed a desire to retire at the end of the 2012-2013 school year to date.
6. The Behavior Management Taskforce has reviewed School Board Policy JFC-PC, Student Conduct, and provided recommendations for changes to the School Board. These changes include: Under Class 3 misconduct - adding over the counter medication (unauthorized use or possession or being under the influence) and under Class 4 misconduct adding controlled substance, possession of a weapon or look alike weapon. The final approval of this policy change is anticipated at the April 9, 2013, School Board meeting.
7. A question was raised about the possibility of moving teachers to accommodate the budget. The instructional staff has reviewed staff across the entire school division in order to provide equity in every school. Mrs. Wanda E. Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, will be meeting with each principal relative to the equity plan. If the budget is approved as requested, there would be

no layoffs; however, there would not be any additional money to hire more teachers.

Mrs. Wanda E. Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, addressed the following items

1. The High School Course Selection Guide was provided. There have been some revisions in the guide. The high school diploma options have also changed. The Modified Standard Diploma will no longer be an option for students entering the ninth grade for the 2013-2014 school year. The Governor's School information was also revised.
2. SOL test results for the Fall 2012 assessment were provided. The science and math assessments were based on new standards. The English and math scores were good. The staff has been very pleased with the scores.
3. The results for the Preliminary Scholastics Aptitude Test (PSAT) were provided. This test is given to all sophomore students. The percentage of change from 2011 to 2012 was also distributed.
4. The 2012-2013 school calendar was changed because of the need to make up a day missed in February. Students will attend school a full day on Thursday, March 28, 2013, and will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, March 29, 2013. Teachers will work a full day on Friday, March 29, 2013, with the afternoon designated as a workday.
5. The number of teachers with number of sections taught and the average class sizes was provided and discussed.

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

1. The Crisis Management Plan has been updated. Additions and changes included: a threat assessment procedure, updated procedure to assess suicidal threats, earthquake procedures and minor wording and formatting revisions.
2. The following is a listing of priorities being completed by the Information Technology Department:
 - SOL testing
 - Graduate of Merit
 - Upgrading bandwidth
 - Installing new high school machines
 - Upgrading office machines and others to Windows 7 (at least 700 machines)
 - Preparing laptop carts
 - Completing the installation of projectors

- Working with the Career & Technical Center to install equipment purchased by individual schools
3. The School Board has approved the first reading of School Board Policy IIBG-PC, Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy. The second and final reading will be at the April 9, 2013, meeting of the Board. The proposed policy is on the website for review at this time.
 4. A survey will be provided to the teacher representatives to seek comments and input relative to the virtual meeting experience. This will be an anonymous survey. All representatives were encouraged to complete the survey when received.

Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, addressed the following items:

1. The Special Education Annual Plan has been reviewed by the Special Education Advisory Council. This plan will be presented to the School Board at its April 9, 2013, meeting for approval to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education. The majority of the funding for special education is tied to the information provided in this annual plan.
2. The majority of the Tdap clinics have been completed. The Tdap (Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis) vaccine is required for students prior to entering the sixth grade.
3. The Modified Standard Diploma will no longer be an option for students entering the ninth grade beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. Students with disabilities will be required to earn verified credits. Options for these students will include the locally awarded verified credits for math and English or to utilize the VMAST testing in order to earn the appropriate credits for graduation with a Standard Diploma.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Social media issues were discussed. There are some parameters that drive decision making in regard to disciplinary responses to social media. For example, students who are not using our equipment and not on our campuses engaging in social media off campus or after hours are to a certain degree protected by First Amendment rights. The defining criteria is if the social media event is substantially disruptive at the school level and not just personally offensive. The principals are strongly encouraged not to engage with students through social media at any time. Any time an administrator or teacher becomes involved with students through social media, it creates an open interpretation, is risky and can escalate to inappropriate communications. These actions may result in a disciplinary matter. Teachers should also encourage their colleagues to be alert to

the casualness of communication with students. Educators are held to a higher standard relative to the way they communicate with students.

2. Feedback was requested relative to the inclement weather communications. The intent of the communication has been to provide prescriptive and descriptive messages. Decisions are made based on the condition of the schools, parking lots and roads. The Teacher Representatives were appreciative of the early notifications.
3. The Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office deputies and investigators are visiting the schools on a consistent basis. The following list shows the number of visits made at each school between December, 2012, and February, 2013. These numbers do not reflect any visits that may have been made by the Virginia State Police.
 - a. Mt. Airy Elementary School – 15
 - b. Hurt Elementary School – 9
 - c. Gretna Elementary School – 15
 - d. Gretna Middle School – 6
 - e. Gretna High School – 6
 - f. Chatham Elementary School – 19
 - g. Chatham Middle School – 17
 - h. Career & Technical Center – 12
 - i. Chatham High School – 6
 - j. Southside Elementary School – 19
 - k. Dan River High School – 4
 - l. Kentuck Elementary School – 27
 - m. Dan River Middle School – 21
 - n. Alternative – 2
 - o. Union Hall Elementary School – 13
 - p. Twin Springs Elementary School – 27
 - q. Tunstall High School – 4
 - r. Tunstall Middle School – 18
 - s. Brosville Elementary School – 18
 - t. Stony Mill Elementary School – 14
4. The School Board attorney is currently reviewing the proposed policy as developed by the Dress Code Taskforce for an employee/volunteer dress code. This proposed policy will be presented to the School Board at its April 9, 2013, meeting for first reading approval. There have been concerns expressed about not being allowed to wear flip flops (beach style). It was indicated that employees will have the opportunity to review the proposed policy and make any comments prior to the final approval by the School Board. Mr. Cedric J. Hairston, Principal at Chatham Middle School, is receiving feedback from parents and students relative to a school initiative for dress at Chatham Middle School. This issue is separate from the School Board Policy relative to the employee/volunteer dress.

5. The Sick Leave Taskforce met and developed a proposed policy for the voluntary donation of sick leave days. The School Board attorney is currently reviewing this proposal. This proposed policy will also be presented to the School Board at its April 9, 2013, meeting. The Sick Leave Bank policy is for the employee only. This proposed policy would parallel the Sick Leave Bank policy and would allow the employee to use time for other members of their family.
6. Appreciation was expressed to the Representatives for their willingness to serve on this Council. There was no interest in having a meeting in June, 2013.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. There were no suggestions for improvement. One comment was made relative to the lack of chocolate at each of the sites.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.