

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
March 31, 2014**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, March 31, 2014, 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, Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, and Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The following Council topics were addressed:

1. A question was raised about the consistency of time schedules and standards for reporting and leaving work for all schools.
The principal has the autonomy to operate, supervise and manage the school under the policies of the School Board and the direction of the Superintendent's Office. The teacher workday is 8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. However, the principal may assign the teachers to work from 8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. The expectation is for everyone to report to work on time. There have been circumstances where employees were dismissed from duties for not arriving to work on time.
2. A question was raised about the 2% salary increase included in Governor McAuliffe's budget proposal.
The 2014-2015 school budget was based on the proposal from former Governor McDonnell. Governor McAuliffe has added amendments to the budget which includes a 2% raise for K-12 teaching positions covered under the Standards of Quality effective April 1, 2015. This extra funding would only provide \$199,000 for Pittsylvania County Schools which would not cover all employees. The 1% raise included in the 2014-2015 school budget will provide more money for the employees than this proposed increase.
3. A question was raised about Danville City Schools joining Pittsylvania County Schools in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Academy.
The school system is currently partnering with Danville City Schools for the Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET). There may be opportunities to share resources with Martinsville City and Henry County;

however, Danville City will be watching the STEM program as a possible model for the implementation of their program.

4. A proposal was presented to extend the school days in the 2014-2015 calendar by 12-18 minutes in order to meet the requirements for the 990 hours and prevent the need for make-up days. Other suggestions included having make-up days at the beginning of the week rather than the end of the week and remove Spring Break as make-up days. When planning make-up days, Good Friday and Easter Monday should be considered before looking at using Spring Break days. If the days are listed on the approved calendar as make-up, employees need to be present or take leave time.

These suggestions will be provided to the Calendar Committee for discussion and consideration in developing the 2014-2015 school calendar.

5. Concerns were expressed about employees not receiving a paycheck in August if the school opening is after Labor Day.

All employees will receive their contracted salary amount for the school year; however, if school does not begin for students until after Labor Day, employees may not receive a check in August.

6. A proposal was made to implement an A/B alternating block schedule to allow the students the opportunity to take more classes.

The schools have the opportunity to bring proposals for changes in scheduling to the School Board. The principal should present a proposal to the Superintendent which would include compelling research and data if a change is desired. The Superintendent would present any appropriate recommendations for changes in the schedule to the School Board for consideration. The principal must show why a change in schedule would be in the best interest of the students and the school. All schools are not required to be on the same schedule.

7. A concern was expressed about teacher aides being placed in the classrooms to substitute for a teacher and being paid teacher aid pay rather than substitute teacher pay.

It was explained that the daily rate for a non-degreed teacher aide is \$51.52 and the amount paid to a substitute teacher is \$50.75. As the school system continues to review salary schedules, the teacher aide scale is a top priority. All of the teachers, as well as other employees are being asked to do more because of budget constraints.

8. A concern was expressed about special education teachers being pulled from inclusion classrooms to substitute in other classes.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) dictates the student placement. If the IEP indicates inclusive setting, this must be available for the student. Special education teachers should not be pulled from the classroom on a regular basis; however, students cannot be unsupervised in

a classroom. If the special education teacher is being pulled, the Central Office administrators must be contacted.

9. A concern was expressed about the PALS scores counting as part of the elementary teachers' evaluations.

Teacher evaluation instruments include multiple criteria. One assessment will not have that great of an impact on the teacher evaluation over a three-year cycle in determining whether the goals are met. If the teacher includes the PALS scores as part of a goal, this assessment would become part of the evaluation process.
10. It was noted that more computers and greater computer access was needed in the schools.

The Information Technology Department reviewed the number of students enrolled and the access of computers in the schools. From that review, additional computer labs and laptop carts were added. The IT staff is continuing to look at the ratio of available computers and will be adding computer labs at Chatham Elementary School and Chatham Middle School, a mini lab at Union Hall Elementary School and laptop carts for Tunstall Middle School and Twin Springs Elementary School. The ratio for students to computers is at least three (3) students to one (1) computer. Computers will also be added to the middle school science classrooms. The IT staff is also working with the Instruction Department, Title I Office and Career & Technical Office to add laptops carts. Plans are continuing to ensure that the ratio is equitable across the division.
11. A concern was expressed about the need for a space to have for women to breastfeed.

It is uncertain if this requirement has been passed by the General Assembly at this time. However, if passed, a space will be located in the schools to accommodate these individuals. It was noted that some of the schools have already set up appropriate areas.
12. A suggestion was made to have a plan for school zones that are not affected by inclement weather and close schools by sector.

Pittsylvania County covers approximately 1,000 square miles (the size of Rhode Island). The school division buses close to 6,000 students each day. It is not as simple as closing one area of the County while other students are allowed to go to school because of other students attending programs outside of their school zone (such as a special needs student attending a program in the Chatham zone rather than Gretna zone).
13. A question was raised about using the end of the year surplus fund to remove trailers from the school properties and providing a raise for employees rather than buying an overpriced building.

The Superintendent will be attending faculty meetings to answer questions relative to the STEM Academy. Last year, the end of year funding equaled to approximately \$1 million which allowed the purchase of eight (8) new buses and safety initiatives (front door locks and buzzers, key card swipes for back doors, and new digital cameras for the buses). This year the end of year money will be used to purchase the old Woodlawn property at \$600,001 which will house the STEM Academy, the Regional Alternative School and the Horizon Academy. The Woodlawn property was assessed at \$2.5 million. Grant funding of approximately \$300,000 has also been received to assist with costs associated with the STEM Academy. The school system will also realize a savings of \$52,000 which is the amount paid for rent and custodial fees at the current Regional Alternative School site. The School Board has approved a 1% salary increase for 2014-2015 and an increase in the amount provided to employees to help pay for health insurance costs (additional \$400 per year). The cost for health insurance premiums for 2014-2015 will not be known until summer, 2014.

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

1. The School Board, at its March 27, 2014, meeting, approved a balanced budget to submit to the Board of Supervisors. The budget was based on former Governor McDonnell's budget proposal. More federal money may be forthcoming from sequestration; however, this is not known at this time. Additional changes may be made in the budget if the Board of Supervisors does not approve the proposal as presented. Highlights of the budget include:
 - Reinstatement of nine (9) teaching positions (87 certified positions have been cut in previous years)
 - Additional \$40.00 per month (\$400 per year) for health insurance
 - 1% raise for all employees and 1% for VRS salary offset working toward the full 5% requirement for employee rate
 - Retired Health Insurance Credit for non-support group for VRS
2. There are currently fourteen (14) teachers and one (1) administrator retiring at the end of year and five (5) teachers and one (1) director that have retired over the course of the 2013-2014 school year. Also, there are nine (9) classified staff members retiring at the end of the year and five (5) that have retired during the year. For resignations, there are (4) teachers and one (1) classified employee. There is also one (1) teacher requesting a one year leave of absence. Currently, the school division is advertising for three (3) teachers for the STEM Academy which will be funded by a grant. The total number of vacancies for the 2014-2015 school year to date include: 19 teacher replacements; 3 STEM Academy teachers, the 9 reinstated teaching positions (total of 31 teaching vacancies), 1 principal position and 10 classified positions. There may be additional changes and vacancies prior to the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.

3. The Behavior Management Taskforce met on February 19, 2014, to review the Student Code of Conduct. There were no changes recommended for the Student Code of Conduct.
4. The School Board has reviewed and approved changes in the salary schedules for the 2014-2015 school year. Previously, the year of experience for a teacher reflected the salary step on the scale. Because there was no raise for five (5) years, the salary went with the step for those years. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the step will no longer reflect the years of service. Employees will remain on the same step as the 2013-2014 school year which will include the 1% salary increase and the 1% VRS salary offset for full-time employees. Part-time employees will only receive the 1% salary increase. A meeting will be scheduled in each region to present the changes in the salary schedules and answer questions.

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

1. The High School Course Selection Guide includes information about the Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET) which will run parallel to the Piedmont Governor's School for Mathematics, Science and Technology using the same buses for transportation to and from the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research (IALR). The AET is a partnership with the IALR, New College (Martinsville, Virginia), Virginia State University and Danville Community College. There will be very little cost to our school division for the AET. Letters have been provided to the interested students who have been accepted to the Governor's School and the AET for the 2014-2015 school year.
2. Information was distributed relative to the high school Standards of Learning (SOL) preliminary test results. Final test results will be available from the State in the Spring.
3. The PSAT was given to all sophomores in the Pittsylvania County Schools in October, 2013. The PSAT results were also provided.
4. The 2013-2014 school calendar has been updated to reflect the make-up days. The school days were extended by 30 minutes for March 31 – April 17, 2014 (with the exception of Fridays). These extended days will allow for one make-up day. The 2013-2014 school year will conclude for students at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, May 23, 2014. When the school system uses banked days, the number of hours included in the school year must be counted. Pittsylvania County Schools has 1,080 hours in the school calendar (prior to missing any days because of inclement weather). The State requires the school year to be no less than 990 hours. At this time, after calculating the number of days missed, banked days and

the additional extension of hours, the school system has 9.5 additional hours to be used for make-up if necessary.

5. Information was shared about the 2014-2015 calendar proposal. Because it is not known if the school division will receive approval of a waiver for a pre-Labor Day opening, the Calendar Committee decided not to put out two (2) calendars. The Calendar Committee will be meeting to further discuss possibilities. It is anticipated that Spring Break for 2015 will be around Easter. The Superintendent has also requested a waiver for pre-Labor Day opening of school from the State Board of Education. This waiver would be based on having an innovative program (STEM Academy) in place. The school division must prove that the elementary and middle schools as well as the high schools will need to start before labor day. Another option for a waiver is included in the State budget which, if approved without changes by the General Assembly, will allow a waiver that was in place for the 2011-2012 school year to be extended for an additional two (2) years. Any suggestions or comments relative to the school calendar should be e-mailed to Mrs. Wanda Vaughan at wanda.vaughan@pcs.k12.va.us.

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

1. The following priorities are being addressed by the Information Technology (IT) Department:
 - Standards of Learning (SOL) testing
 - Graduate of Merit program
 - Update Windows XP to Windows 7 on computers
 - Upgrade teacher computers to IE 10 (IE 9 is causing some e-mail issues)
 - Installation of projectors and school-purchased equipment
2. At the completion of the 2013-2014 school year, the IT staff will be working to relocate the Regional Alternative School, and completing work at the STEM Academy to ensure that the wiring and installation of computers and instructional technology is in place for the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year.
3. Representatives were asked to e-mail Dr. Early if there are any suggestions for changes in the Crisis Management Plan. Additions to the current plan included: Code Orange (students remain in classrooms for continuing instruction with no one allowed in the hallways), additional explanations of what to do for each type of code and the addition of an updated lockdown drill form.
4. The proximity key swipe cards have been issued and provided to most elementary and middle schools. Hurt Elementary School should receive these cards very soon. Employees are asked to avoid bending or punching holes in the cards and leaving them in the hot sun (do not leave in car). If a card is lost, the principal must be contacted and a replacement fee would be requested from the employee.

The activation time for the key-swipe cards is 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Any questions relative to these cards should be e-mailed to Dr. Early.

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

1. A question was raised about changes in the requirements for Standards of Learning (SOL) testing and the effect these changes would have on the third and fifth grades and the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The General Assembly has not finalized the legislative issues at this time and it is not known which SOL tests will be eliminated. However, if the IEP on-line will not allow a broad statement to be included, the same procedures and language should be used as in the past. Any appropriate changes could then be made in the Fall.
2. As of March 31, 2014, there have been 224 students receiving the Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine. This vaccine is required for students prior to enrollment in the sixth grade. If any student misses any of the clinics offered at the schools, they have the opportunity to go to the local health department to receive the immunization.
3. The school division will partner with the Pittsylvania County Health Department to again offer flu clinics in the fall. A schedule of these clinics will be distributed as soon as dates are known.
4. Funds are being recovered from Medicaid for services provided to students. These services include nursing, therapy and transportation.
5. As of December 1, 2013, there were 1,258 student (13.67% of student population) receiving special education services. The largest group of identified students is in the other health impaired (OHI) category. The second largest group is identified as specific learning disabilities (SLD). These students have the opportunity to graduate with a regular diploma.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. A teacher work day has been scheduled on the afternoon of Friday, May 23, 2014, from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. and 3:30 – 7:00 p.m. However, after completing all required work and checking out with the principal, teachers may leave as soon after 3:30 p.m.
2. Additional opportunities will be available for students. These include the Academy for Engineering and Technology, the STEM Academy, more advanced coursework and industrial maintenance programs.
3. The following legislative issues are being considered by the General Assembly:

- The process of grading schools A-F has been delayed for two (2) years by the General Assembly.
- Social Services and schools are required to develop written interagency agreements for the investigation of all child abuse and neglect complaints.
- Diploma changes include the consideration of all computer science course credits to be science, math or career and technical education course credits.
- The Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments shall not exceed 17 in grades 3-8 and requires only math and English SOLs to be completed at the grade 3 level.
- Changes in student discipline include: certain weapon or drug offenses not required for expulsion regardless of the facts of the situation; administrators can determine that special circumstances exist and no disciplinary action is warranted for controlled substances (imitation) or synthetics; pneumatic guns were removed from the list of weapons; a student will be permitted to carry diabetic supplies anywhere; school employees will be prohibited from sharing personal identifying information from student records to federal agents; teacher dismissal window of opportunity to request a hearing before the School Board will be extended from 5 to 10 business days.
- It could be June, 2014, before a budget is passed by the State.
- Expedited retakes for the Standards of Learning is a funding issue in Richmond.

The Representatives were asked about continuing the electronic meetings with a face-to-face meeting at the beginning and the ending of the year. The consensus was to continue this schedule for the 2014-2015 school session.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. There were no suggestions for change. Appreciation was expressed to the Superintendent for doing such a fine job. The Superintendent also expressed appreciation to the teachers for their work with Pittsylvania County Schools.

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