

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

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

The Superintendent called the meeting to order and welcomed those joining the virtual meeting.

The following Council topics were addressed:

1. A request was made for the heat to be checked at Chatham Middle School and to have more consistent heat throughout the building. A work order has been submitted for the heat.
Dr. Jeff Early, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, indicated that he would check on the heat at Chatham Middle School. Prior to the end of the Council meeting, the heat had been corrected for the school.
2. Appreciation was expressed from the Career & Technical Center for checking on the problems at the school (mold, moisture and temperature in the building; and buses arriving late to the Center).
3. A request was made for a salary raise.
Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, responded that the Salary Taskforce would be discussing and providing recommendations to the School Board Budget Committee for consideration in the 2014-2015 school budget. Tentative discussions have included a 3% raise for the 2014-2015 school year.
4. A concern was expressed relative to updates for PowerSchool being conducted during the last week of every six weeks when teachers need to work on report cards.
Dr. Jeff Early indicated that updates were necessary in order to complete State reports. These updates are generally completed after 3:30 p.m. and is limited as much as possible. Sometimes, these updates must be completed at a time that may be inconvenient for users. The IT staff will review the timeframe and limit shut down to avoid report card times as much as possible.

5. A question was raised about the possibility of shopping for health insurance to find a cheaper plan for the school system.

Dr. Lillian D. Holland provided information relative to the process that is used to obtain quotes for health insurance for the school system. An outside company assists the school system to obtain these quotes. There were five (5) different quotes received; however, it was determined that Anthem would provide a plan to best meet the needs of the school system at no additional costs. It was also noted that Anthem's cost was lower than the other submitted quotes. The health insurance premiums did not increase for 2013-2014. Staff will continue to pursue the competition bid process for health insurance in the future. The school system is self-insured which means the premiums are used to pay the costs of services.
6. A concern was expressed about the need for special education personnel to review eligibility for services for students.

Dr. Jeff Early indicated that model criteria from the State must be followed in order to determine eligibility for special education services. The number of individuals receiving special education services must also be reported to the State which determines the amount of funding received for special education.
7. A concern was expressed relative to a lack of increase in the mileage reimbursement when fuel costs continue to increase.

This request would need to be considered as a budget initiative. For professional development activities, the cost of the conference fees, meals and mileage is included in the request for approval.
8. A suggestion was made to consider a break for teachers and students before November (Thanksgiving). It has been suggested that a break be considered in October, on Election Day or on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, indicated that the Calendar Committee will consider these comments and will look at the possibility of a pre- and a post-Labor Day opening for the 2014-2015 school year. The school system is not eligible for a pre-Labor Day opening for the 2014-2015 school year based on the number of days missed because of inclement weather. This option will not be available unless a waiver is received from the General Assembly or the Governor or an innovative program is implemented that would involve all grade levels.
9. A request was made to have an at-home workday prior to the end of each six (6) weeks. Should there be inclement weather during January, February or March, an at-home workday may be applicable. This strategy has been utilized in the last few years as necessary.
10. A concern was expressed relative to spending money on the purchase of Woodlawn Academy rather than giving a raise to teachers.

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

- Representatives were encouraged to provide input for the 2014-2015 calendar proposal.
- The dues for clubs and organizations were discussed. A question had been raised at the most recent Citizens' Advisory Council relative to paying dues. School Board Policy JN-PC, Student Fees, Fines and Charges, stipulates that fees may be reduced or waived for economically disadvantaged students or students whose families are undergoing economic hardships or are financially unable to pay. The principals have been notified and reminded of the stipulations in the policy.

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

- The safety audits have been completed for all of the schools. Unannounced lock-down drills have also been included. A review of the results from the audit will be completed during the month of December, and a report will be provided to the School Board at its January, 2014, meeting.
- The swipe locks will be installed at the middle and elementary schools by January, 2014. The identification cards will be updated as the swipe key.
- An upgrade of the pager system for 911 has been completed. The old pagers had to be replaced because they were not compatible with the new system. The new pagers will be tested in the near future.

In the absence of Mrs. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Dr. Lillian D. Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, addressed the following item:

- Flu clinics were held in the elementary and middle schools. There were 978 participants in these clinics. Appreciation was expressed for the support and cooperation of the hosting schools, the school nurse coordinators and the Pittsylvania Danville Health Department.

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

- The hazard communication standards for OSHA have been revised as of March, 2012. These changes were made to align with the new labeling requirements for specific chemicals. The deadline for the changes is not until December 1, 2015; however, there are some chemical companies that are beginning to make these changes on their products. Each employee is required to sign and submit a document indicating that they have received the information about these changes.

- The Salary Taskforce held its first meeting on October 15, 2013. Budget requests are due to the School Board Office by December 13, 2013. It is anticipated that budget information will be received from the Governor's Office in December. The Salary Taskforce has tentatively discussed the following recommendations for the budget: maintain positions and programs, maintain benefits, review the teacher aide salary schedule and provide a 3% salary increase. Any suggestions for the 2014-2015 budget proposal may be provided to any member of the Salary Taskforce or Dr. Holland.
- An update on the Affordable Care Act was provided. The school system's health insurance plan is above and beyond the requirements of the Act. The health insurance plan meets the minimum value and affordability stipulation to be in compliance with the Affordable Care Act. The part-time hours for staff will be monitored during this school year. Decisions relative to the eligibility for health insurance will be made for employees working at least thirty (30) hours per week.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

- Information was provided relative to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Academy. Plans are being reviewed to implement a STEM Academy to initially include students in grades 5, 7 and 9. These students would have the opportunity to come to the STEM Academy and participate in a laboratory environment to study which would include a lab for each school level (elementary, middle and high). The elementary, middle and high schools would also have instructional support for the science, technology, engineering and mathematics competencies. Additional grades would be added after the initial implementation. The Superintendent's efforts were applauded for trying to obtain the Woodlawn facility.
- A new Academy for Engineering and Technology (AET) program will begin for the 2014-2015 school year. This program will parallel with the Governor's School schedule with students having two (2) blocks in the morning and returning to the base school for the afternoon. There will be no cost to the school system for this program. The students will be transported to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research on the same buses used for the Governor's School. This program will provide opportunities for students to participate in summer internships working with business partners and organizations with the possibility of earning up to \$2,000.00.
- A weather event may occur on this date. The Superintendent and Mr. Bobby Lovelace, Director of Pupil Transportation, will review the forecast and determine if any changes in schedule for Tuesday, November 26, 2013, would be necessary. Appropriate announcements will be provided as necessary.

- The Representatives were polled relative to having virtual meetings. The response was positive. The January 27, 2014, meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council will be held virtually with the last meeting of the year (March 31, 2014) to be held face-to-face at the School Board Office. The Representatives liked having chocolate at the meeting and requested that water also be provided for the next meeting.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. There were no suggestions for improvement.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.