

**MINUTES OF TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL
PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
September 24, 2012**

A meeting of the Teachers' Advisory Council was held on Monday, September 24, 2012, at 2:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office, Chatham, Virginia.

Nineteen (19) 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. Ann Cassada, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services. ABSENT: Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

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

The protocol and organization of the Advisory Council was discussed. The purpose of the meeting is to share information about policies, programs and procedures and solicit input and feedback from the representatives relative to division level issues and initiatives. School level issues should be addressed with the principal of the school. Representatives were encouraged to e-mail topics to the Superintendent, Mrs. Janet Hancock, Clerk of the Board, or any one of the Assistant Superintendents. A notice of the meetings will be e-mailed to Representatives prior to the meeting date. Information not available at the meeting will be included in the minutes after the meeting. These minutes will be posted on the website and will be e-mailed to each Representative.

The following Council topics were discussed:

1. A question was raised about the Information Technology Department work order system.
The work order system is designed so that the individual requesting assistance completes a work order request which is submitted to the appropriate IT technician. The location is requested only upon completion of the initial work order. There have been over 1,200 work order completed since the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year.
2. A question was raised about the professional development and performance growth plans.
Professional growth is part of what is done in the school system. The plan is to put on paper how an individual would like to grow in an area for the school year. Professionalism is part of one of the standards included in the new teacher evaluation instrument. Professional growth needs to reference student growth. Data needs to drive the decision making process for the schools and classrooms. This is the same process that has been used in the past; however, teachers are now being asked to put this in writing.

3. A question was raised about the availability of funding for teachers attending conferences.
The schools receive funding that may be used toward professional development. All teachers and administrators have access to PD360 which provides an opportunity for professional development.
4. A question was raised about funding for field trips for schools.
The teachers/principals plan and determine which field trips are appropriate. There are two (2) types of field trips: curriculum-based trips which are free to the student or enrichment-based field trips where the student may be charged for any transportation and/or other costs.
5. A question was raised about State Remedial Reading and Title I funding for resource teachers.
The principal has the autonomy to assign staff based on needs of the school. There have been many cuts from the budget because of the lack of funding which has increased class sizes.
6. Questions have been submitted from Chatham High School regarding the math department. There are concerns over the classes that are offered and not being able to offer as many classes as in the past.
A meeting will be planned for the math department at Chatham High School to discuss these concerns. It was noted that positions have been cut at all levels in order to balance the budget.
7. A question was raised about the possibility of donating sick leave days to other employees.
The process of donating sick leave days to other employees would require a change in School Board policy. Other possibilities may be to implement a change in the way sick leave is paid at retirement (\$10.00 per day up to 100 days and \$25.00 per day for any days beyond 100). The Superintendent indicated that he would put together a commission to include teachers to review this issue.
8. A question was asked about when teacher computers and software would be updated.
The teacher computers at the high schools will be ordered with Windows 7 and Microsoft Office and installed during the 2012-2013 school year.
9. A question was raised about the possibility of implementing a school uniform.
The Superintendent has conducted a survey relative to school uniforms. The concern would be the response from the community. Also, the school system would have to pay for individuals who were not able to afford the costs of the uniform. Data will need to be collected, relationships will need to be built and foundational work will need to be laid in order to begin this process. Any school has the opportunity to present an initiative at any time based on data relative to

how school uniforms would make a difference at the school. This does not have to be a division-wide initiative.

10. A question was raised about the use of cell phones by teachers.
The position of the School Board and the school principals is that the cell phone should be used by the teacher during class time unless it is an emergency. This would include texting and calls. This issue will be discussed with the school principals.
11. A question was raised about the possibility of a raise for employees in the future.
At this time, it is not known what the challenges will be for the 2013-2014 school budget. However, 2013-2014 is the second year of the biennium which means the budget funding will be very similar unless there are any changes by the Governor or the General Assembly. Suggestions for the 2013-2014 budget should be provided to the Salary Taskforce.
12. A concern was expressed relative to teachers attending extra meetings after school with no additional pay. It was noted that recertification points for these types of activities are not worth the time nor the drive.
The teacher contract states there are some activities that must be completed by teachers. The teachers are working 192 days but receive a contract based on a salary for 200 days which includes these after school meetings. With the concern about the distance having to be traveled to attend meetings, it was suggested that the meetings be held closer to the schools or have a virtual meeting. Dr. Jeff Early was requested to determine the feasibility of having virtual meetings.
13. A question was raised about why professional dress is being discussed.
This is a division-wide issue.
14. A request was made for feedback when Central Office administrators observe teachers.
The Superintendent will discuss with this with Dr. Lillian Holland and the directors.
15. A question was raised about the Fall Break that was part of the 2011-2012 school year.
The feedback received for the 2012-2013 school calendar was to complete the first semester prior to Winter Break. In order to have the 90 days required between August – December, it was necessary to eliminate the Fall Break. Representatives were encouraged to provide any suggestions to the Calendar Committee. The Superintendent noted that the students attending the Student Leaders Forum were very pleased with the school calendar.
16. A question was asked if the Salary Taskforce Committee is still in force.
The Salary Taskforce Committee is still in existence and will hold its first meeting for the 2012-2013 school year on October 17, 2012. Any suggestions for

the 2013-2014 school budget may be provided to any Salary Taskforce Committee member or to Dr. Lillian Holland.

17. A request was made to change the date of the student visit to the Career & Technical Center to a day during the fall semester. The students are being requested to register for classes prior to having the opportunity to view the courses and programs being offered.
18. A request was made to allow school staff and immediate family members free admission to school-sponsored games.
The funding for athletics has been dramatically cut. Currently, staff members are allowed free admission. Family members have not been included in this. A discussion will be held with the principals to consider the possibility of year-long or family passes for sporting events.

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

1. A budget calendar for the 2013-2014 school budget will be presented to the School Board at its October 9, 2012, meeting. The proposed budget calendar is very similar to the calendar for the 2012-2013 school budget.
2. A personnel update was provided. There were sixty-five (65) certified and classified employees who retired and forty-two (42) who resigned at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Thirty-eight (38) positions were not filled for the 2012-2013 school year. There were fifty-three (53) certified and fifty-one (51) classified employees hired for the 2012-2013 school year. Currently we are advertising the following positions: Special Education Teacher at Gretna High School, Chatham Elementary School and Tunstall High School; Speech Therapist position; Business Teacher at Dan River High School and Librarians at Hurt Elementary School/Mt. Airy Elementary School and Tunstall Middle School. Since 2009, 104 positions (87 certified and 17 classified) have been cut from the school budget, which represents 7% of the workforce in the schools.

In the absence of Mrs. Wanda Vaughan, the Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Information relative to the Federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) was provided. The Virginia Department of Education applied for an ESEA flexibility waiver from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system. This waiver has been granted for two (2) years, and moves the school system from a prescriptive annual measurable objective to one that will rise over time at a more realistic pace with more reasonable targets.
2. The 2013 graduation site selection was provided. The site is selected by the students at each high school. A review of the graduation audit for the class of 2012 was also presented.

3. Feedback was requested from the Representatives for the 2013-2014 school calendar. There were no additional comments.

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

1. The school cafeteria at Brosville Elementary School was expanded over the summer. The project was completed on time. The expansion provided additional workspace for the cafeteria workers, increased food storage, a larger serving line, a walk-in freezer and refrigerator, a restroom, washer and dryer and a mop sink.
2. The softball and track fields at Chatham High School have been upgraded. Additional storage building was constructed at Dan River High School, Gretna High School and Tunstall High School. Funds for these projects came from bond money and other designated funds that could not be used for employee salaries. The bonus that was provided to the employees last November was provided using one-time available money.
3. The school division will participate in the Great Southeast ShakeOut Drill. Everyone will have to drop, cover and hold on for one minute on October 18, 2012, at 10:18 a.m. Students and teachers will be asked to get up under their desks for one minute and then return to class.
4. The Safety Audit Team will be visiting the schools to conduct a review to ensure that the schools are prepared for any emergency.
5. The best filtering system that should be used is for the teacher to ensure that the students are doing what they are supposed to be doing.
6. There are six (6) Information Technology Resource Teachers (ITRT). They assist teachers, provide teacher training and resources, act as a consultant and provide learning and continuous improvement for using technology in the delivery of instruction. Should teachers have any questions or requests for additional information, they should contact Mrs. Cathy Scolpini, Lead ITRT.

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

1. In collaboration with the Pittsylvania-Danville Health District, flu clinics have been scheduled at each of the middle schools. Information relative to Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance billing has been included in the correspondence to community members and staff. A schedule of the clinic locations and times was provided.
2. The State requires the school system to offer training for insulin and glucagon protocol and the use of the Epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen). This training has been implemented for the schools and appropriate protocol will be used.

3. A brochure regarding the Project Connect FAMIS program was distributed. Through this program, Ms. Amy Warren Edwards, FAMIS Outreach Worker, helps eligible families to obtain health insurance.

The Superintendent addressed the following items:

1. Professional dress for teachers and staff members was discussed. There were several concerns expressed by Representatives relative to the professional dress of staff members. These comments included the following:
 - a. Behavioral aides should not look like they are going to the “club”
 - b. Students should not be talking about tattoos on a staff member’s body
 - c. No shorts (other than coaches)
 - d. There are a lot of khaki and low rise pants
 - e. An individual’s stomach should not be showing
 - f. Staff members should following the same dress codes as students
 - g. Individuals should be able to tell the difference between a student and a staff member
 - h. There needs to be some direction given relative to dress
 - i. The school division is moving further away from professionalism
 - j. Dress is sloppy
 - k. There is nothing defined in the School Board policy relative to staff dress
 - l. A question was raised about the difference between a flip flop and a sandal
 - m. It was suggested that an anonymous survey be conducted relative to professional dress
 - n. Because there has been no raise in four (4) years, it was noted that staff may be resistant to having to buy new clothes
2. Representatives were asked to discuss with principals the possibility of having 5-10 minutes at a faculty meeting to talk about items of interest and importance from this meeting.
3. A presentation was made to the Chamber of Commerce last week relative to the financial challenges of the school system, the success of the students on assessments and the information gleaned from the State Report Card. The school system has quality people working in the division. There were 14 out of 18 schools that met the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). The schools are doing very well comparatively across the State. Appreciation was expressed to the teachers for all they do to meet these challenges.
4. The school division is continuing to do a great job with charitable giving. Last year over \$70,000.00 was given to the American Heart Association and over \$370,000.00 over the last three (3) years. United Way contributions were over \$175,000.00.
5. Mr. Brian Turpin, new Juvenile & Domestic Court Judge, indicated to the Superintendent that Pittsylvania County Schools ranked first or second in the State for attendance. The students in Pittsylvania County want to come to school.

Recognition is provided at each principals' meeting for those schools exceeding attendance rates. Good instruction is the key. There were students from Wales who visited Brosville Elementary School recently. These students were impressed with the teachers' enthusiasm and engagement with the students in the classroom.

The Superintendent asked if there were any suggestions on how to improve this meeting. One suggestion was to have chocolate at the meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

After the meeting, additional questions were provided for review. These questions included the following:

1. Is there a way to have all after-school meetings on ½ days or teacher workdays? Can information be provided by e-mail or webcams?
The division is given two days on the calendar for division-wide meetings - one in August and one in November. Staff does plan to meet with elementary and middle school teachers on Tuesday, November 6. The IT department is investigating the feasibility of using webcams for after-school meetings.
2. With 40% of the teacher evaluation on student achievement, there is more testing than teaching. How many pre-, post-, benchmark, and SOL practice tests are going to be required? Is any of the 40% going to be evaluated on actual County test, or SOL tests? If not, a teacher can make a hard pre-test and students fail and then make an easy post-test and students pass. This would show improvement but would be a bogus test. There has to be universal pre- and post-tests so teachers cannot do this. Benchmark tests are required and are given on 6- and 12-week intervals at the high school level and on 9- and 18-week intervals at the elementary and middle level. Each school should be using data to show trends and areas of need. These would be areas to help determine where to pre- and post-test. At the evaluation meetings, there were discussions about grade levels, content areas, and collaboration to help determine areas of need. For example, if a school shows a need to improve Algebra I scores or reading scores, then that is an area to assess. From the assessment, the teacher can then write a goal. Those in elementary school are not expected to write a goal for each subject taught nor are high school teachers who teach different math, science or history courses. If a teacher has several sections of a class, then the goal can easily be written for all the students taught that subject. The purpose of the requirement is to show academic progress of the students taught. Some teachers already pre-assess in all classes so the teacher knows where to begin teaching to achieve the end goal of learning. The pre-test and post-test are to be the same assessments. This is a new process for the school system. Staff will be working through the process to make equitable assessments. It is the desire to have county-wide assessments.

3. With the number of special education students rising, why are fewer students being exempt from testing? If they qualify for special education but cannot read, then why do so many still qualify to take the SOL tests?

State testing guidelines require that all students participate and are accountable in the testing process. Some special education students qualify for alternate assessments provided by the State testing system. Others are allowed to use accommodations that fit the disability as determined by the IEP team.

4. How will teachers be evaluated that do not have a homeroom? If teachers receive merit pay, how will they figure in the equation since they do not have a homeroom? All teachers are required to show student academic progress according to the subjects taught. Fine arts teachers, PE teachers, and others that do not have a homeroom do have standards and must prove the students have shown progress in those standards.

There are no plans to implement merit pay for our schools. At this time, the first priority for any funds received above the State-mandated funding from the Board of Supervisors may possibly be used to provide a raise for teachers and staff.