



Teacher Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Meeting Summary Notes: November 2, 2015

Meeting Summary Notes are intended to serve as the superintendent's reflection on the discussions that occur during advisory committee meetings. They are not intended to be exhaustive. Instead, they are intended to serve as a general record for our on-going efforts to assess our needs, determine our goals, map out our strategies, and evaluate our policies, procedures and programs. Participants should contact the superintendent if they observe any critical oversight or misinterpretation in these notes.

Participants present: David Edwards (AHS), Stacey Gibson (AHS), Cindy Ferris (MVES), Sarah Weirich, Valerie Humphreys (CES), Cindy Fox (CMS), Becky Johnson (SES), Melissa Nicely (SES), Lorie Bess (Administrative Asst.), Fred Vaughan (Director of Human Resources and Pupil Personnel), Jan Hobbs (Director of Assessment and Student Success), Mary Jane Mutispaugh (Director of Instruction), and Eugene Kotulka (Superintendent)

1. Mr. Kotulka reminded participants the Capital Improvement Plan and Comprehensive Plan are on the division website. He explained the Plan focuses on four key areas: (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Student Academic Progress, (3) Climate and Culture, and (4) Safety and Organization Management. Both plans will be reviewed by the School Board at a work session on November 11 and a public hearing will be held on November 16 at Alleghany High School, he noted. Both plans will be considered for approval by the School Board on December 14.
2. As a follow-up to a previous concern about school lunch menus, Mr. Kotulka explained the state controls menus by enforcing strict caloric intake. He noted the costs are determined by the state, even if the school division has a surplus in the cafeteria fund. He stated Ms. Paxton will look at other menus and prices to see if there are any changes that can be made. He noted he had eaten at each cafeteria and all were good. He said if anyone had any suggestions to improve the menus, to let him know.
3. As a follow up concern regarding running out of lunch food at CMS, Mr. Kotulka reported this has been taken care of but to let him know if it occurs again. He also asked that if a teacher or cafeteria worker notices a student not eating on a regular basis, to let the principal or school counselor know.
4. Mr. Kotulka stated National Board Certification is specific to teachers and is a state-recognized program.
5. Mr. Kotulka asked for teachers to let him know if there are still issues with Talent Ed.
6. Mr. Kotulka stated there should not be staff meetings held on the same day as parent/teacher conferences. He stated staff meetings should be held before or after the conferences, but not during, and this will be communicated to the principals.
7. Mr. Kotulka stated he has been informed of difficulties with scheduling IEP meetings due to Dr. Heath's busy schedule. He explained Dr. Heath does have a very busy schedule

but if she is invited to attend the IEP meeting, then it will have to be scheduled around her. He noted IEP meetings should be attended by the teacher(s), counselor, case manager, and building administrator. He offered the option of having IEP meetings after school to better accommodate everyone's schedules.

8. As a follow up to a previous question regarding the American Reading Company program, Ms. Mutispaugh explained this program was purchased as recommended by the Title I teachers and there is evidence of improvement with the program.
9. A participant reported some students are more difficult to teach than others and what can be done to improve this. Mr. Kotulka agreed this happens and administration wants to help by providing "wrap around services" to these students. He stated if a teacher has a student that is being disruptive on a consistent basis, to let him know.
10. Mr. Kotulka reported the next budget meeting will be held November 9.
11. Mr. Kotulka discussed the 2016-2017 academic calendar. He explained the calendar committee will focus on finishing the first semester before the holiday break. He stated the two choices to accomplish this will be to either start five days earlier or start after Labor Day. The first draft calendar has been presented to the Board and the final draft will be considered for approval at the December board meeting, he noted. A participant asked if "Mid Six-Weeks Reports" could be removed from the calendar since there are no reports being sent home now. Ms. Mutispaugh stated it should stay on the calendar because some parents request the paper report and need to know when they are available.
12. Mr. Kotulka reported one school had confirmed cases of MRSA. He commended staff for the extra work that was done to clean the building.
13. Mr. Kotulka reported employees would receive their raise on their December 18 paycheck. He explained the raise is retroactive according to the employee's contract, as follows:
 - 12 month employees – retroactive to July 1
 - 11 month employees – retroactive to August 1
 - 10 month employees – retroactive to September 1
14. Mr. Kotulka reported he has been holding "Superintendent Office Hours" in each school to allow staff, students, or parents to meet with him without an appointment. He noted this has gone very well.
15. Mr. Kotulka explained accreditation status is dictated by the federal government. He encouraged everyone to write their state legislators with their comments and concerns about education.
16. A participant expressed concern about using the School Messenger Alert system for unofficial business, such as announcing a school Bingo event. Mr. Kotulka replied division wide announcements should come through Mary Jane Mutispaugh or himself. School level announcements are approved by the principal. He stated he would discuss this with the building leadership teams to determine what is appropriate.
17. A participant asked if any further thought has been given to a 9-week grading period. Ms. Mutispaugh stated one disadvantage would be that parents would only get one report before the final grade, due to 4x4 block scheduling.

18. Mr. Kotulka discussed discipline issues and explained that is imperative we are consistent and make sure that parents are being notified.
19. A participant reported some students purposely get suspended from school during hunting season and SOL test time. Mr. Kotulka replied it is very important that students are in class and he will discuss this with building administrators.
20. A participant asked if a teacher is interested in dual enrollment teaching, does the division pay for the classes. Mr. Kotulka replied there is a Memorandum of Agreement for these employees. He reminded participants that the state no longer requires recertification classes for license renewal. He also noted the division no longer pays for National Board Certification.
21. A participant asked if any consideration has been given to teachers wearing school division uniforms, such as khaki pants with school logo shirts. Mr. Kotulka replied he would mention this idea at an AEA meeting but it would require 100% participation and it is important that teachers dress above students.
22. A participant stated stress is affecting staff members' health throughout the division and asked if administration could look at health insurance programs that promote healthy living and offer incentives for health checkups, instead of just looking for the cheapest insurance policy. Mr. Vaughan replied our health insurance currently offers an online portal with wellness information and a nurse line. Mr. Kotulka stated he would like to look at discount programs with the YMCA or Lewis-Gale Alleghany to see what might be available for employees.
23. A participant asked why teachers are not required to work their 200-day contract, but aides must work their 190 contract days. Several teachers replied that aides do not take work home with them, but teachers do and it's usually on a daily basis.
24. A participant asked if teachers can test their own students or at least test the same subject they teach during SOL testing. Mr. Kotulka replied it is not good practice for a teacher to test their own students during SOL testing, and there should be two teachers covering each test. He stated he would discuss this with Ms. Hobbs to see if there are other options, perhaps including counselors and aides.
25. A participant reported most computers have expired anti-virus software. Mr. Vaughan replied a work order should be submitted. Mr. Kotulka added that software updates can be handled by the resident technology expert at each school.
26. A participant sated there is not enough bandwidth at the CMS mobile lab. Mr. Kotulka stated he would check into this.

NEXT MEETING: February 1, 4:00 p.m.

The Alleghany County School Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated as the contact regarding compliance issues associated with this non-discrimination policy: Fred Vaughan, Director of Human Resources and Pupil Personnel, and Jan Hobbs, Director of Assessment and Student Success, at the Alleghany County School Board, P.O. Drawer 140, Low Moor, Virginia 24457. 540-863-1800.