



## **Teacher Advisory Committee to the Superintendent**

### **Meeting Summary Notes: September 8, 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), Valerie Humphreys (CES), Sarah Weirich (CMS), Cindy Fox (CMS), Mike Isbell (CMS), Becky Johnson (SES), Lorie Bess (Administrative Asst.), Mary Jane Mutispaugh (Director of Instruction), Elizabeth Heath (Director of SPED), Fred Vaughan (Director of Human Resources and Pupil Personnel), Jan Hobbs (Director of Assessment and Student Success), and Eugene Kotulka (Superintendent)

1. Mr. Kotulka welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussed the purpose of the teacher advisory committee. He reminded participants it is helpful to send any suggestions, concerns, or questions to him ahead of time as some topics require research. He explained the committee provides valuable input and it should be considered an open forum, unless there is a specific personnel issue, which would need to be discussed privately. He stated we will all work together, like "spokes in a wheel", and the goal is to fix issues that arise.
2. This year's TAC meetings will take place on the following dates: September 8; October 5, November 2, February 1, March 1; April 11, and May 9. All meetings begin at 4:00 p.m. If schools are cancelled due to inclement weather then the teacher advisory committee meeting is also cancelled.
3. Mr. Kotulka presented participants with a draft copy of the Comprehensive Plan and explained the purpose of the Plan is to be the driving force of our plans for the school division over the next six years. 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. The Plan must be approved by the School Board and he asked for any suggestions or comments to be emailed to himself or Lorie Bess.
4. Mr. Kotulka reported he is planning to develop a division-wide Leadership Team of about 10-14 people. He stated if anyone is interested or knows someone who would be an asset to this team, to let him know. It is open to anyone who is willing to work hard and be very involved in the process.

5. A participant expressed concern that elementary teachers do not have a duty-free lunch while secondary teachers do. Mr. Kotulka replied all students have to be monitored by someone, but it doesn't necessarily have to be the teacher. He suggested asking for parent volunteers to cover lunches because the division cannot hire lunchroom monitors at this time.
6. A participant shared a complaint that the A/C is cutting off too early in the day at CMS. Mr. Isbell stated the thermostat should be set to cut off at 5:30 p.m., but it may not be and that he would check on it to be sure the thermostat is set at the right time.
7. A participant commended the Superintendent for his many school visits and stated it helps boost morale to see him in the building.
8. A participant expressed concern that the middle and high school teachers get an 87-90 minute planning period while the elementary teachers get 30-40 minutes, and sometimes none at all. The participant stated this concern has been brought to the committee before and the reply has been the middle and high school teachers have other duties, which is understood, however the elementary teachers also have other duties also. A participant added that planning periods used to be mandated, but that doesn't seem to be the case now. Mr. Kotulka requested two teachers provide him with exact amounts of their planning time over a two-week period and he would take a look at it and follow-up at the next meeting. He reminded participants the high school is on a 4x4 block so this gives them a 90-minute planning period.
9. A participant stated giving testing dates for November, January, March and April in August may not be the best practice because the dates will likely change. Ms. Hobbs replied the goal is for testing dates at the elementary level to be consistent. She also stated she wants all testing retakes to be done before the last week of school.
10. A participant reported problems with the logins and passwords in Talent Ed. Ms. Hobbs reminded everyone there is a "forgot password" button to reset the password. She also noted administrators can live chat with tech support. Mr. Kotulka suggested a few teachers work with Ms. Hobbs to resolve this issue.
11. A participant expressed gratitude for the extra copier at the high school.
12. A participant asked how many bank days are in the calendar with the extended school day schedule. Mr. Kotulka replied there are seven bank days each semester and they cannot be carried over. A participant asked what happens with the bank time if we do not use it and Mr. Kotulka replied employees will work those days. He reminded everyone a teacher contract is 200 days and instruction is the top priority.
13. A participant asked if employees would be getting a raise from the surplus money. Mr. Kotulka stated he is working on a plan to recommend to the School Board, but it is ultimately their decision. He stated the Board recognizes it is important to compensate employees. A participant noted if employees are to receive a bonus this year, it would be most helpful before the "Black Friday" shopping holiday.
14. A participant asked why teachers have to write a "letter of explanation" to use a personal day. Mr. Vaughan replied a letter is not required, but a brief description should be put into the notes section in Aesop. Mr. Kotulka reminded everyone that our policy requires

no more than 10% of staff can be absent at one time, so this has to be closely monitored, especially on Friday's and Monday's.

15. A participant suggested getting paid twice a month, instead of once a month, as a morale booster. She noted employees could be paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, which doesn't offer any more money for the month. Mr. Rice explained because there are so many variables with a school payroll system, it could be a complex task. Mr. Kotulka stated it will be looked into.
16. A participant asked the appropriate amount of time for a central office employee to respond to a question. Mr. Kotulka replied all employees are expected to respond within 24 hours, and to let him know if this is not happening. He emphasized using your "out of office" email notification if you are absent.
17. Mr. Kotulka reported the Calendar Committee will be meeting earlier in the year to plan for next year, in hopes to start school a week earlier to finish out the first semester before the holidays. He explained because the high school is on a 4x4 block schedule, it drives the calendar. He noted a 2-year calendar will also be considered by the committee.
18. Ms. Mutispaugh offered participants to consider serving on an Environmental Education Committee. She explained the committee will develop four priorities for meaningful watershed experiences. This committee is open to all levels and will require dedicated work. She stated she would like to have a representative from each school and to let the principal know if they are interested.
19. Ms. Mutispaugh reminded everyone the ETC department is short one employee and they are trying to get the technology work orders completed as quickly as possible. She asked for everyone's patience during this time.
20. A participant commended the Physics teacher at the high school.

The meeting ended at 5:00 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: October 5, 4:00 p.m.**

*The Allegheny 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 Allegheny County School Board, P.O. Drawer 140, Low Moor, Virginia 24457. 540-863-1800.*