

SUPPORT STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2009 – 8:30 A.M.
SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE

Present were:

Alan Lee	Division Superintendent
Melissa Caudill	Director of Finance & HR
Rocky Blevins	Transportation Department
Darlynn Chafin	Finance/Accounts Payable
Pat Frye	Human Resources Department
Donna Gentry	School Nurse, Meadowview Elementary School
Emory Hale	Custodian, Abingdon High School
Michele Lilly	Bookkeeper, Abingdon High School
Jennifer Rhea	Technology Department
Joyce Stevens	School Nutrition Specialist, Abingdon Elementary School
Chris Warren	School Secretary, Watauga Elementary School

Dr. Lee opened the meeting by welcoming the group and asking them what was going on. Responses were:

- Donna Gentry: She has seen some cases of the flu. The staff is working hard. Interior doors are being installed at Meadowview, and she feels that will cut down on noise from the hallways. Some refrigerators have been removed from the building. She has heard no rumors or concerns.

Dr. Lee informed them that, as a result of the High Point incident, open classrooms within the division are being provided with doors. He also told them that, as a cost savings measure, the number of refrigerators in the division are being reduced. Anyone working in an area with no heat vents and a room temperature of below 68 degrees is allowed to use a heater.

Responses continued:

- Rocky Blevins: Everything is going well. He suggested purchasing a device that would enable them to wash the salt from underneath and off the sides of the buses. He also said it would be helpful if a memo was sent out about cut backs.

Dr. Lee said that, at present, we replace buses after thirteen years with approximately 200,000 miles. When we sell the old buses, we are now getting from \$2,000-\$4,000 for them. Dr. Lee suggested that Rocky talk with Tom Williams about his idea.

Dr. Lee gave them an update on the budget. We still do not know what the state's cut back will be, but it could be as much as \$3.4 million. It is hoped that the Board of Supervisors will be able to at least level fund us. It is unsure what the federal government will do for us, and the stimulus package will probably be a one-shot deal. The Board took these things into consideration when

developing the school budget. Dr. Lee said that he and Ms. Caudill would be meeting with the School Board members to talk to them about a plan to address the reductions. He does not feel jobs will be lost at this point. The state has indicated there will be further cut backs, but the School Board's goal is to keep people employed. Some reductions have already been done such as discontinuing two bus routes and not filling some recent vacancies. As a result, employees may be asked to do a little more.

Responses continued:

- Emory Hale: Some of the Abingdon High School custodians are already helping other schools.
- Joyce Stevens: Everything is good at Abingdon Elementary. They had some leaky water pipes, which the Maintenance Department fixed right away. Beginning March 2, it is National School Breakfast Week. The school will be doing "give aways", and they do "Grab and Go", which has increased breakfast sales. One of her concerns is the locking of doors this summer. Typically, they keep the door open and use a screen door to let air into the kitchen. There are no ceiling fans, and she has officially made a paper request for them. There are no windows. She has heard people talking about the stimulus package, and they feel things are not as bad as first thought.

Dr. Lee responded that the Virginia Education Association sent an e-mail asking all teachers to ask Board Members to not cut positions because a stimulus package is coming. Dr. Lee said a response to that is forthcoming when we know what the stimulus package contains. Senator Wampler is concerned that the situation could be worse than first thought. Delegate Johnson feels it will be as bad as the Governor says, and Delegate Kilgore said he thinks it will not be any worse than what the Governor has predicted. Dr. Lee encouraged them to contact him if they have any questions.

Responses continued:

- Michele Lilly: At Abingdon High a teacher recently passed away. Two students also had their homes burn up. The school is having a hat day today to raise money for one of the families, and next week they are doing a fund raiser for the other family. They are collecting clothing. The school is turning lights out and has gotten rid of some refrigerators. She has heard no rumors, and everyone is busy with SOLs.
- Chris Warren: The interior doorways are complete at Watauga Elementary, and it has made a difference in the noise level in the classrooms. They got a memo from the principal saying we will cut back on paper as much as we can. They are conserving lights. Two new maintenance men came to Watauga and are taking care of work orders. Water fountains and other things are being repaired. The school has had some sicknesses, and lots of fevers. Everything is going great, and she has heard no rumors.

- Pat Frye: The intent memo sent out from Human Resources each year typically is returned with comments that employees would like to try something else. This year, everyone seems to be happy where they are, and they are content to stay in their job. She has heard no rumors.
- Darlynn Chafin: Everything is fine in Accounts Payable. She has heard no rumors.
- Jennifer Rhea: Everything is going good. They started training on Power School, which will replace SASI. The Technology Department, as well as the ITRTs, has already been trained. She heard someone say raises would be given this year, but she thinks it was a misread from the paper.

Dr. Lee responded that he does not feel there will be raises in 2009-2010. He said that the School Board, in the 2009-2010 Budget, asked the Board of Supervisors for funds to provide raises as well as other things they felt was important. That request was printed in the paper. The Board of Supervisors has not responded to the Board's budget request; however, it is hoped they will be able to level fund the school system. Dr. Lee said he would be glad to explain this to anyone who has a question or concern.

- Emory Hale: People are concerned in his department, but they understand why they have to go to other schools to help out.

Dr. Lee asked them to tell him what we can do to make the school system better. Response was:

- Emory Hale: He feels they are already doing things such as turning out half the gym lights. This is also being done by other schools.

Dr. Lee thanked them for coming and providing their thoughts. As soon as something concrete is known, he will publish a priority order of reductions. We have enough cushion for one year. As people retire, we will continue to consolidate jobs.

The next meeting will be March 27.