



SUPERINTENDENT'S PERSONNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 12, 2017
MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ted Finney, Linkhorne Elementary School; Stacie Monday, Robert S. Payne Elementary School/Nurses and Health Assistants; Patty Webb, Linkhorne Middle School; Connie Finney, Bedford Hills Elementary School; Tate Culbreth, Bedford Hills Elementary School; Robin Einreinhof, Perrymont Elementary School; Rich Ferguson, William Marvin Bass Elementary School; Marshall Saunders, Department for Maintenance; Kira Roberts, Robert S. Payne Elementary School; Toni Hill, School Nutrition; Karl Loos, Lynchburg Education Association; Adam Benyo, Paul Munro Elementary School; Jane Ruehle, Hutcherson Early Learning Center; Marie Gee, Director for Personnel; Larry Massie, Acting Superintendent; Wendie Sullivan, Recording Secretary

The Superintendent's Personnel Advisory Committee met at 3:45 p.m. Dr. Massie opened the meeting.

The following is a summary of comments offered by each of the representatives.

- Linkhorne Elementary School/Perrymont Elementary School/Robert S. Payne Elementary School: Concern was expressed about the increasing need for counseling and mental health services for students. Dr. Massie stated that the school administration is looking at this as a budgetary item for next school year. He noted that there is a marked difference in student behavior as compared to when he served as acting superintendent six years ago. Suggestions were made from the group about providing parenting classes and replacing coaches with social workers. It was also suggested that teachers receive professional development in the science of behavior.
- Bedford Hills Elementary School
 1. Why aren't resource teachers (art, music, physical education) in the larger elementary schools five days per week like librarians? There is zero planning time for resource teachers in the large schools. A five-day week in the home-based school would allow planning time.

With the exception of Thomas C. Miller Elementary School for Innovation and Dearington Elementary School for Innovation, which are staffed differently because of those schools' magnet status, art and music teachers are assigned in such a way that each student in each grade, Kindergarten through fifth, receive a lesson in that subject area each week.

Movement education teachers provide three lessons for each student every two weeks.

Regardless of whether she teaches art, music, or movement education, the school division expectation is that a resource teacher should be scheduled to teach six lessons of 50 minutes each per day, for a total of 350 minutes of teaching time. Allowing for 10 minutes of transition time between lessons 2-6 each day, the total teaching and transition time is 350 minutes. The teacher's contracted day is 7.5 hours or 450 minutes.

2. I don't know if this can of worms is worth opening, or if it is even something that goes before the SPAC and not somewhere else, but I am still confused about Christmas in the classroom. I totally understand being inclusive of practices other than Christian Christmas and how it must feel if you are Jewish, Atheist, or Muslim and you are surrounded by Christmas all the time. I guess my question is what do I need to do in order to be allowed to spend two weeks celebrating secular Christmas in my room? (By that I mean math and literacy activities that revolve around Christmas subjects like Rudolph or Santa or Christmas trees, etc.) If you look at the world's major religions, Judaism isn't even in the top four, but at least it has a semi-secular side like dreidels and latkes. It is Christianity, then Islam, the "non-religious," then Hinduism, then Buddhism. And Christian Christmas is the only one besides Judaism that really has a secular side that we could even do in the classroom. The rest are pretty much all strictly religious in nature, except maybe little fat Buddhas being used in decorations. So am I supposed to give equal weight (two weeks) to Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism just so I can spend two weeks on secular Christmas? And if so, how do I touch on those celebrations that don't have a secular side to them? And Kwanzaa? At best, maybe 1-2 percent of the US celebrates Kwanzaa. Why do we give it any attention at all?

Guidelines for equity and inclusiveness can be found at <http://www.lcsedu.net/new-teachers/equity-inclusiveness>. For additional information regarding the celebration of holidays, please contact Ms. Ethel E. Reeves, director for engagement, equity, and opportunity at reeves@lcsedu.net, or Ms. Dashia L. Womack, coordinator for engagement, equity, and opportunity, at womackdl@lcsedu.net.

3. I am concerned with the number of initial evaluations for special education services this school year when our school has an already high number of students whom qualify for special education services. It is taking staff, including classroom teachers, away from their students' needs – teaching/support – due to testing/attending meetings. With such an increase of students going through the

eligibility process, case managers are bogged down with data collection, testing, report writing, attending meetings, behavior support for students prior to having an IEP, etc., and the majority of staff are new and fresh out of college so there is a huge learning curve. Special Education Department staff turn over on an annual basis. It is happening again this year with a staff member resigning after the second quarter and others talking about not coming back next year. They are burnt out with behaviors and the amount of paperwork involved. They are upset that they cannot just teach and be there consistently for their students because they are being pulled in so many directions. Due to a staff member resigning, other team members are having to complete an increased amount of eligibility testing, reports, attend meetings, etc., to the point that it was impacting students' IEP services times, until administration agreed to give the Department Lead a substitute teacher in order to complete some of these tasks. We are grateful for this, however, it doesn't change having an increased amount of work load on our Department Lead when she has other obligations (i.e., after school tutoring program, second job, a family, sleep) and this school year is impacting that greatly.

Thank you for sharing your questions and concerns related to special education caseloads and the additional work staff members must complete when the Bedford Hills Elementary School Child Study Committee/School Team "suspects a child may have a disability" and a full evaluation is necessary for eligibility and educational programming.

Lynchburg City Schools adheres to the special education caseload guidelines as outlined in the chart that can be found at [this link: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf). Caseloads are monitored throughout the year. If a special educational staff member believes their caseload exceeds the Virginia Department of Education caseload requirements, please see your building principal. A January 23, 2018, review of Bedford Hills' special education caseloads did not reveal any excess caseloads.

Referrals of students "suspected disabled" does result in the need to complete general education summaries of performance for each child as well as comprehensive educational achievement testing as assigned to special education teachers. Special Education staff schedules are "drafted" based on projected IEPs as well as projected CSC referrals for the upcoming school year. This is completed in February/March annually. If Bedford Hills' special education teachers assigned to educational achievement testing are experiencing challenges completing educational achievement

testing during their scheduled testing times, please see your building administrator. Mr. Wyllys D. VanDerwerker, director for exceptional learners, will be glad to meet with the Special Education Department to discuss ways to meet our students' needs.

- Carl B. Hutcherson School

The school requested that they receive a guidance counselor for their school and/or a student support specialist to provide wrap-around services.

The group continued to discuss student behavior and defined responses for that behavior, re-establishing Saturday School, requiring parents to pay for vandalism that occurs by students in the classroom, and hiring a permanent substitute teacher for each school.

The following question was submitted after the meeting.

- Sheffield Elementary School

Did LCS know there would be an increase after the first year of getting a new insurance company? Usually, that's how businesses get "hooked" in – like lower deductibles, lower co-pays, etc. Now there is a hike in what we have to pay to have insurance as well as a higher deductible and more money for specialists visits. Also, prescriptions will cost more. Does LCS have any funds available to incur these costs? Surely they knew about this ahead of time. You don't just pick an insurance company without knowing if and when it will increase within a specified time. Sure would be nice if they considered picking up that cost like they have done in the past.

The increase in our health insurance rates are not related to costs associated with the plan administrator. The increase in the health insurance rates is the result of the increase in the number and the cost of employees' medical claims.

The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

The next meeting of the Superintendent Personnel Advisory Committee will occur on February 1, 2018, at 3:45 p.m. in the Board Room at the School Administration Building.