



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Parent Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2017
9:00 a.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves. He told parents the purpose of these meetings was to keep them informed about the major items the division is looking at annually to give them an opportunity for input and to share ideas for continuous improvement.

The Comprehensive Plan was discussed, noting that progress has been made in many areas and others are in progress. The committees will be reconvening in the fall to review and update the plan. Dr. Clemons invited parents to be a part of the process and will have Ms. Dehoux send them the plan to review. He asked them to be thinking about the committee they might like to serve on.

The Board of Supervisors has allotted \$100,000 to have a master plan study done by Moseley Architects to determine what will be required to address various needs at GHS. Moseley has been working with a design committee that consists of a wide representation from the community to determine what this conceptual design might look like. We would like for it to be a facility that is updated for the future, not just a new roof and HVAC. Once a conceptual design is determined, we will look for feedback from the community. The architects are looking at renovations for the existing building. We plan to have options for both a new or renovated facility to share with the BOS and the community that addresses the overarching needs expressed by the multiple groups included. There is some increased debt capacity that the county will be able to incur in 2019 which may allow additional steps, but it may be in phases. Ultimately, it will be a community decision. Advisory member Cindy Sharp added that we will need people in the building to teach what the building is being designing for. We need community involvement and support. GCPS is the largest employer in Gloucester County and we provide county officials with a detailed budget annually to allow them to make informed decisions.

We are also working with the county on an agreement for a combined transportation facility on the new Page site. The county would like the land where the current transportation facility is located for economic development. We are working to make this situation a win-win for both the schools and the county. We will also need a new baseball field at the new Page site as it was not done when the building was constructed. We want to be sure we address what is needed and don't look back and know it should have been done differently. If the field had been done when Page was built, it would have cost \$285,000. Now, it could be twice that amount. Dr. Clemons said the new Page site actually has room for another school if Gloucester grows in population. In addition, the central office housed at T.C. Walker could be relocated and the building could then be used again as an elementary school if necessary.

Budget planning for the next fiscal year begins in the fall of each year. Dr. Clemons will soon be meeting with principals, directors and the executive leadership team to begin the budget process. In December, the governor will release his budget. Based on that information, Dr. Clemons will then create a budget with his team that will be presented to the school board. They will approve/make changes and develop the school board's budget to present to the BOS. The County Administrator

has indicated that compensation will be a top priority this year. Dr. Clemons informed members of the candidates' forum on Monday, Oct. 2nd at Abingdon Ruritan Club at 6:30 p.m. and encouraged everyone to vote on Election Day. He is hopeful that it will be a good budget year for GCPS.

Ms. Sharp asked where the division is in regards to the pending lawsuit. Dr. Clemons replied that a motion has been made to dismiss the case, but he doesn't know yet, if that will occur.

Ms. Sharp also inquired about the dropout rate for Gloucester County based on the information that was released last week in the Daily Press. Dr. Clemons explained that this figure is based on a cohort of students who started as first time freshman in 2013-14 and didn't finish for whatever reason in four years. We are planning to look at the individual situations to determine what the reasoning is behind each student who didn't graduate and if there are some that we can still provide services for. We may need to see if there are areas that we also need to work on. He feels a graduation coach would be valuable in helping to reduce these numbers. We do have a truancy officer and guidance counselors, but will look further into what depth they are able to look into what happened to these students. Dr. Wagner mentioned virtual learning opportunities and that the 4X4 schedule allows for recovery of classes better than our previous schedule. Virtual learning is another opportunity for recovery, but is a challenge for students who are not motivated and minimum attendance is also going to be a state requirement in addition to SOL's. The number given for our dropout rate may also include students who moved away and may have been homeschooled, but not reported to us. We need to work with families. We have many challenges with some parents and students that we must continue to work out in our efforts to see all students be college and or career ready.

Ms. Sharp also informed members that some students are using a (VPN) or Virtual Private Network to break through the school network security.

Advisory member Nicole Bayler expressed concerns about the lack of male teachers at Bethel, noting that the physical education teacher is the only male. Dr. Clemons knows this is an issue, especially at the elementary level, that is often predominantly female, due to the fact that fewer males apply. It was suggested that more male volunteers be brought in through community engagement. Ms. Bayler said that military in the community who need community service hours could volunteer in the schools. Dr. Wagner wants to be able to offer more to students on both ends of the spectrum. We have repurposed in some areas and taken away some resources from virtual education and put those toward special education.

Ms. Sharp shared that her son is a junior and has had a good experience at GHS. She is concerned that traffic is an issue at GHS and would like to see this taken into consideration with the redesign. There are times that she's noticed children being let off on the road because cars are so backed up.

Advisory member Kristie Askew expressed concerns about some classes in regards to the new 4X4 schedule, specifically foreign language classes that may not be offered the following semester. This could create a situation where a student taking Spanish I in the second semester, might not have an opportunity to take Spanish II until the following year in the second semester, leaving large gaps between the two classes. She would like to see these scheduling issues avoided if at all possible.

Advisory member Mr. Wiese is also on the gifted advisory committee and feels positive about the steps the school division is taking in regarding gifted services noting that there is still work to do. He is happy to see the back to school night in some of the schools, noting that they give people an opportunity to see what is going on in the schools. From a budgetary standpoint, he felt like the competitive benefits analysis for localities wasn't explanatory enough and that it needs to also show the benefits picture, not just compensation. He said it's easier to sell as a package if you show that you have to phase in some benefits costs with the raises. He asked how our employee contribution

compared with other localities and suggested we compete more on the salary end instead of the benefits package end. He believes the information pertaining to other localities can be obtained through our broker. Dr. Clemons mentioned salary competitiveness between divisions, noting that we need the community to value staff and offer competitive salaries.

Members also mentioned that Gloucester is down in comparison to other localities regarding the per pupil amount spent.

Future meetings were discussed. Dr. Clemons would like to hold a meeting in December, January or February and March or April. Members felt the 9:00 a.m. timeframe worked best for the majority.

Adjournment -- 11:51 a.m.