

DLT Meeting

September 16, 2020 – 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone, thanking them for all they are doing. Today marks the seventh day of the new school year. There are some glitches to be worked out, but those are to be expected at the beginning of every year, and especially with the new platform.

A joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors and School Board will be held on October 20, instead of the previously scheduled date of September 15. At this time, Dr. Clemons is uncertain if both boards will be meeting virtually, in person, or a combination of the two.

Gloucester residents will have an opportunity to vote for the Sales Tax Referendum on the November 3rd ballot. Infrastructure for GHS will be the biggest item this tax would fund. “Know Before You Vote” on the division website provides facts about the sales tax. If passed, Dr. Clemons indicated this would be monumental for the community.

The School Board voted on July 28, to have a 100% virtual start, with the most vulnerable learners being phased in as soon as COVID-19 numbers began to go down. Dr. Clemons reiterated that nine weeks totally virtual without exception was never articulated and it is our job to ensure that people understand. Returning will be done in phases. In addition, gathering numbers referenced in the Governor’s phases, refer to a singular space, not the number of people allowed in an entire building.

ELT Updates

Instruction – Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, indicated Regional Special Education students will begin returning on Monday, September 21, followed by Pre-K and Kindergarten one to two weeks later. A few of our schools have been offering internet cafes to families who are without internet. This option will be discussed further in the Instructional Team meeting and may be advertised to families. TCWEC could also be added as an internet cafe location.

Principals received a google drive sheet to complete regarding students who will require transportation. Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation, asked that those be completed and returned as soon as possible. Mrs. Deckard also indicated she expects on time bell arrivals with the first phase of students, but feels a tiered approach may be required as we begin to phase in additional grades. Once initiated, parents who request changes in transportation, should allow one week for those changes to become effective. Mrs. Deckard also asked that information regarding meal deliveries or student pick up, be filtered to the Transportation Department from each school and not directly from families.

Budget & Finance – Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, indicated budget packets would be sent out within the next month and a half, and that it will be a tricky budget year with the COVID-19 situation. A bill that would have held school divisions harmless regarding ADM, did not move forward. Mrs. Lucas indicated the bill may be brought back in January, but at that time, may be too late to benefit budget planning. At this time, GCPS has 160 more homeschool students than last year, which equates to roughly a 1-million-dollar deficit. Mrs. Lucas is hopeful that an eventual return to the classrooms will increase ADM.

Operations – Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, provided an update on enrollment figures. Current enrollment is at 4,883, down 229 students from June, which includes homeschool students, religious exemptions, and others who may be in Virtual Virginia or unreported. In addition, Mr. Hartley has been contacted by six families this week who do not plan to continue using Canvas. Principals also expressed concerns regarding students who are currently unaccounted for in their schools. Mr. Hartley encouraged principals to make every effort to reach those families, and may be able to offer some assistance from his department, but did not feel it was appropriate to contact the Sheriff's Office to use SRO's currently assigned to other duties.

Human Resources – Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance, has been working with principals regarding staffing. Mrs. Blankenship also attended a COVID-19 protocol training Lisa Jones held at Petsworth Elementary School.

Department Updates

Food Services – Approximately 800 meals are being delivered daily. Steve Patton, Director of Food Services, indicated it would require 2,000 daily to break even. Mr. Patton expressed concerns about meal services when some students return, but others are still receiving deliveries. Middle Schools will work with their cafeteria staff for meal cart deliveries to classrooms.

Facilities – Dave Miller, Director of Facilities, indicated a smooth start in facilities, with only a few issues to work out. The new chiller has been installed and is operating at the high school. Summer projects are being completed and were done to the extent funding would allow.

Grounds – Jimmy Viars, Grounds Manager, said his department was keeping up with summer mowing and discussed library pedestals being installed for use when people are allowed back on the grounds.

Safety – Del Dautrich, Safety Manager, indicated guidance was sent out in July regarding fire drills. State requirements specify the frequency for students and staff. Due to the proposed hybrid schedule, twice as many fire drills will be required. In addition, one should be held every week teachers are in the building for the first month, even if students are not present. Lock-down drills were also discussed. Two lock-down drills should be held in the first twenty days, with Pre-K and Kindergarten students exempted. After some discussion, Dr. Clemons asked that clarification be provided in the form of a schedule that would create a standard of interpretation for staff during the hybrid schedules.

Nursing – Lisa Jones, Nurse Coordinator, discussed COVID-19 screening guidelines for employees. An employee who knows they will answer “yes” to screening questions should not come in, unless they have clearance from Mrs. Jones. Principals should refer anyone with symptoms to Mrs. Jones, who will then coordinate with Lydia Gilbert in Budget & Finance regarding employee leave. Please provide employee phone numbers when contacting Mrs. Jones. Administrators need to set the example and be accountable. Washing hands, wearing masks, and social distancing protocols must be followed. School nurses will report any staff to administrators who repeatedly refuse to follow protocols. Mrs. Jones will also be meeting with Pre-K and kindergarten teachers to assist with personal protective equipment.

Community Engagement – Gloria Williams, Community Engagement & Public Information Manager, provided information regarding the “Vote yes for Gloucester” committee and “Know Before You Vote” information pertaining to the sales tax referendum. In addition, Mrs. Williams provided information pertaining to Bay Aging.

The deadline to complete the Census is two weeks away. Dr. Clemons stressed the importance of an accurate count and the impact it has on federal funding to localities.

Accreditation/Testing – Dr. Bess Worley, indicated SOL testing would eventually begin at GHS. Details to follow.

Adjourned – 10:34 a.m.