

Division Leadership Team Meeting

October 28, 2020 – 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone, and asked for updates from secondary administrators regarding the return of grade 6 and grade 12 students. Principals and assistant principals, noted a smooth transition back into the classrooms, with no issues regarding transportation or meals. All expressed their appreciation to fellow members in the group, who have done so much during this process. Craig Reed (GHS) also indicated an in-person orientation is being planned for 9th grade students.

Elementary administrators also provided an update on the return of students in grades 1 through 3, noting a quiet environment considering students are back in the buildings. Small class sizes allow for a more productive work environment, and teachers are working hard for both in-person and online learning. Students and staff are happy to be back. Pre-K and Kindergarten students are using playgrounds and 1st – 3rd grade students are anxious to do so as well. Eileen Kersmarki noted some assessment performance scores are low, but expected that would be the case. Felicia Hudgins indicated the parent pickup line at Botetourt is out to Main Street and is concerned when all students return, that it will be much longer. Dr. Clemons welcomed Jessica Brown, newly appointed Achilles Elementary School Assistant Principal.

Dr. Clemons hopes that the health and safety measures being taken for COVID-19, will also help reduce the spread of other illnesses in our buildings, in addition to fewer students opting for in-person learning than are normally in the buildings.

VDH Pandemic Metrics Dashboard – The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Pandemic Metrics Dashboard is accessible via the GCPS website. Dr. Clemons added that the dashboard is constantly reviewed but is not the sole factor regarding whether schools would be open or closed.

Sales Tax Referendum – On Friday morning, Oct. 30 at 7:00 a.m., Dr. Clemons will be on-air with Neal Steel on WXGM 99.1 to speak about the sales tax referendum. “Know before You Vote” provides information regarding the sales tax referendum and may be accessed on the GCPS homepage. Dr. Clemons added that members may talk about the facts, what the Capital Improvement Plan is, and how the proposed sales tax increase would impact school infrastructure projects, adding that renovations to GHS have been on the Capital

Improvement Plan since 2008. The Sales Tax Referendum is a great opportunity for Gloucester County, if passed.

Joint School Board/Board of Supervisors Meeting – Dr. Clemons informed members of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) approval (7-0) of the appropriation request for the use of \$884,328 in Cares Act Funding with the majority of the funding being used to provide our teachers with the latest technology. Dr. Clemons noted the ability to take advantage of this funding to bring our staff this much needed technology is a great opportunity. In addition, the BOS approved (4-3), the allocation of \$974,000 from the counties Cares Act funding that would allow the School Board to proceed with the procurement process to obtain a vendor for bi-polar ionization rooftop and interior units. These funds must be spent and utilized by December 31, 2020.

At the end of the joint meeting, Dr. Clemons was questioned by a BOS member, regarding the proposed African American History class, and if was a requirement for graduation. Dr. Clemons plans to address the racially insensitive nature of the questioning at the upcoming BOS meeting on Nov. 4 at 7:00 p.m. in the Thomas Calhoun Walker Education Center auditorium. Bess Worley gave a synopsis of the changes the commission has made in history classes, and the African American History course added. Dr. Worley stated that from the 1990's to 2013, a similar class was taught at GHS for a half credit, as well as a Native American class. Plans are underway to recommend that this course also be taught again at GHS.

ELT Updates

Budget & Finance – Dr. Clemons informed members the FY'22 budget process would soon begin.

Operations – Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, is currently waiting on a quote for the bi-polar ionization units. Mr. Hartley asked members to notify him of cleaning supply needs in their buildings.

Department Updates

Transportation – Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation, indicated transportation was going well. Wi-Fi on wheels is operational, meals are being delivered, as well as students attending in-person learning.

Food Services – Steve Patton, Director of Food Services, thanked Dr. Clemons for approving the double meals being delivered to compensate for having none on the upcoming professional days. Dr. Clemons will also include this information in his "All Call" message going out on Wednesday evening, October 28.

Grounds – Jimmy Viars, Grounds Manager, indicated his crew has been clearing debris and trimming trees. Please inform him of any needs at your locations.

GCPS Technology – Scott Mecca, Director of Technology, will be submitting a requisition today for the teacher laptops and accessories, to include screen beams, which Mr. Mecca hopes to have demonstrated for principals. Mr. Mecca and Chris Morgan, Online & Alternative Ed. Coordinator, have been reviewing analytics in Canvas and when shared during a recent state meeting, were informed Gloucester is 3rd in the state for utilization of Canvas, which is a tremendous achievement.

Nursing – Lisa Jones, Division Nurse Coordinator, informed members that windows and doors need to be closed due to safety, pest control, as well as for HVAC efficiency. Once installed, the bi-polar ionization units will also work optimally under these conditions.

Assessment – Dr. Worley, Director of Assessment & Evaluation, informed members of the fall SOL writing test window (11/6 – 12/18). Students have been contacted and will have the option to either test at this time, or in March of 2021.

Human Resources – Craig Smith, H.R. Coordinator, provided the upcoming window for the United Way Campaign (Nov. 16 – Dec. 18). Details will be forthcoming.

Dr. Clemons provided feedback from the Parent Advisory Committee members, indicating that most would like to have in-person learning for their children. In addition, Dr. Clemons said some families may desire to change the method of learning they requested and we will need to look at each circumstance on a case by case basis and use common sense to do what is best for students and families.

Dr. Clemons said vigilance will be needed to stay healthy and keep our schools open, and thanked everyone for their efforts and hard work.

Adjourned – 10:01 a.m.