

Division Leadership Team Meeting

February 24, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone and congratulated George Baines who will be the new Deputy County Administrator, as well as the Technology Director. Mr. Baines is excited for the opportunity. Mr. Baines also said the information coming from the state regarding raises, is promising.

Community Engagement – Valerie Lewis, Community Engagement Coordinator attended the meeting for Gloria Williams, Gloucester County Community Engagement & Public Information Manager. Mrs. Lewis reminded members of an email sent by Mrs. Williams, regarding the retirement of Cindy Thomas, Petsworth Community Engagement Coordinator. Please take a moment to wish her well through the link sent in the email. Mrs. Lewis values the full service school program, is ready to assist with summer programs and expects mental health to be an issue as we come out of the pandemic. Please send submissions for the upcoming *Beehive* by March 26. The County Administrator will be presenting his proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors on March 3.

Dr. Clemons thanked Dr. McMahon and staff for the use of Page M.S. for the School Board Work Session on February 23. Staff worked tirelessly to recreate the technology required to record and air the meeting. Citizens trying to call-in comments were unable to get through during the meeting. Dr. Clemons discussed having pre-recorded comments played at the upcoming meetings to prevent potential problems. Thank you to Jodi Simpson, GHS Assistant Principal, who participated in the Black History Month video presentation at the meeting and to Abingdon E.S. staff for submitting a video from their school. Dr. Clemons also thanked Katina Keener, for filling in during a time of need at Peasley M.S. and to the Executive Leadership Team for the work put into the proposed budget, which will be available on the division website.

Governor Northam was proposing a 2% bonus for SOQ positions, which could become a raise if the proposal in the House for a 5% raise and Senate for a 3% raise are considered. Dr. Clemons is proposing a 4.5% raise in his budget for support staff and 4.5% average for teachers. In addition, health insurance is not expected to increase as it has in previous years. Dr. Clemons' proposed budget is 3 million above what was received this year, however, Dr. Clemons noted the FY'21 budget was below level funding from what was received in FY20. The County Administrator will present his proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors (BOS)

on March 3 and the School Board is expected to present their final budget to the BOS on March 16.

Vaccination Update – Dr. Clemons thanked everyone who took advantage of the opportunity to receive Covid-19 vaccinations. Of the 475 available slots offered to GCPS through Riverside Walter Reed Hospital, 474 were used. Dr. Clemons commended Lisa Jones, GCPS Nursing Coordinator and Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance for the diligent job both have done during this process. Mrs. Jones indicated a survey would be sent out to staff who have not received the vaccination, to offer another opportunity. Mrs. Blankenship reminded members to inform staff who don't normally use email.

Superintendent's Recommended Budget – Dr. Clemons and the Executive Leadership Team will be presenting the Superintendent's recommended budget to the School Board at the February 18, School Board Budget Work Session. Departmental budget requests have been reviewed and will be addressed as funding permits. Compensation and health insurance, as mentioned above, are also being reviewed. Dr. Clemons is hopeful the budget will be favorable this year, following the \$479,000 less than level funding received last year and reminded members that decreased enrollment does not equate to decreased expenses. Dr. Clemons is hopeful the School Board's budget request will be supported by the Board of Supervisors as well as staff.

Staff Bonuses – The Executive Leadership Team requested bonuses for all staff at the School Board meeting held last night. All full-time staff will receive a \$900 bonus and part-time staff (under 30 hrs.), a \$450 bonus. Bonuses will be included in March paychecks. Dr. Clemons explained that raises were not included in the FY'21 budget due to the pandemic, however some positions were also temporarily not filled. This created a savings of over \$700,000, which will cover the cost of one-time bonuses.

Congratulations – Dr. Clemons recognized Dr. Tingley, who has been serving as Acting Director of Special Education and was appointed as Director at the School Board meeting on February 9. In addition, Mrs. Jones, Nursing Coordinator, was appointed as Director of Nursing.

ELT Updates

Instruction – Dr. Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, informed members of plans for a summer program, starting with an initial meeting next Tuesday, which will include representation from all departments. Dr. Wagner feels many families will take advantage of this opportunity.

The School Division decided to send a survey to families, students, and staff prior to determine if in person learning can be increased from two days per week to four days per week. Dr. Clemons mentioned Senate Bill 1303, which calls for students to return five days per week beginning in the fall. Governor Northam called for all schools in Virginia to return students to school in some manner by March 15. Currently, one-third of the schools in the state have not had in person instruction since March of 2020.

The GCPS Comprehensive Plan is updated every two years. Dr. Clemons explained this plan is used to plan for needs and drives budget requests. Following an ELT meeting this Friday, DLT members will receive the current plan to discuss with staff for input. Dr. Clemons also plans to discuss the plan with the Parent Advisory Committee and ask for input on the division website. Previously, meetings were held in-person to garner input; however, an electronic meeting may be held this year. Dr. Clemons indicated a public hearing would then be required during a future School Board meeting.

Dr. Wagner discussed summer program needs. Transportation will be needed at all levels for several hundred students. Tanya Deckard, Transportation Director indicated she has talked to staff and doesn't expect any issues. Steve Patton, Food Services Director, indicated even with half days, bag lunches would be preferred over snacks due to federal reimbursement. Mr. Patton is hopeful the free lunch program will continue this summer and has confirmed twenty-one of his employees are able to work summer hours.

Budget & Finance— Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, reminded staff of bonuses going out to staff in their March paychecks. Dr. Clemons will make an announcement to this effect. Mrs. Lucas indicated the County Administrator's presentation could be huge for GCPS.

Human Resources – Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance, indicated recruiting for 2021-22 is amped up, with candidates moving fast during this competitive time. Substitutes are being processed weekly and may also be clustered at some schools.

Operations – Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, indicated plans are underway to finalize the Achilles bus loop. The survey will occur for the Page ballfield site when it dries out. Plans are also underway for the new transportation facility, as well as renovations to GHS. Mr. Hartley indicated the heat exchanger on the TCWEC Auditorium HVAC unit is not repairable and other options are being explored. Thank you again to Dr. McMahan, Scott Mecca and their staff for accommodating the School Board Work Session on February 23.

Mr. Hartley informed members Michelle Campbell, Administrative Assistant II in the Student Service Office will be retiring on Friday, February 26, and asked for their patience until a replacement is hired.

Department Updates

Nursing – Lisa Jones, Director of Nursing, is working to obtain COVID vaccines for the 112 staff members now interested in receiving the vaccine. Of those, 54 are teachers and 58 support staff. Mrs. Jones said the vaccine is not required, but will be a benefit in returning to in-person learning. Masks will continue to be a requirement.

Transportation – Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation, indicated transportation is being provided for special education programs returning to four days and February 23rd was Team Transportation Day. Dr. Clemons thanked Mrs. Deckard and team for the gift he received.

Grounds – Jimmy Viars, Grounds Manager, said fields are beginning prepared for the upcoming season. All known sinkholes have been repaired. Please inform him of any needs at your locations.

Facilities – Dave Miller, Facilities Manager, said water filling stations are being installed and roof repairs underway. Please submit work orders for any needs.

Food Services – Steve Patton, Director of Food Services, said a 15 question survey on the Governor's Scorecard on Nutrition/Physical Activity will be sent to principals and may be delegated. Mr. Patton is hopeful students will be able to eat in the cafeteria if a four-day return to in person learning occurs.

Construction Update – Scott Shorland, Construction Manager, was not present for the meeting. Mr. Hartley noted capital projects occurring and conversations regarding GHS and the transportation facility.

Technology Update – Scott Mecca, Director of Information Technology, informed members the bandwidth for GCPS has doubled in the past year and upgrades made to the firewall/infrastructure, by utilizing \$250,000 in E-Rate money. Additional work is also occurring to prevent ransomware attacks. Mr. Mecca reminded staff to remain cautious of phishing scams, noting one had occurred in the division last week. Office 365 should be utilized division wide in March, with training portals available, which also may be used for

recertification points. Mr. Mecca also thanked Dr. McMahon and noted the video quality of the meeting last night, actually turned out better than meetings held at TCWEC.

The next meeting will be held on March 10, 2021.

Adjourned – 9:58 a.m.