



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING

September 9, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Via Zoom

SUPERINTENDENT/DIVISION UPDATES

Dr. Walter Clemons welcomed everyone, expressing his appreciation for all that is being done to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Today is day seven of the 2021-22 school year and our biggest challenge will be to keep schools open five days in the midst of the pandemic.

COUNTY UPDATES

George Bains, Deputy County Administrator provided members with county updates, to include the jobless rate of 3.1% in Gloucester County, elections beginning in eight days for absentee ballots, broadband options being considered, and Social Services staff returning to their building following renovations. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) passed a solar ordinance (5/2 vote) that will allow both small and large solar fields in the county. A request is also being made of the BOS to use ARPA funds for Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) that would protect county online accounts from being hacked. In addition, the legislative agenda will be submitted on September 10. County offices are again requiring masks to be worn, unless individuals are alone in their offices.

Dr. Clemons introduced Michael Norvell from Bay Transit, who provided details of the Bay Transit Express now providing transportation in central Gloucester (Mon.– Fri./8 – 5). The cost is \$2 per ride each way, with the first ten rides free. Children under thirteen must be accompanied by a parent and pay \$1 to ride with the parent. It takes approximately eight minutes from the time initiated through the Bay Transit Express App until the ride arrives, and may be paid in cash or through the app. Four hundred rides have been provided since the program began.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATES

Dr. Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services – Dr. Wagner indicated instructional updates would be provided during the principals' meeting.

Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer – Mrs. Lucas expressed her appreciation of Mark 3, the new GCPS benefits provider. Please contact Mrs. Lucas if you know of any issues occurring with staff in the open enrollment process. Mrs. Lucas is currently working to complete the division's annual school report. In addition, budget packets will be sent out in October. Principals will have budget meetings following the December 9th DLT meeting and all other department heads on December 10th with times to be determined.

Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations – Mr. Hartley indicated the 2023-27 Long Range Capital Improvement Plan will be presented to the School Board for approval on Tuesday, September 14. Several policy updates will also be presented for approval. In addition, Mr. Hartley has received positive feedback regarding the school year beginning prior to Labor Day.

Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance – Mrs. Blankenship is still urgently recruiting for bus drivers, but otherwise, is in a good place regarding staffing. Coaches are being encouraged to become bus drivers to help the driver shortage.

Lisa Jones, Director of Nursing – Mrs. Jones informed members the COVID dashboard is available on the division website. Please contact Mrs. Jones if any information is inaccurate at your location. This information only pertains to school cases and only nurses have editing rights on the website. Mrs. Jones will inquire with technology to determine if information can be restricted to individual schools. All COVID related questions should be answered by the school nurses. Please do not share confidential information with the community that would violate privacy rights. Masks are being ordered on a weekly basis, however Mrs. Jones said any with torn ear loops could be fixed by making another hole and tying it. Additional mitigation strategies will be shared in the principals' meeting.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Steve Patton, Director of Food Services – Mr. Patton thanked members for their support. Food Services had a good opening and staff liked the early start to the school year. Some products are currently difficult to obtain and substitute items may be necessary at times.

Jim Reiflin, Director of Technology – Mr. Rieflin indicated cyber security hacks usually occur through email and reminded everyone to beware. In addition, staff should inquire with the I.T. department prior to purchasing software applications to ensure they are compatible and supported by our I.T. department.

Dave Miller, Facilities Manager – Mr. Miller has been addressing issues at Gloucester High School and in the Transportation Department, as well as lighting projects in many of our buildings. In addition, Mr. Miller has met with Mr. Hartley and Scott Shorland to prioritize needs for the 2023-27 long range CIP request.

Scott Shorland, Construction Manager - Mr. Shorland said that the Achilles Bus Loop project has been delayed due to the impact of COVID on the crew performing the work. The Page baseball field is progressing nicely and the transportation facility bids were received on August 24th. The next steps as a result of the bids are still to be determined.

Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation – Mrs. Deckard stated bus loads are currently heavier than usual due to the driver shortage, which have been increased because of COVID and lack of DMV training. The transportation department now qualifies to train potential drivers for their commercial driver's license, but lack of interest and quarantines have been an issue. Bus schedules are improving, however contingency plans are also being considered, which include possibly combining high school and middle school routes, and having shorter runs to allow buses to drop off one load and pick up another. Elementary transportation after school other than our normal trips home, is not currently possible, but transportation for after school athletics is being considered. Mrs. Deckard expressed her appreciation for everyone's support.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:31 a.m.