



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING MINUTES

November 4, 2021 - 8:30 a.m. (Via Zoom)

SUPERINTENDENT/DIVISION UPDATES

Dr. Walter Clemons welcomed members and started the meeting with updates from county members.

COUNTY UPDATES

George Bains, Deputy County Administrator – Informed members that Brent Fedors, County Administrator, had resigned due to medical issues and the county has started the process of seeking a new County Administrator. The Board of Supervisors recently approved over two million to fund the entire transportation facility and Mr. Bains is looking forward to that project beginning and the old Page site becoming useful to the county for other needs. The election went off without any issues in all precincts in the county. Mr. Bains commended Dr. Clemons and Mr. Hartley for an excellent job putting forth the school division CIP to the Board of Supervisors. The use of ARPA funds was approved for open broadband with equipment coming in and plans in place to begin on main street and then a tower placed in the northern part of county next.

Dr. Clemons is hopeful that the election results for the Board of Supervisors will be positive for the county, but is disappointed for Anita Parker and Elisa Nelson regarding school board elections. However, Dr. Clemons expects to continue to work with the School Board to do what is expected to move the school division forward.

Gloria Williams, Community Engagement and Public Information Manager – The “How Can We Help You Guide” is a valuable resource for Gloucester families. If anyone is not familiar with the guide, please contact Mrs. Williams. Community Engagement Coordinators can also provide copies if needed. Mrs. Williams is working with PTA/PTO’s toward a leadership program and will be holding an event on Tuesday, November 16, with “conflict resolution” as the next topic. The broadband hub link (<https://gloucester-broadband-gcgis.hub.arcgis.com/>) can help families to get on the list of families who need internet service. This service does come with a fee, but is a wireless service. The moratorium was lifted in August for utility bills, however; local water cutoffs were extended until January. Citizens on a repayment plan will not have their water cut off. The next edition of the Beehive will be coming out in a few days. Mrs. Williams is excited about the partnership with the full service program at GHS and appreciates the support of the school as these important services are provided at GHS.

Dr. Clemons indicated recommended calendar changes will be taken to the School Board on Tuesday, November 9. Dr. Clemons is hopeful the early release day previously approved was helpful to staff as well as the work from home day provided.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATES

Dr. Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services – Information will be shared at the end of the meeting regarding the year round school exploratory committee. Dr. Wagner indicated next steps will involve staff from the Division Leadership Team.

Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer – Budget packets have been sent out and are available in Google Drive. If anyone needs assistance, please let her know.

Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance – Partitions are still available. If needed, please let Dave Miller know.

Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations – The Achilles bus loop is progressing, but running a little later than planned. The Page baseball field is moving forward and Moseley architects are working toward the GHS renovation. The transportation facility is at the forefront, with land disturbance permits expected soon.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Scott Shorland, Construction Manager – Activity should be occurring at the Achilles bus loop and Page baseball field next week. Mr. Shorland is currently working through the contract and initial permit phase of the transportation facility as well as working with utility providers to arrange for internet and electricity to the site. In addition, work is occurring to incorporate some ESSER funds into the GHS project.

Lisa Jones, Director of Nursing – Mrs. Jones thanked those who hosted flu and vaccine clinics. Two clinics will be held today, November 4, at TCWEC and Petsworth E.S. A testing follow-up meeting is planned later in the week. COVID test kits are available, but Mrs. Jones is waiting to be able to issue them. As soon as COVID shots are available, Mrs. Jones hopes to partner with Riverside to provide those to families. Citizens are also able to register at local pharmacies or at [vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org). These avenues can be shared with families as information, however; advise anyone with additional questions to follow-up with his/her medical provider.

Jimmy Viars, Grounds Manager – The grounds department has hired a new groundskeeper who will begin next week. Mr. Viars indicated two new full playgrounds have been delivered, with a third coming next week. Communication will be held with principals regarding the closure of old playgrounds and installation of new equipment.

Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation – Mrs. Deckard shared with members that due to their location, a third of the transportation fleet was out on the day (October 29) of the high tide. Temperature changes have also caused some issues with a few of the older buses not starting, which has caused delays.

Steve Patton, Director of Food Services – Mr. Patton shared that Food Services provided 107,000 meals for the month of October, which is over 5,100 per day and expressed gratitude for how hard staff worked to ensure all bags are full. Kudos to all school cafeterias for receiving perfect health inspection ratings! Sysco has been distributing to GCPS for the past twenty-eight years. Mr. Patton believes this has attributed to the service our division is receiving during the pandemic. Food Services is using a group text to help communicate when staffing shortages occur at a school.

Dave Miller, Facilities Manager – Marine Chemist has been doing indoor air quality assessments. Lighting projects are occurring at Achilles, with Bethel and Abingdon scheduled next, depending on product availability. The pumping station at Bethel will be replaced over winter break. At the Central Office, the new reception area is almost complete and partitions are being installed today (November 4) to divide one of the large offices. Dr. Clemons appreciates all that is being done.

Jim Rieflin, Director of Technology – Chromebooks will soon be in for K-2 with carts for storage and charging. Eileen Kersmarki (Bethel Principal) asked if the librarian at Bethel would be receiving Chromebooks. Mr. Rieflin believes so, but encouraged submitting a help ticket.

Craig Smith, Operations Coordinator – United Way information is available on the GCPS website as well as a form to contribute to the Educational Foundation. Please be sure to make staff aware as applicable.

OTHER ITEMS SHARED

Mrs. Kersmarki (Bethel) asked for clarification regarding volunteers in the buildings. Dr. Wagner confirmed that starting November 8, volunteers may come into the buildings and details will be discussed in the principals' meeting. Mrs. Jones indicated that volunteers should only be working in areas away from students and would not be required to provide vaccination status. Members asked about VIMS visits to the schools as well as therapy dogs. Mrs. Jones indicated as long as self-screening and other mitigation strategies are occurring, it should not be high risk to allow these short visits and that it is time to move on a little, changing one variable at a time. The schools should keep history logs for any visitors coming into the schools regarding locations and who they (visitors) are around for contract tracing purposes.

Dr. Wagner shared slides regarding the year round school (YRS) model. The YRS committee is exploring a different way to look at a school calendar and may make a recommendation to the School Board later in the spring. If supported, the 2023-24 school year would be the target for implementation. Dr. Wagner provided examples of reasons to support a YRS, including increased engagement, intersessions for enrichment, current learning loss over the summer and difficulty staffing summer school. Additional benefits include breaks of ten to fifteen days every nine weeks, the same number of in school days as well as teacher contract days, and the opportunity to work up to five additional weeks during intersessions if desired. Hopewell schools currently pay an additional \$1,000 weekly to teachers working intersessions. YRS information will be presented to the School Board on November 9 and will be available in the School Board agenda packet today, November 4. Following the November 9 School Board meeting, focus groups will be hosted to include teachers, athletics, support personnel, education business partners, parents, community members, childcare providers and others. School visits are planned to schools currently using the YRS model in Chesterfield, VA, Wake County, NC, and again to Hopewell, VA in March. Dr. Wagner hopes to include a couple of School Board members at the March visit to Hopewell. Dr. Wagner will discuss further details in regards to operations at a later time, adding that Hopewell administrators say it is a major plus for teachers. Principals presented some potential issues of concern that would need to be addressed.

ADJOURN --- 10:03 a.m.