

Division Leadership Team Meeting

March 11, 2021 – 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone and indicated he would provide information from the School Board meeting held on March 10, following updates from the county representatives.

Community Engagement – Gloria Williams, Gloucester County Community Engagement & Public Information Manager is currently advertising for an administrative assistant and a community engagement coordinator for Petsworth Elementary School.

County Technology Department – Mr. George Baines, Deputy County Administrator, informed members of a Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting at Page Middle School tonight, March 11, followed by a joint meeting with the School Board at GHS on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. The next allotment through the CARES Act funding will come directly to localities, with 7.3 million expected for Gloucester, 50% of which will be available in sixty days and the remainder in one year. Mr. Baines also indicated the state has approved a 5% compensation increase for the upcoming year.

Dr. Clemons thanked all who attended the School Board meeting on March 9. The School Board voted 5-2 to return hybrid students to four days per week of in-person learning for Pre-K – 12 beginning April 19, the first day of the last quarter, and students with disabilities in grades 6-12, returning on March 22. Pre-K – 5 students with disabilities (specialized programs) are already attending school on the four-day schedule along with Regional Special Education students. Students spoke at the March 9 school board meeting regarding the mental health issues occurring during the pandemic and the impact not being in school is having on students. Employee vaccinations and the FY'22 budget was also discussed at the School Board meeting. Due to time constraints, continued discussion of the FY'22 budget along with spot redistricting and air quality management will be added to the March 11 School Board Work Session agenda.

Dr. James Lane (State Superintendent of Public Instruction) visited Botetourt Elementary School On February 25 and Governor Ralph Northam visited Bethel Elementary School on Monday, March 8. Dr. Clemons thanked Mrs. Hudgins and Mrs. Kersmarki for the preparations made to accommodate the visitors in their buildings. March 15 is the date the Governor has asked all school divisions in the commonwealth to begin providing some form of in-person learning.

ELT Updates

Instruction – Dr. Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, asked principals to contact families regarding transportation for students with disabilities in grades 6-12 returning on the four day per week in-person schedule beginning March 22. Dr. Wagner stated that we need to reinforce the decision made by the School Board. Some tiered transportation will be needed, but should be minimal.

Summer plans are underway for a site-based program at each school. Mrs. Deckard indicated it may be more difficult to provide transportation to every school over the summer due to staffing. Consolidating schools was discussed and may also help with summer cleaning schedules. Mr. Patton has three cafeteria managers who have indicated they would be willing to work over the summer. Bagged lunches could be delivered from those sites to other schools.

Budget & Finance– Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, referenced the 5% compensation increase just approved by the General Assembly. This increase is included in the budget presentation the School Board is expected to present to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. The Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt a budget on April 19. Mrs. Lucas believes the main focus will be on compensation and additional positions may need to be revisited. Health insurance is not expected to increase as in the past and information regarding the carrier GCPS will select should be available in the near future. Mrs. Lucas indicated mental health continues to be an increasing concern and reminded everyone of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that is available to all staff and their families.

Operations – Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, is busy with projects. Pre-bids are coming in for the Page ballfield and a funding request will go to the School Board at the March 11 work session to finalize the Achilles bus loop project. Mr. Hartley is also working to obtain quotes for the TCWEC Auditorium HVAC unit. The School Board approved an internal staff member for the position left vacant by Michelle Campbell and Mr. Hartley asked for patience during this transition. In addition, Lisa Rilee, Administrative Assistant in Student Services, will also be retiring at the beginning of May. Eileen Kersmarki asked if there would be any changes to the calendar now that we are returning to four days of in-person learning. Dr. Wagner indicated the calendar would be discussed during the principal's meeting.

Human Resources – Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance, indicated many offers have been made for 2021-22, with locations to be determined. Please inform Mrs. Blankenship of any staff you expect to retire or resign.

Tables have been ordered to accommodate the distancing needed when students return to four days of in-person learning. Partitions and other furniture are also being ordered. Storage of items needing to be moved will be discussed. Dr. Clemons is appreciative for how positive Mrs. Blankenship and Mrs. Jones have been during this time and for all they and others are doing.

Department Updates

Nursing – Lisa Jones, Director of Nursing, indicated sixty vaccines were not taken advantage of during the clinic held on March 10. All staff who received the vaccine will have their second shot prior to April 19.

Transportation – Tanya Deckard, Director of Transportation, indicated transportation is finalizing plans for the four days per week of in-person learning and information will be going out to principals by the March 13. Some buses will change, however; changes should be minimal. Mrs. Deckard feels any issues will be worked out during the first week and asked principals to send student information to the transportation department as soon as possible. Mrs. Deckard also said the seventy-two passenger buses have already been a big help with sporting events. Dr. Clemons expressed his gratitude to Mrs. Deckard for all she has done.

Grounds – Jimmy Viars, Grounds Manager, indicated he has a great team who are fully vaccinated and thanked the ELT for the many changes his crew has seen in recent years. Mr. Viars said the grounds crew worked hard to prepare Bethel Elementary School for the Governor's visit and sports fields are being prepped for the upcoming season. Please thank the grounds crew when you see them. Mrs. Kersmarki thanked Mr. Viars, adding that the grounds at Bethel E.S. looked beautiful.

Construction Update – Scott Shorland, Construction Manager, indicated bids for the Page ballfield are due by April 6 and plans are underway for the design of the transportation facility. Mr. Shorland also thanked Mrs. Deckard and her staff for the guidance given to the architects. A design should be ready by June. Mr. Shorland also hopes to be making progress with Gloucester High School soon.

Technology Update – Scott Mecca, Director of Information Technology, informed members some technology will need to be moved with the transition to four days per week of in-person learning. Please contact him if you have any issues.

Facilities – Dave Miller, Facilities Manager, indicated water testing is occurring in buildings. Projects will be addressed as the budget allows.

Food Services – Steve Patton, Director of Food Services, will have three cafeteria managers working during the summer program and will deliver meals to other schools as needed.

Safety - Del Dautrich, Safety Manager, was not present for the meeting. Mr. Hartley indicated a checklist for custodians is being streamlined. Currently, staffing is short and it has been difficult to attract and retain custodians.

Dr. Clemons closed by saying serving students and families should always be the center of our focus.

The next meeting will be held on March 24, 2021.

Adjourned – 10:10 a.m.