



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Parent Advisory Committee

May 21, 2021 (2:00 p.m.)

Dr. Clemons welcomed members and thanked them for all they have done this year. With the efforts of everyone, GCPS has navigated through the pandemic well.

In-Person Learning Update – Since April 19, all grades have returned to a four day per week in person learning schedule. Virtual opportunities are also still available for those who opted to remain virtual. Plans for the 2021-22 school year are underway, and include options for some to continue with remote learning, the return of a one hundred eighty-day calendar, a pre-Labor Day start and redistricting at the elementary level. Dr. Clemons expects to be back to a five day per week in person learning schedule in the fall and feels the transition will be smooth based on the current model in place. It is unknown at this time, if masks will be required. We will continue to receive information from the Governor’s office as well as guidance from the CDC, VDH and VDOE as it becomes available.

Budget Season Wrap Up to Include Local Sales Tax – The FY’22 budget has been approved. Dr. Clemons indicated that while everything requested, was not received, GCPS will be able to move forward with some initiatives and make the most of the funding provided. The Attorney General has not made a ruling at this time as to whether or not the county can rightfully use the local sales tax funding to pay back prior debt service. Typically, a response from that office takes four to six months. Dr. Clemons will apprise members when that occurs. Approximately 45 million is allocated toward renovations at GHS, which will allow some positive things to occur. Dr. Clemons is hopeful plans made now will allow for flexible expansions moving forward. On Monday, May 17, the Board of Supervisors approved a request made by the School Board for an additional \$200,000 (from unspent FY 21 school division appropriations) to complete the Page ballfield. In 2015-16, the cost for the field would have been \$285,000. However, the lowest bid now is \$554,000.

Executive Order 79 – The Governor’s Order (Executive Order 79), going into effect on May 28, is expected to bring positive news regarding removing restrictions related to physical distancing and gathering capacities. As a result, GHS will hold one graduation ceremony in the GHS stadium on June 12. In addition, GCPS will continue through the end of the year by keeping current mitigation practices in place (outdoors) where applicable as we don’t know who has or hasn’t been vaccinated and we are unable to have everyone on school property physically distanced by six or more feet.

Vaccination Updates – Rising 7th graders and 12th grade students are required by the state to have meningococcal and Tdap vaccines and may only opt out with a notarized religious exemption. The HPV vaccination is optional. GCPS plans to offer the opportunity for students to obtain these shots at one of our secondary schools in June. There may also be opportunities in the future for students of age to receive optional COVID vaccines through GCPS.

Remote Learning Options for 2021-22 – Dr. Clemons indicated any remote learning opportunities offered next year would most likely be limited to secondary grades and done through a third party vendor, not GCPS staff. Virtual students would remain GCPS students and eligible to participate as such. This will allow GCPS teachers to focus on providing in person learning without being overburdened by doing both.

2021-22 School Calendar – Students will begin school on August 30 next year and will be back to a 180-day instructional calendar for the first time in many years. Summer school will be offered six weeks this summer instead of four weeks to help students with the loss of learning that has occurred during the pandemic. Dr. Clemons added that several neighboring school divisions are also doing a pre-Labor Day start.

Elementary Redistricting – Dr. Clemons indicated the School Board approved elementary redistricting and hopes this will balance numbers and make it better for our schools and families.

Miscommunication on Social Media – GCPS is not supporting the Critical Race Theory as some are implying through social media. A universal screening process is being implemented for the gifted program that will ensure all students have a fair opportunity to be identified.

Meetings for Next Year – Dr. Clemons would like to return to in person meetings next year in the cafeteria or conference room. A doodle poll will be sent out to members regarding dates and times for meetings next year. Dr. Clemons suggested holding meetings every other month instead of quarterly, which members who were present, supported.

Items from Members – Nicole asked if GCPS is teaching the Critical Race Theory and the 1619 project, which Dr. Clemons replied that GCPS does not teach the 1619 project as put out by the New York Times. There is a new African American History course that will be offered that could include the year 1619 and what occurred during that time, but not the actual 1619 project. This will be based on an approved curriculum that we will follow.

Adjournment – 2:53 p.m.