



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Teacher Advisory/GEA Committee

February 26, 2020

Dr. Clemons started the meeting by welcoming everyone.

FY'21 Budget Update – Dr. Clemons shared pertinent information regarding the FY'21 budget. The total funds requested for FY'21 are \$113,460,486, with the local request being \$7,040,777 more than last year. The CIP includes the GHS renovations and is the bulk of that increase. Dr. Clemons has included everything that is needed in the proposed budget being presented to the School Board.

The County Administrator will most likely want parity with the schools and county regarding compensation. Dr. Clemons added that the county has 300 employees where GCPS has over 800 employees. This puts us in a different position regarding how compensation increases are given. The focus this year is on teachers and Dr. Clemons hopes to focus on support staff again next year. A chart was shared showing proposed increases for school divisions across the area and how those would look like compared to our proposed 7.25% increase. Dr. Clemons is trying to remain competitive in the state and the area. A proposed teacher salary scale was shown for GCPS based on years of experience/steps. Percentages given to an employee at step 30 and above were also explained. Dr. Clemons discussed how salaries impact retirement benefits and if insurance goes up, but salaries goes up too, that helps employees' retirement.

Health insurance increases will be approximately 1.7 million and is based on the claims history of those using our insurance. Dr. Clemons discussed the benefits of the HSA and feels if educated about the plan, more employees would see the advantages for people who are generally healthy. Dr. Clemons doesn't want anyone to be adversely impacted by insurance changes. Comparisons were shown between the county/schools insurance, indicating we have close rates. The county has two plans and GCPS has three, but could possibly move to two plans. Dr. Clemons would need to consider that with the insurance broker. If GCPS had more staff on the high deductible plan, like the county, our rates would go down significantly.

Currently, the addition of two days is in the proposed calendar to get the school year to 178 days; GHS becoming a full service school; positions being requested by buildings; and expansion of the gifted program are all included in the recommended FY21 budget. The Commonwealth is moving towards equity and we are asking for an equity/CTE position; behavioral support specialist; new textbooks; PSAT and AP testing costs; cost for tuition for special needs; technology; utility cost additions; facility needs in our buildings; a new widespan mower; 7 passenger van and dump truck. The current budget request is substantially more than in years past, however as Amber Giampa, Bethel E.S. noted, it is almost equal to the amount that hasn't been funded annually over the years. Dr. Clemons added, when you don't receive the requested funding, most of what you get is applied to compensation and health insurance. In addition, Dr. Clemons said a loss of enrollment doesn't necessarily equate to loss of staff. Mrs. Giampa asked about the GHS project and if it would be part of the loan process. Dr. Clemons explained that it would, but is still in the budget request. If the budget is passed with the amount needed, and the referendum passes for the sales tax increase, the

real estate increase would then be minimal for the GHS project. Currently, 41.8 million is in the CIP for the GHS project, which does not include replacing the entire roof at GHS, but areas indicated by the architect, as needed. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) has indicated a desire to replace the entire roof, but would need to approve the additional 3.5 million it would require. The County Administrator will be presenting his budget to the BOS next week.

Senate Bill – SB224 would allow Gloucester County to have a referendum on the November ballot to increase sales tax by 1% for school construction. The bill has passed in the Senate and the House and will now go to the Governor for the needed approval to be considered as a referendum on the ballot.

Items from TAC members

Megan Harris, Peasley M.S. inquired about the 20-21 school calendar. Dr. Clemons believes the calendar will be available in April and indicated teachers will return around Aug. 26 or 27 next year, with new teachers beginning the week before. This is approximately a week later than in the past.

Megan Harris, Peasley M.S. stated that every student at Peasley has a Chromebook and are always on them, even in the hall and during homeroom. Dr. Clemons asked Mrs. Harris to send an email with considerations for a possible solution. Tricia Dowdy, GHS ITRT, said it has been an issue there as well and discussion has occurred regarding a cart that would be the teachers' responsibility with the Chromebooks on them. Parameters may also be set on the Chromebooks.

Sarah Alexander, Achilles E.S. asked if the air quality reports would be shared. Dr. Clemons said these would be available and principals will be asked to share them with all staff. Reports show that some of the issues are not from mold, but old HVAC systems.

Amber Giampa, Bethel E.S. expressed concerns regarding the Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT) person being taken out of their school because the program is not being funded. Mrs. Giampa noted that change is one of the hardest things for these children and asked if Dr. Clemons would contact Social Services. Dr. Clemons asked that Mrs. Giampa have Mrs. Kersmarki send an email to him addressing this issue.

Dr. Clemons spoke about enjoying being in the buildings and talking to kids, and being recognized by them. In addition, Dr. Clemons expressed enjoying working with the Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC). Issues addressed by TAC are even being discussed in other school divisions surrounding Gloucester, such as what we are doing to pay teachers for substituting. Dr. Clemons encouraged members to keep bringing good ideas.

Adjournment - 6:42 p.m.

Next Meeting – March 23, 2020 (Conf. Rm. A111)