



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Teacher Advisory/GEA Zoom Meeting
February 22, 2021 – 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone and members briefly shared news with the group, including Flora Brunjes (Bethel) who indicated she has seen a big difference in her self-contained students who are back in the building for four days each week. Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) said many of her coworkers have received the second vaccine and done well. Brian Teucke (Page) thanked Dr. Clemons for initiating the bonus for staff.

FY'22 Budget – Dr. Clemons indicated the Superintendent's proposed budget would be presented to the School Board on Tuesday, February 23, in the Page M.S. Schola. Health insurance bids are being reviewed and Dr. Clemons is not expecting an increase in rates for the upcoming year. Dr. Clemons is hopeful employee raises will be possible, to include step increases and COLA adjustments and is proposing an overall average increase of 4.5%. Restoring services is also included in the budget. Dr. Clemons added that in FY'21, we are working with less than level funding and that decreased enrollment does not equate to a decrease in services. The School Board will ultimately approve the budget to be presented to the Board of Supervisors, which will be considered as part of the County Administrator's proposed budget for all county agencies.

ELT Updates

Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, reiterated Dr. Clemons comments regarding health insurance, adding that the elimination of the OAP25 plan for FY'21 has helped to keep rates manageable and health insurance is currently out to bid.

Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, indicated plans should be finalized in the next week for three and six-week summer programs as well as credit recovery at GHS. Vacancy announcements will be posted for interested staff and Dr. Wagner expects compensation to be increased for those positions.

Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, explained the issue that occurred with the HVAC unit in the TCWEC Auditorium, preventing the work session from being held last week. The unit will most likely need to be replaced. The Achilles paving project redesign is ready to be completed and Scott Shorland will soon receive bids on the Page ballfield. Mr. Hartley indicated capital projects will be presented in the budget presentation during the School Board Work Session and could be bundled in FY'22 if the County Administrator's proposed plan is approved. Clint Alexander (GHS) asked about the sales tax referendum approved in November. Dr. Clemons expects the Board of Supervisors will soon approve the amount to increase sales tax, up to one cent.

Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance, indicated efforts are being amped up for teacher recruitment next year, which is extremely competitive. Brian Teucke (Page) indicated some staff used sick leave to receive COVID vaccinations and if professional leave could be used instead, which the ELT will discuss. In addition, Mr. Teucke asked if efforts were being made by GCPS to hire people of color, which Mrs. Blankenship indicated that introducing diversity and hiring the most qualified candidates, is always the goal.

Lisa Jones, GCPS Division Nurse Coordinator, said 475 vaccinations were offered to GCPS through Riverside and 474, were administered. Some staff have experienced symptoms with the

second shot. Those staff are allowed to return to work after 24 hours of being symptom and fever free. Following a second poll, an additional 112 staff are interested in receiving the vaccination when more become available. Of those, 54 are teachers. Dr. Clemons expressed his gratitude to Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Blankenship for their efforts in this process. In addition, Dr. Clemons noted the many hours during the day, nights, and weekends, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has spent to work through the planning and implementation required during this time. Dr. Clemons is greatly appreciative for all that is being done during this time.

Dr. Clemons discussed Governor Northam's desire for all school divisions in the Communication to offer some form of in person learning to students by March 15. For some divisions, this could mean the beginning of hybrid since the pandemic began, for others, like Gloucester, it could be a time to bring students back more. GCPS will issue a survey to parents/students/staff to determine interest in returning hybrid students four days per week instead of two, beginning with Pre-K through first grade and Gloucester High School as early as March 18, and middle schools and grades two through five, on April 19, which is the first day of the fourth quarter. Dr. Clemons hopes to have results available the first week of March, adding that in-person would either remain at two days or switch to four. Both would not be an option and virtual students would have the option to return to in person learning as capacity permits in quarter 4. In order to ensure accurate data is obtained, the survey is not anonymous and can only be taken once in each applicable category (i.e. student/staff/parent).

TAC Items

Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) inquired about plans for the loss of learning, which ELT members are currently discussing. ESSER II funding would help with specialists' positions for middle school reading and math that are not covered under Title 1.

Flora Brunges (Bethel) asked if a plan was in place for librarians to collect devices at the end of the school year or if compensation would be available if staff needed to work additional hours to collect them. Tricia Dowdy (GHS) said the technology team is discussing this issue; however, no plans have been made at this time. However, the Destiny Resource catalog system might be in the budget for next year.

Megan Harris (Peasley) inquired about having different virtual and in-person teachers at the secondary level. Dr. Clemons and Dr. Wagner indicated it would be a challenge to attempt this year, however plans are being discussed for a solution in the next school year. Virtual students may be required to log-on while teachers are in the classroom.

Mrs. Harris provided data on teacher COVID cases and questioned moving forward with four-day classes, noting that six feet of physical distancing will not be possible. Often times, classes are asked to absorb another class if substitutes are not available. Under the proposed plan, middle school classes would be too large for that to occur.

Amber Giampa (Bethel) wondered if an increase in cases is expected following spring break and if it would be better for GCPS to remain consistent with the hybrid method currently being used. Dr. Clemons said that we try to weigh the pros and cons of any situation and we will just have to continuously review this issue as time moves on.

Adjournment - 7:35 p.m.