



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Teacher Advisory/GEA Committee

January 27, 2020

Dr. Clemons began the meeting with welcoming remarks and introductions.

FY'21 Budget Update The School Board will be working with the Board of Supervisors (BOS) over the next couple of months to develop a budget. On February 20th, Dr. Clemons will recommend a budget to the School Board for their consideration and the School Board will ultimately pass a budget to recommend to the BOS on March 12th. Dr. Clemons is looking at bills coming out of the senate regarding unfunded mandates and plans to go to Richmond to speak regarding compensation not being included in the first year of the biennium. The 3% the Governor has proposed giving toward compensation in the 2nd year will only be given to divisions who provide a minimum 3% increase over the two-year period. Meeting the national average for teacher compensation is not possible in Virginia at 3%. Dr. Clemons believes it would take 7-10% increases over 4-5 years. Virginia is currently ranked 34/50 in salary, but is one of the highest ranking states in academic success. Dr. Clemons plans to look at salary rankings from the VEA when available, to help determine what request for compensation he will make in the FY'21 budget. In addition, the County Administrator prefers the county and schools have parity in compensation requests and Dr. Clemons doesn't know at this point, what the County Administrator is planning to request for county employees. In addition, health insurance is another big factor. GCPS is self-insured and has had about 1 million in increases annually, in recent years. Competitive health insurance is important and Dr. Clemons indicated we may be at a point where going out to bid again is necessary.

Senate Bill – SB224 Dr. Clemons informed members of the possibility of adding a 1% sales tax in Gloucester, which would be applied to school construction. This was successfully done in Halifax, Virginia last year. Currently, it would take an approximate 8 cents real estate tax increase for the construction planned for GHS and the transportation facility. A 1% sales tax increase would generate enough over the twenty-year allowable period, to pay for these projects, with the impact on real estate taxes possibly being as low as 0.7%. Both the School Board and BOS have passed a resolution to support this bill and Senator Norment has taken it to the Senate Appropriations Committee where it passed, and subsequently, on the Senate floor, where it also passed. If the bill makes it through the House and the Governor, it would be able to go on the November ballot for Gloucester residents to consider. Dr. Clemons feels it could be helpful if the Teacher Advisory Committee draft a resolution in support of SB224 that could be presented with the School Board and Board of Supervisors' resolutions. The Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority, and GEA may also be submitting resolutions.

Before and After School Care Survey Follow-up Approximately 85% of those responding to the Before and After School Care Survey voted in favor of some type of care in our buildings. Dr. Clemons said a Request for Proposal (RFP) process will need to be done to be fair to all providers. Dr. Clemons would also be looking for a provider who offers educational opportunities and would need to consider Community Engagement and other activities in the buildings. York County has successfully had this type of program for ten years and uses "Champions" as their provider. Proximity and space may currently prevent some parents from using other services in the county.

Christy Phillips (Achilles) indicated there have been issues trying to provide before/after school intervention to students who attend other programs due to transportation.

Substitute Pay for Teachers and Assistants Follow-up Dr. Clemons indicated the new policy allowing substitute pay for teachers and assistants, went into effect the beginning of January. A minimum of 30 minutes is required to be reimbursable when substituting a class and is not applicable to any other type of coverage. Dr. Clemons hopes to increase the amount compensated in the FY'21 budget.

Supplemental Pay Separate from Regular Pay Follow-up – In response to an inquiry that had been made regarding supplemental pay being separate from regular pay, Dr. Clemons explained that due to IRS guidance, we do not separate supplements. In addition, if separate checks were to be given, the tax incurred would be at a higher rate.

Bus Communication System Follow-up – Dr. Clemons and the School Board made a request to the BOS to accelerate the bus communication system into FY'20, but the request was denied. The BOS has an unassigned fund balance that is currently at about 15% and their goal is not to go lower than that figure. Therefore, the bus communication system will remain in the FY'21 budget request. It is a needed safety feature for our buses.

Leaving Premises Follow-up – In regards to concerns about staff leaving the premises during planning period or other times, Dr. Clemons explained that staff must ask to be able to leave the premises and this should be monitored by principals. As long as it is approved, he believes staff should be able to have that flexibility.

Reimbursement for Meal Expenses Follow-up – As a follow-up to questions regarding the allowable amount for reimbursements, Dr. Clemons indicated there is probably about a 2-3-dollar difference amongst divisions. Dr. Clemons plans to recommend increasing the daily meal per diem next year in the budget, which would bring GCPS to the average point of the divisions in the region.

Items from TAC members

Jennifer Worrell (Abingdon) expressed concerns regarding copier issues at Abingdon Elementary. Dr. Clemons feels at some point, we may have to look at copying in general, due to the excessive amount that occurs. Teachers indicated however it is necessary to provide the materials needed.

Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) said that many at Botetourt were surprised that rezoning didn't occur. Next to the high school, Botetourt has the largest enrollment and is running short on space, desks, and overburdening their nurse, reading specialist, etc. In addition, free/reduced lunch numbers are increasing as well as students who are entering school who are not ready. Parking is also an issue, with some staff parking behind the school in an area not intended for parking, to alleviate space in the parking lot. Ms. Glenn asked if this area could be paved, fenced, and lit to be an adequate parking area. Dr. Clemons believes re-districting for elementary schools in general will need to be looked at in the future to include the possible reopening T.C. Walker as an elementary school. We are uncertain what the growth is going to look like with the new housing units coming up in the county. We may need our transportation department to look into what this would look like if we were to redistrict.

Sarah Alexander (Achilles) discussed a situation at Achilles Elementary, with a Special Education student who has transferred from Williamsburg and needs a self-contained classroom, which isn't available at their school. Dr. Clemons asked Mrs. Alexander to send him a narrative about this situation to help determine what can be done. In addition, alternatives for situations with students who are displaying behaviors that are unacceptable was discussed and is becoming an increasing issue. Additional support staff resources may be needed. Dr. Clemons noted that out of division

placements may not be the best situation and are more costly. Christy Phillips (Achilles) feels their staff is doing the best they possibly can, but worries about the impact these situations have on the entire class.

Alyssa Thomas (Petsworth) said there are no testing accommodations for IEP students in Star Reading/Star Math.

Megan Harris (Peasley) inquired about compensation being given for creating lesson plans, etc. for someone who has resigned, or is out unexpectedly. Dr. Clemons indicated in a previous division he was employed in, lesson plans were used across the division and grade level teachers across the division had planning at the same time and could video conference. New teachers would already have plans available, which could be tweaked, but weren't done from scratch. Dr. Clemons requested Mrs. Harris send him the information she was provided in the request. Mrs. Harris indicated that Peasley M.S. has had teacher of turnover in Special Education and it is taking its toll on others. Members were interested in the collaboration and lesson plan sharing. Dr. Clemons would need to look into it deeply before thinking about suggesting this idea.

Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) brought forth a concern regarding a license issue with Starr/AR that will not allow you to have a license for one student, it has to be for an entire class. Due to classes being setup in PowerSchool, this has become an issue.

Adjournment 5:03 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 24, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. in Conf. Rm. A135.