



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teacher Advisory/GEA Committee

October 28, 2019 / 4:30 p.m.

TCWEC/Conf. Rm. A111

Present: Tricia Dowdy/Carla Williams/Jen Worrell/Amber Giampa/Ann Marchant-Jones/Clint Alexander/Melanie Glenn/Flora Brunjes/Lisa Sheesley/Lisa Parzanese/Holly King/Alyssa Thomas/Sarah Alexander/Karen Salmon/Megan Harris

Dr. Clemons welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

Accreditation Update – Dr. Clemons shared the accreditation information on the division website. All GCPS schools are fully accredited. Teachers were thanked for the work they consistently do to ensure our schools are accredited. Indicator levels and achievement gaps were explained in the newly implemented green/yellow/red accreditation system. Schools are fully accredited if all indicators are green or yellow. Chronic absenteeism is also now included in the accreditation status. If a student misses at least 10% of the school days, for any reason, that student is considered to be chronically absent. This will not necessarily fail a student, but counts toward state accreditation. GHS now has an 18.92% chronic absenteeism rate, which is significantly down from being over 30% several years ago. We need to strive for being at 15% or below regarding chronic absenteeism for GHS.

Comprehensive Plan – Part of the budget planning process includes looking at what is in the Comprehensive Plan. Dr. Clemons asked members to look at the plan and provide any additional needs members feel should be included, adding that because of the Teacher Advisory committee, we now have instituted early dismissals specifically at the elementary level; leave donation; sick leave changes and personal leave changes. In addition, valuable discussion regarding compensation was held with the TAC. Dr. Clemons showed members where meeting minutes and the “need to know” information are located on the division webpage.

Regional Calendar Survey – GCPS took part in a regional calendar survey with five other school divisions who participate in New Horizons. These school divisions include Williamsburg, York, Poquoson, Newport News and Hampton. Dr. Clemons expects all divisions will have completed the survey and a decision made by the end of November. In Gloucester, the survey, which didn’t have an actual yes or no question, reflected that 62% indicated no, 24% yes, and 14% were undetermined on the open ended questions at the end. Dr. Clemons noted that 87/132 school divisions in Virginia already start before Labor Day. Members felt like the questions on the regional survey gave the appearance that a decision has been predetermined. Dr. Clemons added that he nor the School Board has a predisposition either way. If GCPS did start school before Labor Day, the professional days at the beginning of the year would more than likely be reduced. Labor Day will occur later in 2020 than in years past, which could potentially impact implementation if adopted. Some members felt like families may already have vacations scheduled for the week prior to school normally opening.

Before/After School Care Survey – A Before/After School Care survey will be coming out around the end of November. Dr. Clemons noted that it isn’t intended to take away from our local providers, but is being explored as a possibility that would give families options. The only involvement GCPS

would have would be to provide the space. The survey would need to be worded appropriately to determine if parents would be interested in having this care in our schools. Typically, spaces provided include the gym, cafeteria, and/or library. If implemented, Dr. Clemons expects it would initially start at the elementary schools. Mrs. Marchant-Jones (GHS) indicated a potential need at GHS, noting parents are dropping students off at 6:30 a.m., when it is dark outside and the building is not open.

CIP Updates – GHS is the main focus on the CIP plan. Dr. Clemons indicated the School Board is still working with the Board of Supervisors for final approval on that project. Dr. Clemons noted that if approved, the 44 million the School Board has determined is needed, would have a huge impact on the facility. The Board of Supervisors has initially discussed a potential funding amount of 38.8 million. Also on the CIP is 7.1 million for a new transportation facility. Dr. Clemons would like to work with the Board of Supervisors in the attempt to secure funding for both projects, noting however that funding for GHS is the top priority and that some funding discussed for the transportation facility needs to be re-allocated to meet the needs at GHS. Dr. Clemons also stated that he would like to see the old Page site used for economic development. Dr. Clemons indicated this will require trust between the two boards as well as bundling the projects to obtain cost savings. Dr. Clemons said that initiatives like this if successful will be a part of our legacy working together for the betterment of the community. An example was given of a school division, in an economically challenged area on the Eastern Shore of VA where 29 million has been approved to renovate the high school. The tax rate there is 83 cents, compared to our 69.5 cents. Dr. Clemons doesn't want the omissions that occurred at the new Page due to budget constraints to happen at GHS. The high school needs to be renovated properly for this community.

Items from Teacher Advisory/GEA Members

Sarah Alexander (Achilles) shared concerns of an Achilles teacher who would like a district-wide conference day near the beginning of the school year where most conferences could be held. Dr. Clemons noted that regional calendar results should be ready by our next meeting and may be helpful with this discussion.

Clint Alexander (GHS) inquired about network issues. Tricia Dowdy explained that the problems occurring are division-wide and entail three varying firewall issues. The technology department is attempting to narrow those down. Mrs. Dowdy stressed that staff should contact the Help Desk (693-0989) when an issue occurs or at the very least, record the time and location and report it as soon as possible. This will help to pinpoint the problems.

Holly King (Page) presented an inquiry from a teacher at Page regarding how their school was listed on the new division website. Other members inquired about accessing the calendar and policies on the new website. Mrs. Dowdy indicated that there have been some issues with the conversion that the technology department is working to remedy.

Amber Giampa (Bethel) presented a concern regarding inequalities between the elementary schools in regards to technology (teachers) support. Dr. Clemons noted that we need to have licensed technology teachers at all elementary schools. We are aware of the concern and it will be a part of our upcoming FY21 budget discussions. It was noted that ITRT's can help with the technology if teachers need help.

Dr. Clemons expressed his appreciation to members and asked that they send him any inquiries they may have between meetings.

Adjournment – 6:11 p.m.