



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Teacher Advisory/GEA Committee

November 25, 2019

Members Present: Alyssa Thomas, Megan Harris, Lisa Parzanese, Anjie O'Beirne, Tricia Dowdy, Clint Alexander, Melanie Glenn, Sarah Alexander, Christy Phillips, Lisa Sheesley, Flora Brunjes, Amber Giampa, Ann Marchant-Jones, Carla Williams

Dr. Clemons wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and an enjoyable break, noting it will already be December when we return.

Regional Calendar Update – Based on survey results, superintendents in the region have decided not to start school before Labor Day in the 2020-2021 school year. The first day of school will be on September 8, 2020. A calendar committee has been formed for the region and will be looking at options for the 2021-2022 school year. If changes are implemented to start earlier in 2021-2022, Dr. Clemons expects an announcement will be made in the spring of 2020.

Dr. Clemons is considering new teachers reporting on August 24 next year, which would be two weeks prior to the start of school, and veteran teachers returning on August 27. If implemented, convocation would most likely be held either August 27 or 31. Dr. Clemons asked members to consider this option, discuss it in their buildings, and provide feedback. Professional development held during that time would need to be reduced. Other considerations would be determining if teachers would have enough time to prepare and hold open houses. If the calendar is changed for the 2021-2022 year, teachers will have a similar timeframe to prepare before the students return. Dr. Clemons said this would not impact teachers contracted days. Teachers are currently contracted for 200 days, which is more than actually worked. Mrs. Marchant-Jones (GHS) asked if SOL's would be later because of the late start in 2020-2021, which Dr. Clemons agreed would be necessary.

Substitutes Update – Dr. Clemons has asked Jessica Duren (Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance) to provide a substitute survey to determine which substitutes are being called, still active, frequency of calls, and if they wish to remain active. In addition, Dr. Clemons is considering paying teachers per hour if they are asked to cover a class when a substitute isn't available. If implemented, Dr. Clemons would like to have it included in the pay plan. Members were asked to discuss it with their peers and provide feedback as soon as possible. Dr. Clemons would like to have it on the agenda for the December School Board meeting and if approved, possibly begin implementing it after Winter Break. Discussion was held regarding how paraprofessionals could also be compensated for the additional responsibility when asked to substitute.

Before and After School Care Survey – Plans are underway to have the “Before and After School Care Survey” go out by the end of December, with feedback due in January.

BOS Upcoming Meeting School Item – Dr. Clemons informed members a request for an acceleration of an item in the current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will be on the agenda for the December 3, 2020 Board of Supervisors meeting. The request would be for \$308,000 for a bus communication system, which is currently listed in the CIP for FY’21. However, we are trying to be proactive. The current system, which requires the use of cell phones, is not effective. Bus drivers are not permitted to use cell phones while driving, there are many dead zones in the county where phones do not work, and the new system would tie into the transportation, emergency service, and sheriff’s office. Flora Brunjes (Bethel), referenced an incident that occurred on a school bus on Hickory Fork Road where a student was having a seizure and a call for assistance would not go through. The new communication system may also help obtain new drivers.

Upcoming Budget Meetings – Building level administrators will begin budget meetings the week of December 9. Members should notify administrators prior to that date if there are things they would like considered. Dr. Clemons expects the Governor to have his preliminary budget out before the winter break and hopes to see favorable moves in Richmond. In regards to compensation, Dr. Clemons plans to remain aggressive to maintain the progress that has been made in the past two years.

Items from TAC/GEA Members

Flora Brunjes (Bethel) asked if supplement pay could be separated from an employee’s monthly pay as it was in the past. Dr. Clemons indicated this was changed because of IRS regulations, but will double check and provide feedback at the next meeting.

Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) presented an inquiry regarding health insurance, asking if an increase in pay could be given for those who don’t use our health insurance because some feel our benefits aren’t equitable to employees who don’t use our insurance. Dr. Clemons noted salary and retirement compensation issues that would occur if allowed and the increased inequity doing so would create.

Megan Harris (Peasley) made an inquiry regarding stipends, which Dr. Clemons plans to look into during budget planning. Current stipends will be reviewed to determine if other duties are in alignment and not being given stipends. Members mentioned VTSS and department chairs as an example and that some who are receiving stipends do club work during the day.

Megan Harris (Peasley) The daily reimbursement per diem does not always provide enough to compensate staff for expenses. Dr. Clemons believes the per diem is established based on Commonwealth of Virginia guidelines, but will verify.

Christy Phillips (Achilles) inquired about the policy for leaving the building during planning/lunch. Some have noticed staff at GHS leaving if they have planning in the morning/last in the day. Dr. Clemons stated that if a staff member was to leave during

those times, they would need to discuss it with an administrator, sign out, and use leave, which Clint Alexander (GHS) and Ann Marchant-Jones (GHS), believe is occurring. Dr. Clemons will follow up with Mr. Reed.

Clint Alexander (GHS) noted an inequity in teacher duty time. Teachers with bus duty are only required to be on duty for 15 minutes before school begins. Others have 25 minutes taken from them during their planning period for their duty or have to eat their lunch during their planning period because their duty is lunch duty. Unencumbered planning periods were discussed and a need to balance that with “other duties as assigned.” Dr. Clemons indicated he will look at this and asked Mr. Alexander to recommend potential solutions as well.

Amber Giampa (Bethel) inquired about rumors regarding the Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT) provided by the Community Services Board, being eliminated next year. Mrs. Giampa added that without them, it would put a lot more on administrators, teachers, and counselors. The type of issues handled by TDT are already having hard impacts on the classroom. Dr. Clemons said we will need to inquire and also feels that the Commonwealth of Virginia is aware of the needs in the Social/Emotional area. Our division may have to repurpose funding if the program ends in order to meet those needs. Members were encouraged to advocate for the TDT program to remain.

Upcoming Meeting – There will not be a meeting scheduled in December due to the short month and holiday break. The next meeting will be held on January 27, 2020.

Adjournment: 6:13 PM