



GLOUCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Teacher Advisory Committee
Electronic Zoom Meeting
April 26, 2021 – 4:30 p.m.

1. Welcome – Dr. Clemons welcomed members. The return to a four day schedule occurred the prior week on April 19. Dr. Clemons feels the current mitigation practices will continue when school starts in the fall. Currently, over eighty of the one hundred thirty-two divisions in Virginia, are attending four days of in-person learning weekly. Fifty three of those divisions, including Gloucester, have students in all grades attending four days per week.
2. FY'22 Budget – On April 22, the School Board adopted a budget for FY'22. However, the Board of Supervisors' (BOS) approved local funding for GCPS, was \$986,000 less than requested. Dr. Clemons explained that although it won't be possible to do all that was planned for FY'22, health insurance isn't expected to increase for employees and compensation is expected to be increased at an average of 5%. ESSER funding will help the division carry out some additional needs.
3. Sales Tax Referendum – Dr. Clemons expressed disappointment in the direction taken by the Board of Supervisors regarding the sales tax referendum. The School Board is waiting for a response from the state attorney general regarding the legality of the decision to use the sales tax for prior debt. Funding approved for renovations to GHS will provide for needed repairs, such as roofing and HVAC, but will not provide for a full renovation to the building.
4. Comprehensive Plan – Dr. Clemons plans to send out information in the next few weeks, asking members to review and provide input on the Comprehensive Plan. Prior to the adoption of the updated plan, a public hearing will be held at a School Board meeting. The Comprehensive Plan must be re-adopted every two years. The current Comprehensive Plan started in spring of 2015 and has continuously been updated to show what has been completed, has yet to be completed, and what needs to be added.
5. ELT Updates

Instructional Department – Dr. Chuck Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, indicated Summer School positions were posted as internal vacancies prior to spring break and are now also open to external applicants. The School Board has also adopted a calendar for 2020-21, with an August 30 start date and June 15 end date. New teachers are expected to return on August 16 and veteran teachers on August 19. Megan Harris (Peasley) expressed a concern regarding working more time for the same pay and why hours would still need to be banked with the availability of Canvas. Dr. Clemons discussed clock hours and shared that GCPS traditionally has had fewer instructional hours than neighboring divisions. We worked to address that starting with the 2016-17 school year regarding hours. Our schedule moving forward will also help us in addressing learning loss that has occurred during the pandemic.

Dr. Clemons recognized Alyssa Thompson, Petsworth Elementary Teacher of the Year and Megan Harris, Peasley Middle School Teacher of the Year, Overall Middle School Teacher of the Year, and Division Teacher of the Year. Congratulations to all of our Teachers of the Year!

Budget & Finance Department – Heather Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, is currently creating the FY'22 budget book and also working with Human Resources to finalize contracts. Mrs. Lucas indicated a health insurance provider should be determined soon. GCPs also had to bid out for a benefit consulting firm this year and will be changing firms. Mrs. Lucas believes the changes will provide good opportunities for employees in the long run.

Human Resources Department – Rachel Blankenship, Executive Director of Human Resources & Compliance, is working on contracts, teacher pay scales, and job postings. Anyone interested in applying is encouraged to do so. Mrs. Harris indicated at times the librarian and others are still being used as substitutes at Peasley. Mrs. Blankenship indicated Peasley has the same sub-pool as Page and GHS, but many schools now have between 2-5 substitutes that are onsite daily. Many long-term subs have also been pulled into classes to cover teachers on maternity leave.

Operations Department – Bryan Hartley, Executive Director of Operations, is excited about the 2021-22 calendar with 180 days. There will be a day between each quarter for teachers to work on grades and the only holiday excluded is Columbus Day. The long-range capital plan has many large projects, including GHS, transportation, HVAC needs, paving, lighting, and roofing. The last phase of the Achilles bus loop is also ready for completion. Dr. Clemons asked members to look at how the calendar flows this upcoming year and provide input which will help us determine if this is what should be continued in future years.

Nursing Department – Lisa Jones, Director of Nursing, indicated COVID transmission rates are currently back in the higher range, but would expect that as we are coming out of spring break and beginning spring sports. Staff are reminded to keep mitigations strong in schools. Mrs. Jones is also having discussions with the Virginia Department of Health about clinics for students sixteen and older. Mrs. Harris asked if masks would be required in the fall, which is unknown at this time. If COVID vaccine booster shots become necessary, an opportunity will be provided for staff to receive those. Mrs. Harris asked if students are allowed to wipe tables with a paper towel if teachers spray them. That answer is that students are not allowed to do so due to the product getting on their hands and the need to know by staff that the surfaces have been properly cleaned. When school returns to five days of in-person instruction, deep cleaning will need to be done in the evenings. Dr. Clemons added that guidelines will only allow schools to close if there is a specific outbreak and only until the outbreak is mediated.

6. Items from TAC members

Melanie Glenn (Botetourt) asked if report cards could be color coded according to quarters to make them clearer, especially in math. In addition, there is only one line on the report card for reading, where two lines could split spelling and reading. Tricia Riley (GHS/Tech) said it may be a programming request that could be made through PowerSchool. Ms. Glenn thanked administration for proposing the redistricting, even though it has not passed at this time, Ms. Glenn is hopeful it will in the future. Ms. Glenn asked if extra positions could be added with ESSER funding. Dr. Wagner indicated teacher positions require long-term sustainability and space. Ms. Glenn also indicated behavior issues are resurfacing with class sizes increasing.

Julie Blake (Bethel) expressed a concern that Bethel still does not have a computer teacher. Dr. Wagner indicated this position was in the initial budget, but due to lack of funding additional positions had to be removed. Critical needs will be met if possible, but Dr. Clemons can't promise what those will be. Compensation needs to take priority along with health insurance and then initiatives.

The School Board will be meeting again on April 28, with redistricting the only item on the agenda. Dr. Clemons is hopeful that with a full board a decision will be made.

A question was asked about a permanent substitute who was left out of the bonuses given. Dr. Clemons indicated that situation would be researched.

Dr. Clemons thanked everyone for their time. There is one more meeting in May, unless members decide to meet again. Hopefully, at the next meeting, contracts will be finalized, and health insurance determined, as well as other issues addressed that were discussed today.

Adjournment -- 6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting – May 24, 2021 (Via Zoom)