

**MINUTES**  
**The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies**  
**Regional School Board Meeting**

**Thursday, June 21, 2012**

**9:00 a.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

Kenneth Pritchett, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional School Board, called the meeting to order.

**II. Introductions**

Each Board member introduced him or herself and stated their locality, (listed in alphabetical order by locality).

**Present:**

Mrs. Barbara Crawley, *School Board*, Charles City Public Schools

Mrs. Dianne Smith, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Mr. Kevin Hazzard, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools

Mr. John Axselle, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools

Mrs. Diana Winston, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools

Ms. Cora Armstrong, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools

Mrs. Sarah Grier Barber, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools (late arrival)

Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools

Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools

Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools

Mr. Jerry Warren, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools

Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools

Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools

Mrs. Patty Cover, Instruction Specialist for Gifted Education, representing Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Mr. Tom DeWeerd, Director of Secondary Education, representing Dr. Pete Gretz, **Acting Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools

Dr. Daryl Chesley, Assistant Superintendent, representing Dr. Jamelle Wilson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools

Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools

Mr. Charles Clare, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools

Dr. John Mayo, Assistant Superintendent, representing Dr. Alvera Parrish, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools

Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

Ms. Victoria Oakley, Chief Academic Officer, representing Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools

Mr. Don Skeen, **Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Mrs. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Mrs. Megan Marcinkevich, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

**Absent from Meeting:**

Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools

Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools

**Also present:**

Phil Tharp, Patti Chappell and Wendy Ellis – **Administration**

Hal Waller, Doug Scheibe, Brian Thomas, Portia Chan and Burt Hazelwood - **GS Foundation**

Julie May, Liz Aldridge, Charles Byles and Karen Akens – **Parents**

Julie Weissend, Shelley Allen, and Mary Phillipa Parker - **PTSA**

Michele Surat – **Faculty Liaison to the Regional School Board**

**III. Approval of Agenda**

On motion by Diana Winston, seconded by Kimberly Gray; the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Kevin Hazzard; minutes as submitted for May 17, 2012 were unanimously approved.

## V. Recognitions

The following were recognized for their outstanding service to Maggie L. Walker Governor's School and to this Regional Board:

- **Dr. Alvera Parrish:** Superintendent – Petersburg City Public Schools, serving MLWGS since 2010.
- **Dr. Jeffery O. Smith:** Superintendent – West Point Public Schools, serving MLWGS since 2008.
- **Mrs. Dudley Olsson,** School Board – West Point Public Schools, serving MLWGS since 2008.
- **Don Skeen,** MLWGS Director, 2011-2012.

## VI. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes (in the discretion of the Chairperson) to make his/her comments. Individuals representing groups will be allotted five (5) minutes. Citizens must schedule their appearance with the Board's Clerk, not later than 10:00am on the last business day before the meeting at which they desire to be heard.

**Mr. Burt Hazelwood (Henrico) - GS Foundation:** “Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, Superintendents and guests. First of all I would like to thank each of you that were able to attend the graduation; I think as you saw the students have performed very well, have been accepted to some great universities and given back to the community at very high levels. We do appreciate you sending your students to this school.”

“Second, I'd like to discuss our role continuing to give you data and information you need to make informed decisions on how to keep that success moving forward. So, I'd like to give you a page or two on some information that's been provided to us that I'd like each of you to have...again, relating to the tuition here at the school and items like that, I really want to go to page two. Published in the Richmond Times Dispatch, and I'm sure everyone grabbed hold of this, was a listing of the regional cuts that have had to be made, how important they have been to each of you and how we know you've had to work through these hard times. We've kind of done an average of all those that come to Maggie

Walker, both in total and for the four largest and compared that to the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School district tuition. As you can see there has been a significant variance there and something that I think continues to need to be addressed. We'd like to give you this information so that you can re-assess from time to time ...each of your localities and how you're funding this school, but again, we do show some major concerns on the finance levels that are given to this school. The level of acumen that the leaders here have given for the finances you provide has been extremely well done and we think we should continue to fund this school well. To go back to the front page...excuse me...the district average was down about 7%. Maggie Walker's tuition from the localities has gone down 13.3%. You've seen the numbers before as far as how the funding compares to your own localities, just a great deal, a great offer for your children that will be giving back to the community when they come back. I did want to also bring up that... I continue to bring this information to you because I know you need talking points when you go back to your community."

"Why are we funding this school? I think you need both the information that is provided in the recognitions and the information on cost per student and how well these students are doing for your school. Again, this was the effect of the 5% cut this year (points to PowerPoint slide projected); some people have addressed 'well gosh our budget is final now, how can we change even now?' I'm reaching out to you and asking you to continue to look to change; the dollars per locality given your budgets are not that great in number...the impact on the school is significant. I would be more than happy to meet with each of you and look at your budgets and try to find some in there. I know you've already done the best you can... maybe a fresh set of eyes can help. We're more than happy to do cookouts at your facilities to allow people to put money into our bake sales. But the numbers are not that significant to the individual localities, they are significant to this school."

"Finally, one thing I wanted to bring up was...in the paper, also the VRS obviously is a major issue. I think it was kind of thought that each of the localities would follow the 1% graduated way of getting to 5% (employee contributions). Several of the localities have decided to pursue higher percentages, 3% or 5%; that puts Maggie Walker at a disadvantage when it comes to hiring new and retaining current teachers and administrative staff. I do want you guys to acknowledge that and also, next year if Maggie Walker were to try to catch up along with everything else, you're seeing a significant increase that's going to be requested. That's all I really have to say. Thank you."

**Julie Weissend - PTSA President:** "As Regional School Board members you are asked by the state to sit at this table and mentor, guide and govern Maggie Walker. It's because of your regional perspectives and support that this school has succeeded, not in spite of them. Regional cooperation continues to be an admirable goal but not if it comes at Maggie Walker's peril. This current budget is handicapping our offerings at this school, and most importantly it's handicapping our abilities to attract and retain teachers who are our life blood. You are asking this school to take

bigger budget cuts than the districts have made respectively, some of them, and we are unable to fund this state's required mandate in terms of retirement this year while as Burt just mentioned, some jurisdictions are fully funding which puts us at a disadvantage as well. Maggie Walker has proven to be one of the best investments of taxpayer dollars going with 28 National Merit Semi-finalist, 3 Presidential Scholars and a number 16 ranking in the nation by Newsweek Magazine. The question should be what kind of additional investment do we need?"

"This school is, and should continue to be, an integral component of every district's economic development arsenal. It is unique and exceptional and it needs additional funding to stay that way. As PTSA President on behalf of our 924 members that live and work in your respective districts, I'm asking you to amend the budget and give us the support that we need. Thank you."

## **VII. Director's Report**

**Policy Steering Committee Report:** Don Skeen reported that the Policy Review Steering Committee will meet again at the conclusion of this Regional School Board meeting. He stated this committee has been gathering information and developing an action plan to move forward. The next step this fall would be to constitute a committee(s) to begin the work of policy review, reminding Board members that a review process currently exists that includes examination by the Planning Committee and the Superintendent's Steering Committee who may choose to seek stakeholder input prior to Regional School Board approval.

Mr. Skeen remarked that to the best of his knowledge no policy review had been conducted so the steps he outlined are necessary to appropriately make progress. Further, he estimates that by the second meeting of next year the committee should be able to identify for the Board which policies are priorities for review.

In conclusion, Mr. Skeen reminded all that policy review will be a long process, but noted we are fortunate to be able to use the Richmond Public School's handbook in the meantime if their policy reflects practice at MLWGS.

**Diversity Committee Report:** Mr. Skeen recognized that concerns had been addressed prior to his tenure at MLWGS as evidenced by the UVA study commissioned by this Board and on-going issues at the division level. To that end, a committee was commissioned at Maggie Walker to develop a strategic plan and action steps to address what we can do regarding these concerns. Mr. Skeen introduced **Dr. Wendy Ellis** to present a brief report to the Board.

Dr. Ellis called attention to handout items sent digitally to each board member and were also available at the table for this meeting, illustrating the work of the Diversity Committee. Handouts encapsulate committee members, meeting schedules, and the work of the committee to explore options that address the recommendations of the UVA study in the primary areas of recruitment, admissions, and retention. Dr. Ellis noted that the committee began the 2011-2012 academic year looking at this issue to see what can be done internally that MLWGS has control over –see Action Steps Implemented 2011-2012 in Diversity Committee Update handout. Future committee goals can be read under Additional Strategies Planned (Recruitment, Admissions and Retention) of this same handout.

Dr. Ellis also included the 2012-2013 Admissions Statistics Report that illustrates the breakdown by race for all students that applied to MLWGS and all students that were accepted to MLWGS.

Ms. Gray thanked Dr. Ellis and the committee for their work, but voiced concern regarding receipt of a communication containing poignant questions of why we need diversity here and if it is important. She stated that as a parent, board member and member of the community she affirmed that diversity does matter and is important for this school as it improves the educational experience of all students as evidenced by numerous studies. She stated that while she is supportive of opposing opinions and thoughts, that sometimes these things can undermine the work of people who are really trying to make a difference and is disheartening. Ms. Gray stated that diversity to her does not mean a lowering of standards; it means a removal of barriers that have been in place for students who are from diverse backgrounds, gay, or from lesser means. Ms. Gray wholly supports the work of this committee, stating “education is the equalizer and is key to breaking through these barriers.”

Dr. Ellis responded that the MLWGS administration is aware of this communication and that for the Diversity Committee it represents exactly the reason why their works needs to continue and why work needs to continue in this school making teachers and students aware of the need to promote diversity; which is not just defined as race, but as Ms. Gray stated is all under-represented populations and having a diverse community is beneficial to everyone. The Diversity Committee was aware when they started that their task would not be easy because anytime you bring change, even if it is something positive, you are not going to have everyone agree. The committee has a strategy for when everyone returns in August and as reported by Dr. Ellis, the vast majority of the faculty and staff are supportive of their efforts to date.

Dr. Russo requested a trend analysis of the last five years to see if any progress has been achieved promoting a greater level of diversity at Maggie Walker. Dr. Ellis will disseminate this information to Board and Superintendent members via email.

Mrs. Winston asked for an explanation of the admissions process and why the applicant numbers don't reflect the make-up of the Henrico school system, for example. Dr. Ellis stated the admissions process is not a function of Maggie Walker; it is a function of the Planning Committee (PC) and the participating school systems. In regards to the question, this is a conversation that the PC continues to have and is working diligently on the Admissions Handbook to clarify who is responsible for admissions, evaluations and selection. The conclusion determined by both the PC and the Superintendent's Steering Committee is that the function of the PC is to execute evaluations (determines testing, writing prompts, weighting, etc.), concluding by compiling a cumulative score and ranking for each student that has applied with that score/ranking then being provided to each school district. It is each district's decision to do what they wish with the scores provided. Two school districts are currently choosing students in two phases: 1) a student from each of the feeder middle schools and 2) taking the remaining students sequentially from the top down. The remaining school districts thus far have chosen to take their students sequentially from the top down based on ranking for the number of slots they have available.

Dr. Ellis stated that while MLWGS has no control over the admissions process, the school hopes to become more cognizant of the various kinds of assessments used and as the Diversity Committee continues to research what the issues are, to be able to liaise with the PC and the Superintendent's Steering Committee to provide information and make recommendations based on its assessments and study.

Mrs. Winston inquired if a student wishing to participate in an activity that MLWGS does not offer (example: football) could participate in that activity at their home school, and if this option could be used as a means to attract a broader range of applicants. Dr. Ellis replied that option is not allowed by VHSL with Mr. Tharp confirming that the Board has already addressed this issue years ago.

Mr. Skeen added to the discussion by re-emphasizing that as a school we are limited as to what we can do. The purpose of the Diversity Committee is to explore all the areas where MLWGS can do something. Mr. Skeen stated that many of these concerns will have to be addressed through the PC and Superintendent's Steering Committee as the governance of the school does not allow MLWGS to address many of these issues. As part of the conversation to help you understand how we might be of assistance beyond just providing recommendations for admissions, what are some of the things we can do as a school to get out into your community, especially in some of the under-represented communities, even at the elementary level, to start helping students become more aware of what is available to them and what can we do to help enhance those opportunities. The difficulty comes in working with twelve different school districts because the needs are so different. But the school is willing to help reach these students to get them on track, and hopefully we can see a difference in 4-5 years.

Mr. Skeen suggested that a need still exists to provide more clarity as to why we are doing this. Diversity is a broad topic but we have to focus on under-represented populations because that's the important issue; however, the subject is more inclusive than that. "We have to understand where other people are coming from." Without a teacher's ability to connect with students, their knowledge is useless; we have to help teachers understand how important it is to connect with students and understand where they are coming from and help them achieve and be the best they could possibly be." Mr. Skeen stated that we have opened the door for discussion on this issue rather than it being something that is hidden in the workroom or faculty lounge, so he sees this as a positive sign to have an open and honest dialog.

Clarification was requested by Dr. Russo regarding Dr. Ellis' admissions remarks. He stated that his colleagues agree it is important to have a consistent evaluation process that identifies students who are eligible for Maggie Walker, and that school systems have the flexibility to provide opportunities to its high scoring students within their middle schools, he does not however, agree with the sequential in line selection statement, believing this practice has never been agreed upon by the Superintendent's Steering Committee and PC. He stated his understanding from the Superintendents group is to have selection flexibility for students identified as eligible for MLWGS and meeting the criteria; that school systems retain the flexibility to determine which students are chosen rather than just taking the top 35 for example. Dr. Ellis agreed with his remarks, and affirmed that she was speaking of current practices.

Patty Cover attested to the scope of Dr. Ellis's remarks and added that the PC feels diversity is a very important topic and is dedicated to looking closely at the current admissions process. She stated that changes have been made to the process in the last couple of years and the PC is looking at the data while working with the school to see how it has impacted admissions and the students who are offered admission to Maggie Walker. Lastly, Ms. Cover said that the PC is committed to working with the Board, Superintendent's and the school to find new ways to better address this issue.

**Updates:**

- Class of 2012 Graduation
- Summer Operating Schedule

**Coming Events:** See VII.c



## **VIII. Action Items**

### **a. Teacher Evaluation Policy**

Presented at the last meeting for Board review, Mr. Skeen stated this policy was modeled after the Board of Education version designated as 'YourTown,' but includes an addition suggested by Dr. Newsome that reflects student progress at 40% (see page 9 of document).

There being no additional discussion on this matter, on motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Dianne Smith, the proposed Teacher Evaluation Policy was unanimously approved.

### **b. 2012-2013 Student Fee Schedule**

The Director recommends the Board approve the proposed 2012-2013 Student Fee Schedule as presented for Board review in May, 2012.

There being no additional discussion on this matter, on motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the 2012-2013 Student Fee Schedule was unanimously approved.

### **c. VRS Member Contribution Election for School Divisions**

The Director recommends the Board approve employee contribution rates of 1% for Plan 1 and Plan 2 employees and an employer contribution rate of 4% for Plan 1 and Plan 2 employees in FY13. New employees hired July 1, 2012 or beyond will pay a contribution rate of 5% with 0% employer contribution.

There being no additional discussion on this matter, on motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Kevin Hazzard, the FY13 VRS employee/employer contribution rate schedule was unanimously approved.

### **d. Personnel**

The Director recommends the Board approve the following personnel requests: 1) Phillip A. Sorrentino – Retirement, and 2) Ryan Webb – One Year Assignment in Mathematics Department.

There being no additional discussion on this matter, on motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Sarah Barber, the personnel actions requested were unanimously approved.

Mr. Skeen shared brief remarks on the tenure of Mr. Sorrentino at Maggie Walker Governor's School and the addition of Ryan Webb to the faculty.

**e. Approval of the Amended 2012-2013 Governor's School Foundation, Inc. Board of Director's per the Amended and Restated Bylaws, Article I**

The Director requests the Board bypass their normal one month review and approve an additional nominee, Jerry Canaan, submitted for the GS Foundation Board of Directors (other new board directors approved at May meeting).

There being no discussion on this matter, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Sarah Barber, the addition of Jerry Canaan to the GS Foundation Board of Directors was unanimously approved.

**IX. Materials for Board Review**

- a.** None

**X. Informational Items**

- **Recognitions for Individuals Not in Attendance:**
  - Daniel Leibovic ('13-Henrico), District Music Award
  - Samantha Marquez ('14-Chesterfield), INTEL Science Fair Honors
  - Saumil Banyopadhyay ('13-Henricdo), INTEL Science Fair Honors
  - Debate Team
  - Siobhan Rigby ('12-Richmond), RTD Co-Scholar-Athlete of the Year
  - Dr. Linda Underwood, Departing Superintendent for Goochland County Public Schools
- **Preliminary Audit Report**
- **Newsweek Top Performing Schools Ranking, May 20, 2012**
- **Planning Committee Minutes**
  - January 10, 2012
  - February 7, 2012
  - April 24, 2012

- **Student Wireless Network Procedures**
- **Bring Your Own Device Agreement Form**

**XI. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Meeting**

None

**XII. Closed Meeting**

Mr. Pritchett asked the Clerk to announce items for closed session.

Mrs. Barbara Marshall stated: “It is my understanding that the School Board desires to enter into a Closed Session in accordance with §2.2-3711.A of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and specifically under the following enumerated subsections, the following item: 1) Salaries of specific employees of the Board.

Mr. Pritchett stated: “Members of the Board, you have just heard the items requested to be discussed in closed session. Do I have a motion in that regard?”

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Kimberly Gray, the Board unanimously approved and entered into closed session.

**XIII. Certification of Closed Meeting and any action, if necessary, as a result of closed meeting.**

The Chairman called for a motion to reconvene in open session.

On motion by Diana Winston, seconded by Kevin Hazzard, the board unanimously approved open session.

Mr. Pritchett requested: “Mrs. Marshall (Clerk) please read the resolution certifying the closed session.”

Mrs. Marshall stated: “Now, therefore, be it resolved that the School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from opening meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the School Board.”

The Chairman called for a motion to adopt this resolution. On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the resolution was adopted.

*Roll Call Vote (alphabetical order)*

Cora Armstrong: Aye

John Axselle: Aye

Valarie Ayers: Aye

Sarah Grier Barber: Aye

Barbara Crawley: Aye

Kimberly Gray: Aye

Kevin Hazzard: Aye

Dudley Olsson: Aye

Kenneth Pritchett: Aye

Dianne Smith: Aye

Jerry Warren: Aye

Diana Winston: Aye

*Motion carried and the Board resumed open session*

The Chairman called for a motion to amend the employment contract of Jeffrey McGee for the academic year 2012-2013. On motion by Diana Winston, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the 2012-2013 Amended Directors' contract was unanimously approved.

**XIV. Announcements/Unfinished Business**

None.

**XV. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the motion was unanimously approved and this meeting was adjourned.

**XVI. Next Meeting**

August 16, 2012 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

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Kenneth Pritchett, Chairman

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Minutes Recorded by:  
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk