

MINUTES

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies
Regional School Board Meeting
1000 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

Thursday, April 16, 2015

9:08 a.m.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Moment of Silence

The Chairman called for a moment of silence.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Michael Thompson ('15-Chesterfield) led the pledge of allegiance.

IV. 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. Michelle Ogburn, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools
Ms. Linda Hyslop, *School Board*, Hopewell Public Schools
Mrs. Sarah Grier Barber, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools
Mr. Jeffrey Bourne, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools (late arrival)
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. James Lane, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Mike Gill, **Assistant Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Kinlaw, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. John Fahey, **Superintendent**, Hopewell Public Schools
Dr. Stanley Jones, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. David Myers, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Jeff McGee, **Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School (MLWGS)
Mrs. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Ms. Megan Rainey, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Absent:

Ms. Cora Armstrong, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools
Mr. Jerry Warren, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. David Gaston, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Joseph Melvin, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Eric Jones, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Dana Bedden, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools

Also present:

Phil Tharp and Wendy Ellis – MLWGS Administration

Wendy DeGroat, John Piersol, Stephanie Welles, Dickson Benesh and Deborah Snagg – MLWGS Staff

Burt Hazelwood and Laura Lewis – GS Foundation

Chamie Valentine – School Advisory Council (SAC) Chairman

Marianne Macon and Anne Hayes – PTSA Advocacy Committee

Dr. James McMillan – Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Sydney Bland and Rebecca Ott – Community

Michael Thompson ('15-Chesterfield), Feline Lucas ('15-Richmond), Piper Shifflett ('15-Hanover), Kiara Williams ('15-Henrico), Elizabeth Ratliff ('15-Richmond), Ellie Palazzolo ('15-Henrico), Wilton Wu ('15-Henrico), Pranay Vissa ('15-Henrico), Gretchen Ashauer ('15-Richmond), Tierney Whelan ('15-Chesterfield), Libby Ebeling ('15-Richmond), Anant Kharkar ('15-Henrico), Alan Zhang ('15-Chesterfield), William Overman ('16-Hanover), and Morgan Andrews ('15-Chesterfield) – MLWGS students.

A few in attendance are inaudible on recording of introductions.

V. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Dianne Smith, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved.

VI. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by John Axselle, minutes for the regular meeting of March 19, 2015 were unanimously approved.

VII. Recognitions

- A brief *video of Relevance Rising Guatemala Spring Break 2015, created by Kaitlyn Kurdziel*, was played and students Gretchen Ashauer, Piper Shifflett, and Morgan Andrews shared personal stories that were representative of student experiences on this trip. Mrs. Welles reported that MLWGS has financially supported the destination Guatemalan community of Tzununá for five years with almost \$20,000 in donations to date and with (3) Regional School Board approved interscholastic trips. Mrs. Welles and the Relevance Rising students thanked both the Regional School Board and the GS Foundation for their support.

- **Moody's Mega Math Challenge Team** – MLWGS will compete in the M3 Challenge to be held April 27th in NYC for the top six qualifying teams in the nation selected from 1,128 papers originally submitted. Walker's assigned problem was to determine the cost of college and how it would benefit one financially over the course of 10-20-30 years into the future. Led by faculty member Dickson Benesh, the following students will compete: **Anant Kharkar ('15-Henrico), William Overman ('16-Hanover), Pranay Vissa ('15-Henrico), Wilton Wu ('15-Henrico) and Alan Zhang ('15-Chesterfield).**
- Recognized in absentia: **Emma Call ('16-Richmond), Richmond Times Dispatch Scholar-Athlete of the Month.**
- Recognized in absentia: **Boys and Girls Indoor Track Teams – (repeating from 2014) Virginia High School League (VHSL) State Champions.**

VIII. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes (at 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 no later than 10:00am on the last business day before the meeting at which they desire to be heard.

The following remarks are not verbatim:

Mrs. Chamie Valentine, Chairman of the School Advisory Council (SAC), addressed the Board:

Mrs. Valentine began: as Chairman of the School Advisory Council I was asked to participate on the Strategic Planning Committee. This committee worked hard for many days and many hours trying to develop a plan that resonates with the Board with the expectation that you will take from it what you think will make this a great school for the 21st century, or at least for the next 3-5 years during which the plan will be applied.

From the town hall, of which Director McGee issued many public notifications inviting the public to comment...for those that did a few of the provisions were suggested to be changed and in changing them the easy fallback was the former position; i.e., mission and vision statements. I am here today, on my own, to address the mission statement, and would like the Board to give an opportunity to the committee that worked so hard, to take what's best from both the old statement and the new one that has been proposed.

The school has worked and been very successful on the old mission statement but through this process there are a number of items in the new mission statement that reflect what we came up with in the new strategic plan; example, references to a diverse and supportive community, that is key going forward. We have a great deal already but would like to enhance going forward.

In addition, we [*the committee*] have references in the new mission statement that talks about supporting student character. We find that important for a number of reasons...not only in creating integrity within each student that is partially developed here with the support of our educational opportunities and the community; but also this implies mental and physical health. If you have strong character you also have mental and physical health and those are also key items in the strategic plan and in that respect in the mission statement we developed and the committee approved.

Another change we made...the old mission statement talked about the ability to ‘contribute, participate and lead.’ The committee thought contribute and participate in this day and age overlapped too much and changed that to ‘contribute, collaborate and lead’ because we know from experience collaboration is extremely important in all fields, careers and pursuits in life throughout the world and our children will be prepared to ‘contribute, collaborate and lead.’

With that, Mrs. Valentine stated she hoped the Board would keep these three provisions in mind as they decide what is appropriate for the school’s future mission statement.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Valentine for her remarks.

IX. Director’s Report

A. Climate Surveys with Dr. James McMillan, VCU

Introduced by Chairman Hazzard, Dr. McMillan began by explaining he was asked to put MLWGS survey results into context given his background in measurement.

Dr. McMillan declared that every organization has some kind of environment or culture that develops over time. From education research it is noted that different schools have different climates and it is important to capture and review what develops in that climate over time. Research is very good at connecting certain aspects of climate to student achievement. However, an issue to be considered is the fact there have been many different surveys developed and used over many years. Because of that each survey has its own take on what it is actually measuring. The one that MLWGS used has its own ideas about climate and its own sub-components of climate and lists leadership as one of the important components; but this survey has its own particular way of thinking about leadership that could be different from other surveys. Because of that, it is important to go behind some of the broader categories and look at individual questions as they give a much better feel for what is being assessed.

The primary purpose for doing this type of survey is two-fold: 1) to identify areas that may need further investigation, thinking of those areas as an ‘indicator’ or a way of getting started with understanding a particular environment, and 2) to establish a benchmark or baseline looking at trends longitudinally, which is much more important than looking at comparisons; i.e., comparisons between schools, or between parent perspectives to student perspectives or to teacher perspectives, the reason being that each survey contained different questions.

The reports are summarized responses made by parents/students/faculty that participated in the National Center for School Leadership Engagement and Satisfaction Surveys categorized from 1 for favorable to 5 for unfavorable. These surveys were developed approximately twelve years ago by NCSL but usually uses the more typical 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' range, yet the description of favorable to unfavorable was used here and is a little different from what the question asks respondents to indicate.

N=261 represents what is used for the overall parent engagement satisfaction rating (a combination of all items on the scale). The 'N' number is far fewer than the number of parents that actually responded to the survey; however, if a parent did not answer any of the questions for whatever reason, that parent was not included in this total. Other response rates for different parts of the survey were actually 50%, which is excellent!

Continuing, Dr. McMillan noted that several items make up sub-scale scores/averages for the levels reported and relate to a 5 point scale with 5 being at the 'strongly agree' end; adding, "When you know this, it provides a reference to interpret results." There are some indicators that maybe jump out, but what one is really looking for is the ½-1 point difference as a way of contrasting different areas because with this scale that is its standard deviation. ½ point standard deviation difference is typically thought of as meaningful when looking at results.

Dr. McMillan reviewed the parent survey remarking that school pride and quality and satisfaction ratings were very high and impressive; however, making comparisons for other items is not as clear cut and there isn't great evidence in the instrument for supporting each of the sub-scales and another reason why it is important to look at individual items. Highest ranked favorable was 'My child's school is well regarded in the community' with 4.89, and least favorable was 'Often times, my child's homework assignment requires interaction with me or others in the family' with a 2.69. As an example of what would typically be considered an indicator, Dr. McMillan questioned how 'homework assignment' was interpreted by parents. "Does this mean it's not hard enough or with sufficient difficulty, or does the parent think it means the opposite of that?"

With the student engagement survey N=162, but there are 746 students at Maggie Walker. The response rate for this survey was approximately 470 students which equates to 63% responding. Again domains and sub-scales are utilized with an overall rating of 3.89. When looking at actual items, you can see the students rate safety and behavior very strong, but looking at least favorable you see quite a bit of difference in averages, representing students telling us something very distinct with this. Looking at 'My teachers align their lessons to match my personal learning style' with 2.70, reflecting an average less than neutral, Dr. McMillan stated; "but I don't know what is meant by personal learning style."

In response to a question, Dr. McMillan clarified that N=162 in this survey is applied only to the Overall Rating. All other ratings reflect response rates per item.

Concluding with the School Climate and Culture Survey N=67 with 79 faculty and staff members who were sent the survey. What is curious is that in some of the sub-scales the N is more than 79; some of the N's go up into the 80's and 90's, and one is totally an outlier in the 100's. Dr. McMillan stated he couldn't explain what this means or why it would be the case but shared that Dr. McGee had checked with the company [NCSL] who explained to him that it is possible to take the survey more than once; there is no check to only complete once.

However, there are still trends to note that are important. When you look at the five items rated most favorably and five least favorably you see some dramatic differences. For instance, 'I am committed to seeing my school succeed' rated 4.72, and 'Students show respect' and 'Parents very engaged' is consistent with how the parents view the school. Least favorable items again are less than neutral. Looking at 'Holding people accountable' and 'Information is shared openly' and so forth, suggests there are areas that need follow-up and discussion and could be a base line for improvements to be made over time.

Dr. Lane and Dr. Newsome and Mr. Axelle all asked follow-up questions relating to the unusual number of responses in the School Climate and Culture Survey and how it affects analysis. Dr. McMillan summarized by stating there are obvious trends for follow-up, and while not asked for his recommendation at this time, if asked, he would certainly say that there are some issues, the end being the most serious, the need to be better administered with respect to who is responding.

Mr. Axelle asked specifically, "In your opinion, should we rely on this data?" Dr. McMillan responded, "I wouldn't rely on this data to make any decisions, frankly."

In conclusion, when asked if there was a survey he would recommend, Dr. McMillan replied that he trusts one from the University Of Chicago's Consortium for Schools as they have done the most extensive research with respect to framing different climate areas. But unfortunately, it is a very long survey to complete.

Dr. McGee offered his interpretation that multiple answers reflect a need to be heard by some and that means something as well.

Dr. Lane thanked Dr. McMillan for his many hours of review, analysis and service to this Board.

Mr. Axelle remarked to Dr. McMillan in closing that his remarks were not to be perceived as negative toward the survey for, as with anything, you can't manage it until you measure it, and commended his work. Remarks are for clarification of results only.

B. Verbal Updates

AP Testing May 4-15, 2015. Number of tests to be administered is 1,202 to 471 students. Average number of exams per student is 2.55.

We the People team competing in National Finals April 25-27, 2015 in the Washington, DC area.

FY16 GS Foundation Annual Enhancement Grant Request totaling \$106,700.00.

Graduation for the Class of 2015, Monday, June 15th at Altria Theater.

C. Coming Events

- April 16, 2015 through May 21, 2015 (see page IX.c for details).

X. Unfinished Business

None.

XI. Action Items

a. Policy Proposal

The following is submitted from the Policy Steering Committee for Board approval: Policy No. 0002-Facilities Planning. Proposed policy is grounded in model policy of the Virginia School Board Association.

On motion by Barbara Crawley, seconded by John Axselle, Policy No. 0002-Facilities Planning was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jeffrey Bourne left the meeting.

b. Interdisciplinary Trip Proposal, Costa Rica, March 26, 2016

Proposed and reviewed in March 2015, the Director recommends approval of David Barnes' Interdisciplinary Trip Proposal to Costa Rica, March 26, 2016 through April 3, 2016.

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Valarie Ayers, the Costa Rica Interdisciplinary Trip Proposal in 2016 was unanimously approved.

XII. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

a. New Policy and Procedure Proposals

The following policies and procedure is submitted from the Policy Steering Committee for Board review:

Policy No. 1010 Constitution and ByLaws (*Amended*)
Policy No. 1019 Minutes
Policy No. 1026 School Board Clerk
Policy No. 5075 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Proc. No. 5075-P Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Follow-up

Proposed policies are grounded in model policies of the Virginia School Board Association. Proposed procedure is modeled from the MLWGS Crisis Manual. Approval will be requested at the May 2015 meeting of the Regional School Board.

b. Regulation No. 7006-R, Meal Credit Program Amended

Proposed meal allowance increase from \$4.50 to \$5.00 per day for qualified students to be billed back to the divisions for costs associated with the MLWGS lunch service effective in the 2015-2016 academic year. Dr. McGee noted this request for increase is the first since the program was started in FY09.

Dr. Lane indicated the Superintendent's reviewed this request and their consensus was with less than fifteen MLWGS students that qualify, financial impacts to the divisions will be minimal.

Dr. Lane requests that future budgets include revenue and expense line item(s) for the cafeteria. Mr. Tharp expressed the cafeteria revenue/expenses have typically been "a wash" in the budget. Maggie Walker, with its limited number of students, provides as an inducement to the vendor, to cover overhead costs; no revenue is generated for the school and no payments are received other than what is taken to cover utilities and the repair of equipment. Dr. Lane acknowledged Mr. Tharp's remarks; however, still requests future budgets include revenue/expense line items.

Approval will be requested at the May 2015 meeting of the Regional School Board.

c. Proposed Strategic Plan

Pursuant to Policy No. 0013, the MLWGS Regional School Board will adopt a comprehensive strategic plan. The proposed five-year plan has been posted on the school website for public inspection and a public hearing was held on March 24, 2015 for comment. The proposal can be viewed at: <http://mlwgs.com/welcome-to-mlwgs/proposed-strategic-plan/>. The plan proposal presented to the Regional Board considers community input captured from the public hearing with the exception of the mission and vision statements that remain unchanged from their original committee affirmed versions.

Dr. McGee reviewed committee membership, the strategic planning process, standards for excellence, vision and mission statements, and goals 1-9, all reflecting the work of this committee stating members are receptive to feedback from the Board.

Mr. Hazzard observed that financial goals within a strategic plan are a bit unusual as typically plans highlight what an organization is attempting to do, not necessarily how the organization attempts to pay for it. However, with the governance of this school being cooperative, collaborative and regional in nature, this was an opportunity to describe some of those things within this plan. The three objectives between goals 8 and 9 begin to approximate outcomes by looking at the three funding sources available, but the committee

didn't get as far [*with financial goals*] in determining initiatives and outcome measures, the reason being that it is the Regional School Board's responsibility to describe outcomes.

Dr. Lane remarked, "It is important to advocate for improvement in funding at the General Assembly, but that sounds like a strategy, or what is being called in this plan as an initiative more than a goal." He added, "Advocacy should be wrapped into the strategic plan under goal 8 if the Board was going to have financial goals at all. The issue of strategic plan financial goals was discussed at the Superintendent's Steering Committee meeting and the superintendents would prefer the plan address specific issues (example: more counselors are needed), not that the school may need more funding that may lead to these things."

Notes from the Strategic Plan Town Hall on March 24, 2015 were provided to the Regional Board as captured by Wendy DeGroat, MLWGS Librarian and will be retained within the April packet record.

Unless changes are directed, approval will be requested at the May 2015 meeting of the Regional School Board.

d. 2015-2016 School Operating Calendar

The proposed calendar was developed through collaboration with participating divisions and community input.

Approval will be requested at the May 2015 meeting of the Regional School Board.

XIII. Information Items

Finance Committee Minutes April 2, 2015. Contained within was a suggestion for consideration that should FY15 fund balance be sufficient, thought be given to using said balance for the planned lease-purchase of a new activity bus.

Student News:

2015 PTA Reflections Winners
MLWGS Regional Economics Champions 2015
2015 Scholastic Writing Winners

Alumni News:

(4) MLWGS Alum are Awarded the Goldwater Scholarship at W&M

XIV. Superintendent's Steering Committee Report

Reported by Dr. Lane, items discussed in the Superintendent's Steering Committee meeting have been addressed throughout the Board meeting. Additionally, the group discussed the amended cell phone policy authorizing Dr. McGee to do what he thought best between school purchase of equipment or monthly flat fee reimbursement. Lastly, the committee briefly discussed the matter to be covered in closed session.

XV. Closed Meeting

The Chairman directed the Clerk to announce items for closed session:

It is my understanding that the School Board desires to enter into a Closed Session in accordance with Sections (§) 2.2-3711 and/or 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and specifically under the following enumerated subsection (7), the following items:

Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the Regional School Board; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the Regional School Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. For purposes of this subsection, "probable litigation" means litigation which has been specifically threatened or on which the Regional School Board or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. The closure of a meeting is not permitted merely because an attorney representing the Regional School Board is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved moving into closed session. The recorder was paused and the door closed.

At the conclusion of closed session, the Clerk was invited back and asked to record a motion to reconvene in open session.

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Valarie Ayers, the Board unanimously approved moving into open session.

XVI. Certification of Closed Meeting

The Chairman directed the Clerk to certify the closed session:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Regional School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i-one) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements, and (ii-two) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting. Any member of the Regional School Board or committee who believes that there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place.

The Chairman asked if there were any statements or concerns from Board members. Being none, a motion was requested for closed session certification.

On motion by Barbara Crawley, seconded by Linda Hyslop, the Board approved closed session certification.

Roll Call Vote on Closed Meeting Certification:

Barbara Crawley	Aye
Dianne Smith	Aye
Kevin Hazzard	Aye
John Axselle	Aye
Michelle Ogburn	Aye
Linda Hyslop	Aye
Cora Armstrong	Absent
Sarah Barber	Aye
Kenneth Pritchett	Aye
Valarie Ayers	Aye
Jerry Warren	Absent
Jeffrey Bourne	Absent

XVII. Announcements/Additional Discussion

Congratulations Powhatan, recipient of AP recognition for participation.

XVIII. Adjournment

On motion by Valarie Ayers, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Next Meeting

May 21, 2015 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 153,
Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

W. Kevin Hazzard, Chairman

Jeffrey McGee, Ph.D, Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk