

MINUTES

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

Thursday, December 17, 2009

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Ivan Mattox, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order.

II. Introductions and Recognition

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
Mr. Ivan Mattox, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools
Mrs. Anne Gladstone, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools
Mrs. Lisa Marshall, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools
Mrs. Gwynn Litchfield, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools
Mrs. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mrs. Connie Foreman, **Gifted Coordinator** for Dr. Linda Underwood, Superintendent,
Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
Mr. Fred S. Morton IV, **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:

Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Richard Layman, **Superintendent**, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. James Victory, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Logan Ferrell – MLWGS Student, Lynne Carruth – MLWGS Parent, Phil Tharp, Pat Taylor and Patti Chappell – MLWGS Administration, Joan Yates – PTSA President, Bill Yates – MLWGS Parent, Becky Alexander – Hanover Gifted Coordinator, Mike Geiger – Admissions Coordinator, Rodney Fout – Richmond Gifted Coordinator, Judy Williams – Henrico Gifted Coordinator, Cathy Glenn – Chesterfield Gifted Coordinator, Sheila Rolf – Prince George Gifted Coordinator, Hal Waller – MLWGS Faculty & GS Foundation, Cliff Broeniman – MLWGS Faculty, Paul Fleischer – Richmond Peace Education Center, Angela Dews – Richmond Education Association, Inaudible, and Sharon Parker – MLWGS Faculty.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, the amended agenda including a personnel item as provided at table was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Mrs. Gwynn Litchfield, seconded by Mrs. Teresa Lindsay, minutes for the November 5, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.

V. Public Comments

None

VI. Director's Report

Faculty and Student Recognitions

Mrs. Lisa Williams (English)

Mrs. Williams was recognized as a 2009 R.E.B. Winner for Teaching Excellence. Her name will be etched into an R.E.B. Winners Plaque which resides in the main office of Maggie Walker.

The focus of Mrs. Williams' study is to look at the experience of the African American. Mrs. Williams explained that her grant will allow her to travel to Ghana this coming summer for a 2-week writing intensive workshop. During that time she will visit the remains of slave castles and learn about their history. The following summer she will travel to the Midwest to trace part of the great migration.

Mrs. Williams was congratulated by the Board for her work and accomplishment.

Dr. Janet Spencer (English) and Mrs. Lynn Foshee Reed (Mathematics)

Dr. Spencer and Mrs. Reed were recognized as 2009 National Board Certified Teachers. Mr. Morton acknowledged services provided to these teachers by VCU which assisted them in their extensive certification process.

Each teacher was presented with an award of appreciation and congratulated for this significant accomplishment.

Mr. Quincy Waller (Social Studies)

Mr. Waller was recognized for his service and commitment to young people serving as a defensive coach for the 2009 State Football Championship Team from Thomas Dale High School. In addition to coaching at TDHS, Mr. Waller is an assistant coach for the Midlothian Middle School track team.

Mr. Waller stated that it is important to him to be able to give back to the community he grew up in, and to help develop young men into adults.

Mr. Morton noted that Mr. Waller, in addition to being an outstanding teacher, has great organizational skills and his students are always challenged academically. Mr. Morton shared a statement from Mr. Waller that read “My official title is the Defensive Back and Receiving Coach, but actually I spend most of my time mentoring and developing positive young men.”

Mr. Waller was congratulated by the Board for his work.

Students Recognized for Community Service

One student from each of the participating divisions was recognized for their contribution to community service and asked to report where the majority of their hours had been earned:

Jeanette Carter, Senior, Charles City County Schools: Math & Science Innovation Center and the MLWGS Peer Mentors Program

Emily Ko, Junior, Chesterfield County Schools: Caritas

Daisha Stone, Senior, Goochland County Schools: Lewis Ginter Children’s Garden

Adam Bivens, Senior, Hanover County Schools: Math & Science Innovation Center

Tong Sun, Senior, Henrico County Schools: Doctor’s Assistant at MCV and a Gallery Interpreter at the Science Museum of Virginia

Amanda Perez, Sophomore, King & Queen County Schools: Science Museum of Virginia and 4H Camp

Andrew Dydak, Senior, New Kent County Schools: Costume Interpreter on the Ships at James Town

Alicia Moore, Senior, Petersburg City Schools: Math & Science Innovation Center

Anthony Hennig, Junior, Powhatan County Schools: Math & Science Innovation Center

Brooke Andrews, Junior, Prince George County Schools: Prince George Elementary School

Samantha Halle, Senior, Richmond City Schools: Has earned over 1,000 hours, many earned at Comfort Zone Bereavement Camp and as a MLWGS Ambassador

Renison Tisdale III, Sophomore, West Point Public Schools: MLWGS Landscaping

Mr. Morton stated that Maggie Walker is a place of extraordinary academic expertise, but it is also deeply connected to the community. He thanked Mrs. Pat Taylor for conceiving the idea of recognizing these students before the Board today. These young people represent

all of the characteristics of the season; promise, joy, and the human spirit. These students were congratulated by the Board for their contributions.

Students Recognized for Athletic Accomplishments:

The following students earned top honors as All American Cross Country Runners:

Clarissa Schick, Senior, Richmond City Schools: 3rd Place

Carolina Newcomb, Senior, Chesterfield County Schools – 19th Place

Marc Breidenbaugh, Junior, Hanover County Schools – 19th Place

Coach Jim Holdren explained that qualifying as an All American means an athlete must place in the top 25 in the National Championship, held in Reno, Nevada (in 16” of snow). Clarissa finished the regular season by winning two invitational meets, broke three course records, and earned placement on All District, All Region, and the All State Teams.

The following student earned Maggie Walker’s first All State Team Member for Field Hockey:

Cassie Turnage, Junior, Hanover County Schools

Coach Paige Hawkins noted that Cassie also placed on the 1st Team All District and 1st Team All Region, as well as being named the District Player of the Year.

These students and coaches were congratulated by the Board for their achievements.

Mr. Morton concluded recognitions noting that two teachers listed on the rationale sheet were not in attendance for this meeting, but will be brought in at the January meeting for an overview of their recent trip to China - Mrs. Barrett Brown – Foreign Language Department Chair, and Mr. Jeff Hall – Fine Arts Department Chair. Their experience was provided by the Hanban and College Board, with work by the National Superintendent’s Organization and the GS Foundation, who generously covered the registration fee. Mr. Morton stated that his hope would be that MLWGS continue to provide similar opportunities at least every four years to every staff member with the help of outside support.

UVA Study Recommendations

Mr. Morton asked the Board to refer to the full written recommendations provided in their December packet on pages 19-23; the Planning Committee and the Maggie Walker Administration’s response to the UVA study. He then distributed, to everyone in attendance, copies of a PowerPoint presentation, which is a synopsis of the overview of the Recommendations Report. Both documents will be posted to the school website upon completion of this meeting.

Mr. Morton asked members of the Planning Committee in attendance to rise and thanked them for the weeks of work they collectively contributed over the past months.

Key points of the overview are as follows:

- The study gave Maggie Walker an opportunity to look at strengths and opportunities for growth.

- The study has offered an opportunity to look at better means of communication strategies to help people understand about Maggie Walker.
- The ability to use constructive feedback for growth is the hallmark of any organization that looks to get better over time.
- Standards and quality are part of our success at Maggie Walker and should continue, and should be perceived as a helping hand used to lift people up.

Mr. Morton reviewed the process noting key dates (slide 3).

On December 3, 2009, Maggie Walker held a Public Forum hosting an estimated 80 people with approximately 20 speakers. Included in the Board packet, on pages 25-34, is the verbatim transcription by Megan Marcinkevich of those speakers. Also, pages 35-53 contain written comments by those wishing to contribute. The Board is being given the opportunity to see everyone's ideas with nothing being screened out or changed.

The report submitted before the Board was finalized on December 8th, (slide 4) after both the Public Forum and further review by the Maggie Walker faculty department chairs and the Planning Committee. Mr. Morton noted that at the Public Forum there was a range of participants; i.e. students, community members not connected to Maggie Walker, faculty and parents, which allowed for a wide range of people with a diversity of perspectives.

The structure (Slide 5) of the UVA study focus was recruitment, identification, and retention. The Planning Committee's work and recommendations looked at each area of the UVA study and focused on 4 areas:

- Commitment statements
- Commendations (Due to the length of the study the Planning Committee tried to identify key bullet items for each of these areas, which makes this a good reference tool for Board members and Superintendent Steering Committee members.)
- Identification of current efforts already reflected in the UVA study. (Please note that work had already begun on recruitment issues prior to the study, but decisions were held off pending the UVA study.)
- Recommendations for future plans.

Recruitment

The Planning Committee did not put in commitments for each of the commendations as it would make for too lengthy of a presentation (slide 6). There exists some redundancy between recommendations and commitments, but the detail is there for the Board's review. The three commendations (page 20 of the December Board packet) are printed in italics because that is the language used in the report and reflects extensive work on a process that is easy to understand.

With the support of the Superintendent's, Maggie Walker was able to expand recruiting efforts, allowing our personnel to visit 9 additional sites this year (slide 7). Initial

application information is beginning to come in and it indicates that the total number of applicants has increased by slightly less than 200 students. Mr. Morton stated that he believes this increase has happened because of the efforts of the Planning Committee, with the support of the Superintendents, in getting the message out.

As the Maggie Walker Administration interacted with the Planning Committee/Gifted Specialists, there was discussion concerning some of the programs in the divisions designed to nurture high academic potential at an early age. In the report there is a set of sub-text under future recruitment (page 20 of the December Board packet), but it was felt that the real strength of what is happening is in grades K-5 (slide 8). There are families that really know how to work with the system to enable their children to have multiple opportunities. However, there are also students who have the potential but their parental, familial, and community support is not there. The main question is how to begin expanding opportunities to children that are able. This is obviously deep, complex work, which has to happen in the locality, but Maggie Walker is willing to do whatever it can to help inform people of the possibilities.

Mr. Morton stated that while good efforts were made this fall, it is important to broaden recruiting practices across the region. One tool under discussion involves developing media presentations that can be used in a DVD format, utilizing students and parents, talking about what one would need to do to prepare and be ready for a gifted program from each of the divisions, which could then be spread across the community.

One of the students who spoke at the Public Forum had an interesting concern that if not handled correctly, academic pressure could be put upon the student at a much younger age. While that perspective is appreciated, for students that can handle it, ways should be found to create that opportunity for them.

Mr. Morton commented that, as the Board is fully aware, many of the students who come to Maggie Walker have been identified and are in Gifted and Talented Programs, but that does not apply to all students. The question is what can be done to provide academic opportunity for those students to enhance their potential.

Discussion also occurred about methods of getting information out and visible to the younger student; not just about Maggie Walker, but for individual programs, especially when decisions about what courses to take will have an impact 3-4 years down the line.

There is a lot of information in this report; the Board needs to have ample time to read it. The target is to come back to the Board in January for approval. After approval, action plans will be developed for implementation with the Board's direction.

Identification

The identification process (slide 9) has incorporated multiple data sources using multiple measures.

The Planning Committee has initiated a program for systemic evaluation of writing samples. It would be fair to say that the writing sample is the one performance component used, therefore the Planning Committee recognized the need for using a rubric to score these samples and training has already begun.

It is the recommendation to this Board (slide 10), given the movement in the state to have the majority of middle school students complete Algebra I by the end of 8th grade, that Algebra I remain a requirement.

While Maggie Walker is a school for government and international studies, this does not mean less value is placed on other disciplines such as math or science. In each of our departments there are clear and deep connections that can be made with issues of government and issues of international connections.

Some of the most powerful recommendations from the UVA study centered around standardized testing. Given the level of technical data included, one would probably need to be a testing expert to fully understand it at a deep level, but it is well documented, so changes are being made to the assessment tools this spring.

One thing that the UVA study identified was that there are some parents who have gotten access to the assessment tools and have prepped their child to take the test. Mr. Morton stated that he has had parents contact him wanting to know what the exact assessments are going to be so they can make arrangements for their kids to be prepared. As it turns out, the Naglieri, which is one of the tools used, is actually available on the open market.

Mr. Morton shared work done by Tom Tokarz, attorney for Henrico County, who spent time looking at code concerning testing availability and FOIA, and indeed testing measures are something that can be protected. There are multiple versions of tests and they can be rotated. The Planning Committee and the Administration agree this is something that absolutely should be done.

Future identification (slide 11) will entail working together to expand efforts to increase enrollment of students from underserved populations in Algebra 1 by Grade 8. Mr. Morton stated that the Superintendent's are already aware of this important issue and have been working on it. There needs to be a thoughtful review and research of the current recommendation form for evidence of validity and there also needs to be an analysis of distribution weights for each individual category to ensure balance. Currently, 50% of the decision is based on the Saturday assessment taken. As this is a matter for additional study, there was not enough time to impact this year. There should also be an identification of other types of assessments. This too, will be a lengthy process. It is also important to ensure that all writing evaluators complete the VDOE web-based writing training.

Retention

(Slide 12) Although, invariably, Maggie Walker loses a small number of students each year who go back to their home school division for a variety of reasons, as the UVA study noted,

retention for all students is not a prevailing problem. Maggie Walker is employing strategies for student retention that are reflective of best practices.

Compared to other competitive, rigorous high schools, the racial/ethnic diversity of Maggie Walker is higher than the national sample (7.3% versus 4.8%).

Current efforts (slide 13) include a range of mentoring programs that have gotten stronger each year. The counseling department and a group of teachers provide a program for incoming students from diverse backgrounds. Maggie Walker hosts a 9th Grade transition program that involves 2 days over the summer and has also implemented a studies skills course, which students indicated they would like more of. MLWGS also supports student neighborhood programs that support student learning and further community connections. One of those connections is with the Maggie Walker House; expanding community service work and student learning about the world around us.

Future efforts (slide 14) will focus on creating a formal structure for data tracking of students as they come in, students that choose to leave, and identify tools that can help us.

Develop a process of how the records get to Maggie Walker. One of the challenges that the divisions, as well as Maggie Walker, face is from students coming in from non-public school entities. Once they are admitted they are a public school student, but the Records Act obviously becomes important and we'll need to find a system to help this work smoothly.

Expanding support for multicultural mentoring in a number of different ways; not just based on ethnicity, but also on issues of poverty.

Consider summer expansion of mentoring efforts. This one will be particularly difficult given the budget times for its financial implications.

Lastly, provide additional staff development in differentiating instruction for students with diverse backgrounds, skills, and learning styles. Mr. Morton commended Mrs. Pat Taylor for her strong work organizing unique ways to present deep content as well as pedagogy staff development, but we will look to expand on her efforts.

Next Steps

The Recommendation Report will be presented to the Regional School Board in January asking for approval. Upon your approval the Maggie Walker Planning Committee and Administration will begin to develop action plans.

This concluded Mr. Morton's presentation.

Mr. Mattox opened the table for questions or comments. No questions or comments were made.

Mr. Mattox thanked the Planning Committee and the Administrative team for their extensive work analyzing the UVA study and the recommendations submitted to this Board.

Mr. Morton's PowerPoint presentation to the Regional School Board will be retained as a permanent part of this meeting record.

Personnel

Dickson Benesh, Mathematics Teacher, will be returning to employment for the academic year 2010/2011. Mr. Benesh has been on a 2 year sabbatical teaching in Malaysia. This Board approved his leave request on January 17, 2008 (first year) and January 15, 2009 (second year).

Coming Events

The full list of activities is on page 60 of the December Board packet. Mr. Morton highlighted the Winter Concert Assembly to be held on December 18th and acknowledged that the Music Director, Mr. Karl von Klein, has challenged his students with a piece of 18th century French music that was probably one of the most difficult pieces he had ever heard a high school band perform. Mr. Morton invited all that could to attend the concert.

Comments

None

VII. Action Agenda Items

a. Personnel (added on Amended Agenda)

The retirement request of Mrs. Pat Taylor, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction.

Mr. Morton expressed his gratitude to Pat Taylor for her decision to continue employment through this academic year. However, Mrs. Taylor has given the Board her letter indicating that she is going to retire. As stated before, this school would have been a much different place without the work she has done, and she should be recognized, in partnership with Phil Tharp, who together are known as the godmother and godfather of Maggie Walker. There will be opportunities over the course of the spring to celebrate the great work she has done. Mr. Morton shared that during discussions with Pat's husband Dean, we believe because she loves Maggie Walker so much, she may put in more time volunteering than she does right now working. We want to initially recognize, with great heartfelt thanks, the work that she has done, but there is work she is still going to do that will help Maggie Walker be an extraordinary place.

Mrs. Taylor thanked the Board for the last nineteen years. She stated that she has tried "as an educator and a leader in education, to put in the extra time to join together the metropolitan area to meet the needs of very special students. The commitment for me

comes from my oldest daughter who was in school in the 70's when there was no opportunity for a gifted child and the outcome was very different. What you have done here is not duplicated in any way across the nation. You've given us the opportunity to work with unbelievable children. I hear parents when they come in to speak to me say 'my child is popular;' because here they do grow and they blossom. So I thank you. There are visionaries who are still in this room who imagined this school in 1989 and 1990, and I thank you also."

"To Fred, Phil, and Patti, I had hoped to make 20 years, but that is not going to happen. They have been beside me this year and helped when my health had not been what I had hoped this fall, and they made this year possible and I owe you my undying thanks."

Mrs. Taylor received a standing ovation from the Board.

On motion by Ms. Kimberly Gray, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved the retirement request of Mrs. Pat Taylor effective 4:00pm, June 30 2010.

VIII. Materials for Board Review

- a. Mr. Morton asked the Board to refer to page 63 in their December packet for review relating to the annual reorganizational meeting and elections. The Board will vote at the January meeting for a chairman, vice-chairman, clerk, and deputy clerk.
- b. A proposed calendar of meetings is submitted on page 65 of the December packet. Mr. Morton noted that an effort had been made to build this calendar to avoid date conflicts. He noted three possible dates that the Board may want to consider changing:
 - **February 18th** is the VSBA Legislative Conference, but typically this starts mid-day.
 - **June 17th** is graduation week and may be one the Board would want to consider adjusting based on what division graduations schedules look like.
 - **August 19th** is the VSBA Hot Topics Conference.

The Board will vote on calendar approval at the January meeting.

Dr. Newsome shared a date announcement relating to professional development. The Region 1 Superintendent's established a Region 1 Consortium, pooling resources to bring in top presenters from around the country. The next scheduled session is January 20th at the Jepson Alumni Center at the University of Richmond from 6:00pm-9:00pm, on Attributes of the Digital Learner with Ian Jukes, Director of the InfoSavvy Group. All Superintendents, School Board Members, and Administrators are invited.

Mrs. Dudley Olsson left the meeting at this point.

IX. Informational Items

Finance Committee Minutes from 10-30-2009

Planning Committee Minutes from September 15, October 13 and November 10, 2009

MLWGS News Items:

Robotics Team – First Lego League Tournament

MLWGS Civics Society & Peer Mentors Reader’s Day at Highland Springs

Regional Cross Country Championships

Visiting North Carolina Poet and Poet Laureate Nominee

MLWGS Civics Society Beautifies Maggie Walker Gravesite

Great Grandson of Maggie Walker Visits School

X. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Meeting

None

XI. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

XIV. Next Meeting

January 21, 2010 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Ivan Mattox, Chairman

Fred S. Morton IV, Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk