

MINUTES

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

Thursday, February 18, 2010

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Dianne Pettitt, 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 Pettitt, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mr. John Axselle, *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
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. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. James Victory, **Superintendent**, Petersburg 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:

Mr. Ivan Mattox, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Richard Layman, **Superintendent**, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

Also present:

Karen Hoover, Phil Tharp, Pat Taylor, Cliff Broeniman and Sharon Parker, all MLWGS, Joan Yates – PTSA President, Hall Waller - GS Foundation, Angela Dews – REA, Vicki Tito – Parent, Rob Churchman & Associate – KPMG.

III. Amended Agenda Approval

Fred Morton requested an agenda change to incorporate an action item for easement usage requested by the City of Richmond. On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, an amended agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the minutes for January 21, 2010 were unanimously approved with the following change:

Page 11, last paragraph, the word **weight** (2 places) will be changed to **wait**.

V. Recognitions

Dr. John Barnes presented members of the National Outstanding Math Modeling Team: Susan Ballentine (Chesterfield), Will Farmer (Chesterfield), Ashish Makadia (Chesterfield) and Eric Tyler (Chesterfield). This team was one of 8, out of 277 teams in the world (top 3%) to be awarded this designation. This is the 15th time over the years that Maggie Walker had a team finish as National Outstanding, more than any other high school in the world. The contest consisted of 36 hours of mathematical modeling sponsored by the Consortium for Mathematics and Its Applications (COMAP). The team addressed the problem of predicting the devastation caused by tsunamis in various international cities.

Maggie Walker also had two teams qualify as Regional Outstanding (top 8%) in the competition and their members are: Cody Talmadge (Chesterfield), Matthew Nguyen (Henrico), Laura Goodfellow (Henrico), Erica Cousins (Henrico), Matthew Gill (Richmond), Emily Qiu (Goochland), Adam Bivens (Hanover) and Cameron Napps (Chesterfield).

Board members interested in obtaining a copy of the team's winning math modeling paper may contact Mr. Morton.

The Board, led by Mr. Morton, acknowledged the commitment and leadership that Dr. Barnes has brought to Maggie Walker.

Introduction and welcome for Uruguay Teacher Ana Maria Szephegyi Striegl by International Language Department Teacher Donna Bennington. Ms. Szephegyi spent the last two weeks at Maggie Walker through a teacher exchange program provided by the Department of State, along with The American Councils (formerly known as Fulbright).

Ms. Striegl presented the Board/school with a plaque and native Uruguayan clock as a token of appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Walker program.

VI. Public Comments

None

VII. Director's Report

Mr. Morton updated the Board on the following matters:

- Prospective student testing had to be rescheduled for February 13th and 20th due to weather closings. February 13th testing has been completed and the remaining divisions will finish on the 20th, with several make-up testing dates scheduled. Testing postponements will delay mailing of acceptance letters as well as all Planning Committee meetings, reviews, and activities. Mr. Morton will provide the Board with an updated Planning Committee schedule via email.
- The annual Asian Assembly was conducted yesterday with extraordinary student performances.
- Coming Events are included in this packet on pages 21 and 22.
- The State German Convention will be hosted by Maggie Walker on February 26th and 27th and all Board members are invited to attend.

VIII. Action Items

a. Audit Reports FY04, FY05, FY06, FY07 and FY08

Mr. Morton referenced the above fiscal audit reports submitted to this Board for review in January. He noted these reports are the result of several weeks of work by Mr. Churchman's team. Included in this packet is an Executive Summary and PowerPoint report. Mr. Morton thanked Mrs. Pettitt for requesting this synopsis as it gives a good overview of the audits.

Mr. Rob Churchman of KPMG addressed the Board. He stated, "The Executive Summary before you is a 4 page snapshot of the audits performed under standard auditing principles required. Each financial statement is qualified, meaning they are clean, which is what you want. As you will also see from the Executive Summary, I have provided a snapshot of where fund balance ended, along with where budget verses actual for revenue expenditures ended at the close of the year. For the most part the years are pretty straight forward. As you know from your budget deliberations, Maggie Walker has been under spending expenditures for many years because of the contingency line, for example. Maggie Walker revenues have been coming in as budgeted. I have included two performance improvement observations listed on page 28 of your packet, and they are based on items I suggest would enhance operations and I have discussed these actions with management."

Mr. Morton concurred with Mr. Churchman's recommendations and believes they will improve the quality of work at Maggie Walker.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mr. Churchman for his presentation and summary. Mr. Churchman noted that each statement contains a lot of "boiler plate" that is required by the industry, but the key statements are C and G for balance sheet and budget actuals. He stated that in the Board's own jurisdictions there is often a management discussion analysis section in front of the financials (Executive Summary) which are intended to be friendlier verbiage-wise to the lay person and to provide a short history of the year.

There being no further questions or discussion, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Kimberly Gray, audits for FY04, FY05, FY06, FY07, and FY08, as provided by KPMG, were unanimously approved.

b. City of Richmond's 10' Encroachment Request to Retrofit Curb and Handicap Ramp Item Added to Agenda at Beginning of Meeting

Phil Tharp reviewed a request received from the City of Richmond Department of Transportation, to retrofit the ramp located at the intersection of Lombardy and Leigh Streets to meet ADA compliance. The request is in response to a safety concern at this intersection where the school buses exiting Maggie L. Walker Governor's School run over the sidewalk corner when trying to complete the southbound right movement from Lombardy to Leigh Streets. This project would have no major impact on Maggie Walker utilities and MLWGS recommends approval so the City may move forward with this project.

There being no further questions or discussion, on motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the encroachment request for the corner of Lombardy and Leigh Streets, as requested by the City of Richmond in their correspondence dated February 17, 2010 to this Board, was unanimously approved.

IX. Materials for Board Review

a. FY2011 Proposed Operating Budget

Mr. Morton began the initial presentation of the FY11 operating budget (included in your packet on pages 34-38) by distributing copies of a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Phil Tharp and himself, which is a summary of the major line items in the proposed budget.

Included on the revenue side:

- Fund Balance carryover of \$185,000
- 6% tuition decrease to school divisions; with the only exception being a few divisions that pay an additional fee for participation as they were not part of the original Maggie Walker start-up
- Loss of Technology Initiative
- Reduction in State funding

The total loss in revenue is calculated for \$425,449.

Mrs. Marshall asked for clarification concerning the 6% tuition decrease and whether or not it applies to all participating divisions. Mr. Morton confirmed that it does.

Initial actions to balance the budget include:

- Personnel Salary Scale remains the same as FY10
- Facility contracts reduced and handled in-house
- Professional Service areas reduced
- Equipment maintenance savings
- Textbooks are deferred
- Technology reductions and deferments
- Athletic uniforms

Mr. Morton stated that the goal in preparing this budget was to protect the classroom; however, one action that would impact the classroom is textbook deferment, but during leadership discussions most felt fairly comfortable with this action, also understanding that it may last for a couple of years. Pat Taylor is currently working through a textbook adoption process that is built into this year's budget and Mr. Morton has informed the staff that MLWGS may possibly look to those dollars to pre-buy a one-time cost reduction for next year to help with any additional cuts MLWGS may need to make.

In Technology, there remains a refurbishing of staff laptops, as the equipment is four years old and wearing out, plus a Science Laptop Lab; these are recurring costs. Refurbishment of other computer labs is deferred.

Fund Balance for Maggie Walker is different than other school districts because MLWGS does not have a Capital Improvement Fund, but in essence this line item has served as one. The goal is to complete the budget process this spring and then begin the work to have a Capital Improvement Fund. Currently there is \$1.1 million in Fund Balance.

Encumbrances from FY09 are debts that were incurred in that year but will need to be paid in FY10. Payments will be taken from Fund Balance. As indicated, the plan is to use \$185,000 to insure a balanced budget for FY11.

Restricted Liabilities in the districts would typically be covered in roll-over where there are more veteran staff retiring and newer people coming in, MLWGS doesn't really have that. These liabilities are payout to veteran staff when they decide to retire and there has to be dollars built in or it would be devastating to the budget.

Mr. Morton also stated that, "Under Capital Budget Items we are initially looking at two areas estimated at approximately \$500,000 in major repair and/or replacement and we've worked with Richmond to establish codes for this. Two issues that I'm seeing right now are 1) leaks in the roof and 2) HVAC units. A roof replacement could be anywhere between \$500,000 and \$600,000. The HVAC system, which was good when put in, are now

10 years old. One unit failed over the winter break and in order to be repaired, Trane had to manufacture a new part as they are no longer making this equipment. We believe these expenses exist. However, any reserve at the end of the year will be pushed into the Fund Balance to insure we are protecting the facility as best we can, factoring in that Maggie Walker does not have the ability to bond, and coming back to you for additional help would be very difficult. At this time we are **estimating** approximately \$300,000 in savings at the end of this year, but this is not a guaranteed amount. We could also possibly look to use any savings to pre-buy items out of next year's budget. I want to be very clear with you because this is different than what you have seen in the past; people knew we had the reserve, but we wanted to lay it out this way. We've also worked with Richmond to ensure that this money is protected for capital improvements."

Mr. Morton concluded his presentation and requested that Board members review their packet for details of this proposal. He stated that MLWGS is not asking for approval today, but we are hopeful for action at the March meeting. Mr. Morton will continue to work closely with the Superintendents in this process.

Mrs. Pettitt commented that she felt that it was wise to plan a capital improvement reserve given the age of this building.

Mrs. Ayers asked for clarification on salary scales. Mr. Morton verified that salary scales were not increased last year and will remain completely frozen, along with benefits in this proposal, which makes this the second consecutive year. What MLWGS has been able to do in this proposal is to protect people and the current benefits. However, we will be looking at other options if there is another round of cuts.

Mrs. Olsson questioned what Maggie Walker is proposing as far as benefits, due to rising costs in that area. Mr. Morton replied that MLWGS is budgeting for a 14% increase in this proposal, but will not know the actual increase until renewal rates are issued mid-summer. In reality, MLWGS is so small that if the staff picks up half of that increase it would only amount to \$5,000 and in reality we need to find bigger pieces.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mr. Morton for the work he and his team have done.

Mr. Morton extended his appreciation to the Superintendent's who have been extraordinary to work with. He also encouraged citizens to become active in the political process on behalf of the system and quality of K-12 education across the state.

b. Draft Audit Report for FY09

Board members were provided a draft audit report for FY09 from KPMG with their packet. Mr. Churchman was asked to provide an Executive Summary and to be in attendance at the March meeting to answer any questions the Board may have prior to seeking approval of this audit.

X. Informational Items Provided

MLWGS News Items:

Senior Mentorship Spotlight on Natalie Wong

MLWGS Alumni Address Peer Mentors

Thank You to MLWGS Community from Danny Yates/Haiti Crisis

Mr. Morton called the Board's attention to page 44 of their packet to view a letter from Danny Yates, MLWGS Class of 2009, who was in Haiti when the earthquake struck.

Mr. Morton commented on an item that is not in the Board packet but connects with community service. He stated that he has recently met with twenty-two senior students who are short on community service hours. Mr. Morton thought it would be appropriate to share that he will be taking a stronger stance on the issue of community service because it is a graduation requirement at Maggie Walker as well as a core part of the mission of the school. MLWGS is currently putting information together and will be working with the Planning Committee first, then coming to the Superintendent's and the Board, to revitalize this requirement. If students are choosing not to fulfill this commitment, the districts have ample students on their waiting lists who would love to be at Maggie Walker and would complete the community service.

Mrs. Pettitt inquired about the monitoring process for community service hours. Mr. Morton replied that it is set up in four segments, one for each academic year. Maggie Walker recently revised its report card to include this information, as well as the annual Intent to Re-Enroll form with a language change that represents the students' full understanding of what the community service commitment is.

Mrs. Marshall inquired about replacements for students leaving Maggie Walker due to an unfulfilled obligation of community service. Mr. Morton responded that regardless of the grade level of the departing student, their replacement would occur with a 9th grade slot.

This concluded Mr. Morton's report.

A final follow-up was made by Mrs. Pettitt, who asked about whether there has been a response to Mr. Fleischer's inquiry last month concerning developing a condensed testing process. Mr. Morton responded that he would be contacting Mr. Fleischer and updating him with our current actions which include building in a break, beyond what was built in before, with our PTSA providing snacks and refreshments during that time, along with additional student monitors to assist with parental interest. Maggie Walker is also using a different set of assessments that are broken up into smaller parts, all of which are being kept secure. While helpful to know, Mrs. Pettitt stated she was actually referring to Mr. Fleischer's idea for streamlining with other specialty centers to reduce repetitious testing. Mr. Morton replied he would not be able to respond at this time to his point for testing consolidation as it is part of the work of the Planning Committee and the individual school districts.

Mr. John Axelle stated that, “The children here are the main concern of this institution and this Board. We have one agenda – what is best for the children. As long as we stay focused on that, we move at our speed for what we think is best for the children.”

Mrs. Pettitt agreed with Mr. Axelle’s statement, but added “this institution owes a response to anyone who addresses this Board with a specific request to say that the Board has heard you, thought about your idea, and this is what the Board is doing. A written response also facilitates this Board to be current and informed.”

XI. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Meeting

None

XII. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XIV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by John Axelle, seconded by Barbara Crawley, with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned.

XV. Next Meeting

March 18, 2010 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman

Fred S. Morton IV, Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk