

MINUTES

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

Thursday, February 24, 2011

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional 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:

Mr. Roy Campbell for Mrs. Barbara Crawley, *School Board*, Charles City Public Schools
Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mr. Ivan Mattox, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools
Mr. John Axelle, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools (arrived before Item III)
Mrs. Lisa Marshall, *School Board*, Henrico County 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 County Public Schools
Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Ms. Sandra Crowder, Coordinator for Gifted Education and Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Mrs. Lorianne Smith, Director of Human Resources & Instruction for Mr. Charles Clare, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Alvera Parrish, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
Ms. Linda Minor, Gifted Education Specialist for Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point 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. Gwynn Litchfield, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools

Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Also present:

Patti Chappell and Wendy Ellis – MLWGS Administration, Lynn Foshee Reed – Faculty Member and Faculty Liaison to the School Board, Du’Neika Easley and Rob Churchman – KPMG, Hal Waller - GS Foundation, Anne Napps – PTSA President, and Karen Hoover – MLWGS Staff.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Roy Campbell, the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Report

Dr. Newsome thanked the Board for adjusting their agenda allowing the Superintendent’s Steering Committee Report to come early in this meeting. He stated the Superintendents had met this morning prior to the Regional School Board to discuss the FY12 budget for Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School. Although budgets for some of the school divisions are still somewhat uncertain, based on an informal survey conducted this morning on division budget expectations, Dr. Newsome stated the majority of our school partners believe they will be able to level fund MLWGS for next year. However, there are still some divisions that will experience severe cuts. Today we recommended that MLWGS move forward with a budget proposal that provides level funding. As more information becomes available we will contact Mr. Morton if adjustments need to be made.

With no questions from the Board, this concluded the Superintendent’s Steering Committee Report. Dr.’s Newsome, Russo, Roberson and Brandon left the meeting to attend other business.

V. Approval of Minutes

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the minutes as submitted for January 20, 2011 were approved with Valarie Ayers, Roy Campbell and Dudley Olsson abstaining.

VI. Recognitions

Students with the highest number of *Community Service* hours by division unable to attend group recognition in January:

Wesley Black, Charles City
Emily Ko, Chesterfield
Allen Qiu, Goochland
Michelle Shuman, Henrico

Khalila Roney, Petersburg (*not in attendance*)

Scheduled for recognition but not in attendance: **Brooke Nancekivell** (Hanover), an honoree from MLWGS for the 44th Annual Brotherhood Sisterhood Youth Award Program sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond for deserving high school students who have shown caring for others and participated in activities that improve human relations.

National Russian Essay Contest Gold Medal Winners: **Reid Deckeback** – *not in attendance* (Chesterfield), **Timothy Earley** – *not in attendance* (Hanover), **Blake Foreman** – *not in attendance* (Chesterfield), **John Ziegler** – *not in attendance* (Henrico) and **Duanpeng ‘Roy’ Ma** (Henrico). Nearly 1,400 high-school students nationwide registered, representing 58 Russian programs.

Virginia Space Grant Consortium Scholars: **Arthur Wu** (Chesterfield), **Michael Zalewski** – *not in attendance* (Powhatan) and **William Thomason** (Chesterfield). During the 2010-2011 school year, these students will participate in the VA Aerospace Science and Technology (VASTS) program and at the end, if successful, request high school credit for his/her work. VASTS is an interactive, one-semester NASA exploration themed online course. Students were accompanied today by Pam Edgerton, Science Department Chair.

Scheduled for recognition but not in attendance: VHSL One Acts Festival Best Actor Winner: **Bradley Zykoski** (Chesterfield).

2011 Scholastic Art Gold Key Winners: **Lucy Dacus** (Hanover) for her American Vision Award plus two other Gold Keys in Art, **Jennifer Hynson** (Hanover) Gold Key for Drawing and **Joseph Martin** (Henrico) with eight Gold Keys in Photography Portfolio. Students were accompanied today by Georgianne Stinnett, Photography Teacher and Jeff Hall, Fine Arts Department Chair.

2011 Scholastic Writing Gold Key Winners: **Aileen Bi** (Henrico) in Short Story, **Niccolo Seligmann** (Richmond) in Poetry, **Grace Gardiner** (Chesterfield) in Senior Writing Portfolio, **Ruth Shuford** (Richmond) in Senior Writing Portfolio and **Elizabeth Ballou** (Richmond) with one award for Poetry and three for Short Story. Students were accompanied today by Denise Yagel, English Department Chair.

2011 National Merit Finalists (by division). With the assistance of Senior Counselors Penny Deck and Susan Eschenroeder, substituting for Rachel Loving, along with the designated division School Board member, certificates from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation were presented to the following students:

Thomas Casalaspi – Chesterfield

Jason Kong – Chesterfield

John Roach – Chesterfield (*not in attendance*)

Brooke Nancekivell – Hanover (*not in attendance*)

Spencer Pigg – Hanover

Andrew Barron – Henrico

Olivia Baumann – Henrico
Baltej Dhillon – Henrico
Leon Hu – Henrico
Marie Kuzemchak – Henrico
Duanpeng ‘Roy’ Ma – Henrico
Joseph Martin – Henrico
Ishani Premaratne – Henrico
Jennifer Straus – Henrico (*not in attendance*)
Claire Williams – Henrico
Heather Rucker – Powhatan
Brooke Andrews – Prince George
Elizabeth Barnett – Richmond
Aya Kellam – Richmond
Laura Merchant – Richmond

We the People, 14th Consecutive Virginia Championship Win: Lead by Mr. Matt McGuire, the team finished first place at the Virginia Championship held February 4th at the U.S. Court of Appeals. The team advances to the national championship held in Washington, D.C. Team members in alphabetical order:

Olivia Baumann – Henrico
Margaret Chambers – Hanover
Charles Condro – Chesterfield (*not in attendance*)
Sarah Davidson – Chesterfield
Molly Dawson – Richmond
Logan Ferrell – Chesterfield
Jason Kong – Chesterfield
Daunpeng Ma – Henrico
Shannon Marwitz – Chesterfield
Laura Merchant – Richmond
Laura Merriman – Richmond
Cole Pearce – Hanover
Ishani Premaratne – Henrico
John Roach – Chesterfield (*not in attendance*)
Kerry Sawyer – Henrico
Carly Spraggins – Henrico
Rosa Waters – Richmond (*not in attendance*)

Mr. Morton addressed a rumor he stated began to circulate school last week that MLWGS was discontinuing the *We the People* program due to finances. A statement was released in Smoke & Scales stating that was not the case, but that Mr. McGuire had requested to take a year off (2012-2013) from the team as his son completes his senior year in high school. 2011-2012 applications have been opened up for juniors and seniors so no class will be denied the opportunity to participate. Mr. Morton noted however, that each year for the last 3-4 years, funding for the Center for Civic Education (the group that provides support at the state and national level for *We the People*) has been put on the chopping block in Washington and advocated for continued support of the Center with our elected officials.

VII. 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.

There were no public comments.

VIII. Director's Report

Middle School Science Day, April 2, 2011: Science Day for middle school students organized and taught by MLWGS Science National Honor Society students.

Black History Program, February 16, 2011: *Back in the Day*, written by faculty member Mrs. Lisa Williams and directed by faculty Ms. Sherri Arnold and Ms. Joy Davis and performed by MLWGS students.

Student Art Show, March 4, 2011: The annual student art show will be on exhibition at MLWGS through the month of March starting on the 4th.

Acceptance of Foundation Check: \$350,000 was received by MLWGS on February 7th from the GS Foundation designated for pavilion construction.

Pavilion Bid Status: The advertisement has been placed and bidding is open for two weeks on the pavilion project with a target completion of mid-September.

New Student Assessments & Evaluation: All assessments were completed on February 16th by 110 evaluators that were supplied by the localities. The Director expressed appreciation for the support and efforts of the Superintendents, Gifted Specialists and visiting faculty making this work possible while giving a sense of balance and fairness to our regional program.

AP On-Line Registration: MLWGS students will register for testing on-line but pay associated fees at MLWGS. We are exploring an option that allows parents/students to both register and pay on-line for next year.

Raptor System: MLWGS has installed a security system for screening personnel and visitors to the Walker building. A parental notification letter sent to MLWGS families is included in this packet.

Budget Planning FY12: The Director anticipates bringing a proposed budget for FY12 for Board review and approval at the March meeting.

Date Reminders: Night of the Dragon Auction on March 5th and 20th Anniversary Events on March 31st and April 1st.

Legislative Issues: The Director offered information on the work of AASA regarding legislative issues and the mechanics of their implementation. The most burdensome issue deals with the intent to submit all student grades K-12 by teacher and course to the state and federal governments. The Board expressed support of Mr. Morton's efforts to speak to members of the congressional delegation and make comments in Washington if necessary.

Dr. Richardson stated that school systems are finding this mandate is attached to one-time money spread out over two years, but the requirement continues indefinitely. He expressed his opinion that this mandate is intrusive and provides data on teachers, students, grades and courses that has the potential to be misappropriated to draw conclusions that may not be valid.

Mr. Axselle asked for explanation as why the state and federal government would want this information. Dr. Richardson stated that while it has not been made clear yet, the presumption is it will be tied to teacher evaluation and merit pay. He stated, tests have two forms of identified usefulness 1) evaluation based on validity and 2) does it address the issue of reliability. Student achievement is not a reliable or valid measure of teacher performance.

Mrs. Pettitt asked what the source of this particular requirement was. Mr. Morton replied it came attached to stimulus funding after the fact and was not in NCLB. He stated there is common agreement in Washington that NCLB is broken, but without reauthorization we continue to add a 5% target each year in Virginia. AASA has taken a strong position that without reauthorization the Secretary, who has the regulatory authority, should stop this mandate where it is now. AASA's position is that reauthorization should go back to the original intent of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act and that money should be clearly targeted to work for students in poverty. If the government wants to apply this level of data analysis, then apply it to the place you are applying the money.

Mrs. Marshall asked if student names were attached to the federal submission and how would this protect student confidentiality. The Director responded that names are connected to student identification numbers.

Lynn Foshee Reed interjected that as the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics representative to the Virginia Education Technology Advisory Committee, they were advised during a recent meeting by VDOE that this requirement was already being processed and rolled out. VCTM is concerned about FOIA requests on this data.

Mrs. Marshall expressed concern that VDOE would conduct teacher performance evaluations that tie to achievement using this data for accountability. The Director shared the following judgment: stipulated in the first page of the original analysis given to the state in 1998 on SOL scores; while reliable, the data was not valid to be used in the way they were using it. Mr. Axselle articulated his unease with this requirement as data can be manipulated and also for this level of bureaucratic oversight.

Dr. Richardson shared a compelling and dramatic story as related by Diane Ravitch at the VSBA Conference referencing the impact this disclosure has on an individual teacher. The LA Times while covering a story on teacher/student performance FOIA'd test scores that focused on one particular teacher, who by all accounts was considered a very talented and capable teacher with 12-15 years experience. This teacher had accepted the challenge of working with some of the lowest performing students in that system. When those test scores were published, that same teacher arranged for a substitute the following day, stayed home and committed suicide. Dr. Richardson stated this story brings home the impact of how this mandate could affect our teachers.

In conclusion, the Director stated we are trying to stop this mandate, first at the federal level then at the state; and while none of these strategies mean we shouldn't be having these conversations, we must focus on the places where the needs of students are so extraordinary and require a higher level of time and resources. Regulatory issues should never be an excuse to lose the focus of what we need to do for those students.

Coming Events - See Page 29.

IX. Action Items

a. Audit Report for FY10:

Board members were provided an Executive Summary and the full report in their March packet. Mr. Rob Churchman of KPMG was available for questions from the Board.

During presentation Mr. Churchman stated the FY10 Audit was performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, MLWGS statements are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and the audit opinion is presented unqualified. There was no change to the statement presentation. The budget actual statement is available on page 26. KPMG is independent of the school system, there were no past audit entries, and we had no disagreements or difficulties doing this audit. The Finance Committee, who was provided an earlier draft copy, had no questions from its review.

There being no questions or comments, on motion by Ivan Mattox, seconded by Kenneth Pritchett, the FY10 Audit Report prepared by KPMG was unanimously approved.

Mr. Churchman and the Director thanked the staff of MLWGS and Richmond Public Schools (fiscal agent) for their cooperative efforts and access allowing efficient completion of this report.

X. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

a. 2011-2012 School Operating Calendar:

A proposed calendar developed by Phil Tharp is presented today on page 32 of the Board packet, coordinated with the twelve school divisions. Mrs. Pettitt discussed a proposed

Chesterfield calendar change that might include nine half days and would questioned if this affect transportation. The Director stated that the districts have worked with MWLGS in the past on the occasion of a half day of operation, but he would discuss this matter further with Dr. Newsome.

b. Naming of Athletic Pavilion:

Requests have been received from both the Athletic Boosters and the GS Foundation (included in this packet) requesting to name the pavilion after Maggie L. Walker Governor's Schools previous Director, N. Douglas Hunt. This item will be brought back for Board action at their March meeting.

The Board discussed the merits of this request and their consensus was they are comfortable with this choice. Mrs. Pettitt requested the pavilion naming suggestion be advertised to the school community and public prior to Board approval.

XI. MLWGS Informational Items:

- Student News:
 - White House Performance by American Harp Ensemble
 - RTD – Walker Team Wins Competition, We the People
- Finance Committee Minutes, November 4, 2010
- Planning Committee Minutes, November 16, 2010

Mrs. Pettitt inquired if these committees had met since November. The last Finance Committee meeting occurred on the day of the rescheduled Regional School Board meeting in January and Mrs. Marshall was unable to attend and take minutes, while the February meeting had only recently occurred. The Planning Committee did not meet in December other than to briefly work on planning for testing.

Mrs. Pettitt then asked if there was a report for the Board on the common assessment(s) conclusion. The Director stated there is no report at this time other than to state that the committee has meet and worked on this issue, common assessments are standard, and there are no changes in the process at this time. In follow-up Mrs. Pettitt inquired about how the division that has altered their assessment weighting would impact the overall process. The Director stated the agreement from the Superintendent's Steering Committee is that the process existing today stands; however, it could be subject to change if there is a change in policy.

Mr. Axelle stated his interpretation of today's discussion is the assessment piece remains the same on a regional basis, while each district still has the independence to select from the pool of students that have meet cut-off criteria . Mrs. Marshall acknowledged that the Henrico Board, while not voting on this issue was polled and their consensus found this approach was reasonable based on the make-up of the county.

Mr. Mattox commented it was important to note that private school and home-school students also utilize the same set of assessments so it is important to follow guidelines as established by this Board.

Finally, the Director described an upcoming peer visiting opportunity each faculty member will participate in this spring.

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 Axselle, seconded by Lisa Marshall, this meeting was adjourned.

XV. Next Meeting

March 17, 2011 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