

MINUTES

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

Thursday, January 6, 2011 (postponed from December 16, 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
Mrs. Anne Gladstone for 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
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg 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 Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mrs. Connie Foreman, Specialist-Gifted Education for Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Jamelle Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Leadership for Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Lorianne Smith, Director of Human Resources & Instruction for Mr. Charles Clare, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. Alvera Parrish, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Mr. Rodney Fout, Coordinator of Programs for the Gifted for 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
Mrs. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools

Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

Also present:

Phil Tharp, Patti Chappell, and Wendy Ellis – Administration, Anne Napps – PTSA President, Hal Waller - GS Foundation, Bill Yates – MLWGS Parent and GS Foundation, Danny Yates – MLWGS Alumni, Barbara Reese – Athletic Boosters, Sarah Dwelle and Lynn Reed – Faculty Liaison to the School Board, Shannon Dowling – BCWH Architects, Cheta Emba and Samantha Marquez– MLWGS Students.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Gwynn Litchfield, seconded by Lisa Marshall, the minutes as submitted for November 11, 2010 were unanimously approved.

V. Recognitions

Student: Cheta Emba, a senior from Henrico, was recognized as the third MLWGS athlete this year to be selected for the weekly Lexus Pursuit of Perfection Leadership Award.

Student: Samantha Marquez, a freshman from Chesterfield, was recognized for her recent participation in a series of scientific research activities in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Harvard University. Samantha was the only high school student to present at this national meeting.

Students: Ben Zavelsky, a junior from Henrico, and **Ryan Johnson**, a senior from Chesterfield, were recognized for earning top honors as Best Delegates in their respective committees at the UVA Model UN Conference.

Students: Members of the Girls Cross Country Team/2nd Place Virginia State Champions were recognized along with Assistant Coaches Deborah Snagg and Ryan Webb. Head Coach Jim Holdren was unable to attend due to illness. Team members include:

Madison Swart (Henrico) – **Captain**, **Anna Spiers** (Chesterfield), **Rachel Galton** (Chesterfield), **Daisy Banta** (Henrico), **Nemo Keller** (Chesterfield), **Jessica Lull** (New Kent), **Lindsay Ardiffe** (Chesterfield), **Caroline Rose** (Richmond). Team Alternates: **Julia Wells** (Prince George), **Elizabeth Napps** (Chesterfield) and **Kelsey Miller** (Chesterfield - not in attendance). Team Manager: **Samantha Mladen** (Henrico).

Students: All-American Honors in Track: Anna Spiers (Chesterfield), Rachel Galton (Chesterfield), and Mark Breidenbaugh (Hanover).

VI. 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.

VII. Director's Report

Constitutional Plaque Dedication Update: This discussion was postponed to a future meeting as representatives of the American Spirit Constitution Foundation were unable to attend today's rescheduled meeting due to calendar conflicts.

General Assembly Capital Day January 18, 2011: The Director acknowledged the efforts of Trish Sigler and Jane Scheibe who worked tirelessly making new connections and coordinating other Governor's Schools to accomplish our joint lobbying effort(s) that include student and parent voices. As Governor's Schools collectively begin to look at budget preparation for FY12, Capital Day will be an important activity; especially because it is known that all Governor's Schools will experience some loss of state funding due to changes in the composite index.

AASA Meeting in Washington, D.C., December 8-10, 2010: Thirty-eight superintendents from across the nation met with Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, and Carmel Martin, Under Secretary. The group strongly expressed their concern about what they believe to be a rather significant increase in adding more complexity rather than less to the work. Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, a.k.a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act, should look at simplification and target dollars where they can make the most sense. Simple things can effect change; leadership, the right attitude, and providing people support and money support as one cannot create the significant changes talked about to challenge schools without people and money support. That's added time and resources.

The Secretary started his conversation by stating, "We are asking you to do more with less", but in reality schools are already doing that and are reaching a point of diminishing returns. Collectively the group communicated this to the Secretary. The superintendents also used this event to advocate for the underserved populations such as gifted education. The Under Secretary commented that the United States is competing with China and India and that India's results are very impressive. Having had the opportunity to visit India himself, the Director asked the Under Secretary if he had ever been to India and his response was that he had not. On follow-up, he was asked if he knew anything about the public schools in India and again his response was, "No, except they are really doing well

and they are out-competing us.” The Director replied that those findings may be because the public schools in India are all actually private schools. Public schools in India that are similar to United States public schools are called ‘government schools.’ When these international assessments are done they are using their public schools which are private schools to gather statistics as opposed to government schools which are public schools. It is disingenuous to the American public not to be honest about the make-up of the applicant pool and where the students are coming from in these comparisons. The most recent one that came out in December is an international comparison citing a group from Singapore. The Singapore community used would be the equivalent of students from Cambridge outside of Harvard and MIT.

The Director stated he is sharing this information with the Regional Board as part of his duty as Director and also as former Superintendent of the Year. The Under Secretary has asked that Mr. Morton follow up with a letter to him, so the Director is talking with staff, parents, and people at FOVGS (Friends of Virginia Governor’s Schools) to gather core ideas of what it means to serve children and where the emphasis should be. Mr. Morton stated that he plans to take a more active role getting information to local representatives of Congress as we deal with these complex issues.

The Director stated, “I have discovered over the years that sometimes even professional educators think the needs of gifted students are being met as long as there is AP programming. I would suggest that while AP programming is wonderful, it is an intellectual approach to the SOL’s with a structured curriculum and a specific test. While good, it is an academic enhancement program not necessarily dealing with the needs of the profoundly gifted student.”

Mrs. Pettitt thanked the Director for his informative report and for speaking up on behalf of public schools. She asked that he share any future correspondence with this Board, as it would be valuable for members as they work with their respective boards and legislators. The Chair stated that her understanding of international comparisons as presented today between other countries and the United States is that other countries are using their top level private school students for the studies. The Director affirmed that was an accurate statement for India’s results, for example, but with European statistics, even the researchers have stated that the results of their studies should not be used as the basis of comparison because of the pool used. In Europe, children make a decision around ages 12-13 of how they are going to continue their education, either taking an academic or vocational route, making their structure of schooling differently designed. Creating an assessment that operates as if international structures are all the same is a problem.

Lisa Marshall recalled information learned from a delegation sent by Henrico County to Korea, which included Fred Morton who was, at that time, serving as Superintendent, as well as Dianna Winston, School Board, and members of the Board of Supervisors, where the party observed that the Korean system is selective of which students they send to high school; making comparisons against Korean students vs. students of other systems inequitable. The Director stated that there are lessons to be learned from countries like Korea and Japan which incorporate practices requiring students to attend class 5 ½ days/week with an hour each day allotted for social interaction, and with most students

attending 2-2/12 hours of after-school education for extra instruction, primarily in english and math, paid for by their parents. 10 hours/day is focused on academics.

Slot Commitment Letters: The Director concluded with a reminder about submitting division slot commitment letters for FY12 budget planning.

Coming Events - See Page 22.

VIII. Action Items

- a. **International Trips:** Board approval is requested for the following - 2011 Summer Service Project in Guatemala and 2011 Summer Program in Russia, both described on page 23 of the Board packet. The Director noted the addition of Item 10 as requested during the November meeting on the revised form shown on page 24 of this packet that mandates health/medical insurance for these trips.

There being no questions or discussion regarding the Guatemala and Russia trip requests; on motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Barbara Crawley, both trips were unanimously approved.

- b. **Athletic Pavilion:** Shannon Dowling of BCWH Architects presented updated building design information to the Board with renderings and construction estimates duplicated on pages 26-29 of the Board packet.

The Director acknowledged the work of Bill Yates and Barbara Reese for their collaborative efforts to accomplish this project.

Mr. Yates addressed the Board and thanked them for their previous approval of the feasibility study for this project last year; also thanking BCWH Architects for their work, Hal Waller for his fund raising efforts, and the entire MLWGS community. Mr. Yates stated that cash on hand and pledges exceeded or met the goal of \$350,000, and believes that amount to be more than sufficient, but that won't be known with certainty until bids are in. The pavilion will meet a need that has been un-met for 10 years while adding to athletics, physical education, and outside events such as fall festival. It is the team's hope to also turn the pavilion into a learning facility allowing monitoring for activities such as solar collection, wind turbine, or rain water collection for science classes. In conclusion, Mr. Yates stated, "By the end of January we will have all of the cash on hand and I'll be ready to have Mr. Tharp take this project off my hands."

Kimberly Gray inquired about the inclusion of LEED certified improvements in the design. Mr. Yates responded that challenges with the physical space, location, plumbing issues, and soft ground, which required extra foundation work, drove the cost up and precluded those types of improvements in the initial phase. Further, the building will not be used like the school is used; people will not be in it all the time, so there was a decision to be made whether or not to make a partially used building extremely efficient and if there would be a cost benefit. Features have been incorporated which do give environmental benefits, teaching benefits, and operational benefits.

Ms. Dowling stated that the design presented incorporates a core shell that takes advantage of natural light while allowing for add-ons, such as solar or wind panels, when additional funding becomes available.

Barbara Reese, Athletic Boosters, also thanked the Board for their support of this project. Mrs. Reese noted the understated look of this proposed facility, which she noted mirrors MLWGS itself. She stated, “A year ago I remember being told we’ll never be able to raise this kind of money in this economy, but here we are with \$350,000 in the bank.”

Mrs. Pettitt thanked today’s speakers for their fundraising success and remarked that it is a testament to the MLWGS community and the appreciation they all have for the education that is offered here.

The Director recognized Hal Waller for his contributions to this successful fundraising effort. Mr. Waller, in brief remarks, stated that it is enjoyable to talk to alumni and parents; they are appreciative of this school and the experience they had here, and are very philanthropic.

Added comments from Mr. Morton: naming the pavilion – the Athletic Boosters collectively contributed approximately \$140,000 into this project and he suggested it would be appropriate for them to submit name suggestions to this Board for approval.

The Director requested approval to put this project out for bid once final funds of \$350,000 (less \$26,000 that have already been transferred to cover initial and soil preparation work), have been procured and those funds have been placed in the proper MLWGS financial account. On motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Kenneth Pritchett, proceeding with the athletic pavilion project upon receipt of full funding was unanimously approved.

IX. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

- a. **January Elections** – As stipulated in the Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Constitution and By-Laws, the Board shall elect from its membership in January a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Board Clerk, and Deputy Clerk.
- b. **Proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2011-2012** – Mr. Morton asked the Board to review proposed dates and potential meeting conflicts as noted on Page 31 and highlighted on Page 32. Mrs. Pettitt requested Board members check with their clerks for other conflicts prior to approval on January 20th.
- c. **20th Anniversary Planning Update** – Mr. Tharp distributed to Board members a 20th Anniversary Calendar of Events brochure and coffee cup imprinted with the 20th anniversary logo designed by a MLWGS student. The school bookstore has a copy of this logo and will be designing promotional materials coming soon. A meeting of this committee is scheduled for next Thursday where they will finalize the alumni showcase on April 1st for invited alumni, former board members, and superintendents; all that were part of the 20 year history of MLWGS.

- d. **Other** - Mr. Morton requested that the Board add the following dates to their calendars: The Night of the Dragon Auction held at the Science Museum on March 5th and the 20th Anniversary event on April 1st which includes an alumni showcase. For the record, no school operational money was used in the design and printing of the anniversary cups supplied today, they are graciously provided by the PTSA and the Governor's School Foundation.

X. MLWGS News Items:

- Richmond Times Dispatch: History Lesson at Maggie Walker, November 29, 2010
- Planning Committee Minutes, October 19, 2010
- School News: Author Rita Mae Brown Visits MLWGS
- Alumni News: Palmer Mebane's (Class of 2008) Team Wins World Puzzle Championship

Mrs. Pettitt noted Planning Committee Minutes provided on pages 36 -37 and inquired if the Board could expect issues brought to their attention in regards to calculation of scores on the entrance exam. The Director deferred this question to Dr. Newsome as part of his report.

XI. Superintendent's Steering Committee Meeting

The Superintendent's Steering Committee met on December 14, 2010 and there are no recommended actions for this Board, but they did discuss in detail the need for clarification of policies as they relate to admission at MLWGS. The committee will seek legal advice as the school moves forward in the development of a policy manual and will keep the Board updated. Still to be discussed is a need for make-up time if there is inclement weather, and the committee will be working with Mr. Morton on that.

On another note, Dr. Newsome described a meeting he attended prior to this Board meeting with the Greenfield Elementary School faculty that recently experienced the loss of a mother and child within that community killed in a fire over the holidays. While the relatives are devastated, the staff and students have done some remarkable things to help this family and he stated, "It makes one proud to be an educator." The relevance of this story to MLWGS is that a Greenfield teacher shared with Dr. Newsome that she had a ninth grader attending MLWGS and she "wanted me to know that for the first time in his academic life he is excited about coming back to school."

XII. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XIV. Adjournment

Gwynn Litchfield provided information concerning an artist that produces pieces of iron dragon sculptures, remarking that he could be a source for a unique senior or anniversary gift.

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by Barbara Crawley, seconded by Anne Gladstone, this meeting was adjourned.

XV. Next Meeting

January 20, 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