

MINUTES

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

Thursday, June 24, 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. Ivan Mattox, *School Board*, Goochland 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
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Becky Alexander, Assistant Director for Gifted & Talented for Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Alvera Parrish, **Interim Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
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. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George 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. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Richard Layman, **Superintendent**, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Also present:

Patti Chappell, Pat Taylor, and Phil Tharp- MLWGS, Joan Yates – Outgoing PTSA President, Anne Napps – Incoming PTSA President, and Hall Waller - GS Foundation.

III. Approval of Agenda*

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the agenda was unanimously approved.

*Agenda was later amended during the meeting – see VIII.g

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Kenneth Pritchett, the minutes of May 20, 2010 were approved, with Barbara Crawley abstaining.

V. Recognitions

Coach Jim Holdren is named the Girls' National High School Track and Field Coach of the Year by Gill Athletics, in conjunction with USA Track and Field. Mr. Holdren was not in attendance at this meeting however, as he was in Iowa receiving this award, and will be brought before the Board in August.

Dr. Becky Alexander, retiring Assistant Director of Gifted & Talented for Hanover Public Schools and long serving member of the Planning Committee, was recognized for her service and contributions to Maggie L. Walker Governor's School.

Mrs. Patricia Taylor, retiring Coordinator of Curriculum, was recognized for her contributions to MLWGS and this Board and serving MLWGS since 1991 as founding faculty. Mr. Morton noted the unique aspect of starting something from scratch in one's career. Of her numerous accomplishments, Mrs. Taylor is endorsed in Gifted Education and has taught classes across the nation on cooperative learning, thinking skills, use of technology, and strategies to implement NCTM Standards for mathematics education. Mrs. Taylor has co-authored county and state curricula and coordinated textbook adoption committees. As VCU clinical faculty and GSGIS mathematics teacher, she has contributed to teacher education in the Richmond Area. She is the co-founder of the "VCU/GSGIS Partnership for Advanced Studies" which includes a "Dual Enrollment Program" for GSGIS students and a "Professional Development School" for teachers.

Her awards include:

- 1988: Chesterfield County Teacher of the Year
- 1989: Finalist for the Virginia Teacher of the Year
- 1990: W.C. Lowry Outstanding Mathematics Teacher
- 1990: American Teacher Awards produced by the Disney Company
- Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching

Mr. Morton referred to Pat as “the most loyal and passionate member of the dragon family”.

Mrs. Pettitt shared memories of Pat teaching her child years ago, calling her and Phil Tharp, “excellent classroom teachers that the students actually liked.” Both were influential in their attitudes and skills. She stated, “I don’t know anybody more hardworking and passionate about what they do. This school is greatly indebted to Pat Taylor for what she has accomplished; she’s been a lynchpin for holding things together. In the early days of MLWGS there were many problems, and this school needed her leadership and devotion to get us where we are today.” With that said, Mrs. Taylor was presented with a commemorative Maggie Walker medallion.

Mrs. Taylor thanked the Board for this recognition and shared her memories of the early days of Governor’s School. She stated, “Leaving here is the hardest thing I’ve ever done. This school has been my life, but I will continue to be part of it as one of Hal Waller’s volunteers. I have been celebrated in so many ways, and let me just say, there is no I or me in all this, there’s we. My father taught me that you never meet a person you don’t learn from.” She added, “Change the world one student at a time. You never know where it will stop. It doesn’t stop.”

Mrs. Taylor received a standing round of applause.

VI. Public Comments

None

VII. Director’s Report

The Director updated the following activities for the Board:

- **The Class of 2010:** Mr. Morton distributed copies of the graduation program and thanked the Board and Superintendent’s for their participation in this activity. Every student that graduated this year received a Maggie Walker diploma, meaning there were no Standard diplomas, and every senior completed their community service commitment. The average number of hours was over 200, with the requirement being 140. One student, Samantha Halle had over 1,000 hours. Also, and this is a record for MLWGS, the average scholarship monies earned per student was \$51,000. Additional facts about this class are listed on page 18 of the Board packet.
- **French Exchange:** The exchange was so powerful and successful that the school in Toulouse and the MLWGS staff want to repeat this activity every other year. On the half day that Mr. Morton spent with the students, they toured the General Assembly and Governor’s Mansion, chatted with the First Lady of Virginia, and met

the Governor and Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court. They also toured City Hall.

Mr. Morton stated that the exchange would not have happened without the support of this Board and the extraordinary work of Barrett Brown (not in attendance).

- **PACE National Scholastics Championship**: Maggie Walker finished 3rd in this national quiz bowl competition held at George Mason University on June 5-6, with the Director recognizing Dr. John Barnes (not in attendance) for his outstanding leadership of this team and students.
- **2010 Runner-Up Scholar Athlete of the Year Award**: Senior Hunter Knight (not in attendance) received this award from the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Senior Clarissa Schick (not in attendance) was a finalist for this award.
- **Newsweek: America's Best High Schools**: Maggie Walker is recognized for the 5th consecutive year under "The Elites" which lists schools of exceptional quality and sky-high SAT and ACT scores.
- **June Incoming Freshmen Parent Informational Night**: This event was structured from recommendations obtained last fall and designed as a "parents helping parents" orientation. MLWGS representatives included administrators, representatives from each department, fall coaches, counselors, and veteran parent members. The Director shared information about community service and finding something for the student to get involved in. From the successful feedback obtained, MLWGS plans to make this an annual event.
- **Summer Operating Hours**. A schedule is provided on page 20 of the Board packet. Mr. Morton will provide Board members and Superintendent's his schedule and contact information via email.
- **Coming Events** are included in the Board packet on page 22.

VIII. Action Items

a. Personnel

The Director shared credentials and background information on the candidates recommended. Wendy Taylor Ellis' Vita was distributed for background reference.

There being no questions regarding the personnel action detailed on page 23 in the Board packet, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the appointments of Hsien-en Sharon Meng and Wendy Taylor Ellis was unanimously approved.

For the Board's information, considering the critical nature of Mrs. Ellis' position within Maggie Walker, Mr. Morton reviewed the process of her hiring recognizing

with gratitude Chesterfield County Public Schools for their guidance and assistance. The following, in bullet form, describes the sequence of events:

- After spring break the position was advertised for one month
- During that month the leadership team met with both faculty and parents to develop a list of criteria to follow in the selection of the prospective candidate
- MLWGS received 56 applicants
- During the initial screening, approximately half of the original applicants were eliminated. The ones remaining were screened down to 8 for interview (with one withdrawing)
- The interview committee was comprised of 16 people representing administration, support staff, a member of each department, GS Foundation, and parents
- On the day of the interviews, candidates were asked to participate in two exercises before their formal interview. The first inbox activity involved a list of 31 things that could potentially happen on any given day to the Coordinator of Curriculum. The candidate was asked to prioritize the list then go back and describe how they would handle each situation during a 45 minute exercise. By design, no candidate was able to complete their inbox. The second activity was a teacher observation in DVD format
- Following completion of the above activities, the candidate proceeded into the formal interview. After introductions, the first exercise involved the post-observation conference with Mr. Morton acting as the teacher
- Each candidate was asked 18 specific questions
- The interview committee narrowed the selection down to 2 candidates. Each candidate was brought back to MLWGS for a day of observation with departments, support staff, student ambassadors, and class officers. Each ended their day in an administrative meeting
- Feedback from all constituencies was obtained. Follow-up calls to references were made
- The sequence above resulted in the recommendation of Wendy Taylor Ellis made to this Board

b. VRS Resolution – Authorization to Pick-up the Employee’s Contribution under §414(h) of the Internal Revenue Code for Plan 2 Employees

The Director’s recommendation at this time is for MLWGS to pick up the 5% employee contribution as an additional benefit not paid as salary to VRS for professional and non-professional Plan 2 employees. Funding has been built into the FY11 budget to cover this expense. There being no additional comments or questions regarding this action, on motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the VRS Resolution – Authorization was unanimously approved.

c. Amended FY11 Budget

Phil Tharp distributed copies of the originally approved budget document for comparison. Mr. Morton indicated that the revised budget has been reduced by \$123,000 as follows:

Adopted: \$7,408,933.85

Revised: \$7,285,713.85

The originally adopted budget showed \$185,000 carryover of year-end money. That funding has now been placed into the Capital Budget line item developed last fall. Other funding levels reflected include VRS changes, restoration of technology funding of \$26,000, and four additional slots purchased by Henrico County.

There being no additional comments or questions regarding the changes submitted, on motion by Kenneth Pritchett, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the Revised FY11 Budget was unanimously approved.

d. New Honor Society (Tri-M Music) Approval

Information about this organization was presented to the Board in May for first review. There being no comments or questions regarding approval, on motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the MLWGS Tri-M Music Honor Society was unanimously approved.

e. Academic Standards & Community Service Policy

The proposed policy and its procedures were included in May's Board packet for review. The Director requests Board approval for implementation of the policy at this time.

Mr. Morton noted that the procedures piece will continue to develop over time as MLWGS works with the system. For additional review, the Director distributed the procedures document to Board members and Superintendents.

Mrs. Taylor commented that the policy and procedures submitted were developed over the course of 18-24 months and included input from parents, faculty, and the Planning Committee.

On motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the Academic Standards & Community Service Policy was unanimously approved.

f. Part-Time Support Position for Foundation

The Director requested approval to add this part-time position to work with the MLWGS Foundation and be fully funded by the same Foundation. This position will be advertised by MLWGS using the schools' usual recruitment methods. No benefits are available with this position.

On motion by Gwynn Litchfield, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the .5 FTE support request was unanimously approved.

g. AMEND AGENDA for UVA Recommendations

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved amending the June meeting agenda and making the UVA Study Recommendations an Action Item.

h. UVA Study Recommendations

The chair called for discussion and questions on these recommendations.

Mr. Morton felt that it was important to note, particularly as the Board looks at the identification area, that this spring's testing was broken down into smaller, secure parts; however, the Planning Committee had a concern about the overall length of testing so the non-verbal portion was not included. As the staff reviewed the results from this testing cycle, it was clear that there exists a need to include it. While it will extend the total length of testing, the new design will include building in two breaks with refreshments.

Mrs. Pettitt questioned the statement under Recruitment, Item 3, bullet beginning with "Henrico process of selecting one top-qualified applicant.....," and whether or not this is a recommendation for all divisions to employ. The Director responded that it was not a recommendation, but was included because the Planning Committee wanted the Board to be aware of this recruitment method.

Mrs. Marshall stated that she believes under the Maggie L. Walker Governor's school charter each jurisdiction still maintains the right of their Superintendent to make the final decision on student selection to MLWGS, and this was a critical point as Henrico Public Schools (not the Henrico School Board) developed this process which they found to have worked well and better reflects the make-up of their county.

Mrs. Pettitt questioned if it was within the jurisdiction of this Board to tell other divisions how to handle their selection process. Dr. Becky Alexander responded, as a member of the Planning Committee, that this was not intended as a recommendation or endorsement, nor was it a recommendation in the UVA study, but provided as information for what Henrico was doing. Mr. Morton indicated that the bullet is written as a statement of process. Dr. Alexander agreed that the inclusion of this statement, when all other items were intended as action, could be confusing.

Mrs. Pettitt indicated that the title of the document was 'Recommendations on the UVA Study' and she was not comfortable with this statement of process being included as it is a consideration only and was not part of the UVA study. Mr.

Morton indicated that the document could be structured differently by including the process bullet on the rationale sheet.

Mr. Mattox indicated that he did not have a problem with the statement remaining because the UVA study eluded that this area could be improved, and the Planning Committee and UVA Study Committee agreed that it was a concern. Although not an action item, it is something the Board does not want to lose sight of. Mrs. Pettitt stated that while the Board had those discussions, they never identified this particular process of selecting one top-qualified applicant per middle school, nor is it in any part of the UVA study, with Mr. Mattox concurring with her statement. Mrs. Taylor offered that the UVA study only suggested “broadening the recruiting practices.” Mrs. Marshall suggested the bullet could be preceded with the words “The Planning Committee considered”, or “The Planning Committee discussed...”

Mrs. Pettitt called on Dr. Alexander to share her perspective as a Planning Committee member on the origins of this process. Dr. Alexander noted that this action did not come from the table of the Planning Committee but from Henrico, and other divisions can learn about their action and emulate it or not. It was not taken as an action item that this is what is being done for recruitment; this is what is being done for retention. Mrs. Pettitt’s concern reflects that allowing this statement could be setting a precedent of telling divisions how to select their students. Mr. Axselle suggested striking this item since it is not an action item.

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Kenneth Pritchett, amended to remove the second bullet, as it was not an action item under Recruitment, Item #3 listed in the 2010-2011 Actions on Recommendations from UVA Study, “Henrico process of selecting one top qualified applicant ...,” the recommendation actions were unanimously approved.

The Board expressed a desire to remain informed of actions explored by the divisions to stimulate diversity recruitment to MLWGS.

Note: The permanent record will reflect revised pages 37 and 38 with the bullet item noted above removed from the recommendations page and placed as an information statement on the rationale sheet.

IX. Materials for Board Review

a. MWLGS Policy Manual (previously listed as IX.b on original agenda)

The Director described the structure of policy development for the last 19 years at MLWGS as being issue-responsive as opposed to a framework or overarching policy for a regional school with a Regional Board. Currently, if a policy is not in place that this Board has approved, the solution is to default to Richmond’s policy, which is designed for a large school system. It is becoming clear that there are a number of items the Board needs to think about dealing with in terms of structure that should be articulated, digitized, and

searchable on the web. It would serve this Board, faculty, and community to have a Regional Board policy manual.

Mr. Morton stated that expertise and input could be utilized from CCPS as that division recently spent 18 months with legal review updating their policy manual. In each Board packet there are policy manual format samples from Charles City, Chesterfield, and Henrico to aid the Board in determining MLWGS's manual structure. The Director recommends that over the next 15-18 months the Board develop, approve, digitize and publish a policy manual for the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional School Board.

Discussion followed concerning the mechanics of developing the policy manual but Board members concluded it would prefer development and recommendations from the Director and the Administrative team. Dr. Newsome stated Mr. Morton could call on the Superintendents for support.

Final review of the recommendations outlined on page 40 resulted in the following: #1 – no action was taken, #2 – no action was taken, #3 – Deferred to Mr. Morton and the Administrative team, and #4 – Mr. Morton will develop a timeline for the Board to review.

X. Informational Items Provided

Newsweek: America's Best High Schools
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, June 3, 2010
2009-2010 Student Achievement List
The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation Matching Grant

MLWGS News Items:

- Academic Team Wins National Championship Press Release
- Virginia's First Lady Welcomes French Exchange Students
- VCU President, Dr. Michael Rao, MLWGS Graduation Keynote Speaker
- Alumni News

The Director noted that Dr. Rao's comments at graduation recognized the VCU/MLWGS partnership and the power of the dual enrollment program.

The Chairman congratulated the Foundation for the matching grant donation and wished them well with their fundraising efforts.

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 Axselle, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the meeting was adjourned.

XV. Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 17, 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