

MINUTES

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies
FY17 Budget Public Hearing
1000 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

Thursday, March 17, 2016

11:30 a.m.

I. Call to Order

John Axselle, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board, called the hearing to order.

Present:

Ms. Martha Harris, *School Board*, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Javaid Siddiqi, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mr. John Wright, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools
Mr. John Axselle, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools
Mrs. Michelle 'Micky' Ogburn, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools
Mrs. Sarah Grier Barber, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. David Gaston, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. James Lane, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Michael Gill, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Melody Hackney, **Superintendent**, Hopewell Public Schools
Dr. David Myers, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Jeff McGee, **Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Mrs. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Mrs. Megan Perez, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes to make his/her comments. Individuals representing groups will be allotted five (5) minutes.

Speakers should state their full legal name prior to addressing the Regional School Board.

Speakers will not be permitted to address or question the Director, Board Attorney, Board Clerk or Deputy Clerk, or any other staff member directly. Questions should be directed to the Chairperson, who may, at his/her discretion, solicit a response.

Speakers appearing before the Regional School Board will not be allowed to campaign for public office, promote private business ventures, engage in personal attacks of anyone, or use profanity or vulgar language.

Applause is permitted during the awards and presentations period only.

Citizens may express their views in writing in lieu of any oral presentation.

Hearing-impaired persons may contact the Regional School Board Clerk in advance to make arrangements for an interpreter.

- *Anthony Edward Holten, MLWGS Senior.* Mr. Holten, addressing the Board, spoke of his specific aspirations at the time he committed to attend MLWGS and said he was thrilled by the host of languages offered. Walker was his dream. But Maggie Walker is not a dream, it's a logistical and budgetary reality, one that hit him hard when he learned that Dr. Cliff Broeniman [Latin] would not be returning for 2015-2016. It is Anthony's understanding that Dr. Broeniman's departure was not strictly a budgetary issue; adding, however, he understood that Dr. Broeniman is now teaching in Hanover making more than he did here. Mr. Ross, the only Latin teacher left will be overloaded with classes next year and will be unable to offer Greek, Italian cooking or independent studies in Latin for students who have exhausted the Latin track. For those not familiar with what that is; students can file for an independent study course with a teacher; it has been a great privilege at this school and is now being denied to many students in Latin. This is shameful and a failure to the current students and to those like me who four years ago dreamed of pursuing what this school had to offer. I believe it is in the school's best interest to maintain two full-time Latin teachers.

Specific data requested by Mr. Holten is the number of full-time teachers or their equivalent, and the number of full-time administrators accounted for in the 2014 budget. Also, the number of full-time teachers or their equivalent, and how many full-time administrators are intended to be accounted for in the 2017 budget. Anthony said, "I know this information is supposed to be available online somewhere, but I can't seem to find it." With preliminary calculations it appears teachers have received about a 7% average increase from 2014 to 2017; whereas with the same calculation, it appears the administration per person increase is far, far greater over the same period. The number of FTE's and the number of people in administration should be available publicly in the line item, and again Mr. Holton said he hasn't been able to find it. Anthony added; "in my opinion, creating competitive salaries should come before and in greater proportions than raises to the administration, which are of course very necessary in their own right."

- *Avery Gagne, MLWGS Junior.* Mr. Gagne addressed the Board to speak about competitive salaries and those offered at Maggie Walker, an advanced school that should attract teachers to come here, finding it odd that teachers are leaving this institution to go to other localities because they need more money. Avery said that as he looked at the budget recently, manually calculating the number of teachers and the

number of administrators, even if the budget allotted for the same rate of increase for a 5-man administration team as it does for a 66-man team of teachers, this is essentially an average \$2,200 raise for teachers, or around 5%. However, when comparing to administration, even adding one new administrator that makes \$100,000/year, the administration is getting a raise of approximately 14%. Unless there is other information to be shared for transparency, there seems to be a disproportional amount of funds going to the administration which is causing teachers to leave this school, as Avery said he personally witnessed last year, because they couldn't justify taking a dip in salary and opportunity compared to other schools.

- *Laura O'Brien, Alum Parent.* Mrs. O'Brien encouraged the Board to conduct an analysis of teacher/administration salaries from within the districts that provide students to Maggie Walker. Mrs. O'Brien shared that Powhatan recently conducted a phenomenal study of area salaries that provides a benchmark for determining if indeed salaries at MLWGS are competitive. She added this analysis is critical to the goal of remaining competitive and is called for in the strategic plan.

Mrs. O'Brien also requested a review of technology needs at Maggie Walker to determine if the school is on par with local districts. Laura recalled that the school took a hit with technology in the last DOE evaluation that was conducted as an area that was lacking; but not just in equipment, also in regards to staffing, where DOE suggested a two member technology department.

Lastly, please keep in mind when looking at the budget what is on our wish list. She stated we have an opportunity in the next few years to make a case to the state for more money, even more than we got this year. We need to articulate our needs to the state for more money on a long term basis.

- *Remarks from Dr. Lane* in response to today's comments. Dr. Lane said that a focus over the past two years was building transparency and adding actual values to the budget, both the previously approved budget and the presented budget. The superintendents have had verbal updates related to the budget, but he thinks it is also important for the community that a document be made available of an executive summary of the budget that outlines all of the priorities that have been put forward. He also assured that of the issues addressed today, specifically administrative compensation, he would never recommend a 14% increase, and knows this issue is not true. Additionally, technology enhancements are addressed in this budget but we didn't delve into details again today due to time as it was addressed in earlier meetings, but if we put out a document that summarized FTE's and other items that are requested, this will help with transparency. He concluded by saying, "Maggie Walker has grown sufficiently over the past twenty years that the budget prepared is probably going to have to look like what is put together in the school divisions."
- *The Chairman* requested an Executive Summary be made available on the website and emailed to Board members.

On motion by Micky Ogburn, seconded by Sarah Barber, this hearing was adjourned.

John Axselle III, Chairman

Jeffrey McGee, Ph.D., Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk