

MINUTES

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

Thursday, November 5, 2009

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Ivan Mattox, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order.

II. Introductions and Recognition

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
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
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Becky Alexander, **Assistant Superintendent** for Dr. Stewart Roberson,
Superintendent, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Jean Murray, **Assistant Superintendent** for 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. 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. John Axelle, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, the agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Ms. Kimberly Gray, with Mrs. Barbara Crawley abstaining, the minutes for the October 15, 2009 meeting were approved with the following changes:

Page 18, XII, Ayes vote will be corrected to include Mr. Pritchett.

V. Public Comments

None

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Fred Morton briefed the Board on the status of Mrs. Pat Taylor who is home focusing on her health. He shared her appreciation to this Board for their many comments of concern.

Learning/Instructional Highlight

Mr. Morton asked two current MLWGS Technology Integrators to present a new tool used at MLWGS called Google.docs.

Mr. Jeff Hall, Fine Arts Department Chair, and Ms. Kerry Sheppard, English Department, introduced themselves to the Board. The presentation focused on a brief introduction to Google.docs, which is a great and powerful tool that allows users to collaborate on projects.

Google.docs allows multiple users to log into the same document at the same time. Students can be working from home on the same document or seeing the same data at the same time. Google.docs also has a built-in chat feature which allows users to actually talk and work with each other simultaneously.

This overview featured documents, presentations, and spreadsheets and explained how these tools are being used in the classroom to integrate.

Google.docs documents have all of the features of basic Microsoft Word. It also has the ability to upload previously created documents and go "live", which teachers find to be a tremendous time saver and thus an important feature. As students peer edit these documents, teachers have the ability to view the document history, which shows any revisions made and can restore to an earlier version if needed. Google.docs documents can

also be exported back into the hard drive. Documents are protected from unauthorized changes through the permissions granted feature. This also includes permissions for basic viewing. Mrs. Chappell created the MLWGS Google.docs group and only MLWGS students and faculty have access to it. If someone at MLWGS attempts to communicate with someone outside the group, Google.docs will issue a warning before they can proceed.

Mr. Morton noted, for clarification, that users with a regular Google account cannot access the MLWGS group without permission. Mr. Morton also stated that it was Mrs. Chappell who developed and brought Google.docs to MLWGS.

Continuing on with Google.docs presentations, Mr. Hall suggested that the Board think of this application as "PowerPoint Light" with a collaborative work and chat feature. Presentations can also be embedded into a teacher website and viewers do not need PowerPoint or be a Google.docs member to view.

Google.docs spreadsheets allow users to collect data through on-line forms which can then be uploaded into Excel and manipulated and/or integrated with any other Google application. A collaborative project example that was mentioned illustrated gathering weather pattern data from any school participating in the project around the world, having everyone add in data via an online form, and giving all users access to the end data set.

Mr. Hall noted that there is no cost to MLWGS for this tool; it is a free service to any school or non-profit organization.

Ms. Sheppard began her presentation on Google.docs usage in the English subject area. She stated that peer editing is vital in the writing process. Essentially, the better students become at peer editing, the better they are at self editing. The process allows for fewer papers that the teacher reviews. The students get immediate feedback from each other and it doesn't take away from classroom instruction time. Ms. Sheppard shared an example of a project that her senior classes worked on in October which had students working on college essay drafts. Students could view each of the phases that their essays went through, which helped them decide what might be the best way to proceed with the next draft version. Google.docs helped the students to see their progress from when they first got their essay question all the way to the finished product.

Another example that Ms. Sheppard shared was her freshmen class writing cliff notes on the works of Shakespeare and how they collaborated as teams on the project. An added feature of Google.docs, which benefitted each student in the teams, was that members who were not in attendance or failed to bring in work on the day it was due could retrieve their work on-line through Google.docs.

Dr. Marcus Newsome questioned the hardware portability of this tool. Specifically, he asked where the students do their on-line work; in class, in the computer lab, in the library, or from home. Ms. Sheppard responded that the students have access through all of the options mentioned. Mr. Hall stated that Google.docs is computer independent, meaning neither the student nor the document needs to be on one particular machine allowing for

tremendous flexibility to the user(s). Mr. Hall indicated that iPhone has applications for this tool also, but students are not currently allowed iPhone usage in class. Mr. Hall was questioned about system security issues, to which he responded that there is no issue because Google.docs transcends MLWGS's entire hard medium. Also, Google.docs is platform independent, meaning it works with either a Mac or PC.

Mrs. Lisa Marshall shared a personal story about her son's team project grade being affected due to team members who were absent with illness. Consequently, their work was not turned in when due, resulting in a loss of project points for all team members. Mr. Hall supported her concern and indicated that this tool was a great way to ensure that all students have access to projects and enables teachers to continue instruction when students are home.

Mr. Max Smith, Global Studies Department and Technology Integrator, was asked by Mr. Hall to share a recent assignment that his students participated in using the Google.docs tool.

Mr. Smith explained that his classes were studying Middle Eastern history and that he was interested to learn what perceptions the students were bringing to the table. Mr. Smith created a Google.docs form and embedded it into his website and asked the students to use one word to describe their perception of the Middle East. In addition, students in other Global Studies classes were asked to participate, so there were about 300 responses. The data gathered was then exported into an Excel document. Mr. Smith then took that data to another free site called Wordle.net, which creates a visual representation called a "graffiti wall". With this tool, as a specific response is repeated it becomes larger in size so students can easily see what the most common responses are. Mr. Smith's classes used this graffiti wall to spark conversations about perceptions, reality, and history.

The project was expanded, with the help of Ms. Sharon Parker, MLWGS Mentorship/Senior Seminar Coordinator and Technology Integrator, to include students from the International School in Kuwait and used their input from the embedded form on Mr. Smith's website to describe their perceptions of the American Government. Mr. Smith explained that he used the same process and exported their data through Excel, and then Wordle, to create a graffiti wall, then had the classes discuss the perceptions from the students from the International School of people from the United States. It made for some very interesting conversations. This next layer of internationalism is something MLWGS really strives for.

A copy of Mr. Smith's Wordle graffiti wall will be included in the permanent record of this meeting.

Mr. Morton made a few clarifying points:

- MLWGS just started using Google.docs this past summer so MLWGS is on the front end of learning the program's many uses and capabilities.
- Google.docs itself has been around from some time.

- There are individuals in the respective schools systems that are using this tool.
- There are similar tools that people are currently using for planning.
- MLWGS is using technology as a tool, not a target; but not everybody is ready yet.
- Google.docs is FREE.

Mr. Morton reminded the Board that part of the original mission of MLWGS was to be an innovator and to share these innovations. However, some people view MLWGS as only a center that works with gifted students. The key is that not every kid accepted here is in a GT program. The other part of these innovations is that a program such as FIRC, which the Board saw in September, would be useful anywhere.

Mr. Morton explained that the tool the Board has seen is considered “cloud computing” and is a format of Web 3.0. There are many other pieces of cloud computing that are free, such as Skype, which allows live visual and audio communication. Mr. Morton reminded the Board that he will be traveling next week to Scotland and the Netherlands with CoSN as they explore how these nations are using technology tools to help drive their economic engines in these challenging times.

In conclusion, Mr. Morton noted that another area of growth is the phenomena of social networking and how it is becoming a powerful learning tool. In response to a previous question concerning the use of an iPhone, Mr. Morton noted that there are some school systems around the country that are allowing a student to use this tool as an active part of instruction. iPhone has a wide selection of free applications that can be downloaded to any PDA allowing the user to do personal surveys and question/answers in the classroom.

Mr. Morton thanked Mr. Hall, Ms. Sheppard, and Mr. Smith for their presentation and for their hard work putting this program together during what is probably the busiest time of the year.

Update on Middle School Visits

Mr. Morton stated that the number of middle schools visited this fall by MWLGS has increased by nine, and a conservative estimate translates that number to over four hundred more families. Additionally, at Open House there was a very diverse group of people in attendance to look at the school. Many families had questions about the number of slots available; MLWGS is referring these questions back to their localities. Mr. Morton stated that he believes that MLWGS is very strong in its communication, as it has to cover questions that impact twelve school districts.

Update on UVA Study

Mr. Morton reminded the Board that the Planning Committee is planning on bringing their report to the Board in December. At this time, The Planning Committee has a good draft that looks at each of the key sections. The great news is that the report indicates that MLWGS is already doing some of the things proposed, but those things were not picked up on in the UVA study and need to be recognized. The Planning Committee is looking at

both short term and long term changes. Mr. Morton noted that one point he has consistently voiced is that to separate out the issue of diversity as the only thing considered would not be appropriate. Instead, this issue needs to be embedded as we revitalize and look at our next ten years as a mission of the school, and as a connected part of what we do.

Superintendent's Steering Committee Chairman, Dr. Crawley, and Vice-Chairman, Dr. Newsome, will be meeting with the Committee next week for added discussions. Also, a date after Thanksgiving will be determined to schedule a public meeting to obtain public input on a draft of the report prior to presenting a final version to the Regional School Board.

For clarification Mrs. Pettitt affirmed with Mr. Morton that the 'Committee' refers to the Planning Committee.

Swine Flu Update

Mr. Morton stated that at one point MLWGS had 127 students out with this illness, but it appears to be on the downswing from that high. MLWGS is continuing to work with the Richmond Health District to coordinate the immunization schedule and process.

Individual Staff Meetings

Mr. Morton's PowerPoint presentation to the Regional School Board will be retained as a permanent part of this meeting record.

Mr. Morton asked the Board to recall a list supplied them at the September meeting with three questions that each staff member was asked in their one-on-one interview: 1) What do you love about MLWGS? 2) While this is a great place, we need to... and 3) The future. Each answer highlighted on the presentation had to be stated by a minimum of ten people to make the list. One common quote running through many of the interviews was "this is the hardest job I have ever had and it is the best educational experience I have ever had."

One concern repeatedly raised was the concept of team meetings, which were designed and implemented as part of the original design of the school. It was where teachers would meet and discuss the problems of students who were struggling. The problem, as it exists now, is having 15-16 people sitting in on these meetings and maybe only 4 are teaching the same student. This is an example of the process staying the same over time, but MLWGS needs to look at more efficient ways to help students.

See Mr. Morton's presentation for other examples of suggestions made for improvements and future innovations.

In closing, Mr. Morton shared a photograph of a MLWGS student who performed the harp at Fall Festival. This student was accompanied by another MLWGS student playing the Ukulele, and Mr. Morton stated how surprisingly beautiful the two instruments were together and what a perfect metaphor for MLWGS they were: 'with the work we do at

MLWGS, taking things that people would not assume work together, and when we are done it makes beautiful music.’

Coming Events

The full list of activities is on pages 23 and 24.

Comments

None

VII. Action Agenda Items

a. New Clubs Approval

The following are submitted for your approval: The Random Acts of Kindness Club, sponsored by Ms. Sherri Arnold and The MLWGS Checkers Club, sponsored by Ms. Michele Surat. There being no questions or comments;

On motion by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, seconded by Ms. Kimberly Gray, the Board unanimously approved the new clubs submitted.

b. VDOT Easement for Bridge Repair I-95 Overpass of Lombardy Street

Details of the offer received from VDOT are described on Rationale Sheet VII.b.

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mrs. Theresa Lindsay, with Ms. Kimberly Gray abstaining, The VDOT offer of \$17,640.00 to acquire right of way for the I-95 Overpass Repair was approved.

VIII. Materials for Board Review

None

IX. Information

RTD Open House Advertisement run 10-25-2009
Finance Committee Minutes from 10-1-2009
Class of 2008 Alumni Endorsement of MLWGS Program Preparation
RTD Coverage of World Record Dodge ball Tournament at MLWGS

X. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Meeting

None

XI. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

Open Discussion

Mr. Ivan Mattox recognized Ms. Kimberly Gray for ranking in Style Magazine, Top 40 under 40 issue, October 14, 2009.

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

XIV. Next Meeting

December 17, 2009 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Ivan Mattox, Chairman

Fred S. Morton IV, Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk