

MINUTES

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies
Regional School Board Meeting
1000 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

Thursday, October 20, 2016

9:05 a.m.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Moment of Silence

The Chairman called for a moment of silence.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Regional School Board and visitors recited the pledge of allegiance.

IV. Introductions

Each Board member introduced him or herself and stated their locality (listed in alphabetical order by locality).

Present:

Ms. Martha Harris, *School Board*, Charles City Public Schools
Mrs. Dianne Smith, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Ms. Beth Hardy, *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
Dr. Deborah Marks, *School Board*, Hopewell Public Schools
Mrs. Sarah Grier Barber, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools (late arrival)
Dr. David Gaston, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. James Lane, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Jeremy Raley, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Michael Gill, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Kinlaw, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Carol Carter, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. David Myers, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Eric Jones, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Mrs. Renee Williams, **Superintendent**, Prince George 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

Absent:

Ms. Celestine Gaines, **School Board**, King & Queen Public Schools
Mr. Reeve Ashcraft, **School Board**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Melody Hackney, **Superintendent**, Hopewell Public Schools
Dr. Dana Bedden, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools

Also present:

Dr. Wendy Ellis and Michael Smith – MLWGS Administration
Lynn Reed, Deborah Snagg, David Bortz – MLWGS Staff
Suzannah Stora and Bill Benos – GS Foundation
George Nyfeler – PTSA President
Dr. Leslie Hausser, Laura Razzolini, and Brick Brickley– School Advisory Council
Inaudible – Walker Parent
Olivia Ratliff – MLWGS Senior
Marianne Macon (late arrival) and Bill Yates – Community

V. Approval of Agenda

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

VI. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Kenneth Pritchett, seconded by Deborah Marks, minutes for the regular meeting of September 15, 2016, were unanimously approved.

VII. Recognitions

- Olivia Ratliff ('17-Richmond), Lexus of Richmond, Pursuit of Perfect Leadership Award weekly winner, October 3, 2016.

VIII. 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.

The following remarks are provided by speaker Kiera Goddu - '17-Chesterfield:

Hello, members of the Regional School Board, my name is Kiera Goddu and I am a senior at Maggie Walker and have been on the Honor Council since my freshman year. When the Honor Council was suspended last year, members of the Council were largely left out of the decision-

making process and communication regarding the purpose and duration of our suspension ranged from inaccurate to nonexistent. Unfortunately, the rest of the student body has been treated much in the same way over the course of this review process. Maggie Walker’s mission statement declares that the school wants students to “contribute, collaborate, and lead.” This Honor Code review has asked students to do none of those things. Instead, it has made them feel as if their contributions are not needed nor valued in the school policy making process. Student representatives from the Honor Council were often shouted down and disrespected by adult members of the committee with one going as far as to call the Honor Council a “kangaroo court” despite being a first-year teacher who had never interacted with the Council. Students were also called incapable of properly identifying academic dishonesty. This committee was misled, misinformed and overwhelmed with the importance of legal expediency at any cost and largely gutted our student-run system as a result.

I ask that you vote for the Code in its present form to bring a sense of student ownership back to Maggie Walker and that we put an end to this committee review that has gone on too long only to achieve too little. Honor is a necessary, not optional part of our school community, and it cannot just be avoided for superficial concerns. Prolonging the review process only further undermines the work the student council has promoted integrity and academic accountability that has been valued by administration and faculty since I arrived as a freshman. While not at all satisfied with the methods or result of this review, the importance of reinstating the student-run honor system supersedes personal preference and serves a larger public good for this school community.

Thank you.

IX. Director’s Report

A. Verbal Updates

- **Facility Update/Innovation Space** – exploration of additional space based on specific school needs is stipulated in the strategic plan. To that end a group meet recently that was comprised of Mrs. Barber as a board member and architect, along with members of the GS Foundation and the school administration, to begin conceptualization and to define a pathway forward. A statement of need and a timeline will be developed moving forward.
- **Budget Development FY18 Town Hall**, Tuesday, December 6, 2016, @ 6:00pm, in the Walker Forum. We welcome engagement in discussions around our FY18 budget.
- **Recruitment:**
 - Nightly Information Sessions at MLWGS, November 14-16, 2016
 - Radio and Social Media Advertising
 - Other Recruitment Efforts: Planning Committee, middle school visits, recruitment material dissemination, etc.
 - Goochland Elementary School (5th) Grade Visits MLWGS, October 10, 24 and 31
- **National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists:**
 - Ketty Bai – Henrico

Corinne Burch – Henrico
James Caven – Richmond
Isha Gangal – Henrico
Gabrielle A. Grob – Henrico
Jessica Kong – Chesterfield
Parth. Kotak – Henrico
Andrew McCullough – Powhatan
Rowan McDowell – Chesterfield
Shreya Shetty – Henrico
Harish Tekiwal – Henrico
Eva Tsow – Richmond
Charles Yang – Henrico
Kimberly Yu – Henrico
Annie Zhang – Henrico

The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1995. High school students enter the National Merit® Scholarship Program by taking Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) – a test which serves as an initial screen of approximately 1.5 million entrants each year – and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements.

B. Coming Events

October 20, 2016, through November 10, 2016 (*see packet, Section IX.b for details*)

C. 2017-2018 Division Enrollment

With the beginning of the planning process for the next school term as directed by policy adopted May 18, 2000, amended December 18, 2014, and December 17, 2015, the school annually seeks this slot commitment statement from participating divisions.

Letters are being prepared for distribution in November to participating school divisions for their 2017-2018 student enrollment commitment. Note that each letter should be executed by the division superintendent and school board member, and returned to MLWGS by December 1, 2016.

X. Unfinished Business

None.

XI. Consent Items

On motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Deborah Marks, the following consent items were unanimously approved: Employer provided LTD insurance carrier change from Fort Dearborn to The Hartford effective October 1, 2016, personnel actions, and the fiscal status report August 31, 2016.

XII. Action Items

a. Policy Proposals

The following are submitted from the Policy Steering Committee for RSB approval:

3001 – Instructional Goals and Objectives *Amended*

3002.1 – Class Size

5001 – Personnel Records *Amended*

5004 - Professional Staff

5089 – Staff Weapons in School

7014.1 – Purchasing Procedures

7015 – Small Purchasing *Amended*

8003 – Compulsory Attendance

8004 – Religion in School

Proposed policies are grounded in model policies of the Virginia School Board Association.

Dr. McGee reviewed how policies are vetted. With membership in the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) a few years back, the Regional School Board (RSB) established a policy committee. Mrs. Ayers as the board's member and its representative sits on this committee, along with our administrators, a staff member, faculty members, and parent representation. This committee considers VSBA model policy if the school does not already have an existing policy. The committee also considers updates that are issued by the VSBA and makes small adjustments in language; not context, to suit the school: ex: director for superintendent. The process has worked very well for several years, and we periodically review the process to make sure it is functioning as it should. Links to all policies are posted in the RSB agendas. We believe the process has strengthened this institution.

On motion by Micky Ogburn, seconded by Sarah Barber, the above listed policies were unanimously approved.

b. International Trip Proposal

Director McGee recommended approval of Ms. Robinette Cross' interdisciplinary trip proposal to Morocco, April 2017. Presentation and information were provided to the RSB in September.

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Kimberly Gray, Ms. Cross' trip proposal to Morocco 2017 was unanimously approved.

c. Proclamation: October is Bullying Prevention Month

In an effort to promote awareness of school bullying, the RSB, on the recommendation of the VSBA, has designated the month of October as Bullying Prevention Month.

On motion by Martha Harris, seconded by Sarah Barber, the 2016 Bullying Prevention Proclamation was unanimously approved.

XIII. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

a. Policy & Regulation Proposals

The following are submitted from the Policy Steering Committee for Board review:

Pol 2024 – Weapons in School *Amended*
Pol 8010 – School Absences/Excuses/Dismissal
Pol 8030 – Gang Activity or Association
Pol 8030 - Weapons in School (New Cross Reference)

Proposed policies are grounded in model policies of the Virginia School Board Association.

Policies listed above will be requested for approval at the November 10, 2016, meeting of the Regional School Board.

b. Honor Council Code Revision

The Honor Council review committee has met on several occasions during the months of May, June, August, and September 2016 for the purpose of reviewing recommendations from the Board’s legal team and making comments/suggestions for potential inclusion in the updated draft. The updated draft represents the combined work of the legal team and the committee and has been approved by the legal team.

Dr. McGee explained that the former code and the revised code were previously brought forward at an earlier meeting [*August*] but taken back for additional work. Since that work is now completed it is being presented again for RSB review. The Director called attention to page 6 and highlighted how it now clarifies the RSB does not give implicit or explicit authorization for students ‘not’ to report if they have any particular violations. He added, “as we think about the questions students must answer on college applications, the questions don’t ask what is in the disciplinary record, the questions pertain to have you ever been subject to any consequence or have you ever violated your school’s disciplinary policies, etc.”

The language in markup follows:

“A student’s first offense for violation of the Honor Code heard by the Honor Council shall not become part of the student’s school disciplinary record; however, for the purpose of college application, the student should report and explain the violation. Such explanation may include but may not be limited to, “While not part of my school disciplinary record, I was counseled by the student honor council...” A student’s first offense for violation of the Honor Code heard by the Administration and any subsequent Honor Code violation shall become part of the student’s school disciplinary record. For the purpose of college application, the student should report and explain the violation. Such explanation may include but may not be limited to, “My school disciplinary record includes a consequence related the school’s academic honor system...”

Ultimately, this is a family decision; however, the committee believed as the Board planned to codify [*Honor Council code revisions*], there should be no implicit recommendation that could be interpreted that a student would not be required to report.

Ms. Gray asked, “Are we putting a burden on our students here that other students may not have by adding this [*reporting requirement*] as part of the policy or is this standard everywhere?” Dr. McGee responded that questions on the college application are standard, but what is different is other schools do not have honor councils. He added that typically the disciplinary record, etc. exists, but questions on these applications are very standard. Ms. Gray responded, “If the standards in a comprehensive high school are a little different, are we raising red flags where typical behavior [*example provided*] that would have resulted in a reprimand at a comprehensive high school and is worked out; but it’s also not something one would remember?” Dr. McGee added the difference is that perhaps within the districts there isn’t a policy that speaks to this reporting action. Continuing, he said schools typically assert FERPA so that a school typically doesn’t report anything as Walker hasn’t reported. Again, what is different is that Walker has an Honor Council that we are attempting to make explicit what has to be in place to have a functioning honor code in line with federal and state guidelines. As issues emerge we have to provide a response. The committee wanted to be very clear that the Board was in no way saying ‘if it’s not on your record you don’t have to report it.’ This is a question that school employees; i.e., counselors have to respond to, and they need to know how to advise students.

The Chairman explained that we are making it clear to the student that while they need to be honest, reporting is their call. Dr. Jones affirmed the Chair’s statement and said this approach is consistent for other students across the state. Mrs. Barber added this last revision is for language clarification so the student is able to make an honorable response to the question.

Ms. Gray concluded that Walker students do have a bigger hurdle with the honor code and ethical standards here that are different which could create a red flag that otherwise would be overlooked. Mrs. Barber said it was set-up in the body of the document to give students two pathways to deal with a violation: 1) a hearing with the Director which automatically goes on their record for a first offense, or 2) through the Honor Council for a first offense which will not be reflected on their record.

Mrs. Ogburn asked the Director for a review of the process to change this policy and how students were involved. Dr. McGee stated at a meeting late last spring we [*RSB*] decided on a slate of members for an Honor Council review committee that included students, teachers, a board member, a superintendent, alumni, etc. and charged the group with reviewing our Honor Council code based on legal team guidance to bring it into compliance with federal and state guidelines. The question was not ‘can we have an Honor Council,’ but ‘how can we have an Honor Council.’ The committee met several times in the spring and summer and vetted through in a reciprocal fashion based on legal guidance how our Honor Council could be tweaked. Our students were involved in open discussions about the process and what was flawed about it and how it needed to be brought in line. We had lively and vigorous discussions. Many of the recommendations that are included in the proposal are a direct result of student input. The committee valued student perspectives and considered it in how we could make the Honor Council function legally. Mrs. Barber stated the committee had two student

members representing the current body, one from the Honor Council and one from the SCA (Student Council Association) as well as alumni. Mrs. Ayers asked the Director for reassurance that yelling at students did not occur during the committee's lively discussions, to which Dr. McGee stated there was never any yelling by school employees.

Mrs. Ogburn asked if this morning's speaker request was to approve the red line proposal or to reinstate the current code. With discussion, RSB members interpreted the speaker wanted the original code. Continuing, Mrs. Ogburn said from today's discussion she understood the red-line should clarify the process, but it's not clear to her. "We've been told it's up to the family's to decide, but the language makes it sound as if it outlines what one should be doing." Dr. McGee replied that absent this language there was an implicit authorization notion embedded that they didn't have to report and that the school was saying as it's not part of your record there is no obligation to report. However, when students look at the application and as counselors are working with families looking at the college applications, it doesn't say, 'was something on your disciplinary record,' it says 'have you ever been subject to a disciplinary consequence.' So, as the Honor Council will still recommend consequences, the honest response to that question is yes. To be clear, Mrs. Ogburn asked, "So you can have a consequence that is not on your disciplinary record?" Dr. McGee responded the answer to that is yes, it was designed to keep students incentivized towards going before a jury of their peers.

Ms. Gray noted code language reads the student 'should' report, it doesn't say 'must' report. But, Mrs. Ogburn expressed concern that using 'should' could land the school back in the same situation again. Mrs. Ogburn requested all red-lines revisions from beginning to current be provided as a helpful tool to see all the iterations of code and the origins of development.

Approval for the Honor Council code revision will be requested at the November meeting of the Regional School Board.

Martha Harris and Kenneth Pritchett left the meeting.

XIV. Information Items

New Clubs: Fishing Club, Garden Club, and Baking Club

Minding your Mind and Mindfulness at MLWGS

Walker Students attend Vice-Presidential Debate

Walker Golf – 2016 Conference 33 Champions

Cultural Exchange Program: HS Diplomats Experienced by MW Student

School Advisory Council Membership Update

XV. Superintendent's Steering Committee Report

Dr. Gill reported nine superintendent's met this morning and discussed all items on today's agenda, followed by a discussion on the Honor Council and the red line changes just presented. The group had similar concerns as those raised by Ms. Gray. However, the group left with a unanimous understanding that with these changes the intent is to bring the Council into alignment with other divisions that do not have an honor council and/or would be

expected to report. The remainder of the time was in a discussion of personnel issues and recommendations that will be presented today in closed session.

XVI. Closed Meeting

The Chairman announced the item for closed session:

Do I hear a motion to enter into a Closed Session in accordance with Sections (§) 2.2-3711 and/or 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and specifically under the following enumerated subsection, the following items:

Number 1: [Discussion, consideration or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of the School Board. Any teacher shall be permitted to be present during a closed meeting in which there is a discussion or consideration of a disciplinary matter which involves the teacher and some student and the student involved in the matter is present, provided the teacher makes a written request to be present to the presiding officer of the School Board.]

On motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Valarie Ayers, the Board unanimously approved moving into closed session. The recorder was paused and the door closed.

At the conclusion of the closed session, the Clerk was invited back and asked to record a motion to reconvene in open session.

On motion by Deborah Marks seconded by Valarie Ayers, the Board unanimously approved moving into open session.

XVII. Certification of Closed Meeting and Any Action Taken if Necessary as a Result of Closed Meeting

The Chairman read the certification of closed session statement:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Regional School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i-one) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements, and (ii-two) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting. Any member of the Regional School Board or committee who believes that there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place.

The Chairman asked if there were any statements or concerns from Board members. Being none, a motion was requested for closed session certification.

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Sarah Barber, the Board unanimously approved closed session certification.

Personnel Action

The Chairman called for a vote to certify the personnel action presented in closed session.

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Sarah Barber, the Board unanimously approved a personnel action discussed during closed session.

The Chairman announced the closed session issue was the hiring of Interim Director Dr. Jonathan Lewis, effective December 1, 2016.

Dr. Lewis has a distinguished resume serving among others, Hanover and Fauquier Public Schools, with his last two assignments as Interim Superintendent of Richmond Public Schools and Director of Hanover's Summer Governor's School. Some overlap with Dr. McGee will be worked out to assure a smooth transition. Dr. Lewis is not interested in the full-time Director position.

Dr. Gill summarized the process which will begin as soon as tomorrow with a 'survey of input' available to all, put out by the Hanover Human Resource Department. The link will be sent to all twelve participating divisions. The survey will gather information on the desired qualities of the next permanent director of MLWGS. The survey will stay open until November 15th at which time information gathered from that survey will be used to write the position description. The application process couldn't begin until late November at the earliest. In addition, there has been an expressed desire for stakeholder input outside of electronic, for in-person input, so there will be continued discussions on what that process will look like, but in some way, there will be an in-person opportunity for input.

After all the information is gathered and synthesized a posting will be put up targeted for late November, possibly early December. When interviews begin there will be multiple rounds that will take place depending on the number of qualified applicants and will involve multiple stakeholder groups which would certainly include superintendents and board members, a certain number of parents and faculty. Students will have the opportunity for input through the survey and stakeholder meetings.

Ms. Gray asked for a public posting of the process.

XVIII. Announcements/Additional Discussion

Mrs. Barber will bring information for discussion at the November meeting on how the RSB participates in the leadership of the school.

XIX. Adjournment

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Sarah Barber, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Next Meeting

November 10, 2016, at 9:00 am. MLWGS, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 153, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190.

John Axselle III, Chairman

Jeffrey McGee, Ph.D., Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk