

MINUTES

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

Thursday, September 17, 2009

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, Vice- Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order. Mr. Ivan Mattox assumed the chair upon his arrival.

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
Mr. John Axelle, *School Board*, Hanover 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. Fred Wilson for Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan Public Schools
Mrs. 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 J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Pete Gretz, **Assistant Superintendent** for Dr. Linda Underwood, Superintendent, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Mrs. Gail Wade, **Coordinator of Staff Development** for Dr. James Victory, Superintendent, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George 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. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Richard Layman, Superintendent, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Superintendent, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, Superintendent, West Point Public Schools

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mr. John Axselle, seconded by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, the agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, the minutes of the August 19, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.

V. Public Comments

None

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Fred Morton thanked the Board for their support and expressed his pleasure in presenting this report to them and what he hoped would be many future Director Reports to come.

Mr. Morton shared with the Board some of what he has learned about the MLWGS program through staff development training and that his intention is to present periodic overviews of instructional highlights to help this Board better understand the work that goes on at MLWGS.

The first program he shared is known as FIRC (Foundations of Independent Research and Communication). See page 30 of the September packet for detailed information on this course which is completed by all freshmen at MLWGS. The following teachers shared information about their particular component in FIRC: Mr. Phil Sorrentino (Social Studies) for writing skills, Ms. Wendy DeGroat for Media Research, Mrs. Celie Boswell (English) for public speaking, Mrs. Christie Riles (Mathematics) for the use of real world technologies and trends, and Mr. Jeremy Clark (Science) for how to collect data and interpret the results.

As an overview, MLWGS teachers discovered that as MLWGS students are coming from multiple school systems and have been exposed to multiple programs there was a broad spectrum of ability levels for these students. FIRC attempts to fill in these levels where students may be weak, build on levels of strength and provide a common preparation and skill set for students. FIRC has also developed as a team building experience.

After the teacher presentation, Mr. Morton offered his view as someone who has been in education a long time, both as a Superintendent and two time former Principal, that this program has responded to the question of 'whose taught them how?' and created a hands-on learning opportunity at a deeper level that flows through every department.

In response to a question about how long MLWGS has taught FIRC, Mrs. Pat Taylor responded that the first year was 1992-93, but the course has evolved and been redesigned every year since then.

Mr. Morton highlighted several coming event activities noted on page 18 of the September packet, notably, today is Constitution Day, with Back to School Night on Tuesday, September 22nd, and Fall Festival on Friday, October 2nd.

Mr. Morton discussed our efforts to establish, within the MLWGS community, a communication system for the H1N1 flu response similar to what the divisions are developing. Some of the common sense actions that have been developed are the installation of multiple hand sanitizer stations around the building, asking people to cough or sneeze in the crook of the elbow, and picture reminders to ‘wash your hands.’

A bigger problem at MLWGS is getting the student to remain home when ill or running a fever. Mr. Morton stated his administration is also planning long-term in the event the school closes due to pandemic conditions so we can keep connected with the instructional work we are doing. This is a very complex issue in any school system, but given the geographical challenges here it is even more complicated.

Mrs. Teresa Lindsay questioned the validity of news items that report the time frame for an individual to remain contagious after a fever has broken is now up to eight days, and what is the schools’ response to those reports?

Mr. Morton had not been advised of this notification from officials with the State Department of Health and thus was unfamiliar with this report. Dr. Marcus Newsome encouraged those that question any information presented by the media to call the appropriate source to get it validated.

Communication from MLWGS will also advise constituents to routinely check with their local school district and health department websites for updates. All communications will be shared with this Board and each division as they are finalized.

Mrs. Valarie Ayers shared that Powhatan, in addition to correspondence going out to their community, will keep a running total of H1N1 notification cases on the school system website.

Mr. Morton briefed the Board on activity involving the UVA study. He stated that everyone from his discussions is grateful for this study as it highlighted a lot of the extraordinary things going on in this building. Also, within the study there are a number of suggestions to be considered. Mr. Morton’s analysis, at this point, is that there is short term, medium term, and long term implications, which means the Board’s approach needs to be thoughtful so things are done in a way that makes sense and also does not diminish the quality of standards currently in place at MLWGS.

Questions to be considered from this study include how to open up avenues of communication in a deeper, more thoughtful way. There is a need to look at the assessment pieces used, which is well documented in the report. The Board would benefit from the joint involvement of both the Planning Committee and the Superintendent's Steering Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, not in an operational capacity, but to work together for a sense of purpose and direction while moving forward.

Mr. Morton stated that he will be requesting to borrow, in half day increments, some of the tremendous resources in the participating divisions to support the work that is being done here. He noted that while MLWGS functions as a school district, and while its size and budget are larger than several divisions within the state; it does not, however, have a school district staff, it has the staff of a school. While MLWGS is looked at as an entity, it is, in fact, part of twelve school divisions that are diverse and cover a large geographic area. Mr. Morton stated that he views his responsibility, in addition to working with this Board and the Superintendent's Steering Committee, to be listening and taking direction, and trying to represent the interests of the twelve divisions in a way that will help move MLWGS productively into the future.

Mr. Mattox inquired about when this Board could expect the Planning Committee/Superintendent's Steering Committee's study analysis recommendations from their review. Mr. Morton responded that the target is November, should all twelve divisions have input, but certainly December at the latest. The goal is that the structure of the study analysis recommendations to this Board will be responsive, thoughtful, builds upon the great work that has been accomplished, and also recognizes that there are some things that need to be worked on.

Mrs. Kimberly Gray questioned if the recommendations will be structured in such a way that the Board members will be able to take them to their individual divisions for discussion and review how students can be better prepared to be admitted to MLWGS. Mr. Morton responded that this concept is part of the current conversations of the Board. As MLWGS has a small staff and serves twelve divisions, implications for action at the local arena is a vital component.

Mrs. Dianne Pettitt commended Mr. Morton for his insight, even though he hasn't been Director for long, and commented that the Board has made a great choice in his selection, both from the experience he brings and the perspective of a Superintendent. She stated that Mr. Morton articulated the complexity of the organizational structure at MLWGS, and how inextricably linked this school is to each division. The MLWGS faculty and staff works tremendously hard without the support that most of the divisions have, and so the plan of thoughtfully approaching short term, medium term and long term goals will serve everyone well into the future. The Board will go about this review in a collaborative manner.

Mrs. Gray asked about data relating to the number of students that enter through their divisions coming from private schools. Mr. Morton responded that would be information that the local Planning Committee member would have. Mrs. Gray followed with a question about whether the Planning Committee members also collect socio-economic data.

Mr. Morton was uncertain about that particular statistic, but stated that it probably varies by division. Reiterating what Mrs. Pettitt stated about the complexities of this school, Mr. Morton stated that his two weeks on the job have taught him that he has a lot to learn. As an institution MLWGS can impact some things, but it really is a regional connection that's going to do this work and create this balance that moves MLWGS to some of the deeper levels this Board and the Planning Committee have already talked about.

Finally, Mr. Morton distributed a brief list of interview questions being used as he personally meets for fifteen minutes with each MLWGS employee. From this process he is developing a list of patterns and strategies looking to the future of this institution. Analysis of these patterns will be supplied to this Board.

VII. Action Agenda Items

a. New Club Proposal – MLW Civic Society

There was no discussion or questions concerning the MLW Civic Society proposal.

On motion by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved the MLW Civic Society.

b. Reschedule November Regional School Board Meeting to November 5, 2009

Mr. Morton shared that he has been invited by CoSN (Consortium of School Networking) to accompany an international group that will visit a number of institutions to study their work with technology and how it has enhanced learning. He noted that there is no cost to this School Board or MLWGS for his trip other than him not being in the building. Mr. Morton stated that November 5th is also a scheduled Open House evening and offered the suggestion that the Board may want to consider an evening meeting to facilitate their attendance at this activity.

On motion by Mr. John Axselle, seconded by Mrs. Dudley Olsson, the Board unanimously approved a schedule change for the November meeting date to the 5th at 9:00 a.m.

VIII. Materials for Board Review

Mr. Morton briefed the Board on a proposed new club sponsored by Ms. Sherri Arnold called The RAMPS Club. Materials describing this activity are enclosed. A vote for the Board's approval will be requested at the October meeting.

In addition, two other club requests were submitted to Mr. Morton yesterday that are academically based, but due to their late submission we are unable to include them in this packet. We will bring them to this Board for approval in October.

IX. Information

August Teacher Professional Development Schedules and Information

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

None

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by Mr. John Axselle, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned.

XIV. Next Meeting

October 15, 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