

MINUTES

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

Thursday, September 15, 2011

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional 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:

Mr. Roy Campbell for 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. Diana Winston, *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools
Mrs. Eileen Long, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools (late arrival)
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools (late arrival)
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Jamelle Wilson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Kinlaw for Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Ms. Lorraine Smith for Mr. Charles Clare, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. Alvera Parrish, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools (late arrival)
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
Ms. Linda Minor for Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools
Mr. Don Skeen, **Interim 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
Mrs. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools
Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Also present:

Phil Tharp, Wendy Ellis, Patti Chappell – MLWGS Administration, Cynthia Balderson – Dominion Foundation, Bill Yates – Parent & GS Foundation, Hal Waller - GS Foundation, Julie Weissend –PTSA President, Angela Dews – REA, Michele Surat – Faculty Liaison, Rob Comet – BCWH Architects, Chamie Valentine and Ann Majors Hiles – MLWGS Parents, Alec Shobe, Raleigh Matteo, and Nitin Nainani – MLWGS Students, and John Wilkes, Sharon Parker, Kerry Sheppard, Denise Yagel – Faculty.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Diana Winston, seconded by John Axselle, the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Ivan Mattox, seconded by Kenneth Pritchett, the minutes as submitted for August 18, 2011 were approved with Roy Campbell and John Axselle abstaining.

V. Recognitions

Mrs. Denise Yagel and Ms. Kerry Sheppard, English Department, 2011 NEH Grant Recipients.

2011 Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership’s High School Leaders Program graduates- MLWGS students *Alec Shobe (Richmond)*, *Raleigh Matteo (Henrico)*, and *Nitin Nainani (Hanover)*. John Wilkes, Social Studies Department Chair, accompanied the students for this recognition.

VI. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes (at the discretion of the Chairperson) to make his/her comments. Individuals representing groups will be allotted five (5) minutes. Citizens must schedule their appearance with the Board’s Clerk no later than 10:00am on the last business day before the meeting at which they desire to be heard.

The following people addressed the board:

Julie Weissend, parent of MLWGS graduate and current student, stated, “I am so happy Don Skeen is helping to mentor us through this period,” emphasizing she “thinks a lot of people aren’t necessarily comfortable being in a state of flux and a temptation might be to do something quickly to be progressive and make people more comfortable, but this a real opportunity to do things strategically.” Mrs. Weissend then stated, “If we could have somebody on a long term basis to really do some things we haven’t had an opportunity to do for awhile at Maggie Walker that would be such an asset, so important that even if the

time frame to look for the director is complex as a function of that, it's worth it." In conclusion she stated, "The bottom line is to think strategically to find someone who is willing and able to give for a number of years so we can accomplish things even more impressive than we already have."

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mrs. Weissend and stated that the Board has the desire to find the very best candidate for this school, even if that means extending the search timeline; waiting until we get the very best.

Chamie Valentine, MLWGS parent, stated "I love this school and every single parent I know loves this school, and the reason is because the kids love this school. There's an environment in this school that I haven't found in any other school we've been affiliated with. All the kids come here very intelligent, thinking everybody else is more intelligent than they are, and they are delighted to be able to support each other and are the biggest admirers of each other. That kind of cohesiveness is a form of love and that kind of loving environment is wonderful. I would like the new director to be able to recognize that and also lead from the top down and share and encourage that from the students. In that light, I think it is also very important to have a director with an advanced degree in gifted education. While it's wonderful that Dr. Ellis has her degree in gifted education, I think the leader of a gifted school should have a PhD or some qualified experience that shows the same. The two are very important as they have to be able to relate to the students, get their arms around the kids on that level, and part of having that gifted education defines that they know how to reach gifted kids. These kids are hard workers and need some balance in their lives. They need a gifted educator that knows how to direct them. In this school we have academic counselors. We don't have psychological counselors so we need someone in a leadership position that has that aspect in their background so they can meet those needs. I also think it is very important that the person has a great deal of experience in technology. Private schools that are prep schools in this area are now offering physics at a much younger level, when those students come here from the private schools they go right into Trig+. We need to have a director that sees things are changing and can address that. Calculus is being taught on a smart board in private schools with 3-D moving technology, so we need someone who can encourage and support technology development in our school."

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mrs. Valentine for sharing her thoughts and comments and stated the Board will keep her comments in mind.

VII. Director's Report

Mr. Rob Comet – BCWH Architects, Gift Presentation of Camden Whitehead Art. In celebration of the firms' 25th anniversary, BCWH commissioned a rendering of the MLWGS building as a gift to the community. He presented each Board member with a piece as an expression of gratitude for their service.

Dominion Educational Partnership Grant Award Presentation. Ms. Cynthia Balderson presented a check for \$9,500 awarded for a proposal submitted by Anna Shore who is a member of the MLWGS faculty which incorporates solar panel energy development,

energy monitoring, and a system that provides energy back to the grid on the new athletic pavilion. Dominion received close to \$2 million in requests from an 11-state region with MLWGS being one of the chosen recipients. Bill Yates, head of GS Foundation Development, and Anna Shore accepted the award.

Fall Festival Update with Ann Major Hiles – Chairman. Mrs. Major Hiles extended an invitation to Board members for this annual school event sponsored by the PTSA that directly supports over 60 clubs and organizations at MLWGS.

Mentorship Program Review with Sharon Parker – Coordinator. Ms. Parker described this rigorous program designed to allow senior students to explore an area of personal interest that also promotes the mission of the school. A list was provided on pages 20-21 for the Board to see where MLWGS students are being mentored this year.

Updates by Administration:

Don Skeen reported that MLWGS had a **smooth opening of school.**

The new **Washington Post Public Elite Top 24 Schools in the Nation Poster** is on display in the room.

Middle School visits are currently being scheduled.

Administration is reviewing the **UVA Study** targeting under-represented minorities at MLWGS and has discovered that the school has already taken a number of steps to address the issue. However, the administration recognizes that a more assertive approach needs to be taken in reaching out to the minority population. MLWGS is in the process of developing an aggressive plan of action, forming a committee, and will be reaching out to different communities. This new committee will be prepared to make a full report to the Board as to what their plan will look like at the October meeting. Mr. Skeen stated, “We realize we need to have more than just a plan, we need to take action and we are prepared to follow through.”

Phil Tharp addressed the Board regarding **2012-2013 state mandated teacher observation/evaluation changes.** One of the biggest changes involves 40% of the teacher evaluation targeting assessment and student performance. Dr. Ellis and Mr. Tharp will attend a conference in Williamsburg next month that addresses assessment and data collection methods.

Mrs. Pettitt suggested Mr. Tharp or Dr. Ellis contact Dr. Evans in Chesterfield for foundational assistance regarding state changes to teacher evaluations.

Dr. Ellis was asked to update the Board regarding VDOE’s required **economics and personal finance credit for the class of 2015.** Dr. Ellis stated that a committee has been formed within the school for course development and one of the items they will address is the sixteen units already designed by DOE to be rolled out in January, and the online course though Virtual Virginia available this fall. The committee will determine if MLWGS wants

to use the units on an online basis, face-to-face, or a combination of both to fulfill the requirement. Upon completion of the course design, their proposal will be presented to the Planning Committee. Once sanctioned by the Planning Committee the proposal will be presented to the Board.

Coming Events - See Page 24 - 25 of the Board packet. Mr. Skeen noted Back-to-School night on September 22nd.

VIII. Action Items

a. New Club Proposals

The original student proposal titled the group The Jaw Harp Club; however, upon video review of the instruments played, Phil Tharp stated the students are now requesting a club name change to the Appalachian Heritage Music Club. Students will have a musical presentation for this Board in October.

On motion by Ivan Mattox, seconded by John Axselle, the Board unanimously approved accepting the name change request from The Jaw Harp Club to The Appalachian Heritage Music Club and approved its constitution.

b. Advisory Council Membership Approval 2011-2012

Mr. Skeen stated this action is normally requested in the spring. The Director is asking for approval of the members listed on page 28, even though the list is incomplete at this time. The PTSA is in the process of obtaining commitments from parents for open slots.

On motion by John Axselle, seconded by Kimberly Gray, the Board unanimously approved the 2011-2012 Advisory Council Membership as presented.

IX. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

a. New Club Proposal:

The following club proposal is submitted for Board Review: SAT Practice Club.

Club approval will be requested at the October meeting of this Board.

b. International Trip Proposal, Geographic Learning Expedition to China, 2012 – Mary Jane McKay:

Mrs. McKay's proposal is detailed on page 34-38 of the Board packet. Mr. Skeen noted that the services of a touring company and an administrator plus an additional teacher have been added to the plan, which is a change from Mrs. McKay's presentation in August.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding policy and the distinction between school sponsored vs. non-school sponsored travel and their liability. Concerns were discussed

regarding clearly written expectations and clearly written results if those expectations are not met.

Mrs. Pettitt requested the Board see the entire informational packet presented to families that includes the student application form and parental permission.

Mr. Tharp shared information regarding the school's umbrella travel policy for students on school sponsored trips that has a component for repatriation and getting access to emergency funds. This policy is on top of regular trip insurance each student is required to obtain. The travel policy will be available for review at the October Board meeting. Mrs. Long requested a digital copy of this policy prior to the October meeting.

Additionally, Mr. Tharp stated the student permission form includes a statement about MLWGS policy and the student code of conduct superseding international law.

Mrs. Winston expressed concerns regarding economic conflict/pressure on students to avail themselves of these trips and expressed concern over the liability of the school system sponsoring. She also emphasized the need for students to familiarize themselves with the cultural differences of the country they will be visiting prior to the trip. Mrs. Winston volunteered the services of Henrico Public Schools and its established policy to assist in development, if needed for MLWGS policy.

Dr. Browder remarked that issues arise regarding district rules/policy vs. regional program rules/policy and cited discipline as an example. Districts may cover specific issues that do not relate to a regional program because that program maintains its own consistent policy approved by its Board regarding unique issues for all students that attend their regional program, including students formerly attending private school. The regional board must have approved a consistent policy. In addition, district boards have stated they pay tuition for educational services, so in terms of what the student chooses to participate in, e.g., VHSL activities, those services are encumbered by the regional board.

X. MLWGS Informational Items

- None

XI. Superintendent's Steering Committee Report

Dr. Newsome stated the committee met last Tuesday, September 13th, and Don Skeen provided them with an update on school issues. An open discussion ensued regarding the UVA study and the committee determined they wanted to commend the school for being aggressive in implementing their recommendations and over the long term they anticipate seeing better results. In the short term the committee is exploring strategies to speed up results. The committee's next meeting is in November; however the group will be corresponding with each other regarding UVA study recommendations and international travel policy for MLWGS.

Dr. Newsome was asked if they discussed faculty diversity as a factor in student representation, with Mr. Skeen indicating a report will be presented in October that includes this component, along with student recruitment and retention. Dr. Newsome emphasized the importance of concurrently increasing diversity while maintaining high academic standards, keeping in mind that this is the second year recruitment changes are being implemented.

Dr. Parrish established for clarification that increasing diversity is not synonymous with lowering standards.

In response to Ms. Gray's question regarding retention and information maintained on minority students who have left the program, Mr. Tharp stated, "It's only internally tracked informally through the counseling department as we track academic issues for ninth graders," and then he noted the various interventions that are available. However, Ms. Gray wanted information on the external barriers that may help with retention. Dr. Ellis stated that a diversity committee will be formed and based on her observation there has been no follow-up analysis to the UVA study in terms of tracking data. Dr. Ellis stated she has spoken to Mr. Skeen about the possibility of a follow-up study on our students with data points that can be tracked yearly to determine what is working and what is not and how to continue moving forward.

XII. Director's Search Committee Report

Ivan Mattox's report included committee members and their preliminary timeline of activities.

Ivan Mattox - Chairman, Diana Winston, Eileen Long, Dr. Linda Underwood, Dr. Marcus Newsome, Dr. Bobby Browder, and Dr. Pat Kinlaw - Director of Human Resources for Henrico Public Schools. Preliminary timeline (can/will change depending on specific concerns or issues as necessary):

- August 4-September 23 – Position announcement posted
- August 25th – Preliminary timeline sent to Board members
- Previous survey used sent to Board members for review
- September 10th – Deadline for input on survey
- September 15th – Committee meeting with School Board. Committee will remain to conduct other business.
- September 20th – September 30th – Face-to-face input sessions with MLWGS constituents
- September 22nd – October 13th – Survey input from constituents
- October 17th – Selection Committee meeting to review survey results
- October 20th – Selection Committee presents survey results to School Board. Committee will screen applicants after Board meeting.
- October 21st – October 22nd – Selected candidates contacted & scheduled for interviews
- October 31st – November 4th – Interviews conducted

Dr. Kinlaw stated as of this date there are forty five applicants.

Dr. Newsome, while encouraged by the committee's ambitious timeline, cautioned that anything can happen and cited the following examples: 1) after review of the paper screens it is determined you do not have the pool of applicants that you are looking for, and 2) after the interview process you determine you want additional applicants. He stated: "the reality is we want to do it right, not fast."

XIII. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Ivan Mattox, this meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting

October 20, 2011 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman

Don Skeen, Interim Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk