

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

**Attendance**

**October 16, 2008**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Superintendents**

**Present:**

Kathy Kitchen, Chesterfield County (in for Marcus J. Newsome)  
Peter Gretz, Goochland County (in for Linda Underwood)  
Becky Alexander, Hanover County (in for Stewart Roberson)  
David Meyers, Henrico County (in for Fred Morton)  
J. Roy Geiger, New Kent County  
James Victory, Petersburg City  
Yvonne Brandon, Richmond City

**Absent:**

Janet Crawley, Charles City County  
Richard Layman, King and Queen  
Margaret Meara, Powhatan County  
R. Francis Moore, Prince George County  
Jeffery Smith, West Point

**Others Present:**

N. Douglas Hunt, Director  
Crystal C. Charity, Clerk  
Barbara Marshall, Deputy Clerk

**Board Members**

**Present:**

Barbara Crawley, Charles City County  
Dianne Pettitt, Chesterfield County  
Ivan Mattox, Goochland County  
John Axselle, Hanover County  
Lisa Marshall, Henrico County  
Gwynn Litchfield, King and Queen County  
Teresa Lindsay, New Kent County  
Kenneth Pritchett, Petersburg City  
Valarie Ayers, Powhatan County

**Absent:**

Robert Cox, Prince George County  
Lisa Dawson, Richmond City  
Dudley Olsson, West Point

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

**Thursday, October 16, 2008**

**9:00 a.m.**

I. Call to Order

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

II. Introductions and Recognition

Each Board member introduced him or herself and stated their locality.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Valarie Ayres, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the agenda was approved. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Diane Pettit, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the minutes of the October 16, 2008 meeting were approved. Motion carried.

Public Comments

None

VI. Director's Report

As we continue to go through and review the slots that each division has, it is time for you and your Superintendent's to look at the slots that you have to, and see where you want to go. I am going to send out a memo to each Superintendent letting you know the number of slots you are responsible for. You may have a desire to grow or you may need to turn in slots you are having a hard time filling. We are at 708 currently and feel that 712 will be the maximum for us to hold in the building. It will really be difficult for anyone to grow unless there are individuals that would like to turn in some slots. Caroline County is investigating the possibility of coming on board again. They were a member at one time and dropped out prior to the renovation of this building, so if they were to come on board, the best I could do for them would be 2 slots at this stage. They would be responsible for the additional \$600.00 a year to make up the \$40,000.00 that the small divisions pay for the renovation of the building. Just as a reminder to anyone that comes on board that has not paid the \$40,000.00 for the renovation, \$600.00 would be added onto the tuition for each student until they reach that threshold of \$40,000.00. This is just an investigating stage for Caroline, evidently they are pretty serious about this and we would like to with your blessings welcome them

back. Some of the smaller divisions with smaller number of slots have large demands one year and the next year could possibly be down. So we are asking each division to re-evaluate where they are and where they would like to be. In our bi-laws it calls for our Superintendents to notify us by November 1<sup>st</sup> for any slots that they do not want for the following school year so the budget can be set appropriately. This is seldom done because we don't have divisions turning in unused slots they are automatically renewed each year at that level. At least we should have in writing from each Superintendent, here is where we are and here is where we would like to be. This would give us something to plan down the road. Any comments or anything we could do, please let us know.

Mr. Tharp has shared with me the early results are in with the survey that was sent out for the Director's search. So far there have been 252 who have taken the time to take the survey, 52 who was alumni which shows some interest there, 119 parents, 52 current students, 24 faculty and staff, 3 citizens and 2 Planning Committee Members. This survey will run through the end of this month. Also with Mr. Waller's help will notify the all alumni, citizens, major donors of the school, faculty, parents, students about the session that will be held on October 27<sup>th</sup> 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Faculty session, and the students, parents, community session being held 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Both will be held in the auditorium. Crystal and Barbara will be there to record the meetings and announce speakers. Mrs. Chappell is going to make sure the audio is set up. We have sent out emails for all of you to attend. The Director's Search Committee will there in the event you cannot attend. We also have gotten the word out through the Smoking Scales our weekly newsletter, through phone calls, personal contact and the PTSA is sending out cards as a reminder of the meeting.

Mr. Mattox asked "Looking at the numbers are we still in the process of getting the survey out to the different groups? I am a little concerned that only 2 on the Planning Committee members responded to the survey. The Chair of the Planning Committee was there and answered "The information has reached her so I am sure that same information has reached the others as well."

Mr. Axselle added the committee discussed how much time to give people to fill out the survey and the committee decided to give them as much time as possible to fill them out.

Mr. Hunt added that we will also push and remind people of the deadline to have the survey's filled out. We had a Faculty meeting Tuesday and reminded them and will continue to do so.

Ms. Pettit asked "Was the Finance Committee being solicited for their input?"

A Finance Member replied she is aware and there are only 4 members and she will inform the others of the survey.

Mr. Tharp stated that the survey is not on the website, but can give them the URL and the secret word. According to Mrs. Chappell the problem with putting it on the website is it

would be open to everyone in the world and I don't know if you want that. The problem is there is not a secure site to put it in the website, it is web page and the URL and is not directly linked from our web page.

Mr. Mattox stated that he thinks putting the survey on the website would be helpful and give everyone an opportunity to respond. We can discard those surveys that are inappropriate.

Mr. Hunt stated this week has been interesting. We had PSAT's yesterday. The students were more into spirit week this year than in the 7 years he has been here. Each class has a certain color and certain part of the school to decorate. They absolutely took it very seriously. When you walk in the Commons you saw red which was the junior color, the senior commons was blue, the freshman was yellow and the sophomore was white. We had class meetings after the test, and then the pep rally that was quite spirited leading into an old fashioned elementary field day with all kinds of activities and competitions. Cooked hamburgers and hotdogs on the grill for those students and faculty who could stay after school for the Field Hockey game. Our children need that sometimes. They get wound pretty tight with the pressures they face everyday and the desires to do well in school and they need a day they can "hang loose". Friday will be our Homecoming Dance. As you know we started having it on Friday to get away from the Virginia Union football game that occurs on that Saturday. So this week was very special and everyone worked very hard to make it a good school spirit day. The students, faculty, staff and the PTSA went through a great deal to make that day a success.

Ms. Pettit wanted to revisit the topic of slot information again and asked, "Realizing that you have a maximum of 712 and now have 708 you have 4 slots there, could you talk to us a little bit about any other slots through attrition?" and "Is each district filling their allotment or are you finding that they falling back?"

Mr. Hunt replied that it is sometimes a struggle for the smaller divisions and some of them have decreased their slot allotment because they found out the demand is not there. On a consistent basis some are hesitant to do that because they fear in a year or two they will have more demand and would not be able to get their slots back. In most cases we still have a tremendous number of applications. If you remember last time this year we had 980 and 170 slots available. The policy is to replace anyone who moves or wants to go back to their home school and replace them with a freshman. That is a problem and I don't know how to get around that problem and it will continue to be a problem. One of the motivations that I have in initiating this is when I send out the slot information is for people will look at their individual cases and say here is what the demand is, here is how many applications we get a year, and to serve our population we need more slots, or we may have more slots that we need. So we need to look at this and drop back if appropriate. That is what we are looking for. Most of you are underserved. Most of you have more people that would like to come than can. We have had a consistent growth over the last 5 to 6 years we have gone from 585 to our current 708 which is a pretty rapid growth and has supported us financially. I think we need

to level off at this stage. TJ in Fairfax found that they could not level off. The state only supported 800 students with state money, and they are currently with 1800 students. The state has increased on their behalf to 1300 student that they support with state funds and 500 students who are not getting state funds. They are in a little different situation, as they are a Fairfax County School not a Regional School like we are and Appotomax is. Pat was sharing with me that in 1991 the slots went out according to student population on a percentage basis. I would hope every would be honest when reviewing your slots and let us know and especially the new director in making a new 5 year plan on how to handle this. We will do whatever your wishes are. If we need growth and find more space that is what will happen, but this is where we are now.

Mr. Mattox added this is important and unfortunately all of our Superintendents are not here today but I think the Superintendents and maybe through the Superintendents Steering Committee have some discussion regarding this and interject this in the meeting. In the past our Superintendent looked back and did an evaluation of the slots and came back to the Board on their recommendation of where they think they are and unfortunately they are the ones that need to hear this and definitely need to have this discussion in the Superintendent Steering meeting.

Mr. Hunt stated the problem with the Superintendent Steering meeting is it does not meet very often, with the next meeting at the end of December. We do have another board meeting rather quickly on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, so we will be coming back together. The ideal situation would be that Roy and Theresa sit down together and talk about this. One representing the Board and one representing the school administration and come up with something they both feel comfortable with. I would hope each one of you will sit down and spend time with your Superintendent and share this discussion with them and we will continue this discussion on the next Board meeting.

A request was made that when the memo is sent to the Superintendents that you also send a copy to the corresponding Board member as well. Mr. Hunt replied we would be more that happy to do so.

Ms. Pettit asked "When someone falls back and does not take their slot is there a deadline in which someone can replace them?"

Mr. Hunt replied in most situations we keep it open through the first semester.

Ms. Alexander – Hanover stated that they filled a slot this week. This has not been a problem for them but I don't know about the larger districts.

Mr. Hunt continued by saying it is not unusual for them to get students in September. It happens quite often through the summer to get new students. Sometimes we get students who move into a locality. The policy calls for them to be tested during the summer because they did not have a chance get tested

originally. Whatever their score is determines if they are put on the waiting list, they are not guaranteed a slot just on the list. When a slot becomes available if you have really high scores they maybe the first to come off the waiting list.

Mr. Geiger stated that the last time they did this there was a real interest in the smaller division growing population like New Kent. The demand started to increase and we have lived up to that. We have gone from 4 students to 8. There are different needs for different divisions. I don't know if we are ever going to come up with a perfect solution.

Mr. Hunt stated this is not meant to be a study, just talking about this should occur every year and we have been relaxed with that. I don't want anyone to rush and give up slots they may need. Not only are we looking for people who do want to add a slot or two but looking for people who say look we have 12 slots and we would be better suited with 9. We don't want to encourage that because that would be bothersome to us financially. I do think we have enough interest of the larger divisions that they could pick up any extra slots put out there; they have expressed interest in doing so.

Mr. Mattox stated that he has recalled in the past looking at their enrollment. The Superintendent Planning Committee in our district already had an idea of what they wanted to do. It is a planning process that is constantly happening in our division. Anyone who has a plan to reduce or increase if we put the memo out there is will come to the surface.

Ms. Pettit stated one final perspective on this and I don't know if it has been discussed not just an increase or decrease in slots, but how we are currently using the slots. Obviously Doug is filling them up pretty good but when someone falls back when you loose a student you also loose the state funds. I am wondering how often does that occur and how much of a loss that is and if no one fills that slot that also impacts your budget.

Mr. Hunt stated that it is very rare that this happens. September 30 deadline and we had 706 students in place out of 708. Mr. Tharp stated the average is \$2200.00 for each student. Usually we are on the mark. The deadline for new application is December 1<sup>st</sup>. We are currently doing middle school visits and each one of you handles that differently. Some of you handle it on your own, some of you have a fair, and some of you allow us to come into you schools. Whatever works for you is what we try to fulfill. It is an exhausting effort but you really feel good and in my case we are so proud of what we have and it is pleasure to stand and talk about something you feel good about. The turnouts have been very good. I usually do Henrico and Hanover. November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> we will have an open house and they will be coming here for an informational session and have any questions answered and then the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for applications. Testing dates are January 31<sup>st</sup>, which is a Saturday and the following Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Then about the third week of February the Metro Evaluation Committee about 100 educators come in to evaluate the applications.

The letters go out in March and then we get started on a new year. The process is well under way. We talked to a lot of people about this and appreciate the effort to get to word out. The handbook has all the dates in it, the contact information and criteria for selection. They are given to every applicant along with the schedule.

If you talk to Cathy and Becky they will tell you that the admissions review is under way and a lot of that information has been coming back to the gifted co-coordinator or people in your division have been contacted for information. Some is sensitive information. Sometime they are asking for information that we really can't deliver. I'm having a little fear that the statement will come back to us you weren't open and did not give them the information that was needed, but in most cases I think we can. The school has very little involvement in that, but I think some divisions are getting some contacts and are asking for some information that is hard to obtain.

Becky has stated that they have asked for quite a bit of information and is trying to be guarded on what she actually go out and create. A lot of documents I create are state documents, which are turned in and the public has access to those. Under the Information of Freedom Act if you create something then it is available. It is the intent that we go out and create new information. In doing so it is open to the public. Do we give them just what we have already have created? In addition to that do we go forth and create new documents that normally we would not do? An example would be a list of all the students who attend Maggie Walker. Were they identified as gifted in your home division and if so how were they served and what type of programs? I asked them how far back and they said 3 years. That would take quite a bit of time for me to go back and capture that information.

Mr. Axelle made a suggestion that if these concerns as a result of the survey especially within the divisions, they follow that up with the Superintendents or the Board members of each division on what information to give and what not to give. Now I think we are getting back to the divisions area versus regional. Just a suggestion maybe we follow up with the Superintendents and individual Board members from that district.

Mr. Mattox asked Becky "You mentioned that there were specific tasks they had requested, do you feel that the committee needs to at some point and time get back together and look at what is going on and interject some guidance on that or is it something a smaller group for example the Superintendents can get involved and facilitate that problems that may be occurring? What is your advice since you are dealing with this hands on?"

She responded by saying when she got the request yesterday she sent it to Dr. Roberson and Dr. Wilson and wanted you to have a heads up on the what I am being asked to supply. To me the question is simple and I could be wrong. Am I being asked to give them information that has already been created they have access to that. Do you want all of us as a group go out and create new information that normally that we would not be doing? To me that is the question. Cathy

stated she has spoken with Richmond, Hanover and Henrico and they all have similar concerns.

Ms. Pettit asked "How accurate would it be if you gave them the data you have created already?" Would it be sufficient to get what they need"?

Becky responded by saying that she would not have a problem with that.

Mr. Mattox asked "I don't want to lose sight of what we are trying to do and I don't want to lose sight of what they are trying to achieve. Is it any way possible for the individuals who are on the Planning Committee representing the big four possibly form a group regarding some of these requests? Is it anyway you can start communicating some of those requests to the Superintendents and if there are issues or problems concerning those requests have some person relay that information to us and look at some other alternatives? What advise can you give me as to what we need to do have a process that will eliminate not getting what they need but also getting some communication to them as to what we can provide?"

Becky's response is that Cathy is the Chair of the Planning Committee and she has taken that lead as far as communicating with everybody on Planning Committee. Perhaps Cathy can be the point person to filter and keep our Superintendents in touch as to what we will be releasing when concerns come up.

Mr. Mattox stated that if you don't feel comfortable that you have not gotten what you requested in a timely manner, I would ask that you contact as quickly as possible either myself or Doug and we will have a conversation and maybe sit down with the consultants again and remind them that communication is important aspect to have this be successful. We want to be at your disposal if you need us. If we need to come in and interject some energy or some movement on their part we could do that, because if they don't do what they need to do, you can't do what you need to do.

Mr. Hunt stated that early in the game they sent me a memo asking me to alert the Superintendents that they would be contacting the individual Principals of the schools and have the Superintendents name someone that would be that divisions representative for protocol and for reviewing the surveys that would go out and is sensitive to the fact they are dealing with 12 school divisions. I sent that out to the Superintendents and in many cases maybe Becky you were designated from the Superintendents. So I think they are aware that they are dealing with 12 different viewpoints. They are trying to do what is right and it is just a matter of getting done what they are charged to do and the enormous amount of work that is being put on their personnel.

## VII. Action Agenda Items

- a. Free Lunch Program 2008 - 2009



Mr. Tharp indicated the front page is a summary page. I contacted the 4 largest school divisions and spoke with their food service programs Richmond, Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico. This program is patterned after the Hanover school system in which Chesterfield has copied and has worked well in those two divisions. They do not offer the federal lunch program at the high school level, but does offer it at the elementary and middle school. They do not get reimbursed from the Federal Government for that. The piece that I got from Richmond City, because they do participate at all three levels do get reimbursed, but no one who participates in this program would get reimbursement from the Federal Government because Maggie Walker does not participate in the lunch program. So what I have put together following Hanover's application process is based on the qualifying parts. If it is a foster child, TANF, or if you are receiving food stamps. There is no other economic qualifier. It is a simplified application form. What I would propose is when the application came in it gives me the authorization to check with those services from those individual counties or cities to verify that they do receive the particular items that are listed. Upon verification then they would qualify for the meals program that we would offer. Appomatox Governor's School has a similar program and they are under the same guidelines of using these programs. What Dr. Ruffa does at the end of each month simply invoices the individual school divisions for those students who have qualified in that program and that school division reimburses him. The school divisions do not get a reimbursement back from the Federal Government this is all out of pocket for the participating school divisions. When we send out information at our interim level we will note the bottom of the report stating any student feeling they would qualify contact Valenta Williams. As of yet we have not received any request. We do feel that we have some students in the building who would qualify if they choose to do this. The individual cost per student would be \$792.00 a year if they were here every day. There are only have 4 days that we do not provide lunch and that is early release days. The \$450.00 that we charge is less than what Appomattox Regional School Board has approved for them which is \$525.00. I have talked with our food service and they are confident that they could track this program. We have a debit card system that we use. Their name would be on the back of the card and there would not be any distinction between the cards that would separate any student using this program from any other student. We feel we can track this by the name so when they go through the line a qualifying meal would be debited to them. At the end of each week if they did not participate in lunch one of those two days those debit cards can be recharged for an additional \$22.50. The cashier would simply pull that card and issue another card and the charge to that school division would only be for the amount that student used that week. I feel confident that we can track this with the limited number that we have following the procedures of Hanover and Chesterfield. Any sodas any desserts are out of pocket for those students. We have a combination meal that is offered at lunch time which is an entrée, vegetable or salad, and the drinks that would qualify would

be the 8oz. milk, or 20 oz. water. They would have to have a full qualifying meal. Our cashier would monitor what comes through and the maximum they could charge on the card per day is \$4.50 for a qualifying meal.

On motion by John Axelle, seconded by Diane Pettit the Board approved the Free lunch Program. Motion carried.

b. New Course Proposal for Fine Arts 2009 – 2010

On motion by Diane Pettit, seconded by Valarie Ayres the Board approved the new course. Motion carried.

VIII. Materials for Board Review

New Club Proposals

There are three for review.

IX. Information

a. Directors Search Verbal Report

This has already been done in the Directors Report. Mr. Axelle added that once we get the survey information and have public comment time our goal is to have the actual announcement put together based on everything we have gotten out in November with dates of January and February for interviews. Our goal is to come back to this Board at the February meeting with recommendation and the narrowing down of candidates. With final approval in March or April. Just to let the Board know there may be some expense associated with the interview process, advertisement, announcements, hotel for candidates from out of state, etc to be from \$3,000.00 to \$10, 000.00. It all depends on the final candidates.

Mr. Mattox added from the conference call they had there are some concerns on the financial aspect. Doug had budgeted \$3,000.00 for the Director's search. We will need to discuss this again in the November meeting from a budget standpoint.

b. Commercial Advertising of School Grounds Discussion

The Athletic Boosters has requested us to come forward for them to request commercial advertising within the city guidelines for zoning. Basically what they want to do is create some kind of sign; they have different sized signs and different amounts of money for each sign to hang in the gym, school or on the athletic field. We can maybe support our Athletic Booster group. Hanover has lots of signs available with different companies around their field and this is money that would help our athletic budget.

There should be strict guidelines of who we allow to have signs on the field. You may want the Foundation to set the guidelines and have them be the ones to say no instead of the school. A policy will protect you when one company who you would prefer not advertise on the field complains that you letting another advertise. If there is a policy in place then you would over a problem.

Mr. Mattox also stated we may want to contact legal council for those problems just mentioned. There may also be a need to contact the Planning Commission for the City of Richmond. If you could come back to the Board with a proposal we can start from there.

X. Superintendents' Steering Committee Meeting

XI. Closed Meeting

None

XII. Certification of Closed Meeting

None

XIII. Announcement

There being no further business to discuss, Motion by Diane Pettit, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

XIV. Next Meeting: December 18, 2008 at 9 a.m. MLWGS Board 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

  
Ivan Mattox, Chairman

  
N. Douglas Hunt, Director