

MINUTES

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

Wednesday, August 19, 2009

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

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.

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 Axselle, *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. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan 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. Becky Alexander for Dr. Stewart Roberson, Superintendent, Hanover
County Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, Superintendent, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, Superintendent, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Superintendent, Richmond Public Schools
Mr. N. Douglas Hunt, Director, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Mrs. Crystal Charity, Clerk, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Mrs. Barbara Marshall, Deputy Clerk, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Absent:

Mrs. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools
Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Mrs. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Linda Underwood, Superintendent, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Richard Layman, Superintendent, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. James Victory, Superintendent, Petersburg Public Schools
Position Not Filled, Superintendent, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, Superintendent, Powhatan Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, Superintendent, West Point Public Schools

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mr. John Axselle, with Mrs. Barbara Crawley and Mrs. Lisa Marshall abstaining, the minutes of the June 18, 2009 meeting were approved with the following changes:

Page 9, XIV, paragraph three will be changed to— *On motion by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, seconded by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, the Regional School Board in Student Case No. 080809 will not uphold the Director's recommendation for expulsion, but instead approves a modified expulsion through the first semester. Student Case No. 080809 may apply to this Board for reinstatement to Maggie L. Walker Governor's School after the first nine weeks of instruction is concluded with the following stipulations; must attend professional counseling specific to the offense, must complete 40 hours of community service related to the offense, and must provide proof of successfully completing the academic plan of studies for Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for a nine week modified expulsion term. Student Case No. 080809 may not participate in any school or school sponsored activities for 45 school days, or the length of the modified expulsion, whichever is greater. Finally, Student Case No. 080809 must appear before this Board prior to re-entering Maggie L. Walker Governor's School.*

Let the record reflect that Mrs. Lisa Marshall, School Board, and Mr. Fred Morton, Superintendent, both from Henrico County Public Schools, did not participate in the closed session for Student Case No. 080809.

On a vote of (7) yes, and (1) no (by Mr. John Axselle), the Regional School Board approves the action from the closed session described above.

Page 11, Superintendents Present will be changed to— *Dr. Robert Richardson for Dr. J. Roy Geiger, New Kent Public Schools.*

V. Public Comments

None

VI. Director's Report

Doug Hunt reported that the Planning Committee, (four members currently in attendance: Cathy Glenn – Chesterfield, Rodney Fout – Richmond City, Becky Alexander – Hanover, and Sheila Roalf – Prince George), have met three times over the summer to review the UVA, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, MLWGS Final School Report on Admissions with a plan to identify items that can be addressed in a timely manner and items that will be for long range consideration. The Planning Committee is formulating a response statement on the report recommendations and how they would affect MLWGS. Each Gifted Coordinator will then meet with their respective Superintendent to share the Committee's findings. The Superintendents can then collectively discuss the Committee's recommendations in their Steering Committee meeting and decide how the school will move forward.

Mr. Hunt stated that now that the Planning Committee has the report they want to consider ways to act on it because it is a very important item to be dealt with. The Committee wants to give as much support to the Board as they possibly can. With the Board's direction the Planning Committee will proceed as they see fit, but for a lack of some direction at this point, the Committee decided to study the report, attempt to condense the report, and to try to bring forward some recommendations for the Superintendents and the Regional Board.

Mr. Hunt called on Cathy Glenn as Chairman of the Committee for comments on their work. Mrs. Glenn advised that of the three meetings held, two were full day meetings and the third was a half day. She stated that the Planning Committee looked at the report in three sections: recruitment, the admissions process, and retention; and that the Committee also looked at the emphasis on the mission of the school, broke down recruitment to what needs to be worked on at the division level, and analyzed observations from the report. She also stated that the Planning Committee is studying the current assessment instruments and possible future options. They have looked at technical reports on those documents.

The Planning Committee applauds the Board for taking the steps to have this study. It is now time for the Committee to reflect on the report and bring something back to the Board. The Committee would like to extend their willingness to work collaboratively, with the direction of the Board, to take those recommendations and make them work. The Planning Committee will finalize their report at their September 15th meeting and will then submit it to the Board. If it is the Board's desire to work on the recommendations, then the

Planning Committee will come back with action steps/strategies, both short and long term, to accomplish our goals.

Mr. Hunt concluded that the one thing apparent to the various people working on the report is that this is a long term situation which needs to go back into elementary school for solutions to be effective. The report emphasizes 4th, 5th and 6th grade identification, and this can be verified by the phone calls to the school from parents with 2nd and 3rd graders who want to know ‘what do I need to do to get my child ready to be a MLWGS applicant?’ So people are thinking about it. Others don’t think about it until the 7th or 8th grade year, and they are obviously at a disadvantage because of the course work. The work will be done by this school to get information out, but the divisions must also get the word out at an early age.

Mr. Mattox questioned the need for outside help or resources to be involved prior to the Superintendent’s review.

In response, Mrs. Glenn stated that those involved currently work and have background experience in gifted education. Once the Planning Committee brings their report/work back to this Regional Board, it will be at the Board’s direction as to whether or not to form other committees or groups to look at sections of the UVA study. The Planning Committee is in the process of creating a response document for the Superintendents, as preparations for admissions for the next year have already begun. Some of the questions the Committee is looking into are what steps local divisions could take for recruitment and also what steps the Committee could take within that identification. She concluded with the Committee not having discussed bringing additional resources in at this time.

Mr. Mattox questioned Mrs. Glenn as to whether or not she feels that the Planning Committee can adequately look at the report and come back with recommendations, and from that does she think that the Board may need to bring in more resources to determine what steps we want to take as a Board. Mrs. Glenn responded that she does believe that the Committee can adequately come back to the Board with recommendations and that it would be appropriate to bring in additional resources if necessary.

As follow-up, Mr. Mattox asked Mrs. Glenn if she feels that the most effective analysis structure for the Planning Committee’s findings would be through an ad hoc or committee style group, such as that formed to determine the original RFP. Mr. Hunt clarified that the original committee was a representative group from all the stakeholders. Mrs. Glenn responded that she thinks an ad hoc or committee style group would be appropriate. Mrs. Glenn went on to state that the reason the Planning Committee has done this preliminary work so far is because it is actually stated in the by-laws that one of their primary responsibilities is the admission process as well as looking at curriculum; so

the Committee is doing the work they are responsible for, but the Committee would certainly welcome assistance from any other group(s) this Board feels is appropriate.

Mr. Axelle pointed out that the next logical step is for the Planning Committee to review the report, discuss it, and sit down with their Superintendents because there is a lot of expertise and good advice from these two groups. He stated that it would be beneficial for both to review it before it comes to the Board. He also stated that he thinks the Board would be remiss if they didn't take this path and would miss out on a lot of good input and advice from both groups in the process.

Dr. Janet Crawley pointed out that the Superintendents have not met as a group, but have communicated via email about this issue. The route the Superintendents have taken was to coordinate a meeting with the new MLWGS Director once he came on Board, so the work the Planning Committee is doing is very timely and will work well with what has been discussed.

Mrs. Litchfield questioned an identification system in this process for Mexican-American gifted students.

Mr. Phil Tharp, MLWGS Coordinator of Administration, shared that the state revision of the identification of students will go to 32 categories starting next year on a voluntary basis, but the following year will be mandatory. Any Hispanic component will be listed as Hispanic, regardless of the combination. The information Mrs. Litchfield wanted may not be available next year, but would the year after.

Mr. Mattox observed that the focus of what we are doing will cast a net out to many minorities and many children in general who will learn more about MLWGS and its opportunities for students.

Mrs. Glenn explained that the Planning Committee defines minority as traditionally under-represented populations, so that would include Hispanic students.

Mrs. Ayers inquired about a timeline for the Planning Committee report.

Mr. Mattox offered that factoring in a new director coming on Board, the work of the Planning Committee, and the Superintendent's input, we'll try to get insight on what a timeline could look like after the new director is in place. Together they can give the Board a feel for what a timeline will be.

Mrs. Pettitt stated that the Board needs to not be in a rush and needs to take their time to do things right which is the message that this Board would want

to send to anybody making inquiries. The Board has invested quite a bit of time and resources in the RFP and this study so it needs to be carefully examined by the Board. The Board is moving forward, but should not be put on such a timeline that things are rushed and not done well.

Mr. Axselle reiterated that the Board's agenda, and no other agenda, is the children.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Mattox asked Mr. Hunt to continue with the Director's report.

Mr. Hunt shared that the opening of school is moving in a positive direction. He noted in the coming events that the teachers report back on August 26th, with the department chairs already in place. New teachers will consist of 2 part-time faculty members, including one that is shared with Chesterfield County that is being contracted for his service. There are also 3 returning full-time teachers, which demonstrate consistency in the faculty. The new teacher academy will consist of some one-on-one time with the two part-time faculty members.

Mr. Morton has gotten permission from VRS to be at Maggie Walker next Wednesday to welcome the faculty in. Thursday and Friday is staff development. Tuesday, September 1st and Wednesday, September 2nd are freshmen orientation days, as well as early AP instruction. The first day of school is Tuesday, September 8th and the next Board meeting is September 17th.

Things are moving forward very well. Mr. Morton has shared some of his expertise with the administrators in getting ready for the year, so there should be a smooth transition on September 1st.

Mrs. Pettitt asked about staff development content.

Mr. Hunt explained that it is school related, applies to our students, and will help our students and school. The FIRC (Foundations of Independent Research & Communication) program will be a part of it as well as curriculum development within departments.

Mr. Hunt then directed the question to Mrs. Taylor for an exact content description.

Mrs. Taylor explained to the Board that the guiding documents used to structure our professional development were the state report which provided our school improvement plan and a needs survey built by the entire faculty. This fall will be spent tackling curriculum and working within departments to identify where they are in their school improvement plan and what their next

steps are before the mid-term evaluation report. Consultants are coming in to work with several departments. The Guidance Department is immersed in a project called 'Small Group Counseling Issues' and 'Counseling Minority Students'.

Mr. Hunt acknowledged the efforts of the departments on their curriculum development, sharing that several people worked over the summer. They are close to getting a document that the school would be proud to show to anyone.

Mrs. Taylor stated that the intent was to work with the curriculum specialists in the divisions and with DOE to support our report back to the state. Next month in the information section of the Board packet she will provide the Board with the outline of what was done for professional development.

Mr. Hunt reiterated that this is the interim year (mid-term) of our 6-year state evaluation cycle. He stated that, with Pat Taylor leading the charge and the help of department chairs and teachers, the school will have some things that are quite impressive and were created with curriculum developed from the state.

Mrs. Taylor acknowledged the contribution from curriculum specialists in the divisions who have assisted greatly over the last 3-4 years. In addition, she acknowledged the services of specialists in Fairfax County and Virginia Beach.

Mr. Mattox called for any other questions at this time.

Mrs. Marshall inquired about student fees in relation to families who are struggling in difficult economic times and whether or not the school has a payment plan option and has reached out to parents.

Mr. Hunt indicated that the school does not reach out in a general way; but the school is small enough that it is possible to identify students and families who may have those needs. Obviously there is more of a challenge with the freshmen, but the counselors, teachers, and administrators know the families. There are currently 5 students on the free lunch program so their need is automatically known. Maggie Walker relies on the divisions to inform the school about the freshmen, but each individual situation is addressed as it arises.

Mrs. Pettitt queried the community service component verses the ability to find projects for the students to fulfill their obligation.

Mr. Hunt responded that Maggie Walker often receives requests from organizations for volunteers and will advertise them to the students. The school and the Gifted Coordinators have addressed the students that have been

lagging behind to the point that this issue is now top of their agenda. He stated that he does not see a problem, but that Phil Tharp will respond to the question, as he deals with community service.

Mr. Tharp noted our annual Community Service Fair is held the first day of orientation and generally hosts over 40 vendors. Typically, service hours will qualify if the work is performed for a non-profit group. The Planning Committee is currently looking at this issue and probably will advise students that if their annual 35 hour obligation is not met, said student will be required to submit a plan on how they will complete their hours before returning to school at the beginning of each year or their position may be given away. The Planning Committee is working on language for this requirement at this time.

Mrs. Pettitt noted that issues for students do not arise from a lack of opportunity.

Mr. Hunt responded that the types of students that are sent to Maggie Walker are very responsible and very bright, but they sometimes will look for the easiest pass available. But, once they are told the rules, they respond. Now that the Planning Committee has made an issue of it with their students and an issue of it has been made as a school, he does not anticipate problems.

Mrs. Taylor also reminded the Board that in 1997 they formalized and acted on the criteria for a student to remain at this school. At that time there was no standard and advanced diploma, only the Maggie Walker diploma. Currently, a community service component is not needed for a standard diploma, and therein lays the problem. The Planning Committee is reviewing the school's academic statement and is putting language in to include the community service piece and will bring it to the Board for consideration as policy.

Mrs. Marshall shared that Henrico recently revised their community service policy posted (August 13th work session available on BoardDocs).

Mr. Mattox called for any other questions.

Fred Morton spoke to recognize the service of Mr. Hunt to this school and community. He stated that he and Doug spoke on several occasions over the summer and that he could not have asked for a more intelligent and supportive gentleman. Mr. Morton said, "It has reaffirmed that I'm going to have real trouble with my size 9 shoes stepping into those 24's. I would like to publicly thank him because he has been so very helpful assisting me to learn some things I need to know."

Mrs. Pettitt stated the Board would like to re-echo those comments. She stated, "I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Mr. Hunt. I remember when he came on board, he stabilized this community. He has great leadership

skills and a very balanced approach dealing with the parents and faculty that has produced a lot of success and confidence in the Governor's School. So we thank you very much, we enjoyed it, we will miss you; but we welcome Mr. Morton too."

Mrs. Taylor acknowledged Mr. Hunt's service as the longest term of any Director in Governor's School history. She stated, "Each director we had brought us a special gift, but Doug brought us some really special gifts that we were desperate for."

Cathy Glenn spoke on behalf of the Planning Committee to share that Mr. Hunt was not one to just run in the door, say hello, give a brief report and then run out. She stated that his input helped the Committee greatly and they appreciate his service.

Dr. Janet Crawley spoke on behalf of the Superintendents to state that Mr. Hunt has been an inspiration and they will truly miss him. She said, "You've always kept us abreast of everything by giving us detailed information. We know Mr. Morton will jump into those size 24's, but we certainly appreciate all that he's done."

Mr. Hunt expressed his appreciation by saying, "I've said it hundreds of times before, but it's been seven years of joy for me; wish it could be seven more. But, there's a time to come and a time to go, and I feel this is the right time. I'm really confident that Mr. Morton will do a great job. He knows this school. What encourages me more than anything else is he was so supportive of our school before he knew he was coming here. He brings a lot of global experience that this school needs and will welcome. It's a great place to be and I think it's in good shape, and I look forward to it growing and getting even better and with your support I know it will. We have great kids and this is a great school for them to be at. I told Mr. Morton that he's a very lucky man. I thank you for your support through the years."

Mr. Mattox took this opportunity to state that reality is setting in now that Doug is actually leaving. He said, "I've been on this Board for six years, and chair the last two. I want to echo the professionalism and problem solving abilities spoken of, and we've dealt with some. Mr. Hunt has had the ability to get in there and help this Board come up with solutions to issues we've had. He's always been about the children. I want to thank you Doug, because having someone like you gave me the will, with your encouragement, to serve as chair. You made the transition into this roll very easy and I will definitely miss you. I know I speak for this whole Board when I say that we appreciate all that you've done for this community, this Board, this school, and for the parents and students. I could go on and on. I thank whoever started this process allowing us this opportunity to formally publicly acknowledge Mr. Hunt's contributions."

Barbara Crawley contributed with “I say ditto to all.”

Mr. Axselle spoke to acknowledge his experience with Mr. Hunt. He stated, “Doug is a good man and everything that has been said about him, as everyone who knows him knows, has been accurate and true. He also made my transition into the chair position extremely smooth when I served. One of the things I must say is that in addition to the professionalism he brings is a care for the children; he’s just a good guy. He’s easy to work with because he’s personable.”

Mrs. Ayers added that during her time serving on this Board for the last nine years the time working with Mr. Hunt had been a pleasure. She stated that, “Doug is moral and ethical, which is something we need in all aspects of society today and he exudes that in everything he does every day. I have learned from you, Doug, and I will miss you; but also will call upon you.”

Mrs. Joan Yates, President of the PTSA, spoke on behalf of that group and offered their view that they could not have been more supported and assisted in every way. “Mr. Hunt’s open door policy to the PTSA, parent and students was greatly appreciated. We do, however; look forward to working with Mr. Morton.”

Mr. Hunt thanked everyone for their comments

VII. Action Agenda Items

a. Annual Certification of Crisis Plan

Mr. Hunt, with the assistance of Mr. Tharp, answered questions relating to the pandemic flu response section and communication with various school constituencies. Mr. Hunt confirmed that the plan has been reviewed, updated, and is current and requires the Board’s approval.

On motion by Mrs. Gwynn Litchfield, seconded by Mrs. Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved the updated the Crisis Plan for Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School.

b. Annual Board Authorization of Signatures in Absence of Division Superintendent – Fiscal Year 2010

Mr. Hunt explained that this document is an annual certification for the Department of Education which allows Mr. Tharp to sign documents in the absence of the Director. There being no discussion:

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mrs. Dianne Pettitt, the Board unanimously approved this certification for the Department of Education.

c. Personnel Action

Mr. Hunt stated that one of the actions listed would require this Board to go into closed session. The other is necessitated by a reassignment of duties in this building necessitating a request of this Board to change the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Board. We propose that Barbara Marshall be appointed as the School Board Clerk and Megan Marcinkevich be appointed as the Deputy School Board Clerk. This authorization will allow us to function better in service to this community.

Mrs. Pettitt asked if we could separate actions on this request; one to be voted on presently and one after closed session.

Mr. Mattox announced that a vote on this action item will be deferred until after closed session.

VIII. Material for Board Review

Mr. Hunt briefed the Board on a proposed new club sponsored by Mrs. Lisa Williams called the MLWGS Civic Society. Materials describing this activity are enclosed. A vote for your approval will be requested at the September meeting.

IX. Information

Newsweek 2009 Public Elite Press Release
Planning Committee Minutes April 21, 2009 and June 2, 2009

X. Superintendent's Steering Committee Meeting

None

XI. Closed Meeting

Mrs. Valarie Ayers moved that the Board enter into a closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, I move that this Board to into closed meeting to consider the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of the School Board, or for discussion, consideration, or interview of prospective candidates for employment. Mrs. Lisa Marshall seconded the motion, and the Board entered closed meeting.

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

Mrs. Lisa Marshall moved that the Board end the closed meeting; Mrs. Valarie Ayers seconded the motion and the Board entered regular session.

On motion by Mrs. Valarie Ayers, seconded by Mrs. Lisa Marshall, be it resolved that the Regional Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Regional Board.

The Board unanimously approved the Personnel Action described in item VII.c.

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

September 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