

MINUTES

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

Thursday, January 21, 2010

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Fred Morton, Director of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, 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:

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. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan Public Schools
Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
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. Richard Layman, **Superintendent**, King and Queen Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. James Victory, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point 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:

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. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Amended Agenda Request

Fred Morton requested an agenda change of order to accommodate teachers who are scheduled to present today before this board. On motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Barbara Crawley, an amended agenda was unanimously approved.

III. Election of Chairman

Nomination: Dianne Pettitt. With no other nominations, on motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Lisa Marshall, Dianne Pettitt was unanimously approved to serve as Chairman of this Board. The Chairmanship was turned over to Mrs. Pettitt.

IV. Election of Vice-Chairman

Nomination: Kenneth Pritchett. With no other nominations, on motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Barbara Crawley, Kenneth Pritchett was unanimously approved to serve as Vice-Chairman of this Board.

V. Election of Board Clerk and Deputy Clerk

Nomination: Barbara Marshall for Board Clerk and Megan Marcinkevich for Deputy Board Clerk. With no other nominations, on motion by Kimberly Gray, seconded by Barbara Crawley, Barbara Marshall and Megan Marcinkevich were unanimously approved to serve as Board Clerk and Deputy Clerk for this Board.

VI. Approval of Agenda

See action noted above on this page.

VII. Recognitions

Ivan Mattox was recognized with a commemorative gavel for his service to this Board as its Chairman for the last two years. Mr. Mattox stated that the seven years he has served on this Board have been one of his most fruitful experiences since becoming an elected School Board member and attributed this to the great people that have surrounded him. What has been learned here through exposure and experience has been taken back to his local School Board and benefited those that he serves. In conclusion, this has been a great experience on a great Board in a great institution.

Mrs. Barrett Brown, Chair – MLWGS Foreign Language Department, and Mr. Jeff Hall, Chair – MLWGS Fine Arts Department shared with the Board a slide show presentation on their educational/cultural exchange trip to China in December 2009. This opportunity was provided by College Board and The Hanban, with work by the National Superintendent's Organization and the GS Foundation.

Mrs. Brown stated that she and Jeff Hall were 2 of the 3 teachers in this group of 400, so they felt honored to be included. A recurring theme to their experience was ‘this is not what we expected.’

Highlights included:

- Confucius’ Temple
- Christmas Displays
- The Great Wall of China
- The Birds Nest
- Contemporary Chinese Art Market
- The New U.S. Embassy
- The International School of Beijing
- Great Food
- The City of Wuxi (U'shee)
- Flag Raising Ceremony in Tiananmen Square
- World Class Museums

Mrs. Brown described the team’s visit to a high-end high school in Wuxi and how she was surprised by the high tech educational opportunities in contrast to the low tech residential environment. She observed students in the Wuxi AP Program taking Physics and Calculus classes in English which is made possible because their students begin English classes right away in the elementary grades. She stated, “What I came away with was that these are the students ours will be competing with, not just those in the next district, county, or state. Secondly, expanding the learning of the Chinese language and understanding of the Chinese culture will not be achieved from our school alone. Meetings have already started with Chesterfield personnel on collaborations to take the next step.”

As a follow-up, Mrs. Pettitt asked about the Wuxi curriculum and what they study. Mrs. Brown stated that it is recognizable; however, not as an IB program, but as AP curriculum taught in English. What was not recognizable was the great emphasis placed on writing skills.

Mrs. Brown thanked the Board for this opportunity for herself and Jeff Hall.

Mr. Morton reminded the Board that this great opportunity was provided for our teachers at very little expense, as the trip is designed for educational leaders. At Maggie Walker the Department Chairs very much function as Central Office Curriculum Specialists and thus in this structure they unquestionably qualify. He also noted that the region focus next fall in Global Studies will be China.

Mrs. Pettitt requested a sharing of this experience and information as Regional Professional Development.

Mrs. Dawn Grois - Maggie Walker German Language Teacher, and students Kelsie Taylor (Chesterfield), Logan Ferrell (Chesterfield), and Niklas Philipsen (Richmond) gave a presentation on the upcoming State German Convention held at Maggie Walker on February 26 and 27, 2010.

Mrs. Grois introduced her student leaders to the Board. Kelsie Taylor presented an overview of the convention with the following highlights:

- They are expecting 200-300 students from across Virginia
- Opening dinner on Friday, February 26th
- Opening ceremony
- Opening Battle of the Brains type competition to test participant knowledge of German culture and society
- Dancing
- Opening ceremony on Saturday, February 27th with guest speaker, Professor Dan Hamilton, from Johns Hopkins University
- Series of 1 hour workshops
- Closing Battle of the Brains competition
- Closing remarks

Niklas Philipsen displayed web pages for the German Convention found at <http://mlwgsgerman.org/> noting this student created tool counters previous convention difficulties in getting information out to teachers, thereby increasing participation. This site allows for registration, provides information about Maggie Walker, gives directional maps, gives information about the Maggie Walker German program and the Virginia Organization of German Students, and much more. Niklas displayed the official Convention t-shirt entitled “Einigkeit” for Unity – bringing together the old and new, east and west.

Logan Ferrell explained that the convention theme of unity was not just the 20 year celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification, but represents multiple levels of unity. The convention brings students from all over the state of Virginia, all coming with a unified interest. There are Science, English, Technology, and Art presentations; things that unify every aspect of this school and bring it together around looking at the German language and culture as a tool for these students.

Logan continued, stating that this convention matters because of the concept of competition on a global scale. Logan read from notes he’d taken of remarks Dr. Newsome made during the last Chesterfield School Board meeting that “languages are the key for the 21st century student. It’s what brings the American student into the 21st century,” and stated that that’s exactly why they are here. This convention allows students to participate with the same language that unites them; classical poets to modern scientific innovators, and will increase their ability to get into the global market place. Logan stated, “We are recognizing our schools’ potential to serve as a gateway to the wider global community” and that “being a member of the global community is no longer a luxury; it’s a necessity.”

In conclusion, Mrs. Grois and her student representatives extended an invitation to each Board member and Superintendent to attend any or all portions of the Convention.

Prior to proceeding with the next piece of business, Mrs. Pettitt took a moment to thank Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Marcinkevich for their efforts to ensure the Board is fully prepared for each meeting.

VIII. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Barbara Crawley, with Dianne Pettitt abstaining, the minutes for December 17, 2009 were unanimously approved.

IX. Public Comments

Mrs. Pettitt reminded members of the public that the maximum time allowed for public comments is 30 minutes. Persons representing individuals are allowed 3 minutes. Persons representing groups are allowed 5 minutes. Public speakers must be signed up with the Board Clerk no later than 10:00am on the last business day prior to any regularly scheduled Board Meeting.

Mr. Paul Fleisher spoke representing the Richmond Peace Education Center and others.

“It’s been a while since you’ve heard my voice, although I’ve been here quite a bit. But I know that on your agenda today is an approval of the Administration’s proposal of how to address the UVA recommendations, and there are a couple of things that I would like to highlight. I have sent all of you a letter by email, and I have some copies in case any of you have not gotten it. (Copies were distributed and one will be retained in the permanent record of this meeting).

There are a couple of issues in the Maggie Walker Administration’s proposal that will be before you that I think need to be addressed and are not. I have addressed those in detail in my letter. First of all, I think the schools need to respond to the concern about the high stakes nature of the testing process. I was just talking to a parent about this last night and I’ve been thinking about our conversation ever since. Her son, in the next month, is going to spend four straight Saturdays at four different schools taking tests at each school and being evaluated. Very, very high pressure. And then it occurred to me, well all these schools are doing all these evaluations with students, and here at Maggie Walker we have this wonderful example of regionalism, I wonder if there might be some way to both lower the pressure to make...well first of all the experience ought to be a learning experience, there ought to be some experiential learning and not just a test when kids come here to be evaluated. But beyond that, here we have a bunch of public schools, all in the same region, all evaluating the students, all trying to find out...giving them tests for their ability and tests for their achievement; I wonder if some of that might be shared and particularly at a time when people are looking at ways to save a little money because budgets are so tight. That might be something that would be worth exploring so that a student wouldn’t have to take a test three different times for three different schools or perhaps the schools could agree on one test that would work for all. College applications these days now do a general essay so a student doesn’t have to write five different essays to apply to five different schools. But there is a single essay that then goes to all those schools. So I would

encourage you to think about this. I just thought about this last night, but it seems like a possibility.

The second concern is even more serious. The UVA Study says that using a matrix score, combining student scores into a single matrix score, is not best practice. It's not even good practice, quoting the study now. But that issue is not being addressed at all in the proposal before you. Somehow, it's important to gather all the data about each individual student, but then you clump it all together into one single number, you lose... and then you make the decision based on that one number, you lose all that detailed information about the student. In addition, what happens is, because of the statistical facts of it, you get percentage points, and percentage points have no statistical significance. A student gets a 87.3 might get in, while a student scoring an 87.1 might not get in at all or gets on the wait list, and there is no statistical difference between the two.

So I would encourage you, in sum; encourage you before you accept the Administrations' proposals to request that those two issues be addressed and that some adjustments be made so that those two critical issues that the UVA Study looks at be addressed in the school's final adopted procedure. Thank you."

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mr. Fleischer for his statement and suggested that, in the future, if he has any remarks for which he would like the Board to consider action, it would be helpful if he could also provide a written version. Mr. Fleischer responded that the issues he addressed were noted within the content of the letter each Board member received through email and distribution today.

Mrs. Debbie Sawyer spoke representing the MLWGS PTSA.

"Good morning, my name is Debbie Sawyer, and I am the parent of three Maggie Walker students, one currently a Junior. I serve as the Auction Committee Chair, and if you heard, last year we raised \$70,000 for the school. This year I don't know if we'll make that much, but any dollar we make will be more than we had before March 6th. So, I would like to extend an invitation to all of you to attend the auction at the Acca Temple."

Mrs. Sawyer distributed invitations to this event to the Board.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mrs. Sawyer and asked if there are any others in attendance wishing to address the Board during Public Comments.

"I didn't sign up, but my name is **Vicki Tito**, and I'm a parent of a current senior, and I just wanted to give you anecdotal evidence that what Mr. Fleischer just talked about on the single matrix thing really is affecting students. I have a daughter who is a sophomore and people were frankly shocked; people, friends, parents would come to me 'I could not believe Claire did not either flat out get into Governor's School or at least was high up on the wait list.' She was on the wait list; she wasn't high enough to get in. But when I went to, by the way I'm from Henrico County, when I went to discuss why, what happened with Mrs. Williams; it was true, the people that got in, it goes to the hundredth thing, and there is no... there has got be some other way to do it. I don't know; I don't know what the answer

is, but what he says is true in terms of... She is very happy where she is, but I know what happens here academically, and let me tell you it doesn't compare. The Honors Programs in the regular schools, just the whole atmosphere doesn't compare to what she would have had here. But, like I said she is very happy and she's obviously excelling in her school."

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mrs. Tito for sharing her personal story.

X. Director's Report

Mr. Morton updated the Board on the following matters:

- The recent tragedy in Haiti has a MWLGS connection. Danny Yates, Class of 2009, was in the country when the quake occurred doing relief work. Danny arrived home safely, much to the relief of his family and friends, and will resume his studies at William & Mary.
- Progress of Mrs. Pat Taylor's recovery. He stated that she is recovering well from knee surgery and is anxious to return back to school soon.
- While collaborating with the Superintendent's Steering Committee, Maggie Walker is working towards a 6% reduction target, and is anticipating presenting this to the Board in February for review. The starting budget target has one underlying budget category that we will seek to ensure; to make decisions that do not reduce classroom support and learning for our students. One of the challenges faced is a significant number of single section classes because of the size of the school and the requirement of 30 credits for graduation. MLWGS will be looking carefully at classroom staffing.
- Prospective Student Testing is scheduled for January 30th and February 6th. Currently there are 1,130 students scheduled, which is approximately 200 more than the school has ever had, so obviously there continues to be interest in the program. Maggie Walker expanded its outreach this past fall, particularly in Chesterfield, with the assistance of Dr. Newsome and Mrs. Pettitt. Maggie Walker will be utilizing a new selection of tests and the timing will be different and vary in length. The PTSA will be providing refreshments during a longer mid-morning break that students can purchase.
- Upcoming Events listed on pages 24 and 25 of Board packet. Exams are scheduled for January 28th and 29th and February 1st and 2nd.
- Mrs. Pettitt requested an update on the Friends of Virginia Governor's School lobby date at the General Assembly on February 8th. This activity is sponsored by FOVGS and brings students from each Governor's School across the state to meet with their representatives at the General Assembly. Maggie Walker will provide support for this event in the way of transportation to the GA. House Room #3 is the designated gathering site. Students will be served a mid-day lunch. A top goal of FOVGS is for every delegate to have a personal contact from a governor's school

student from their district. Another goal is to lobby to maintain the level funding that was in the Governor's introduced budget.

- The budget that will be brought to the Board in February comprises 80% of Maggie Walker funding from the localities and 20% from the state. Careful planning must be utilized to manage a reduction from the state, coupled by a deduction in state funding to localities, which translates to a double reduction on state revenue to MLWGS. The Superintendent's have helped guide MLWGS's team, and it is believed that 6% is a fair starting target.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mr. Morton for his report and commented that students are always the best spokespeople for the schools, noting how effective it is when Maggie Walker students speak to the Chesterfield School Board as an example.

XI. Action Items

a. Proposed Calendar of Meetings

Mrs. Pettitt directed the Board to refer to page 28 for review of the proposed 2010-2011 Calendar of Meetings. Discussion followed concerning changing the following:

Proposed Date Change for February 18th: Possible conflict with VSBA Legislative Conference. After discussion it was decided that no change was required for February.

Proposed Date Change for June 17th: Possible conflict with various graduation schedules. After discussion the Board moved this date to **June 24th**.

Proposed Date Change for July 15th: After discussion, the Board **eliminated** this meeting from the calendar.

Proposed Date Change for August 19th: Possible conflict with VSBA Hot Topics Conference. After discussion it was decided to move this meeting to **Tuesday, August 17th**.

On motion by Ivan Mattox, seconded by Gwyn Litchfield, the Board unanimously approved the 2010-2011 Calendar of Meetings with the above noted changes.

b. UVA Study – Report Recommendations

Mr. Morton distributed an abbreviated version of recommendations previously provided to this Board at the December 17, 2009 meeting. This document will be emailed to each Board member and posted to the MLWGS website at the conclusion of this meeting. A copy of this document will also be retained in the permanent record of this meeting.

Today's request for Board approval covers the current actions being taken and for MLWGS to plan to complete the future action recommendations. Noted are bullets 3 and 4 under Future Plans on page 32 of this packet: 3) Analyzing the selection process category

distribution weights to ensure appropriate balance, and 4) Identifying alternative assessments to enhance the reliability of the selection process. The Planning Committee and Maggie Walker Administration felt these items would need more time to make an appropriate analysis and may require contacting various experts.

After approval from this Board, the next actions would be to work with the Planning Committee, but right now their plate is completely full with the admissions process. A working timeframe would begin at either the March or April Planning Committee meeting, where they would then take these pieces, put timelines to them, determine who will do what, and prioritize. However, the assessment piece would clearly be one that would be on the front burner.

Mrs. Gray questioned if it is possible to determine if there was a way to pull scores for students who are taking the same or multiple tests.

Mr. Morton responded that that would have to be a regional conversation, but noted that each of the assessments serves different purposes. However, there may be ways to look at part of the assessments that may be common, for example a common writing sample. But, as indicated last fall and again in June when the study was presented, there are some people who want to game the assessments to gain an unfair advantage. As a reminder, the assessments given this year will be unidentified, the covers will be removed, and they will be numbered for security purposes. While worthy of discussion in places where it might be fit, the Board should look to the Superintendent's Steering Committee for direction on this issue.

Mrs. Marshall observed that while colleges are now using a common application, every school still had their own supplemental essays looking for an interest particular to their program.

Mr. Morton stated one of the things to be looked at will be teacher recommendations.

As a follow-up, Mr. Morton was queried about an interview component to this process. He stated that it had not yet been considered in initial conversations, but the problem is who would do them and how many there would be. Personnel would require training to insure validity and reliability and there would have to be a great deal of interviewers for 1,100 students. University admissions have personnel that do nothing but that full time, and Maggie Walker does not have that kind of structure.

Dr. Richardson mentioned that many universities and colleges have done away with the interview and it is no longer part of the application process because of the subjectivity factor, not to mention the degree to which it is labor intensive. The issue of inter-rater liability, how one person views one applicant compared to another, is potentially problematic.

Mr. Axelle commended Mr. Morton, the Planning Committee, and the Superintendent's Steering Committee for taking the time to look at this issue in a deeper, thoughtful manner.

He stated that at times some tend to forget that this school is a regional institution with twelve districts, regional involvement, and that things don't always happen quickly.

Mrs. Pettitt requested that the Board be updated on this matter after the March or April Planning Committee meeting, with a target review in May.

There being no further comments, on motion by John Axselle, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the Board unanimously approved current efforts and future plans as listed in the Recommendation Report for the University of Virginia Study, December 17, 2009.

c. Personnel

Mrs. Sarah Dwelle, Global Studies Department, is requesting a leave of absence February 16, 2010 through June 23, 2010. Her class load during this absence will be split between one long term substitute (Sam Ulmschneider) and one current part-time employee (Libby Germer).

On motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by Barbara Crawley, the Board unanimously approved the leave of absence request for Sarah Dwelle.

XII. Materials for Board Review

In your packets are draft copies of the FY2004 – FY2008 audits. These audits have not previously been before the Board and Maggie Walker is catching up as required. Mr. Morton thanked Phil Tharp for his assistance and work with KPMG to complete these audits. Mr. Churchman of KPMG will attend the February meeting to respond to any questions the Board may have, and members of the Board are asked to review this information and feel free to ask whatever questions you may have.

The Board will vote on FY2004-FY2008 audit approval at the February meeting.

The FY2009 audit draft will be presented during the February for your review. Approval for this audit will be requested in March.

XIII. Informational Items Provided

Planning Committee Minutes from December 8, 2009

MLWGS News Items:

Alumna Published Political Science Text

Uruguay Teacher to Visit MLWGS

XIV. Superintendent's Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. Newsome stated that he was honored to be selected as the Chairman for the Superintendent's Steering Committee serving with a two year term. Dr. Linda Underwood was elected as the Vice-Chair for this committee.

With this report, Dr. Newsome clarified concerns generated from recent reports in the local papers about Chesterfield's support for Maggie Walker. Three to four school divisions surveyed their employees to get budget input, but only Chesterfield's was reported. The items reported for budget reduction weren't necessarily items that were recommended by the Superintendent, but were items that have been discussed by members of the community. In Chesterfield, support for the Governor's Schools has been discussed for the past couple of years so there was an obligation to include them. Dr. Newsome stated that last week at the Appomattox Governor's School Board meeting he gave them a glimpse of Chesterfield's budget which did not include the district's withdrawal of support from any of the regional programs. In the Steering Committee it was agreed to withhold 6% from the regional programs, but as Fred Morton appropriately reminded us, this process is long from being over.

Lastly, Dr. Newsome reported on the Region One Superintendent's Professional Development Consortium summit held last night with Ian Jukes focusing on the 21st Century Learner and the Digital Age Learner. Approximately 10-11 school divisions were represented, along with Maggie Walker Administrators.

XV. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XVII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

XVIII. Next Meeting

February 18, 2010 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman

Fred S. Morton IV, Director

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk