

MINUTES

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

Thursday, May 20, 2010

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Dianne Pettitt, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional School 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, *School Board*, Charles City Public Schools for Mrs. Barbara Crawley, *School Board*

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. Teresa Lindsay, *School Board*, New Kent Public Schools

Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, *School Board*, Petersburg Public Schools

Mrs. Valarie Ayers, *School Board*, Powhatan County Public Schools

Ms. Kimberly Gray, *School Board*, Richmond Public Schools

Mrs. Dudley Olsson, *School Board*, West Point Public Schools

Mr. Ed Walent, Director of Instructional Support, for Dr. Marcus J. Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Mrs. Connie Foreman, Gifted Education Director, for Dr. Linda Underwood, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools

Dr. Rosemarie Stocky, Director of Instructional Support, for Dr. Stewart Roberson, **Superintendent**, Hanover 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. Victoria Oakley, Chief Academic Officer, for Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools

Mr. Fred S. Morton IV, **Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Mrs. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Mrs. Megan Marcinkevich, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Absent:

Mr. Robert Cox, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools

Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Jeffrey Smith, **Superintendent**, West Point Public Schools

Also present:

Patti Chappell, Pat Taylor, Barrett Brown, and Sharon Parker - MLWGS Staff, Bill Yates, Debbie Sawyer and Roxanne Sawchak– MLWGS Parents, Hall Waller - GS Foundation, Danny Yates – Class of 2009, Sarah Wilson – Director of Development for St. Margaret’s School, and MLWGS students Staige Davis, Kelsie Taylor, Sarah Davidson, Ishani Premaratne.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Ivan Mattox, the agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Kenneth Pritchett, seconded by Gwynn Litchfield, the minutes of April 15, 2010 were unanimously approved.

V. Recognitions

Mrs. Roxanne Sawchak, MLWGS parent, was recognized by Mrs. Pettitt, Mr. Morton, and Mrs. Debbie Sawyer, for her numerous contributions to this school; including countless hours developing the PTSA Night of the Dragon Auction on-line catalog and spearheading the weekly Smoke & Scales newsletter single-handedly.

Dr. Richard Layman, Retiring Superintendent, was recognized for his contributions to MLWGS and this Board serving from 2003-2006 and also from 2007-2010. Dr. Layman thanked the Board and stated that it has been an honor to serve and be a part of MLWGS. He related a brief history of an initial conceptual meeting about the future MLWGS from July 7, 1988 when he was Director of Secondary Education for the Virginia Department of Education. At that meeting, a focus for the school was decided, that being government and international studies.

Dr. James Victory, Retiring Superintendent, was recognized for his contributions to MLWGS and this Board serving from 2007-2010. Dr. Victory thanked the Board for this recognition, but more importantly, for what they do to extend opportunities for students, not only from each member’s home district, but specifically the children from Petersburg. Dr. Victory stated that “MLWGS and this Board are doing wonderful things for our youth; stay the course, continue doing what you’re doing.”

College Sponsored National Merit Scholar – Niklas Philipsen (not in attendance) was verbally recognized for this award from George Washington University.

National Latin Exam Perfect Score – Natalie Bruno was recognized for this rare achievement as one of only 568 students achieving a perfect score out of more than 138,000 worldwide who participated in this exam. Teachers, Dr. Cliff Broeniman and Mr. Steven Ross, were in attendance for this recognition.

2010 Benjamin Cooper Academic Ambassador Award by PACE – Sarah Angelo was recognized as the recipient of this national award from the Partnership for Academic Competition and Excellence for her outstanding work to enhance and expand the quiz bowl circuit competition throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Teacher, Dr. John Barnes, was in attendance for this recognition.

Moody's Mega Math Challenge – a team of five seniors from MLWGS took 3rd place and won \$10,000 in scholarship money at this national challenge which took place in New York City on April 28th. The competition challenges students to apply mathematics to a real-world topic, this year's being: "The US Census, Including Making Recommendations for Undercount Adjustment and for Apportioning the US House of Representatives." A total of 531 teams submitted papers and six teams were chosen to present their results for top prizes. Students who participated are Susan Ballentine, Will Farmer, Ashish Makadia, Cody Talmadge and Eric Taylor. Teachers, Dr. John Barnes and Mrs. Kristine Chiodo, were in attendance for this recognition.

VHSL State Forensics Winner – Ishani Premaratne was recognized for her performance in Poetry Interpretation at this competition. Teacher, Mrs. Cecilia Boswell, was in attendance for this recognition.

We the People – 3rd at National Championship. The 2010 team continues the school streak making this finish the twelfth consecutive top ten in the nation, which is also the longest winning streak in the United States. This team prepared for one year to participate in vigorous debate with scholars, attorneys, and judges in a broad range of topics relating to American government and constitutionalism. The team was comprised of the following students: Katie Ardoff, Mitch Caudill, Kyle Herman, Elaine Hillgrove, Travis McCall, Maryam Patton, Kimberly Quick, Eric Sawchak, Elsa Schultze, Kelsie Taylor, Emily Qiu, Melissa Bearden, James Billard, Staige Davis, Delia Gray, Ben Kenzer, Dylan Kolhoff, Dallen McNerney, Jocelyn Powelson and Charlie Shobe. Teacher and sponsor Mr. Matt McGuire was in attendance for this recognition. Mrs. Pettitt acknowledged the team's winning plaque, which will be displayed in the main office.

VI. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes (in 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, not later than 10:00am on the last business day before the meeting at which they desire to be heard.

Danny Yates, MLWGS Class of 2009, spoke about his experience in Haiti during the January 2010 earthquake, and his current efforts to assist Haitian students with finding a school in the United States to assist in furthering their education. Danny credited MLWGS for providing him with the network of support that has helped him in his efforts, as well as the French Language program for contributing to his overall success with these efforts. Danny distributed his contact information for anyone interested in getting involved in this project.

Mrs. Marshall, Ms. Gray, and Mrs. Pettitt all spoke to the dedication that Danny has exhibited with these efforts and how he exemplifies the caliber of students produced at MLWGS. Ms. Gray noted that Danny's organization was short of their funding goal of \$100,000 by only \$15,000.

VII. Director's Report

Mr. Morton updated the following activities for the Board:

- **Faculty Selected to Present at Morehouse College.** Sherri Arnold, Joy Davis, and Lisa Williams were selected by College Board to present at a national conference for educators at Morehouse College in Atlanta. Their proposal "Establishing and Maintaining Excellence among Gifted African American Students" addressed the many complexities of gifted education; including identification of exceptionalism, strategies on developing mentorship, soliciting community and parent support, and devising a culturally diverse curriculum.
- **Newtowne Tutoring Project.** Sponsored by Mrs. Barrett Brown for the last 7-8 years, the Newtowne Tutoring Project is a student-led, student-organized outreach program involving MLWGS student volunteers and neighborhood students who come once a week after school for help with their respective school work. Student leaders, Kelsie Taylor, Staige Davis, and Sarah Davidson explained the logistics of this activity. Ms. Davis discussed the importance of bolstering interaction with students from our most immediate community (Newtowne). She indicated that many of these students did not know that Maggie Walker was an option for them, and that it is important to plant the seed of possibility that one day they too could come to Maggie Walker as students.

Mrs. Pettitt inquired about the total number of students involved in this activity and was informed that we have approximately 30-40 student tutors with an equal number of students, K-8, that regularly attend.

Mr. Ivan Mattox asked how the students that attend are identified, with the student leaders explaining that they are invited by contacting school guidance departments (especially Fox and Carver). Once a student attends they tend to return year after year, sometimes bringing other siblings or friends.

Mrs. Pettitt followed this question with one about the tutors interacting with mentored students' parents. The leadership team explained that it does happen on

occasion, and that the parents are very supportive of this program. Mrs. Pettitt stated that it would be wonderful if one or more of those youngsters attends MLWGS in the future.

- **French Exchange.** Mrs. Barrett Brown shared experiences and pictures from the April trip to St. Jory, France with twelve students and Mr. Jeff Hall as Co-Teacher Sponsor. This was the first French Exchange completed by MLWGS in several years and proved to be an enriching, successful experience.

French students and their teachers were due to arrive in Richmond on April 16th, but were delayed until late May by the eruption of the Iceland volcano.

Mr. Morton discussed the early planning stages of the exchange which involved parent and student meetings to state the school's expectations and to reinforce that should those expectations be violated, there will be specific consequences. However, everyone understood that this was an incredible opportunity and Mr. Morton expressed his desire to work collaboratively with the Board to continue to promote international exchanges.

As a management issue, Mr. Morton stated that he is aware of MLWGS staff members taking international student trips on their own, and as in the local school districts, organizational meetings for these trips occur off-campus. While this makes sense for the divisions, it creates an added problem regarding fairness of access for learning about these activities when our students come from several thousand square miles. Mr. Morton has worked with the Superintendent's and school attorney Pat Lacy, and determined that MLWGS staff can be allowed to conduct their organizational meetings at MLWGS as long as any paperwork clearly states that this activity was not school-sponsored.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mrs. Brown for her efforts coordinating and directing this exchange and to the students who traveled and were good ambassadors for MLWGS.

- **Senior Showcase.** Sharon Parker, Mentorship/Senior Seminar Coordinator presented information and a sample video of a previous Senior Showcase for Board members. This is the culminating activity for seniors to communicate their year-long research to an audience in a professionally appropriate manner. The entire student body is involved and selects the presentations that they are interested in attending. Senior Showcase is scheduled for Wednesday, June 9th.

Mrs. Pettitt requested that invitations to this event be extended to all School Board members of the participating divisions in an effort to better educate them about MLWGS. Mr. Morton responded, stating that he would forward a digital version of the Showcase program to the Superintendent's for distribution to their Board.

- **The Return of Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein** to MLWGS on May 24th. Reception at 6:00pm, public program at 6:30pm. Ambassador Klein will speak

about the role of the UN in negotiating peace and the pursuit of justice in areas such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

- **Policy Manual**. Mr. Morton will be working over the coming year to develop a MLWGS Policy Manual, with cooperation and assistance from the school divisions. He anticipates bringing this topic to the Board in June for formal discussion.
- **Coordinator for Curriculum & Instruction Position**. 56 individuals submitted applications to Chesterfield, which provided the initial support for this opening, with the cut-off date occurring last Friday. Mr. Morton stated that the process is continuing and that there is a very strong pool to choose from. Mr. Morton is anticipating having a recommendation for this Board at the June meeting.
- **Enhancing MLWGS's Relationship with the Science Museum of Virginia**. Mr. Morton is in the developing stages of expanding and extending MLWGS's relationship with the Science Museum of Virginia. During an initial meeting with Mr. Rich Conti, Executive Director, they discussed topics such as MLWGS students becoming involved on a deeper level to help the Museum do outreach to the twelve school divisions. Approximately 40-50 MLWGS students each year earn a portion of their community service from volunteering at the Museum. The Museum also offers resources such as scientists, equipment, and materials that would prove to be a valuable resource for MLWGS classrooms. Finally, as the school has outgrown its current auction location, Mr. Morton is also exploring the possibility of hosting future auctions at the Museum.
- **Coming Events** are included in each packet on pages 18 through 19 for review. Mr. Morton noted the following activities: Junior/Senior Prom on May 22nd, SADD Assembly on May 1st, New Incoming Parent Information Night on June 2nd, Senior Showcase on June 9th, and Graduation at the Landmark on June 18th.

Mrs. Pettitt thanked Mr. Morton for his thorough report and noted her appreciation for the efforts to move Maggie Walker to another level in regards to organization with policies and partnerships, reaching out to parents, and re-starting the international programs.

VIII. Action Items

a. Personnel

There being no questions or discussion regarding the personnel action detailed on page 20 in the Board packet, on motion by Ivan Mattox, seconded by John Axselle, the resignation/retirement of Mrs. Connie Schuler and the appointment of Timothy Donahue were unanimously approved.

b. The Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Foundation Board Approval

Mrs. Pettitt inquired about the length of service for Board members. Mr. Hal Waller reported that the length of service is 3 years, renewable to six. There being no additional questions regarding this annual consent item listed on pages 22 through 24 in the Board packet, on motion by Lisa Marshall, seconded by John Axselle, the 2010-2011 Board of Directors for the MLWGS Foundation was unanimously approved.

IX. Materials for Board Review

a. New Honor Society

Information was provided to the Board on the proposed Tri-M Music Honor Society, to be sponsored by Karl von Klein. Board approval for this Society will be sought at the June meeting.

b. Academic Standards & Community Service Policy

Originally adopted by the Regional School Board in 1997, with community service reviewed in 2001, documents attached on pages 33-37 list the original policy and attached procedures and community service processes. The proposed policy and procedures submitted have been reviewed by the Planning Committee and the Superintendent’s Steering Committee. Text in black print refers to the original documents and red indicates the recommended changes and separates policy from procedural functions. Mr. Morton clarified that page 33 would be the action piece sought for approval in June, with pages 34-37 provided as background information and for Board information. Noted for correction, on page 35, under Step 2, 3rd line, change the number 78 to 61 (this data will be corrected for June submission).

Mr. Morton also suggested that the Board consider revisiting community service as a graduation requirement for Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School and that work begin with the State Board of Education for a clarification of said requirement. Mr. Morton stated that he is attempting to find a copy of the original school charter and the final one from when the school was moved from Thomas Jefferson High School to the Maggie Walker building, but has not found an original version as of this meeting. Dr. Layman indicated that he might have a copy in his vast arsenal of files and would attempt to locate it.

In the past, if a MLWGS student did not fulfill their community service requirement they were issued a standard diploma. Mr. Morton stated that, in his opinion, if this is expected as part of the graduation requirements and the student hasn’t met that requirement; that student should not graduate.

Mrs. Marshall asked if the intention is that approval of this policy would affirmatively resolve the issue and eliminate any ambiguity. Mr. Morton confirmed that point, stating that it is currently a requirement for a Maggie Walker Governor’s School diploma, but the issue still needs to be resolved with the Board of Education. On a positive note, after

several meetings with current seniors by both the Director and Senior Guidance Counselors, those students who were low on their community service hours have all completed their requirements.

X. Informational Items Provided

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, April 22, 2010
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes, January 12, 2010

MLWGS News Items:

- Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein, May 24, 2010
- Friends of VA Governor's Schools Annual Report, April 2010
- Mention in RTD Article by Guest Columnist: Vision for a Shared Community
- Moody's Mega Math Challenge Press Release
- We The People

XI. Superintendent's Steering Committee Meeting

None

XII. Closed Meeting

None

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

None

XIV. Adjournment

The Chairman asked for any additional questions or discussion from the Board.

Gwynn Litchfield suggested that future consideration of community service might include a plan that has MLWGS students visit some of the divisions, particularly the smaller rural schools, and address the younger students on academic excellence and what it means to do well in school.

Ivan Mattox inquired about the status of the UVA study recommendations. He was thanked by Mr. Morton for his inquiry, noting the Planning Committee has a meeting scheduled this month to put that information before the Superintendent's and plans to bring a set of recommendations, structure and timelines to this Board in June. Mrs. Marshall pointed out that work planned to complete a policy and/or procedure manual will be very helpful when issues result from these recommendations. Should a school district have admission or qualification questions from participating families, it is very helpful to a school board member to have these issues codified. Mr. Morton's view is that 80-85% of the work would be perfunctory, but 15-20% would require much deeper work and discussion to make

the process clear. Mr. Pettitt agreed, and suggested this Board may want to establish a process for policy review and possibly establish a committee, or should members deem appropriate, work only during regular meetings. She stated the work is intense and would require a large commitment. In the meantime, the Chair asked Board members to review how policy is set in their respective divisions.

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

XV. Next Meeting

June 24, 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