

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

Thursday, March 21, 2013

9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Kenneth Pritchett, Chairman of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board, called the meeting to order in the auditorium.

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 Smith, *School Board*, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Mr. Kevin Hazzard, *School Board*, Goochland County Public Schools
Mr. John Axselle, *School Board*, Hanover County Public Schools (late arrival)
Mr. John Montgomery, Jr., *School Board*, Henrico County Public Schools
Ms. Cora Armstrong, *School Board*, King & Queen Public Schools
Mrs. Sarah Grier Barber, *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 (late arrival)
Dr. Janet Crawley, **Superintendent**, Charles City Public Schools
Dr. Marcus Newsome, **Superintendent**, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Dr. Pete Gretz, Assistant Superintendent for Dr. James Lane, **Superintendent**,
Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Jamelle Wilson, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools (late arrival)
Dr. Pat Russo, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Mr. Charles Clare, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Dr. Joseph Melvin, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Bobby Browder, **Superintendent**, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, **Superintendent**, Richmond Public Schools
Mr. Jeffrey McGee, **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 from Meeting:

Mr. Jerry Warren, *School Board*, Prince George Public Schools
Dr. Robert Richardson, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Dr. Margaret Meara, **Superintendent**, Powhatan County Public Schools

Also present:

Phil Tharp, Wendy Ellis, Patti Chappell, Karen Hoover and Michele Surat – MLWGS
Others: too numerous to list.

III. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Barbara Crawley, seconded by Valarie Ayers; the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion by Dianne Smith, seconded by Cora Armstrong, minutes as submitted for February 21, 2013 were unanimously approved.

V. Recognitions

In absentia: Diana Winston, Regional School Board, 2011-2012.

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.

Note: Audio quality is poor during house comments due to the projection of the speaker. Portions of remarks were unintelligible and denoted by _____

Brian Walter (Chesterfield), representing **EduPac** addressed the Board stating, "Good morning. Mr. Chairman and members of the Regional School Board, my name is Brian Walter and I'm a senior from Chesterfield County and I'm speaking on behalf of the Education Policy Advocacy Club at Maggie Walker. Last semester I read a paper in my AP Environmental Science class called 'The Tragedy of Commons' by Garrett Hardin. In this paper, among other things, Hardin described how the over grazing of cows on _____ can land on you if each individual thinks only of their own interests. Now I'm not a cow...shocking I know, but right now I feel as though the biggest threat to my school is my own tragedy of commons. I think more than anything else Maggie Walker's EduPac has stressed to you all here that our school is much more than any individual's experience. We draw across the region to

create a community of the sharpest minds bent on achieving our school's mission statement. Maggie Walker's students understand all too well that we are part of a community that is larger than just ourselves. We are all members of a regional experiment in gifted education; an experiment that has given thousands of students tools to create and to lead. Our experiment can only be successful if we continue to attract men and women from across central Virginia. This school was created with an idea in mind that it cannot just function as a specialty high school for Henrico County. It would enroll more than just students from Richmond City because receiving a gifted education is supposed to transcend political boundaries. But therein lies the rub; if one district falters, if one district doesn't believe that Maggie Walker is worth their time, energy and funding, then our experiment is going to fall apart."

"I've never been able to understand why despite all the increases in education across individual districts these past five years Maggie Walker has seen a budget cut time and again. It just doesn't add up to me. The only logical explanation I can think of is that each districts' school board does not value students _____Maggie Walker as much as other schools in their district. And not only do I find this unfair, it just doesn't make sense...it doesn't add up. It doesn't add up when teachers across the state will see a 2% salary increase while teachers at Maggie Walker have their positions cut. Now I know times are tough, everyone knows times are tough, but we're not asking for much. We don't feel entitled to exuberant amounts of money. If anything, we embody the spirit of our school's namesake. _____how administrators at Maggie Walker know the value of a dollar. It just becomes incredibly hard to receive the quality education that each student at Maggie Walker needs and deserves if we cannot afford the best teachers, the best technology and the things that make our school great."

"This school has been a dream realized for me these past four years. Next week 188 eighth graders from across your districts will visit our school and decide whether or not their own dreams will be realized and I intrigue you all here to let them have the same quality education I was so grateful to receive. I would leave you all with a quote from *The Tragedy of the Commons*; "ruin is the destination towards which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in society that believes in the freedom of the commons." Please, do not treat Maggie Walker as a commons, but as a unique chance to give your students the best education they could ever possibly hope for. Thank you."

Johnny Mac Yates (Richmond) addressed the Board. "Hi. I'm here to thank the Board for the unique opportunity Maggie Walker has provided for me these past four years. And it seems that at every meeting the student recognition portion is packed with community based activities that we students are proud of; while that can be overwhelming, I think it's a good thing. Today however, I wanted to talk about an opportunity that sometimes flies under the radar because of the humility of the faculty sponsor. Mr. Edwin Slipek, architect of senior seminar, has been a mainstay of the Governor's School from TJ days until now. Mr. Slipek's class is one that makes

Maggie Walker special for two reasons: first, the opportunity to study the _____ environment that surrounds us is something that sets Maggie Walker apart. But second, and more subtly, Mr. Slipek runs a class that is more than an introduction to a field; it's part Richmond history lesson, part study of our environment, part classical architectural class, part community planning and part problem solving. For me I just take architecture, not because I'm strong in STEM or because I want to become an architect, but because of Mr. Slipek and the way the class is run. Mr. Slipek has a friendly, knowledgeable nature that seems to just open doors and make things happen. As a class, we can't walk down a street in Richmond without Mr. Slipek being hailed. His contacts in journalism, art, political, scholarly and business circles of Richmond are truly an asset to Maggie Walker and the community. He can take our class into VCU Special Collections and immediately scholars run to jump to help several of our students working on their _____ papers. _____ great architect presentations on our trip to New York or even on local tours, Mr. Slipek provided captivating and connected history behind every building. He provides an optimistic attitude for the class to just let us tackle projects such as re-designing the Central National Bank building, Maggie Walker expansion or the old GRTC bus depot. On my individual thesis dealing with the development of Sandbridge Beach, he knows just when to push and what facets to explore, even with a topic that requires _____. But more amazing is that Mr. Slipek has been able to share this with not only one class, but balances it while helping in the community, leading trips for other seminars and working at Style and VCU. If one individual could personify regional and community cooperation at Maggie Walker, Mr. Slipek would be the definite choice.”

“So while you hear a steady drumbeat of this, I would like to thank you for your support and ask you to continue...to consider opportunities like this when dealing with difficult budget issues.”

Matthew King (Henrico) addressed the Board. “Ladies and gentlemen of the Regional School Board and the Superintendent’s Steering Committee, my name is Matthew King and I’m a junior from Henrico. It’s no secret that I love this school. I remember receiving my acceptance letter from Henrico County Public Schools informing me that I had the opportunity to attend Maggie Walker. Please forgive my pop culture reference, but I felt like Harry Potter receiving an invitation to Hogwarts. It was a magical moment. And to this day the magic has never faded away. But this magic doesn’t come from students alone; it flows from teachers and the budgets that support them. Local districts like Henrico and Chesterfield are leading the way to heal the wounds of the great recession by granting pay raises and hiring new teachers to put the magic back in the classroom. For next year Henrico is adding (59) new positions and Chesterfield is offering a 4% VRS offset and a 2% pay raise on top of that for teachers. These are bold, forward looking budgets that invest in education. Please, our only request as a school is to share in the wisdom of these budgets. This year we face shortfall in order to meet state requirements for VRS and healthcare; we will have to cut teaching positions, particularly the part-time teachers such as Mr. Slipek that Johnny Mac just mentioned; that add so much to this school. But Maggie

Walker is not just a school, not just a community of trust or a village of learning, we are family. And families can't stand being split up; that's why we the students are here today."

"And I made the choice to be here, leaving behind some of my best friends. I didn't come here with many friends at all, but now Maggie Walker is my home...its home to students from (11) different districts. Maggie Walker is a Powhatan school, a Goochland school, a Henrico school, a Hanover school, a New Kent school, a Charles City school, a King and Queen school, a Prince George school, a Petersburg school, a Chesterfield school and a Richmond school. Most of all, we are a regional family. Maggie Walker is stronger because of the metro Richmond region, and the region is stronger because of Maggie Walker."

"Over the next few months, please make the bold decision to support our teachers and tie the region closer together. Please, I ask this of you for you too are part of our Maggie Walker family. Thank you."

Liz Wolfe (Henrico) addressed the Board. "Hi, my name is Liz Wolfe and I'm from Henrico and I'm a member of the Class of 2014. I set my sights on Maggie Walker in 5th grade and I haven't been disappointed. This school has been hugely impactful on me as both a student and a person and I owe so much of it to my teachers. English classes have left me with the ability to trace succinct analytical essays, but English teachers have a passion for the _____ language and an ability to speak with confidence to analyze words _____. Social Studies classes have let me question the application of constitutional amendments, but Social Studies teachers allow me to explore the areas where philosophy, economics, morality and government intersect."

"Maggie Walker is a unique _____ community. Relationships _____ with teachers, discussing politics and religion, personal _____, are the reasons _____. With many teachers it feels as though you are talking _____. These are people we can learn from in all capacities, and so often we do."

"I value the complexity of the budget and understand these budget cut decisions are never made lightly, but I think it is most important to preserve the integrity of our school and maintain the community that keeps us so strong. In my experience, the teachers are the most integral part of this community. Furthermore, I encourage those who are making decisions, to seek the opinions teachers, parents and students _____ have to offer; perhaps we can ban together and make these difficult decisions as a community. The optimal solution is to avoid cutting faculty, but if teachers must be cut to make this budget work, I urge you to include the rest of the Maggie Walker community in the decision making process. At the end of the day it affects us so much."

"I am confident that the input of students, parents and teachers will be a valuable resource for making this decision. It is after all, the community that has made all the difference and I know I am so grateful for the input. Thank you."

Bill Yates (Richmond parent) addressed the Board. “Good morning, it’s good to see you all here today. I have two things I wanted to address and the first one I’m going to just real quickly touch on. I know the folks from RPEC, Ms. Seigel-Hawley and Mr. Fleisher were going to speak and I was planning on speaking after them; I signed up I know later, but I just wanted to mention something as someone who has been around Maggie Walker for (8) years now and having worked with the diversity discussion many years ago, and I just wanted to ask this Board as people start to argue for additional actions and changes to the school in order to achieve social ends, to please keep in mind the quality of this school. Keep in mind the efforts that went on years ago to bring Maggie Walker to the process we are in now. The \$75,000-\$80,000 that was spent on the UVA study, the clear plan that was put into place and give that plan time to work. Let the districts continuing working at their level and provide the best student possible for Maggie Walker. I think that’s particularly important as we look at today’s budget discussion. Right now Maggie Walker is facing severe budget issues; putting students who are not prepared would be a severe problem, cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional tutoring costs and I think it’s something we really need to look at carefully.”

“That brings me real quickly to the budget and I would like to just say that I think the budget here has already been cut. Last year we took a much bigger cut than the districts did. When you look at what you pay per student here, it’s a bargain...it really is. When you take out what the state pays, which is supposed to be additional to help gifted ed, you are getting an amazing bargain at Maggie Walker. We can’t have the same quality of education here at Maggie Walker if you take away more money this year. I know budgets are tight, we’ve all seen it but our teachers have been asked to do more with less every single year. We really need your help. I’d ask you to please look at those numbers, consider things, and say ‘is it worth harming Maggie Walker for the small political gain.’ The numbers that we’re talking about are rounding issues in most of the budgets; it’s really a political issue I know for many of you and I’d ask you to have strength. Stand up to that political issue and continue fulfilling the obligations you made when you signed on to be a part of this fantastic institution. I appreciate your time today and thank you for your continued support.”

VII. Director’s Report

- a. ***Budget Priorities.*** The community has identified the following as essential priorities: maintaining the quality and integrity of this world class program at Maggie Walker and to provide support for its outstanding educators.

Virginia Department of Education Evaluation of Maggie Walker Governor’s School. A draft copy of the evaluation was provided to the Board at table and no significant changes are anticipated in the final report. Further, the Director noted that the DOE awarded MLWGS an ‘exemplary’ evaluation with a few recommendations made that will be fed into existing Task Forces for their consideration.

Strategic Planning. A survey has been developed for members of the MLWGS community (parents, students, faculty, Foundation, Board) to rate MLWGS on a scale of 1.0-4.0, keeping in the spirit of a GPA. Anything scoring below a 3.0 will be taken as a sign of immediate action needed in this area.

- b. *MLWGS Coming Events:* March 21, 2013 through April 18, 2013.

VIII. Action Item

a. Personnel

The Director recommends approval of the retirement request by Dr. John Barnes.

There being no additional discussion on this matter, on motion by Cora Armstrong, seconded by Barbara Crawley, Board members unanimously approved the requested personnel action.

b. FY11 & FY12 Audits by Cherry, Bekaert & Holland

Contextual comments were made by Mr. W.R. Gay of CBH regarding the firm's audit reports. He stated both audits were completed in accordance with auditing standards and the firm is issuing an unqualified opinion on both statements. Their report on internal control is issued with no findings or material weaknesses. BCH had no difficulties during the audit with management and were free to discuss any issues. Lastly, the BCH opinion is issued with no recommendations.

After brief discussion, on motion by John Axelle, seconded by John Montgomery, Board members unanimously approved the FY11 and FY12 Audit Reports submitted by Cherry, Bekaert & Holland.

IX. Materials for Board Review

a. Policy Review

The following policies are submitted from the Policy Steering Committee for review: No. 5011 – Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation-Employee, Form 5011-F – Report of Harassment-Employee, No. 8000 – Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation-Student and Form 8000-F Report of Harassment-Student. These policies are grounded in the model policies of the Virginia School Board Association.

Approval for these proposals will be requested at the April meeting of this Board.

b. Request for Proposals

The following projects are seeking bids from qualified contractors: Parking Lot Resurfacing, Tennis Courts Repair and Resurfacing, Windows Reglazing and Painting and Laptop Leasing.

Approval for contractor bid awards may be requested for some of the projects advertised at the April meeting of this Board.

c. Interdisciplinary Trip Proposal: Belize – April 2014

Faculty member David Barnes made presentation for his application to sponsor an interdisciplinary trip to Belize, April 2014.

Mr. Hazzard questioned how the number of chaperones is determined that would be required for this trip. Mr. Barnes responded the formula used is one for each six students. Follow-up question: is this the same formula used for other trips such as the Germany trip? Mr. Barnes responded, “I believe so”. Mr. Hazzard recommended additional caution based on personal experience and changing the ratio for the Belize trip proposal to one/five, which Mr. Barnes replied that restrictions will be placed on student travelers, and in terms of ratio he will also have the services of their professional tour guide.

Approval for this action will be requested at the April meeting of this Board.

X. Informational Items

- **Finance Committee Minutes, March 8, 2013.**
- **Night of the Dragon Auction Success Raising Over \$70,000**
- **Foundation Donates Electronic White Boards**
- **Student News**
 - Senior Emily Sacks (Richmond) Skates in National Championship
 - Chess Team Takes 1st Place in Greater Richmond High School League Championship
 - Sophomore Noah Kim Snags TED slot
 - MLWGS Robotics Team Partners with Community High
- **Faculty News**
 - Phil Tharp is the recipient of the 2013 Central Region Virginia Education Association Art Advocacy Award

XI. Superintendent’s Steering Committee Meeting

Dr. Newsome reported that the Superintendent’s Steering Committee met on Tuesday, March 12th and again this morning prior to the Board meeting; both meetings specifically were engagement and discussion regarding budget.

Dr. Newsome thanked the students who spoke today for their articulate and bold comments reflecting their love for this school. Additionally he remarked, “I just wish

every student in America loved their school the way students here at Maggie Walker do.” This comment was followed by a long round of applause.

Dr. Newsome shared the following commentary with students, “When you’re talking about challenging decisions that have to be made, your voices are stronger on the front end of those decisions.” In this case, it would be for those who have the authority and autonomy to make policy and allocate dollars, starting at the federal and state level. Dr. Newsome cautioned this is a lingering, harsh recession and anticipates it to continue for some time to come. He added that this Board, made up of members who volunteer their time to support Maggie Walker, have heard their voices; however, going forward your voice will be more valuable when you speak to those who make policy.

As of this morning eight of the eleven participating divisions have approved their budgets. Of the eight, all have had to make cuts to adjust for increased costs in VRS, fuel, healthcare and other areas. Two divisions were able to see a net increase to balance their budget. Six of the eight saw a net decrease ranging between 1% - 11%. What the committee has advised the Director to do is 1) look at starting with a level funded budget that would require the school to make cuts just to reach a net level, and 2) in the event of across the board cuts, to look at a budget that would decrease by 1.5%. That said, the committee is still looking for ways to maximize resources that will hold on to as much as possible instruction in the classroom.

XII. Closed Meeting

Mr. Pritchett asked the Clerk to announce items for closed session.

Mrs. Marshall stated: “It is my understanding that the School Board desires to enter into a Closed Session in accordance with §2.2-3711.A of the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and specifically under the following enumerated subsection (1): “employment of specific employees of the Board.”

Mr. Pritchett stated: “Members of the Board, you have just heard the items requested to be discussed in closed session. Do I have a motion in that regard?”

On motion by Valarie Ayers, seconded by Kimberly Gray, the Board unanimously approved and entered into closed session.

The Board relocated to the Board room and the door was closed.

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

Mr. Pritchett stated: “Do I have a motion to reconvene in open session?”

On motion by Kevin Hazzard, seconded by Valarie Ayers, the Board unanimously approved open session.

The auditorium door is opened.

Mr. Pritchett requested: “Mrs. Marshall (Clerk) please read the resolution certifying the closed session.”

Mrs. Marshall stated: “Now, therefore, be it resolved that the School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from opening 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 School Board.”

Mr. Pritchett stated: “Do I have a motion to adopt the resolution?”

On motion by Barbara Crawley, seconded by John Montgomery, the Board unanimously approved this resolution:

Roll Call and Motion Vote (alphabetical order by locality)

Barbara Crawley: Aye
Dianne Smith: Aye
Kevin Hazzard: Aye
John Axselle: Aye
John Montgomery: Aye
Cora Armstrong: Absent
Sarah Grier Barber: Aye
Kenneth Pritchett: Aye
Valarie Ayers: Aye
Jerry Warren: Absent
Kimberly Gray: Aye

No action was taken by the Board at this time.

XIV. Announcements/Unfinished Business

XV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by John Montgomery, seconded by John Axselle, the motion to adjourn this meeting was unanimously approved.

XVI. Next Meeting

April 18, 2013 at 9:00am. MLWGS Board Room, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 226, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190 or x2111.

Jeffrey W. McGee, Director

Kenneth Pritchett, Chairman

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk