MINUTES

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies
Regional School Board Regular Meeting
1000 N. Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

Thursday, October 15, 2026 **9:00 a.m.**

I. Call to Order

Heather Donbrosky, Chair of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board, called the meeting to order.

II. Moment of Silence

The Chair called for a moment of silence.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Regional School Board and visitors stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

IV. Introductions

Each member is listed in alphabetical order by locality.

Present:
Ms. Debbie Walwer, ***School Board***, Colonial Heights Public Schools
Ms. Mary Benjamin, ***School Board,*** Dinwiddie Public Schools
Ms. Meredith Moses, ***School Board***, Goochland County Public Schools
Ms. Whitney Welsh, ***School Board***, Hanover County Public Schools (Remote)
Ms. Heather Donbrosky, ***School Board***, New Kent Public Schools
Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, ***School Board*****,** Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. James Taylor, ***School Board***, Powhatan County Public Schools
Ms. Jill Andrews, ***School Board*****,** Prince George Public Schools
Ms. Kathryn Ricard, ***School Board***, Richmond Public Schools

Dr. Katina Otey, **Superintendent,** Charles City Public Schools
Ms. Brianne Gunn for Dr. John Murray, **Superintendent,** Chesterfield County Public Schools
Ms. Liz Kingdom for Dr. Andrew Armstrong, **Superintendent**, Goochland County Public Schools
Dr. Lisa Pennycuff, **Superintendent**, Hanover County Public Schools
Dr. Michelle Boyd for Dr. Amy Cashwell, **Superintendent**, Henrico County Public Schools
Mr. Byron Davis for Dr. Melody Hackney, **Superintendent**, Hopewell Public Schools
Dr. Brian Nichols, **Superintendent**, New Kent Public Schools
Ms. Yolanda Brown, **Superintendent**, Petersburg Public Schools
Dr. Angela Steward for Dr. Beth Teigen, **Superintendent,** Powhatan County Public Schools
Dr. Douglas Lyle **Superintendent,** Prince George Public Schools

Ms. Lynn Plevich for Mr. Jason Kamras, **Superintendent,** Richmond Public Schools

Dr. Kristin Janssen, **Executive Director**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Ms. Barbara Marshall, **Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
Ms. Joy Cobb, **Deputy Clerk**, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Also present:

Dr. Lisa Williams and Dr. Max Smith – MLWGS Administration
Wendy DeGroat and David Bortz– MLWGS Staff
Ginger O'Neil – MW Foundation Executive Director
Ms. Melanie Ficke, Prince George Gifted Education Coor.

Absent:
Ms. Marchelle Hampton ***School Board***, Charles City Public Schools
Ms. Lisa Hudgins, ***School Board***, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Ms. Alicia Atkins, ***School Board***, Henrico County Public Schools
Mr. John Griffin, ***School Board***, Hopewell Public Schools
Ms. Harwood Hall, ***School Board***, King & Queen Public

Dr. Carol Carter, **Superintendent**, King & Queen Public Schools
Mr. Travis Ridley, **Superintende**nt, Colonial Heights Public Schools
Dr. Kari Weston, **Superintendent**, Dinwiddie Public Schools

V.a Approval for Board Member(s) to Participate in this Meeting Remotely

I. Quorum Physically Assembled

A. The Regional School Board may conduct any meeting wherein the public business is discussed or transacted through electronic communication means if 1) on or before the day of a meeting, a member of the Regional School Board notifies the chair that such member is unable to attend the meeting due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance or that such member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter; and **2) the Regional School Board approves the member's participation by a majority vote of the members present at the primary or central meeting location.**

Ms. Whitney Welsh requested to participate in this meeting remotely as she was out of town for personal travel.

On a motion made by Jill Andrews to allow Whitney Welsh from Hanover to participate remotely in this meeting, seconded by Mary Benjamin, this request was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

V.b Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Meredith Moses, seconded by Mary Benjamin, the agenda for this meeting was unanimously approved on a voice vote.

VI. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by James Taylor, seconded by Kathryn Ricard, the minutes of the regular meeting on September 17, 2026, were unanimously approved with a voice vote.

VII. Recognitions

Note: Hadley was late for this meeting, so her actual recognition occurred after Item X.a.

Hadley Walder (’27-Richmond) was on-hand recognized by Dr. Lisa Willaims and Barbara Marshall as the second recipient of the **Green Dragon Award**, as she exemplifies the Walker Way qualities of service, leadership, integrity, and character. A highly motivated senior, Hadley has distinguished herself through an impressive combination of academic achievement, athletics, leadership, and community service. She serves as co-president of both the ASL National Honor Society and Science National Honor Society, is a Student Ambassador and Dragon Advisory leader, and has demonstrated outstanding commitment as a captain on both the varsity field hockey and softball teams.

Hadley also contributes to her community through her church leadership, volunteer work, Spanish tutoring, and service with organizations such as Consolidated Community Club and RVAccess. Her dedication to learning is reflected in her rigorous coursework, including AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Calculus BC, AP English Literature, AP Government, and intensive college-level courses, as well as recognition as an AP Scholar with Distinction and National Merit Commended Student. Whether she is leading a team, supporting a fellow student, serving her community, or pursuing academic excellence, Hadley consistently demonstrates the compassion, responsibility, and leadership that make her a true Green Dragon.

Hadley will be presented with the Green Dragon jacket that is on-order, but was in person presented with the Green Dragon pin.

VIII. Public Comments

The Public Information Period shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes. Each speaker will be allotted three (3) minutes to make his/her comments. Individuals representing groups will be allotted five (5) minutes.

No comments were received or presented.

IX. Consent Items

Related to the financial reports, Dr. Janssen observed the following: 100% of tuition was received and she thanked the divisions for their quick payments. 76% of all anticipated funding has been received to date, and 26% of state funding has been received.

Dr. Janssen added that the outstanding audits are still are track for receipt in December.

On a motion by Meredith Moses to approve consent items as a slate, seconded by Jill Andrews, the following items were unanimously approved on a voice vote: October 2026

personnel actions [no personnel action occurred], fiscal status reports for October 2026, and the donations report [there were no donations] for October 2026.

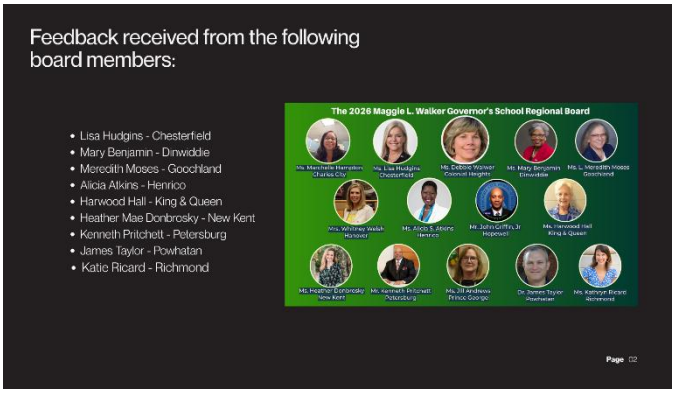
X. Action Items

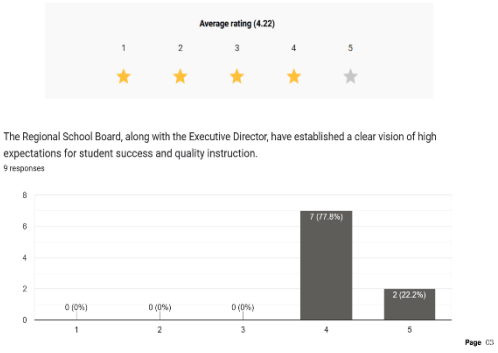
a. Regional School Board Self-Evaluation 2026 – *Second Read*

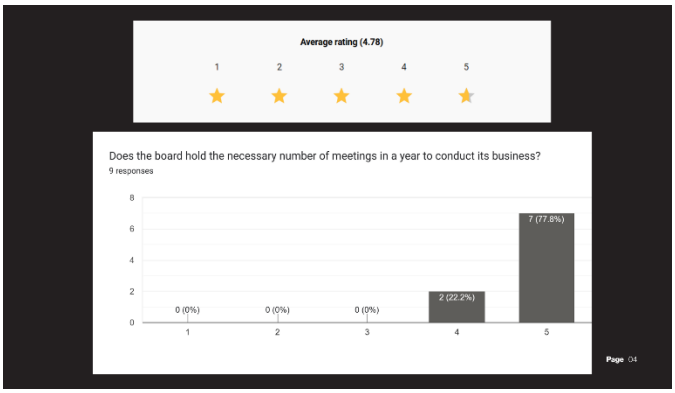
As stated in Policy 1007- The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board reviews its performance annually to ensure its proper discharge of responsibilities to the community.

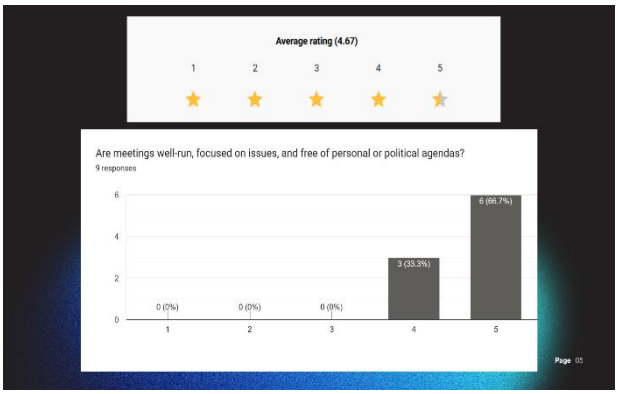
Evaluation results:

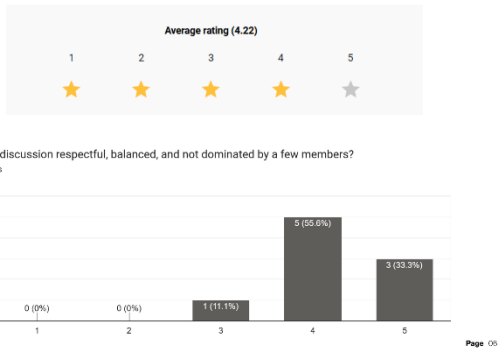










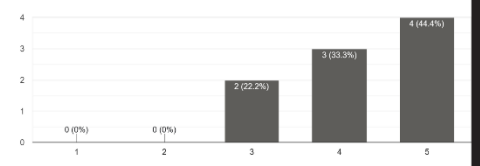


Average rating (4.22)

1 2 3 4 5

Do board members come prepared, having reviewed the agenda and materials in advance?

9 responses



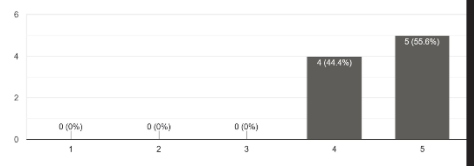
Page 07

Average rating (4.56)

1 2 3 4 5

Are you satisfied that the Executive School Board conducts effective business on behalf of the Regional School Board?

9 responses



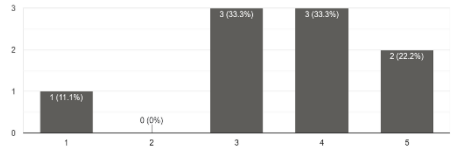
Page 08

Average rating (3.56)

1 2 3 4 5

Are annual or multi-year goals set, aligned with the vision, and regularly reviewed for progress?

9 responses



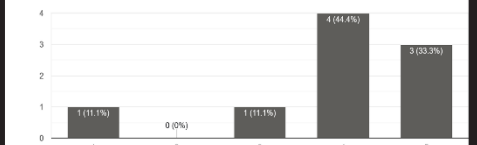
Page 09

Average rating (3.89)

1 2 3 4 5

Are goals and priorities clearly communicated to the staff and to the community?

9 responses



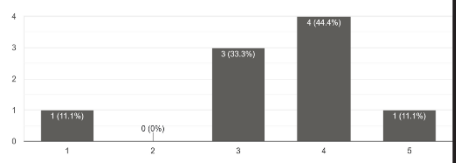
Page 10

Average rating (3.44)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board regularly monitor student performance data?

9 responses



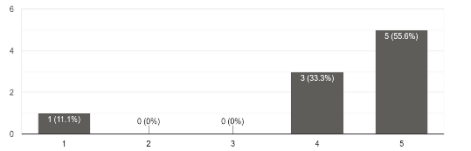
Page 11

Average rating (4.22)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board support continuous improvement and professional growth for staff?

9 responses



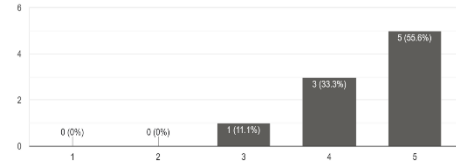
Page 12

Average rating (4.44)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board clearly understand and stay within its policy-making role vs. day-to-day management?

9 responses



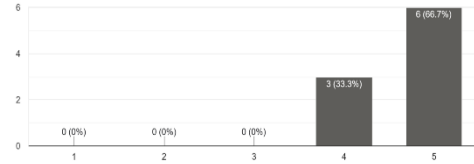
Page 13

Average rating (4.67)

1 2 3 4 5

Are policies reviewed and updated regularly for alignment with the law, the school's vision, and with best practices?

9 responses



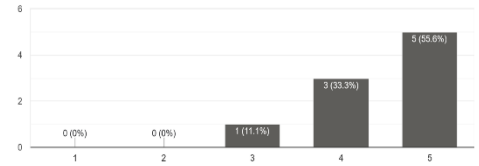
Page 14

Average rating (4.44)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board provide responsible fiscal oversight, including reviewing budgets, expenditures, and long-term financial health?

9 responses



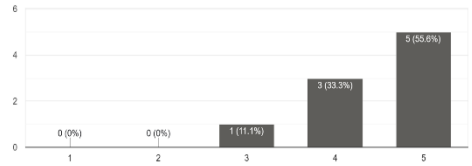
Page 15

Average rating (4.44)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board allocate resources in ways that support student achievement priorities?

9 responses



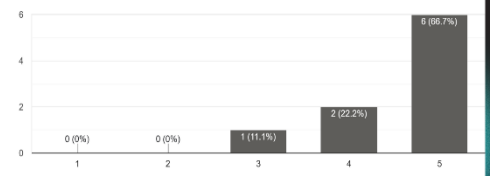
Page 16

Average rating (4.56)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board ensure transparent and accountable use of public funds?

9 responses



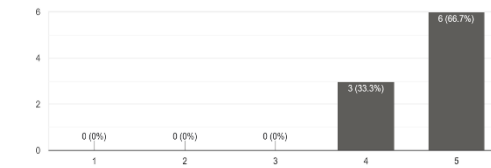
Page 17

Average rating (4.67)

1 2 3 4 5

Is communication between the board and the executive director open, timely, and constructive?

9 responses



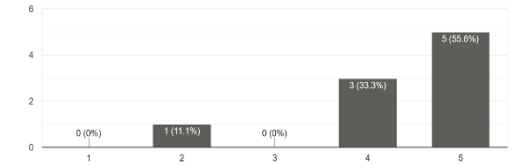
Page 18

Average rating (4.33)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board provide clear expectations and direction to the executive director while respecting the executive director's operational role?

9 responses



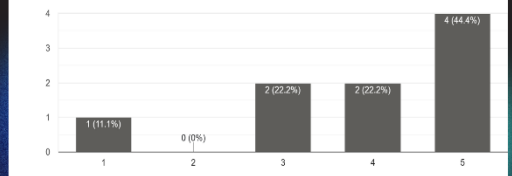
Page 19

Average rating (3.89)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board conduct a thorough, fair annual evaluation of the executive director on mutually agreed goals?

9 responses



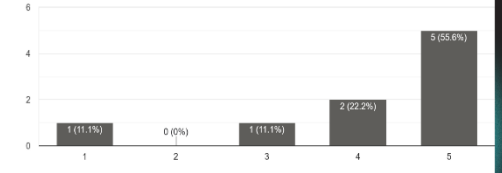
Page 20

Average rating (4.11)

1 2 3 4 5

Does the board foster open communication and engagement with parents, staff, students, and the broader community?

9 responses



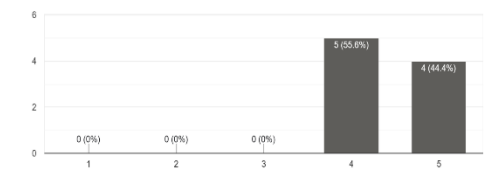
Page 21

Average rating (4.44)

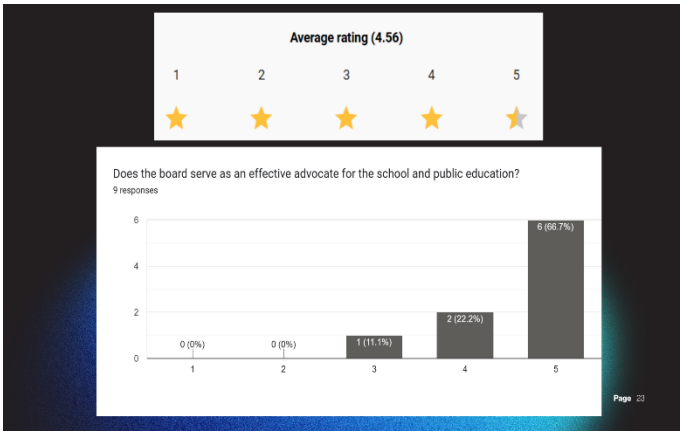
1 2 3 4 5

Are new board members properly orientated?

9 responses



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What do you believe is one of the Regional School Board's greatest strengths?

·Leadership

·One great strength of the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Regional Board is its collaborative leadership. The Board brings together representatives from multiple school divisions to ensure that students across the region have access to rigorous academic opportunities in a diverse and supportive learning environment.

•Diversity of perspective. The Board is made up of school divisions of all sizes, and it brings those diverse perspectives together for the betterment of MLWGS.

·Different perspectives, diversity of thought.

·The Board has a consistent and sustainable governance model.

·The diversity of experience lends itself to a well-balanced board.

·The ability to share solutions to issues; diverse individual backgrounds.

·The members come to the meetings.

·One of the Regional School Board's greatest strengths is our shared commitment to Maggie L. Walker Governor's School and its success. I believe each of us genuinely cares about the school, its students, staff, and future. We work well together, consistently show up and engage in our responsibilities, and bring a shared desire to make thoughtful decisions that support the school. That combination of commitment, collaboration, and consistency is a real strength of our Board.

What are the top two areas of growth for the Regional School Board?

Inclusion.

Equitable access and recruitment...Expanding opportunities for qualified students from every participating school division while maintaining high academic standards.

Communication and collaboration...Strengthening communication among Board members, participating divisions, school leadership, families, and the community.

1) Greater involvement and knowledge of the school. 2) Capital Improvement Planning.

-Clear evaluation process of the executive director.

-Development of school board goals.

(1) The Board could make its financial oversight more understandable. (2) The Board generally meets at 9 a.m., and this could be difficult for families to participate during public comment during our Board meetings.

I don't necessarily have two areas of growth here, but we do need to ensure that we are supporting the executive director in every way necessary so that she is able to do her job to the best of her ability.

Continued on the next page...

What are the top two areas of growth for the Regional School Board? ***continued***

Attendance

We should be better prepared for the meetings and have more true discussions instead of rubber-stamping.

1. Establishing a consistent Executive Director evaluation process. Since I began serving on the Board, we have not conducted a formal evaluation of the Executive Director. Establishing a regular, structured evaluation process would provide clear expectations, meaningful feedback, and an opportunity for the Board and Executive Director to assess progress and identify areas for continued growth.

2. Developing clear annual and multi-year goals aligned with the MLWGS vision. The Board has not established formal annual or multi-year goals that are directly aligned with the school's vision and priorities. Developing these goals would give the Board and administration a shared roadmap, help establish priorities, and provide a meaningful framework for measuring progress over time.

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And lastly...

Would you like to leave any general remarks about the Regional School Board's work that is not covered in this survey?

The Regional School Board has demonstrated a strong commitment to academic excellence and to providing exceptional opportunities for students across all participating school divisions. I appreciate the collaborative spirit of the Board and its focus on student success. Moving forward, continued attention to equitable representation, transparent communication, long-term financial planning, and stronger engagement with the governing school divisions will help ensure the school remains responsive, sustainable, and positioned for continued excellence.

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Dr. Janssen shared the following summation of the board's self-evaluation.

Madam Chair, this item was presented for first read in September. Board members completed the annual self-evaluation, and the results are included in your materials.

There are some clear themes in the responses.

Board members identified leadership, collaboration, and the different perspectives represented on the Regional School Board as strengths. Having representatives from divisions of different sizes and backgrounds gives the Board a broader regional perspective. Members also recognized the Board's commitment to the school and its established governance structure. There were also several areas identified for improvement.

These included greater Board involvement with the school & its structure, preparation for meetings, opportunities for more meaningful discussion, and continued attention to communication, inclusion, recruitment, and access.

Financial oversight, capital improvement planning, and Board attendance were also mentioned.

Two governance issues came up more than once: establishing a clear and consistent process for the Executive Director's evaluation and developing annual and multi-year Board goals that align with the school's vision and priorities.

"I think these results give the Board some useful areas to consider as we begin implementing our strategic plan and preparing for the Board's organizational work in January," said Dr. Janssen." Madam Chair, those are the results of the 2026 Regional School Board Annual Self-Evaluation. This item is presented for Board action."

Ms. Moses noted that only 9 out of 14 board members participated in this exercise.

On a motion by Meredith Moses, seconded by Kathryn Ricard, the Regional School Board accepts its 2026 Self-Evaluation Survey results.

b. **2026 VDOE Administrative Procedures Manual –** ***Second Read***

The 2026-2027 MLWGS Annual Administrative Procedures Manual required by the VDOE and last year was mandated to obtain Regional School Board approval, similar to the annual approval sought for the Crisis Manual. The manual was due to VDOE on October 9, 2026.

On a motion by Kathryn Ricard, seconded by Debbie Walwer, the 2026 MLWGS Administrative Procedures was unanimously approved on a voice.

c. Regional School Board Preference on Regulations as Information Verses Approval Action – ***Second Read***

The question before the board is how they want regulations adopted and managed. Legal recommendations were sought and their feedback and options are here for selection today.

Virginia Code § 22.1-78 provides that a school board "may adopt bylaws and regulations" for its own government, the management of its official business, and the supervision of schools.

As part of the review of Policy 1016.2, Policy Implementation, the Regional School Board is being asked to determine how it wishes administrative regulations developed by the Executive Director under the authority granted in Policy 1016.2 to be handled.

Currently, administrative regulations developed to implement Regional School Board policy do not routinely return to the Board for approval or presentation. The Board is being asked whether it wishes to continue this current practice or establish a different process.

Board Options

- **Option 1: Board Approval**

New or substantially revised administrative regulations will be presented to the Regional School Board as action items and will require Board approval before taking effect.

- **Option 2: Board Information**

The Executive Director may develop and implement administrative regulations pursuant to Policy 1016.2. New or substantially revised regulations will be presented to the Regional School Board as information items but will not require Board approval unless approval is required by law or another Board policy.

- **Option 3: Continue Current Practice: Administrative**

The Executive Director may develop and implement administrative regulations pursuant to Policy 1016.2. Administrative regulations will not routinely be presented to the Regional School Board. A regulation will be brought to the Board when Board action is required by law or another Board policy, or when the Board requests review.

Options presented were discussed by the Board and many shared what was the normal practice in their own division.

Kathryn Ricard made a motion to adopt Option 3 for administrative development and implementation of regulations. Jill Andrews seconded the motion. However, there was no unanimous voice vote, so a roll-call vote was required. The clerk recorded the following votes;

Marchelle Hampton	Absent
Lisa Hudgins	Absent
Debbie Walwer	Yes
Mary Benjamin	Yes
Meredith Moses	Nay
Whitney Welsh	Yes
Alicia Atkins	Absent
John Griffin	Absent
Harwood Hall	Absent
Heather Donbrosky	Yes
Kenneth Pritchett	Nay
James Taylor	Nay
Jill Andrews	Yes
Kathryn Ricard	Yes

The final vote was (6) Yes, (3) Nays, and (5) Absent. The motion is adopted to approve Option 3 above.

The chair asked if there would be any specific types of regulations that the board would prefer to consider moving forward. Ms. Moses suggested that this should be handled on an individual basis. The chair added that this would be *taken into account as the board* reviews policy.

Additionally, the chair requested a motion to approve Policy 1016.2, which pertains to Policy Implementation, to include the language from the previous action. On a motion by Debbie Walwer to approve the updates to Policy 1016.2, and seconded by Jill Andrews, the revised policy implementation was unanimously approved through a voice vote.

d. Policy and Regulation Update *(Waive First Read Requested for Only One of These) – Second Read*

Two revisions were submitted for Regional School Board approval with a waive of first read requested for 4025-R1. Policy No. 4092 was updated per board member *[Ms. Atkins'*] request at the board's September meeting.

4025-R1 is a revision update necessitated from a change to the Student Handbook.

4092 is a revision that was requested from the version submitted to the board at their September meeting.

On a motion by Meredith Moses, seconded by Kathryn Ricard, waiving first-read for Regulation 4025-R1 followed by its approval along with approval of 4092 was unanimously approved with a voice vote.

e. Food Service Provider Change for 2026-27 *(Waive First Read Requested)*

Regional School Board Action at their August 20, 2026, meeting.

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School (MLWGS) initially selected Ordo as its food service vendor for the 2026–27 school year following an RFP process conducted with RPS. Although Ordo began service in August, the operation quickly proved unsustainable because meal participation was lower than anticipated, staffing was challenging, and operational costs exceeded Ordo's expectations.

After working through several options to stabilize service, MLWGS provided notice to end the Ordo agreement and has worked with Omo & Co., Ordo's existing food service subcontractor, to establish a direct agreement for the remainder of the school year. Omo has already provided day-to-day food service operations and, beginning September 29, assumed responsibility for both breakfast and lunch service with dedicated staffing. This arrangement provides a more practical, stable short-term solution while MLWGS continues working toward ultimately incorporation into the RPS food service program.

Regional School Board approval is requested to formalize the Omo agreement for the remainder of the 2026–27 school year.

On a motion by Jill Andrews, seconded by Kathryn Ricard, to approve Omo & Company as the 2026 MLWGS Food Service Provided, and unanimously approved on a voice vote.

XI. Director's Report

A. Verbal Updates

- **Congratulations to the (41) MLWGS Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation from the Class of 2027**

I would like to begin by recognizing 41 members of the Class of 2027 who have been named Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Approximately 34,000 Commended Students nationwide are being recognized for their academic promise. These students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2027 National Merit Scholarship competition through the 2025 PSAT/NMSQT.

By division this list includes: (10) students from Chesterfield, (3) students from Hanover, (1) student from Goochland, (20) students from Henrico, (1) student from Powhatan, and (6) students from Richmond.

We are very proud to recognize the following seniors and their home divisions:

Chesterfield: Claire Adcock, Tayyib Ali, Ousmane Dieng, Daniel Lee, Abhinav Mehta, Chris Qian, Ameen Rahman, Simon Smith, Miranda Zhang, and Yun Xuan Zhu.

Goochland: Eli Konikoff.

Hanover: Samuel Freeman, Reesa Kelleher, and Grace McDonnell.

Henrico: Prithvi Chakraborty, Danielle Chen, William Chen, Neha Jain, Shrihari Kalagi, Naman Kaushi, Ronith Kollipara, Grace Ku, Palak Kundalia, Jackson Lookingbill, Shravan Madurantakam, Chaitly Marapareddy, Indira Mudinur, Lolu Nzombola, Nikhil Palavalas, Candice Santos, Vrinda Shah, Nuveena Sooriya, and Jan-David Wasiak.

Powhatan: William Blashfield.

Richmond: Noah Heyward, Sofia Krahe, Everett Reeves, John Thomas Trevey, Hadley Walder, and Paxson Wijesooriya.

Congratulations to all 41 of these students, their families, their teachers, and their home school divisions.

- **New: 2026-2027 School Profile**

  Our 2026–2027 School Profile has been completed and is now being used as part of the college application process.

  The profile gives colleges and universities important context about Maggie Walker, including our regional structure, competitive admissions process, graduation requirements, all-Honors curriculum, Advanced Placement and dual-enrollment opportunities, grading practices, and the academic accomplishments of our students.
  It is an important tool because our students' transcripts need to be understood within the context of the rigor and expectations of the MLWGS program.

- **College Counseling and Recruitment**

  College recruitment is in full swing. More than 70 colleges and universities are scheduled to send admissions representatives to Maggie Walker this fall, either in person or virtually.

  During just one week in October, our students had opportunities to meet with representatives from Boston College, Randolph-Macon College, Richard Bland College, the Art Academy of Cincinnati, New York University, Princeton University, Dickinson College, Duke University, Stanford University, the University of Mary Washington, Case Western Reserve University, Georgetown University, Rice University, and Rutgers University.

  These visits occur primarily during lunch and give students in grades 10, 11, and 12 direct access to college admissions representatives here at school.

  Our counseling department is also working with GRASP to provide financial-aid support to students and families.

- **Academic Programming and Student Experiences**

  Our academic programming continues to extend well beyond the traditional classroom.

  In October, we welcomed Dr. Sherri Mehta to work with our students through *Freedom Fighters, Freedom Writers* workshops and *The USCT: Beyond the Panels*. These programs provided students with opportunities to engage directly with history, scholarship, and primary-source-based learning.

  Our senior Mentorship classes continue to meet as students prepare for and participate in experiences connecting their academic interests with professionals and organizations throughout the region.

  We also administered the digital PSAT to our sophomores and juniors on October 9. At the same time, students participated in Field Day activities, giving us an opportunity to combine an important academic testing day with community-building activities.

- **National Honor Society**

  We are also celebrating our students through our National Honor Society induction on September 29th. NHS recognizes students not simply for academic achievement, but also for scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

  The induction is an important opportunity for us to recognize students who have demonstrated those qualities throughout their time at Maggie Walker and who will continue serving our school and broader community.

- **Bi-Annual Alumni Showcase Day, Friday, October 2, 8:30 am – 2 pm**

  The MLWGS Foundation is excited to once again be hosting the Alumni Showcase on Friday, October 2 at MLWGS. We are thrilled to welcome back more than 50 alumni for this beloved

event that started in 2012 and has been a huge hit with alumni and students. The speakers will share with our current student body all things about life after high school, including the challenges, setbacks, and successes they've experienced over the course of their education and careers.

The Foundation **hosted 43 alumni who provided 84 sessions** for our Dragons and was a task that required our entire village. Speakers included a judge, the CEO of a company that provides props for famous TV shows and movies, non-profit leaders, a dump truck driver, former Peace Corps volunteers, an HVAC tech, educators, a gubernatorial candidate, and many other amazing alum.

- **Fall Festival at MLWGS, Friday, October 2, 2-6:00 pm**

  The MLWGS Fall Festival *[photo album at link*] was on Friday, October 2, from 2 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The PTSA sponsors this event to celebrate our school's international focus, offering clubs and classes a lively and enjoyable venue for community building and fundraising. Our students and clubs were excitedly preparing to host their booths and provide unforgettable entertainment.

  Fall Festival raised approximately $17,000 for our various clubs. Even with our date change, we had amazing booth sponsors, volunteer signups, record-breaking ticket sales for the fest, passion from our entertainers, and fantastic student involvement. Fall Festival's beauty is providing a safe space for our students to learn how to organize activities, recruit volunteers, work within rules/regulations, fundraise for future benefits, muster courage to perform in front of crowds, and so much more.

  The value of Fall Festival extends beyond fundraising. Students organize activities, recruit volunteers, manage booths, follow school and safety requirements, perform for an audience, and work together to make the event successful.

- **Student Life and Community**

  October has been an exceptionally active month for student life.

  Following Alumni Showcase and the PTSA sponsored Fall Festival on October 2nd, our junior class also hosted the Homecoming Dance on October 10.

  Our students remain active in athletics, performing arts, robotics, Model UN, dance, and numerous other extracurricular programs. October alone included volleyball, field hockey, cross country, orchestra, drama rehearsals, robotics meetings, Model UN, and dance team activities.

- **PSAT 2026 for Sophomores and Juniors, Friday, October 9**

  PSAT Day took place on Friday, October 9th starting at 8:40. The PSATs were **digital** to prepare students for digital SATs in Spring 2027.

Students are allowed to use their personal devices for testing. Personal devices can include a Mac or Windows device or an iPAD. You are not allowed to use a personal Chromebook. Your device must also be able to connect to Wi-Fi and be charged enough to stay on for roughly 3 hours. We recommend you bring a power cord or portable charger, but we can't guarantee you'll have access to an outlet. You're permitted to bring an external mouse for your device and an external keyboard if your device is a tablet. You can't use detachable device privacy screens. All other applications and programs must be closed during the test.

- **Homecoming Dance, Saturday, October 10, 7-10 pm**

  The Homecoming Dance was **Saturday, October 10th from 7:00 to 10:00 PM.** The theme for the event is 'Enchanted Forest.'

  Each year, the Junior class hosts the MLWGS Homecoming Dance. The dance was open to all MLWGS students and their dates if they chose to bring one.

- **Counseling [Dr. Loving] is taking AP Exam Registration and Payment until October 23, 2026.**

  For students enrolled in one or more Advanced Placement courses, it is now time to complete your registration for AP exams for May 2027.

  Exam fees ($99 per exam) are paid in OSP by Friday, October 23rd, 2026. The College Board's $40 per exam late fee will be applied after that date.

- **Infoforum and Regional Recruitment, October 17**

  Our InfoForum will be held Saturday, October 17, as we continue our regional recruitment and admissions work for the next entering class.

  InfoForum is one of our most important opportunities to welcome prospective students and their families to Maggie Walker. Families have an opportunity to learn about our academic program, the admissions process, student life, and what it means to attend a regional Governor's School.

  Our staff are also participating in recruitment events throughout the region, including division-level expos. This work is particularly important as we continue partnering with all of our participating school divisions to make sure students and families throughout the region understand the opportunities available at MLWGS.

- **Community Service**

  Our students continue to demonstrate the service component of the Walker Way.
  One recent example is a student-led book drive benefiting children and teens in our community. Students, including members of the National English Honor Society, collected books while also contributing service hours.

These opportunities allow students to see community service not simply as a graduation requirement, but as part of their responsibility to the larger community.

- **Professional Learning**

  There are also a number of professional-learning opportunities available to our faculty this fall. These include the Chesapeake Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers' fall meeting and computing workshop; the CodeVA Computer Science Innovators Conference focused on AI literacy in education; the VCU Dyslexia Symposium; and the School-University Resource Network's Multilingual Learners workshop.

  These opportunities align well with several areas we are continuing to examine as a school, particularly artificial intelligence, computer science, literacy, student learning needs, and instructional practices.

- **Faculty Recognition – Taylor Teaching Award**

  The application period for the Taylor Teaching Award is now open.

  Eligible MLWGS educators may submit proposals for professional travel and learning experiences, with an award of up to $7,500, based upon the proposed trip budget.

  Applicants must meet the established eligibility requirements, including teaching experience at MLWGS, continuing-contract status, and gifted endorsement. Applications are due November 16 at 3:30 p.m.

  We appreciate the Foundation's continued investment in meaningful professional growth opportunities for our faculty.

- **October Awareness and Recognition**

  During this period, we are also recognizing several national and statewide observances that connect directly with our students, staff, and school community.

  September 15 through October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month.

  October is National Bullying Prevention Month, National Physical Therapy Month, Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, ADHD Awareness Month, Down Syndrome Awareness Month, and Dyslexia Awareness Month.

  Virginia Farm to School Week was recognized October 5–9.

  We will also recognize National School Bus Safety Week, October 19–23, and Unity Day on October 21.

  These observances give us opportunities both to recognize members of our community and to reinforce our commitment to the Walker Way—Courage, Compassion, Community, and Collaboration.

- **Fun Trivia: 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics has an MLWGS Connection**

> **Nobel Prize in Physics Is Awarded to Francis Halzen**
>
> The Nobel was awarded for the discovery of high-energy neutrinos of astrophysical origin, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

During the years of the Polarpalooza senior seminar {*2020 and 2021 sessions*], Dr. Jim Madsen was a guest speaker and very capably explained the IceCube Neutrino Observatory at the South Pole and its importance. At the time, Jim was Interim Executive Director of the Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center. If you want to understand a bit more about the project (for which Dr. Francis Halzen won his Noble), I encourage you to listen to one of the sessions.

Lynn Reed, MLWGS Mathematics Teacher

- **Looking Ahead**

There are several important dates coming up.

Our InfoForum is Saturday, October 17, as we welcome prospective students and families from across our participating school divisions.

AP Exam registration closes October 23.

Grades 9-12: Parent/Teacher Conferences: Our first Parent/Teacher Conference Day is Monday, November 2, with our second conference day scheduled for January 21.

- ***Mark your Calendar*: <u>VIRTUAL</u> FY28 Budget Development Town Hall**, December 8, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. This is the first step in the budget development process, and we welcome engagement in discussion around our FY28 budget.

- **November Legislative Advocacy.** Sample letter in the Executive Director's Folder.

- **Lastly**

Maggie Walker Governor's School has two finalists for the 2026 R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence: Sam Ulmschneider-Social Studies, and Nicholas Merillat-Performing Arts.



B. *Coming Events*

October 15, 2026, through November 12, 2026

Thursday, October 15th	**Regional School Board Meeting, 9:00 am, MLWGS Room 153**
	College Rep Visit, 11:40 pm, Forum
Friday, October 16th	School Advisory Council Meeting, 7:45 am, Rm 153
Saturday, October 17th	**Information Forum Day for the Class of 2031, 8:00 am – 3:30 pm**
Monday, October 19th	Various College Rep Visits, Forum, morning and afternoon
Tuesday, October 20th	College Rep Visits, Auditorium, 11:30 am
	End of Q1
Wednesday, October 21st	College Rep Visits, Forum, 11:30 am
	VA Math League Contest, Auditorium 11:30 am
Thursday, October 22nd	College Rep Visits, Forum, 11:30 am
Tuesday, October 27th	Quarterly Chairs + Pillars Meeting, Rm 153, 8:40 am
	Senior English Classes Field Trip to see Frankenstein (the play), 10 am
Wednesday, October 28th - Friday, October 30th	We The People Class Field Trip to Philadelphia
Thursday, October 29th	Science National Honor Society Induction, Auditorium, 11:30 am

	Mu Alpha Theta Guest Speaker, Dr. Jessica Otis from George Mason University, Forum, 3:30-5 pm
Monday, November 2nd	Student Holiday – Teacher Workday
	Parent/Teacher Conferences 12 pm – 3 pm and 4 pm – 7 pm
	Colonial Heights MS Visit, CHMS, 5 pm
	Dinwiddie MS Visit, Dinwiddie MS, 7 pm
Tuesday, November 3rd	**Election Day. School Holiday - Closed**
Wednesday, November 4th	Underclass Make-Up Portraits, Auditorium, 8 am – 2 pm
Thursday, November 5th	Virtual Finance Committee Meeting, 9 am
	New Kent MS Visit, NKHS, 7:30 pm
Friday, November 6th	Senior Portraits (last chance) with Cady, Commons, 7:30 am – 4:30 pm
Monday, November 9th	**School Holiday - Closed**
Tuesday, November 10th	Winter Sports Begin
Wednesday, November 11th	Virtual PTSA Meeting, 7 pm
Thursday, November 12th	**Executive School Board Meeting, 9:00 am, MLWGS Room 153**

C. 2027-2028 Division Slot Commitments

As MLWGS begins the planning process for the next school term as directed by Policy 1029 adopted May 18, 2000, amended December 18, 2014, December 17, 2015, and October 15, 2020, it annually seeks this commitment statement from participating divisions.

Letters were provided to participating school divisions for their 2027-2028 student enrollment commitment. Note that each letter should be executed by the division superintendent and school board member and returned to MLWGS by December 1, 2026.

Dr. Janssen did advise the board that MW is proposing a 4% tuition increase but behind that is the State's 4% for teachers, and the anticipation of increased health insurance costs, and the mandatory medical leave tax that we estimate at $40,000, which is large for a small site.

Additionally, we are increases student meals from $10 to $12 per day if we can't get on a division's meal plan.

D. New Club Proposal from Students 2026-27

Policy 4030-R

Each new club proposal requires a constitution in which students describe what the new club will do at club activities and what its purpose will be.

*__A reconstituted student club__ is defined as an active, not on probation, established related student interest club, special interest club, service club, club sports non-VHSL, or performance club that can demonstrate active membership and activities.

Seniors cannot propose a new club. If a junior starts a club, there must be at least half sophomores or freshmen on the initial application. The club will then be on probation for one year. This allows the club to establish any long-term projects or outreach.

Student organizations must be sponsored by one or more faculty members. Sponsorship is considered in the vetting process.

Upon Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Administrative approval, club materials will be provided to the Regional School Board for their information.

The following was vetted by Paige Hawkins, AD, and operating as a new club this year:

Diversity Advocates, Sponsor – Robinette Cross. Stipend = $0.00.

Ms. Moses raised a question regarding the removal clause (Article III, Section 4): "In the event of a member acting against the core values of Diversity Advocates, their membership will be put on probation and reviewed by the council. If a specific behavior is consistent and contradicts the attempts by the sponsor or council, the member shall be removed." She asked who the 'council' refers to, expressing concern that if it means the officers, it may not be sufficient. Dr. Janssen responded that it likely includes the officers, but administration is usually also involved in such discussions. Ms. Moses expressed her concern that a student could be dismissed simply because classmates dislike them and suggested amending the constitution to clarify the process.

Furthermore, Ms. Moses highlighted Article VII, Section 2, which states, "Eligibility: Applicants must be in their second year of Diversity Advocates to apply." She noted that this would not work for the first year since all applicants are first-year students. Dr. Janssen agreed to direct a correction on that matter.

This item is offered for regional board information.

E. **2025 Medical Loss Ratio Rebate**

Anthem rebated **$4,106.23** back to Maggie Walker Governor's School for the year 2025. The rebate was received September 2026. When carrier costs are lower than the threshold set by the Affordable Care Act, the carrier will issue premium rebates. These are called medical loss ratio (MLR) rebates.

The MLR rule is calculated on a State-by-State basis. In Virginia, Healthkeepers, Inc. did not meet the 85/15 standard. In 2025, Healthkeepers spent only 84.60% of the total in premium dollars on healthcare and activities to improve healthcare quality. Since Anthem missed its target, it must rebate 0.40% of the total health insurance premiums paid by the employer and employees in the group plan.

Employers must follow certain rules for distributing the rebate to employees.

As MLWGS pays the largest portion of the premium (ranging from 63% to 100%), a formula provided by our agent calculated rebates as follows:

Amount distributed to employees =	$ Awaiting employee share amount from agent
Amount retained by MLWGS =	$ Awaiting employer share amount from agent
TOTAL	**$4,106.23**

This item is offered for regional board information.

F. MLWGS Foundation Impact Report w/Ginger O'Neil, Executive Director

Ms. Ginger O'Neil was available to present this report to the board.

Ms. O'Neil shared some of her background as Executive Director of the MLWGS Foundation, noting that she has two MLWGS graduates

The following are some of the 2025-2026 foundation report highlights:

- Reached fund goal of $375,000.
- $101,820 of which was from one donation from the Doug and Tamra Adams family – 8 of their 12 children attended MLWGS – with funds being used to create an endowment.
- Honorarium for Eliza Mickens to speak at MLWGS during Black History Month.
- Funded the traveling exhibit 'Unbound" at MLWGS from the VMHC.
- Supported Peer Mentors.
- Supported robotics travel costs to Worlds in Houston.
- Coach Jeff Hall won Taylor Teaching Award and traveled to South Africa (he was the first winner when the award was established and has won it again 13 years later).
- Foundation Fellows program (seniors) put on a Legislative Forum – eight representatives came.
- Supported Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater's visit to MLWGS.

Concluding the presentation, Ms. O'Neil invited board members to the Night of the Dragon auction coming on February 20, 2027.

Ms. Andrews asked Ms. O'Neil if the Regional School Board has oversight of the MLWGS Foundation. Ms. O'Neil responded yes, they are a 501.C3 support organization of the school.

The chair thanked the Foundation and expressed her appreciation for how it gives back to the school community.

XII. Unfinished Business

None

XIII. Materials for Board Review and/or Discussion

a. Regional School Board Reorganization in January 2027

This item was included to notify the full board of actions to be taken at their January meeting and will be reissued as individual first-read items at the November meeting.

Policy 1010:
The Regional School Board shall adopt bylaws or rules of operation and shall establish the beginning dates of its members and may establish committees, which might be needed to carry out their responsibilities.

January Reorganization elections include:

- Annual Election of the Board Chair for 2027
- Annual Election of the Board Vice-Chair for 2027
- Annual Election for Board Clerk and Deputy Clerk for 2027
- Election of the Executive Board Members for 2027
- The Assignment of the Executive Director's Designee for 2027
- Announcement of the 2027 Superintendent's Steering Committee Leadership
- Code of Conduct Approval for School Board Members in 2027
- Code of Conduct Approval for Clerks in 2027
- 2027 Regional School Board Calendar of Meetings
- 2027 Policy Committee Membership
- 2027 Wellness Committee Membership
- 2027 Finance Committee Membership

b. New Course Proposals for 2027-28 – *First Read*

The following proposals presented for first read have been vetted by the Planning Committee:

Proposed New Courses

Advanced Chorus and Drama III (Production)

Topics in Digital Art: Animation

Documentaries and New Media Journalism

Genre Studies (American Myths and Truths in Movies) (Film Studies Level 2)

Beginning Orchestra

VCU Dual Enrollment-Introduction to Biomedical Engineering

Approval of these proposed new courses to be available in the 2027-28 academic year will be requested at the executive school board's November meeting.

c. International Trip Proposal, Kara Love's Austen Seminar, England in 2027 – *First Read*

Brief description/overview of this trip:

Traveling to London, Bath, and Chawton offers a focused, immersive experience that brings Jane Austen's world—her life, works, and cultural legacy—to life. In London, students can situate Austen within the broader literary and historical context of Regency England, exploring museums, neighborhoods, and archives that shaped the era's society and readership. In Bath, where Austen lived and set portions of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, students can walk the very streets she described, visit the Jane Austen Centre, and experience firsthand the city's Georgian architecture, assembly rooms, and social customs that figure prominently in her novels.

By engaging directly with these cultural and historical landmarks, students gain a tangible understanding of how Austen's personal experiences and Regency society informed her writing. This targeted travel experience deepens classroom learning, encourages cross-disciplinary connections between literature, history, and culture, and fosters critical thinking about the lasting impact of Austen's work on both her contemporaries and modern audiences.

What are the educational values and learning objectives of this trip:

By exploring authentic sites connected to Jane Austen's life and Regency England, students will gain a deeper understanding of the cultural, historical, and social contexts that shaped her novels. The trip encourages critical thinking as students analyze how place, history, and lived experience informed Austen's literary works and how modern portrayals—in museums, film, and popular culture—interpret and reimagine her legacy.

Through visits to Austen's home in Chawton, the Georgian cityscape of Bath, and key sites in London, students will engage directly with artifacts, architecture, and landscapes that illuminate themes of class, gender, marriage, and social mobility central to her writing. Reflective activities and guided discussions will help students connect classroom study to real-world contexts, fostering a richer and more nuanced understanding of Austen's artistry and her continued influence on literature and culture today.

Minimum number of students: 6, Maximum number of students: 14

Additional Chaperone: Ed Coleman (English Teacher)

Costs: Overall total: Projected total per student: $3,000 + Projected subsidy: $5,900 total = approximately $425.00 per student,

Approval of Ms. Love's repeat trip will be requested at the executive school board's November meeting.

XIV. Information Items

- Finance Committee Minutes, October 1, 2026
- National Honor Society Induction for 125 Students, September 29, 2026
- Alumni Showcase at MLWGS, October 2, 2026
- Robotics Open House, October 3, 2026
- Homecoming Dance, October 10, 2026
- Information Forum at MLWGS for the Class of 2031, October 17, 2026
- Scholar-Athlete of the Week: September 28, 2026-Samuel Freeman, '27-Hanover, Golf

- Scholar-Athlete of the Week: October 5, 20206--Stella Griffin, '27-Richmond, Field Hockey

XV. Superintendent's Steering Committee Report

Dr. Nichols reported that all regional school agenda items today were discussed at their meeting today.

Dr. Nichols shared that October is National Principals Month and recognized the work of Dr. Janssen, Dr. Smith, and Dr. Williams with a small token of appreciation.

XVI. New Business

None.

XVII. Closed Meeting

None.

XVIII. Certification of Closed Meeting

None.

XIX. Announcements/Additional Discussion

None.

XX. Adjournment of Regular Meeting

This meeting was adjourned at 10:24 am.

Next Meeting

Executive Board on November 12, 2026, at 9:00 am. MLWGS, 1000 N. Lombardy St., Room 153, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-354-6800 x2190.

_____ _____

Heather Donbrosky, Chair Kristin Janssen, Ed.D., Ex. Director

_____

Minutes Recorded by:
Barbara Marshall, Regional Board Clerk