

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

12301 Spotswood Furnace Road

Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Governing Board Meeting

March 20, 2014

MINUTES

Members Present: Mr. Duane McOsker (Stafford); Dr. Mary Anderson, Vice Chair (Caroline); Mr. Ken Novell, Chair (King George)

Members Absent: Mr. Ray Lora (Spotsylvania)

Also attending: Mrs. Merri Kae VanderPloeg (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Dr. Chris Quinn (Assistant Superintendent of Stafford County Schools); Dr. Greg Killough (Superintendent of Caroline County Schools); Mr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George County Schools); Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education and Leadership).

Mr. Novell determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. McOsker made a motion and Mr. Novell seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Anderson had no comments at this time. Mr. Novell shared with the board that CGS King George English teacher, Mrs. Laura Merryman, was awarded a PTO grant for the purchase of materials which would support a 360 degree classroom instructional model. Mrs. VanderPloeg added that Donald Saunders, King George CGS mathematics teacher, was awarded a PTO grant

to purchase laser hardware for mathematics. Mr. McOsker attended the CGS Snowball in February. He was impressed with the organization of the event by PTO. Nearly 500 students attended the event and the dance represented all of the school divisions.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

No comments at this time.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

The Snowball was a success this year and the students all had a good time. The CGS Robotics team placed among the top 5 in robotics teams in South Carolina. Mrs. VanderPloeg learned from faculty members that 2004 CGS graduate recently won the final round of the TV. game show, 'Jeopardy' winner.

The CGS Culminating Symposium will be held on April 16. Mrs. VanderPloeg encouraged the board members to attend the event at Riverbend High School. The CGS picnic will be held on May 22nd at Pratt Park. The picnic is open to current and rising CGS students and their families. Finally, the CGS Senior banquet will be at the Clubs of Quantico on May 30th. The PTO pays for the dinner of the CGS Governing Board members, teachers, and superintendents.

Mrs. VanderPloeg thanked Assistant Supt. Quinn for inviting her to a military dependent school symposium on March 20th. Mrs. VanderPloeg attended the educational symposium at Quantico with educators from Stafford County. There are several students in CGS who are military dependents so the symposium offered many ideas on how to support the academic and social emotional needs of this population. Finally, she emphasized the importance of supporting military and former military families and students who live in the school divisions because they are an integral part of the school community.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Novell made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Midyear Review of the Strategic Plan

Mrs. VanderPloeg explained the color-coding of the strategic plan process. Program objectives that are in yellow are objectives or language included in the plan which needs more clarification from faculty or other stakeholders. Objectives in pink are objectives that have not been met. Objectives in green are “met objectives” and blue are objectives that are “in process”.

Mrs. VanderPloeg clarified each objective for the Governing Board. Mr. McOsker, asked for clarification about the Advanced Placement Biology course. He received concerns from two faculty members about the AP Bio class and the viability of teaching the course in a short time period. Mrs. VanderPloeg addressed the concerns and pointed out that this is the first year AP Bio has been offered since the revision of the Advanced Placement curriculum. Dr. Killough asked if Mrs. VanderPloeg addressed concerns about the course with faculty. She has met with the faculty numerous times, observed classes, reviewed grade distributions, and have met with a few parents over the course of the year that had concerns about the course. Mrs. VanderPloeg gave examples of differentiated tools and strategies that have been effective with students in the course. Also, an informed decision about whether AP Biology is viable cannot be determined for two to three years when longitudinal data has been collected. Mr. McOsker asked fellow board members to look at the AP data in the fall to see if it’s effective.

Dr. Killough calculated the number of hours students are receiving instruction and it is comparable to other main school schedules. Mrs. VanderPloeg explained that all of the Advanced Placement classes have the same amount of blocks; however, AP Biology has been getting extra time because it is an introductory course for many of the students. Dr. Killough said there is a natural learning curve for the educators during the first year of an Advanced Placement course because they are getting to know the curriculum and trying to calibrate the pacing of the curriculum. Mr. Novell agreed that a longitudinal study of the data is important and the suggestion of offering boot camps to prepare students for the rigorous content will be helpful.

Mr. Benson asked how the calendar was coordinated. Mrs. VanderPloeg explained the daily schedule and how the Wednesday schedule was structured. The faculty and the Director agreed that AP Biology would receive extra time this year for instruction than the other courses since it is a new course and many students have not had Biology before.

Mrs. VanderPloeg continued to discuss the strategic planning initiatives. Some of the objectives will be re-evaluated based on the individual needs of the program and various schools. Mr. McOsker asked what the relationship was between the building gifted resource teacher and CGS. Mrs. VanderPloeg explained that each building and division has a different model for gifted services. Mr. Benson asked for more clarification about the attrition rate data objective in the strategic plan. Mrs. VanderPloeg said that at the end of the year, she will get together with

the gifted coordinator to determine if student exits correlate with the initial application scores or if there are other reasons for exiting outside of CGS. If there are correlations that can be changed, the Director and coordinators will work on the reasons and determine ways to improve the attrition rate.

Dr. Quinn asked about the field experience opting out objective which is noted in the strategic plan. Mrs. VanderPloeg explained that some students will not participate in the field experiences because they are being dissuaded by their main school teachers, coaches, or schools. This objective was developed because the field experiences are part of the curriculum, the trips are paid for with CGS funds, and they are integral to the CGS program. It is important for the students to participate in the trips and CGS needs to know if there is a reason for students to opt out of the field experiences.

One of the strategic planning objectives pertained to utilizing community experts in the CGS classrooms. Mr. Novell wanted to learn more about the community experts and speakers each site may use. Mrs. VanderPloeg is encouraging the sites to share their experts with one another so all of the students can benefit rather than holding onto the contacts for individual sites.

Under the technology initiative, Mrs. VanderPloeg asked the sites to speak to their building administration about the division BYOD policy and how it is enforced in each building. Several teachers want to implement technology devices into their lessons but the program wants to respect the building rules. Mr. Novell wanted to know the ratio of technology devices for each student. The goal is to be 1:1 with devices but the program has to continue upgrading hardware as the generation of devices change. Presently, many computer information systems such as emails are now being converted to the cloud so it can be appropriately stored.

Culminating Course Proposal

The CGS culminating research committee reconvened to explore the possibility of providing a credit class for the culminating research component of the program. Eight years ago, the Virginia Department of Education Governor's School auditing team recommended that CGS should pursue a research credit class. The committee is in the development phase of the credit class and received input from the Stafford County Assistant Superintendent. Mr. McOsker asked how much time was devoted to culminating. Mrs. VanderPloeg said its two to three Wednesdays a month but students are expected to work on the culminating project outside of class time and some of the work is already done online through the CGS Blackboard system. In light of the rigorous coursework that is already being offered, Mr. McOsker wanted the program to be cognizant of time restraints. Mrs. VanderPloeg explained that after the AP exams, the sites have five to six Wednesdays to work on culminating projects.

There was further discussion about the Advanced Placement calendar and alternative exam times. CGS was going to continue to following the original AP schedule.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

There was discussion to table the election to May since Mr. Lora was absent but Mr. McOsker pointed out that the election was tabled in March and the board would run the risk of tabling it another month without full board attendance. Mrs. VanderPloeg said that one of the board members needed to sign the bills. Mr. McOsker and Dr. Anderson agreed that the election should proceed. Mr. Novell was comfortable with holding the election on March 20th. Dr. Anderson nominated Mr. Novell to be the Chair. Mr. McOsker seconded the nomination. Motion carried 3-0. Dr. Anderson nominated Mr. Lora to be the Vice-Chair and Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0. Mr. McOsker nominated the Executive Superintendent position to Mr. Benson from King George. Mr. Novell seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Adjournment: Dr. Anderson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. The Governing Board adjourned at 4:15 p.m.