

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

12301 Spotswood Furnace Road

Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Governing Board Meeting

February 18, 2016

MINUTES

Members Present: Mr. John Copeland, Vice Chair (Caroline); Ms. Tammy Indseth (King George); Mr. Bill Blaine, Chair (Spotsylvania)

Also attending: Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Dr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George County Schools and Executive Superintendent of the Governing Board); Dr. George Parker (Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools); Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County); Mr. Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education in Spotsylvania County).

Dr. Bruce Benson (Superintendent of Stafford County Schools) and Mr. Dewayne McOsker (Stafford County) were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Dr. VanderPloeg welcomed new members to the CGS Governing Board. Each board member, superintendent, and director introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 18, 2015 AGENDA

Mr. Copeland made a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Indseth seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No comments at this time.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mr. Copeland gave a summary of the Caroline school division's budget process with the Caroline County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Blaine praised CGS and said it was an important element of the educational system. He was passionate about identifying students for CGS who were economically disadvantaged and wanted the divisions to continue this effort. Mrs. Insedth had no comments.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Parker assured the board and fellow superintendents that in spite of the budgetary challenges, Caroline Co. was looking forward to continuing their partnership in CGS. Mr. Parker also stated that he enjoyed his visit to the King George CGS site in January. Dr. Benson and Dr. Baker had no comments.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

The CGS Model UN team would be competing in Baltimore over the weekend. The Model UN team is new to CGS this year and was suggested by many ninth graders who participated in Model UN in middle school. Mrs. Darby and Ms. Christopherson of the North Stafford site are leading the team. Presently, the team represents all of the participating school division but CGS hopes more students will participate next year. The CGS Robotics team is preparing for the regional robotics competition that will take place in Blacksburg, VA on March 12th. Fifty-eight students from across the region are participating in the robotics program. CGS is fortunate to have several engineers from Dahlgren who consult with the students on the engineering of the Kilroy robot. Students have the opportunity to build, computer program, solicit sponsors, and handle the promotion of the robotics program.

On February 9th, nine students went to Richmond to participate in the annual Governor's School Capitol Day event. All of the students found the opportunity worthy because they could visit with their legislatures about CGS; encourage state govt. to continue supporting the academic programs, and observe the General Assembly in session. During the week of February 18, an amendment to House Bill 139#13h had been proposed to increase funding for the stand alone Governor's Schools (i.e. Appomattox, Thomas Jefferson, and Maggie Walker). The CGS/PTO parents are advocating to kill the amendment and asking legislators to continue forward with the funding formula the Governor proposed in December. The bill itself is proposing an increase in funding for the Academic Year Governor's Schools. Mrs. Insedth asked if the Governing Board was active in the VSBA. Dr. VanderPloeg said that the each board member represented their school divisions which collaborated with the VSBA but CGS did not solely work with VSBA. Mrs. Insedth said that VSBA had lobbyists who supported the school divisions so perhaps they could voice an opinion. Dr. VanderPloeg said the Governor's Schools

have an organization called the ‘Friends of the Virginia Governor’s Schools’ who is supposed to advocate for the Governor’s Schools but lately, many parents from Maggie Walker are active members and few parents outside of the Richmond area have been participating in the organization. Dr. VanderPloeg will keep stakeholder apprised of further developments as they reach her office.

On March 5th, CGS 9th graders have the opportunity to participate in the March Madness Mixer. The event will give the students a chance to socialize with other students from the regional program as well as seek tips on study skills and academic work habits. On March 12th, the annual CGS Snowball will take place at the Eagles Lodge in Fredericksburg. Snowball is sponsored by the CGS/PTO. Finally, CGS will hold its first film festival on March 23rd for students at Riverbend High School. Students have the opportunity to submit a short film they have produced for the competition. Three winners will be selected by a panel of judges. Governing Board members are welcome to attend both events. April 20th is the annual Senior Culminating Symposium at the University of Mary Washington, Stafford campus. The Symposium gives the 12th grade students an opportunity to present their year-long Culminating research project to the public.

ELECTION OF 2016 OFFICERS

Dr. VanderPloeg facilitated the election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Board for 2016. Mrs. Indseth made a motion to elect Mr. Bill Blaine as the Chair. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. Mr. Bill Blaine made a motion to elect Mr. Copeland as the Vice Chair. Mrs. Indseth seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. Mr. Copeland made a motion to elect Dr. Robert Benson as the Executive Superintendent. Mrs. Indseth seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0. Dr. Robert Benson of King George will be the Executive Superintendent.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES & FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Copeland made a motion to approve the financial report and consent agenda. Mr. Blaine seconded the motion to approve the financial report and consent agenda. It passed 3-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Review of Every Child Succeeds Act

When the federal government reauthorized the K-12 public education law in December, they renamed it as the “Every Child Succeeds’ Act and determined funding from the legislation could be used to support gifted education services. The federal government distributes \$21 billion in federal funds to K-12 public education. Under the new legislation, the Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program was retained and new provisions pertaining to gifted education were passed. Data collection and reporting for gifted identification will be required of

public school districts, the use of professional development funds for gifted education training will be allowed, the use of Title I funds for gifted services will be authorized, and computer adaptive assessments for gifted identification was approved. The superintendents noted that federal funding will not increase for school divisions with the passing of the new legislation but the authorization of funds would be more flexible than in the past. Mr. Copeland emphasized the need for economically disadvantaged gifted students to receive additional educational opportunities and thought the legislation would support the effort. Dr. Parker liked the flexibility in the language to serve gifted learners in school divisions. Dr. Baker believes school divisions should be more inclusive when supporting learners and hopes the funding can be distributed across the board. Dr. VanderPloeg noted the professional development funds can benefit a lot of teachers not just gifted education teachers. Dr. Robert Benson cautioned the use of Title I funds can be challenging when a program wants to initiate a long-term project because funds can fluctuate or may not be sustainable. Dr. VanderPloeg said the VA Department of Education had not offered guidance on the legislation yet but hoped the Director of Gifted Education for the VDOE could provide information to the Governor's Schools at the March Directors' Meeting.

First Reading of the FY2017 Budget

Dr. VanderPloeg presented the draft version of the FY2017 budget. She reminded the board the preliminary budget is fluid because the General Assembly has not determined the state allocation yet and enrollment will not be finalized until late September. Enrollment will change due to the application pool of rising 9th graders, students who exit, and students who move away from the school divisions. Mr. Blaine inquired about the funding reduction of the site connection line item. Dr. VanderPloeg explained that site connections support the six site connection. This year, the broadcast system was upgraded and some hardware was replaced which enabled the program to suspend certain costs. Additionally, a considerable amount of money was saved due to the phasing out of software contracts. The superintendents noted the composite index changed a few months ago so the numbers on the budget were inaccurate. Dr. VanderPloeg said she would clarify the new index numbers with the program manager and fiscal agent. Dr. Benson asked about the health insurance costs and whether there would be an increase or decrease. Dr. VanderPloeg said the budget was still a draft and CGS was awaiting word from the fiscal agent on any changes in employee benefits. The budget should be finalized in May. The board could review and pass the budget at the May meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Biology textbooks in Spotsylvania Co.

All of the participating school divisions except for Spotsylvania purchased biology textbooks in the last three years. The lapse in the textbook alignment cycle was due to the recession. Recently, Spotsylvania County was able to purchase new biology textbooks and the online resources for the school division and for CGS. In order for the Biology classes to remain aligned,

the CGS budget will pay for the new textbook ancillary resources for the Stafford and King George sites as well as copies of the new textbook for each Biology teacher in CGS. Mr. Copeland had concerns about e-book access for students who do not have internet access at home. Dr. VanderPloeg said the program works tirelessly to accommodate students without internet access and purchased extra copies of the textbooks for the sites in case a student needed to have a copy at home. Mrs. Indseth made a motion to approve the textbooks. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Copeland made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Indseth seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. The Governing Board adjourned at 5:38 p.m.