

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

12301 Spotswood Furnace Road

Stafford, VA 22407

Governing Board Meeting

January 19, 2017

MINUTES

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

Also attending: Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Dr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George County Schools) and Dr. Bruce Benson (Superintendent of Stafford County Schools); Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Schools); Mr. Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education for Spotsylvania County Schools); Dr. Joanne Jones (Caroline Co. County Curriculum Director)

Absent: Dr. George Parker (Superintendent of Caroline County Schools)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Dr. VanderPloeg welcomed members of the CGS Governing Board, division administration, and guests.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Blaine opened nominations. Mrs. Indseth nominated Mr. Blaine to continue as CGS Governing Board Chair. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. Mr. Blaine abstained. Mrs. Indseth nominated Mr. Copeland to continue as CGS Governing Board Vice Chair. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. Mr. Copeland abstained. Mr. Copeland nominated Dr. Robert Benson to continue as Executive Superintendent. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 19, 2017 CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Copeland made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Indseth seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mrs. Dana Brown, CGS parent of a North Stafford CGS student and alum, was in attendance. She remarked that a few local politicians had children and grandchildren attend CGS and they were very pleased with the educational experience CGS provides to students in the school divisions. She publically thanked Spotsylvania County Public Schools for their quick response to FOIA emails she requested a few months ago.

Mrs. Joan Darby, CGS Social Studies teacher and site leader at North Stafford was in attendance.

Mr. Mike Brown, Spotsylvania Co. Director of Professional Learning and Instructional Programs was in attendance. He will be overseeing special programs in the division beginning in late January and CGS would be one the programs under his department.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES & FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs. Insedth made the motion to approve the minutes and financial report. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mr. Blaine spoke to a Governor's School parent recently and said the parent was very impressed with the work the teachers do at her student's CGS site.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

No comments were made.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Dr. VanderPloeg shared with the board that the student mid-year climate survey would be sent to students on January 23. The anonymous survey would ask students how they believed they were doing on a social, emotional, and academic level in CGS and in school. The survey was suggested by board members and superintendents in November and the questions were developed by the Director and the CGS contracted counselor. Dr. VanderPloeg will share the results of the survey as well as the survey questions at the March meeting.

Several interdisciplinary units were taking place at the various sites. Division school board members were welcome to visit one of the interdisciplinary end-of-unit experiences or during another classroom period.

Mid-term exams were to take place in Spotsylvania and Stafford counties during the last week in January.

Currently, the Calculus department is reviewing formative and summative assessments as well as the curriculum lessons to determine if the course needs to be changed or modified in the future. One of the analytical measures the department will conduct this year is to administer a Calculus readiness test to the Math Analysis students in April. The readiness assessment will analyze pre-Calc skills, students' mathematical strengths, problem solving abilities, and any challenges they encounter in Math Analysis. The department hopes the data will help determine if the curriculum map needs to be modified and if math placements of students needs to be re-evaluated before they enter AP Calculus.

The social studies department in Stafford Co. is collaborating with the other division teachers in a textbook adoption review. Stafford Co. is in the process of adopting new social studies textbooks in 2018. In the future, when the other divisions are ready to purchase new texts, the CGS sites will already have their selections reviewed for adoption. Mr. Keith asked when the last social studies book was adopted. Mrs. Darby and Dr. VanderPloeg believe the last social studies textbook adoption was eight years ago.

February 14th is the annual CGS Poetry Slam across the divisions. Stafford Co. CGS seniors will gather at Stafford High School site to share original poems with one another. Riverbend, Spotsylvania, and King George will meet at Riverbend High School for their Poetry Slam event.

The English department is collaborating with a professional film maker to host an 11th grade film workshop on February 15. This workshop kicks off the Harlem Renaissance unit students study in AP American History and in AP Language. Students will be able to create a short film and have the opportunity to submit it to the CGS Short Film Contest in late March. Winning films will be announced at the CGS Film Festival on April 6.

The Kilroy Robotics team is currently building their robot for regional and state competitions. Many of the experiences and tasks students learn while on the team correlates with 21st century skills, soft skills, and critical thinking processes the VDOE recommends VA secondary educators and school divisions should adopt when developing curriculum and student outcomes. Mr. McOsker asked if Kilroy was currently seeking funds for transportation. Dr. VanderPloeg was not aware of this concern; however, the team holds fundraisers and seeks financial assistance from CGS and private donors.

CGS posted dates and times for school board members to visit the sites. The CGS visits will raise awareness of the program to the new and veteran members so they can become more informed about the daily operations of CGS. There are several dates and times for board members to choose. If a date does not work, the board members are welcome to contact the CGS office and make an appointment. Dr. VanderPloeg will host the board members during the visits.

Dr. VanderPloeg showed two postcard invitations that were sent to students. The first card was an invitation for rising 8th graders to apply to CGS. The targeted students who received cards in the mail were advanced math students in Caroline and King George as well as students in Spotsylvania and Stafford who scored in the 95th percentile on the PSAT. Ninety-five cards were sent in Spotsylvania. Ninety-eight cards were sent in Stafford. One hundred and twenty-five were delivered in King George and a little over one hundred were delivered to students in Caroline. The CGS application window was from January 2nd through February 14th.

The second card was an invitation to CGS upperclassmen who would be the first in their family who planned on attending college. All 10th and 11th grade students took a college readiness survey and declared on the survey as being a “first-generation student” seeking to attend college. Dr. VanderPloeg and Mrs. Gladney, the contracted counselor, will be hosting a college readiness workshop on January 28th as well as providing individual outreach to the students at their schools. After the AP exams, CGS will be transporting the students to visit George Mason University in late May as well as Georgetown University in the summer.

INFORMATION ITEMS

CGS Model UN Presentation, Mrs. Joan Darby

In 2016, CGS started a Model UN team for CGS students who were interested in competing in a program that focuses on social studies, public speaking, and language arts. Mrs. Darby and Ms. Christopherson coached ten students from the four school divisions. Twenty-one students from the various sites participated this year attended the Johns Hopkins Model UN Conference in January. The students found the conference to be very informative and an enjoyable experience. There are conferences across the country but the CGS team decided to participate in a local conference so families could watch their student compete as well as reduce travel expenses. The

Model UN team is financially self-supporting at this time so families are responsible for the travel, registration, and lodging during the conference. Secondly, the Johns Hopkins Conference does not interfere with Spring Break schedules, midterm exams, and Advanced Placement exams.

Prior to the conference, Model UN team members were assigned to a United Nations committee and a country. They had a period of time to research the country and communicate with their committee chair that provided them information about two topics relating to their committee. Students read, synthesized, and evaluated the information over a course of a few weeks and then submitted two position papers to the committee chairs. During the conference, students met with fellow committee members and debated/discussed the two topics. They formally prepared a resolution. Over the course of the conference, Johns Hopkins Model UN students posed international conflicts pertaining to the countries and committees the students had to solve. The Model UN Conference provided social opportunities for the participants so they could meet students from other school divisions across the region.

The Model UN program enhances students' critical thinking skills, public speaking experiences, and independent research competencies. The team does not interfere with other school teams and competitions. The CGS team attends different conferences so they can be on their home school team. The team was generated from CGS underclassmen that participated in middle school and wanted to continue in high school.

Demographics of students in middle school Algebra I and Geometry Classes

Dr. VanderPloeg provided the school divisions the enrollment, gender, and demographics of eighth grade students who are in the Algebra I and Geometry classes. Dr. VanderPloeg received the data from the assessment department in Spotsylvania and from the gifted coordinators in King George and Caroline. Stafford had not submitted their data to CGS at the time of the Governing Board meeting. Dr. Robert Benson asked if King George disaggregated the data. King George and Caroline combined the Algebra and Geometry enrollment data.

Mr. McOsker asked what CGS' top three concerns were. He was curious to see the program's demographics compared to the math demographics. Dr. VanderPloeg had the same inquiries about demographics of advanced classes in middle school compared to CGS; however, she emphasized the importance of knowing what the divisions were doing to develop and foster students in mathematics in the lower grade levels so they would be prepared for advanced math in middle and high school. Secondly, Dr. VanderPloeg wondered if the divisions were informing parents of elementary aged students about secondary opportunities and the math placement process.

Mr. Copeland asked if CGS was going to individually meet with counselors and students about the program. CGS currently visits all of the middle schools, hosts tours, and provides outreach opportunities for elementary and middle school students but its awkward for the director to invite herself to faculty meetings or department meetings to discuss the program. CGS is happy to attend meetings to discuss the program if it were invited.

Mr. Blaine asked how different divisions identified students for gifted and accelerated programs and how parents are alerted of the program. Dr. VanderPloeg shared that King George tests every single 2nd grade student. Dr. Jones (Caroline) said her school division is providing enrichment opportunities to elementary aged students before they are tested and is currently developing a young scholars program for elementary students. Mr. Brown (Spotsylvania) stated that some elementary schools in the division have young scholars programs and identification screening occurs for students in grades K-2.

Mr. Copeland believes that CGS as well as CBGS should be invited to meet with the different departments to discuss the program. Mr. Blaine hopes schools directly visit with parents of students who are exhibiting potential and intellectual ability and encourage them to apply to accelerated programs in the divisions.

Dr. Robert Benson asked if there were other options or considerations for students who have not had Algebra I before 9th grade. Dr. VanderPloeg stated it was challenging to come up with another math option other than Advanced Algebra II for 9th grade students because a majority of the accepted students had completed Algebra I in middle school. A 9th grader could not take a one semester Algebra I class and then transition into the CGS Advanced Algebra II course because it was a year-long class. She further explained that alternative programs, on-line programs, and summer school Algebra I courses are very different than a traditional year-long Algebra I class because often they do not comprehensively cover all of the concepts needed in the Advanced Algebra II course. Dr. VanderPloeg said that when alternatives were made for students, a majority of them struggled to keep up with the pace and all of them eventually exited. Dr. Robert Benson hopes some flexibility or alternatives could be explored.

Mr. Blaine asked if CGS needed resources that related to middle school communication and identification. Dr. VanderPloeg encouraged the divisions to develop a way to communicate to elementary families about secondary opportunities. She applauded divisions like Caroline who were providing enrichment to elementary students before they were tested. In the end they would be better prepared. Mr. McOsker emphasized to the superintendents that the divisions have to market the program to the different grade levels.

Dr. Baker believed there were two different conversations occurring. One is marketing the program and the second is the identification of the students. Spotsylvania has seen a wait list for a few years of qualified applicants so there isn't a direct relevance to not having enough applicants. He agrees with Dr. Robert Benson about breaking down barriers so more students

have access to the program. He hopes the systems are not creating barriers and expecting the students to always make the academic adjustments. Dr. Bruce Benson stated it's important to tear down barriers but we, as school systems, need to focus beyond the standards of learning, build critical thinking skills, and eventually build student capacities. Moreover, Dr. Bruce Benson believes inviting students to apply to the program and encouraging them to be a member of CGS would probably be better received if it came from a teacher or school faculty member who knows the students rather than it coming from CGS who hasn't built a relationship with the students.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Review of Proposed FY2018 CGS Budget

Dr. VanderPloeg shared a draft of the FY2018 budget to the Governing Board. She explained the Virginia Department of Education changed the funding formula of a weighted composite index of each participating division to an average weighted composite index formula. The recalculated average composite index is .3533. The well per pupil amount is currently \$4,983. Donna Welch, CGS Program Manager, communicated several times with the finance offices of VDOE to get details about the recalculated average formula and was unable to receive specific answers. The projected enrollment for the 2017-18 school year will be 581 students and the new projected funding will be \$1,011,195.00.

Mr. Copeland asked if the board would receive a line item budget and Dr. VanderPloeg will provide a line item budget to the board in May once the state finalizes the funding contribution.

ACTION ITEMS

In December, the VDOE emailed the CGS office that the finance department recalculated the composite index average after they promised CGS and other governor's schools a certain funding amount. Ms. Welch verified the email with the state's finance department and they acknowledged the amount that was promised last summer and early fall was inaccurate and the recalculated composite average would immediately be implemented. As a result, The Commonwealth Governor's School reduced its budget \$53,958 at the end of December 2016. The line items of new equipment, summer enrichment, maintenance upgrades, site connections, and telephone were reduced. Line items that would directly impact students and instruction were not touched. Dr. VanderPloeg requests the board approve the second amended budget.

Mr. Copeland made a motion to pass the second amendment of the FY17 budget. Mr. McOsker seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

FINAL COMMENTS

Dr. Bruce Benson inquired about the CGS instructional calendar and whether it considered divisions' different calendars (begin dates and end-of-school dates). This question arose from learning that Spotsylvania County will be starting school in August of 2018. Three years ago, CGS had to make instructional adjustments because half of the participating divisions started earlier than the other divisions. Currently King George and Caroline start school during the third week of August. CGS faculty and sites have made curriculum adjustments. In August, the King George site covers SOL requirements, introduces the culminating requirements to the grade levels, and facilitates AP curriculum units that would be given by the other divisions as summer assignments. The broadcast lectures and the traditional instructional map of the curriculum begins after Labor Day. The site dismisses from school in late May but they fulfill the SOL and culminating requirements before the Stafford and Spotsylvania sites. The new student orientation continues to be scheduled the second week in August. If students cannot attend, they will receive an orientation from their site before school starts.

Mr. Blaine believes school choice will be discussed more in the region and at the national level. Spotsylvania County passed a resolution to recognize January 22-27 as National School Choice week. He believed the Commonwealth Governor's School is an opportunity in the region many families can choose for their high school students. The divisions need to promote it as an excellent educational choice.

Adjournment

Mrs. Indseth made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. McOske seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. The Governing Board adjourned at 5:24 p.m.