

**THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL**  
**Spotsylvania County Public Schools, School Board Office**  
**Fredericksburg, VA**  
**Governing Board Meeting**  
October 19, 2017

**MINUTES**

Members Present: Mr. John Copeland, Vice Chair (Caroline); Mr. Bill Blaine, Chair (Spotsylvania)

Also attending: Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Dr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George Schools); Mr. Mike Brown (Director of Professional Development and Special Programs of Spotsylvania County Schools); Dr. Bruce Benson (Superintendent of Stafford County Schools); Mrs. Lindsey Rose (Gifted Coordinator of Caroline County Schools); Stephenie Fellingner (Supervisor of Gifted & Accelerated Programs of Stafford County)

Absent: Mr. Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education for Spotsylvania County Schools); Mr. Dewayne McOsker (Stafford County Schools); Ms. Tammy Indseth (King George); Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Schools); Mr. Tom Nichols (Director of Secondary Education in Stafford County); Dr. Sarah Calveric (Assistant Superintendent of Caroline County Schools)

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF October 19, 2017 CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Merri Kae VanderPloeg and Chairperson Blaine determined there was not a quorum but the members of the board who were present decided to move forward with the meeting and pass Governing Board business when Mr. McOsker was reached. Dr. VanderPloeg welcomed members of the CGS Governing Board, division administration, and guests.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Mrs. Dana Brown, a North Stafford site parent of a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student, wanted the program to survey students to determine the amount of homework and time they were spending on homework. Her daughter is a travel student, therefore, time to work on assignments while CGS is in session is shortened due to the bus ride.

### **APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2017 MINUTES & FINANCIAL REPORT**

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. McOsker was reached and the three board members present (Mr. Copeland, Mr. Blaine, and Mr. McOsker) approved the minutes and financial report. Motion passed 3-0.

### **BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS**

Mr. Copeland was looking forward to working with the school divisions and CGS for another school year.

Mr. Blaine believed the school year was off to a good start and appreciated Mrs. Brown's observations and believed it was an important matter to review (i.e. homework load for students).

### **SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

No comments were made.

### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

Dr. VanderPloeg complimented the King George site for their creative and clever bulletin board that was viewed on one of the hallways at King George High School. The bulletin board represented each student's name, pictures of classroom activities, and field trips. Mr. McNamara and other CGS faculty members did a wonderful job of representing student engagement. Many thanks for Mr. Blaine for his assistance in spearheading the installation of the CGS generator. With his persistence and guidance, the operations department of Spotsylvania County installed the generator on October 16. The generator will insure the CGS servers will remain in operation in the event of a power outage. This has been a problem for many years. When the power is off for several hours, back up batteries cannot maintain server capabilities, the servers overheat, and consequently, have to be replaced which has been expensive to the program and disruptive to student learning and communications.

The Director will be visiting all of the middle schools in the region in October and November. After the visits, CGS schedules a tour for interested and eligible middle school students to see a CGS class in session as well as meet with CGS faculty and students. Homeschool networks and private schools will have an opportunity to visit a CGS site in December and they will work directly with the gifted coordinators in the school divisions to complete the CGS application. Mr. Brown asked if the SCOPE teachers are responsible for communicating the visits and tours with Algebra teachers and Dr. VanderPloeg affirmed this. All gifted resource teachers in the divisions are asked to communicate the CGS visits and tours to the counselors and Algebra teachers.

Dr. VanderPloeg gave each division the application numbers from 2017. She also provided them with a hand-out which featured a new field trip the AP Environmental Science classes took as well a preliminary list of students who are National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists.

In October, ten students will be participating in a LIVE town hall event during the National Council of Teachers of English convention that will be held in St. Louis. The town hall discussion will focus on controversial subjects that are featured in literature. Mr. Kevin Ramsey, CGS Technology Engineer, is coordinating with conference producers to set up the live video technology.

Finally, Dr. VanderPloeg provided the Governing Board the 2017-18 enrollment and demographic breakdown as well as longitudinal data from the last five years. Mr. Blaine asked if the International Baccalaureate program in Stafford and Spotsylvania counties would impact enrollment and the application process. She replied that every program serves certain kinds of students. The Commonwealth Governor's School particularly serves gifted and talented students. If a student was not identified as gifted prior to acceptance, become identified once they are enrolled in CGS. The IB program has a particular curriculum, a different course sequence, and program expectations than CGS. Each program serves different kinds students across the divisions and the enrollment and application numbers have not decreased in the divisions. Mr. Blaine believed it was important for the communities to know there are wonderful educational choices in the division that private and homeschool families may want to take advantage of in the future. Dr. VanderPloeg shared that many non-public school families call the CGS office inquiring about the program so that is a positive sign for the school divisions.

Mr. Blaine asked how the divisions determine the racial identification of the students. Families self-identify but Mr. Brown clarified that identification occurs usually when the students are first enrolled in public school.

Dr. VanderPloeg was satisfied with the enrollment count but wants the program to continue its goals to keep the attrition rate stable and not to lose students mid-way through high school. She was pleased that some of the sites which had difficulty maintaining enrollment a few years ago are showing growth and enrollment stability. This is largely due to the monitoring of the

enrollment goals, increasing student engagement at the sites, providing social/emotional supports for students who are struggling with school, and monitoring the academic progress of students who are having academic difficulties. She addressed Mrs. Brown's concerns about homework load and the rigor of some of the AP classes. She believed transportations, the schedule and structure of the school day plays an important role in the success of students in CGS. For example, students in Spotsylvania County are allowed to take a study hall which is not the case in a few other divisions. Students have commented that the study hall option helps them effectively manage their course loads with the extra-curricular activities.

Mr. Brown asked if exit interviews are done when a student leaves the program. Dr. VanderPloeg explained the exit interview process and gave reasons why students leave such as changing schedules to pursue the fine arts or other interests. Sometimes exits are due to moving away but it is not all due to homework load.

Mr. Blaine asked if CGS collaborates with other Governor's Schools. In the past, CGS has partnered with other Governor's Schools for field trip experiences, competitions, and faculty professional development. Since all of the divisions in the state have different school calendars it is problematic to offer courses that are synced.

Dr. VanderPloeg provided the board the 2017-18 Strategic Plan Initiatives. Mr. Blaine asked if CGS will be dramatically impacted by the early start in Spotsylvania. Dr. VanderPloeg said the faculty will be developing the 2018-19 calendar after the holidays. The new student orientation will change but currently half of the participating divisions are starting before Labor Day so it can be managed without too much disruption. Dr. Bruce Benson said Stafford County is locked in for a post Labor Day start but the school board will review calendar options for 2019-20.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

None

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

Due to enrollment changes, there was an amendment to the budget. There was a reduction in the CGS budget of \$22,536.00; therefore, funds from the technology line items were decreased. CGS just installed a generator which will support the computer servers in the event of a power outage. In years past, servers had to be replaced which were tens of thousands of dollars. Dr. VanderPloeg is hopeful line items will not be negatively impacted by the reduction of funds and it optimistic proactive measures such as the generator will reduce unintended expenses in 2018.

Mr. Blaine and Mr. Copeland agreed to pass the budget once they found Mr. McOsker and received his vote.

### **FINAL COMMENTS**

**Adjournment**

Mr. Blaine made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Copeland seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0. The Governing Board adjourned at 5:10 p.m.