

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL
Spotsylvania County School Board Office – Conference Room E

Fredericksburg, VA

Governing Board Meeting

September 20, 2018

MINUTES

Members Present: Mr. John Copeland, Chair (Caroline); Mr. Bill Blaine, (Spotsylvania); Dr. Sarah Chase, Co-Chair (Stafford); Mrs. Gayle Hock (King George)

Also attending: Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Public Schools); Dr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George County Public Schools); Dr. Scott Kizner (Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools); Mr. Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education for Spotsylvania County Public Schools); Mr. Mike Brown (Director of Professional Learning & Instructional Programs); Mr. Tom Nichols (Chief Secondary Officer for Stafford County Public Schools); Dr. Joanne Jones (Director of Curriculum & Instruction for Caroline County Public Schools); Dr. Donna Poland (VDOE Gifted Education & Governor's School Specialist); Mrs. Jennifer Grigsby (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Mrs. Donna Welch (The Commonwealth Governor's School Program Manager)

Absent: Dr. Victor Hellman (Interim Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. John Copeland determined there was a quorum. Mr. Copeland asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Dr. Chase moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Blaine seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Dr. Chase introduced and welcomed Dr. Scott Kizner, new superintendent for Stafford County Public Schools, to the group.

Mr. Blaine shared that he was very pleased with the early start of school for Spotsylvania County Public Schools, and the feedback on the early start which he received from stakeholders was positive.

Mr. Copeland shared that the King's Dominion Bill was briefly discussed at the VSBA meeting and that the VSBA's position is that schools should determine which the best dates for their calendar are in order to meet the needs of students. Dr. Chase confirmed this statement. This is the second year that Caroline has utilized a calendar starting prior to Labor Day and ending in May, and it best meets the needs of the students in terms of instruction, testing, and timing for breaks.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Benson welcomed Dr. Kizner to the group of superintendents involved in the joint agreement for The Commonwealth Governor's School program.

There were no further comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CGS Director's Entrance Plan

As part of the director's entrance plan, Mrs. Grigsby is scheduling meetings with all of the stakeholders for CGS. All information gleaned from these meetings will be disaggregated and used to create a plan of improvement that correlates with feedback received from the VDOE in our last mid-cycle evaluation update.

Governing Board Members (3 out of 4)

Executive Directors

Principals at CGS sites

Gifted Coordinators

Site Leaders

Once all of these meetings are complete, I will begin meeting with the following:

Superintendents

Principals at feeder sites

All teachers individually

Interested students (Student Advisory Committee)
Interested Parents (Parent Advisory Committee)

CGS – Regional Program Focus

As Mrs. Grigsby conducted meetings with various stakeholders, the necessity of ensuring alignment of the program based on the pillars upon which it was founded became apparent.

Technology
Curriculum & Instructional Focus
Community of Learners
Community Outreach

Additionally, there needs to be consistency between the sites so that the CGS identity and family environment are clear at all six sites.

CGS Service Projects Per Site

Each site will be determining what student-driven service project they would like to design and complete this school year. The project should occur in the spring, and teachers will be given an outline of dates to ensure each site completes this new initiative. One of our pillars is community outreach, and this project will fit this premise of our program nicely.

CGS New Student Orientation

New Student Orientation went well in August at Riverbend HS. Students were engaged, parents participated in the Q & A session, and there were no issues. Feedback from the students indicated that it met their needs and the program goals.

CGS Toolkit for Success & Merit-Based Financial Aid Workshop

Toolkit for Success & Merit-Based Financial Aid Workshop went very well and approximately 80 parents and students attended either or both of the sessions. The Toolkit for Success was led by the director and CGS counselor consultant, Sabrina Gladney, session focused on an introduction of the social-emotional aspects of participating in CGS and a functional lesson on how to pace assignments using a calendar, breaking down assignments into smaller, more manageable chunks, using active studying techniques, and additional tips. The Merit-Based Financial Aid Workshop was led by Terri and John Rinko, parents of two CGS graduates who both earned full scholarships to the University of Mary Washington and Washington & Lee University.

CGS FIRST Robotics Club

Will be moving to a new location at North Stafford HS – Thank you!
All CGS students are welcome to join, regardless of site.
If space is available, non-CGS students may join.

CGS Application Process Meeting

A meeting is scheduled on October 2 with all application coordinators in all counties to discuss the application process and ensure it is best providing each division with the necessary data to select students who will thrive in the program.

CGS Informational Meetings & Visits

Middle school information meetings and CGS visits have begun being scheduled in October and November in all counties. Meetings and presentations for Spotsylvania County will be held in conjunction with the IB program.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of the May 17, 2018 meeting minutes and September 2018 financial report. Mr. Blaine seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

PRESENTATION AND QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Dr. Donna Poland, VDOE Gifted Education & Governor's School Specialist, presented information regarding the Code of Virginia and how those regulations pertain to the operation of Academic Year Governor's Schools at the request of the CGS Governing Board. See attached presentation handouts.

During the question and answer portion of the presentation, the following questions, answers, and discussion points occurred:

Question #1 – Mr. Copeland

If requesting a waiver, does the waiver need to be for a specific regulation or is it an all or none proposition?

Answer: If requesting a waiver, it should be for a specific regulation. No Governor's School has requested a waiver during Dr. Poland's tenure.

Discussion: CGS does not have a formal clerk. Currently, the CGS Director serves in the capacity of clerk of the board. Chesapeake Bay Governor's School also does not have a clerk of the board. The CBGS Director also serves in the capacity of clerk of the board. Dr. Poland will research the clerk of the board question and provide an answer to the Director.

Question #2 – Mr. Blaine

Does the VDOE evaluate the multitude of expectations that you presented today?

Answer: No. It gets reported to each of your school boards and the public in your committee reports. The VDOE does not check up to ensure that policy is being followed. However, if a complaint from the public does arise that alleges the Governing Board is not following regulations, then the VDOE could be contacted to investigate and see if that allegation is true or not and make recommendations for improvement.

Discussion: The CGS program is evaluated every six years by the VDOE based on the guidelines for running an effective Governor's School program. The VDOE department is just the Governor's School Specialist.

Question #3 – Dr. Chase

Do the Superintendents ever meet as a committee in reference to CGS?

Answer: The superintendents have not been meeting as a committee as related to CGS. Dr. Poland recommended that the superintendents meet as a committee with the Director prior to each Governing Board meeting.

Question #4 – Mr. Blaine

Are the 19 Governor's Schools evaluated against each other in order to improve all GS programs?

Answer: No. The Governor's Schools are evaluated against standards created by the VDOE in conjunction with the National Association of Gifted Student's program standards. At the quarterly AYGS Director meetings, directors share their strategies and successes with each other in order to collaborate, create a statewide network, and improve all programs to meet the individual needs of gifted students.

Question #5 – Dr. Chase

In terms of expenditures and funding, does each division provide funding to CGS or is the contribution in terms of facility, teachers, textbooks, and instructional items?

Answer: Each division that hosts a site provides the local contribution in terms of the facility, teachers, textbooks, and minor instructional items. Caroline County pays tuition per student in order to participate since they do not have their own site.

Question #6 – Dr. Benson

According to VA Code, should the tuition paid by Caroline County be paid directly to King George CS (as the site host) or to the fiscal agent for CGS? Currently, Caroline is paying KGCS directly.

Answer: Dr. Poland will check with finance to find an answer to this question.

Question #7 – Dr. Kizner

Since the divisions are paying the teachers and for the facilities, what does the state funding cover?

Answer: The CGS office is made up of the Director, Program Manager, and Network Engineer and all of their salaries and benefits are paid using state funding. The remaining state funding is used per VDOE allocation restrictions for instructional usage and technology.

Question #8 – Dr. Chase

Are the seats that Caroline is using extra seats at King George that they are allowing them to use and charging tuition or are those their seats?

Answer: The Director will review the governing documents and previous meeting minutes to find an answer to the question.

Question #9 – Dr. Benson

Currently, the CGS Governing Board approves a recommendation for hiring one of the office positions, and the fiscal agent's School Board actually approves the hiring for those positions. Is this in violation of the Code of Virginia because we are taking authority away from this board and putting it into the hands of the fiscal agent's board?

Could the CGS Governing Board approve a regulation that governs the salary scale and benefits for the office positions that ensure consistency regardless of fiscal agent?

Answer: You can decide as a Governing Board that the regulations of the fiscal agent dictate the scale and benefits for CGS employees.

Discussion: This could be an area of concern if the fiscal agent changes and the salaries/benefits of those employees change due to that change in fiscal agent and their specific scales. The process currently being used has worked for the lifetime of the program, but the fiscal agent has not changed over those 20 years. If the Governing Board picked up the three employees on a separate policy, it would be an extremely expensive endeavor.

Question #10 – Dr. Chase

In some CGS classes, the class size is small and seats are available for additional students. Can the school divisions put non-CGS students into those classes in order to fill those seats? Could the CGS Governing Board create guidelines to allow students into the CGS classes that don't enter into the program?

Answer: There is no law or regulation that prohibits that from occurring. However, Dr. Poland recommended that putting students in CGS courses that did not qualify for the program may not be in their best interest as the course has been differentiated for gifted Governor's School learners. Additionally, if students who are not entering the program are allowed to take classes in CGS, it defeats the purpose of having a specialized program for qualifying students if anyone can take classes piecemeal. It can be decided by each individual school division and does not need to be dictated by the Governing Board.

Discussion: Dr. Kizner expressed that he liked the idea of allowing students an opportunity to try a CGS class and that it could increase interest from diverse populations, which are an area of concern for AYGS programs across the state. Students who may not have support at home to help them navigate the GS process may benefit from exploring a CGS class. This would be a way to fill open seats and make class sizes more equitable within the program and outside the program. Dr. Poland cautioned that putting students into classes to fit a schedule instead of to provide them exposure to GS level courses could become a slippery slope that will diminish the program and overall applications. Some comprehensive schools

provide opportunities to non-GS students for courses that are not offered in their schools. If issues arise with allowing students into CGS courses, it will be noted in the evaluation system.

Question #11 – Dr. Chase

On page 11, slide 21, could you please provide an example of a disagreement that would qualify?

Answer: An example might be if one superintendent wanted to go in a completely different direction. Dr. Benson provided an example for CBGS where free slots were phased out and this caused some derision amongst the superintendents who were losing free seats.

Question #12 – Dr. Chase

The bylaws state that the Director reports to the Executive Superintendent. If the Director's evaluation is completed by fiscal agent administration, how does that play out?

Answer: Dr. Poland responded that the Director always reported to the regional Governing Board. However, this was for programs that directly hired the Director and staff. Ultimately, the CGS Governing Board should provide feedback into the performance of the Director. Dr. Poland concluded by recommending that the divisions may want to contact a lawyer to discuss this personnel issue further and make sure the bylaws align with appropriate practice.

Discussion: Dr. Chase pointed out that the Governing Board did approve the Director before her name was taken to the fiscal agent's board for their approval. Mr. Copeland shared that the Director was hired by the fiscal agent's board for this position and was agreed upon by the Governing Board before that occurred. Dr. Kizner added that all superintendents provided input into the Director's performance in his previous school division. Mr. Wolfe confirmed that he was the direct supervisor for the previous Director for the past five years and is the current Director's direct supervisor for evaluative purposes. Dr. Chase wants to ensure that the bylaws match the practices. Mrs. Grigsby stated that she would review the constitution, bylaws, and joint agreement to see how it is outlined. If there is an issue with the director's performance, Dr. Kizner recommended that the superintendents get together regularly to discuss any concerns and that is reported to Spotsylvania County to

handle with their evaluative process. The CGS Governing Board does not have access to personnel files for the Director. Mrs. Hock questioned if bylaws match practices, it should be okay. Dr. Kizner stated that other programs with which he was familiar (regional special education and other GS) utilized the fiscal agent administration as the evaluative entity. Mr. Blaine asked the Director to evaluate the constitution, bylaws, and joint agreement to assess any potential issues with policy and practice. Mr. Wolfe stated that he would solicit feedback from the Governing Board in the future before completing the Director's performance evaluation. Mr. Nichols pointed out that if a division provides feedback into the evaluation not as the hiring division, that it could be a warranted grievance by the employee that other criteria was considered in the evaluation. Dr. Chase stated that previously the divisions did not realize that they should be providing feedback into how the Director was performing before the evaluation.

Question #13 – Dr. Chase

If a county were to decide to withdraw from the joint agreement and CGS, what happens with the items purchased with CGS funding? Should an inventory be kept?

Answer: Dr. Poland stated that an inventory should be kept for items purchased using state funding. Surplus items

Discussion: Per Mr. Copeland, all of these questions arose due to questions with personnel concerns (salary, benefits, retirement, etc.) and materials if the fiscal agent were to change. Would all of those things transfer? This would have to be determined and decided upon before any change could occur. Salary would be an easy transfer, but healthcare and other benefits would be difficult. Dr. Kizner pointed out that the fiscal agent is the transferor of money.

At the conclusion of the questions, Mrs. Grigsby stated that she would review the constitution, bylaws, and joint agreement to see how policy and practice aligned and then bring it back to the Governing Board for discussion. Dr. Chase recommended having the Director meet with the superintendents to discuss next steps as they are the experts regarding the policies and meeting Code of Virginia expectations.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Teacher Evaluation System

After reviewing the teacher evaluation system, the Director noted inconsistencies within each division and across the regional program for how teachers within the program were evaluated.

In order to best meet the needs of students and to improve an identified area of focus in the VDOE mid-cycle evaluation, the following recommendations were made by the Director:

1. ALL CGS teachers will receive summative evaluations from their assigned building principal or assistant principal ONLY.
2. The CGS Director will observe each teacher in the program four times over the course of the school year, provide feedback using the SURN Student Engagement Tool, and conduct a post-observation conference with the teacher to review next steps. These observations and conferences will be emailed to each school's administration to use as part of the data collection process to write each teacher's summative evaluation.
3. The CGS Director will also provide feedback to the summative evaluation administrator in each of the seven categories of assessment prior to the final evaluation's completion.

Overall, the goal of this system is to provide consistency across the regional program, help each of the teacher's improve their craft in order to best meet the needs of students using research-based strategies, and use observational data to increase engaging instruction in the program.

All building administrators and central office representatives were invited to a meeting on August 22, 2018. The process was explained, agreed upon by all parties, questions were discussed, and there was a genuine excitement about the instructional focus collaboration.

Dr. Kizner asked if this process will be in lieu of the state evaluation system. This process is in addition to the required observations from building administrators for each division as outlined by state and division expectations. As pointed out by Mr. Copeland, this allows CGS to provide feedback into the evaluative process for each teacher's performance while instructing in CGS classes.

CGS Culminating & Potential DE Credit

During the 2018-2019 school year, the first group of students in Spotsylvania, King George, and Caroline Counties will receive an elective credit for the work completed over the four years of their CGS Culminating Projects. Stafford County did not elect to pursue this pathway, and

Stafford County students will continue to have their Culminating Project grade used as their final exam grade for each CGS class at the end of each year.

Due to our status as a regional program, not having all students in all four counties receiving the same credit for their Culminating Project is a concern. Thus, the Director has begun discussions with Germanna Community College (GCC) to see if dual enrolled credit could be granted for the work the students complete on their Culminating Projects. Currently, it has been discussed that English 210 might be a feasible option. This is an Advanced Composition course and is different from the English 111-112 and English 240 for which students receive credit if they pass their AP examinations in 11th and 12th grade. This will also permit our students to earn weighted credit at the high school level for the extensive work demonstrated in Culminating Projects. In addition, CGS does have an instructor that was previously approved to be an adjunct instructor in English at Germanna Community College.

Dr. Chase asked if students would have to pay for the credit hours and when would they pay. Students would have to pay for the DE credit, and they would pay at the start of their senior year. In terms of grading, Mrs. Grigsby explained that the college transcript would reflect the work completed during senior year, but the high school transcript would combine all four years' worth of work. Dr. Kizner stated that he liked the idea of trying to get DE credit at the 200 level or higher so that it is transferrable. Dr. Kizner asked, "Will this course count toward graduation requirements for students transferring to a four-year university or two-year community college?" Mrs. Grigsby replied that, from her talks with Dr. Konhaus from GCC, English 210 is Advanced Composition and does count as the required composition credit at the university level (unlike English 111-112). Dr. Chase stated that having two children who graduated from CGS be forced to take college level writing courses was painful as they already had the requisite skills and did not learn anything in those college courses. She felt it would be lovely for them to earn credit now and not have to take those courses.

Mrs. Grigsby's largest concern is that students from all sites have reflected on their transcript that they participated in a research and writing course as part of their Governor's School program. Currently, that is not the practice and is not equitable for the Stafford County students who are completing the copious amount of work, but it is not transparent on their transcript. Dr. Kizner pointed out that this is a point well taken. Dr. Chase also noted that using the culminating project as a final exam grade skews their core course grades as the project may have nothing to do with the content (mythology project with a final exam grade for BC Calculus). Dr. Kizner commented that in his former position, Governor's School students earned DE credit through Patrick Henry Community College for a research class, which was beneficial to them. Dr. Chase mentioned that all the other counties are giving high school credit currently, but Stafford County is not. Dr. Kizner replied that would be fixable through internal division processes.

Mr. Wolfe asked if the high school elective credit would be eliminated in favor of the DE credit. The answer would be yes. Mr. Wolfe was in support of the idea and moving forward since it was a 200-level course and could be transferrable as a usable course and not just a college elective.

Dr. Kizner asked if all teachers are qualified to teach at the collegiate level. The answer to that was no. Mr. Nichols expressed concern with Dr. Konhaus's replies in the Director's initial meeting because there were issues with not having a qualified instructor at every site. Ultimately, any decisions made for our students would have to be done in writing with a specific MOU for CGS. Dr. Chase asked for clarification about the Director's request. The request was to see if the Governing Board would like the Director to continue pursuing DE credit as an option through any potential institution (GCC, RCC, Richard Bland, etc.). All divisions supported continuing the conversation in trying to gain DE credit with an institution.

ACTION ITEMS

2018-2019 SOL Testing Plan

After reviewing the new guidelines for testing, graduation requirements, verified credits, and state and federal accountability, the Director discussed with the CGS faculty which CGS courses best aligned with the VDOE Standards of Learning and would provide students the greatest opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of content and earn verified credits. After this discussion, the following SOL EOC examinations were selected to be administered to students enrolled in 9th grade in 2018-2019:

Subject Area	CGS Course	EOC Exam	Time Frame Taken...
Mathematics	Honors Algebra II	Algebra II	Spring of 9 th Grade
Science	AP Biology	Biology	Spring of 10 th Grade
English	Honors English 10	Reading	Spring of 10 th Grade
Social Studies	AP US History	US/VA History	Spring of 11 th Grade
English	AP English Language & Composition	Writing	Spring of 11 th Grade

This proposal was emailed to all division central office administrators associated with CGS for discussion. All students who are grandfathered under the previous graduation requirements would only take EOC SOL examinations still needed to obtain all required verified credits. All divisions indicated that they were in support of this proposal.

Dr. Chase moved to approve the SOL Testing Plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hock. Motion passed 4-0.

FINAL COMMENTS

Adjournment

Mrs. Hock made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Dr. Chase seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. The Governing Board adjourned at 5:55 p.m.