

**THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL**

**Stafford County School Board Office**

**Executive Session Room**

**Governing Board Meeting**

**October 17, 2019**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Members Present: Mr. John Copeland, Chair (Caroline); Mr. Bill Blaine, (Spotsylvania); Dr. Sarah Chase, Vice-Chair (Stafford)**

**Also attending: 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); Dr. Tom Nichols (Chief Officer of High Schools and School Safety for Stafford County Public Schools); Dr. Stephenie Fellingner (Teaching & Learning Facilitator for K-12 Gifted Education and Secondary Programs – Stafford County); Mrs. Jennifer Grigsby (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director); Mrs. Donna Welch (The Commonwealth Governor's School Program Manager)**

**Absent: Mrs. Gayle Hock (King George); Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Public Schools); Dr. Sarah Calveric (Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Dr. Sarah Chase at 4:27pm on October 17, 2019. A quorum was determined by Dr. Chase at 4:30pm via the sign-in sheet.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, and this was seconded by Mr. Copeland. The motion passed 3-0.

## **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

## **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Blaine stated that he is retiring at the end of his second term on the Spotsylvania County School Board after 14 previous years serving on the school board of his former residence. He was profusely thanked by all in attendance for his service to both Spotsylvania County as well as The Commonwealth Governor's School.

## **SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

There were no superintendent comments.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Enrollment
  - 594 students as of 10/17/19
    - 3 exits due to extenuating circumstances
    - 3 exits at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> nine weeks
    - Of the six total exits, three were related to mental health concerns.
  
- Field Experiences
  - Trips have gone well thus far!
    - I had the opportunity to chaperone one of the canoe trips, and it was a fantastic experience. The students learned about the biotic and abiotic factors affecting Lake Mooney and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. They canoed, did water quality testing, and used netting to catch organisms to discuss the health of Lake Mooney.

- Feedback on the Chesapeake Bay Field Station Overnight Trip (Grade 10) was overwhelmingly positive. We had a few first trip concerns, but those were handled and fixed when the second group attended. The teachers felt the content explored and the bonding experience made the trip very worthwhile.
  - Upcoming Trips
    - Physics Laboratory Day – 10/23 – Grade 12
    - Business Trips – 10/31 – Grade 12
    - Enrichment Day – 11/4 – All Grades
    - Orienteering Trip – 11/6 – Grade 12
    - Pamplin Park Trip – 11/20 – Grade 11
    - Theatre Trip – A Christmas Carol – 12/4 - Grade 9
    - Library of Congress Trip – 12/4 – Grade 10
      - Replacing Mock Congress Trip due to renovations of the Richmond House of Delegates (just this school year)
- Dates
  - MS Recruitment Visits – October 2019
  - Stafford County – Career & College Pathway Night – October 17, 2019
    - Held four sessions with interested families; first three sessions were packed with no standing room available and the final session was standing room only
  - MS Site Visits – November 2019
  - Information Nights
    - November 4 – Caroline Middle School – 6pm
    - November 14 – King George Middle School – 5:30pm
    - November 14 – Holy Cross Academy – 7:00pm
    - November 25 – Stafford High School AND North Stafford High School – 6:30pm
    - December 4 – Riverbend High School AND Spotsylvania High School – 6:00pm
  - Applications open at the end of November (Caroline) or December (remaining counties).
  - Senior Symposium – Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at UMW Stafford University Hall 6-8:30pm
  - Senior Recognition Ceremony – Sunday, May 17, 2020 at Fredericksburg Expo Center 4:00pm

- **Fall Social**
  - The CGS PTO hosted the annual Fall Social event this year at Funland in Fredericksburg. Students were able to ride all of the rides, use all of the activities, received \$10 of arcade money on their bracelet, and were fed pizza and unlimited drinks for the cost of admission (\$31.00) starting at 2pm. Our event ended at 6pm, but students were able to stay with parental consent until closing at 8pm. Approximately 115 students participated and enjoyed themselves. The PTO sent out a survey requesting feedback on the event, where they would like to hold Fall Social next year, and what theme they would like for this year's SnowBall dance.
  
- **Homework Protocol Feedback**
  - **Positive & Unsolicited!!!**
    - Parent from Stafford site – Parents had an older child in the program previously, and they have noticed and appreciate the decrease in workload and the change to more meaningful assignments.
    - Teacher from MS – Mr. Long from A. G. Wright MS shared with his current students that he had spoken with this year's freshmen about the program and their workload. Those students reported to him that the workload was manageable and that they were loving the program. He was excited to share that the changes made have been very positive!
    - Gifted Liaison – Ms. Kiger shared that the freshmen students she met with all shared that the workload was manageable and that they were doing no more than 1.5 hours per night.
    - Students – workload varies depending upon subjects and assignments; most felt that the workload was less than the previous year or met the expectation of 2 hours per night
  
- **Observations**
  - I will begin doing observations of teachers in November once I complete all 17 middle school visits to speak with eligible students.
    - We will continue to focus on student engagement and also look at research-based direct instruction strategies that maximize student mastery.

### Questions?

Mr. Blaine stated that he is impressed with what we have accomplished and asked what our next steps will be. Mrs. Grigsby stated that she would like to continue to work with her teachers in exploring research-based instructional strategies and challenging them to grow and incorporate ideas that are new to them in order to continue improving instruction and focusing on best practices for gifted and highly motivated learners.

Mr. Copeland asked about sharing opportunities with all eighth grade students. Mrs. Grigsby shared that in previous years students who were interested in applying attended the information session at the middle school. That has been changed and all students who are eligible to apply to the program by meeting the mathematics requirement of Algebra I completion will now attend the session. Thus, with more students learning about the program, the hope is that more students from various backgrounds will apply.

### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDAS**

Mr. Copeland made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which includes the meeting minutes from September 2019 and financial report for October 2019. Dr. Chase seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### **2019-2020 CGS Student Demographic Data**

Student demographic data was shared for the 2019-2020 school year with the CGS Governing Board and division superintendents.

Overall, there are 598 students participating in the CGS program during the 2019-2020 school year. Of those students, the breakdown of students program-wide is as follows:

- 68% - White or Caucasian
- 13% - Asian
- 7% - Black or African American
- 7% - Hispanic
- 5% - Two or More Races
- <1% - American Indian or Alaska Native

Additionally, data was also collected in additional categories:

- 58% - Female
- 42% - Male
- 10% - Economically Disadvantaged
- 3% - Students with Disabilities OR a 504 Plan

This data is comparable to the overall data for the 2018-2019 school year, and there was no significant change in demographics.

### Comments/Concerns

Dr. Kizner felt that the restriction of requiring Algebra I for incoming CGS students was keeping minority students and economically disadvantaged students from enrolling in and being eligible for the program. Mrs. Grigsby stated that the program is open to adding a third mathematics pathway in order to allow more students access to CGS, but that option will require significant local financial resources in order to add teachers and course sections to each site.

Dr. Kizner continued and stated that Stafford County has a population of non-Caucasian students of 53% and that demographic is not reflected in the numbers of the CGS program. At the Stafford School Board meeting the previous evening, Dr. Kizner stated that it was mentioned that minority students do not feel welcome in the program and he would like to partner with us to fix this concern as the problem does start at the county level. He did state that a student in the CGS program did recognize that changes in recruiting techniques are being used to try to encourage more students from diverse backgrounds to apply to the program. Lastly, he stated that the system needs to change along with the adults who are implementing the process in order to include more minority students. Dr. Kizner stated, "I find this personally and professionally very disturbing."

Dr. Benson asked the question of can we look into the demographic data as a whole and compare it to the final CGS enrollment data. Digging into the overall eighth grade class demographic, the Algebra I completion demographic, the applicant pool demographic, and finally those who are accepted into the program demographic would all be necessary steps to see where the gaps are occurring. Dr. Chase supported this question and knowing the data components is a crucial part of being able to address the issue in a way to make it solvable. Ultimately, there are two components: 1) What are the percentages of students completing Algebra I by the end of eighth grade? 2) Is Algebra I a necessary requirement to be successful in this advanced program?

Overall, more work at the division level of identifying talented students at a younger age and moving in the direction of helping more students gain access to upper level courses is needed. Additionally, CGS needs to look at data to see where the discrepancy is occurring in enrollment trends and also review the mathematics curriculum to see if other routes could be pursued. Dr. Benson recommended having the application group with division level representatives look at the data and review it further.

### **CGS Application Process**

Division representatives met on September 24 to discuss the CGS Application process. The goal is for the application process to be consistent across all four school divisions. The CGS office, administration, and teachers do not participate in the selection process. Each school division completes the process for their applicants and provides the admitted student list to CGS at the end of the application process. All counties will provide acceptance letters for all advanced programs to applicants on the same date, in order to mitigate one program having an advantage in candidates over another program. Finally, all students must have an achievement test score as well as an ability test score. If a test is missing, an alternate date will be assigned to make up the missing component.

### **CGS Culminating Course & Recommended Governor's School Seal Change**

The Virginia Department of Education has an outlined expectation for all students participating in Academic-Year Governor's Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia to complete independent research projects as part of their Governor's School curriculum.

The Commonwealth Governor's School meets this requirement through the Culminating Research, Writing, and Created Product course. This course earns students a high school credit on their transcripts and is a key component of the CGS program. Thus, in order to earn the Governor's School seal, the Director is recommending adjusting the current requirements to include successful completion of the culminating course.

The first reading information was taken to the Stafford County School Board as an informational item, and their board did not support changing the policy as recommended for the 2019-2020 school year.

Thus, this is the second reading of this Governor's School Seal Requirement policy change with an amendment for the change to begin for the class of 2021.

Dr. Chase commented that the Stafford County School Board did not support the change occurring in the middle of the year and that they would vote again on this item starting with the Class of 2021 at their next board meeting.

### **CGS Budget Amendment Action Item**

Due to an adjustment in student enrollment from the estimated 620 students to the actual 598 students as of September 30, 2019, there was a reduction in funding equaling \$37,919.00 for the 2019-2020 budget. Thus, the attached amended budget accounts for this change in funding and

distributes the remaining unencumbered funds (\$8,927.00) into the Field Experiences line item of the budget.

Mr. Copeland stated that he would prefer to see the projected funding rolled into selected line items and not include an unencumbered line item in the budget.

Mr. Copeland moved to approve the amended budget change based on September 30, 2019 enrollment data. Mr. Blaine seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

### **Questions**

Dr. Benson asked about the letter written by all of the Governor's School directors regarding AYGS funding from the General Assembly. Mrs. Grigsby responded that the directors wrote a letter requesting the General Assembly change the funding formula for AYGS programs to reflect an SOQ model. This would ultimately increase funding to all AYGS programs across the state and the SOQ model is more familiar to the General Assembly for potential approval.

### **FINAL COMMENTS**

Next meeting is on January 16, 2020 at King George School Board Office – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference room, starting at 4pm.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Copeland motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:52pm. Mr. Blaine seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.