

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

via Zoom Online Meeting & In-Person Meeting at KG School Board Office

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2021

ATTENDANCE

Members Present:

- Mr. John Copeland, Chair (Caroline);
- Dr. Lorita Copeland Daniels, (Spotsylvania);
- Dr. Sarah Chase, Vice-Chair (Stafford);
- Mr. T.C. Collins (King George)

Also attending:

- Dr. Robert Benson (Superintendent of King George County Public Schools);
- Dr. Sarah Calveric (Superintendent of Caroline County Public Schools);
- Dr. Scott Baker (Superintendent of Spotsylvania County Public Schools);
- Dr. Tom Nichols (Chief Officer of High Schools and School Safety for Stafford County Public Schools);
- Mr. Keith Wolfe (Executive Director of Secondary Education and Leadership for Spotsylvania County Public Schools);
- Ms. Karen Foster, (Director of Secondary Education for Caroline County Public Schools);
- Ms. Kristine Lentz-Johnston (Director of Professional Learning and Instructional Programs for Spotsylvania County Public Schools);
- Mrs. Amanda Higgins (Coordinator of Gifted Instruction for King George County Public Schools);
- Dr. Stephenie Fellingner (Facilitator of Gifted Education & Secondary Programs for Stafford County Public Schools);
- Mrs. Jennifer Grigsby (The Commonwealth Governor's School Director)

Absent:

- Dr. Scott Kizner (Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mr. John Copeland at 4:00pm on January 21, 2021. A quorum was determined by Mr. Copeland at 4:00pm with all Governing Board members in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, and this was seconded by Mr. Collins. The motion passed 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Daniels thanked CGS parent, Ms. Michelle Chaudoir, for sharing her perspective at the previous meeting regarding hosting CGS PTO events and the unintentional consequence that may occur for students who are unable to participate due to health concerns to their family.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Dr. Benson commented that he will need to step out for another meeting at 4:15pm with his elementary administrative staff after their first in-person day, and then he will return.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CGS Events

- Upcoming Events
 - Senior Symposium
 - Canceled
 - Senior students will still present their final products and presentation to their teachers and peers at each individual site.
 - CGS PTO Scholarship Competition opened this week and was emailed to all students and senior parents subscribing to the email distribution list.
 - Snow Ball Dance
 - Canceled
 - Senior Recognition Ceremony
 - May 23, 2021 at 3pm
 - Fredericksburg Expo Center

2020-2021 School Year

All sites are setup with the same technology to allow teachers to conduct virtual and hybrid instruction simultaneously. At each site, there are three classrooms with this equipment. We will be keeping these setups in the future to allow sites to broadcast lessons between each other with no restrictions or competing for the “broadcast room.”

Spotsylvania County transitioned to hybrid learning on October 12. They have since resumed virtual learning since winter break. They are scheduled to continue virtual learning through January 29 and the data will be reassessed on January 26.

Stafford County is our next county scheduled to transition to hybrid learning on February 2 for the HS level.

Caroline County is currently scheduled to transition to in-person learning on February 1.

King George has postponed in-person instruction at the HS level until further notice and will reassess on January 25.

The College Board has released guidance regarding pacing and additional resources to help teachers and students prepare for the AP exams with the understanding that most school divisions are behind in pacing due to COVID restrictions and reduced instructional time.

CGS VDOE Evaluation

The VDOE did not approve our AYGS director recommendation to pause evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year. CGS will be evaluated on April 12-14, 2021. It has not been determined

the format of this evaluation (online or in-person) and will be contingent on current practices at that time due to COVID. We were provided with an option to postpone teacher observations as part of the evaluation until the fall 2021, but CGS will be moving forward with the full evaluation.

CGS Application Process

Application Update:

County	Closing Date	Number of Applicants	Number of Seats	Parent Information Meeting	MS Student Information Sessions
Caroline	January 8	10 applicants	4 seats	Yes	No
Stafford	January 8	120 applicants	90 seats	Yes	No
KG	January 11	26 applicants	20 seats	Yes	No
Spotsylvania	January 22	139 applicants	60 seats	Yes	Yes

MS Meetings

- Caroline – scheduled, but canceled due to inclement weather; unable to be rescheduled due to missed class time from inclement weather
- Stafford – did not schedule due to concerns with losing instructional time with the current condensed schedule at the MS level
- KG – scheduled, but canceled due to COVID diagnosis for Director; unable to be rescheduled due to timing of upcoming breaks and needing the instructional time
- Spotsylvania – scheduled and conducted in concert with IB; pushed into all Algebra I and Geometry math classes to provide information and answer questions with current CGS students

All interviews/portfolio presentations will be virtual instead of in-person this year. Decisions should be determined no later than March by all divisions.

Questions:

Dr. Chase asked how this current year’s numbers compared to previous years. Mrs. Grigsby replied that the numbers are down across all divisions at this point in time. Stafford County was approximately 60 applicants less this year than the previous. Additionally, Dr. Chase asked how the diversity of the applicants was looking. From conversations with Dr. Fellingner, Mrs. Grigsby shared that the pool of applicants was diverse, but no official data was available at this time.

Dr. Daniels inquired about last year's number of applicants for Spotsylvania, and Mrs. Lentz-Johnston replied that there were 174 applicants previously. The current number of applicants was 148, which changed from the morning number in the above chart to the early evening. The Spotsylvania County application will close tomorrow. Diversity numbers for applicants were not available at that time since the application was not closed yet.

Teacher Observations

I am conducting observations of all teachers currently and then meeting with each teacher in a post-observation conference. The first round of observations will be finished by the first week of February. Once both components are complete for each teacher, the signed observation is emailed to the building administrator for that teacher.

Question:

Dr. Daniels asked for an explanation of the teacher observation process. Mrs. Grigsby explained that the informal observations conducted focus on engaging instructional strategies for students. Although notes are taken on teacher behaviors, the key to the observations is seeing what students are doing and how they are interacting with content, each other, and the instructor. This area of instructional focus was selected due to an identified area of weakness in the VDOE evaluation from six years ago, specifically in lack of engagement in broadcast lessons. Also, the teachers participate in a post-observation conference, which allows the teacher and Director to discuss strengths of the lesson, what alterations could be made to enhance the lesson, and what engaging strategies the teacher would like to work to implement to become more well-rounded and student-centered.

Shoutout to Mr. Benjamin Diggs at Stafford HS! He is the assistant principal in charge of CGS teachers, and he requested to collaborate with me on all of the observations and post-observation conferences to better learn about CGS and our methods of working with students. I've enjoyed the collaboration, and he has stated that he likes our observation tool that focuses on engaging instructional strategies.

AYGS Current Legislation

On January 19, 2021, House Bill 2305 was introduced by delegate Rosalyn Tyler from the 75th district. It reads as follows:

§

1. The Board of Education shall issue guidance on the governance of academic year Governor's Schools, including communication and outreach practices, admissions policies, and guidelines on diversity, equity,

and inclusion training. Such guidance shall focus on the importance of increasing access to Governor's Schools for historically underserved students and shall include best practices on

(i) conducting information sessions about the school and the availability of gifted, advanced, and specialty education program opportunities for feeder public middle schools;

(ii) strengthening the student pipeline in feeder public middle schools, prioritizing the most underserved and underrepresented students and public middle schools; and (

iii) conducting programs related to and evaluations of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In developing such guidance, the Board of Education shall collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including local school boards, Regional Governor's School boards, and Governor's School directors.

According to Mark Levy, co-chair for the AYGS directors, Tori Noles, policy advisor to the VA Secretary of Education Atif Qarni, the section with the prescribed admissions method for Thomas Jefferson and Maggie Walker was removed from the draft version. One of the last additions was the last few words at the end – specifically including that we AYGS directors are to be included in development of future guidance from the Board of Education. He also confirmed that the use of “guidance” provides room for input regarding best practices, but NOT regulatory authority. Finally, she stated that this is the only version of the bill (no alternative in the Senate with different wording) and that prescribed admissions policy was not being attached to any other legislation.

Original draft language presented to AYGS Directors via email:

Proposal Title: Enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Virginia Governor’s Schools

Language:

§ 1 All Academic Year Governor’s schools are encouraged to:

I. Collaborate with local school boards to conduct information sessions about Governor’s schools and create Gifted and Specialty Programs opportunities for feeder schools, prioritizing the most underserved and underrepresented students and schools.

II. Conduct programmatic and evaluative Diversity, Equity and Inclusion activities. The Virginia Department of Education's Office of Equity and Community Engagement, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Education and the Governor's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion may partner with the Governor’s schools to conduct these Diversity, Equity and Inclusion activities for all students, teachers, and staff.

III. Work with the local school board in strengthening the student pipeline for underserved and underrepresented students. Local school divisions may share their gifted plans with the proximate Governor’s schools to bring alignment and efficiency to the overall gifted programs in their region.

§ 2 A pilot admissions policy shall be enacted for the students applying to enter Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology (TJHSST) and Maggie Walker High School (MW) Governor's Schools in the fall of 2022. Each year, TJHSST and MW shall demonstrate an increase in their

Economically Disadvantaged student population. These measures must continue until the school is within 5% of the Economically Disadvantaged numbers for the region it serves. Once the goal is met, the school must seek to sustain the numbers year to year. This admission policy shall be piloted at TJHSST and MW for at least 4 years. An update on the progress of the pilot program shall be submitted along with the report mentioned above to the Governor by October 1 of each year.

The new admission policy will be as follows:

I. No standardized test shall be used during the admission process to determine eligibility for any student. This includes any local, state, or federally administered standardized tests.

II. No minimum subject requirement shall be used for any student which is unrelated to the type of Governor's School, e.g. Algebra 1 cannot be used if the Governor's school is not a STEM school.

III. A composite score will be determined based on giving equal weight to the following three categories:

1. Portfolio of student's abilities to include but not limited to performance assessments, projects, exhibits, and other bodies of work. May include recommendations from teachers and other school staff.

2. Student GPA and/or grades in coursework most relevant to the school's focus.

3. Essay and/or interview determining students' interest, perseverance, ability to overcome adversity, and ethical engagement with the community. This category should also assess the student based on the Virginia State Board of Education (BOE) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

IV. Any student applicant determined to be economically disadvantaged shall receive a 10% add-on to her composite score. BOE and VDOE definition of Economically Disadvantaged shall be used for this add-on.

V. Any student applicant, regardless of her economic status, who completes a full previous academic year at a feeder school where the 20% or more of students are economically disadvantaged shall receive a 10% add-on to her composite score. The BOE and VDOE definition of Economically Disadvantaged shall be used for this add-on.

VI. After all applicants have been reviewed, the selection committee at TJHSST and MW may create a lottery based on the criterion I through V listed above. If a lottery is utilized for selection, at least double the number of applicants shall enter a lottery compared to the seats available, e.g. If a school has 300 seats available for the incoming class, at least 600 applicants must be entered in the lottery.

VII. No more than 5% of the students from the total eighth grade student population at a feeder school shall be admitted to TJHSST or MW, e.g. If the eighth grade student population at a feeder school is 200 students, only up to 10 students from that school can be admitted to TJHSST or MW.

§ 3 The Virginia Board of Education will issue guidance on the governance of Governor's Schools including but not limited to communication and outreach practices, admissions policies, and guidelines on diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Mrs. Grigsby then asked the Governing Board if they had any thoughts on how they felt about this bill in order for her to provide feedback to the co-chairperson of the Director committee.

Mr. Wolfe recommended running the numbers with this current group of applicants in the traditional manner and then also running the numbers with the new requirements proposed by the original legislation to see if there is a significant difference in how students are selected.

Dr. Daniels shared some concerns with removing the mathematics requirement as it is a key part of students' success in the program to have a strong math sense as the courses are challenging. She stated that she would be willing to share more opinions once she reviewed the legislation (that was released on the meeting date).

Dr. Chase asked the question of what would be the ramifications if a school division chose to no longer participate in the Governor's School programs since these proposed changes could drastically change the selection process. Mrs. Grigsby responded that Secretary Qarni did mention in his meeting with the directors that he does not believe that Governor's Schools should be for just gifted students. This would completely change the charter for all AYGS programs as that was the original intention of these programs: to provide services to gifted students that they do not receive in their comprehensive high school. Unfortunately, at this point in time, there are more questions than answers and all AYGS programs will have to see where this legislation leads.

Mr. Copeland shared a concern that if the requirements for entry were changed that may result in a higher attrition rate of students due to a lack of financial support attached to this legislation.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDAS

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which includes the meeting minutes from October 2020 and financial report for January 2021. Dr. Daniels seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

CGS FY 2022 Budget

The FY 2022 CGS Regional Office operating budget was developed based on projected student enrollment, anticipated state revenues, and each school division's composite index. As outlined in the CGS Joint Agreement, the Governing Board shall consider the proposed budget, make any recommendations, and then approve an operating budget no later than May 31 of each year. An amended budget will then need to be approved in October based on actual September 30, 2021 student enrollment for FY 2022. This is the first reading of the CGS FY 2022 budget.

This budget is tentative as we are awaiting finalized numbers from our fiscal agent, all participating counties, and the state based on the Governor's budget allocation for AYGS programs. Additionally, the budget does reflect the addition of a CGS counselor or social worker position for FY 2022 and there may be adjustments based on personnel changes as well.

ACTION ITEMS

CGS Governing Board Election Positions for 2021-2022

Mr. Collins nominated Mr. John Copeland for the position of CGS Governing Board Chairperson, and Dr. Chase seconded that nomination. The motion passed 4-0. By voting Mr. Copeland the chairperson, Dr. Sarah Calveric is the corresponding executive superintendent.

Dr. Chase nominated Dr. Daniels for the position of CGS Governing Board Vice-Chairperson, and Mr. Copeland seconded that nomination. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Copeland nominated Mrs. Jennifer Grigsby for the position of CGS Governing Board Clerk, and Dr. Chase seconded that nomination. The motion passed 4-0.

CLOSED SESSION & OPEN SESSION ACTION

Mr. Copeland motioned to move the CGS Governing Board into closed session pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711.A.1, for discussion of personnel matters, including appointments, resignations, and other functionalities. Dr. Chase seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

After discussion in closed session, Mr. Copeland then moved to end closed session and reconvene open session and certifying that only information as part of Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711.A.1 was discussed. Dr. Chase seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

Mr. Collins made a motion to accept the personnel agenda as presented. Dr. Daniels seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

FINAL COMMENTS

Next meeting is scheduled to be on March 18, 2021 in-person at Caroline High School Library. The director will send out an email approximately one week prior to determine if the group will meet in-person or via Zoom.

Adjournment

Dr. Daniels motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:01pm. Dr. Chase seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.