

## **Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board Minutes of June 7, 2021 Meeting - DRAFT**

The Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board met on Monday, June 7, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Due to renovation work at the Roanoke Valley Governor's School, the meeting was held in the Patrick Henry High School Library, 2102 Grandin Road.

The following Board members were present:

Mr. Mark Cathey	Roanoke City	Chairman
Mr. Jason Johnson	Bedford County	Vice Chairman
Ms. Michelle Austin	Botetourt County	
Mr. Trace Bellassai	Craig County	
Dr. Nancy Bradley	Salem City	
Mrs. Julie Nix	Franklin County	
Mr. Mike Wray	Roanoke County	

Also present: Roanoke City Public Schools Superintendent, Mrs. Verletta White, representing the Committee of Superintendents; Governor's School Director Mark Levy; Clerk Cindy Poulton; Deputy Clerk Paula Buch; Botetourt County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Russ; Roanoke County Schools Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely; Roanoke City representatives Archie Freeman and Dr. Cynthia Delp, and Salem City representative Jamie Soltis.

### Call to Order

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. He introduced and the Board welcomed Dr. Nancy Bradley who joins the Board representing Salem City Schools.

### Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mrs. Nix and Mr. Wray, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as distributed.

### Approval of April 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes

On motion by Mr. Bellassai and Ms. Austin, the Board unanimously approved the April 26, 2021 meeting minutes.

### Recognition of International Science and Engineering Fair Grand Award Winners

The Board recognized the following students for winning awards at the 2021 International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). The students presented an overview of their projects.

Lord Botetourt Junior Sydney Vokus and Senior Kierstyn Stanley discussed their project, "Rotating Weekly Pill Dispenser," that won a third place award in Engineering Mechanics noting they hoped to file a patent for the three-drawer dispenser as well as create an app for use by patients and caregivers.

Patrick Henry High School Sophomore Eleanor Little discussed her project that won a fourth place award in Earth and Environmental Sciences entitled "Analysis of Microbial

Diversity in PCB-Contaminated Environments” that studied the environmental impact of pollution in sections of the Roanoke River.

The Chairman congratulated the students and teachers on this significant accomplishment during a challenging school year.

#### Overview of Annual Report Data

Mr. Levy reviewed total population demographic distributions by district as well as the economically-disadvantaged population by district noting this is some of the information that would be included in the Annual Report submitted to the Virginia Department of Education in October. Mr. Levy reviewed the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the 2020-21 student body by percentage and compared the percentages to the makeup for 2021-22, based on enrollment information received from each district, and reviewed the same data for the 2021 applicant pool. He noted district liaisons will meet during the summer regarding information for the annual report to ensure the narrative is developed collaboratively, and the Board would receive the full report at a later date. Mr. Levy stated there is room for improvement in the underrepresented subgroups and “we need to be vigilant in ensuring that we are reaching the students.” He reviewed plans for greater outreach to the specific communities once restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted and noted the Board would receive a copy of the data presented.

#### Fall Reopening Plan

Mr. Levy stated plans are to be back in person for the 2021-22 school year given the current trajectory of the pandemic.

#### 2020-21 Operating Report and Budget Update

Mr. Levy highlighted the current financial position as of May 26, 2021, as compared to the similar timeframe last year noting the Board did not meet between April and June in 2020. He noted income is lower than the past year as there are some outstanding tuition payments, repairs and maintenance costs are higher than last year due to charges during the current fiscal year for work completed the year prior, and utility costs look good due to the efficiency upgrades completed in 2020. Mr. Cathey asked what type of work was currently underway; Mr. Levy stated the front entrance of the building is being renovated to provide more secure building access, and funds from the RCPS security grant are covering the cost of the project. Mr. Wray asked to be reminded about the decreased debt service cost; Mr. Levy stated the larger debt was for the building expansion and this debt has been paid and the monies allocated to the additional teacher position, and the remaining debt service is for the roof replacement.

Mr. Levy noted a small decrease in the income category in the 2021-2022 budget for tuition.

### Director's Report

**Science Fair Update**—Mr. Levy stated students did an excellent job in the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) as exhibited by the student presentations this evening. He noted that all local science fairs will be in person for 2021-22, Virginia Western Community College is hosting the regional science fair, and there has not been an announcement regarding the 2022 ISEF.

**Enrollment**—Mr. Levy reported student enrollments were submitted by each district, new students received invitations for 2021-22, and the meeting with first-year students was held. He stated in anticipation of a difficult first-year transition, beginning June 14 through the end of July, students will have access to weekly math help sessions and there is a website where students can check in twice a week during the summer to prepare them for joining the Governor's School in August; a parent survey was distributed in hopes of identifying what support would be beneficial for their student. Mr. Levy expressed concern regarding the potential for student attrition and more students on academic probation; he stated adjustments to the probationary process have been made, and districts will have flexibility during an appeal. Mr. Levy reiterated that equity of access continues to be the goal.

### Staff/Teacher Updates

Mr. Levy reported no staff turnover this year and the selection of Doug Divers at the Governor's School Teacher of the Year, and he expressed gratitude for the excellent job teachers did navigating the challenges of the pandemic and their ability to adjust to difficult circumstances while still holding students accountable.

### Senior Recognition/College Admissions

Mr. Levy stated a link to the senior recognition event is available on the Governor's School website, and a list of college destinations was provided. He noted he had provided information for college applications regarding the sustained academic standards and stated he would continue to provide similar letters in the future. Mr. Levy stated during the summer he would make direct contact with a number of colleges to ensure they have the information necessary to fairly evaluate RVGS students' applications.

### Board Discussion Items

Mr. Johnson asked if consideration would be given to waiving tuition for unfilled slots due to attrition; Mr. Levy stated he understood the request and while the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) commits districts to tuition payments for budget purposes, the Board could entertain the request. Mr. Levy added that he would email Board members a copy of the MOU for their district.

Mr. Wray asked if there were any additional legislative updates; Mr. Levy stated he was not aware of any and noted the Virginia Department of Education is exploring the gifted regulations and plans to release the guidance document that would likely include much of the House Bill language. He added that he expects current litigation will result in law.

Superintendents' Discussion Items

Mrs. White thanked the Board for their commitment to and conversations around equity and stated the superintendents will continue their discussions regarding increasing equity. She thanked Mr. Levy and the RVGS teachers for their hard work.

Mr. Cathey stated the Board is grateful to have Dr. Bradley, is grateful to have made it through this once in 100-year event, and grateful that students persevered.

Next Meeting

Monday, October 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourned

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

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Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

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Cindy H. Poulton, Clerk