

Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board Minutes of October 7, 2019 Meeting

The Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board met on Monday, October 7, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the Roanoke Valley Governor's School Lecture Hall. The following Board members were present:

Mr. Mark Cathey	Roanoke City	Chairman
Dr. Michael Chiglinsky	Salem City	
Mrs. Michelle Crook	Botetourt County	
Mr. Patrick Myers	Craig County	
Mrs. Julie Nix	Franklin County	
Mr. Mike Wray	Roanoke County	

Absent:

Mr. Jason Johnson	Bedford County	Vice Chairman
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Also present: Roanoke City Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Rita Bishop, representing the Committee of Superintendents; Governor's School Director, Mark Levy; Clerk Cindy Poulton; Deputy Clerk Paula Buch; Roanoke County Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely; Bedford County Schools Chief Learning Officer, Karen Woodford; and Salem City Schools Director of Instruction and Career Readiness, Jamie Soltis.

Call to Order

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He noted Vice Chairman Johnson was in Richmond at the 2020 Virginia Teacher of the Year Recognition Ceremony celebrating a Bedford County Schools' teacher who was named Region V Teacher of the Year.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Dr. Chiglinsky and Mrs. Nix, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as distributed.

Approval of June 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes

On motion by Dr. Chiglinsky and Mrs. Nix, the Board unanimously approved the minutes as distributed.

2020 Meeting Calendar

On motion by Mr. Wray and Mrs. Crook, the Board unanimously approved the meeting calendar for 2020 setting the following meeting dates:

- February 3, 2020 (organization meeting)
- April 27, 2020
- June 1, 2020
- October 5, 2020

Financial Report

Mr. Levy reviewed minor revisions to the current operating budget:

- As a result of a reduction in student enrollment from 271 to 269, projected income was reduced to \$1,774,239 (from \$1,787,237).
- An increase of \$5,000 in utility costs (from \$60,000 to \$65,000) was required based on the prior year-end total.
- An adjustment was made to the projected unspent funds category increasing it to \$503,441 from \$445,746 due to the completion of the physics laboratory renovation in July and funding the project from the 2019-29 budget rather than the 2018-19 budget. Mr. Levy stated the project came in under budget at \$23,084 because the work was completed by RCPS staff.

Mrs. Crook asked if revenues were received from all localities; Mr. Levy stated yes.

Mr. Levy reviewed the current financials as of September 9, 2019 as compared to expenses during a similar period in 2018-19 noting the total laboratory renovation expense was not reflected nor were salaries and benefits for one pay period.

Looking Ahead to 2020-21

Mr. Levy stated while he does not typically discuss plans for the upcoming budget so early in the year, he wanted to give the Board a preview of the preliminary 2020-21 budget given a significant reduction in debt service costs (approximately \$160,000). He stated State revenues are projected to remain flat; expenses will increase slightly to cover salary increases and health care benefit costs, and maintenance and repair is projected at \$12,000 as no proposed renovations are planned. Mr. Levy stated based on preliminary projections, \$70,000 would be added to the unspent funds balance moving into 2020-21 for a total of \$573,897.

Mr. Levy stated in 2010 the Governor's School cut 2.5 positions due to lack of funding; one faculty position has since been added, and he wanted to add another position in 2020-21 to ease master schedule issues. He noted he currently teaches the AP science class, and this position would allow him to be more involved in program development and outreach as well as offer additional research electives for students. Mr. Levy stated the estimated cost of the position is \$79,232. Mr. Wray asked about the chemistry class size; Mr. Levy stated it is a priority to maintain the class size to 20 at most.

Mr. Levy stated he would also like to bring back the summer program for middle school students and he continues to search for a partner. He stated previously the Interactive Achievement Foundation offered a grant for the program. Mrs. Nix asked about the cost and if students paid tuition; Mr. Levy stated he projects the cost to be approximately \$26,000 as he planned to offer a different model that would be more efficient while reaching more students, and there is not a tuition fee.

Mr. Levy stated he also wanted to expand services for students including additional research opportunities, enhanced outreach services, and staff development. He stated the directors group has lobbied the State to replenish the funding level for the Governor's Schools and it may require the directors to become more involved in direct lobbying with the legislators. In the meantime, he continues to budget conservatively.

Mrs. Crook asked if there was something the individual boards could do, perhaps sign a joint letter to the legislators, to support the directors' efforts. Mr. Wray suggested talking points be developed for the Board to use as they are speaking with the legislators. Mr. Levy stated he would continue to work on the funding matter. The Chairman stated Roanoke City would host an event with the legislators in November and he would be happy to talk with them at that time.

Mr. Levy stated his goal is to continue the focus on equity of access for students in rural and urban areas, raise the School's national profile, ensure a strong staff, and offer extra programs that add to the student's experience in order to provide a competitive edge and level the playing field. He stated to facilitate this process he developed a road map to help the Governor's School attain the goals by pursuing the following focus areas:

- Unsurpassed Learning Experience
- Distinctly Unique Offerings
- Institution-Defining Research Program
- Cultivation of Future Leaders
- Nationally Competitive Learning Outcomes

Dr. Chiglinsky stated he has served on the Board since its inception and sat through Board meetings during the great recession when staff cuts were necessary; he was happy to hear the vision and plans to increase building utilization. Dr. Chiglinsky encouraged Mr. Levy to consider putting aside some of the additional funds to assist with maintaining the building while also pursuing the goals he outlined. He thanked Mr. Levy for presenting the information so that Board members had time to digest the information. Mrs. Crook stated she agreed with Dr. Chiglinsky's suggestion and also supported the additional staff position.

Directors Report

Student Enrollment: Mr. Levy reported current enrollment at 269 with 270 being a "perfect" number. He stated Roanoke County and Roanoke City did a good job of balancing the cohorts, and he expected some slot shifts in the future.

State Review: Mr. Levy stated the State review is scheduled for November 6-8 and asked Board members and superintendents to mark their calendar for November 7 at 6:30 p.m. for a reception followed by interviews with the evaluation team.

Diversity Team: Mr. Levy stated the Diversity Team met throughout the summer in support of the focus on equity and diversity. He reviewed the work of the team and provided a detailed explanation of plans to revise the student application process commencing in January.

Community Outreach/Collaboration: Mr. Levy reported he and William Fleming/RVGS student London Paige were guests on the Roanoke Branch NAACP radio program "Our Voices" and discussed the Roanoke Valley Governor's School. He reported on ongoing tours and presentations to students and robotics lessons targeting middle schools with fewer applicants. Mr. Levy stated he has established relationships with the Virginia DEQ and Roanoke Stormwater Division and he remains committed to equity of access for all students.

Shelly STEM Challenge: Mr. Levy stated the challenge is scheduled for October 19 and will again this year include students from other Governor's Schools.

Additional Highlights: Mr. Levy stated additional lab capabilities coming this year will enrich student learning in the areas of biotech, chemistry, and environment. He noted summer supports were offered for students on academic probation, and this is the last year the State science fair will be in Roanoke and hosted by the VTC School of Medicine.

Board members were asked to mark their calendar the following upcoming events in 2020—Saturday, February 1 is Project Forum (February 8 is the inclement weather date), and May 4 is the Senior Dinner.

Board Discussion Items

There were no additional Board items discussed.

Superintendent's Items

Dr. Bishop informed Mr. Levy that she expected VTC to become more involved with the Governor's School. She noted Roanoke City skews the diversity numbers as it has tripled the participation of African American students over the past few years and she thanked Mr. Levy for his efforts to increase diversity.

Next Meeting

The Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board will meet next on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Governor's School.

Adjournment

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

Cindy H. Poulton, Clerk