**Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board  
Minutes of October 4, 2021, Meeting - DRAFT**

The Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board met on Monday, October 4, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the Governor School’s Lecture Hall.

The following Board members were present:

Mr. Mark Cathey Roanoke City Chairman  
Mr. Jason Johnson Bedford County Vice Chairman (arrived at 6:43)  
Ms. Michelle Austin Botetourt County  
Mrs. Julie Nix Franklin County  
Mr. Mike Wray Roanoke County

Absent: Mr. Trace Bellassai Craig County  
 Dr. Nancy Bradley Salem City   
  
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 representative Archie Freeman, and Salem City Schools Superintendent Dr. Curtis Hicks.

Call to Order

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He noted Dr. Bradley had a work conflict and welcomed newly-appointed Salem City Schools Superintendent Dr. Curtis Hicks and those present.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mrs. Nix and Mr. Wray, the Board unanimously (4-0) approved the agenda as distributed.

Approval of June 7, 2021, Meeting Minutes

On motion by Mr. Wray and Mrs. Nix, the Board unanimously (4-0) approved the June 7, 2021, meeting minutes.

2022 Meeting Calendar

On motion by Mrs. Nix and Ms. Austin, the Board unanimously (4-0) approved the 2022 Meeting Calendar as follows:

February 7, 2022 Organization Meeting  
April 25, 2022  
June 6, 2022  
October 3, 2022

Review of State Diversity Report

Director Mark Levy presented an overview of the annual Academic Year Governor’s School Diversity Goals and Report. He noted the report data was presented in detail at the June Board meeting, and the report’s format and content coincide with the report submitted last year. Mr. Levy highlighted key components of the report—Primary Diversity Goal(s), updated with input from the district representatives, focuses on enrollment from each district mirroring the district’s demographic diversity of eligible students; Plan for Progress Toward Diversity Goal(s) continues diversity-related strategies previously presented and discussed by district representatives; Current RVGS Screening and Admission Practices are common across all districts and include a uniform application and essay component, additional practices shared by individual districts were included in the report; and demographic data that included racial/ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of 1) current RVGS students by percentage, 2) 2021 applicants by percentage, 3) current faculty by percentage, and 4) qualified potential first-time applicants by percentage.

There was brief discussion by the superintendents regarding some of the data presented for qualified potential first-time applicants, and Mr. Levy stated the data was provided by the district’s representative and he was happy to clarify any of the data points.

Mr. Wray asked if there was any acknowledgement from the Governor or State regarding the report; Mr. Levy stated there had not been any individualized response or official acknowledgement to date even though the Secretary of Education had acknowledged receipt of the information during a meeting of the Governor’s School directors. Mr. Wray asked if there was any expectation that legislation would be passed; Mr. Levy stated last year there was discussion about legislation and regulatory pathways, however, he did not anticipate much movement in the immediate future. He added that he expected to be appointed to a review committee when such a committee is initiated at the State level.

Financial Report

Mr. Levy presented the current operating budget as of September 14 as compared to the same time last year noting nothing out of the ordinary to report.

Mr. Wray asked if there had been requests for additional slots; Mr. Levy stated RVGS is not at capacity and there are slots available, however, there have not been any requests for additional slots. Mr. Levy stated he continues to fight for additional funding and has reached out to legislators requesting support of SOQ funding from the State for Governor’s Schools, which would result in an increase in State revenue of $170,000 for RVGS.

Mr. Levy reviewed the 2021-22 budget highlighting a breakout of unspent funds to account for the $400,000 floor for reserved funds, previously approved by the Board, and the remaining unspent funds in the amount of $230,308 set aside for emergency needs and budget overages. Board members concurred that this was an acceptable presentation of the unspent funds. Mr. Levy stated current enrollment is 253 due to higher-than-normal student attrition this year—two late summer withdrawals and six withdrawals after the school year began, as well as four unfilled slots. He stated tuition is budgeted at 265 and the anticipated reduction in funding is just over $28,000. He stated the default in prior years has been for districts to pay tuition for unfilled slots, but the Board could consider a one-time allowance, which the budget could accommodate. Mr. Levy stated thus far no district had requested a reduction in fees and it does not put any district in a negative situation. There was discussion regarding the challenges of students from the wait list entering RVGS after the first week of school or beyond, and Board members concurred to stay the course with districts covering the tuition for unfilled slots.

Director’s Report

Mr. Levy commended staff for maintaining the rigor and high expectations while being attentive to potential learning loss and student emotional stains brought on by the pandemic. He reported the back to school plan, which incorporates procedures from last year, was implemented without complications, there have been no requests for exemptions, and the Patrick Henry nurse assists with documentation when there is a need to notify students, parents, and staff of a COVID-related incident. He noted there has been some missed class time, but, because of the hard work of staff, students have been able to participate virtually.

Mr. Levy reported teachers are checking prior knowledge to determine the need for additional reinforcement, and students’ progress and grades are closely monitored to allow timely interventions. He stated School Counseling Coordinator Kathy Sebolt monitors student mental health and proactively provides counseling assistance. The RVGS Determined Program and other social-emotional learning efforts continue.

Mr. Levy stated student outreach continues at both the middle school and elementary levels, Mrs. Sebolt has resumed an in-person format for middle school visits when space and distancing is provided, and unless there are improvements in the COVID situation, the January informational meetings will be conducted virtually except for Staunton River and Franklin County high schools where there is ample space for on-campus visits. He stated RVGS has submitted a proposal to NASA for a downlink from the International Space Station for a student and astronaut question and answer session, perhaps at the Addison Aerospace Center, and hope to hear soon regarding the scheduled date. Mr. Levy stated RVGS is taking the lead on a new initiative for the staff of Governor’s Schools across the State to participate in teacher-guided professional learning and collaboration.

Mr. Levy stated the 2022 RVGS Project Forum is planned for February 5, 2022, with students participating in person and judges participating virtually. Mrs. White and Dr. Nicely discussed the importance of the open house for student outreach and encouraged Mr. Levy to explore options that would engage potential students.

Mr. Levy stated the 2022 Senior Dinner is scheduled for May 9, 2022, and space has been reserved for an in-person event if permitted.

Superintendents’ Items

Mrs. White stated because everyone is seeing more students with anxiety, she applauded the efforts of the Governors’ School staff to monitor the social-emotional needs of students. Mr. Wray noted that Roanoke County has seen the need and acted accordingly to address student needs.

Next Meeting

Monday, February 7, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Cathey adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

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 Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

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 Cindy H. Poulton, Clerk