**Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board  
Minutes of April 25, 2022 Meeting - DRAFT**

The Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board met on Monday, April 25, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the Governor School’s Lecture Hall.

The following Board members were present:

Mr. Mark Cathey Roanoke City Chairman  
Dr. Susan Mele Bedford County   
Mrs. Anna Weddle Botetourt County   
Mrs. Julie Nix Franklin County  
Mr. Mike Wray Roanoke County  
Dr. Nancy Bradley Salem City

Craig County Board member, Mr. Trace Bellassi, and Salem Board member, Dr. Nancy Bradley, were absent due to scheduling conflicts.

Also present: Verletta White, Roanoke City Public Schools Superintendent, representing the Committee of Superintendents; Mark Levy, Governor’s School Director; Dawn Winter-Ware, Clerk; Paula Buch, Deputy Clerk; Dr. Jonathan Russ, Superintendent, Botetourt County Public Schools; Mrs. Jeanette Warwick, Superintendent, Craig County Public Schools; Archie Freeman, Roanoke City Public Schools Representative; and Jennifer Dean, Salem City Schools Representative.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda**

On motion by Mr. Cathey, the agenda was approved as distributed.

**Approval of February 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

On motion by Mr. Cathey, the RVGS Regional Board approved the February 7, 2022, meeting minutes.

**Legislative Update**

Mark Levy stated there are two items of legislative interest. The first is to continue the work on obtaining more funding. The budget has not been adopted, no updates yet and the budget remains at basal levels.

The second item is House Bill 127 which was specifically connected to Governor’s School admissions. Mr. Levy said the original version differed greatly from the version in front of Board members this evening. The original version was long and in-depth and talked about prohibiting discrimination and preferential benefit or preference to groups. After conference within the Senate, the version for Board members currently is a much more trimmed-down version which essentially states the admissions process will not discriminate against any individual or group and requires divisions to ensure curriculum coursework and rigor are sufficient for each student.

**Proposed Amendment to Constitution and By-laws**

Mr. Cathey provided a recap of information from the February 7, 2022, meeting regarding the discussion with Floyd County Public Schools and their interest in joining RVGS. Floyd County students would be phased in and the slot allotment would be part of a Board action at the time Floyd County submits an application. A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws need to be reviewed and approved by the Floyd County School Board for the process to proceed.

Mr. Levy restated from the previous meeting there are a few dates and passages in the Constitution and By-laws that need adjustment by amendment, such as deadlines that were not suitable and would place the Board in an awkward spot to add students, notification deadline dates of withdrawal of participating districts and budget approval dates.

After overviewing the rationale and amendment process, Mr. Levy outlined the changes in the proposed Amendment #1: In *Section Two* of the Constitution, the date for application by a prospective new district would change from January 1, to September 1. In *Section Three*, the withdrawal date for a participating division leaving the regional program would change to January 2, of the current school year, so it would occur before student recruiting and budget timelines for the following year. *Section Six* would move the deadline for budget approval to be in line with the RVGS Regional Board meeting dates.

Mr. Cathey stated he had a conversation with Board member Trace Bellassai who could not attend the meeting due to a work conflict. Mr. Bellassai provided his approval for the change in the Constitution and Bylaws for this evening’s meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Cathey, the RVGS Regional Board approved Amendment #1 and the Clerk will provide copies for filing in each participating School Division office.

**FY 2021-22 Budget Update**

Mr. Levy provided information to Board members with their packets and gave an update on the 2021-22 budget in the spending categories that included salaries and services, maintenance, books and supplies. Mr. Levy reported although there is a different way of coding educational resources this year, the costs of textbooks and subscriptions add up to a similar number from the previous year.

**2022-23 Budget for Approval**

Mr. Levy provided information to Board members with their packets and reviewed the 2022-23 budget. Mr. Levy stated the budget is similar year to year with no major differences beyond adjustments to income based on estimates and staff salaries. Tuition amounts are proposed to remain the same. Mr. Levy reported that carryover funds are in a separate account.

Upon motion by Mr. Cathey, The RVGS Regional Board approved the 2022-23 Budget.

**Director’s Report**

Mr. Levy reported the Western Virginia Regional Science Fair took place on March 19, and an email was sent to Board members on March 24, with a full list of awards and a spreadsheet sorted by school division. Three Grand Award winners will move on to represent RVGS at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Atlanta.

The Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair was hosted virtually on April by ODU and RVGS had nine projects receive awards. An email was sent to Board members on April 19, with the full list of projects and awards.

Mr. Levy stated it had been a positive year for students and the school is very proud of senior college admissions results. Mr. Levy will provide updates at the June 6 RVGS Regional Board meeting on specific destinations for students. Mr. Levy stated there have been some students who have experienced difficulties transitioning back to normal expectations which had been expected. RVGS staff have been working with these students and students have been successful in getting back to normal expectations. Mr. Levy stated he has been particularly pleased with the first year group coming in this past year. The counselor follows up with this first year group throughout the year so any academic concerns are addressed promptly.

Mr. Levy said in terms of enrollment for the upcoming year the process is completed, acceptance letters have been sent out and there has been confirmation district staff is well aware of the process for enrollment. Enrollment may be down, there are a few less applications than normal, but this is not a major problem. RVGS will continue to work with member divisions on recruiting efforts.

Mr. Levy said there is some challenges with mismatches in school year calendars between school divisions. Some divisions begin earlier in August, and since RVGS runs on the City School year calendar it can be a challenge. For instance, out of seven participating school divisions only two have the same Spring Break as RCPS. RVGS is not holding students accountable for any vacations, booked tickets, etc., it is something the staff work through, but is a bit of a challenge.

Mr. Levy touched on the need to increase the number of staff members with gifted education endorsement. It is an expectation from VDOE that a program like RVGS has a large proportion of staff members with gifted education endorsement. When making hiring decisions at RVGS we want to hire the best person for the program that has the right skill set and that doesn’t always come with a gifted endorsement. Currently, there is a low number with the gifted endorsement. VDOE considers the endorsement part of their evaluation later on.

Mr. Levy stated he had spoken with colleagues and it is very common to put teachers through as a cohort to focus on the needs for a specific school or program such as RVGS. A cohort is a benefit by not being in a specific mixed-class setting where a teacher would take gifted classes, but the cohort would concentrate on a specific need such as the Governor’s School. Mr. Levy stated he was very early in the research process and said funding would be based on carry over funds and if a discount could be negotiated. Mr. Levy stated when a group is cohorted you can arrange for the work they are doing as part of the specific courses. Mr. Levy stated it is something to think about for future needs.

Mr. Levy stated the Senior Dinner would be in person this year on Monday, May 9, at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Mr. Levy stated it is a great night for student recognition and is a wonderful event. RVGS does not have a Graduation Ceremony as the students graduate with their home school, so the Senior Dinner provides a nice event for Senior students.

**Board Discussion Items**

None

**Superintendents’ Items**

Mrs. Verletta White stated it was good to see the Board approving the budget and added the level of teaching at RVGS is remarkable. Mrs. White provided a suggestion for the gifted and talented courses in terms of cohorting. Mrs. White stated if the RVGS Board looked at direct billing and paying the tuition for teachers upfront there is better negotiation opportunities with colleges and universities.

**Next Meeting**

June 6, 2022

**Adjournment**

Mr. Cathey adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

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 Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

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 Dawn Winter-Ware, Clerk