

Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board Minutes of May 11, 2020 Meeting - DRAFT

The Roanoke Valley Governor's School Regional Board met on Monday, May 11, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, suspension of public gatherings with more than ten individuals, a stay-at-home order by the Governor of Virginia, and the passage of the Governor's Executive Amendment 28 to HB29, the Regional Board conducted the meeting virtually in compliance with the provisions of Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia. The meeting was video streamed on the Governor's School Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/RVGSLabRats/>

The following Board members participated virtually:

Mr. Mark Cathey	Roanoke City	Chairman
Mr. Jason Johnson	Bedford County	Vice Chairman
Mr. Trace Bellasai	Craig County	
Dr. Michael Chiglinsky	Salem City	
Mrs. Michelle Crook	Botetourt County	
Mr. Mike Wray	Roanoke County	

Also participating virtually: 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; Salem City Schools representative Jamie Soltis; and Bedford County Schools representative Sarah Merricks.

The Chairman noted Mrs. Julie Nix, Franklin County School Board representative, was unable to participate due to a meeting of the Franklin County School Board.

Call to Order

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Dr. Chiglinsky and Mr. Bellasai, the Board unanimously (6-0) approved the agenda as distributed.

Approval of February 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes

On motion by Dr. Chiglinsky and Mrs. Crook, the Board unanimously (6-0) approved the minutes as distributed.

COVID-19 Instruction Update

Mr. Levy stated the COVID-19 Instruction Plan was previously distributed to the Board so that members were aware of how instruction was being delivered for students following the March 23, 2020 closing of all public schools for the remainder of the academic year by the Governor of Virginia. He summarized efforts to maintain continuous instruction noting instruction began the Monday following the Governor's declaration on Friday because staff had received training in advance and had a plan for online instruction.

Mr. Levy stated students have maintained a normal schedule with only slight modifications needed; a 99% daily attendance rate has been achieved because the majority of students have not experienced problems with Internet access. He noted that classes were also recorded to ensure students, particularly those in more rural areas, who experienced some connectivity problems could review the recorded class; students who viewed recorded classes were counted as present. Mr. Levy stated he was very proud of the teachers who have demonstrated flexibility and of the students who have been committed and dedicated to completing the academic year successfully. He noted he had received numerous communications from students and parents thanking the staff for maintaining stability for the students.

Mr. Johnson asked if the students, especially those in the rural areas who experienced connectivity issues received assistance; Mr. Levy stated students have been able to access the Internet but there have been challenges for some students participating real time; however, students were creative in problem-solving these challenges and were able to watch the recorded class. He noted that there were a few students who needed a device and he ensured that they received a laptop. Mr. Wray asked if students had a laptop from their home school; Mr. Levy stated some of the districts have one-to-one programs but not all, and while a good number of the students had a computer at home, there were a few who needed a device.

Mr. Levy stated Fall planning is underway and the Governor's School will be fully prepared to open in whatever form the opening takes and will adapt to what the seven districts are doing for their students.

2019-20 Budget Update

Mr. Levy reviewed the financials noting the comparison to last year does not have a direct corollary; however, revenues and expenditures are lining up well for the year.

2020-21 Budget Adoption

Mr. Levy reviewed the proposed FY21 Budget noting, "State money is not where we would like it to be as we were not successful this time around but we are planning for what we have available." He stated revenue from the State is based on 267 students; salaries will remain the same as 2019-20 because RCPS has made that decision, and the additional stipends he reviewed as part of the preliminary budget have been removed so that the budget is as balanced as it can be. Mr. Levy stated his goal is to keep spending to a minimum because of the unknowns moving into the new school year. He noted the projections for utilities were reduced based on better experiences this year, and the major change in the budget is the reduction of debt service, which will allow for the addition of a new position. Mr. Levy stated the budgeted amount for maintenance and repair remains the same as does the amount for educational expenses, and he has maintained the stipends for intercession. Mr. Levy stated expenditures from unspent funds is \$586 and the budget is about as balanced as it can be. Mr. Wray asked about the two positions that are being filled; Mr. Levy stated three new staff members have been hired to replace two physics teachers who are retiring and for the new position previously approved by the Board for biology/environmental sciences.

On motion by Dr. Chiglinsky and Mrs. Crook, the Board unanimously (6-0) approved by roll call vote to adopt the 2020-2021 Budget as presented.

Director's Report

State Budget and Equity Requirements—Mr. Levy stated the budget amendments were introduced to increase funding for Governor's Schools but failed to advance; he noted efforts will continue in this regard. He stated there is a new clause in the budget bill requiring each Governor's School to develop diversity goals for students and staff and provide a report to the Virginia Department of Education by October 1 annually; he added that because this has been a high priority for him and steps have been taken toward this goal, he developed a template for use by all of the Governor's Schools' directors across the State. Mr. Levy stated he would provide the report to the Board members, and if needed, the Board could call a special meeting for the purpose of reviewing the report in advance of the October 1 deadline.

Science Fair Awards: Mr. Levy noted the following results for recent science fairs conducted virtually.

Western Virginia Regional Science Fair (March 17)—17 projects advanced to the State Fair. The Grand Award winners, Kevin Sheng, a senior at RVGS and Cave Spring High School; Mary Grace Giles, a senior at RVGS and Patrick Henry High School; and the team of Luke Arner, a senior at RVGS and Hidden Valley High School, and Grady Brydges, a senior at RVGS and Cave Spring High School, were all finalists to the International Science and Engineering Fair, which, unfortunately, was canceled due to COVID-19.

Virginia Junior Science and Humanities Symposium—Uyen Tran, a junior at RVGS and William Fleming High School, won her category and was selected to advance to the national symposium, and Abhi Karri, a sophomore at RVGS and Hidden Valley High School won his category.

State Science Fair (April 17 hosted virtually by the VTC School of Medicine)—Kevin Sheng received first place in Biomedical and Health Sciences and the Virginia Bioscience Foundation; Maggie Parkhurst and Rebecca Qiu, freshmen at RVGS and William Byrd High School received first place in Animal Sciences; four other RVGS projects received place awards.

Class of 2020: Mr. Levy reported 63 graduating seniors were offered \$4.9 million in scholarships and will attend 22 colleges including Yale, Cambridge, and Carnegie Mellon. Board members received a full listing of graduates and the colleges they will attend.

Community Outreach/Collaboration: Mr. Levy stated Don Wages has been designated coordinator of equity and outreach and had planned a number of outreach activities prior to the COVID-19 outbreak; he hopes to return to the planned activities as soon as possible.

2020-21 Recruitment: Mr. Levy stated acceptance materials have been distributed to incoming students, and there is a meeting on Wednesday, May 13, with parents and students to welcome them and introduce the summer assignment. He noted there is a plan to offer additional summer enrichment assignments, and teachers will be provided incentives to provide this assistance and help students who have not been in the classroom since mid-March. Mr. Levy added that existing students are comfortable with online instruction should there be a need to continue providing instruction outside the

classroom, and online instruction will be provided during the summer so that new students feel more comfortable.

Staff Update: Mr. Levy announced all three positions had been hired prior to school closure—two positions fill the vacancies created by the retirements of Dr. Brent Holt, Physics and Engineering Teacher, and Mrs. Nancy Aldridge, Physics and Engineering Teacher; the third position is a result of the Board's approval of a new position which allows for a new elective—Computation Biology and Bioinformatics, and the opening of a second elective next year, Psychology. Mr. Levy stated he was proud to announce that Don Wages was selected as the Governor's School Teacher of the Year for 2020.

Board Discussion Items

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Cathey congratulated Superintendent Rita Bishop on her June 30 retirement adding this is her last meeting of the Regional Board. He thanked her for her service to the Regional Board stating, "we will always remember your contributions that have resulted in many successes for the Roanoke Valley Governor's School."

The Chairman expressed appreciation to the General Assembly for allowing virtual meetings and conveyed his appreciation that the districts continue to provide this wonderful opportunity for students across the area.

Superintendent Discussion Items

There were no items for discussion.

Next Meeting

The Chairman stated there are no agenda items for the June 1 meeting; therefore, the next meeting of the Regional Board is October 5.

Adjournment

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

Cindy H. Poulton, Clerk