The Lay Advisory Committee (LAC)

To The Henrico County School Board

To Bring about better communication between the School Board and the patrons of Henrico County Public Schools

Meeting Minutes September 9, 2013 6:00pm Glen Allen High Scool

Attendance: Hank Chambers, LAC Chairman-elect (Pemberton ES), Paula Beran, vice-chair-elect, Donald "Spec" Campen, Jr. , Sylvia Farbstein (Short Pump MS), Charles Taylor (Brookland MS), Amanda Barth (Echo Lake ES), Anna Yenney (Byrd MS), Cheryl Bemis (Shady Grove ES), Janet Sullivan (Shady Grove ES), Elizabeth Baskin (Freeman HS), Mary Nardo (Freeman HS), Nancy Godfrey, Cathleen Jacobson, co-secretary-elect (Springfield Park ES), Mary Schlanger, co-secretary (Hungary Creek MS & Glen Allen HS), Nicholle Simpson (Baker ES), Peggy Berkeley (Pocahontas MS), Tony Pham (Gayton ES), Ginny Crenshaw (Pinchbeck ES), Sue Striamo (Godwin HS), Hilary Martin (Godwin HS), Laura Obmen (Moody MS)

There were 21 people in attendance. 16 schools were represented, 7 ES, 6 MS, 3 HS.

**Call to Order:** Chairman-elect, Hank Chambers, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm at Glen Allen High School.

**Welcome and Introduction:** Hank began the meeting by having all present introduce themselves and which school they represented. Hank then defined the purpose of the Lay Advisory Committee stating that its mission is essentially to provide a liaison with HCPS, the schools, parents, and community members. It acts in an advisory role to the school board on such issues deemed important by its members.

Hank introduced Spec Campen Jr., who has been a long time member of Lay Advisory. Spec recounted the committee’s historical roots through a bond referendum and its accomplishments through the years. Paula Beran, former chairwoman, also gave her viewpoint of the committee and its direction in recent years. Interest had started to wane, but in the last several years, the LAC has started moving forward again.

**Committee Reports/Discussion:**

Nominating Committee - Paula Beran

Paula presented the nominees for chairman, vice chairman, and secretary.

Hank Chambers has been nominated to serve as chairman again.

John Ballsrud has been nominated as vice chair.

Mary Schlanger and Cathleen Jacobson have been nominated as co-secretaries.

Hank did mention that anyone could still be nominated, and that he saw the chair position as a coordinator for the committee. There were no other nominees at this time. The slate was presented and can be voted on at the October 7, 2013 meeting to be held at Moody Middle School.

**Old Business/New Business/Open Discussion:**

Hank offered the committee a review of the previous year in order for everyone to get a sense of what the LAC did last year, and where we are at the beginning of this year. The knowledge we gained has allowed us to gain credibility.

Hank presented old business from last year and topics covered or not yet covered by the committee. These included:

* SOL’s
* Math Readiness
* Elementary Schools and IB programs
* Laptops
* Discipline and Suspensions

Last year we had Dr. Chris Corallo speak to us about elementary programs including the potential for an IB program at a pilot school. Thomas Woodward, did a presentation on the use of laptops in the schools. Dr. Bondy Shay Gibson did a presentation on discipline and suspensions and the disparities each school experiences in these areas. All speakers were very open about sharing information on the topic they spoke about.

We discussed the low turnout on last year's committee meetings in general, and meetings with guest speakers specifically. This is an area we need to work on this year.

We also discussed meeting dates and when they will occur. Hank went over our attempt last year to rotate these dates and places but this proved confusing and did not promote the attendance we had hoped. Therefore, this year we have set the meetings for the second Tuesday of the month, with two exceptions due to scheduled school closings.

**Meeting dates are as follows:**

October 7, 2013 February 10, 2014

November 11, 2013 March 10, 2014

December 9, 2013 April 7, 2014

January 13, 2014 May 12, 2014

All meetings will take place at 7:00pm at the Moody Middle School library.

This lead into items we could pursue this year and discussion about the role of Lay Advisory and what position(s) it could take on matters concerning education. Also, how best do we communicate events, concerns, and information in general to our schools and community members?

* Paula Beran did let everyone know that Lay Advisory can take a position if voted on by the voting members. (Reminder: voting members are those who are school representatives )
* Hank brought up the fact that Lay Advisory can be a forum for finding information out concerning particular issues that arise at a school.
* It was suggested that a formal "to-do" list be generated to educate the school representatives on how they are to relay information between their schools' PTA and LAC.

Hank then posed the idea of the kinds of ways the LAC, or individuals can be involved.

* Go to the board meetings
* Listen to the board meetings on boarddocs (there is a link on the county school website)

Paula has spoken with board members in the past. The thought is that there are so many different committees that the purpose of the LAC has been diminished. This committee has the flexibility to pursue global issues as opposed to the narrow specific committees.

Reminder: If issues comes up at a specific school, bring it up. The LAC may be able to help. We have a good relationship with the administrative team and can get parents' voices heard.

At this point, we broke out by elementary, middle, and high school to discuss any concerns or problems that might be worth pursuing for the upcoming year.

* Pinchbeck has a new principal that year. The administration wants principals to move around about every 5 years.
* Waste of paper: all the paper that comes home at the beginning of the year. If have multiple children, then receive multiple copies of the same information.
* Buses: so far, things are running smoothly
* Gifted programs: children identified in the 3rd grade, put in clusters, 4th & 5th can chose to attend gifted classes
* 10 point grading scale - where are we with this issue?

The school year is starting well. At the October 7th meeting, additional discussion on the 10 point grading scale is requested.

Next LAC meeting will be held October, 7, 2013 at 7:00pm at the Moody Middle School library.

Hank Chambers, LAC Chairman-elect, adjourned the meeting at 6:57pm.

**Dates to remember:**

September 12 - Henrico County School Board Work Session (1pm)

September 26 - Henrico County School Board Work Session (4pm) & Monthly meeting (6:30pm)

Respectfully submitted, Mary Schlanger & Cathleen Jacobson, co-secretary-elects