

2024–2025

**MAGGIE L. WALKER
GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT**



Your Support Matters

Dear Friends of the MLWGS Foundation,

The 2024–25 school year reminded us of the power of community and the heart of the Walker Way. Together, we [celebrated the 31st class of Dragons to walk across the stage](#), marking three decades since our very first graduates in 1995.

We also leaned on one another through moments of deep loss, as we mourned our longtime director Bob Lowerre and beloved physics teacher Drew Austen. In true Dragon spirit, our community rallied to celebrate lives well lived, support our students and faculty, and renew our shared commitment to the mission of Maggie Walker. Dr. Lowerre often marveled at this community's generosity, never taking for granted the time and talent you pour into our school. That spirit of giving—and of standing together—is part of what makes Maggie Walker extraordinary.

As we look ahead to 2025–26, we do so with confidence and optimism under the [leadership of MLWGS' new Executive Director Kristin Janssen](#), who is building on the strong foundation laid by her predecessors. With her vision, the continued strength of our community, and your ongoing support, we enter our fourth decade ready to carry forward the tradition of excellence that defines Maggie Walker.

Once a Dragon, always a Dragon.

With gratitude,



Ginger O'Neil
Executive Director
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Foundation

Our Mission

The Governor's School Foundation cultivates resources to enhance the educational experience of ALL students at MLWGS.

Our Vision

All MLWGS students have access to educational resources to reach their full potential.



On the Cover

Photos from the 23rd annual Night of the Dragon in March 2025. In addition to the Maggie Steppers, highlights included the "Dragon Doers" (above) led by Jake Nelson '26 and friends, offering chores, tutoring, and sports coaching as an auction item, and a captivating acoustic performance by Luna Forlano '25 and Lily Stemhagen '25.

2024–25 MLWGS Foundation Board of Directors & Staff

Officers

Beth Simms, *Chair*
Veronica Chornodolsky,
Vice Chair and Events
Committee Chair
Karen Setzer '99, *Treasurer*
Julie Seitz, *Secretary*
Erin Ortiz '06, *Alumni*
Advisory Board Chair
Brian Baird, *Development*
Committee Chair
Adam Powers '10, *Finance*
Committee Chair
Emily Stegmaier Winbigler
'00, *Governance*
Committee Chair

Monique Johnson
Cynthia Kostelecky
Anikka Moore
Stinson Mundy '96
Julie Seabury

Ex Officio

Robert Lowerre, *MLWGS*
Director
Kenneth Pritchett,
Regional School Board
Chair, Petersburg City
Schools

STAFF

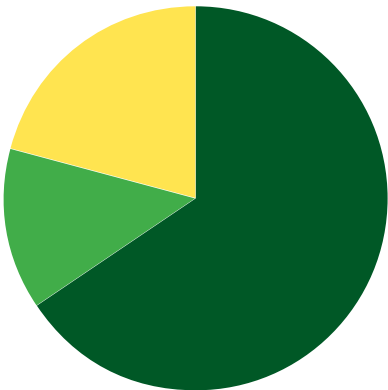
Ginger O'Neil, *Executive*
Director
Stephanie Helsley,
Foundation Assistant

Members

Lakshmi Algappan
Tyler Gibson '10

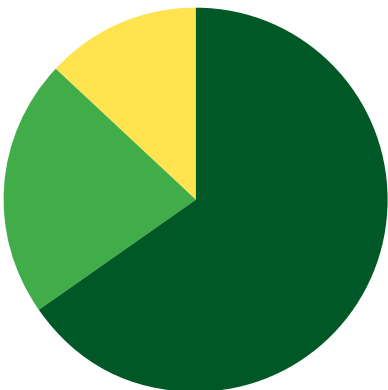
Financial Overview*

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025
(Audited)



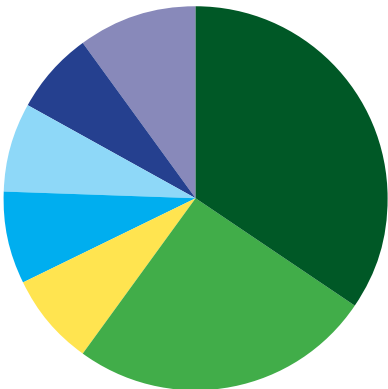
TOTAL REVENUE: \$447,000

- ANNUAL FUND: \$294,000
- NIGHT OF THE DRAGON: \$60,000
- CHANGE IN INVESTMENTS AND INTEREST INCOME: \$93,000



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$429,000

- PROGRAM: \$281,000
- FUNDRAISING (INCLUDING AUCTION EXPENSES): \$93,000
- MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION: \$55,000



PROGRAM EXPENSES: \$281,000

- DIRECT STUDENT AID AND STUDENT TRAVEL: \$97,000
- ACADEMIC CLUBS, TEAMS AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT: \$72,000
- TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS: \$22,000
- BOOSTER GROUPS AND PTSA DISBURSEMENTS: \$22,000
- SCHOLARSHIPS AND TAYLOR TEACHING AWARD: \$21,000
- ALUMNI AND SCHOOL EVENTS: \$19,000
- PERSONNEL AND OTHER MISC: \$28,000

ENDOWMENTS AND FUNDS INVESTED FOR FUTURE USE

Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Foundation Flexible Fund: **\$548,000**

Ruth Elizabeth Cole Endowment Fund for Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School: **\$195,000**

Shamin Hotels Speaker Series at Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Endowment Fund: **\$67,000**

Dr. Smriti Bardhan Scholarship at Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Endowment Fund: **\$24,000**

**(All numbers are rounded to the nearest \$1,000.)*

School Facts and Statistics (2024–2025)

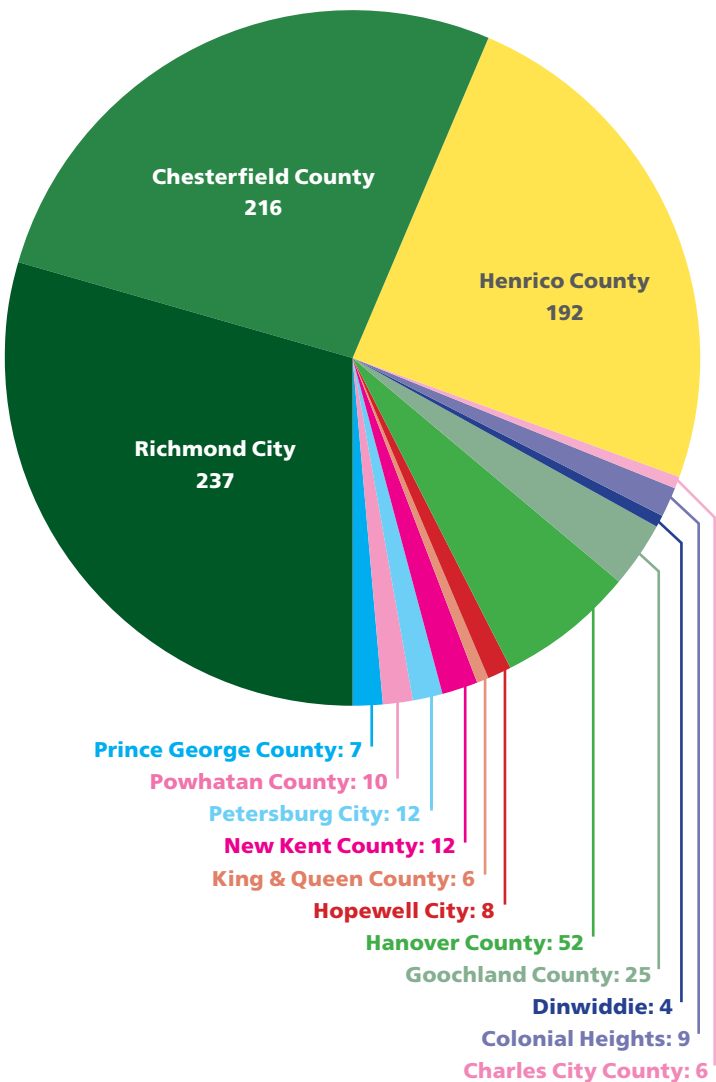


Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School Class of 2025

Class of 2025

- 194** graduates / Average GPA: **4.19**
- Performed **41,169** community service hours
- Received **\$12.57 million** in scholarship offers
- Attending **69** different colleges
- 8** National Merit Finalists, with **42** additional commendations in National Merit Program
- Recognized collectively with **355** honors, awards, and scholarships
- Average SAT: **1345** / Average ACT: **30**

Enrollment by Place of Residence



796

Total enrollment
(grades 9–12)

194

Total enrollment
(class of 2025)

67 full-time faculty

6 part-time faculty

6 university faculty

MLWGS’ Mission is to provide comprehensive educational opportunities that advance gifted students’ understanding of world cultures and languages. Our diverse and supportive community develops students’ character and ability to contribute, collaborate and lead.

The MLWGS Foundation at Work

Enhancement Grants

The Foundation provides grants to teachers and students to enhance the educational and extracurricular experience for all Dragons. In our 2024–25 academic year, we committed:

- **\$204,000** for instructional enhancements, academic clubs and teams, student travel and direct student aid (34 grants)
- **\$35,000** for teachers' professional development, including conference participation, graduate studies and educational association memberships (33 grants)



Student Aid

Students in need received:

- Fees for courses, clubs and dual enrollment
- Test fees not covered by College Board waivers
- Instruments and school supplies
- Lunches
- Class and club spiritwear
- Prom tickets
- Graduation caps and gowns



MLWGS students at the Virginia Model UN at UVA in November
Below: We the People team with State Champion medals

Academic Clubs & Teams

Foundation funding assisted:

- Student stoles, items for Mental Health Awareness Month, Holiday/Cultural celebrations and other student programs
- Support for production and distribution of *Jabberwock*, the student newspaper
- Support for students to attend Virginia Model United Nations in Charlottesville
- GrandeMARK DieCutting Machine and Multishape "Space Chips" die for mathematics classes
- Support for students to participate in the Japan Bowl in Baltimore
- Aid for students to join the Technology Student Association and compete at regional and state events
- Aid for students to attend the Quiz Bowl High School National Championship Tournament in Atlanta
- Financial assistance for students to join Robotics and travel to competitions, including regionals and Worlds in Houston
- Funding for We the People to compete at state and national championships



MLWGS offers teams across nearly every academic discipline—from government and foreign languages to athletics and pop culture—where Dragons earn top honors in competitions and gain defining experiences. [Learn more about how students benefit from Foundation funding](#) that helps underwrite these opportunities.

The MLWGS Foundation at Work

Classroom & Instructional Enhancements

The Foundation supplements instructional needs, such as:

- Art 5 solo exhibition invitation cards for 10 students
- Class set of *The Boy from Clearwater*, a novel about Taiwan, for East and Southeast Asian rotation
- A guest speaker on meditation and yoga for English class unit on Siddhartha
- Lunch and stipends for two authors—Rosa Castellano & Laura Chow Reeve—to speak during National Poetry Month
- Parts for engine rebuilds for the new Automotive Concepts in Engineering class
- Supplies for Oedipus masks for World Lit 9 students



Learn more about the art of mask making as a culminating project for the reading of *Oedipus Rex*.



Dragons from the Black Lives/Black Legacy Seminar in Tulsa, Oklahoma

Student Travel

Students were able to travel throughout Virginia as well as to:

8 states: Georgia, Maryland, Texas, Arizona, New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, Oklahoma

4 foreign countries: Canada, Morocco, France, Germany

Enhancement grants supported:

- Funding for The Power of Story Seminar travel to Paris
- Funding for Baseball (SABR Analytics) Seminar travel to Cooperstown, N.Y., to visit the National Baseball Hall of Fame
- Funding for Black Lives/Black Legacy Seminar travel to Oklahoma
- Support for participation in German student exchange



- Above: Funding for Middle East North Africa (MENA) Seminar travel to Morocco
- Support for students to participate in Worlds for Robotics in Houston
- Support for the 2024 Visual Arts student trip to Washington, D.C., in December
- Support for music students to travel to Disney for Imagination Campus sessions and performance
- Support for We the People students to travel to Philadelphia to tour Independence Hall, First Congress Hall and the Museum of the American Revolution

The MLWGS Foundation at Work



Christine Anderson at the Normandy French Resistance Monument in Sainte-Marie-du-Mont in Normandy.

Exploring Identity Through History

Social studies teacher Christine Anderson received the 2025 Patricia E. Taylor Teaching Award for International Experiences. Her award-funded travel to France explored the intersections of gender, politics and national identity – work that she said underscores “why identity matters and why it needs to be a lens used to study history and politics.”

In France, Dr. Anderson studied how women’s roles were portrayed across key historical moments, from 19th-century feminism to the World Wars, and examined ongoing debates such as the politics of the veil in the 21st century.

Anderson plans to incorporate these insights into her Gender, Politics and Consumerism in a Global Context class. “This trip allowed me to see history in place,” she said. “Now I can help students not only understand events but also see how identity continues to shape the narratives nations tell about themselves.”

Teacher & Staff Professional Development

Gifted Endorsement Graduate Coursework for Teachers

- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for Gifted & Talented Students
- Foundations of Gifted Education
- Models & Strategies for Teaching the Gifted
- Social/Emotional Needs of Gifted Students
- Special Populations of Gifted Students

Professional Memberships

- American Association of Physics Teachers
- National Science Teachers Association
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- American Association of Teachers of Japanese
- American Council of Teachers of Russian
- American School Counselor Association
- Educational Theater Association
- National Association of Music Education
- National Board Certification for Professional Teaching Standards

Teacher/Staff Conferences & Workshops

- AP Literature and Composition Conference, Williamsburg
- AP Institute Summer Conference, Dallas
- Bridges 2024 (Math/Art/Music/Architecture/Culture) Conference, Richmond
- MathFest 2024, Indianapolis
- NEH Workshop on the Intersection of Modernity and Indigenous Cultures, Spokane
- 2024 Virginia School Safety Training Forum, Hampton
- National Association for College Admission Counseling Conference, Columbus

The MLWGS Foundation at Work



Connecting Parents to One Another and the School

Coming from different cities and counties can make it feel challenging for many new students to make and nurture friendships. But while students can quickly start to build relationships as they interact with classmates, the opportunities are more limited for their parents. To help connect families, the Foundation offers [two signature events—the new Parent Welcome and the Senior Parent Sendoff](#)—so parents can build connections and nurture the broader school community.



Scan to learn more about the MLWGS Foundation and how you can support our Dragons today!

Sneakers, Spirit and a Whole Lot of Hustle

Parents took a page out of their students' playbook by trading stilettos for sneakers at the [23rd annual Night of the Dragon fundraiser in March](#). The annual event, hosted by the Maggie Walker Governor's School Foundation, embraced a playful new theme: Sneaker Ball. Held in the The Faison Center's Flo and Tony Guzman Community Center, the fundraiser proved that a little creativity (and a lot of elbow grease) can go a long way.



"Fund the Dragon" participants sporting their new hats at the March 2025 Night of the Dragon Sneaker Ball

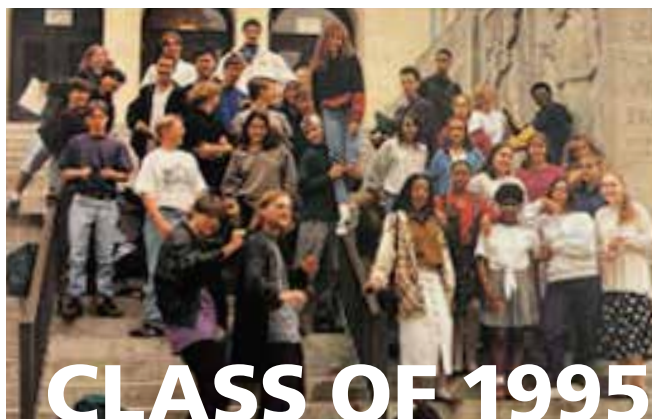
The MLWGS Foundation at Work



This year, for the fifth time, Robinette Cross took students to Morocco with the “Gender and Culture in the Middle East and North Africa” (MENA) Senior Seminar.

Shaping Senior Year with Passion and Purpose

In their final year, MLWGS seniors may choose a year-long mentorship with a professional or a faculty-led Senior Seminar featuring collaborative inquiry, travel, independent projects and deep discussion. Both paths offer rich opportunities to sharpen research and communication skills while connecting passions to real-world questions. [Read more about how these opportunities have impacted senior students](#), and how your support of the Foundation makes it possible.



Spring 2025 marked an important milestone for Maggie Walker: The 30th anniversary of the first graduating class. Students and faculty alike [reflected on what it meant to decide to be part of this unfolding experience.](#)

Providing the Margin of Excellence for Transformational Learning

The transformational education received by Maggie Walker’s high-achieving students requires lots of “extras.” Extra, as in travel across the country or around the globe to apply classroom learning. Advanced training for teachers to meet the needs of highly motivated and gifted students. Course fees for dual-enrollment classes at VCU. And the Foundation strives to make those extras – and so much more – happen by raising funds to support educational initiatives and cultural experiences that go far beyond the basics of a high school education.



Scan to learn more about the MLWGS Foundation and how you can support our Dragons today!