

A Special Meeting of the Albemarle County School Board was held on January 17, 2019 at 6:30 p.m., Lane Auditorium, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Stephen Koleszar; Dr. Kate Acuff; Ms. Katrina Callsen; Mr. Graham Paige; Mr. Jonathan Alcaro; Mr. David Oberg; and Mr. Jason Buyaki.

**ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Debbie Collins, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Clare Keiser, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Bernard Hairston, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Ross Holden, School Board Attorney; and Mrs. Jennifer Johnston, Clerk.

**Agenda Item No. 1.1. Call Order.**

Mr. Alcaro called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Agenda Item No. 1.2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Agenda Item No. 1.3. Moment of Silence.**

**Agenda Item No. 1.4. Agenda.**

Mr. Koleszar offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Mr. Buyaki **seconded** the motion, **and the motion passed.**

**Agenda Item No. 2.1. Superintendent's Funding Request Presentation.**

Dr. Haas presented the proposed funding request for FY2019/20.

*Albemarle Rising*

It was more than 50 years ago when President John F. Kennedy used the phrase, "A rising tide lifts all boats." He was speaking in Arkansas about the merits of a new dam. His point was that what was good for Heber Springs, Arkansas, would benefit the entire region, just as improvements in the purchasing power of Arkansas residents would help the income of autoworkers in Michigan.

Twenty years later, President Ronald Reagan used the same expression in reference to our nation's economy, and ever since, government leaders have rallied to the concept that wise, patient, and precisely targeted investments in the public sector can produce long-term prosperity for all.

That has been true in education since at least 1655, when Boston Latin School, the first public school in what is now the United States, opened. Public schools have been a powerful catalyst for history's most successful economic development and prosperity stories. The ideas born and matured in our public schools have been the wellspring for creativity, imagination, teamwork, and trial-and-error skills that have turned young students into the wealth creators of every generation.

Ten years before President Kennedy was in Arkansas talking about our connected economy, the then Chairman of General Motors, Charles Wilson, famously told Congress that "what was good for our country was good for General Motors, and vice versa." And what was good for General Motors at that time were assembly line employees who could reliably and efficiently produce new cars.

The instructional model in the mid-20th century certainly looked like many workplaces across industrial America—classrooms populated by desks all in a row, filled with furious note takers and a learning environment valuing routine over spontaneity.

*The Changing Marketplace*

Today's workplace looks nothing like it did in 1950, and neither should our schools. Much like contemporary businesses all over the world today, schools should provide the resources and support that empower students to succeed in a wide variety of dynamic environments.

Projections from respected research firms and business thought leaders tell us that the growing dominance of artificial intelligence, robotics, and computers will result in the loss of tens of millions of present-day jobs to machines in the not-too-distant future. The challenge for schools and communities is how to remain relevant through such a powerful transition. The answer begins with a strong foundation.

In the 2018-19 school year, our division extended its state and national leadership as measured by several student performance metrics. Our on-time graduation rate again exceeded the state average, as it has every year since this important standard was established. Our graduation rate is higher than the graduation rate for every one of the 50 states in our union.

Our students again surpassed state and national averages for the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test and its college readiness benchmark. By a sizeable margin, our students exceeded the percentages of their peers in Virginia who earned Advanced Studies Diplomas. Niche, a national assessment organization that evaluates academics and school climate, concluded that Albemarle County Public Schools was the third best out of 131 school divisions in the state. Nationally, it placed us in the top 2.3 percent of all school divisions in the nation.

As impressive as these results are, even more important to the future of Albemarle County will be our leadership as innovators. That comes from the investments we put in place to touch every student. To truly be the catalyst for economic development and prosperity in a highly volatile, rapidly innovating, and multicultural marketplace, our instructional model needs to fit contemporary demands.

*The Leadership of Ideas*

Over the past two years, we have updated learning spaces across every school in our division to provide more flexibility for teachers and greater integration of state-of-the-art technology, and to design classrooms that facilitate collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills among students. We are working with college admission officers and the state department of education to expand student choice in the selection of courses that more precisely fit students' career and personal interests. We are the only school division in Virginia to receive a waiver from the state to provide this student option.

This year also marked the debut of Center One at Seminole Place, a new student learning center that looks much like modern offices and research labs across the country. The curriculum is entirely project-based with no bells to signal the end of classes. Students and teachers collaborate on projects that combine several academic disciplines, as demonstrated by the students who are using math, science and engineering skills to build musical instruments, or the student who is merging art and science to design a book for hospitals and clinics on how to support children who suffer from a rare genetic disease. What we learn and fine-tune from student learning experiences at the Center will be incorporated into a 600-student center planned to open in 2021.

One of the General Assembly's highest education priorities right now is strengthening mental and emotional support services for students. We already have made that a top priority, having added mental health counselors at the middle and high school levels. Next year, we are proposing to continue increasing counselor support not only in our middle schools, but also in our elementary schools.

*The Achievement Gap*

This funding request supports our commitment to eliminating the achievement gap between white students and students of color. Our culturally responsive teaching model, the first of its kind in Virginia and one

of the few such programs in the country, is an influential component of our professional development programming, yielding impressive early results in the academic and social development of students.

Complementing this work will be our pilot project for kindergarten students that will allow them to stay in their original school even if a change in their family's housing puts them in another school's attendance zone. One of the contributing factors to the achievement gap is stability in a child's relationship with school. It is not unusual for a student in our urban ring to change elementary schools two or three times due to the family's need to change their residence. This pilot, designed to support students who already possess risk factors, will make it possible for them to avoid the disruptions such changes often cause in a child's academic and social development.

Learning disruptions are among the most challenging issues facing our state, caused by the disproportionate number of minority students and the number of students overall who are suspended from school. Our Short-Term Education Program (STEP) brings students and their parents together with the school principal to agree upon a study plan to keep students learning in school rather than sending them home. Among the program's benefits are sharp reductions in the number of students bring suspended multiple times over the course of the school year. We will be expanding the program to two additional schools next year. Among those interested in our success are state legislators, who have asked if we would be willing to testify in Richmond as a way of sharing this program with other school divisions across Virginia.

#### *Investing in Lift*

Our one strategic goal for all students is that they "will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens." And it is in the fulfillment of that goal that the fortune of our businesses, community organizations, residents, and families will be lifted.

This funding request maps out the strategies and programs that will strengthen the interconnection between the fortune of our schools and our communities. It is a financially thoughtful plan, with clear and specific accountability measures. Despite continually increasing student enrollment, for instance, this request represents a modest increase in expenditures of four percent, from \$186.6 million to \$194.3 million.

The largest increase in expenditures, \$3.2 million, would fund a market-based 2.3 percent increase in compensation for all employees. Classified employees also will be eligible to receive a merit increase.

Nearly \$857,000 in new proposals are devoted to student learning. The largest, \$470,000, would increase the number of students able to attend the High School Centers. Also included is \$150,000 to restart a Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) / National Defense Cadet Corps (NDCC) program at Monticello High School and \$150,000 to expand our culturally responsive teaching program.

To address personnel shortages in key areas, this request targets \$646,000 to increase bus driver compensation. This would allow our division to remain competitive with other transportation service providers in Central Virginia. Another \$108,000 would enable us to close the gap in finding qualified substitute teachers by utilizing the services of retired teachers. We also will begin to phase in a cadre of permanent substitute teachers that will allow us to respond effectively to last-minute teacher absences.

We also are proposing to improve teacher retention practices by easing the financial burden on teachers who live outside the county, but would like their children to attend county schools. Often this situation results from the lack of affordable housing in Albemarle. We would lower the tuition for these students from \$5,400 to \$1,000.

#### *State Revenues Have Not Kept Pace*

Our revenue projections have yet to be finalized, but based on current estimates, we believe the largest source of financial support, revenues from local government, will increase by approximately four percent, from \$131.3 million to \$136.6 million. We expect state revenues to increase by five percent, from \$48.3 million to

\$50.8 million. Prior to the 2008-09 recessionary years, state revenues supported nearly 31 percent of our per pupil expenditures. Next year, the state's share of our per pupil expenditures will be 26 percent. If the state simply had maintained even their nearly 31 percent share of these costs, we would be receiving an additional \$9.1 million next year.

Overall, we are anticipating that revenues next fiscal year will be \$193.7 million leaving a difference of \$642,975 between projected expenditures and revenues. We expect this number could change as both local and state revenues are finalized.

### *In Closing*

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the staff, students, and members of our community who have been a part of our budget development process and my listening tour conversations and who bring exceptional public service to our mission. These interactions strengthen the connection between school and community, and their continuation will be vital to the success of our future together.

Nearly three years ago, our school division went to the community seeking support for a bond referendum that would enhance the learning environments for all students across the county. Recently, we received an update on the progress of that work indicating that all projects will be completed on time and under budget. This is a tribute both to the dedication of our staff and the responsiveness and professionalism of our local business community.

Beginning with Greek mythology and through history, the term Golden Age has come to define periods of greatness, common noble purpose, and the realization of one's highest potential. Today, public education stands at the doorway of a Golden Age, a time defined by symbiotic partnerships between school, community and businesses; by new and exciting ideas that produce quantifiable results; by the use of cutting-edge resources that exponentially advance learning; and by teachers, staff and students who are passionate, talented and determined enough to make a positive difference in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Albemarle, indeed, is Rising.

### **Agenda Item No. 2.2. Architectural Selection for High School Center #2**

Ms. Schmitt noted that this request was before the Board on January 10, 2019. She then provided for the Board consideration, the following overview of the architectural selection for High School Center #2. At the October 18, 2018 School Board meeting, the Board approved the Selection Committee for the High School Center project. The High School Center #2 is a facility that is a resource for the whole Division, strategically placed to provide access to interdisciplinary, project-based, specialized programming, and act as an interface between the school, community, and professional organizations that provide internships and community-based learning experiences. Requests for Proposals (RFP) were issued and proposals received. In accordance with School Board Regulation FEA, "the School Board is to be notified of the top ranked firms, and authorization to begin negotiations with the top ranked firms is to be requested." Accordingly, the following is a summary of the RFP process to date: Ten firms responded to the RFP. A selection committee reviewed the proposals and selected four firms to interview. The committee interviewed the short-listed firms on January 7, 2019.

The FY19 Capital improvement program includes money to design the High School Center project through Design Development. The reasoning behind only approving through Design Development is so the Division can better understand the cost of the final solution and the availability of construction funding.

Mr. Oberg offered a **motion** to approve the selection Committee's recommendation for the High School #2 project and authorize staff to begin negotiations with the recommended firm, Quinn Evans Architects. Dr. Acuff **seconded** the motion, **and the motion passed.**

### **Agenda Item No. 3.1. Other Business by Board Members/Superintendent. None.**

**Agenda Item No. 4.1. Adjournment.**

At 7:17 p.m., hearing no objections, Mr. Alcaro adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

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Chairman

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Clerk