

A Special Meeting of the Albemarle County School Board was held on January 19, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., Room 241, County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.

PRESENT: Mr. Stephen Koleszar; Dr. Kate Acuff; Mrs. Pamela Moynihan; Mr. Graham Paige; Mr. David Oberg, Mr. Jonathan Alcaro; and Mr. Jason Buyaki.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Pam Moran, Superintendent; Dr. Matthew Haas, Deputy Superintendent; Mr. Dean Tistadt, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Vincent Scheivert, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Jackson Zimmermann, Executive Director of Fiscal Services; and Mrs. Jennifer Johnston, Clerk.

Agenda Item No. 1.1. Call Order.

Dr. Acuff 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. Paige **seconded** the motion, **and the motion passed.**

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

Dr. Moran and Dr. Haas presented the proposed funding request for FY2017/18.

All Means All

A few months ago, the Aspen Institute, one of our nation's premier research and public policy organizations, announced the establishment of a national commission on the social, emotional and academic development of students. The Institute wrote, "Compelling education research and brain science now demonstrates what parents have always known: The success of young people in school and beyond is inextricably linked to healthy social and emotional development. Yet, the nation's predominant approach to K-12 education fails to fully take advantage of what we know about how people learn." While these words were national in their scope, their call to action has gained increasing urgency for Albemarle County students and families.

On one level, we have changed little over the past several years. We remain a school division whose students excel in state and national academic measures and one that continues to experience steady enrollment growth. We are a division that remains as committed as ever to our one strategic goal—that every student of Albemarle County Public Schools will graduate having actively mastered the lifelong-learning skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

But at a deeper level, change has been dramatic, and it presents an obligation we cannot responsibly ignore. Over the past 10 years, our overall pre-K through 12 student enrollment increased by 8.3 percent, but the percentage of students from economically disadvantaged homes increased by more than 65 percent. That's nearly an 800 percent higher growth rate. The number of students in our division from economically disadvantaged homes would fill up all three of our comprehensive high schools; it would exceed the total student population of several school divisions in our Commonwealth, including Charlottesville City.

The Dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, James Ryan, points out the serious implications of such a significant demographic shift in our nation's schools: "Right now, there exists an almost ironclad link between a child's zip code and her chances of success. Our education system, traditionally thought of as the chief mechanism to address the opportunity gap, instead too often reflects and entrenches societal inequities."

The High Costs of Inequity

The costs of these inequities in our county are measured in terms both financial and human. Based upon the cost of the added instructional staff needed to meet the learning needs of at-risk students, per pupil costs can exceed our division-wide average by \$1,500. Across the division, this additional expenditure totals more than \$5.5 million.

Here's why our strategic goal on career readiness is so important to Albemarle County: According to a 2016 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual average earnings of adults without a high school diploma is \$25,600; for those with a high school diploma, \$35,250; and for those with a college degree, \$59,100. Over a lifetime, the difference in earnings between college and high school graduates would be \$1 million, and that makes a difference to the communities in which these graduates reside.

Experience shows that the price to our community of ever-expanding opportunity gaps—of promise unfulfilled—is a high one, often reflected in higher social services caseloads, in our courts, and in annual incomes that are far lower than they could be. Economists Clive Belfield and Hank Levin conservatively estimate that the economic benefit of closing the opportunity gap by just one-third would yield \$250 billion in annual savings across our nation.

On a personal and family level, it is important to value that while not all of our students come to us with the same interests, backgrounds or needs, they all do come to us with the same high levels of hopes and aspirations. It is our responsibility as educators and as community members to unlock the potential within each one of our students, to turn hopes from daydreams into reality.

Each year, all superintendents and school boards throughout our Commonwealth are directed by state law to recommend a needs-based budget. This year, one need increasingly urgent in our county is to increase our focus on closing the opportunity gaps that separate our children from their future and our entire community from prosperity.

Our doors must be open to all, just as our mission must apply to all—not to equalize outcomes, but to equalize opportunities.

A Moral Imperative

A look at the data from our 2015-16 school year reveals the moral imperative for decisive action in the year ahead. Students (PK-12) from economically disadvantaged homes comprised 29.5 percent of our total student population, yet they accounted for 48.4 percent of all students who were absent from school 15 or more days and 57 percent of all students who received out of school suspensions. While 78 percent of all third-grade students earned a passing score on the state Standards of Learning (SOL) test for reading, the pass rate for students from economically disadvantaged homes was 54 percent; in math, the pass rate for all students was 74 percent, compared to 47 percent for economically disadvantaged students.

Third grade is an important milestone. It is the first time students take an SOL test, and it often is a predictor for how successful they will be throughout their academic lives.

We take pride in the overall performance of our school division as reflected in our highly competitive graduation rates, the percentage of our students who earn Advanced Studies Diplomas, the SAT scores of our students, and the academic honors they earn across many subject areas. It is now time for us to bring our expertise and commitment to excellence fully to bear on reducing the impact on individual student learning resulting from the inequities many of our students bring with them when they enter our schools.

This Year's Funding Request

As has been true for many years, the main drivers in this 2017-18 funding request are expenditures that are either mandated, directed, or result from changing student demographics. Of the total \$8.2 million expenditure increase in this funding request, nearly \$5.5 million represents those that are mandated or directed. That's nearly 67 percent.

More than 80 percent of our expenditures support personnel, primarily teacher salaries and associated retirement benefits that are mandated by the state of Virginia. The two percent salary increases directed by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board for all full-time division employees total \$2.4 million; another \$500,000 will be required to address classified compensation disparities; contributions to the Virginia Retirement System next year will cost the school division a net of \$1.2 million; and an expected seven percent increase in health insurance premiums require \$1.2 million in additional expenditures.

Within our overall student enrollment growth, the growth rate for special education students has been trending higher. For several years, the school division averaged an annual special education enrollment increase of 40 students. Two years ago, the increase was 80 students, and this year it was 100. We are planning on a similar increase next year, which will necessitate additional expenditures of \$900,000 to meet the instructional and transportation needs of these students.

Collectively, the increases for employees and to meet special education requirements will total \$7.5 million next year, which nearly matches the overall increase of this entire funding request.

Only One New Initiative

For several years, the financial challenges we faced from the severe recession we experienced in 2009 and 2010, coupled with substantial reductions in state revenues, limited the new initiatives we proposed. This again is the case for 2017-18. We are proposing only one new initiative, *Equity and Access*, to begin to close the opportunity gaps in our county. At \$1.28 million, this initiative constitutes less than one percent of our total funding request.

The goals of our Equity and Access initiative are three-fold: to remove the predictability of success or failures that correlate with social or cultural factors; to create inclusive multicultural school environments for adults and children; and to discover and cultivate the unique gifts, talents and interests that every one of us possess.

Our approach aligns with our core belief that an individualized, student-level focus will yield the most efficient and effective results. The majority of our investment, \$574,000, will be devoted to the professional development of our teachers to increase their skill and impact in reaching at-risk students and to identify and remove the barriers to learning that often result from childhood trauma, family disruption, loss of confidence, and the scarcity of at-home resources.

To embed and share these best practices across the division, we will invest another \$493,000 for the establishment of a Social-Emotional-Academic Development (SEAD) team for our four urban ring elementary schools—Agnor-Hurt, Cale, Greer, and Woodbrook. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students at these four schools currently ranges from 44 to 77.

The team will be under the direction of our division's senior leadership and will work closely with principals and staff at each school to determine and specifically target needs in such areas as bilingual support, home and school counseling, and assistance with technology learning resources.

This will be a pilot program, providing us with the opportunity to test, evaluate and adjust our approach before expanding SEAD teams to each one of our three feeder patterns.

The balance of our \$1.28 million investment will be for systems to plan and monitor at-risk student academic progress and to identify areas in real time where additional intervention services are necessary.

State Revenues Still Below 2008-09 Level

Next year, we are projecting that our revenues will increase by \$7.5 million over this year, or about 4.33 percent. The largest portion, nearly \$6.8 million, is expected to come from local government. This is partially offset by our forecasted reductions of \$357,000 in fund balance and local school revenues.

Revenues from the state continue to be inadequate, with a forecasted increase of less than 2.21% percent, or slightly less than \$1.1 million. On a per pupil basis, the state will be providing \$3,696, which in inflation-adjusted dollars is \$436 below the per pupil revenues we received in 2008-09. Had that revenue formula been maintained, we would be receiving an additional \$5.9 million from the state next year, which is nearly 800 percent larger than the projected funding gap of \$691,261 in this request.

People Working Together

This past year, our community rose to a different challenge before our school division. In November, you overwhelmingly approved a school bond referendum to address significant facility and instructional needs across the county. Looking forward, we ask your support in meeting an even more compelling challenge. If we do not begin to achieve equity and access for all students, too many young people will continue to face closed doors when they enter adulthood, with a corresponding restraint on our community's growth potential. The National Equity Project said it best: "The problems in education today are complex, daunting and systemic. There is no one program or approach that will solve them. But in every

case, people will solve these problems—people working together more effectively, purposefully, openly and strategically than before.”

I would like to express the deepest appreciation of our school division to our School Board, our Board of Supervisors, and to our community for the strong and unswerving support you have given to our students and their families in so many vital ways over the past years. And I would like to express my gratitude to all of the members of our truly world-class team who so selflessly and ably serve students and their families across Albemarle.

As we approach yet another pivotal moment in our path forward, I urge your support and collaboration in the fulfillment of our one strategic goal for all students. Together, we can do even greater things in Albemarle County.

Agenda Item No. 3.1. Other Business by Board Members/Superintendent.

Mr. Koleszar noted that our Congressman was appointed to the Education Committee.

Dr. Acuff commended staff on the community conversation on High School 2022.

Dr. Moran noted that Mr. Oberg was appointed as Chair of the CATEC Board.

Agenda Item No. 4.1. Adjournment.

At 7:40 p.m., hearing no objections, Dr. Acuff adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chairman

Clerk