

A Regular Meeting of the Albemarle County School Board was held on September 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Jonno Alcaro; Mr. Graham Paige; Ms. Katrina Callsen; Dr. Kate Acuff; Ms. Ellen Moore Osborne; Ms. Judy Le; Mr. David Oberg; and Student Representative Melanie Burkhart.

**ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Ms. Debbie Collins, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Clare Keiser, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Bernard Hairston, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Christine Diggs, Chief Technology Officer; Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Patrick McLaughlin, Strategic Planning Officer; Ms. Eileen Gomez, School Nurse Coordinator; Mr. Joe Letteri, Director of Building Services; Mr. Jay Thomas, Director of Secondary Education; Ms. Jennifer Sublette, Director of Professional Development; Ms. Natalie Farrell, Lead Coach for Math; Ms. Lorna Gerome, Director of Human Resources; Mr. John McQuilken, Human Resource Manager; Dr. Daphne Keiser, Director of Educator Quality; Mr. Jackson Zimmermann, School Finance Officer; Ms. Maya Kumazawa, Director of Budget and Planning; Mr. Ross Holden, School Board Attorney; and Ms. Jennifer Johnston, Clerk to the School Board.

#### **Agenda Item No. 1.1. Closed Meeting.**

At 5:33 p.m., Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** that the School Board go into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia under subsection 1 for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment and the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; subsection 7 for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the School Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Mr. Oberg **seconded** the motion, **and the motion passed with Ms. Callsen absent.**

#### **Agenda Item No. 1.2. Closed Meeting Certification.**

At 6:30 p.m., Ms. Callsen offered a **motion** that the Board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each Board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the Closed Meeting. Mr. Oberg **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

**AYES:** Mr. Alcaro, Ms. Osborne; Dr. Acuff; Ms. Callsen, Ms. Le; Mr. Oberg; and Mr. Paige.

**NAYS:** None.

**Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.**

#### **Agenda Item No. 1.3. Call to Order.**

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Paige, Chairman, called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Paige said that the meeting is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia state law and Albemarle County ordinance because the Covid-19 pandemic makes it impracticable and unsafe to assemble a quorum physically in a single location. The meeting is being streamed live on the Albemarle County Public School's website, and public comment may be offered through the Zoom waiting room feature in accordance with the School Board's protocol or by written submission.

**Agenda Item No. 1.4. Moment of Silence.**

**Agenda Item. No. 2.1. Approval of Agenda.**

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Dr. Acuff **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded vote:**

**AYES:** Ms. Le, Ms. Callsen, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Acuff, Mr. Oberg, and Ms. Osborne.

**NAYS:** None.

**Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.**

**Agenda Item No. 3.1. Consent Agenda**

- 3.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 3.2 Religious Exemption
- 3.3 Religious Exemption
- 3.4 Religious Exemption
- 3.5 Religious Exemption
- 3.6 Religious Exemption
- 3.7 Religious Exemption
- 3.8 Religious Exemption
- 3.9 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.10 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.11 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.12 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.13 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.14 For Information: Learning Resources Selection and Adoption
- 3.15 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.16 Personnel Action
- 3.17 Resolution: Assignment and Transfer
- 3.18 Resolution: Title IX
- 3.19 Minutes
- 3.20 For Information: Policy Reviews and Revisions

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Osborne **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded vote:**

**AYES:** Ms. Osborne, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Callsen, Ms. Le, Mr. Oberg, and Mr. Paige.

**NAYS:** None.

**Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.**

**Agenda Item No. 4.1. Items Pulled from the Consent Agenda. None.**

**Agenda Item No. 5.1. Public Comment.**

Ms. Amy Gaertner is a teacher. She said that she does not feel prepared to teach in the virtual setting. She also expressed concern about the elementary school schedule.

Ms. Patricia MacDonnell is a parent. She asked that the Board post the health requirements that the Board will be using to determine moving between the reopening stages. She said that there is no transparency and almost feels that the decisions are being made arbitrarily.

Ms. Christine Koenig is a parent. She is disappointed in the Special Education Department. She called several months ago to schedule an evaluation for her child. She was told that virtual evaluations were not allowed because all the necessary information could not be gained in that manner, there was not adequate office space to

the complete the evaluation, and they did not have the necessary PPE. She has now received an email that the email can be completed virtually now. She asked why it is now acceptable to have a virtual evaluation.

Ms. Cheryl Knight is a teacher. She said that she is struggling with Zoom fatigue from teaching virtually. She also asked that the elementary school schedule be reviewed and teachers be given the opportunity to provide feedback.

### **Agenda Item No. 6.1. Spotlight on Education.**

Ms. Burkhart said that as the student representative on the School Board, it's an honor to introduce this evening's recognitions because we are paying tribute to a program and educators that have had a significant impact on students. I think it's safe to say that from its inception, the strategies and practices around culturally responsive teaching have changed the lives of my classmates. That's safe to say because these gains have been documented as part of the rigorous process that leads to educators becoming certified in culturally responsive teaching. Unless an educator can prove that their teaching methods and relationships have improved student performance, they do not qualify as culturally responsive educators. That's a high bar for excellence and perhaps it's why our school division is the only one in the state that asks this of its educators, and delivers this to its students.

Last month, during our fifth Equity Conference, 23 educators earned their certifications and 40 educators received their micro-credential in culturally responsive teaching or CRT. These were the highest numbers in the program to date as was the size of the conference's audience. There were several thought-provoking presentations and one in particular that I hope one of our guests will explain was— *Being Comfortable in the Uncomfortable: Creating an Environment of Academic Risk Takers*.

I think this sums up both the promise and the purpose of the program. Another highlight was the naming of our *Equity Educator of the Year*—Kimberly Gibson. Ms. Gibson has served the students and families of Albemarle County for more than 30 years and I really admire research she uses to describe why CRT is so essential. She talks about the leaves of a tree representing the surface culture of our students, what might be most visible in the popular perceptions of our students' 96 birth countries. Delving a little deeper into the habits or characteristics that students bring with them to our schools is like the trunk of the tree, giving strength to characteristics such as fairness and respect, but real progress she says comes from getting at the roots of the tree— Understanding and celebrating the beliefs, ideas and values that shape and empower the diversity of student learning.

I know we all want to hear more about Ms. Gibson's personal journey but first, I am going to ask our very first recipient of the Equity Educator of the Year Award, Leilani Keys, to talk about some of this year's conference most important moments.

### **Agenda Item No. 6.2. Announcements.**

Dr. Haas provided the Board with an update on the opening of school.

### **Agenda Item No. 7.1. School Board/Superintendent Business. None.**

### **Agenda Item No. 8.1. COVID-19 Status Update.**

Dr. McLaughlin and Ms. Eileen Gomez, School Nurse Coordinator provided for the Board's consideration a COVID-19 Update. The presentation included factors that will determine progression to the next stage for Albemarle County Public Schools, Albemarle County and Charlottesville City case incident rate with a floating 7-day average, and Albemarle County and Charlottesville City percent positivity rate with a floating 7-day average.

Mr. Oberg asked if the City of Charlottesville numbers include the University of Virginia's numbers.

Ms. Callsen asked if there has been any further guidance on if using percent positivity rate is a good indicator given additional guidance on who should be tested.

Dr. Acuff said that there is a high percent positivity rate in Charlottesville. She is concerned that the dashboard for our health district and UVA have not been consolidated.

Mr. Oberg said that James Madison University started before UVA and has closed down due to increased number of positive COVID cases. Do we not expect UVA to have the same issues? Ms. Callsen said that she understands that JMU did not have very good policy for testing students before they came back to campus.

Mr. Alcaro asked if Albemarle County's numbers will include some data from the University of Virginia.

Ms. Callsen asked if the staff has gathered feedback on reopening from schools that did open for in person instruction.

**Agenda Item No. 8.2. Building Services Summer Update.**

Mr. Letteri provided for the Board's consideration a Building Services summer work update.

Mr. Oberg thanked Mr. Letteri for the work of his staff.

Mr. Alcaro said that the Building Services staff is terrific. He also missed being able to visit schools during the summer while the work was taking place.

Mr. Paige thanked the Building Services team for their work.

Dr. Acuff asked if there was any Building Services staff that have indicated that they are not comfortable with working in buildings with students in attendance.

**Agenda Item No. 8.3. Presentation of New Grading Policy.**

Mr. Thomas, Ms. Sublette, and Ms. Farrell provided for the Board's consideration a new grading policy for the Division. One of the four guiding principles of the Contemporary High School model is to ensure the use of fair, meaningful, and equitable grading practices. To confirm that this guiding principle is in place in our schools, division leaders undertook a study of grading practices during the 2017-18 school year. This work included a survey of all teachers in grades 4-12 on their grading practices and beliefs. The results of this survey provided details on the current state of our grading practices, and starting in 2018-19, our staff used this data to help determine next steps as our division seeks to improve student learning through the use of fair and equitable grading practices. One of the things that teachers wanted was a grading policy to guide their practice.

This policy is the first step in creating systems for grading that support all students, families, and teachers. The focus of the proposed policy emphasizes three areas; support of student learning, consistency, and accuracy. Starting in July 2019, division leaders created a cohort of teachers to engage in professional learning focused on equitable grading practices and the complexities of implementing those practices at the classroom, building, and division level. Over 210 teachers have joined this work. This cohort will be a critical element of our ability to transform grading practices across the division and to build a shared understanding of the importance of changes to our grading practices with colleagues, students, and parents.

The next step for teacher teams will be to participate in round table discussion with central office leaders to consider and create the regulations for the policy.

Dr. Acuff asked if a benefit of virtual teaching is some items that used to factor into grading are no longer considered for grades such as attendance.

Ms. Callsen said that she appreciated the work of staff in developing this policy.

Mr. Paige indicated that the policy would be on the September 24, 2020 meeting consent agenda for approval.

**Agenda Item No. 8.4. Break.**

There was a break from 7:53 p.m. until 8:03 p.m.

**Agenda Item No. 8.5. Hiring Update.**

Ms. Gerome, Dr. Keiser, and Mr. McQuilken provided for the Board's consideration an update on teacher and administrator hiring for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ms. Le asked about the retention rates for teachers of color.

Ms. Callsen asked if the when the data showed 2 or more races as an answer, where those individuals counted twice. She also asked what new strategies are being considered because it is evident the current strategies are not working. The progress being made is slow and problematic.

Mr. Alcaro asked if staff only focused on recruiting from historically black colleges and universities that are located in our area or in bordering states. Staff should consider broadening its net with recruiting from these colleges and universities.

Mr. Paige expressed concern about the need to focus on recruitment and retention of minority teachers. He also noted that there were not a lot of male teachers hired.

**Agenda Item No. 8.6. 2020/2021 Enrollment Update.**

Ms. Schmitt provided for the Board's consideration an enrollment update for school year 2020/2021. Staff will present an update on the enrollment for the 2020/21 school year. The enrollment report for September 9, 2020, the second day of school was provided. The report provided a comparison with last year as well as what was projected for this school year. The enclosure provides the breakdown by school and grade. These numbers are considered preliminary. In the past, the Board has received updates from the 10th day of school, but that information is not available for the September business meeting due to the later start day this year.

Enrollment is formally reported to the state twice during the school year utilizing September 30th and March 30th ADM (Average Daily Membership).

A portion of state funding is based on ADM. Staff will present potential budget impact due to enrollment decreases.

Mr. Oberg asked if staff knew where the students who were no longer attending Albemarle County Schools going. He also asked if there has been an analysis of the impact on free and reduced lunch data.

Mr. Alcaro said that the data provided was terrific.

Ms. Callsen noted that the decrease in Kindergarten enrollment could be a result of virtual learning being less effective at that age group.

**Agenda Item No. 8.7. Budget Updates.**

Ms. Schmitt, Mr. Zimmermann, and Ms. Kumazawa provided for the Board's consideration a budget update. The update included a financial update with total estimated revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year

ended on June 30, 2020. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the School Division were discussed.

In addition, staff recommended an annual process for FY 2021/22 budget development. There will be various dates throughout the fall and winter for the School Board to provide guidance and input. The Funding Request will be delayed by one month when compared to previous years, in order to provide staff and the School Board time to more fully incorporate revenue estimates. This proposed schedule aligns more closely with Albemarle County's timeline for the Recommended Budget. Work Session dates for the Funding Request will be determined and presented at a later date.

Mr. Alcaro confirmed that the Superintendent would present his budget in February rather than January.

Mr. Alcaro said that last year there was an item for technology upgrades. He suggested that anything that can be put into technology will be much needed.

Ms. Callsen said that there would most likely be a need to make budget cuts during this year's budget cycle.

**Agenda Item No. 9.1. Other Business by Board Members/Superintendent.**

Ms. Le asked if the iPads for first and second grades had come in and are they being distributed.

Dr. Acuff asked if all students have some device that will allow them to use if for virtual learning.

Ms. Le asked if hot spots have been provided to all students who need them for internet access.

Ms. Le asked if there would be a formal mean for gathering feedback on how virtual learning was for students.

Dr. Acuff noted that Student Representative Burkhart was developing a survey for students.

Ms. Callsen thanked staff for all the information provided during the meeting tonight.

Mr. Paige thanked everyone for their work preparing for the Board meeting, the speakers during the meeting who provided input, and the teachers for adapting and teaching during these unprecedented times.

**Agenda Item No. 10.1. Closed Meeting.** None.

**Agenda Item No. 11.1. Certify Closed Meeting.** None.

**Agenda Item No. 12.1. Adjournment.**

At 9:16 p.m., hearing no objections, Mr. Paige adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

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Chairman

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Clerk