

BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The Albemarle County School Board supports and encourages two-way communication between the School Board and employees of the School Board. The Superintendent is the official representative of the School Board in its relations and communications with its employees. All reports and recommendations to the School Board from any officer or employee under the direction and supervision of the Superintendent shall be made through the office of the Superintendent except when otherwise specifically directed by the School Board. All School Board directives requiring or authorizing an action by an officer or employee or requiring any report shall be directed to the Superintendent.

Employees are encouraged to communicate their ideas and concerns in an orderly and constructive manner to the School Board and/or the superintendent or superintendent's designee.

The School Board desires to develop and maintain the best possible working relationship with the employees of the school division. The School Board welcomes the viewpoints of employees, and it allows time at its meetings for employees to be heard.

The School Board does not discriminate against any employee because of membership in an employee organization, or participation in any lawful activities of the organization.

In all interactions with staff and between and among members, the School Board shall follow its established protocols.

Adopted: July 1, 1993

Amended: March 24, 1997; December 11, 2003, August 16, 2004; March 9, 2006;
September 8, 2011;
May 8, 2014; May 23, 2019; December 10, 2020

Equity Review: December 10, 2020

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:7

Cross Ref.: GA, *Employee Relations Principles Between the Board and Its Employees*

ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AGREEMENT OF PROTOCOL

1. The Chairman/designee of the School Board speaks for the Board.
2. The Superintendent speaks for the school division on operational matters.
3. The Superintendent/designee will communicate in a timely fashion with School Board members on matters that are legal, controversial, or involve public safety.
4. Supportive information about agenda items must be available to School Board members at least five calendar days before School Board meetings.
5. Final presentations to accompany supportive information to agenda items must be attached to the meeting agenda at least two business days prior to the day on which the meeting will be held.
6. School Board members may contact individual staff members for general information. Such information will be distributed to all members of the School Board. Should the information request require significant time or generation of new information on the part of the staff, approval of the Superintendent and/or the School Board shall be required.
7. Requests from Board members for information to be added to supportive information to an agenda item(s) must be made at least one business day prior to the day on which the meeting will be held.
8. Requests from Board members for information to be added to supportive information to an agenda item(s) will be reviewed by the School Board's Legal Counsel to ensure student and employee privacy will be maintained if it is to be part of an open-meeting presentation.
9. At School Board meetings, members may make informational requests requiring more than 30 minutes of time to the administrative staff with consensus of the School Board.

Allocating Staff Time to Address School Board Member Requests for Information

Responses to requests for information requiring 30 minutes or less of staff time for preparation (information which is already assembled and available) should be handled in a timely fashion by the office receiving the request. Any request for information that requires more than 30 minutes of staff time to prepare must have approval of the Superintendent or School Board consensus for the information to be prepared.

Board Guidelines

Adoption of Code of Conduct

Each January the School Board will review, approve, sign and post a Code of Conduct that identifies appropriate behaviors for individuals serving on the School Board.

Meeting Types

The School Board will transact all public business at official School Board meetings conducted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. All meetings of the School Board are open to the public except as provided by law.

School Board meeting dates, times and locations for the calendar year are set during the School Board's organizational meeting held the first meeting in January. The School Board holds at least two meetings a month, a business meeting and a work session, except as otherwise approved at the organizational meeting. Additional meetings may be scheduled for joint meetings with the Board of Supervisors and work sessions.

Agenda Preparation Process

The following procedures have been developed to ensure that Board agendas will be completed and published to School Board members in a timely manner and to ensure all agenda items will have sufficient review by the Superintendent. The deadline for submitting agenda items is ten calendar days before the School Board meeting. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk, Executive Cabinet members, School Board Attorney, and the Superintendent will meet in pre-agenda meetings to discuss items that will appear on the School Board agenda. In general:

1. Items requested to be placed on the agenda will be submitted to the Superintendent/designee, appropriate Assistant Superintendent or Executive Cabinet member and/or the Chairman (or delegated to the Clerk) to be discussed for short- and long-range planning.
2. Guidelines for developing the agenda items:
 - A. All action items should be scheduled on the School Board's business meeting agenda, however, there may be exceptions if the action required is deemed time sensitive by the Chair in consultation with the Superintendent. The sequence of agenda items will be determined by the Chairman of the School Board in consultation with the Vice-Chairman and Superintendent.
 - B. If at all possible, items should be presented to the School Board for information prior to being placed on the agenda for approval. If the item is deemed time-sensitive by the Chairman then exceptions will be made.
 - C. Closed Meetings, whenever possible, will be scheduled immediately prior to the start of the School Board meeting.

3. School Board members may ask that an item be placed on the agenda at any School Board meeting. Inclusion of the item requires School Board consensus.
4. Staff will adhere to the timeline provided by the Clerk of the School Board when submitting items for inclusion on the agenda. Items not submitted by the due date will be postponed to a future meeting unless the item is a time-sensitive issue and the Chair and Superintendent have approved adding the item to the agenda.

Public Participation

The public is encouraged to address the School Board under Public Comment.

Individuals and/or organizations wishing to speak during Public Comment are encouraged to sign in with the Clerk. During the time set aside for public comment on the agenda, the Chairman will call forth individuals who signed up. Public testimony guidelines are as follows:

1. Thirty minutes before the start of the meeting there will be a sign-up sheet for members of the public to sign up if they wish to speak before the School Board. After all individuals who signed up for Public Comment have spoken, the Chairman may ask if there are additional individuals who would like to speak.
2. Speakers should adhere to the following protocol:
 - A. Sign in with the Clerk before the meeting.
 - B. At the speakers' podium, please state name and address.
 - C. Address comments to the School Board as a whole.
 - D. Give written statements and other supporting material to the Clerk. Please note that written statements are made a part of the permanent records of the School Board. In addition, if the speaker is unable to complete the presentation in the time allotted, a copy of supporting materials will be provided to School Board members.

Signing up for someone else is discouraged and limited to you and another person.

3. Three minutes will be allowed for each presenter to speak. A color-coded light/card system will be used to time presentations. However, the Chairman may, with consensus of the School Board, reduce the time allocated for all individuals to speak.
4. The yellow light/card means the speaker is 2minutes into the presentation, and the red light/card means the speaker is at the three-minute limit of the presentation and must wrap up. If a speaker represents a group, he/she may want to have others in agreement stand while he/she speaks, rather than having all speak on the same issue.

5. In order to maintain respect for all points of view, the School Board requests no clapping, booing or any other form of support or nonsupport be used.
6. When multiple comments on the same topic have been presented, the Chair may request additional comments on the topic be limited to those who have new information to present.
7. Debate and dialogue with the School Board is not allowed during public comment.
8. Use of the projection system is reserved for staff scheduled agenda item presentations only.

In lieu of having a large number of individual speakers, organized groups can request up to five minutes to speak during public comment, as long as the request is received two days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Chair will then either grant the request or deny the request, and the Clerk will notify the group.

When an individual and/or organization would like to be formally scheduled on the School Board agenda, the individual and/or organization must submit the request in writing to the Superintendent or Chairman. The Superintendent or Chairman will determine if the request should be granted and determine placement on an agenda. The individual and/or community organization will be notified of the decision.

Closed Meeting Packets for Student Behavior Management Cases

The School Board Discipline Committee holds meetings on the fourth Monday of each month (as needed) or on other dates as advertised. Meetings of the discipline committee typically begin at 5:30 p.m. Discipline meeting materials are provided to School Board Discipline Committee members on the Friday before the Monday meeting or at least three calendar days in advance of the meeting. The materials provided in the packet include:

- Superintendent's Memo to the School Board
- Current School Records for the Student
- Prior School Records
- Incident information for which the student was referred to the School Board
- Related correspondence

Students and/or individuals representing a student must submit any information they wish the School Board to review by the Board Packet publishing date. Any material received after the Board Packet is published will not be accepted.

Superintendent's Letter

Superintendent's Letter is distributed to the School Board on the Thursday following the School Board meeting. This communication contains documents, emails from parents and/or community members, articles of interest from online and print magazines, a calendar of upcoming events, and other pieces of information that the Superintendent and Executive Cabinet members would like to share with the School Board.

Letters Received by the Clerk's Office or Copied to the Albemarle County School Board Are Managed Through the Following Process:

1. The School Board Clerk will notify and provide a copy of the letter to the Chairman/Superintendent.
2. The Chairman reviews the letter to determine if the School Board or staff should respond.
3. If the School Board should respond to the letter, the Chairman or designee will respond and provide a copy to School Board members.
4. If staff should respond to the letter, the Chairman will notify the author of the letter that the issue has been delegated to the Superintendent. The individual's letter and staff's response will be provided to School Board members.
5. If a letter is addressed to the Superintendent or to a staff member and the School Board is copied, the School Board will receive a copy of the letter and the response from staff.
6. If an individual School Board member receives a letter that he/she determines a staff response is needed, then the School Board member is requested to provide a copy of the letter to the Clerk. Both the letter and a copy of the response will be provided to School Board members.

Handling of Electronic Mail

Protocol for responding to emails sent directly to the entire School Board

1. Individual School Board members, the Clerk and the Superintendent are recipients of emails sent to schoolboard@k12albemarle.org. Each School board member is responsible for archiving his/her applicable inbound and outbound email for FOIA compliance.
2. The Chair will respond to all emails to the School Board and copy the School Board on any response. The Chair's response does not preclude an individual School Board member from responding to the email.
 - a) For multiple emails regarding the same topic: the Strategic Communications Officer will draft a single response for the Chair to use in response to the emails. If multiple topics are covered in the multiple emails then several responses will be prepared to use as responses. (i.e., Returning to

school: response for face mask usage; response for reconsidering board's decision; response to COVID data). Talking points will also be prepared for use by individual board members to respond to emails sent to an individual board member.

- b) if there is a specific issue or topic that needs to be addressed then the Chair will determine when staff will respond to the email. The Chair will take the lead on determining how to respond to all emails sent to the Board on which staff is copied.
- c) if the number of emails is great then the Clerk will assist in responding to emails on behalf of the Chair using the prepared response. The Chair will determine if assistance is needed.

Protocol for responding to emails sent directly to individual School Board Members.

1. An individual School Board Member may reply to emails expressing his/her individual opinions so long as it is clear that the member is not speaking on behalf of the entire School Board. If multiple emails are being received by the entire board on the same topic, then the Strategic Communications Officer will prepare talking points for individual board members to use for responses.
2. Each School Board Member is responsible for archiving their applicable inbound and outbound email for FOIA compliance. To ensure FOIA compliance, School Board members are encouraged to copy the School Board Clerk on his/her email replies to these communications.

Approved: August 1995

Reviewed: May 23, 2019

Revised: February 1998, February 1999, February 2000; June 19, 2000; April 14, 2005; March 9, 2006; May 8, 2014; December 10, 2020