

A Work Session of the Albemarle County School Board was held on August 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Jonno Alcaro; Mr. Graham Paige; Ms. Katrina Callsen (arrived at 6:34 p.m.); Dr. Kate Acuff; Ms. Ellen Moore Osborne; Ms. Judy Le; Mr. David Oberg (arrived at 6:49 p.m.); and Student Representative AJ Johnson.

**ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Ms. Debbie Collins, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Clare Keiser, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Bernard Hairston, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Christine Diggs, Chief Technology Officer; Mr. Phil Giaramita, Strategic Communications Officer; Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Patrick McLaughlin, Chief of Strategic Planning; Ms. Eileen Gomez, School Nurse Coordinator; Ms. Catrina Sims, Elementary Language Arts Lead Instructional Coach and Title I Coordinator; Mr. Ross Holden, School Board Attorney; and Ms. Jennifer Johnston, Clerk to the School Board.

**Agenda Item No. 1.1. Closed Meeting.** None.

**Agenda Item No. 1.2. Closed Meeting Certification.** None.

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

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Paige, Chairman, called the meeting 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.**

Mr. Paige asked that the moment of silence be held in memory of Pete Fiddner, teacher at Burley Middle School, who passed away.

**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 votes:**

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

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Mr. Oberg.

**Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.**

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

- 3.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 3.2 Minutes
- 3.3 Religious Exemption
- 3.4 Religious Exemption
- 3.5 Religious Exemption
- 3.6 Religious Exemption
- 3.7 For Action: Policy Review and Revision
- 3.8 Personnel Action

- 3.9 Appropriate CARES Act FY21/22
- 3.10 For Information: Policy Review and Revision
- 3.11 Carry-forward of FY 21 Open Purchase Orders
- 3.12 For Action: 2021-2022 School Crisis Plans
- 3.13 Redistricting Student for Crozet Elementary School Addition

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Le **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, and Mr. Paige.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Mr. Oberg.

**Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.**

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

**Agenda Item No. 5.1. Announcements.**

Ms. Schmitt said that we have wrapped up some exciting construction projects recently. She encouraged the Board to visit Red Hill Elementary School and Scottsville Elementary School. She said that the Boys and Girls Club center near Jack Jouett Middle School is breaking ground on Saturday.

Dr. Hairston said that this past Saturday Albemarle County Schools partnered with the African American Pastors Council, the City of Charlottesville, and Charlottesville City Schools to host the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to School Bash. Over 1200 backpacks and kits with school supplies provided to area students at no cost.

**Agenda Item No. 6.1. School Board/Superintendent Business.**

Dr. Haas said that we had a great opening of schools. He then shared with a Board a brief video on the opening of school.

(Mr. Oberg arrived at 6:49 p.m.)

Ms. Schmitt said that enrollment is a little low across the Board. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Le said that she would like to know how the virtual school is doing. Dr. Haas said that there about 400 students. More information can be provided at the next meeting.

Dr. Acuff note that a lot of surrounding divisions are having bus driver shortages. How are we doing? Ms. Schmitt said that we are always recruiting bus drivers. We are short drivers, but staff is making it work.

Mr. Paige said that the Board needed to appoint a delegate and alternate to serve at the VSBA Delegate Assembly during the VSBA Annual Convention in November. By consensus the Board appointed Ms. Osborne at the delegate and Mr. Alcaro as the alternate.

**Agenda Item No. 7.1. Public Comment.** 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.

Mr. Oberg asked if staff knew the vaccination status of the staff members who tested positive for Covid. He also asked if the students were in the age range where they could be vaccinated.

Ms. Le asked where the quarantines coming from or what area of the school day.

Mr. Oberg asked how staff found out about the positive cases in students.

Ms. Le asked if it was clear who was sitting beside the students on the bus.

Mr. Oberg said that it is good news that there is no transmission in schools, but could we given the period of time for symptoms to show.

Dr. Acuff asked how the employee vaccination data will be stratified.

Mr. Oberg asked about the costs of testing employees.

Mr. Paige asked how many buses have air condition and filtration systems. He also asked about ventilation on buses that do not have air condition.

Ms. Le asked if there was any reason not to move the September 15<sup>th</sup> date up given the fact that we will have the data earlier.

Dr. Acuff said that it appears that the data on staff vaccinations will be available prior to the next board meeting. She asked that staff provide the data to the Board once it is available.

Mr. Oberg urged employees to get vaccinated.

Student representative Johnson said that he understands individuals are nervous about getting vaccinated. Due to his health issues, he was nervous. However, he received the vaccination and had no side effects.

### **Agenda Item No. 8.2. Narrowing the Reading Gap.**

Ms. Collins provided for the Board's consideration the goals of the work session on narrowing the reading gap. This work session, divided into two parts, will focus on eliminating the achievement gap in reading. During the first section of the meeting, Sarah Manes, a representative from Employee Advisory Board (EAB) will present nationwide research and information for narrowing the third-grade reading gap. For the second section, ACPS administrators and teachers will update the school board on the steps the division is taking to follow the research. They will provide examples of key strategies for closing the reading gap.

Dr. McLaughlin said that all work sessions this year will connect to the new Strategic Plan. This work session relates to the Thriving Students goal. He then turned the meeting over to Sarah Manes, Director/K-12 Subject Matter Expert with the Education Advisory Board.

Ms. Manes provided for the Board's consideration national research study on embracing the science of reading to improve student outcomes. The presentation provided data on 1) the fact that far too many kids cannot read at an early age, 2) poor reading outcomes transcend demographics, 3) states are not on the same page on proficiency standards, 4) assessment debates should not distract from realities, 5) there is no reason for poor outcomes, 6) a different approach is needed to improve reading, 7) science provides a blueprint for reading, 8) human brains are not naturally wired to read, 9) auditory cortex builds oral word understanding, 10) frontal lobe produces speech, processes meaning, 11) visual cortex recognizes printed letters and words, 12) angular gyrus associates letters with sounds, and 13) there is no singular reading region of the brain. She then walked the Board through a learning to read simulation. She shared that research confirms that strong readers decode. She noted that reading systems are disconnected from the science.

Mr. Alcaro asked for a definition of contact clue.

Ms. Callsen said that reading is crucial. How does this jive with other models or schools of thought?

Dr. Acuff said that on some state testing – including Virginia – there is a thirty percent gap from the NEAP scores. She asked if Ms. Manes had any insight into that data. She said that the fact that pre-K promotes readiness reading in Kindergarten but there is no difference in the data at the end. Is it the content of what is being taught or the intensity, what accounts for the loss in advantage?

Mr. Alcaro asked how teachers need to be trained to teach reading.

Mr. Paige asked when is the connection made between decoding and regular words.

There was a break from 8:10 a.m. until 8:20 p.m.

(Mr. Oberg left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.)

Ms. Collins shared a video with the Board titled *Is My Child Learning to Read? Part 1: Purple Challenge*. She then turned the meeting over to Ms. Sims.

Ms. Sims shared with the Board information on what the Division was doing to shift practices to teaching reading in the following areas: 1) instructional materials, 2) assessments, 3) instructors, 4) leadership, 5) interventions, and 6) out-of-school literacy support.

The Board then went into breakout groups to talk about what areas is the Board still wondering about in the local and national information provided during the meeting.

After about fifteen minutes, the Board returned to the main meeting room to share the discussions that took place in each room about what surprised you from the presentation and what are you wondering about from the presentation.

Ms. Le asked if we are looking at the number of students in Tier 1 instruction and the number who are not in it.

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

Mr. Alcaro thanked student representative Johnson for attending the meeting during the first week of school.

Mr. Alcaro said that he and Ms. Le would be meeting with Ms. Schmitt next week to develop ideas for future work sessions. He asked that the Board send any topics for consideration to both he and Ms. Le by the end of the day on Tuesday.

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

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

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

At 9:29 p.m., hearing no objections, Mr. Paige adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

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Chairman

Clerk