

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, February 8, 2024
[Meeting Video Link](#)

ROLL CALL - UPON THE ROLL BEING CALLED, THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT:

BOARD MEMBERS - Dr. Kate Acuff, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Chuck Pace, Mr. Graham Paige, Ms. Allison Spillman, and Student Representative, Ms. Fernanda Cisneros.

ABSENT – None

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE - Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Division Counsel Josiah Black; Assistant Superintendent Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Chandra Hayes; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Chief Technology Officer Christine Diggs; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Helen Dunn; Clerk of the School Board Christine Thompson; Assistant Director of Budget and Planning Jackson Zimmermann; and Executive Director of Human Resources Dan Redding

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

At 6:00 p.m., Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County Public 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 3 for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose or the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public; and Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The purpose of the item in the closed meeting is to discuss legal issues in connection with a resolution for public sector collective bargaining. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, and Chair Le.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

Agenda Item No. 2.1 Call to Order - At 6:30 p.m., Chair Le called the Albemarle County School Board meeting back to order.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification

At 6:31 p.m., Dr. Acuff 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. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion**. **A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Dr. Acuff, and Chair Le.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Dr. Berlin offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County School Board move forward with the purchase of property A. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion**. **A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, and Dr. Berlin

NAYS: Dr. Acuff and Chair Le

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 5:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 - Roll Call

Agenda Item No. 2.4 - Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.5 - Moment of Silence

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda Item No. 3.1 Approval of Agenda - Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Dr. Berlin seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Dr. Acuff, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, and Chair Le

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Acuff offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Paige **seconded the motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Dr. Acuff, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, and Chair Le

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

4.1 - Approval of Consent Agenda

4.2 - Approval of the Minutes

4.3 - Personnel Action

4.4 - For Action: Policy, Review and Revision

4.5 - For Information: Policy, Review and Revision

4.6 - AHS Second Floor Connector Project, Schematic Design

4.7 - ELA Adoption

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Berlin requested [Policy BCF](#) in item 4.4 Policy, Review and Revision, be pulled for discussion at the meeting scheduled on February 22, 2024.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Item No. 6.1 Spotlight on Education - Presented by Student Representative Fernanda Cisneros.

Madison House is the volunteer center for the University of Virginia students. The organization coordinates volunteers, develops leaders, builds community partnerships, and promotes lifelong volunteer service. Over 3,000 University of Virginia students volunteer their time and energy through Madison House. Volunteers serve community partners as tutors, construction workers, day care supporters, patient service representatives, role models, and peer counselors.

Madison House provides service programs to address the needs of the community as well as the educational and personal growth objectives of students. The organization serves the Albemarle-Charlottesville Community in partnership with over one hundred community agencies to provide programming for more than twenty programs, including summer and special programs, tutoring and youth mentoring, along with other programming to meet the diverse needs of students, families, and community members. Volunteers serve our partnering community agencies on a scheduled weekly basis. Last year, Madison House volunteers served more than 38,000 hours in our local community.

This school year, Albemarle County Schools and ACPS Transportation have partnered with Madison House to pilot a new tutoring program throughout the county. Last May, President Jim Ryan called for students at the University of Virginia to volunteer as tutors and mentors in local school classrooms to help recover the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative aims to overcome the transportation obstacle many UVA students face when volunteering over a large geographical area like Albemarle County.

Two ACPS buses pick up UVA students each day from the Madison House location on Rugby Road, transport them to the schools at which they volunteer, and bring them back in the afternoon. One bus travels a route through the southern portion of Albemarle County while the other transports tutors around the urban ring. The partnership allows ACPS students to receive a little extra help with their classwork, and it also provides them with an opportunity to connect with a leader and mentor in their community they may not have had the chance to connect with otherwise.

Of the more than 250 Madison House volunteers currently collaborating with schools throughout Albemarle County and Charlottesville City, about 125 are using the volunteer bus, and the program hopes to recruit more volunteers in the coming weeks. Tutors can assist students with a variety of subjects in several elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the county.

The Madison House volunteer program helps ACPS fill tutoring spots at high-priority schools in the division. UVA students who are available on weekdays from 9:15 a.m. to noon and are interested in tutoring ACPS students can visit the [Madison House website](#) to learn more.

Agenda Item No. 6.2 School Board / Superintendent Business

Ms. Spillman offered a motion to request the Albemarle County School Board pass the following resolution concerning secure storage of firearms.

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION
CONCERNING SECURE STORAGE OF FIREARMS**

WHEREAS, an estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm; and

WHEREAS, every year, roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else. That's nearly one unintentional shooting per day, and 70 percent of these incidents take place inside a home; and

WHEREAS, another 1,200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, most often using guns belonging to a family member; and

WHEREAS, in incidents of gun violence on school grounds, 75 percent of active shooters were current students or recent graduates; and

WHEREAS, evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe; and

WHEREAS, research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center emphasizes the importance of appropriate storage of firearms because 76 percent of school shooters use firearms acquired from the homes of parents or close relatives; and

WHEREAS, across the country, lawmakers, community members, and local leaders are working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART program that is being introduced in Albemarle County Public Schools ("ACPS") this month, which is endorsed by the National PTA, and which encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of unsecured guns; and

WHEREAS, school districts across the country have begun proactively to send materials home to parents and guardians informing them of applicable firearm storage laws and firearm secure storage best practices; and

WHEREAS, keeping students, teachers, and staff safe from gun accidents and gun violence should be the responsibility of all adult stakeholders at each of our school sites; and

WHEREAS, Virginia law requires adults to securely store their firearms to prevent a child from having unauthorized access to a firearm; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue with preventative measures to increase student and school safety we must act now.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Albemarle County School Board directs the Superintendent and Members of the Superintendent's Cabinet to take such actions as are necessary to increase awareness among ACPS students, families, and staff about the importance of secure gun storage, the legal requirements of parents and guardians to securely store their firearms, and the best practice of keeping all guns unloaded, locked up, and stored separately from ammunition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Albemarle County School Board directs the Superintendent to create an appropriate letter, in English and other languages spoken by ACPS families and staff, to parents and guardians that explains the importance of secure gun storage in preventing minors from accessing guns, the legal requirements of

parents and guardians to securely store their firearms, and the best practice of keeping all guns unloaded, locked up, and stored separately from ammunition, which letter shall also be included in annual registration materials at each school site.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, on this 8th day of February 2024, that the Albemarle County School Board and the Superintendent will continue to work with local law enforcement agencies, health agencies, and non-profits to collaborate and increase efforts to inform ACPS families of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes.

Dr. Acuff **seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Ms. Spillman, Dr. Acuff, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, and Chair Le

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 8.1 FY 24 Second Quarter Financial Report - The second quarter financial report, representing October, November, and December 2023, is presented for the Board's consideration. This report was a new format that consolidated and simplified reporting. The report provided information on the budgeting and expenditure of funds by state category, and the changes that both the Board and staff have made during the year that affected these categories.

Revenues: March 31 Average Daily Membership (ADM), upon which state revenues were based, and budgeted to be 13,591. ADM was lower than anticipated based upon numbers of students as of September 30, ADM was anticipated to drop by 262 students. Overall state revenues for this report were budgeted upon the Governor's Caboose bill introduced in December/January. State revenue assumptions included in the Caboose bill will likely be revised upward by the General Assembly in the next few months. Local and Federal revenues are also anticipated to meet the budget.

Balance of Revenues over Expenses: Revenues exceeded expenses by nearly \$19.8M. State revenues collected were more than \$30.6M.

Special Revenue Funds: Many special revenue funds are reimbursable.

Federal grants/programs. These funds often have significant receivables booked in the prior fiscal year and therefore include large negative revenues until reimbursements are received for the prior year. This is typical of the first quarter and second report.

School Fund Balance: Fund balance use in FY23-24 is budgeted to be \$4.1M. This information is subject to change as the current year's operations and next fiscal year budget planning continues.

Dr. Acuff asked about timing and when we would know more. Mr. Zimmermann explained that the General Assembly is anticipated to have both the House and Senate recommended budget by the end of next week. He noted that the usual timeframe for assessing the impact of these budgets is between five to ten business days, during which the Department of Education (DOE) will work to quantify the changes proposed

by the General Assembly. Therefore, it is likely that by the end of February, there will be a clearer understanding of the General Assembly's intentions.

Ms. Osborne offered a motion to accept the FY 24 Second Quarter Financial Report. Dr. Berlin **seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, and Chair Le

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 8.2 Human Resources [Annual Report](#) - The Human Resources Department provided a summary of their annual report, focusing on highlights of the work of the Department and the impact of that work across the School Division and areas of continued focus.

Dr. Berlin voiced her appreciation for the current state of affairs and the provided data. She acknowledged the significant effort required to compile this data but emphasized its importance, especially considering the notable progress in staff diversity. Dr. Berlin also expressed her interest in seeing both aggregate data and detailed information broken down by school. She also highlighted the need to monitor where teachers are living, noting a national trend where teachers and staff cannot afford to live in the districts where they work. She pointed out that the district is in a relatively good position, with about 67 percent of teachers living in the district and 12 percent in the city. However, stressed the importance of keeping an eye on this issue and consider affordable housing options.

Dr. Berlin praised the inclusion of information about the installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and buildings. She underscored the importance of this initiative for the safety of teachers, parents, grandparents, and community members, noting that it could potentially save lives without many realizing the full impact. She thanked those involved for making this a part of their efforts.

Mr. Pace inquired about the intent-to-return forms, asking if teachers complete them in January. It was confirmed that the forms are indeed filled out in January and February, giving teachers a few months to make their decision. Mr. Pace then raised a concern about whether there is enough manpower to follow up when a teacher indicates they are not returning. He suggested that someone should reach out to these teachers promptly, perhaps to counsel them and encourage them to reconsider their decision. The intent-to-return forms that are sent are not binding. The goal of these forms is to initiate a conversation between the teacher and their principal or supervisor. This dialogue can address any issues the teacher might have, such as dissatisfaction or a desire to teach a different subject. Often, these conversations can resolve concerns and potentially lead to the teacher reconsidering their decision.

Mr. Pace also commented on the survey results, noting that there were 156 mentions of low morale and sentiments such as "not enough time," "I'm overwhelmed," and "I've got too much on my plate." He expressed his concern about these findings. In response, it was stated that moving forward, the plan involves working with the cabinet and the leadership team to unpack the survey data and prioritize actionable steps. The focus will be on addressing concerns raised by teachers, but also considering all employees. The goal is to examine workloads and schedules to find efficiencies and make improvements. This approach aims to alleviate issues related to feeling overwhelmed and having too much on their plates.

Mr. Pace asked about the wellness programs and whether there are partnerships with places like ACAC. There are discounts available at several fitness centers, including ACAC. The strategy has been fleshed out and currently focuses on addressing high-incidence health conditions. Anonymized data from the health insurance provider highlights the number of cases for various conditions, such as skin cancer, which can often

be prevented or mitigated through education and specific interventions. The goal is to leverage this data to target and address these health issues effectively.

Ms. Spillman acknowledged the value of the data presented but expressed concerns about retention numbers and employee satisfaction. She emphasized the importance of focusing on these aspects because while employees are staying, it doesn't necessarily mean they are happy or have high morale. She suggested examining transfer numbers between schools, as requests for transfers might indicate dissatisfaction. Ms. Spillman proposed that it would be interesting and beneficial to dive deeper into these issues to better understand and address them. Staff explained that new systems have been implemented to replace the old ones. The new system has significantly improved capabilities that allow for more detailed tracking and analysis. This will enable the examination of transfer reasons, such as proximity to an employee's child's school or home versus genuine job satisfaction issues. Understanding these reasons is deemed crucial for making informed decisions going forward.

There was also curiosity about the exit data, with an allusion to it being around 5%. It was mentioned that overall turnover for all employees is approximately 500, which would translate to about 5% turnover. Further details or a continuation of this discussion seemed necessary to fully understand the context and implications.

Ms. Spillman also asked about clarification on the process for managing provisional employees. Specifically, she wants to understand how the responsibility is handed off to supervisors and how the employees are supported during their provisional period. She understands that the organization is assisting these employees in obtaining their licenses, often transitioning Teaching Assistants (TAs) or individuals without current licensure into teaching positions while they complete their licensing requirements. She is interested in knowing what sort of training and oversight is in place to ensure that the performance of these provisional employees meets the necessary standards during their training period.

A provisionally licensed teacher, especially in special education, has typically only completed one course out of the nine or ten required to obtain a master's degree. They come in with less theoretical background, knowledge, and training when they enter the classroom. Over the course of this year, staff have collaborated with the special education office to identify master special education teachers within the county. Staff then provide as much just-in-time training as possible to these new teachers. For example, during IEP season, we organize sessions where they can learn how to answer parent questions, what to bring to IEP meetings, and what data to have ready. These sessions aim to equip them with the practical skills they need to support their roles effectively.

Mr. Paige asked about the status of a program at Albemarle High School, Growing their Own teacher assistants. This initiative has dovetailed nicely with efforts to transition other classified staff into teaching roles. Notably, six individuals from the group Ms. Pearl Early presented to the board last year are now enrolled in the UVA program. Several of these individuals are currently teaching at Albemarle High School, while others are teaching at Journey Middle School and Monticello High School. This demonstrates the program's success in fostering career development and addressing staffing needs within the district.

Mr. Paige asked about the exit interviews, with 31% that were dissatisfied with policies or practices. The current exit data does not provide that level of specificity. However, the stay interviews offer more detailed insights, where employees might share concerns about existing policies. For example, some feedback has indicated concerns regarding student discipline policies. These interviews are proving to be a valuable source of information, helping us identify specific policies and programs that employees are concerned about.

Dr. Acuff asked if people that go through the apprenticeship are obligated to teach with us. It is a two-year program. What is particularly exciting is how some divisions are now reclassifying existing teacher

assistant positions as apprenticeships. These individuals retain all the duties and responsibilities of a teacher assistant but, in addition, are expected to observe and learn from teachers' instructional methods, gradually growing into the teaching role. We have created a separate position for the apprenticeship without repurposing a teacher assistant allocation. The apprentices spend the initial weeks closely interacting with and observing the teacher to understand classroom setup and instructional methods. Gradually, they start taking on small instructional responsibilities as they progress. This structure is very exciting for us because, by the end of the two-year apprenticeship, these individuals are well-prepared and expected to take on full teaching roles within our schools.

Dr. Acuff inquired further about the stay interviews. She mentioned the success we've had in recruiting persons of color and wondered if this success is self-reinforcing in terms of both recruiting and retention. Dr. Acuff expressed a desire to see stay interviews specifically focused on this group to understand their experiences better and to identify ways to prevent turnover. In response to Dr. Acuff's inquiry, it was noted that a recurring theme in the coded data from stay interviews is the desire for affinity groups. These groups, such as those for African American teachers, LGBT teachers, or Latino and Latina teachers, aim to foster a sense of community. This is particularly important at the elementary level, where many teachers of color are often the only teacher of color in their building, leading to a profound sense of isolation. Recognizing this, the goal is to create these affinity groups to help build a supportive community, which is expected to improve retention.

Ms. Osborne expressed how grateful she was that ACPS now has our own human resources department and when she does hear complaints, they're often about payroll. She was curious if we considered getting our own payroll department. This year, a new position was created: the Payroll Quality Control Coordinator. This role serves as a direct liaison with the payroll department. When employees report issues with their paychecks or when definitive errors occur, the liaison focuses solely on addressing these problems. This coordinator actively participates in every payroll run, monitors the process, and makes necessary corrections. While this initiative has not completely resolved all payroll issues, it has significantly improved the situation and represents a substantial step forward in addressing payroll concerns.

Agenda Item No. 8.3 Break – The School Board took a break from 7:49 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Agenda Item No. 8.4 [Bellwether Updates](#) in relation to the Department of Instruction - Members of the Department provided the Board with updates on the progress of four of the five Bellwether recommendations. The four topics of focus were math, the Instructional Coaching Model, Formative Assessments, and High-Quality Instructional Materials/ELA Adoption.

Ms. Spillman asked about the instructional coaching method, and reflecting on the Bellwether report, some concerns teachers raised included the availability of coaches, as they were often spread out among multiple schools. Currently, we have 22 instructional coaches out of the planned 25. Due to staffing constraints, it may not be feasible to assign one coach to each building. However, feedback suggests that both coaches and teachers find value in cross-building collaboration, as it allows for sharing of successful practices. The aim is to eventually decrease the number of buildings each coach serves while maintaining a network of support across the division to foster collective growth.

Ms. Spillman further inquired about how the coaches handled veteran teachers who do not feel they need coaching in their area or do not want to be coached by someone outside their expertise. It's about a more collaborative approach with principals. It is a shift from a punitive model to one focused on support and innovation. A partnership between administrators, teachers, and coaches, aiming to identify growth opportunities and provide resources. A shift from the older model, where teachers had to request assistance from instructional coaches to a proactive approach where support is readily available.

Ms. Spillman asked about the 25 full-time FTEs that were budgeted for this school year, and if the division would maintain that for next year's budget, or request additional FTEs for this new coaching model? Initially, the division planned to request additional FTEs, aiming for 35 based on research and the size of our division. However, due to budget constraints, we will stick with 25 FTEs for now, and redistribute these positions to begin implementing the new coaching model, pulling FTEs from the existing 25 to serve as novice coaches.

Mr. Paige asked if staff were still in contact with Bellwether. Dr. Hayes replied that she and Dr. Haas meet regularly with Bellwether to discuss the initiatives and receive coaching. This helps ensure alignment with the goals and addresses feedback from the audit.

Mr. Pace asked how many novice teachers we have. As appointment time comes, we will get a better idea, which will help us know where we would like to go, but for the current budget season we're going to work with what we have.

Mr. Pace inquired about providing necessary training for instructional coaches to assist middle school students in catching up with reading and math. We've begun by assessing the licensure and expertise of our coaches to guide our planning for the fall. Moving forward, we aim to provide rigorous training in various instructional strategies. This includes professional learning sessions during those teacher work weeks or over the summer. Our goal is to equip our coaches with the skills needed to operate effectively within this new model, enabling them to support more teachers and address literacy gaps among students.

Ms. Spillman inquired about whether the changes and improvements to the instructional coaching model have been communicated to staff, particularly those applying for positions. While we've engaged in discussions with staff to gather feedback on what they appreciate and what needs improvement in the program, we haven't provided a final update yet due to ongoing budget considerations. However, we plan to communicate these changes comprehensively during upcoming board sessions, principal meetings, and school visits. It's essential that teachers understand the shift in the model and how it will positively impact their classrooms and students.

Dr. Berlin suggested reviewing the job descriptions to ensure that the proposed changes are adequately reflected. She emphasized the importance of highlighting practices unique to the coaching model, such as metrics or cycles of support with teachers. This focus on measurable outcomes will help gauge effectiveness and inform future improvements.

Dr. Acuff commented that it was her understanding that the instructional coaches are teachers and they become coaches, and they may go back to their classroom. She asked if staff were engaging the alumni as part of the process as well? Yes, in the job advertisement it states that if you've been a former instructional coach, please, feel free to reapply.

Ms. Le commented that we often hear about fidelity, but wondered what success of that looks like and how we measure that. HMH provides access to a program where one person in the building is allowed 24/7 access for coaching and training. In January and April, they will have a walk-throughs, to see if we are implementing the way we should.

Mr. Paige asked about the status of the assessment and the instructional materials for the Science program. We adopted the material for science last year.

Ms. Spillman commented that we've chosen a highly rated ELA program, but some teachers express concern about the overwhelming number of resources available. She asked what the plan is to address this while ensuring optimal use of funds and avoiding previous issues? We're focusing on standardizing the ELA block across the division and providing explicit guidelines for each grade level. This includes clearly defining

components and integrating writing, reading, and structured literacy. Prioritizing non-negotiable elements to ensure consistency throughout the division. The goal is to have a clear picture of the ELA blocks before summer break to meet teachers' needs for clarity and preparedness.

Dr. Acuff shared her disappointment regarding the state's slow upgrade of math materials, and asked if staff have plans to support students in math over the summer, and how we prepare our curriculum for the fall without updated materials? Math is already part of the elementary summer school program. It is scheduled for 2025 as part of the Bellwether recommendation.

Ms. Spillman inquired about how we are utilizing math interventionists and specialists in the pathway to algebra. Currently, staffing varies across schools, with different approaches to intervention. For instance, Henley has a part-time interventionist who also serves as a counselor, while Walton utilizes someone for intervention work through Core Plus. At Lakeside, the setup is different, with a teacher also providing intervention. Ideally, with sufficient budgetary resources and time, we could streamline these efforts for a more unified approach.

Mr. Pace asked if we had a formative assessment tool in math. The VDOE does provide very discreet algebra readiness assessments that we can utilize.

Dr. Berlin asked if training was being provided for the principals and the assistant principals. Staff explained we are currently in the process of working to get the principals LETRS trained before the start of school year.

Agenda Item No. 8.5 Work Session [Planning](#)

Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt, in collaboration with Dr. Berlin, spearheaded the planning of the School Board Work Session calendar for 2024. Seeking input to refine the purpose of these sessions, Schmitt outlined their significance as opportunities for the board to delve deeply into various aspects of the strategic plan. Originally established in 2006, these sessions aimed to enhance the board's comprehension of critical issues and provide guidance to staff in alignment with the division's strategic plan. However, Schmitt prompted a discussion to evaluate whether this original purpose still resonates.

As for the scheduled work sessions for the remainder of 2024, the next three are designated to support the development of the FY25 funding request. However, the topics for the remaining five sessions, scheduled for March, April, May, November, and October, are yet to be determined. Schmitt invited feedback on potential topics for these sessions to ensure they align with the board's objectives and priorities.

The board has a history of engaging in various topics during their work sessions over the years. In 2021, discussions centered around learning recovery, the science of reading, as well as workforce size. In 2022, there was a deeper exploration into galvanizing social and emotional learning (SEL) support and conducting year-end and school improvement analyses. Last year's sessions primarily focused on budget allocation, tiered services, and support for English learners.

Given this historical context, the floor was opened to deliberate on the purpose of their work sessions and the desired outcomes. Additionally, the board was encouraged to identify any topics from previous years that they believe should be revisited or prioritized for the upcoming sessions in 2024.

Dr. Acuff shared that, except for last year the board has always scheduled time for a retreat.

Chair Le asked if staff could clarify the difference between work sessions and business meetings.

Both serve distinct purposes within the context of a board's operations. Business meetings typically involve transactions and decisions that require formal action, such as approving budgets, adopting policies, or voting on resolutions. They are primarily focused on conducting the necessary business of the board and often follow a structured agenda.

Work sessions are designed to delve deeper into specific topics or issues. They provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion, exploration of complex matters, and collaboration among board members. Work sessions are typically more informational than action-oriented, although they may lead to recommendations or decisions in subsequent business meetings.

One key difference is the level of depth and focus. Work sessions allow for a deeper dive into topics, often involving outside expertise or presentations to enhance understanding. While business meetings are more transactional, work sessions offer a forum for thorough exploration and analysis.

Ms. Spillman expressed a desire for deeper understanding during work sessions, aiming to grasp the intricacies behind policy and budget decisions for informed choices benefiting students, teachers, and staff. She emphasized the importance of thorough analysis beyond brief presentations, recognizing the impact on thousands within the school system. With a shared concern for reading interventionists, Ms. Spillman advocated for comprehensive data review, particularly regarding DIBELS screening outcomes for 4th through 9th graders. She sought clarity on intervention strategies, including allocation, duration, and progression criteria, emphasizing the significance of informed decisions to adapt staffing, scheduling, and resources effectively.

Ms. Spillman stressed the importance of utilizing data to inform decision-making moving forward, particularly regarding reading intervention and the effectiveness of provisionally licensed teachers. She expressed curiosity about the progress and supervision of these teachers, emphasizing the need for robust training and support to ensure optimal student outcomes.

Ms. Spillman also raised concerns about the adequacy of professional development, citing instances of brief sessions. With a focus on budget allocation and maximizing resources, she highlighted the importance of ensuring full utilization of staff and prioritizing the needs of vulnerable students within the system.

Ms. Spillman questioned the collaboration between Special Education (SPED), English Learner (EL) programs, and intervention services, recognizing their interconnectedness. She suggested that understanding their integration would significantly influence decisions regarding budgeting, staffing, and resource allocation.

Chair Le expressed a desire for a mid-year data review, noting its absence in the previous year. Dr. McLaughlin highlighted a shift from in-depth product analysis during work sessions to mere reporting. While there's a plan to review new data during the first business meeting, a similar review wasn't scheduled for a work session.

Dr. Acuff expressed interest in delving deeper into CATEC (Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center) following recent changes and the Career Learning Community. She believes a comprehensive examination of CTE (Career and Technical Education), particularly focusing on work-study programs and apprenticeships would be helpful and envisions a more transformative approach to integrating CTE into the school curriculum, highlighting the potential to tap into a broader range of students beyond traditional academic tracks. She advocated for exploring innovative strategies to seamlessly integrate CTE into the overall educational provision, emphasizing the need for collaboration and a holistic vision for student success.

Mr. Paige and Chair Le are interested to better understand the structure and effectiveness of the EL program. They seek clarity on program specifics and data presentation methods to inform budgetary

decisions effectively. While acknowledging the program's importance, they express a need for clearer, more actionable data to facilitate decision-making processes.

Dr. Acuff recommended that none of her and Mr. Paige's colleagues were present during the discussion about the *Center Model* and its selection rationale. She referenced a comprehensive report from December 2017 that influenced decisions on educational structure and capital requests. Suggesting a need for revisiting and updating the report and proposed inviting experts like Fielding to provide insights on innovative models worldwide. Dr. Acuff expressed a desire to reinforce understanding among the Board of Supervisors and emphasized the importance of reiterating the advantages of the *Center Model* over constructing a new high school, highlighting its potential benefits for the entire division.

Mr. Pace envisions significant changes in secondary education and advocates for staying ahead of the curve to navigate these shifts effectively. He believes that being at the forefront of change will lead to better outcomes for the community.

Ms. Osborne highlighted the potential impact of Collective Bargaining on the operations and boundaries of involvement within the organization. She emphasized the need for further exploration and explanation of this new relationship dynamic. While acknowledging some expertise within the team, she suggested seeking additional input from certified professionals in Labor Relations to gain a comprehensive understanding.

Chair Le mentioned transportation as a topic of concern, expressing uncertainty about its current status, past practices, and planned actions. She highlighted a need for clarity regarding the division's transportation situation, indicating a desire to understand the issue comprehensively.

Chair Le shared that during a meeting with students at Monticello, another concern that arose was the issue of tracking within the division. She acknowledged ongoing efforts to address this issue but expressed uncertainty about what it looks like specifically for the division. Chair Le emphasized the importance of understanding tracking as a significant factor contributing to divisional challenges and noted that counseling discussions often focus on mental health rather than the instructional aspect, highlighting the need for more clarity and information regarding tracking within the division.

Ms. Schmitt and Dr. Berlin will put together a draft plan based on the information received during this meeting and will review it through the budget lens. Once those sessions are finalized, they will inform future ones.

No. 10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 10.1 Closed Meeting – None.

Agenda Item No. 10.2 Closed Meeting Certification – None.

Dr. Acuff asked the board to think about the next retreat. While the January retreat was effective, there's debate over whether to continue with a few focused retreats or opt for longer, more varied sessions historically held on Saturdays. This decision hinges on balancing commitment levels and the desire for both depth and variety in discussions.

Chair Le wished everyone celebrating the Lunar New Year, a Happy New Year.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 9:29 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Le adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Christine Thompson
Clerk

Judy Le
Chair