

MINUTES

WORK SESSION OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, May 23, 2024

[Meeting Video Link](#)

A work session of the Albemarle County School Board was held on May 23, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the Albemarle County Office Building – 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA

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, and Ms. Allison Spillman

Absent: None

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Daphne Keiser; Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt; School Division Counsel, Josiah Black; Chief Technology Officer, Dr. Christine Diggs; Public Affairs & Strategic Communications Officer, Dr. Helen Dunn; Clerk of the Board, Ms. Christine Thompson; Executive Director of Humann Resources, Mr. Dan Redding; Preschool Coordinator, Ms. Lisa Molinaro

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING – At 6:15 p.m., Ms. Spillman offered a **motion** that the School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia 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; the purpose of this item is to discuss the reappointment of teachers for the 2024-2025 school year. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Berlin, Mr. Pace, Ms. Osborne, Ms. Spillman, Mr. Paige, Dr. Acuff, 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 6:31 p.m., Chair Le called the meeting back to order.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION - At 6:31 p.m., Ms. Spillman 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. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 Roll Call

Agenda Item No. 2.4 Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.5 Moment of Silence

Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to adopt the teacher recommendations for 2024-2025. Mr. Pace **seconded** the motion. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Mr. Paige **seconded** the motion. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

AGENDA ITEM 4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - Dr. Berlin offered a **motion** to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Spillman **seconded** the motion. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Mr. Pace, Ms. Spillman, Mr. Paige, Ms. Osborne, Dr. Berlin, 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 Exemption for Compulsory Attendance
- 4.4 For action – High School Center II Design Development Plan
- 4.5 For action – Southern Feeder Pattern Elementary School Design Development Phase
- 4.6 Personnel Action – Athletic Coaches
- 4.7 Personnel Action
- 4.8 For information – 2024 – 2025 Federal Programs Grant Applications
- 4.9 For adoption of AP Science Textbook

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA - None

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Item No. 6.1 School Board – Superintendent Business

Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on the budget. The state has approved its budget, which differs from the one adopted by the board in April based on the budget from March. This new state budget results in a \$750,000 shortfall compared to the board's adopted budget, primarily due to a lower-than-expected sales tax revenue. However, the board's budget had a contingency measure with an unallocated expenditure of \$700,000, which helps offset the shortfall. No immediate action is recommended at this time. The board will wait for further calculations before making any decisions.

Ms. Ayanna Mitchell, Director of Equity Education gave a brief update on the [Equity Conference & stats on credentialing](#).

Agenda Item No. 6.2 Introduction of the School Board [Student Representatives](#) for the 2024-2025 School Year - Chair Le

Moosa Ahmed, 11th grade student at Monticello High School

Margaret Lee, 11th grade student at Western Albemarle High School

Cam Roper, 11th grade student at Community Lab School

Isabelle Wang, 11th grade student at Albemarle High School

Agenda Item No. 6.3 Spotlight on Education – [Honoring our Retirees](#) for the 2023-2024 School Year

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Vernon Liechti, President of the Albemarle Education Association (AEA), announced that the AEA is requesting a [certification election](#) under Section A.7.1 of the School Board Resolution for Collective Bargaining. The AEA aims to represent both educational support professionals and licensed professionals. The AEA has secured membership records and authorization forms from over 59% of educational support professionals and over 80% of licensed employees. These forms have been collected within the past 12 months and are included with their petition. The AEA is prepared to submit these documents to Labor Relations for verification. Liechti expressed gratitude to the workers, organizers, and the Albemarle County community for their support. The AEA will work with the Human Resources Department, Superintendent Dr. Haas, Mr. Black, and the school board on the next steps for collective bargaining.

Heidi Gilman Bennett, a parent from the Samuel Miller District, addressed the school board about issues related to chronic absenteeism. She shared that her son was injured in a car accident while trying to attend Saturday school, highlighting the distress and unfairness caused by current school board policies. Bennett criticized the implementation of policies requiring students to attend make-up sessions for both excused and unexcused absences. She noted that other Virginia school boards have adopted more equitable policies that offer waivers for interruptions beyond students' control. She argued that current practices lead to unnecessary consequences for students and added burdens for school staff. She emphasized that while offering free tutoring is beneficial, students who miss school due to medical reasons or other legitimate causes should not face penalties. Bennett pointed out that the state's mandates and recent flexibility allowed by the Department of Education should be leveraged to create a more fair and focused attendance policy. She urged the school board to revise its policies to avoid penalizing students and families for circumstances beyond their control.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 SCHOOL DIVISION WORK SESSION

Agenda Item No. 8.1 [Early Childhood Education – Preschool, Part I](#) - This session was an opportunity to share the current state of PreK programs in ACPS. In addition, staff highlighted the implementation of recent Pre-K accountability assessments and introduced the School Board to the new state-wide reporting system known as VQB5 (Virginia Quality Birth-5.) The report also highlighted the quality of each ACPS publicly funded Pre-K program starting in the Fall of 2024. In addition, the board had an opportunity to engage with preschool teachers to learn more about how the work they do daily contributes to our strategic plan.

Agenda Item No. 8.2 The School Board took a break from 8:02 p.m. to 8:12 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 8.3 – Early Childhood Education – Preschool, Part II

Ms. Spillman expressed her gratitude for the special education services at Stone-Robinson, highlighting the remarkable progress of a nonverbal autistic student who has shown significant improvement in communication since joining the program. She and her family have greatly benefited from these services.

Ms. Spillman also inquired about transportation issues, asking if they are part of the broader transportation challenges in Albemarle County or if they are specific to preschool. Staff indicated that the transportation issues are part of the general transportation setup in Albemarle County. Historically, the system is designed for buses to transport students to and from schools within their designated districts, with defined routes. To address the transportation needs for specific programs, a significant increase in drivers and potential adjustments to the transportation system would be necessary.

Dr. Berlin thinks it's very important to help people see the great work that staff does because staff really does make a difference. She was curious about what programs are provided with specials - what type of additional support is provided to those kindergarten classes. How would staff characterize that? Staff emphasized that this year's focus on resources for preschoolers has been impactful across all buildings. Building-level administrators were informed that the staffing numbers for preschoolers are integrated into the staffing matrix. The program prioritizes physical education and guidance due to the belief that many children lack access to outdoor activities and face challenges at home that require additional support. Principals were instructed to ensure that Bright Star students receive these essential services. All schools successfully implemented the special programs except for Woodbrook, which faced challenges due to being housed temporarily at a different location and the limited availability of a guidance counselor.

There was a discussion about support for teachers with EL students. Staff shared that there is ongoing discussion on what professional development will be needed and what will look like for the 2024-2025 school year at the PreK level.

Mr. Paige inquired about the release date of the PreK-4 EMAS data and how scores compare to state averages. Staff noted that the data, which was collected this spring, was released on Monday, May 13th. And clarified that the data in question is baseline data for fall 2024. The evaluation of the program's quality, including class interactions and curriculum, will be conducted using a new measurement system starting in fall 2024.

Mr. Pace inquired whether the EMAS is used as a kindergarten assessment. Staff confirmed its use in both preschool and kindergarten, highlighting its value as a continuous assessment tool. They noted that this continuity allows for the tracking of developmental data from children in Virginia public preschools from as young as three years old. This is particularly beneficial for special education students, as it enables early identification of patterns in strengths and weaknesses, which can inform more tailored instructional strategies as the children grow.

Mr. Pace asked about the estimated number of four-year-olds who might need pre-K services but are currently unidentified. There are ongoing efforts by staff to improve tracking to include a coordinated enrollment application process, maintaining comprehensive logs and waitlisting. Staff expressed confidence in the improved ability to monitor and track the number of applications received, placed, and those remaining unplaced, providing a clearer picture of the pre-K needs and placements.

Ms. Spillman had a concern about whether pre-K classes, which currently do not receive all specials, are consequently affecting teachers' planning time. She questioned if this disparity means that pre-K teachers have less planning time compared to K-12 teachers. Staff acknowledged that pre-K teachers do receive some planning time, but it is not on par with the planning time given to K-5 teachers. This imbalance requires further investigation. A proposal being considered, which involves dismissing classes early on Fridays to allocate more planning time for teachers.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Other Business by the Board Members and the Superintendent

Mr. Pace offered a **motion** to appoint Ms. Betsey Soulsby to represent the Rio district to the Accountability Committee for Environmental Sustainability (ACES) for a two-year term June 2024-June 2025. Ms. Osborne **seconded** the motion. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.2 Closed Meeting – if needed - None

Agenda Item No. 9.3 Closed Meeting – if needed - None

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 9:04 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Le adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.



Chair



Clerk