

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, May 11, 2023

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

BOARD MEMBERS - Dr. Kate Acuff, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Ms. Katrina Callsen, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Graham Paige, and Student Representative Mr. Valentine Dowd

ABSENT - Mr. Jonno Alcaro

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE - Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Board Attorney Ross Holden; Deputy Superintendent Debora Collins; Assistant Superintendent Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Chief Technology Officer Christine Diggs; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Phil Giaramita; and Clerk of the School Board Christine Thompson

School Board Member to Participate Remotely - At 4:45 p.m., Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** that the School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(1), approve the participation of School Board Member Rebecca Berlin, White Hall Magisterial District, at tonight's meeting remotely through electronic means as a result of car trouble that prevents her physical attendance. Mr. Paige seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Berlin, Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

*Dr. Berlin participated remotely in closed session.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

At 4:47 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 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; 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. Paige seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Ms. Le, and Chair Callsen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

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

*Dr. Berlin arrived at 6:30 p.m. to participate in person.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification - At 6:32 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. Le seconded the **motion. Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Ms. Le, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Dr. Berlin, and Chair Callsen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 - Roll Call

Agenda Item No. 2.4 - Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.5 - Moment of Silence

At 6:40 p.m., Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to appoint four elementary school principals as recommended. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion. Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, and Chair Callsen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

At 6:43 p.m., Dr. Berlin offered a **motion** to revoke the license of Employee A as recommended. Mr. Paige seconded the **motion. Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

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. Ms. Le seconded the **motion. Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Osborne offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Paige seconded the motion. Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:

AYES: Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, and Chair Callsen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Alcaro

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

- 4.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 4.2 Albemarle Foundation for Education & ACPS Memorandum of Understanding
- 4.3 Policy, Review, and Revision - Action
- 4.4 COVID-19 Status Update
- 4.5 Personnel Action
- 4.6 Application - VSBA Workforce Readiness Award - Action

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Item No. 6.1 Spotlight on Education - National School Nurses Week

Mr. Valentine Dowd introduced the Spotlight - This is National School Nurses Week, a time to celebrate and thank the professionals who work tirelessly with students, their families, and staff to ensure their health and well-being. And to be on call, ready, and often the first responder in a time of crisis.

It was during the Roosevelt Administration that the position of school nurse was established. No, not that Roosevelt. I mean Theodore Roosevelt.

School Nurses have been protecting lives for more than 100 years and this special week of recognition has been in place for more than 50 of those years. In a few minutes, we are going to hear how our nurses exemplify the theme of this year's special week—

Nurses Make a Difference—Anytime, Anywhere — Always.

It's important to note that our students, staff, and families were spared the worst of the pandemic—outbreaks were relatively few and modest in their scope. Thanks to the heroes on the front line. Our school nurses provided masks, comforted children, talked with parents about the importance of quarantining when symptoms were present, and they volunteered to help provide immunizations during community clinics. It worked.

The full story of our school nurses is told, however, not in one chapter but in many pages of a very substantial book. Some of those pages contain the name of Eileen Gomez. She was honored on the state level for her groundwork in getting inhalers into school. She was the lead in our division in coordinating the services of our nurses throughout COVID, and for the long-time support she provides to our School Health Advisory Board, for her close partnership with the medical community, and most recently, for her leadership in the addition of NARCAN dispensers in our schools.

Ms. Gomez, herself, served for more than 25 years as a school nurse at Hollymead and, to borrow a phrase from an investment firm's very old commercial, "When Eileen Gomez speaks, Everyone Listens."

I'd like to ask Ms. Gomez to join us at the podium and to share some of the highlights of the invaluable contributions school nurses make every day of the school year and also to introduce her special guest, who will share a few words with us about their experiences.

Ms. Gomez commented that we now have nurses in all of our schools. Last year there were 66,000 visits for an average of about 550 visits a day across the division. School nurses treat a number of different conditions on a daily basis for minor illnesses and injuries to more serious and sometimes even life-threatening conditions and events. We have a number of students, well over 2000, with chronic health conditions such as asthma, severe allergies, and diabetes. Seizure disorders, to name a few, and our nurses are often involved in their daily care so these students can be safe, comfortable, and ready

to learn at school. During the pandemic, they worked tirelessly to manage our COVID mitigation strategies and the division, whether the public health emergency as well as it did, thanks to their efforts. Most of our nurses joined the medical reserve core through the Virginia Department of Health and became COVID vaccinators or post-vaccine monitors. And you may have seen us participate in many of those clinics.

All of the members of the Board were very appreciative of the school nurses and commended them on their dedication and the daily service they provide to the students and staff.

Dr. Acuff stated that when she first came on the school board, school nurses were not full-time in elementary schools. And that was one change that she was very supportive of. She doesn't know what we would have done with COVID if we didn't have that kind of coverage in our schools. But it also needs to be pointed out that for many of our students, nurses are the primary caretakers, the primary access to the healthcare system, and she deeply thanks you for the work.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 SCHOOL BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT BUSINESS

Superintendent Haas echoed everything he heard the board say concerning our school nurses. When he first came to the central office, one of his areas of responsibility was working with Eileen Gomez and the nurses. Every time he talks to her, he learns something new. He went on to say that the health implications for our students are powerful, and not to take away from that, but the role of the school nurses increases our student success. After that, we have a mission to close achievement gaps. And as many of you pointed out, many of our students their primary care, their reason for coming to school, is to get treated by the nurse, and oftentimes when the nurse treats them, they're able to come back. Our pandemic numbers for COVID are down, but Dr. McLaughlin was letting us know the other day that our attendance numbers are just a half a percent away now from where they had routinely been prior to the pandemic. And we have many people to thank for that, particularly students coming to school. But the fact that the nurses are there day in, day out, treating students and helping them helps them be academically successful and helps us achieve our mission.

Superintendent Haas also pointed out that we had three principals join the meeting tonight; Art Stowe is here from Scottsville; Jen Sublette from Western; and Darah Bonham from Albemarle. He had a walk with Mr. Bonham at Albemarle on Monday and had a lot of fun. He saw a lot of great teachers doing some super work. One thing he noticed at such an enormous school - all over the place, Darah seemed to know everybody's name, and maybe it was just frequent flyers that you see all the time. But the other part is no students were surprised at all to see him in the classroom and sitting down with them, looking at their work and talking to them about what they were doing. But there are sometimes when I'll go to a school, the students will say, "What are you doing here?" None of them said that to Darah. They fully expect his presence because I believe he is everywhere all the time at the school.

Superintendent Haas announced that Cry Baby, the musical started last night at Monticello. And also Little Women at Albemarle was two weeks ago, it was a lot of fun. There are two proms Saturday night at IX Park and the Pavilion.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Phoebe Reborn lives in the Scottsville district. She spoke about Capstone research and a project on ESOL adaptations for SOL's.

Ms. Tory Selmer lives in the White Hall district. She spoke about concerns over the school division moving middle school math and language arts classes to an every-other-day schedule.

ITEM NO. 9.0 SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Employee Engagement - [Staff Presentation](#)

Employee engagement is critical to the success of an organization. Last year, we embarked on a partnership with Gallup to help us use national benchmarking to identify strengths and areas of opportunity in this area. As such, employee engagement has been an area of focus across our schools and departments during this school year. In March, all employees were asked to complete the Gallup Q12 survey. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Clare Keiser, Mr. Stephen Shields, Senior Consultant with Gallup and HR Executive Director Mr. Dan Redding presented.

Dr. Berlin asked about the question "do my best", and the progress of question 11, which seems to be the most significant. -- Question #11 of the five development questions is the most tactical question. The specific wording of the question is in the last six months, someone has talked to me about my progress.

Dr. Berlin asked who the leaders were on the Superintendent's Cabinet? -- The Superintendents Cabinet is the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents and Chiefs. Leaders are defined or grouped as principals, assistant principals, directors, assistant directors, those who supervise others, and lead programs, departments, and schools.

Ms. Le asked about the organization moving up. -- Mr. Shields explained. "I'd like to see you move up to a 4.06. If you moved up by .1 to 3.86, that is a meaningful increase. The reason why we're putting some additional numbers on that is because of the percentile ranking, because currently they're in the bottom quartile of our database and so we have quartile specific recommendations. And it is achievable with the number of people you have. We would like to see you move up to a 4.06, but I would be happy if you moved up to a 3.86. That would be 10 times a bigger change than we had over the past year.

Dr. Berlin asked about the question on “my opinions matter.” Our principals and assistant principals have a 4.19 which really makes her think that the superintendent’s cabinet and all the work at that level really are helping those principles and assistant principals feel like what they’re saying matters. How can we make sure that those teachers feel like their voices are heard? -- 70% of our decisions are limbic system decisions or to put it more colloquially, or emotional intuitive decisions. And the application of that is people learn more when they’re talking than when they’re listening so hence the importance of dialogue around the mission operationalizes in their job and their team.

Chair Callsen asked about pay and incentives and if we do year-over-year comparisons for that or do we just pick another set of additional items every year to just measure? -- This year we have the opportunity to consider do we want to ask the same three or do we want to shift? There is an HR benchmark that we want to measure our performance based on. We do think that’s an important one for us to be thinking about in terms of recruiting and retaining employees in this market. Right now, we need to be thinking about will our employees recommend us to others as a place to work. Communication is a potential pathway for us to improve overall engagement. We were looking into that as one of the benchmarks in HR related to compensation, how do employees feel about the compensation they’re receiving in terms of fairness.

Chair Callsen asked about step 2 ---. Step 1 is data; step three is where we want to be. And on the school board, we lose sight of where is step two. Are we going to have a presentation around that? And as a positive, she really liked how they very clearly put the data from last year, and the data from this year. That’s something that’s nice that we can just see. -- Every level of leadership within the organization needs to action plan down to the team level and at the highest level of the organization. There will be some more work done around what does this look like as we go into next year. The first step of course is making the data transparent. Within HR, we will bring the charge to the department level data to the HR team and here’s where we went, here’s where we improved as the department. Is where our score is going down. We’re going to start thinking and planning as an HR team over the summer for what’s our work next year how did these indicators help us achieve those goals and what one can we leverage and focus upon.

Mr. Paige asked about the question “employee needs” and if there were any follow-ups to help us focus on those needs. -- One thing that we encourage our leaders to do is to look at all the data. The qualitative data is what people say about why an item is high or why an item is low. Those summaries are summaries of a common definition of each one of those questions.

Chair Callsen inquired if this data was specific to school settings? -- Yes. When we percentile ranking, it’s against the K12 database.

Agenda Item No. 9.2 The Board took a break from 7:50 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 9.3 Transportation Update & Plans for the 2023-24 School Year

In response to the ongoing bus driver shortage, the Board has requested regular updates from the Transportation Department. Enclosure 1 is an update on student ridership, staffing, and on-time arrival impacts. In addition to an update for the current year, the Transportation Department will also provide an overview of changes planned for the 2023-24 school year in response to ongoing staffing challenges. Staff presentation given by Chief Operating Officer Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt and Director of Transportation Services Ms. Charmane White. - [Staff Presentation](#)

Dr. Acuff asked about relief drivers. -- Presently, we only have one relief driver, and we need more who are full-time staff. We do not have a list like we have substitute teachers. There are regulations against having something like a list of substitute teachers.

Dr. Acuff also asked how long it takes for drivers to be trained. – it takes from 45 days up to 60 days to complete the training.

Ms. Osborne asked about the status of outsourcing. – We still have limits with solicitation but are still in the process of negotiating.

Ms. Le asked for a registration update. – It looks like we have anywhere from 3,000-4000 students registered. More than our actual daily ridership, and that is a struggle for us because we end up planning for about 3,000 children. If we could have a more accurate account of how many children need transportation, it would help us in our planning and it also would help us with less open routes.

Ms. Le commented that she understood we would have a stricter registration process this year. -- We thought that it was going to shake out so that we had a better stance. What delayed it was we had a lot of parent traffic. Administrators were a little hesitant just to pull students off, but this year we're approaching that and we're meeting to talk about the logistics of how we need to do that so we can be assured that if students need the transportation, it will be available if capacity will allow it and if you don't, we will be asking parent to transport.

Ms. Le asked about the City and transportation issues – if they were having the same issues as us. -- Yes, they are. The increase in pay and the step scale is what has put us above the others. They are still struggling with recruitment as well.

Dr. Acuff commented that she noticed we had nine train this year, but then we lost six. -- That's comparable to what we're seeing for one reason or another whether sickness the family dynamics change whether they found something that was more suitable for their families they chose to leave.

Mr. Paige asked about the double-back routes this past year. He commented that certain students either economically or racially were being picked up early, if we go with this stack route process, will that be eliminated? – We can't say there would be eliminated, but where it's possible, we've indicated which schools can accommodate stacked routes. We just don't have resources to accommodate all the routes, but we're going to do our best to make sure that we get nearly as close to or in that 15-minute timeline.

Chair Callsen commented that it sounds like we're centering the needs of our school bus drivers in a way that we probably haven't in the past. And sounds like the answer just might be we can't at the same level. We don't have enough drivers. We can't ask them to solve all their problems. She appreciated the honesty open communication, and clarity around where we are, communicating that to families, especially if we're going to change how we put students on buses and having to proactively make them register. She is confident we'll be able to do that. A really big focus on letting families know where we stand and can appreciate that we're not in a great place but letting people know so they can plan appropriately.

Dr. Haas commented that Charmaine has been a great leader through this whole thing. She took a ship that was on the rocks and found the path and kept moving forward, her and her team. Because of what it does for kids that need to get to school. He is optimistic because of our strategies around the pay scale and pay increases improving climate has been steadily improving under Charmaine's leadership.

Agenda Item No. 9.4 Community Engagement Update

This is the first of a two-part report (second report will be presented on 6/8/23) providing a year-in-review update from the Office for Community Engagement. During this presentation, members of the OCE Leadership Team will discuss the current state of Culturally Responsive Teaching Program and School Community Engagement, activities from this school year, as well as next steps & plan for the upcoming school year. During the June meeting, the OCE Leadership Team & members of DEAC will provide policy and project updates. Staff presentation given by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Daphne Keiser, Director of Equity, Family, School and Community Relations Dr. Eric Irizarry, and Director of Equity Education Ms. Ayanna Mitchell. [Staff Presentation](#)

Ms. Le commented that one of her favorite days of the year is attending the Equity Conference. She gets to see educators of all kinds talking about ways in which they're changing fundamentally how they're doing their job. Their understanding sounds better. They're reaching their students better. They're showing the data behind it. One thing she is glad to see is giving contract hours to finish that work. We've always said it was important, but we didn't put our money where our mouth was. One disappointment was seeing two of our schools, AHS and Greer Elementary, have the lowest number of teachers with their CRT credentials. We have the highest number of students from marginalized groups in these schools. -- That's part of where we will be thinking about

next year, how we use equity specialists to be in targeted spaces working directly with PLC's where we see and notice the largest gaps.

Chair Callsen commented that she sees these two topics as two separate presentations. A presentation on CRT and one on engagement. She would also like a deeper dive into each versus grouping together. She was very impressed with the work that staff are doing, and happy they are working for us and on our team for the CRT piece. She would like a deeper dive into the data around the effects that it's having in the schools that have a higher percentage of people receiving CRT certification.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 10.1 Closed Meeting - None.

Dr. Haas informed the Board that on May 12, he and Dr. McLaughlin, and several principals who will be heading out to York County. They have set up a 1/2 day of professional development for our team of administrators.

Chair Callsen asked the board members to continue to add to the SB Working Docs database. She noted that they have currently visited almost every school in the division. Only missing one school, Piedmont Regional Education Program. That means that we're hitting our goals. The evaluation is in that working document as well. So, you can look and remind yourself of what we're going for.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 9:10 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Callsen adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Clerk

Chair