

MINUTES

WORK SESSION OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, January 25, 2024

A work session of the Albemarle County School Board was held on January 25, 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: Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Chuck Pace, Mr. Graham Paige, Ms. Allison Spillman, and Ms. Judy Le

ABSENT: Dr. Kate Acuff and Dr. Rebecca Berlin

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; Director of Special Projects, Jamie Gellner; Director of Building Services, Lindsay Snoddy; Assistant Director of Building Services, Matt Wertman; and Director of Budget and Planning, Maya Kumazawa

Agenda Item No. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

At 5:30 p.m., Mr. Paige offered a **motion** the 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 8, which allows for a closed meeting for the purpose of consulting 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, and with the administration of the School Board's Policy concerning the Treatment of Transgender and Gender Expansive Students (Policy JBA). Ms. Spillman seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

Agenda Item No. 2.1 CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION

At 6:31 p.m., Mr. Paige 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**. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Call to Order

At 6:32 p.m., Chair Le called the meeting back to order.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.4 Moment of Silence

Agenda Item No. 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Osborne 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, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, and Chair Le.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

4.2 Personnel Action

Mr. Paige 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: Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Ms. Osborne, and Chair Le.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 5.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA - None

Agenda Item No. 6.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Haas enjoyed attending a theater production at Henley Middle School, featuring "Game of Tiaras" and "Ten Ways to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse" by Henley Theaters. Despite the dreary weather, the performance was well attended, and the students' effort was evident, making the plays highly enjoyable.

Additionally, Dr. Haas visited Stony Point Elementary and Ivy Elementary Schools, focusing on addressing educational opportunity gaps. He discussed with Principal Maureen Jensen and teachers' strategies to provide equitable educational opportunities. For instance, third-grade teacher Addison Holmes emphasized building a consistent foundation for all students, while librarian Julie McGill actively involved students in choosing library books to increase engagement.

At Ivy Elementary, Dr. Haas sought teachers who maintain consistent grade-level standards. Third-grade teacher Michael Weiss highlighted the importance of adhering to pacing guides and revisiting necessary skills, a sentiment echoed by PE teacher Matthew Cruz. First-grade teacher Rachel Montgomery stressed optimizing instructional time to enhance learning outcomes and maintain fairness in education standards across the board. Dr. Haas found these visits enlightening and reflective of the dedicated efforts by teachers and staff to advance educational equity and effectiveness.

Ms. Osborne visited the Scottsville PTO last week and enjoyed hearing about the things they're working on to uplift the students and teachers. She commented that it is evident that they really care about their teachers.

Chair Le visited Madaline Michael at Monticello a couple of weeks back. She stated that one of the favorite parts of this job is speaking with students and they spoke with her with candor, which is a real gift. She recommends anyone else on the board who wants to go out to go visit, Madeline is always open to having people there.

Agenda Item No. 7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ben Garland resides in the Jack Jouett district. Mr. Garland is the president of the Jefferson Swim League and asked that the 2025-2026 calendar be identical to the 2024-2025. He further asked that for planning purposes for his group and others in the community, the Board approve next year's calendar and all future calendars earlier in the year.

Agenda Item No. 8.0 SCHOOL BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT BUSINESS – None.

Agenda Item No. 9.0 SCHOOL DIVISION WORK SESSION

Agenda Item No. 9.1 2024-2025 School Year Calendar – Jamie Gellner - ACPS started its annual calendar development process earlier than usual with a plan to approve a two-year calendar for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years by fall 2023. Throughout the development process, the Calendar Committee, which is composed of teachers, parents/guardians, and school and central office administrators, considered feedback from students, employees, families, and community members, as well as new state and internal requirements. The work prioritized the following goals:

Create a calendar that meets state requirements for instructional hours and supports the division's efforts to engage students and improve opportunities and achievement.

Enable time for division-level and school-based professional learning and collaboration for staff to deepen their understanding of instructional practices that support student learning.

Embed time for teachers to work individually on such tasks as updating lesson plans, grading assignments, preparing materials, etc.

Limit the number of half-days for students.

After careful review, the committee does not recommend an early start for next school year and will not pursue a two-year calendar adoption. The committee has recommended a calendar option for the 2024-2025 school year (attached). [2024-2025 School Year Recommendation](#)

Chair Le appreciated the comments made by Mr. Garland and the notes received from the community thus far. She emphasized the limited feedback received since the last meeting, relying heavily on previous data. Chair Le highlighted three main points from the gathered feedback:

Supportive of moving up the calendar dates, citing benefits such as concluding the semester before winter break and aligning with other calendars.

Advocates delaying changes to the current year, pointing out the high workload and potential disruption as reasons to wait.

Additionally, endorses accelerating the calendar approval process, noting a shift in community expectations due to changes in surrounding areas. She further suggests aiming for a December vote to better accommodate families and organizations."

Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to accept the 2024-2025 Calendar as presented at the last meeting. Ms. Spillman **seconded** the motion. **A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.2 AHS Second Floor Connector Project, Schematic Design – Lindsay Snoddy - Presentation - Through the AHS and WAHS High School Master Plan completed in 2022, a high priority for AHS was determined to be a second-floor connector wing to improve circulation and provide additional innovative spaces. The second-floor connector will improve circulation throughout the building, add classroom capacity, and provide improved teacher professional space. The project concept involves a 1,500 square foot renovation inside the existing building with a 6,295 square foot addition / expansion that includes six additional classrooms, and an additional space dedicated to teachers.

Mr. Pace asked if this is being built on top of the original school, which was built in 1953 – 1953, if they had done test bores, so they know what they are building on top of. The structural engineer is very confident that what the builder is proposing to do will support the structure.

Ms. Spillman was curious about the following:

What is being constructed above the existing classrooms? A new structure is being built on top of a section of the school where there are already several small classrooms underneath.

Will the classrooms below remain functional during construction? No, the classrooms below will not be functional during the initial phase of construction over the summer. This is to ensure safety while structural components like steel are being moved and the concrete floor is being poured.

What is the plan when school resumes in the fall? The goal is to have all spaces below the construction fully functional when everyone returns in the fall. This includes ensuring that the classrooms and main corridor connecting parts of the building are usable.

Is there a backup plan in case construction is delayed? Yes, there are backup plans in place. These include alternative arrangements for the classrooms and potential use of additional spaces like the courtyard for a few days if necessary. These plans are being developed in coordination with the building principal to address potential delays, such as adverse weather conditions that could affect construction timelines.

Ms. Spillman asked for more information about the noise insulation of the partitioned classrooms. The partitioned walls that are being used in the classrooms have undergone significant improvements compared to the older styles from decades ago. Originally, partitions were more like simple panels that primarily blocked vision and did little for sound insulation. However, the new partitions have a high Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating, which means they are much more effective at blocking sound. They are thicker and incorporate materials like those used in insulated walls. Additionally, these partitions are designed to be easily movable and are integrated into the structure above, allowing for flexibility in classroom size and layout while maintaining good sound insulation. This makes them comparable to traditional gypsum wallboard walls with additional soundproofing, ensuring minimal noise transfer between classrooms when closed.

Mr. Paige asked about daylight being in parts of the new corridor. Yes, they are looking at putting windows in the quarter wall to allow daylight to come in.

Chair Le asked if we have any examples of projects built in close proximity while classes were going on. Ms. Schmitt responded that for these major construction projects, all the additions have been immediately adjacent to classroom spaces. We pre-qualify our contractors that they have experience often in schools and our project managers, school safety and fire are on site, There's a lot of protocols in place.

This item will be on the February 8 Consent Agenda for approval.

Agenda Item No. 9.3 High School Center II, Schematic Design – Matt Wertman - ACPS is designing a new high school center on the Lambs Lane Campus. High School Center II is planned to serve 400 students per day at a size of approximately 60,000 SF. In accordance with Policy FEA, an ACPS committee received proposals and selected Quinn Evans Architects as the architect for the project. The design committee included a diverse group of stakeholders and was highly involved with community engagement to enhance the design process. Community engagement efforts included presentations and listening sessions for students, the Georgetown Green community, the AHS PTSO, Making Connections, and the Career Learning Community Leader Steering Committee. The Committee also set up information tables at the recent High School Curriculum Fairs to request input from parents and students. Staff and Quinn Evans presented a budget update for the schematic design for HS Center II and seeking approval to proceed with design development.

Mr. Pace asked if we lost a practice field. No – we did not.

Chair Le asked; in the value engineering, where the pedestrian bridge was located. We were able to mitigate moving that by changing some of the grading it out, which is saving us money. It is not going to be a safety concern.

Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to approve the schematic design of the new High School Center II, and direct staff to proceed to the design development phase. Mr. Paige **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 Chair Le.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.4 Budget – Educational/Informational Session (Part I) – Maya Kumazawa and Jim Regimbal, Principal at Fiscal Analytics, Ltd.

The first part of the Work Session was a **presentation** of projected FY 25 state revenues and the implications of the 2024-2026 Governor's Introduced Budget.

Agenda Item No. 9.5 – The School Board took a break from 8:03-8:15 P.M.

Agenda Item No. 9.6 Budget – Educational/Informational Session (Part II) – Maya Kumazawa

In the second part of the Work Session, staff provided detailed information about the FY 25 Baseline Expenditure Budget for the School Board to understand the major components of the ACPS budget. The materials will also serve as a starting point for the FY 25 Budget Development process and the presentation of the Draft Funding Request.

10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Spillman addressed the issue of gun safety, emphasizing the need for all members of the school community to feel safe and included. She highlighted the prevalence of firearm violence, particularly in schools, and urged a focus on safe firearm storage to prevent harm and tragedy. Citing alarming statistics, she noted that gun violence is a leading cause of death for children in the United States, with a significant portion of school shootings involving guns from homes.

Chair Le noted that while efforts are underway in the General Assembly and the White House to address the issue of safe firearm practices, she emphasized the importance of taking proactive steps at the local level. She suggested that Albemarle County Schools could lead by example by prioritizing safe and secure gun measures without waiting for external initiatives to take effect.

Ms. Spillman offered a **motion** to direct the Superintendent and his staff to draft a resolution emphasizing the importance of safe and secure gun practices for the safety of students and staff in Albemarle County Schools. Mr. Paige **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 Chair Le.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Acuff and Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT

At 9:33 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Le adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk