

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, December 14, 2023

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

BOARD MEMBERS - Dr. Kate Acuff, Mr. Jonno Alcaro, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Graham Paige, and Student Representative, Ms. Opal Kendall.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE - Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Board Attorney Ross Holden; 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 Phil Giaramita; and Clerk of the School Board Christine Thompson.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

At 5:16 p.m., Ms. Osborne 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. The purpose of this item in the closed meeting is to review and discuss candidates for interim appointment to the School Board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Katrina Callsen;

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 body. The purpose of this item is to discuss the purchase of property adjacent to an ACPS school;

Subsection 7 for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. The purpose of this item is to discuss the current status of the lawsuit *Mais v. Albemarle County School Board*; 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 the interim appointment to the School Board, a resolution for public sector collective bargaining, and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Charlottesville City Schools establishing certain operating procedures for CATEC. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Motion carried by a 6:0 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.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification

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

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Berlin

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

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

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

- 4.1 - Approval of Consent Agenda
- 4.2 - All-In Appropriation
- 4.3 - FY 2023-2024 Carry Forward of Fund Balances
- 4.4 - FY 24 Appropriation for All-In VA Funding
- 4.5 - Personnel Action - Athletic Coaches
- 4.6 - Personnel Action
- 4.7 - For Information: Policy, Review and Revision
- 4.8 - For Action: Policy, Review and Revision
- 4.9 - 2024-2025 Middle School Program Guide and High School Program of Studies

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 - Presented by Student Representative Weining Ding. Honoring Zachary Gran, Monticello HS Student

We have the privilege this evening of recognizing Zackary Gran, a Monticello High School senior. Zack's high school career began online, during COVID, enrolled in the school's Health & Medical Sciences Academy. Among other interests was the introduction the academy provided to the use of CPR in medical emergencies. This interest continued into this summer, when Zack was employed by the county as a camp counselor for young children. This led to CPR certification.

A few weeks ago, on November 24, the day after Thanksgiving, Zack and Zack's grandfather were driving in the area of Stone-Robinson Elementary School, on a winding rural road past the school. Zack noticed a car on the side of the road and a few people gathered outside the car. More alarming, Zack spotted a little girl, a very young girl, motionless on the ground. Zack stopped the car and while Zack's grandfather retrieved a blanket to keep the girl warm, Zack ran to her side. She was unresponsive.

While the people around the young girl watched, Zack used CPR training and additional outdoor first aid training to check for vital signs before administering CPR. Within minutes, the police and EMTs arrived, providing additional care and the child was transported to the hospital emergency room, where she recovered.

Many of us I am sure can recall driving past a scene where a vehicle is stopped on the side of the road. It may seem reasonable to assume that someone else has called 911 and that our assistance is not needed. Or perhaps we would call 911 while we continued driving.

It was not exactly clear what was happening on that isolated road the day after Thanksgiving. Zack's third grade teacher once remarked on her student's remarkable observation skills even as an eight-year-old. Nine years later, those skills were on display during a serious medical emergency.

Agenda Item No. 6.2 Announcements –

Chair Judy Le presented School Board Student Representative Ms. Opal Kendall with a [letter](#) of appreciation for her time of service on the School Board.

In recognition of Mr. Ross J. Holden, Esq.'s dedication to Albemarle County Public Schools, Dr. Kate Acuff presented him with a [resolution](#) from the Board.

Mr. Jonno Alcaro presented a [resolution](#) from the Board to Mr. Phil Giaramita in recognition of his unwavering dedication and commitment to the school division for the past twelve years, and in acknowledgement of his retirement.

Mr. Jonno Alcaro has made a significant impact on Albemarle County students and the community during his time on the School Board. Mr. Graham Paige presented him with a [resolution](#) to recognize his extraordinary commitment, and to express the Board's appreciation for his dedication and service. His contributions will undoubtedly be missed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Jill Heinze lives in the Scottsville Magisterial district and spoke to the Board about school bus stop arm camera procurement. In Albemarle County, approximately 6000 vehicles disregard school bus stop arms every year, endangering students' lives. Despite repeated incidents, law enforcement struggles to monitor all routes, leading to a sense of impunity among violators. Stop arm cameras have proven effective in deterring such behavior, with studies showing a significant reduction in violations after citations are issued. Legal groundwork has been laid, but implementation details remain. She urged the school board to expedite the installation of these cameras to protect our children. A Change.org petition with 228 signatures underscores community support for this initiative.

Mr. Finnegan Driscoll lives in the Scottsville Magisterial district and is an Albemarle High School student and MESA student. He spoke to the board about the 7+1 schedule. He is deeply concerned about the proposed 7 + 1 schedule change. This change would severely impact juniors and seniors in Mesa, forcing them to sacrifice electives for engineering blocks, limiting opportunities for exploration and growth. As a student involved in drama, choir, leadership, and student council, he values the balance between academics and electives. Implementing the 7 + 1 schedule would force students to choose between their passions and academics, disproportionately affecting the Arts department. Arts education is crucial for development, providing a creative outlet and promoting mental well-being. Personally, he faces the dilemma of either sacrificing his electives or leaving Mesa and his school community. He urged the board to vote against this change, as it would limit students' opportunities and undermine the importance of a well-rounded education.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 SCHOOL BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT BUSINESS

Agenda No. 8.1 – Transportation Update

Chief Financial Officer, Rosalyn Schmitt presented a [transportation](#) update.

Agenda No. 8.2 – Rio District School Board Vacancy

Ms. Osborne offered a motion to appoint Mr. Chuck Pace to fill the Rio Magisterial District seat vacated by Katrina Callsen. Dr. Berlin **seconded the motion. A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9.0 – SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 9.1 – Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) [Annual Report](#) – Katy Compel, SEAC Committee Co-Chairs; Jessica Allen and Kate Koltizer - The SEAC presented the annual report and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities. This report was presented by the Chairperson of the Special Education Advisory Committee. Any recommendations made by the SEAC that have fiscal implications would be pursued and developed based on the direction of the School Board. Any significant redirection of resources would be brought forward through the budget procedures established during the development of the 2024-2025 school budget. [Presentation](#)

Ms. Le commented that the report was informative, she liked the clarity of the report and thanked the committee for their presentation.

Ms. Osborne found the report comprehensive; she understood their request and thanked the committee for their report.

Dr. Acuff asked about the committee’s strategy in increasing their survey response rate and initiatives to increase community engagement. The committee have met with the UVA Law School who have suggested initiatives that they will be implementing.

Dr. Berlin was pleased that every school was represented in the report and found it to be clear and concise.

Agenda Item No. 9.2 – High School Schedule (7-Academic Choice) – ACPS are investigating the value of implementing a seven-period academic day with one additional period for enrichment/intervention in high schools. One measure of success would include reduction in the number of high school students enrolling in study hall reported by school. [Presentation](#)

The following staff participated in the evening’s presentation to the board:

Mr. Jay Thomas, Executive Director Secondary Education

Mr. Darah Bonham, Principal Albemarle High School

Dr. Beth Costa, Principal Monticello High School
Mr. Chad Ratliff, Principal Community Lab School
Mr. Jeff Prillaman, Director Center One
Ms. Jennnifer Sublette, Principal Western Albemarle High School

The advantages and disadvantages of the 7-academic choice were discussed in depth, including operational and governance implications. You can find the video at this [link](#), beginning at mark 1:15:47.

Agenda Item No. 9.3 – The School Board took a break from 8:21 p.m. to 8:31 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 9.4 – Southern Feeder Pattern Elementary School Schematic Design – Lindsay Snoddy - Albemarle County Public Schools is designing a new elementary school within the division's Southern Feeder Pattern. The assumed building size is 72,500 square feet, with an anticipated capacity of 500 students. In accordance with Policy FEA, an ACPS committee received proposals and hired VMDO Architects, P.C. as the architect for the project. The design committee includes a diverse group of stakeholders and has been highly involved with community engagement to enhance the design process. Community engagement efforts have included presentations at PTO meetings and Making Connections, surveys accessible in multiple formats and languages, and a teacher steering committee. Community engagement efforts have also focused on feedback on a potential upper (grades 3-5) and lower (grades PreK-2) school model for Mountain View and the new elementary school. The funds for A/E Professional Services for the project have been approved in the FY24 Capital Improvements Program. Construction funding is currently included in FY25. Staff and VMDO presented the schematic design for the Southern Feeder Pattern.

Dr. Berlin asked how many elevators would be in the building. Two and they go to all three floors.

Mr. Alcaro asked how many items are being looked at to cut back on for cost savings – how severe are they? ... To get to the budget of 31.75 million, the cuts would need to be very severe. More than anybody wants to consider.

Ms. Le commented that she appreciated trying to keep the scope of it, because we have historically built too small.

Dr. Acuff asked if we know what the cost estimates for any of the construction the county has underway. The most recent comparable project is the Mountain View cafeteria. The most recent one the local government had was the courts project, but that was a different delivery method. Dr. Acuff was trying to assess their understanding of the escalating costs. The budget set for this was two or three years ago.

Agenda Item No. 9.5 – Fourth Quarter Financial Report – Jackson Zimmermann - The fourth quarter year-end financial reports representing April, May, and June 2023 are presented for the Board's consideration. This report provides 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 affect these categories. All lines are numbered to assist in clearly guiding readers of the report when specific information is discussed. A summary of the year-end results, along with summary financial data will be included with forthcoming attachments.

Dr. Berlin asked if there were any major categories if we had lower than expected expenditures. There is a wide range – the largest by far is our compensation and benefits. Mostly due to variations of when people quit to when they are replaced.

Mr. Alcaro. offered a motion to receive the fourth quarter financial report as presented. Dr. Berlin **seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.6 – First Quarter [Financial Report](#) – Jackson Zimmermann

Mr. Alcaro. offered a motion to receive the first quarter financial report as presented. Mr. Paige **seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.7 FY 25 Budget Development and Compensation Update – Maya Kumazawa and Brodie Downs – The purpose of this session was for the School Board to discuss and provide feedback on their priorities for the FY 25 Funding Request. Staff presented preliminary revenue and expenditure assumptions, to include a review of the competitive market for compensation. Staff shared data gathered from community engagement activities for the Board's discussion and consideration. [Presentation](#)

Mr. Alcaro commented about the LCI. The last time the LC I went up was because somebody had sold a lot of stocks and he what happened this time? Adjusted gross income drove the increase. Charlottesville and Albemarle are probably in the top five.

Dr. Acuff asked if we had looked at the competitive market for teacher assistant salaries. That is an area in the survey, an area we are going to explore a little bit more. We do have some comparison data.

Mr. Paige asked if this information was shared with the Board of Supervisors – if not, it should be.

Dr. Acuff was interested in the community study – “do you think your kids are doing well” She is especially interested in the mental health aspect – the social/emotional coaches and the funding.

Ms. Le commented that her top priority would be comprehensive reviews. Now that we have officially incorporated Bellwether into our strategic plan, making all associated recommendations and priorities our top focus. It’s crucial to conduct a comprehensive review of our completed programs. This review will help us understand their original objectives, assess their alignment with our current strategies, and determine their effectiveness relative to the resources allocated.

Dr. Berlin inquired about the reading intervention program. If it would be helpful knowing the number of interventions, and the addition English language support. What we included in last year’s budget. And are there certain schools in the urban ring where we should be providing additional support.

Ms. Kendall shared that her top priority would be the ALICE training for students and mental health.

No. 10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 10.1 Closed Meeting – None.

Agenda Item No. 10.2 Closed Meeting Certification – None.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 10:00 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Le adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk