

**MINUTES**  
**ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD BUSINESS MEETING**

**Thursday, February 13, 2025**

[Video Link](#)

Prior to the start of the meeting, Ms. Leslie Pryor was officially sworn in as the appointed School Board Member representing the Rio Magisterial District. This meeting marks her first official participation as a member of the Board.

**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. Graham Paige, Ms. Leslie Pryor, Ms. Allison Spillman, and Student Representative Moosa Ahmed

**ABSENT** – None

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE** - Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Division Counsel Josiah Black; Assistant School Division Counsel Erin Stone; Assistant Superintendent Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Chandra Hayes; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Helen Dunn; and Clerk of the Board Christine Thompson

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING**

**Agenda Item No. 1.1 Closed Meeting** – Mr. Paige offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County 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 mid-year performance evaluation of the Superintendent; 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 such counsel; the purpose of this item is to discuss a human resources issue and guidelines for communications with media outlets. Ms. Le seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES**

**Agenda Item No. 2.1 Call to Order** - At 6:32 p.m., Chair Acuff called the Albemarle County School Board meeting back to order.

**Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification** - At 6:30 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. Le seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

**Agenda Item No. 2.3 - Roll Call**

**Agenda Item No. 2.4 - 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 taken, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Agenda Item No. 4.1 Spotlight – Recognition of Student Achievement** - The UVA Equity Center and the Karsh Institute of Democracy recently hosted a writing contest open to 6th–12th grade students enrolled in public, private, or homeschool programs in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Out of 42 thoughtful submissions, the panel of judges selected Aanya Sonkusare, an 8th-grade student at Joseph T. Henley Middle School, as the Grand Prize Winner. The School Board was honored to welcome Aanya to the meeting, where she presented her winning poem, [\*Democracy and Me\*](#), to all those in attendance.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4.2 School Board/Superintendent Business**

Mr. Paige offered a [Proclamation](#) Recognizing National School Counseling Week.

Dr. Berlin offered a [Proclamation](#) Recognizing February as National Love the Bus Month

Ms. Le read a [Resolution](#) of Appreciation recognizing Christine Thompson in honor of School Board Clerk Appreciation Week.

Dr. Berlin offered a **motion** to approve the [Affirming Policies Statement](#) as presented by Ms. Allison Spillman, At-Large Representative. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

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

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

Student School Board Representative, Moosa Ahmed, delivered a [statement](#) highlighting the positive impact that students of Albemarle County Public Schools are making on their peers and the community.

Dr. Daphne Keiser provided an update on the impact of weather-related school closures on instructional hours. The Virginia State law requires a total of 990 instructional hours (or 180 school days) each year. As of February 13, the district had 11 surplus hours remaining after accounting for past closures.

Currently, the district can absorb one more full day of closure without falling below the required hours. However, if there are two or more additional closures, makeup days will be necessary. The following non-instructional days are being considered for conversion into instructional days:

- Monday, April 28th (Professional Development Day)
- Monday, March 17th (Professional Development Day)
- Friday, March 28th (Teacher Workday)

If closures exceed these makeup days, the district may need to extend the school day, extend the school year, or request a waiver from the Virginia Board of Education. The situation will be monitored closely, and updates will be provided to families and staff.

Dr. Keiser also addressed how delayed openings (e.g., two-hour delays) count against instructional time. The board discussed the impact of converting professional development days, especially considering the importance

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jim Dillenbeck (Rio District) – Mr. Dillenbeck complimented Dr. Haas and staff for handling the weather forecast effectively. He shared a conversation with a neighbor who decided to withdraw their 4th-grade son from Woodbrook Elementary due to concerns about ELL students and their struggles with SOLs. Mentioned that several other parents had similar concerns. He also expressed concern over teachers leaving the county due to overwhelming conditions and lack of support. Mr. Dillenbeck made three budget suggestions: spend more on teachers and less on central office staff (highlighted disparities in department budgets), fully fund school resource officers for all high schools and hire more safety coaches for middle schools, and consider planning for a 4th high school, as current schools have been overcrowded for 30 years.

Chris Dilbeck (Rivanna District) – Mr. Dillbeck thanked Dr. Haas for his leadership at AHS and shared positive memories from his time at the school. He discussed the value of snow days, mentioning the joy they brought and the opportunities for kids to make lasting memories with family and friends. He suggested continuing to close schools when weather conditions like icy roads pose risks to students. Mr. Dilbeck emphasized the nostalgic beneficial aspects of snow days.

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 6.2 Approval of the Minutes
- 6.3 Personnel Action
- 6.4 Learning Resource Addition
- 6.5 For Action: Policy Review and Revisions
- 6.6 For Information: SPED Program – Leased Space Agreement
- 6.7 Donations & Reimbursements to School Division FY25 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter
- 6.8 Donations & Reimbursements to School Division FY25 – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter

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

**AYES:** Ms. Osborne, Ms. Pryor, Ms. Spillman, Ms. Le, Dr. Berlin, Mr. Paige, and Chair  
**NAYS:** None  
**ABSENT:** None  
**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA - None

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

**Agenda Item No. 8.1 [Overview of the VA School Performance & Support Framework](#)** - The Virginia Board of Education has recently approved a complete redesign to the school accreditation and accountability model. The new model incorporates a combination of student levels of content mastery, growth over time, graduation rates and readiness. Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Patrick McLaughlin provided an overview of the accountability system for elementary, middle, and high schools with specific details about how the VDOE is defining and providing credit for mastery, growth and readiness. This model will be used for the first time at the start of the 2025-2026 school year and will be based on results from the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Dr. Berlin's Questions of Assistant Superintendent Dr. Patrick McLaughlin's presentation:**

- **Time and Complexity of Implementation:**  
How much time (in hours, days, weeks) the work will take and where the complexity lies.  
-- it's complex but manageable. He could break it down in a spreadsheet to show where the work is concentrated.
- **State Support:**  
Is the state is providing funding or support (like a data system) to help with the work.  
-- the state provides data sources which are mostly usable, except for growth data, which won't be available until later. They'll be able to model school results by year's end, though the growth metric remains uncertain.
- **Tracking the "3 E's" (Enrollment, Enlistment, Employment):**  
Are there complications with tracking these.  
-- it's complicated—especially for students who fulfill requirements (like military enlistment) outside school systems, such as through a recruiter. This creates tracking gaps, although most work-based learning and academic programs (like AP/IB) are easier to monitor.

- **Understanding the “5 C’s” (e.g., Creativity, Communication):**  
Clarification on the “C’s” and how changing metrics affect tracking.  
-- the framework includes five “C’s” (e.g., creativity, communication), often measured through performance-based assessments that resemble real-world tasks rather than traditional tests. The specifics are still unclear, making it difficult to predict their impact.

**Ms. Osborne** inquired about the motivation of this change. Stating that she is just now grasping the system after five years. Dr. McLaughlin replied that the change was motivated by a belief that the previous accreditation system obscured the reality of student performance. The new system aims to give a clearer, more honest picture of how schools are doing. For example, in the past, it was technically possible for all students to fail science and the school still be rated as “Distinguished.”

**Mr. Paige** asked about the meaning of the “3 E’s.” Dr. McLaughlin responded that the 3 E’s refer to **Enrollment** (college), **Enlistment** (military), and **Employment** (workforce). The goal is for students to be prepared for any of these three pathways after graduation.

**Ms. Spillman** shared a comment and concern: she is worried about the impact of de-leveled classrooms on high-achieving students—particularly in ELA, where students with very different reading levels are in the same class. She fears high performers may not show growth, which could affect how schools are evaluated. She questioned whether this approach, intended to be equitable, may actually be inequitable. Dr. McLaughlin acknowledged the concern. Under the new system, even high-performing students—those scoring perfectly—still have to meet a growth target the next year. The system now expects all students, regardless of starting point, to demonstrate growth. This was designed to show “value added” across all levels of achievement.

**Ms. Le** – inquired about how we collect and use this new data moving forward? What will that process look like? Dr. McLaughlin explained:

- It’s essential for the Board to require a continuous focus on data, especially since the division’s mission centers on ensuring success for *all* students.
- He expects reporting tools like the Quality Profile to remain similar, including breakdowns by demographics.
- The data will still be available and used to identify schools needing support—e.g., percent of students meeting benchmarks.
- Transparency is key, even if some schools are underperforming.

**Dr. Acuff** asked if this is an actionable set of data that can actually improve education, or is it too complex to be useful? Dr. McLaughlin explained:

- One benefit of the new model is its nuanced view of student performance, especially for those well below benchmarks.
- Previously, it was a simple “above/below the bar” system. Now, the state factors in levels like “below basic,” which gives schools clearer insight.
- While not all aspects will be immediately actionable, it’s the division’s responsibility to turn the data into meaningful action.
- Further clarity will come when Dr. Hitt and Mr. Dommer present on how the division uses data to track student progress.

**Follow-Up on Timing:**

- Most data, especially growth data, won't be available until early fall—often late September.
- This delay is due to the external vendor that handles growth modeling across multiple states.
- As a result, the school year often begins without access to full performance data.

**Agenda Item No. 8.2 [2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024-2025 Financial Report](#)  
[FY 2024-2025 Board Report Combined Revenue](#)**

Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial Report. Dr. Berlin seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed with the following recorded votes:**

**AYES:** Ms. Pryor, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Ms. Le, and Chair

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**Motion carried by a 7:0:0 vote**

**Agenda Item No. 8.3** – The School Board took a break from 8:00 p.m. to 8:10 p.m.

**Agenda Item No. 8.4 [Proposed 2026-2027 School Year Calendar](#)**

**Ms. Osborne** inquired as to why we didn't schedule spring break from March 29 to April 2, directly following Easter, to support family travel? Dr. Irizarry's explained:

- The decision to keep spring break during the first full week of April was based on input from the calendar committee and community stakeholders.
- The choice was also made to maintain alignment with Charlottesville City Schools.
- While this year's break falls about three weeks before Easter, it meets several agreed-upon priorities:
  - Keeps spring break in a consistent window each year.
  - Maintains clusters of professional learning and workdays.
  - Preserves a two-week winter break.
  - Provides flexibility for fall and spring family conferences.
  - Ensures consistency with the 2025–26 calendar and neighboring districts—responding to family feedback requesting more uniformity.

**Agenda Item No. 8.5 [Albemarle Employee Care Clinic](#)** - In partnership with the Albemarle County government, ACPS has opened the first of two employee care clinics. During this session, the Board heard an overview of clinic eligibility and services.

**Dr. Acuff** praised the accessibility of the new health center, noting its convenient hours (8:00 AM–6:00 PM, including Saturday mornings), ample parking, and availability of both appointments and walk-ins. She highlighted the option for same-day virtual care via the app as a valuable support for employees.

**Mr. Paige** asked whether physical therapy services would be available. Mr. Redding responded that physical therapy is planned for the Pantops location in the future.

**Dr. Acuff** also raised the importance of the pharmacy benefit, noting that prescription costs are one of the fastest-growing parts of the healthcare plan. Mr. Redding agreed, emphasizing that the pharmacy component is expected to be a key factor in controlling future healthcare costs and claim trends.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 9.0 OTHER BUSINESS**

**Agenda Item No. 9.1 Other Business by the Board Members and the Superintendent** – None

**Agenda Item No. 9.2 Closed Meeting** – none.

**Agenda Item No. 9.3 Closed Meeting Certification** – none.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 9.0 ADJOURNMENT** - At 8:27 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Acuff adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair