

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD Thursday, March 9, 2023 (5:30 PM)

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

BOARD MEMBERS: Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Graham Paige, Mr. Jonathan Alcaro, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Dr. Kate Acuff, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Katrina Callsen

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Board Attorney Ross Holden; Deputy Superintendent Debora Collins; Assistant Superintendent Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Chief Information Officer Christine Diggs; Chief Finance Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Communications Officer Phil Giaramita; Executive Director of Finance, Maya Kumazawa; Student Representative, Sanuthi Amarasinghe; Clerk to the School Board, Christine Thompson

Agenda Item No. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING -- At 5:30 p.m. Ms. Judy Le 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 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; 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; and Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the Albemarle County School Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Mr. Alcaro **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, Dr. Acuff, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

Agenda Item No. 2.1 CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION -- At 6:30 p.m. Ms. Judy Le 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: Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

At 6:31 p.m. Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** that the Board approve the hiring of Ms. Tessa Ashoff as the Executive Director of the Albemarle Foundation for Education. 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, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Call to Order – At 6:33 p.m., Chair Callsen 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 – Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to approve the Agenda. 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, Mr. Alcaro, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA -- Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to approve the Agenda. Mr. Alcaro **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 4.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

4.2 Approval of the Minutes

4.3 For Action: Policy Review and Revision

4.4 For Information – 2023 Community Lab School Charter Renewal

4.5 COVID-19 Status Update

4.6 Personnel Action

4.7 Personnel Action – Athletic Coaches

4.8 Transportation Update

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

School Board Student Representative, Ms. Amarasinghe presented the Spotlight on Education – Even in the age of automatic spell check and artificial intelligence, there still is a place for the 3 R--- particularly--reading and writing. That’s the message reinforced every winter when we celebrate thousands of elementary and middle school students who compete in their school’s spelling bee. Each school crowns a champion and all of our champions come together in elementary and middle school versions of our division-wide competition.

For the 17th year, we are recognizing the best of the best—the first, second and third place winners who will represent Albemarle County Public Schools in the Regional Bee on Saturday. Students from schools throughout Central Virginia will vie for the honor of competing in the National Bee in early June.

Two of our lead coaches, Kimberly Gibson and Andrea Blount, provided faculty support this year, noting that “Even in a sophisticated technological world, being able to master language construction and to use words properly and effectively, remains a vital lifelong learning skill. A skill that always will be fundamental to academic and career success.

This is the second year that we conducted two spelling bees and are able to recognize two champions. Vihaan Rastogi from Baker-Butler Elementary School and, Saurish Srimath Tirumala from Henley Middle School, are our first-place winners.

Grayson Wickline, from Stone-Robinson Elementary School was second and Broadus Wood’s Hanna Belander was third. For our middle schools, Audrey Ishler from Burley was second and Elis Worley from Walton was third. All six of these outstanding students are in the Regional Bee this Saturday morning at Albemarle High School beginning at 9:30.

I’d like to invite Ms. Gibson and Ms. Blount to join us at the podium to share some thoughts about this year’s divisional round Spelling Bee and to make some presentations. And I think, on behalf of all of their colleagues, Vihaan and Saurish will tell us how we too, can win a spelling bee.

Each of the students came to the podium and received a plaque from the School Board.

Dr. Haas commended the work done by the staff on the Spelling Bee. He also announced there will be an Arts Fest in the West – a foundation that supports the arts program, tomorrow evening at 6:00 p.m., at Western Albemarle High School. He visited Greer Elementary School on Monday with Ms. Osborne and Dr. Acuff. The students were doing rigorous work and it was facilitated in an environment Of care that taught the student to care about one another. Students were the active participants in the class. Kindergarten kids leading the class.

Dr. Haas also offered an update on the Collective Bargaining resolution the Board directed staff to work on. At the beginning of the week, the SB lead counsel, Mr. Ross Holden and Dr. Haas met with Collective Bargaining Counsel, Mr. Eric Patel to discuss parameters for developing the resolution. His aim is that we have a timeline and manageable expectations for completing the draft of the School Board’s desirables in a resolution. In addition, he wants the process to be a collaborative process., and after listening to the Board, tried to tailor a plan with the direction we are hearing. The aim that we have a

timeline being able to manage expectations for completing the draft of the Board desirables. He wants the process to be a collaborative process. More concretely, Mr. Patel can have a draft resolution that incorporates several elements from other resolutions he has worked on within six to eight weeks from now. Part of his process will be to flag elements of the draft resolution to indicate other resolutions as he has found parts of them to be beneficial. Eric and Ross will work together. As the process of making the draft gets near conclusion, they will share the draft with the Board for review and feedback. We are aiming for a completion between April 17th and the end of April / beginning of May. When the draft is ready, we will meet with the AEA Counsel, and representatives, and share our drafts (they have already shared their draft) with each other, and we will commence a series of biweekly meetings to work out a resolution that we will ultimately bring to the Board for consideration.

He recognized that no matter how this is handled, there will be complaints. Nevertheless, this proposed strategy is more collaborative than was most likely expected, and I am not suggesting that the two parties sit down with the AEA draft as the only starting point, neither that nor a blank piece of paper.

7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Andrew West lives in the White Hall district and spoke about the “every other day classes” in 8th grade curriculum. He believes this is a terrible choice, and will have half the time to teach and twice as many essays. Asked how is the county justifying this - is there any data to is this preparing them for high school? Teachers will get twice as many classes and sped classes will be cut, teachers will be asked to teach an elective.

Mr. Tory Selmer lives in the White Hall district, is a teacher and concerned parent. She spoke about her concerns for the “every other day English courses” from the perspective of a current English teacher. Said we always follow the research and has been asking for the data and cannot get it. She stated that the teacher alone is what will predict the outcome for the student. She asked about our diverse learners, and economically disadvantaged students about how often they complete the homework given to them. Stated that this change is not good for every student in the county and this is doing the exact opposite for those students who want it

Mr. Kayden Wright lives in the Rio district, he is a student at Albemarle High School. He thanked the board for their Collective Bargaining hypocrisy. – read from the dictionary what the definition of hypocrisy... He talked about the Career Learning Student and the inequities of transportation provided so students are able to participate in the programs. He believes students are unsupported and the program is underfunded.

8.0 SCHOOL BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT BUSINESS – None

9.0 SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Mid-Year Data Update

In February, the division completed our mid-year academic review with school principals. This presentation will provide an overview of the accreditation process, an update on our formative mid-year assessment results, and an overview of how schools use those results to improve instruction and outcomes.

Ms. Osborne do teachers have the time to work with students on these with kids? – when any assessment is given, time spent in PLC is used to look at the data, and then they build an instructional plan to look at that.

Ms. Callsen – that at the highest level – teacher retention, classroom management comes into play. I remember struggling as a new teacher.

Dr. Acuff asked if the students get to see the assessments? – Students get to see their results. It's rare we give an assessment and not go back and let the students see them.

Dr. Acuff asked if every school division see the “dips”? – Yes, we are taking all of the items we are putting together in the science assessments and talk through some of those data points, etc.

Mr. Alcaro asked if staff could define formative vs summative. – Formative – low stakes, all work. Summative – high stakes – one test.

Mr. Paige asked illuminate – that breaks down the data on individual students. – correct. Teachers only see their students. The branch of science of the example given was a 5th grade science test.

Ms. Le looking at the historical data, what happened with science at the end of last year? – It wasn't a good predictor for us. The math and reading proved to be a good predictor for us, but science wasn't. Last year we did see some lower results throughout the state. We believe a significant factor was the two years kids were at home doing science on Zoom.

Ms. Callsen asked about MAP testing in Illuminate – is this supposed to be a substitute? – No, two additional tests have come on board. We thought they were going to be more useful and able us to make adjustments. Turns out they did not. We decided to stop MAP testing this year. If we bring back MAP testing, what does our assessment calendar look like.

Ms. Callsen asked if the benchmarks weren't as successful as we thought, what are we doing? --- it's a continuing conversation and we will update the Board. Dr. Haas added that what we should do is get teachers involved with the decision making. The teachers working together, making assessments they can identify and map it out.

Ms. Callsen is somewhat concerned about the reading scores and how they have dropped a lot. It seems like a significant drop. I want to make sure whatever interventions we are doing are targeted. – There is a balance on that and putting them in tiers like we do students. There were many schools that held their ground and some that didn't do so well.

Dr. Berlin asked if we are working internally and if they could see some data and are we worried about accreditation. We've got to get these scores up. – We have found that fidelity of practice among the teachers is not there. We need to tighten up.

Dr. Acuff asked if the summer program is going to be more robust. Is the assessment any better for those kids? She would like to see more data on that. – We have not done the numbers on them, but we certainly could. And we are planning on overhauling the summer program. Offering much higher pay so we get seasoned teachers. Identifying a reading and math assessment that is sensitive enough to make a difference. We will be inviting about 3,000 students, with criteria with their performance now, so we are getting students who really need intensive instruction. Do small group and one-on-one tutoring.

Ms. Callsen noted that this is our second agenda item on student achievement and that is to meet our board goal of four on agenda related topics. I hope to have at least two more.

Agenda Item No. 9.2 Break – the Board took a break from 7:58-8:08 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 9.3 FY 2021/22 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) -- Albemarle County operates under the County Executive form of government, one of two such counties in the Commonwealth. With this particular form of government, the School Division is considered a component unit of the overall County. Therefore, each year a single audit is completed that encompasses the financials of all aspects of County operations, including our School Division. Mr. David Foley from Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, PLLC presented the completed CAFR and provided some highlights of the document and the overall financial condition of the entire organization.

Dr. Acuff commented that having three clean opinions seems pretty good.

Ms. Callsen asked if there are other localities who have unclear audit reports? – Yes, there are other divisions that have a wide-range of opinions that are no so good.

Agenda Item No. 9.4 Second Quarter FY 2022/23 Financial Report -- The second quarter financial reports representing October, November, and December 2022 were presented for the Board's consideration. This report provided 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. Revenues: March 31 Average Daily Membership (ADM), upon which state revenues are estimated, is projected to be 13,489. Overall state revenues are anticipated to be stronger than budgeted based upon available current year pre-conference state budget information. Local school revenues are anticipated to be slightly less than budgeted due to the continued effects of the pandemic. Federal revenues are estimated to meet budget. Local transfer will meet budgeted amounts. Expenses: Compensation and benefits expenses are estimated for this report based upon payroll data paid through January. Overall compensation and benefit costs are estimated to be less than budgeted by just over \$1.8M. Balance of Revenues over Expenses: Reported December 31 revenues exceed expenses by nearly \$16.9M. Reported state revenues collected totaled slightly more than \$28.4M. School Fund Balance: Fund balance use in FY22-23 is budgeted to be ~\$11.1M. This information is subject to change as current year operations and next fiscal year budget planning continues.

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to receive the Second Quarter 2022/23 Financial Report. Mr. Paige **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, Mr. Alcaro, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.5 School Board Approval of the FY 24 Funding Request -- This was the fourth session following the Draft Funding Request presentation on February 16. Staff provided a summary of the funding request, follow-up on outstanding items, and facilitated the approval of the School Board's Funding Request.

Dr. Berlin offered a **motion** to Adopt a School Board Funding Request of \$257,346,842 in operating funds and \$29,120,226 in Special Revenue Funds for FY 24. Dr. Acuff **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, Dr. Acuff, and Chair Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 10.1 Closed Meeting - if needed – None

Agenda Item No. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 8:31 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Callsen adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk