

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Thursday, November 13, 2025**  
[Meeting Video Link](#)

**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 School Board Representative Ms. Claire Curry.

**Absent** – None.

**Staff Members** - Superintendent Matthew Haas; Chief Legal Officer Josiah Black; Assistant; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Chandra Hayes; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Jason Grant; Assistant Division Counsel Erin Stone; and Clerk of the Board Christine Thompson

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0** At 5:15 p.m., Chair Acuff called the Albemarle County School Board meeting to order.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.1 CLOSED MEETING** – At 5:16 p.m., Mr. Paige 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 is to discuss the appointment of a candidate for a position in the Superintendent’s Cabinet and to review a proposed employment agreement with School Division Counsel.

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; the purpose of this item is for School Division Counsel to update the School Board on the progress of contract negotiations with the Albemarle Education Association, and for legal counsel to advise the Board about safety measures for presentation hosted by a student organization at one of our high schools. Ms. Le seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES**

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

**Agenda Item No. 2.2 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. Le seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

Ms. Le offered a motion to approve the employment contract of the Chief Legal Officer. Ms. Spillman seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

**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** - Ms. Le offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

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

**Agenda Item No. 4.1 [Spotlight on Education](#)**

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

[Statement](#) of Student Representative – Claire Curry, Western Albemarle High School

Ms. Spillman made the following statement followed by a motion: “Over the past several weeks I’ve talked with parents, teachers, and students — including some from Turning Point — to really understand how our policies affect the people they’re meant to serve. What I’ve heard has made me realize that while we all care deeply about our students’ experiences, there’s room to strengthen our policies to make sure they reflect both our values and our responsibilities.

Over time, our policies governing extracurricular clubs and outside speakers have served us well—but they also deserve a fresh review. The legal landscape and our community expectations have continued to evolve, and we owe it to our students and staff to ensure those policies are clear, fair, and up to date.

We carefully screen the curriculum taught in our classrooms. We review the books in our libraries and the websites students can access at school. Even parent volunteers have to go through background checks before helping in their child’s classroom. But right now, we don’t have a clear, consistent policy for vetting and approving third-party speakers who come into our schools or speak to student groups. That gap creates uncertainty for administrators, staff, and families — and that’s not fair to anyone.

I want to be very clear: I fully support all student clubs and their right to meet. Our extracurricular groups provide incredible opportunities for leadership, friendship, and civic engagement. This motion is not about any single club or event. It’s about reaffirming our district’s commitment to both the First Amendment and to the safety and dignity of every student. By asking the Superintendent’s Office to review and update our procedures, we’re ensuring that every student group, regardless of viewpoint, is treated equitably—and that our schools remain welcoming, respectful spaces for learning and dialogue. I believe we can — and must — do both.”

Ms. Spillman offered a **motion** that the Board direct the Superintendent’s Office to review and update all policies and administrative regulations governing student extracurricular clubs and outside speakers to ensure both robust protections for freedom of speech and safe, inclusive learning environments. The review shall (1) establish viewpoint-neutral criteria for club recognition, facility use, and speaker approval; (2) align with applicable federal and state law; (3) include clear safety protocols that do not discriminate based on viewpoint; (4) provide transparent procedures for event approval, cancellation, and appeal; (5) include staff and student training; and (6) include stakeholder consultation. Draft revisions, with redlines and an implementation plan, shall be presented to the Board at the December 11, 2025 School Board Business

Meeting, with implementation to begin at the start of the second semester. The Superintendent shall report quarterly on implementation and incident trends. Ms. Osborne seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

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

**Chris Dillbeck, Rivanna District** - Mr. Dillbeck proposed an alternative funding option for the new high school. He suggested that if the County approves a data center development, the School Board could partner with those companies to help fund the school. He recommended making data center approval contingent on collaboration with the School Board, with the companies contributing a significant portion of the initial construction costs and committing to annual support. In return, data centers could partner with schools to offer technical and trade-based workforce training programs, benefiting both students and employers.

**Nancy Koenig, Scottsville District** - Ms. Koenig, a retired elementary teacher and parent of a Monticello High School graduate, expressed concern about a lack of focus on academic excellence. She commended the division's reading program and the grant projects presented earlier but noted that despite significant per-student spending, SOL proficiency remains at 75%. She recalled the county's past reputation for educational excellence and argued that current division priorities emphasize innovation and wellness over academics. She urged a renewed focus on academic excellence as the core mission of Albemarle County Public Schools.

**Ashley Martin, Scottsville District** - Ms. Martin echoed Ms. Koenig's comments, stating concern that the Board's attention is centered on capital improvements rather than student achievement. She referenced prior discussions about facilities and renewable energy projects while noting that academic performance remains below expectations. Ms. Martin questioned the need for new schools when existing facilities, such as the one in Scottsville (Yancey Elementary), could potentially be repurposed. She encouraged the Board to prioritize improving student outcomes before investing heavily in new construction projects.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA** - Ms. Le offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Paige **seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

- 6.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 6.2 Personnel Action
- 6.3 Religious Exemption
- 6.4 Approval of the Minutes
- 6.5 For Action: Policy Review and Revision
- 6.6 For Information: Mountain View Upper ES Easements

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA** – None.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 – SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS**

##### **Agenda Item No. 8.1 Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability (ACES)**

[Annual Report](#) and Committee [Annual Update](#)

Following the presentation from the Albemarle Committee on Environmental Sustainability (ACES), Board members posed several questions and offered comments.

Members discussed the committee's recommendations regarding reduction of single-use plastics and electric fleet replacement. The Board expressed support for staff evaluation of current usage and potential reduction strategies. Members noted the pilot program at Murray Elementary School to replace disposable utensils with reusable flatware, and requested follow-up data on its progress, costs, and potential division-wide feasibility, including labor and equipment considerations.

Questions were raised about the vehicle replacement process and funding sources. Chief Operating Officer, Rosalyn Schmitt clarified that vehicle replacement falls within a small, underfunded special revenue fund within the operating budget, covering all non-bus vehicles such as maintenance and technology trucks. Members also discussed the need for clear criteria to evaluate electric vehicle purchases, including cost, performance, and suitability for division operations.

Additional discussion focused on idling near schools and emissions related to vehicle queues during student drop-off and pick-up. Members suggested collecting data on vehicle numbers and idling times, potentially through student participation, to inform future policy.

Several members reflected on the broader goals of the ACES Committee, noting that its creation centralized sustainability efforts, aligned division initiatives with the County's climate action plan, and encouraged integration of environmental topics into instruction. Members agreed that while improvements can always be made, the committee has strengthened coordination and accountability in environmental initiatives.

Ms. Curry also commented on idling concerns specific to Western Albemarle High School, emphasizing the need for practical solutions to reduce emissions from traffic congestion on campus.

The Board expressed appreciation to staff and ACES representatives for their ongoing work and commitment to sustainability.

### **Agenda Item No. 8.2. Update on Comprehensive System of Professional Learning**

Following the presentation, Board members asked several questions regarding the division's instructional coaching model and professional learning initiatives.

Members discussed the reduction in the number of instructional coaches from 25 to 15 positions due to prior budget cuts and asked how coaching support is now allocated. Director of Professional Learning, Dr. Megan Wood explained that 15 coaches currently serve novice teachers and educators new to the division, with eight coaches at the elementary level and three at the secondary level also supporting curriculum implementation and school priorities.

Board members inquired about how the impact of instructional coaching on student learning is measured. Dr. Wood noted that while direct ties between coaching cycles and SOL scores are difficult to establish, coaches and teachers set specific goals, either instructional or professional, and progress is tracked through unit assessments and other local measures.

Members also asked how principals identify teachers for coaching support. Assistant Director, Tony Borash explained that administrators may recommend coaching either voluntarily or more directly when needed, but that any directive approach is handled collaboratively among the principal, coach, and teacher to ensure clarity, respect, and focus on professional growth.

Questions were raised about the integration of culturally responsive teaching in the novice teacher program. Mr. Borash confirmed that culturally responsive practices are embedded throughout the curriculum, with alignment ensured by collaboration between instructional coaches and the division's culturally responsive education team.

Board members expressed appreciation for the high participation rate in the "LETRS" professional learning program and asked for an update on the implementation of the new mathematics curriculum. Dr. Wood acknowledged early challenges with vendor errors in materials but reported that weekly meetings are underway with the vendor to correct issues, provide additional resources, and supply replacement materials at no cost. Coaches are involved in this work to support teachers during implementation.

Dr. Wood also noted that recent reductions in central services staff have affected curriculum rollout capacity.

The Board thanked staff for their efforts and acknowledged the ongoing progress in professional learning and curriculum support across the division.

**Agenda Item No. 8.3** - The Board took a break from 8:19 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Agenda Item No. 8.4 – Approval of [Capital Improvement Plan \(CIP\) Request](#)**

Following staff's presentation on the proposed Capital Improvement Program, Board members discussed project priorities and sought clarification on several items.

Members questioned the sequencing of school renovation projects, specifically why Murray Elementary was ranked ahead of Broadus Wood Elementary despite Broadus Wood having a lower facility condition rating. Ms. Schmitt explained that Murray currently faces greater capacity challenges, including the recent relocation of a pre-kindergarten class due to lack of space, while Broadus Wood's ranking was primarily based on facility condition rather than enrollment pressures. Staff acknowledged that both schools are in need of significant improvements.

Discussion also addressed the ranking of high school projects, including why Western Albemarle High School moved below Albemarle High School in priority. Staff reported that recent internal assessments show Albemarle High now has greater facility needs, as many of Western's major systems, such as the roof, HVAC, and electrical panels have already been upgraded since the 2016 study.

Board members asked about the Preschool Center proposal and whether the estimated \$53.7 million cost reflects a shared or standalone project. Director of Building Services, Matt Wertman clarified that the estimate represents the full cost if Albemarle County Public Schools were to fund and build the center independently, though opportunities for community partnerships or shared funding may exist as the project evolves.

Questions were raised regarding the Northern Albemarle High School project, including whether the total estimate includes land acquisition. Ms. Schmitt explained that land costs were not included due to variability in property values and ongoing evaluation of potential sites, including a proffered parcel that may or may not be suitable.

Members discussed potential future funding models, including the possibility of pursuing a Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) partnership to help offset costs. Staff indicated that such decisions would not be required until later in the planning process, likely around FY 2028, and emphasized that affordability and coordination with the Board of Supervisors will be critical next steps.

Chair Acuff stated that the Board's responsibility is to determine what is needed to effectively educate students, balancing both capacity concerns and renovation needs. She noted that while past capital investments have focused primarily on elementary schools, such as expansions at Crozet and Mountain View and the upcoming North Point Upper Elementary; the division's high schools are now over capacity. She acknowledged that she was initially hesitant to support construction of a new high school but, after reviewing available options, now views it as the most comprehensive and long-term solution. Building a fourth high school, she said, would create four similarly sized schools across the county and address capacity challenges for at least a generation.

Chair Acuff recognized that the project would be costly and would require redrawing attendance boundaries, which could raise community concerns. However, she emphasized that it would allow the division to move beyond constant capacity management and focus on needed facility improvements. She expressed appreciation for the Long-Range Planning Committee's work and identified resolving high school capacity as the Board's top priority moving forward.

The Board thanked staff for their analysis and emphasized the importance of continued coordination with the Board of Supervisors as discussions advance regarding funding, timelines, and long-term capital priorities.

Ms. Le offered a motion to adopt the School Board Capital Improvement Program request for FY2026-27 to FY2030-31 as presented. Mr. Paige **seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

#### **Agenda Item No. 8.5 – [ACPS State of the Division Report](#)**

Following the presentation on the State of the Division, Board members expressed appreciation for the report's transparency in highlighting both successes and areas needing improvement.

Members inquired about the omission of the equity data table that had been included in previous years, which detailed student discipline and other demographic metrics. Director of School Improvement & Quality, Policy & Strategic Planning, Dr. Dallas Hitt explained that while the format of the report has changed, the full equity data remains available on the division's State of the Division website, where additional metrics can be reviewed beyond those highlighted in the presentation.

Board members also raised concerns about school performance, particularly for schools identified as "off track." They requested information on plans to help those schools return to "on track" status and emphasized the importance of addressing persistent achievement gaps. Members noted that Albemarle County Public Schools ranks near the bottom among Virginia districts in reading performance for Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students, despite ranking among the state's highest in per-pupil spending. They asked that specific strategies and budget considerations be developed to improve academic outcomes in these areas.

Discussion also touched on the challenges related to implementation of the new math curriculum, with members asking what additional resources, such as interventionists or staff support might be needed to strengthen instruction and improve student performance. Dr. Hitt confirmed that such needs would be reviewed as part of the upcoming budget development process.

Members concluded by expressing appreciation to staff and school leaders for their work on the report and noted that they look forward to receiving updated state data once released by the Virginia Department of Education.

**Agenda Item No. 8.6 – [Human Resources Annual Report and Hiring Update](#) -- [Presentation](#)**

Following the Human Resources presentation, Board members commended staff for their efforts to retain teachers and maintain strong staffing levels despite national challenges in teacher recruitment.

Members asked about current application numbers for teaching positions and noted that, while applicant pools have decreased in recent years, the division continues to fill positions successfully and maintain high retention rates. Director of Talent, Dr. Jason Sears acknowledged the decline in the number of candidates graduating from teacher preparation programs nationwide but affirmed that Albemarle County Public Schools remains an attractive destination for educators.

Dr. Sears described continued efforts to expedite recruitment and hiring through early contract offers and streamlined review of applications to secure qualified candidates quickly.

Board members expressed appreciation to Human Resources staff, school leaders, and recruitment teams for their ongoing work to support staffing stability across the division.

**AGENDA ITEM No. 9.0 OTHER BUSINESS**

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

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

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

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 10.0 ADJOURNMENT** – At 9:25 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Acuff adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

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Clerk

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Chair