

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, June 11, 2026
[Meeting Video Link](#)

Roll Call - UPON THE ROLL BEING CALLED, THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT:

Board Members - Dr. Kate Acuff, Mr. Bob Beard, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Mr. Jim Dillenbeck, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Ellen Osborne, and Ms. Allison Spillman

Absent – None.

Staff Members - Superintendent Matthew Haas; Chief Legal Officer Josiah Black; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Jason Grant; Coordinator of Office Operations and Executive Support Tanisha Thompson; and Clerk of the Board Christine Thompson

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING - At 4:45 p.m., Ms. Spillman offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County Public 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

1. 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; the purpose of this item is for the School Division's Chief Legal Officer to advise the School Board regarding a recent personnel matter and related legal issues arising at Hollymead Elementary School and the Division's response.
2. Subsection 1, which authorizes 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 review: three principal appointments; three teacher non-renewals; a resignation; a reduction in force involving a department leader; and the evaluation of the Superintendent's job performance. Ms. Le seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously.**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

Agenda Item No. 2.1 Call to Order - At 6:43 p.m., Chair Berlin called the Albemarle County School Board meeting to order.

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification - At 6:44 p.m., Ms. Spillman 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 called, and the motion passed unanimously.**

Agenda Item No. 2.3 - Roll Call

Agenda Item No. 2.4 - Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.5 - Moment of Silence – Chair Berlin shared the sad news of the passing of Anna Young, a member of the Child Nutrition team. She noted that Anna first joined ACPS through the work-study program while she was a student and later continued her career with the division after graduating from CATEC/Post High. Chair Berlin remembered Anna for her positive energy and bright smile and said she will be deeply missed. She asked that Anna's family and friends be kept in everyone's thoughts and then called for a moment of silence.

Ms. Osborne **moved** to appoint Mr. David Foreman as principal of Stone-Robinson Elementary School, Mr. John Wheeler as principal of Baker-Butler Elementary School, and Mr. Christopher Lieberman as principal of Stony Point Elementary School. The motion also included approval of the administrative appointments and tenure recommendations as presented in the closed meeting. Ms. Le seconded the **motion**. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda Item No. 3.1 Approval of Agenda - Ms. Spillman **moved** to amend the agenda to immediately hear public comment, approve the consent agenda, resume the earlier closed meeting, and postpone the remaining business to another date.

After procedural clarification, Ms. Spillman withdrew her initial **motion** and made a new motion reflecting the revised order of business. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Berlin apologized to Board members, staff, cabinet members, principals, parents, and others who had prepared for items on the business agenda. She explained that changing the agenda was not the Board's usual practice, but after the prior evening's Hollymead discussion, public comments, and phone calls received, the Board determined it was important to hear public comment that evening and honor the voices of those who came forward.

She acknowledged that several important items were scheduled for the meeting, including the grading policy, and recognized the time and work that staff, teachers, parents, and principals had put into preparing for those presentations. She stated that those items remain important to the Board and would be rescheduled, either for the July 9 meeting or for another public meeting depending on scheduling and public meeting requirements.

Chair Berlin reiterated that the Board would proceed by hearing public comment, voting on the consent agenda, and then returning to closed session. She said she would work with the Clerk to reschedule the postponed agenda items and provide follow-up early the following week.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS – Postponed

Agenda Item No. 4.1 Spotlight on Education

Agenda Item No. 4.2 School Board, Superintendent, and Committee Updates

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Megan Mitchem, a Rio district resident, Woodbrook parent, and VCU social work graduate student, spoke in support of Albemarle County Public Schools' written policy regarding transgender and gender-expansive students. She said she is grateful the policy remains in place, but expressed concern that implementation varies by school because compliance is left to individual principals. She stated that this places an added burden on families to advocate for their children, particularly families with fewer resources. Ms. Mitchem also noted broader concerns about the safety and well-being of transgender and gender-expansive youth amid state and federal pressures. She urged the School Board to ensure that every school remains a safe and supportive environment for all students, including transgender and gender-expansive students, and emphasized that protecting the dignity and worth of each child is a central responsibility of school leadership.

Bridgette Rodgers, a county parent and Family Council representative from the Rivanna district, expressed concern about the school division's response to an issue that she stated had been known for several months. She said that, in her view, division and school leadership had not taken sufficient action to address parent concerns, revise policy, or communicate clearly with families. Ms. Rodgers stated that parents had experienced repeated refusals to address concerns during the school year and said the events discussed at the prior evening's meeting made the need for action clear. She urged the School Board to vote on the matter and requested that the public be provided with a record of how

each Board member voted regarding the superintendent's continued service. During her comments, the Chair reminded her several times to address the School Board as a whole and not direct comments toward individual people.

Chair Berlin paused public comment to remind speakers and attendees to follow the Board's public comment rules. She stated that speakers should address the School Board as a whole and should not call out individuals by name or position. She emphasized that the Board wanted to hear from the public, but that the meeting must be conducted in accordance with established rules and Virginia public meeting requirements.

Chair Berlin also reminded attendees that public comment is not a discussion and that interruptions or speaking out from the audience could result in removal from the meeting. She asked speakers to continue sharing their concerns with the full Board while following the adopted public comment procedures.

John Riston, a White Hall District resident, requested a three-day extension to the June 1 deadline for submitting foreign exchange student applications. He explained that his family had hosted an exchange student the previous year through the Youth Exchange and Study Program and had a positive experience, including strong support from students at Western Albemarle High School. Mr. Riston said his family delayed deciding whether to host again due to job uncertainty, but ultimately chose to proceed after their prior student returned home. He stated that their coordinator submitted the application on June 4, but the family was informed that the June 1 deadline would not be extended. He emphasized that the program is a merit-based U.S. Department of State diplomatic exchange program and asked the School Board to allow the late submission so his family could host two students.

Helen Dempsey-Henofer, a parent of Albemarle students, local mental health practice owner, and social worker, spoke about Pride Month and the importance of supporting LGBTQ students. They referenced school policies that affirm transgender and non-binary students and expressed concern about public statements and actions that may undermine those protections. They addressed recent reports of sexual violence involving students and a teacher, stating that the issue deserves anger, attention, and accountability. They connected the failure to protect students from sexual violence with the failure to support LGBTQ students, saying both involve denying young people agency over their own lives and experiences. They cited concerns about LGBTQ youth mental health in Virginia and emphasized that schools teach students whether they can expect to be respected and heard. Mx. Dempsey-Henofer urged the community to move toward accountability, healing, and honoring every child as a full person deserving safety, dignity, and agency.

Ashley Fore, an Albemarle County resident, UVA graduate, and ACPS parent, spoke about concerns raised by Hollymead families and teachers at the prior evening's meeting. Ms. Fore said families and staff had made significant efforts to attend and share their concerns and stated that the response they received was troubling. She said the issue should concern all ACPS families because, in her view, current policies do not clearly prevent an adult staff member from being alone behind closed doors with a student. She stated that many parents had assumed such a policy already existed and were alarmed to learn otherwise. Ms. Fore thanked the students, teachers, adults, and law enforcement involved in bringing concerns forward and described the situation as an opportunity for positive change. She urged the School Board to consider a "safety in numbers" policy to prevent students from being alone behind closed doors with a staff member. She requested a full walkthrough of school buildings with an outside agency or trained professional, such as law enforcement or a victim advocate, to identify areas needing greater visibility, cameras, windows, or other safety improvements. Ms. Fore acknowledged that such changes may create logistical and financial challenges but said student safety should take priority.

Lisa Broadway, an ACPS parent and special education teacher, stated that she had submitted a public records and preservation request related to concerns involving an employee arrest, possible prior concerns at another school, and the employee's transfer or reassignment within the division. Ms. Broadway requested that ACPS preserve all records related

to the matter, including emails, text messages, HR records, Title IX records, transfer or reassignment records, outside agency reports, principal and superintendent communications, Board communications, and any district-related records held on district-issued or personal devices. She also asked that the division ensure all relevant information has been reported to appropriate outside agencies, including law enforcement, Child Protective Services, the Virginia Department of Education, and any applicable Title IX or civil rights offices. Ms. Broadway stated that an outside investigator, rather than district leadership, should determine what occurred, whether a transfer or reassignment took place, and whether any administrator failed to act appropriately. Finally, she requested that staff bring the Board, within six weeks, a public framework for proposed student safety policy revisions addressing staff-student boundaries, one-on-one interactions, closed-door meetings, visibility, documentation, supervision, reporting obligations, and enforcement. She said the lack of a policy preventing an adult staff member from being alone with a child is a significant safety gap.

Cassandra Baber, an ACPS parent and 19-year educator, spoke as a parent and stakeholder regarding concerns about the division's handling of the situation. She stated that many parents remain unsure whether their own children were affected and described the matter as a significant failure of leadership at multiple levels. Ms. Baber acknowledged the need for clearer policies governing staff-student interactions but emphasized that policy alone would not have prevented the situation without proper oversight, documentation, communication, and accountability. She stated that existing requirements for documenting student interactions and notifying families were not followed, and said stronger supervision and responsiveness to staff and parent concerns may have prevented much of what occurred. She urged leaders to ask difficult questions, remain accountable, and seek outside guidance when needed. She also asked the Board to speak directly with teachers and staff who worked in the affected building, rather than relying only on filtered information from HR or division leadership. Ms. Baber said teachers have important firsthand knowledge about what they observed and experienced, and they need to be heard directly.

Sarah Paulsworth, a parent of a Hollymead Elementary student, spoke about concerns related to the alleged sex crimes committed by Mike Sweeney against students. She emphasized the importance of transparency and quoted both Patrick Henry and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to argue that public records and government actions should be presumed open unless a specific exemption applies. Ms. Paulsworth stated that she had submitted FOIA requests to ACPS, Hollymead, and Woodbrook, and expressed concern that the division had already indicated some requested records may be exempt from disclosure. She said this added to broader community concerns about a lack of transparency and accountability. She asked whether there had been prior complaints involving Mr. Sweeney, including Title IX-related concerns; whether complaints were handled properly under Title IX and Virginia mandatory reporting laws; why Mr. Sweeney was transferred from Woodbrook to Hollymead; and why parents, particularly those whose children had direct contact with him, were not notified sooner about the police investigation. She stated that the community is not seeking protected personal information but is entitled to clear answers about student safety and division accountability.

Nancy Koenig, a retired ACPS teacher with more than 30 years of experience and the parent of a Monticello High School graduate, spoke about academic expectations and student achievement. She questioned whether the division's current focus aligns with the Commonwealth's stated goal of high expectations and excellence for all learners. Ms. Koenig expressed concern about grading practices that limit the use of zeros for missing work, stating that such practices may reduce accountability and deny students the sense of accomplishment that comes from completing assignments. She also referenced school performance data on the division's website, noting that several schools are listed as off track or in need of intensive support, and asked how long those concerns have existed. She discussed achievement gaps, particularly for Black students and economically disadvantaged students, and suggested that culture, economic status, and instructional methods may be factors. Citing education researchers, she encouraged the division to consider strategies such as explicit instruction, strong academic expectations, clear classroom expectations, phonics-based reading instruction, and more

traditional teacher-led approaches. She stated that renewing some of these strategies could help improve academic performance and reduce behavior concerns.

Tanesha Hudson, a mother of a Black child with an IEP, expressed concern that Black students and students with disabilities have long been treated unfairly within the school division. She stated that families of Black students and students with IEPs have repeatedly raised concerns about discipline, services, and treatment by staff, but do not always see the same level of urgency or response that other families receive. Ms. Hudson questioned whether the division has examined how many Black students or students with IEPs may have been affected by the current situation and urged the Board to consider those impacts as part of its response. She also raised broader concerns about equity, the removal or reduction of DEI-related work, and the way Black women and Black families are sometimes criticized when they advocate for change. She reminded the Board that there is an ongoing investigation and cautioned against assuming guilt before the legal process is complete. Ms. Hudson urged Board members and community members to consider how they would respond if the student involved were a Black child and asked that the division treat Black families' concerns with the same seriousness and urgency given to others.

Daniel Richardson stated that he attended the prior evening's meeting at Hollymead and was angry about information he felt could have been shared with families earlier. Mr. Richardson said the division's communications to families were too generic and did not provide enough useful information, which contributed to parents' concerns that ACPS was not being transparent. He said ACPS could have shared broader details without compromising the investigation, such as that there was a list of families being contacted whose children had been seen by the teacher, or that reports involved incidents in areas such as hallways and the playground. He urged the division to think more carefully about what transparency means in practice, not just in written statements. Finally, Mr. Richardson urged the Board to assess whether any employees or cabinet members involved in the response or communication plan failed to contribute to student safety and should be replaced.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - Ms. Le offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Dr. Acuff **seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

- 6.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 6.2 Personnel Action
- 6.3 Religious Exemption
- 6.4 Religious Exemption
- 6.5 Approval of the Minutes
- 6.6 FY 2026-27 Fee Schedule
- 6.7 For Action: Policy Review and Revision
- 6.8 For Information: Policy Review and Revision
- 6.9 Spring VDOE Series XXVI Reimbursement Resolution
- 6.10 For Information: ACE Academy @ Lamb's Lane Easements
- 6.11 For Action: 2026-2027 Federal Programs Grant Applications
- 6.12 For Action: The New ACPS Cultural Competency Framework Structure for 26-27

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8.0 – SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS – All items postponed.

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 – The Board moved to reconvene its closed session for the reason stated earlier in the meeting. Ms. Spillman made the **motion**, and Ms. Lee seconded the **motion**. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 9.3 Closed Meeting Certification – At 8:26 p.m., Ms. Spillman 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 called, and the motion passed 6-0-1, with Dr. Acuff absent.**

After returning from closed session, Chair Berlin announced that the Board has an obligation to rebuild trust with the community. She stated that the Board had asked Dr. Matthew Haas for his resignation and had instructed Chief Legal Officer Josiah Black to work with Dr. Haas on the details. Chair Berlin further stated that additional information regarding an interim superintendent would be provided in the coming days.

Vice Chair Spillman acknowledged that, in addition to responsibilities related to the superintendent and budget, the Board is responsible for managing policies and practices. She stated that the Board would review and amend policies as needed in response to concerns raised by the Hollymead and Woodbrook communities, with the goal of moving that work forward in the next few weeks.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10.0 ADJOURNMENT – At 8:30 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Berlin adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk