

**MINUTES**  
**WORK SESSION OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

**Thursday, October 23, 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. Allison Spillman, and Student School Board Representative Mr. Maximilian Kofler

**Absent** – Ms. Leslie Pryor

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

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING** - At 6:01 p.m., Mr. Paige 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 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 discuss a new complaint against school administrators and to update the School Board on the progress of contract negotiations with the Albemarle Education Association. Ms. Le seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0). [Ms. Pryor was absent]**

**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 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. Osborne **motion**. **A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0). [Ms. Pryor was absent]**

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

**Agenda Item No. 2.4 - Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda Item No. 2.5 - Moment of Silence**

Chair Acuff introduced Dr. Jason Grant as Chief Communications Officer. Dr. Grant has more than 20 years of communications experience, most recently serving as Director of Advocacy and External Affairs at the International City/County Management Association in Washington, D.C. The Board expressed that they are glad to have him join the ACPS leadership team.

**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 called, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0). [Ms. Pryor was absent]**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Agenda Item No. 4.1 Spotlight on Education**

Student Representative to the School Board, Maximilian Kofler read a statement in Recognition of Principals in Celebration of [National Principals Month](#)

In recognition of National Principals Month, Chair Acuff thanked the students and staff who contributed to the [appreciation video](#) and extended the Board's gratitude to all ACPS principals. She noted that principals provide daily leadership that shapes school culture, supports teachers and staff, and ensures that every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. On behalf of the Albemarle County School Board, she expressed appreciation for their dedication and service.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4.1 School Board Superintendent Business**

Ms. Spillman recognized Director of School Safety and Security, Mr. Ralph Bradley, for participating with her on a recent gun violence prevention panel at Western Albemarle High School. She noted that Mr. Bradley represented the division well and highlighted current efforts to support school safety and student mental health.

Chair Acuff also attended the gun violence prevention program at Western Albemarle High School and stated that it was an excellent event. She noted that Ms. Spillman and Mr. Bradley represented the division well and did a fantastic job on the panel.

Ms. Osborne reported that she attended the African American Teaching Fellows celebration last week, where Daisa Pascall, Art Educator at Walton Middle School, was the ACPS employee honored along with a Charlottesville teacher. She noted that it was a wonderful event and highlighted the strong support network the organization provides.

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

**Lara Harrison, Rio District** - Ms. Harrison expressed appreciation to Board Member Allison Spillman for speaking out regarding Turning Point chapters in schools. She urged the Board to publicly condemn what she characterized as harassment directed at Ms. Spillman, and to take steps to ensure the safety and inclusion of LGBTQ and BIPOC students. Ms. Harrison stated her belief that Turning Point promotes rhetoric that is harmful, discriminatory, and inconsistent with the division's policies. She requested that the Board take action to address the presence of such groups in schools and uphold existing policies related to anti-racism and transgender student protections.

**Phil Rees, Rivanna District** - Mr. Riese thanked the Board for their service and for supporting free speech in schools. He expressed support for the division's decision to allow a Turning Point speaker to attend a recent school event. Mr. Riese stated concern regarding comments made by a Board member comparing a student club to the Ku Klux Klan. He asked the Board to address what he viewed as inconsistent expectations and to publicly reject the comparison. Mr. Riese emphasized the importance of modeling respectful dialogue and ensuring that all students feel supported.

**Gene Locke, Crozet** - Mr. Locke thanked Dr. Haas for his response to a prior inquiry regarding the recent Turning Point speaker. He expressed concern that certain viewpoints, even when allowed under equal access and free speech policies, may create a hostile environment for some students. Mr. Locke questioned how the

division determines when invited speakers may cross that line. He urged the Board to consider student safety and well-being alongside legal requirements, and to prioritize protecting students who may feel targeted by certain rhetoric.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA** - Ms. Le offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Osborne **seconded the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0). [Ms. Pryor was absent]**

6.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

6.2 For Information: Policy Review and Revisions

6.3 2026-2027 Course Additions

6.4 Personnel Action

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

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

**Agenda Item No. 8.1 2025 [Long Range Planning Committee \(LRPAC\) Report](#) and [Capital Improvement Plan Recommendation](#)** - Per policy, the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) is formed to "inform and advise the Superintendent and School Board in the development of comprehensive, long-term plans for facilities needs in the most effective and efficient way and in support of the School Division's Strategic Plan."

The committee has met quarterly over the last two years to analyze and discuss the capital needs of ACPS. The recommendation serves as the first stage in developing the Division's FY 27 - 31 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

In addition to the LRPAC report, staff made a recommendation for CIP Maintenance/Replacement programs for the FY 27-31 Capital Improvement Program.

Board members and staff held an in-depth discussion following the presentation of the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) report and 2025 Capital Improvement Plan recommendations.

High School Capacity and Comprehensive High School Proposal - Board members questioned the ranking and timeline for the proposed comprehensive high school, noting that while NorthPoint was listed first, it was already approved and therefore not an active comparison. Staff explained the project was ranked highly due to the urgent timeline needed to address growing capacity issues. The estimated consulting cost, should the project not proceed, was noted as approximately \$120,000.

Several members emphasized that with four high schools at roughly 1,500-student capacity and expansion of the Community Lab School, the comprehensive high school could solve long-term capacity challenges "for a generation." The committee acknowledged that additions at existing schools, while helpful, function only as "band-aids" and that a larger, countywide solution was needed.

Land Use, Growth, and Development Considerations - Questions were raised about new residential developments, including one near Red Hill, and their impact on enrollment. Staff explained that the referenced subdivision remains in early planning stages, with no firm rezoning or construction timeline. Members also discussed the lack of available land for future schools, urging proactive land acquisition. Staff noted that \$7.5 million is currently allocated for land purchases over five years, but that this may not be sufficient given competition for sites, especially in northern areas with increased biotech and industrial development.

Funding and Economic Development Connections - Board members stressed the importance of a “needs-based” funding approach and the need for sustained investment rather than a one-time five-year plan. They highlighted that school infrastructure directly supports the county’s economic development, workforce readiness, and attractiveness to major employers such as AstraZeneca and Avicenna Scientific. Members agreed that educational quality and modern facilities are integral to community growth and job recruitment.

Equity and Accessibility Concerns - Members raised concerns about aging school buildings and accessibility for students with disabilities, including emergency evacuation procedures in schools lacking functioning elevators. Staff will provide written information on safety measures and potential funding approaches for improvements.

Transportation and Infrastructure Questions - Questions were posed about the connector loop road near Lambs Lane and whether state funding could offset costs. Staff clarified that the county has submitted a revenue-sharing application for pedestrian and intersection improvements along Hydraulic Road but not for the loop road itself. The committee also discussed potential use of school-zone speed-camera revenue for safety-related projects.

Chair Acuff thanked the LRPAC for its extensive volunteer work, calling the report “the gold standard” for capital planning. She affirmed the Board’s responsibility to submit a needs-based budget and advocate for comprehensive investment in school facilities to support student learning, staff safety, and long-term community development.

Site Availability and Land Ownership - Board members asked whether Albemarle County owns property that could be used for school construction to offset land purchase costs. Staff noted that while the School Board owns some land, the county also holds parcels that could be considered, including one near Berkmar Drive that was previously proffered for school use. However, that site is currently being designed for a county convenience and recycling center. Staff advised that if the Board wished to pursue this location for school use, coordination with the county would need to begin soon before the design advances further.

Staff confirmed they will continue evaluating available parcels for potential purchase and report back with options, emphasizing the need to identify suitable land before the design phase for the new high school begins, projected around FY 2028.

Project Prioritization and Capacity Needs - The Board discussed the list of 21 proposed projects and agreed that, aside from minor adjustments, the current ranking aligns with identified needs. Several members recommended elevating the Early Childhood/Preschool Center into the top five projects due to its potential impact on early literacy and childcare access. There was also discussion about swapping the order of Murray Elementary and Western Albemarle High School improvements (projects #6 and #7).

Staff highlighted that North Point Elementary has already been approved and should be considered separately from the ranked list. Members reiterated the urgency of addressing capacity issues, particularly at Mountain View Elementary and in southern feeder patterns, where enrollment pressures continue to grow.

Funding, Land Costs, and Grants - An estimate of the cost to acquire approximately 50 acres of land suitable for a comprehensive high school was requested. Staff agreed to provide an updated figure before the next meeting. Discussion also touched on exploring grants for accessibility projects, such as elevator additions or facility upgrades for students with disabilities. Staff will investigate potential funding opportunities that could reduce costs in these areas.

Next Steps - Staff summarized that the feedback will be incorporated into the final CIP priority list, which will be brought forward for formal School Board action in November.

Board members expressed appreciation for the Long-Range Planning Committee’s extensive volunteer work and the thorough staff analysis supporting the recommendations.

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**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 8:49 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Acuff adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

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Chair

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Clerk

