

A Regular Meeting of the Albemarle County School Board was held on February 11, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902.

PRESENT: Mr. Jonno Alcaro; Mr. Graham Paige; Ms. Katrina Callsen; Dr. Kate Acuff; Ms. Ellen Moore Osborne; Ms. Judy Le; Mr. David Oberg; and Student Representative Angel Pilkey.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Ms. Debbie Collins, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Clare Keiser, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Bernard Hairston, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Christine Diggs, Chief Technology Officer; Mr. Phil Giaramita, Strategic Communications Officer; Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Patrick McLaughlin, Chief of Strategic Planning; Ms. Eileen Gomez, School Nurse Coordinator; Mr. Jackson Zimmermann, School Finance Officer; Mr. Ross Holden, School Board Attorney; and Ms. Jennifer Johnston, Clerk to the School Board.

Agenda Item No. 1.1. Closed Meeting. None.

Agenda Item No. 1.2. Closed Meeting Certification. None.

Agenda Item No. 1.3. Call to Order.

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. Paige, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Mr. Paige said that the meeting is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia state law and Albemarle County ordinance because the Covid-19 pandemic makes it impracticable and unsafe to assemble a quorum physically in a single location. The meeting is being streamed live on the Albemarle County Public School's website, and public comment may be offered through the Zoom waiting room feature in accordance with the School Board's protocol or by written submission.

Agenda Item No. 1.4. Moment of Silence.

Agenda Item. No. 2.1. Approval of Agenda.

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Dr. Acuff **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 3.1. Consent Agenda

- 3.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 3.2 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.3 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.4 Minutes
- 3.5 Policy Reviews and Revisions: For Information
- 3.6 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 3.7 Personnel Action

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Le **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded vote:**

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

NAYS: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 4.1. Items Pulled from the Consent Agenda. None.

Agenda Item No. 5.1. Spotlight on Education.

Mr. Alcaro said sadly, it only was 45 years ago that the U.S. formally designated Black History Month. The first celebration already had taken place, fittingly enough at an educational institution (Kent State University) six years prior. Today, the influence of Black History Month enriches the curricula of schools, colleges and universities throughout our nation and it should lift the consciousness of all. Its theme this year is “Black Family Representation, Identity and Diversity,” exploring in part the strength of Black families across the United States. We don’t have to look very far to find a deep personal appreciation and insight into why its theme for 2021 so resonates and is so vital to our own school community. In fact, we need look no further than Monticello High School. That’s where Autumn King is a sophomore. For many years, Autumn was intrigued by an old family photo in her grandmother’s house. It was of a young lady, born in the latter half of the 19th century. She often studied the picture, which was of a great, great, great grandmother, a photo that immediately dominated her attention every time she entered the room where it was displayed. Autumn is an outstanding young lady who finds inspiration and guidance from the story of others, in life and in art, just as she does every time she becomes reacquainted with that photo and its compelling image. On the eve of Black History Month this year, with its focus on the strength of the Black family, Autumn’s grandmother bestowed upon her a very special gift. The photo, which has been passed down in the family for more than a century, has now been given to Autumn with the simple explanation— “Because I know its care will be in good hands.” Autumn has written about her great, great, great grandmother, not as a class assignment but in response to an ancestor who has reached across several generations to speak to her. He then asked Autumn to share her poem.

Agenda Item No. 5.2. Announcements. None.

Agenda Item No. 6.1. School Board/Superintendent Business. None.

Agenda Item No. 7.1. Public Comment.

Ms. Laura Gonyar lives in the Rivanna Magisterial District. She spoke in favor of returning to school and support of moving to Stage 4.

Mr. Jamie Yowell is a parent. He supports moving to Stage 4. He would like to see Albemarle County move to four to five days a week for in-person instruction.

Ms. Amanda Vogel is a teacher and a parent. She lives in the Rivanna Magisterial District. She said that there has been a lot of planning done around moving to Stage 4. She hopes that the Board continues looking at it through an equity lens.

Ms. Alanna Smith lives in Scottsville. She does not believe that virtual is working. It is time for students to return to school.

Mr. Vernon Lechti is a teacher. He said that safety metrics are lacking. We do not know the long-term health impacts of COVID. Reopening schools is a gamble. He encourages the Board to vote no to moving to Stage 4.

Mr. Agustin Norambuena and Mr. Clemente Norambuena are students. They support in-person learning, and they asked the Board to move to Stage 4.

Ms. Anna Dinwiddie is a teacher. She said that we can do better. She does not support moving to Stage 4.

Ms. Katie Daugherty lives in the White Hall Magisterial District. She said that students want to go to school She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4.

Mr. Chris Craytor is a parent and CEO of ACAC Wellness Center. He encouraged the Board to vote in favor of moving to Stage 4. We are missing teachable moments for students that come throughout the school day.

Ms. Anna Jesus is a parent. She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4. We need to give it a try. It is safe.

Ms. Amy Geartner is a teacher. She said that her ADA accommodation request was denied. She can either take a leave of absence or resign.

Ms. Lori Aldridge is a teacher. She spoke about equity and trust. ESOL students must come in to the building for testing. It will impact their education if they do not come in and take the test. Many parents do not want children in the classroom because they do not trust that it is safe and children will not be protected. She encouraged the Board to consider moving to Stage 4 once all teachers are fully vaccinated.

Mr. Dean Strevel lives in the Rivanna Magisterial District. CDC does not recommend going back to school, they only offer levels of risk. He said that Stage 3 is working. He does not support moving to Stage 4. The school division does not have the resources to support a move.

Mr. Shawn Boyd lives in the Samuel Miller Magisterial District. It is important to get students back in to school. In-person learning is an option, not required.

Ms. Melissa Techman is a librarian at Western Albemarle High School. She does not support moving to Stage 4. There is new information coming about the variants. The CDC guidelines about masking is not addressed for the high school students and eating lunch in classrooms for a longer period of time. Her ADA accommodation request was denied.

Ms. Cheryl Knight is a teacher and resident of the City of Charlottesville. She said that we all want to get back into school. It is important to wait until teachers are able to be vaccinated. She expressed concern about teacher and student morale.

Ms. Ciara Wolfe-Craig is a teacher. She encouraged the Board not to move to Stage 4. She had COVID over the summer. Her family is first. She said that her ADA request was denied. She was given the option to take a leave of absence or resign. She asked that before moving to Stage 4 that all teachers be fully vaccinated.

Ms. Christine Koenig lives in the White Hall District. She shared some points shared at the last Board meeting from Dr. Vergales. Some of this data is very concerning. She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4.

Mr. Andrew West is a teacher. He has some concerns about Stage 4. He said that we should not change stages until all teachers are fully vaccinated. He asked if there were enough substitutes for the County so that they do not spread COVID throughout the County. He said that curriculum will be cut to teach virtual and in-person.

Dr. Monica Lawrence lives in the White Hall Magisterial District. She is an immunologist. She said that fear cannot dictate decision making. Schools are not super spreader. Going back to school is not a risk to students or teachers. Double masking is effective. She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4.

Ms. Allison Spillman is a parent in the White Hall Magisterial District. She said that her children are falling behind. Kids need to be in school. She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4.

Ms. Laura DeNunzio lives in the White Hall Magisterial District. She encouraged the Board to move to Stage 4.

Mr. Dave Hawkins is an Albemarle County resident. He pulled his children out of Albemarle County schools and placed them in a school system that has been doing in person learning since August. He said that no plan is perfect. We need to allow parents the choice for in-person learning or virtual learning.

The Board took a break from 7:40 p.m. until 7:50 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 8.1. COVID-19 Status Update.

Dr. McLaughlin and Ms. Eileen Gomez, School Nurse Coordinator, provided for the Board's consideration a COVID-19 Update.

Mr. Pilkey asked for the number of at-risk teachers who have been vaccinated or if they have been scheduled for their first dose.

There was Board consensus to provide the information.

Mr. Oberg asked if the BRHD will be opening up appointments in March for those teachers and classified staff that need to schedule appointments.

Mr. Paige asked out of the 444 who have been scheduled, when are they scheduled to receive their vaccinations by.

Dr. Acuff asked if there was information on whether the allocation of vaccines for the health district would be increased.

Mr. Paige said that those who are scheduled for vaccines will have them by the end of February.

Agenda Item No. 8.2. Stage Four Recommendation.

Dr. Haas said that on February 4 he recommended to the School Board that we move to Stage Four of our return-to-school plan. Mr. Paige then opened the floor for Board member discussion.

Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to move to Stage 4 but with the start date changing to March 15 (shift the timeline by two weeks). Dr. Acuff **seconded** the motion. Mr. Paige asked for discussion. Ms. Le asked about the difference in instructional time between virtual students and hybrid students. Instructional times are comparable. Ms. Collins said yes. Ms. Le said that the answer is the same as it was in October, so how could that be. Ms. Collins said that the day includes synchronous and asynchronous time. Instructional time is not changed. Time with teachers may have shifted. Students are in school 6.5 hours a day. Ms. Le said that she does not understand how it is the same. Ms. Collins said that she is hearing the question as quantitative but then Ms. Le is also asking a qualitative question. Mr. Oberg said instructional hours are required. Ms. Osborne said that real time teacher accessibility is cut for virtual students. Ms. Callsen asked if virtual was still a.m. and p.m. Mr. Oberg said that they are getting the same hours but not the same type or amount of instruction. Dr. Haas said that there are varying degrees of online education across the state. Mr. Paige asked if there is any data that can be reported to the Board to let us know that both the virtual and the hybrid are receiving the same material.

Mr. Oberg asked if teachers are still able to do PLC work, and if so, are the virtual and hybrid teachers doing the same work.

Ms. Callsen said that she would hope that many teachers have been vaccinated and many are willing to come in. She would like to see students in the classroom as quickly as possible. She appreciates the work that our teachers are doing. She will vote in favor of the motion.

Mr. Alcaro said that he will support the motion because it needs to be fair to all parties. He would like to see students back in school as soon as possible.

Mr. Oberg said that there were 20 plus people testify today. He has been reading all correspondence. He appreciated everything that our educators have done. He hears that teachers feel that they are not being listened to. He supports going on March 15th because it will give staff the opportunity to get inoculated. He would like to see students back in school as soon as possible.

Ms. Callsen asked if we are able to accommodate those teachers that have not been able to get their first vaccine.

Ms. Le said that she supports in person learning. She supports moving the timeline by two weeks to March 15th. She is concerned with parts of the plan and whether it is equitable. She does not think that now is not the time for fewer supports. Interventions are important. Interventionists are being put in other rolls. We need to serve all of our students including those who want to remain virtual. The plan compounds the inequities. She would like to find a way to continue the meal delivery service. We need to think about how we can be accountable to fight inequities.

Mr. Pilkey said that he supports the March 15th start date. Many of the concerns he has heard was the vaccination timeline, and he thinks moving the date by two weeks addresses these concerns. He supports returning to school.

Ms. Osborne said that she noticed that the people of color were the ones who asked us not to move forward, yet, the Board is going to vote on moving forward. We asked people what they thought and we are moving forward anyway. Ms. Callsen disagreed. She said that the issue is that we did not have many people of color provide input. She said that we have to be careful making these broader characteristics. Ms. Le said that the data provided by staff showed that many minorities did not want to return to in-person learning. Ms. Callsen said that she is uncomfortable with making broad characteristics. We are offering all families the choice to make the decision of what is right for their family. Ms. Osborne said that she has not encountered any people of color who want to return to school.

Dr. Acuff said that before the pandemic there was an achievement gap along racial lines. We still have this problem and it may be exacerbated by the pandemic. She favors returning to in person learning. We also need to address the learning loses and put students first. We owe it to families and the Division.

Mr. Alcaro said that we need to communicate with families about what to expect and when to expect it.

Mr. Paige said that equity was an issue before the pandemic. We need to continue to address equity issues.

Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:

AYES: Mr. Alcaro, Mr. Oberg, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Callsen, Ms. Osborne, and Mr. Paige.

NAYS: Ms. Le.

Motion carried by a 6:1 vote.

Agenda Item No. 8.3. Break.

A break was taken earlier in the meeting after public comment.

Agenda Item No. 8.4. 2021-2022 School Division Calendar.

Dr. McLaughlin provided for the Board's consideration the 2021-2022 school division calendar. This calendar is the result of two joint City/County Calendar Committee meetings in November and December. The committee is comprised of teachers, parents, and school and central office administrators.

A first draft of the calendar along with a survey was posted to the public in January. Survey participants were asked to rank their satisfaction with the proposed calendar on a scale of one to five with one indicating "very dissatisfied" and five indicating "very satisfied." A total of 2,549 responses were received with 93% of respondents scoring their satisfaction with the calendar at a score of three or higher.

Dr. Acuff said that both the Governor and the Board have talked about what kinds of strategies we may need to address the learning loss. Most research she has seen said that this will not be possible without more seat time. The calendar looks similar to previous years. Is anything being looked at and is there flexibility to alter the calendar later?

Mr. Alcaro said that on November 2nd it is the only day set aside for Parent Teacher Conferences. Are there other days for conferences set aside or is the decision up to individual schools? He also asked that since it is Election Day will there be any conflict with people being in the buildings.

Mr. Paige said that the Winter Break is longer than usual.

This item will be placed on the next agenda for approval.

Agenda Item No. 8.5. Second Quarter FY2020/21 Financial Report and Fund Balance Discussion.

Mr. Zimmermann provided for the Board's consideration the second quarter FY2020-21 financial report and recommendation for use of fund balance. The second quarter financial reports representing October, November, and December 2020 are presented for the Board's consideration.

Revenues: March 31 Average Daily Membership (ADM), upon which state revenues are estimated, is projected to be 13,211. This is 950 students less than budgeted. Although enrollment has dropped considerably from what was anticipated, state revenues are projected to be strong. Following the release of the Governor's amended budget in December 2020, state revenue estimates substantially improved from original projections. Enrollment hold harmless is proposed in the Governor's amended current year proposal, this provides a significant increase in state revenues (~\$3.8M) that offset pandemic enrollment losses. Additionally, COVID relief and infrastructure support monies are included in this proposal. Local school revenues are anticipated to be less than budgeted due to the effects of the pandemic closure. Federal revenues are estimated to meet budget. Local transfer is anticipated to meet budget. A more detailed presentation of revenues received to date is presented on page 2 of the report. Overall revenues are expected to be ~\$5M more than originally budgeted.

Expenses: Compensation and benefits estimates based upon second quarter data indicate savings by year end of just under \$1M. Monthly compensation and operational expenses by state category is presented on page 3. Although fewer students enrolled in the current year, distanced learning and support has often required more staff and staff time, than is typical for in-person instruction. Detailed operational expenses by department and school are shown on pages 4-6 of the attached report. Substantial unknowns remain for operational expenses for the remaining fiscal year. A number of special revenue programs may need substantive financial assistance to maintain programs in the face of reduced revenue opportunities due to COVID closure.

Balance of Revenues over Expenses: Reported December 31 revenues exceed expenses by more than \$21.1M. Reported state revenues collected totaled slightly less than \$25.7M.

Special Revenue Funds: Special revenue funds are presented on pages 9-11.

School Fund Balance: Fund balance use in FY20-21 is budgeted to be ~\$1.1M. Available balances exceed the 2% threshold established by the Board of Supervisors policy on school fund balance. This information is presented on page 12.

During the Joint Board meeting on January 28, 2021 a pay proposal received positive feedback regarding the use of fund balances to provide a one-time payment to staff in this current year. This proposal would encompass all regular staff members employed before 1/1/21 and receiving an April 2021 paycheck. This proposal would be for a payment of \$1K to all regular staff, from 1FTE to 0.7FTE, and \$750 for all regular staff that work less than 0.7FTE. It is intended that this payment would be made with the April paycheck. This proposal is estimated to cost \$2,665,145, including FICA costs. The specific appropriation of funds by budget code will be brought forward to the Board for an appropriation request at the March 11, 2021 meeting.

As is typical, ~\$1.1M is anticipated to be a regular part of the budget for FY 21-22. Additional substantive uses of fund balance will be part of proposed uses in the FY 21-22 budget cycle. It is anticipated that further additional uses of fund balance may be brought forward during the FY 21-22 budget discussion or as agenda items during business meetings in the coming months.

Dr. Acuff asked about the budgeted use of Fund Balance.

Mr. Alcaro asked about special revenue funds may need assistance due to COVID closure. What is the strategy for changes within the current year budget to address special revenue funds?

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to approve the one-time pay proposal in concept to move forward with appropriations and implementation. Mr. Oberg **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Mr. Alcaro offered a **motion** to receive the second quarter FY20/21 financial reports. Mr. Oberg **seconded** the motion. **Roll was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

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

NAYS: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 9.1. Other Business by Board Members/Superintendent.

Mr. Pilkey said that schools will be moving to Stage 4 has there been any discussion of moving School Board meetings from virtual to in-person.

Ms. Callsen noted that participation and access to Board meetings has greatly increased since meeting via Zoom.

Agenda Item No. 10.1. Closed Meeting. None.

Agenda Item No. 11.1. Certify Closed Meeting. None.

Agenda Item No. 12.1. Adjournment.

At 9:12 p.m., hearing no objections, Mr. Paige adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chairman

Clerk