

MINUTES
BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, February 22, 2024
[Meeting Video Recording](#)

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. Chuck Pace, Mr. Graham Paige, and Ms. Allison Spillman

ABSENT: Student Representative, Ms. Fernanda Cisneros

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Superintendent Matthew Haas; School Division Counsel Josiah Black; Assistant Superintendent Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Assistant Superintendent Chandra Hayes; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Chief Technology Officer Christine Diggs; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Helen Dunn; and Clerk of the School Board Christine Thompson

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

At 5:28 p.m., Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** that the 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 3 for discussion or consideration of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open public meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and 2. Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The purpose of the item in the closed meeting is to discuss legal issues in connection with a resolution for public sector collective bargaining and class action lawsuits by school divisions around the country against social media platforms. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, and Chair Le

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Berlin

Motion carried by a 6:0:1 vote.

Dr. Berlin arrived shortly after the closed meeting began.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

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

Agenda Item No. 2.2 Closed Meeting Certification

At 6:31 p.m., Ms. Osborne 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. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion**. **A roll call vote was called, and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Berlin, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Pace, Mr. Paige, Ms. Spillman, Dr. Acuff, and Chair Le.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 Pledge of Allegiance Agenda

Agenda Item No. 2.4 Moment of Silence

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.0 BUDGET WORK SESSION

Agenda Item No. 3.1 Superintendent's [Presentation](#) of the Draft Funding Request

Albemarle County Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Haas, presented a draft school division funding request for FY 25 to the School Board for consideration.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/Ep7ByPF8aO4?si=ew6TDKqIJWJWyaOq>

Next Steps:

February 29 – Work Session #1

- State Revenue Updates
- Overview of Non-Discretionary Increases
- Compensation Proposal (market update)
- Social Emotional Supports Overview & Proposal
- Operating Principles for Reductions

March 7 – Work Session #2 and Public Hearing

- Tiered Interventions Overview & Proposal
- SPED Overview and Proposal
- World Languages/Immersion/EL Overview & Proposal
- Other School Board Requests

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 4.1 2023-24 [Redistricting Study](#) – Superintendent’s Recommendation - In August 2023, the School Board directed the Superintendent to convene a redistricting advisory committee to conduct a study to evaluate boundary changes in response to immediate enrollment challenges at Baker-Butler Elementary, Woodbrook Elementary, and Stony Point Elementary. The study also informed more long-term planning for a new elementary school scheduled to open for the 2029/30 school year.

The committee, composed of parent and committee representatives, was convened, and met seven times. Feedback was received at community meetings, via a community survey and email. The superintendent brought forward the recommendation of the committee with no modifications.

The School Board received the recommendation for information only. A public hearing will be held on March 14th and the School Board will consider action afterwards. Any approved boundary change by the Board will be implemented for the 2024/25 school year.

Dr. Acuff was interested in how many students we have in the urban ring. Staff will relay this information to the full Board.

Ms. Spillman asked about voting and when voting takes place on the 14th, and if they (Board) are supposed to vote on all the recommendations, or on each recommendation individually? Staff explained that since each recommendation can operate independently of each other, individual votes would be appropriate.

Ms. Spillman requested clarification regarding the primary goal of addressing overcrowding at Baker Butler. She expressed confusion about why students are being moved from Stone Robinson, which is not overcrowded, to another school. She further highlighted concerns about the infrastructure at the receiving school, noting it is ranked low in terms of condition and high in need of improvements. She questioned the decision to add 42 more students to a school already in poor physical condition. Ms. Spillman seeks insight into why this approach is being taken instead of addressing the overcrowding directly and improving the infrastructure before increasing student numbers.

Staff explained that the goals were to decrease overcrowding at Baker Butler and to increase enrollment at Stony Point. The Gilbert Station area was initially eliminated from discussion due to flooding concerns, but it was brought back for further consideration. Discussions revolved around transportation efficiencies and the challenges of

increasing bus routes. There were conversations about the need for enrollment growth at Stony Point. However, using Gilbert Station as a solution is not seen as a long-term fix.

Ms. Spillman commented that she wanted it on record by expressing her disappointment that there was no public comment at this board meeting. Her and her fellow board members have received a lot of feedback through emails, phone calls, and personal meetings. Making such a significant decision is heavy, and there is a lot to consider. Having a public hearing the same night they are voting on such a major issue, without allowing for public comment, feels wrong to her.

Ms. Spillman asked about a community meeting not being held for Hollymead and parents not being aware that students were going to be added to their school. Staff advertised all community meetings to all schools that were in this study.

Ms. Spillman asked if parents were told if their students would be riding the bus or not. That was not a point of discussion.

Chair Le wanted to make clear to the community regarding transportation, that when we talk about flooding, we are not talking about one day – we are often closing schools for several days in a row.

Chair Le asked about the new developments. Realizing that those numbers are not really included in the Hollymead - Baker Butler scenario, and how staff is dealing with those developments? Staff conveyed that it's important to know that enrollment projections are based on historical modeling. When high development areas are identified, staff strive to choose the historical model with the steepest growth to best anticipate and accommodate the influx of new students.

Chair Le asked what some of the ways staff would alleviate overcrowding if it were to become a concern at Hollymead. There are several operational strategies currently in place to manage different capacities. First, there are two preschool programs that could be moved to other schools with available capacity if overcrowding becomes an issue at Hollymead. Second, this year, we have coordinated with the IRC to place families in the Hollymead district due to available space, which has resulted in growth in that area. Third, we can always consider temporary capacity solutions until a new school is built.

Dr. Berlin's biggest concern was the Stone Robinson to Stony Point move. Moving a group of kids to a school that has infrastructure issues. Typically, in a capital lifespan with that scale of renovation you would design for a year and construct over one to two years, maximizing summers. The current budget under consideration by the Board of Supervisors does not include funding for that project. Staff respectfully disagrees that Stony Point is crumbling, Stony Point and Broadus Wood have the most character and are very well maintained. Staff are replacing the casework this summer and making small improvements. While it needs some long-term renovations, the school is relative to our other schools.

Dr. Berlin asked if the Committee looked at the specialized classroom numbers (Abase, Bbase, Cbase) and whether the schools had the capacity to accommodate those students. This was not examined at the committee level. However, we are happy to discuss this with the staff. The specialized classroom numbers were considered in terms of the percentage of demographic impact, and schools with these programs factored them into their overall capacity.

Dr. Berlin asked if anyone looked at public bus routes, knowing that some of the families in those neighborhoods rely on public transportation. It was not discussed.

Mr. Paige stated that he received a lot of correspondence from parents regarding the move from Cascadia to Stony Point, mentioning that they have not had much chance to give input. Staff received input through the survey and the community meeting. There was a representative from the neighborhood who participated in the community discussions, and we have received various emails from members of the community.

Ms. Spillman stated that it was difficult to hear public comment and then decide about the issues on the same night. She asked Chair Le if there was a possibility of delaying the vote?

Chair Le responded that operationally, it would be a hardship to change the schedule. There will be public

comment on March 7th. People are certainly welcome to provide public comment then, and a lot of emails have been received. There is not a lack of public input. There are two opportunities for people to speak, March 7th and the 14th.

Mr. Paige asked which roads had the flooding problem. Preddy Creek. There are multiple roads that cross it.

Ms. Spillman asked what route they take to go to Baker Butler. Currently no bus routes cross that area. They can go up 29 N, but the Lakeside routes and rural high school routes all bifurcate on that railroad track.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 ADJOURNMENT - At 8:20 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Le adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk