

MINUTES
VIRTUAL SPECIAL CALLED SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
October 21, 2020 (7:00 p.m.)

Meeting Held via Zoom

On March 12, 2020, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared a State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2(A)(3) and Acts of Assembly Chap. 1283 § 4-0.01(g), virtual School Board meetings held during the State of Emergency are limited to:

- addressing the public health emergency declared on March 12, 2020 (Va. Code § 44-146.17); and
- business that is necessary to continue school division operations and to discharge the School Board's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

Notice of any virtual School Board Meetings will be posted on the ACPS Calendar and on the School Board Meeting web page, where the public may link to join or watch live meetings. Virtual Special Called School Board Meetings may also be watched live in Alexandria on Comcast Channel 71. Video recordings and minutes for these meetings are posted online as soon as available after the meeting.

ROLL CALL

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

BOARD MEMBERS: Cindy Anderson
Veronica R. Nolan
Meagan L. Alderton
Ramee A. Gentry
Jacinta Greene
Margaret Lorber
Michelle Rief
Christopher A. Suarez
Heather Thornton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Lilla Wise, Natalie Hall, Clinton Page, Dr. Alicia Hart, Erika Gulick, Dr. Terri Mazingo, Dr. Julie Crawford, Dr. Stephen Haering, Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, Ingrid Bynum, Pree Ann Johnson, Pierrette Peters, Darrell Sampson, Terry Werner, Dominic Turner

Call to Order

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Anderson

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All members of the School Board were present at the start of the meeting.

Moment of Silence

2. Observe a Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

3. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the October 21, 2020 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting

Ms. Lorber moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the October 21, 2020 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting.

Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

Chair Anderson indicated she would like to reorder the agenda and put the agenda item “2021 Proposed ACPS Legislative Agenda” as the first order of business.

The vote to adopt the meeting agenda was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

4. Closed Meeting

5. Certification of Closed Meeting

There was no Closed Meeting held.

New Business and Reports to the Board

6. 2021 Proposed ACPS Legislative Agenda

Ms. Lilla Wise, Legislative Consultant to ACPS, briefed the Board on proposed legislative positions for ACPS that will come before the Virginia General Assembly session beginning in January 2021. In the proposed 2021 Legislative Agenda, ACPS supports increased funding to support students, staff, and school facility modernization. This includes restoration of At-Risk Add-On Funding, funding for additional school counselors, funding for local school division support services and advocates for the continued use of the Cost of Competing factor. Additionally, ACPS opposes the diversion of public funds to non-public schools and supports the Virginia’s Department of Education’s recommendation to base English Language (EL) pupil/teacher ratios by English language proficiency of students.

Board Members asked questions about more CIP funding for school divisions, how the Board can help to advocate for At-Risk Add-On Funding, and partnering with other local divisions on similar matters.

This item will return to the Board for approval at a future School Board Meeting.

Old Business & Action Items

7. Enhanced Continuity of Learning Plan 5.0

Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Dr. Terri Mazingo, Chief of Teaching, Learning and Leadership; and ACPS staff members presented updated information on the Enhanced Continuity of Learning Plan 5.0. This item was first presented at the October 15, 2020 School Board Meeting and has returned for further review, and discussion of follow-up questions related to the proposed phased-in transition plan to in-person learning.

The new presentation addressed topics on national insights and barriers to transition planning, how ACPS is assessing feasibility to return to in-person learning, building capacity and staffing constraints, and guidance or input that informed ACPS’ decision making.

Dr. Hutchings emphasized that while many of the constraints barring students from returning to in-person learning have been addressed, building capacity and ACPS staff’s ability to return to work are the most significant barriers to reopening schools. When considering the number of students who indicated they were likely to return to in-person learning, additional teachers and space would be needed for students who would no longer fit into their classrooms while

practicing social distancing. Dr. Hutchings further explained that this scenario would play out across all classrooms in all schools. With these building capacity and staffing issues, a return to in-person learning for grades K-5 and 6-8 would be limited to one day per week, which would be impractical to implement at this time.

The Superintendent recommended that the School Board approve a phased-in approach for in-person learning for students in grades PreK-8 according to the following timeline and contingent upon staffing and building capacity constraints:

- **November 5:** Begin with Students with Disabilities in grades K-2 who are enrolled in the Citywide Special Education program who opt into in-person learning
- **November 17:** Expand to include Students with Disabilities in grades 3-5 who are enrolled in the Citywide Special Education program who opt into in-person learning
- **November 30:** Expand to include ECSE students who opt into in-person learning [to be housed at the Early Childhood Center (ECC)]
- **November 30:** Expand to include Students with Disabilities in grades K-5 who receive self-contained Language Arts and Math instruction who opt into in-person learning
- **December 2020:** Expand to include Students with Disabilities in grades 6-8 who are enrolled in the Citywide Special Education program who opt into in-person learning
- **January 2021:** Expand to include all remaining students in grades PreK-5 who opt into in-person learning
- **February 2021:** Expand to include all remaining students in grades 6-8 who opt into in-person learning

Board Members asked questions about excess furniture in schools, lessening the CDC social distancing recommendation, impact of a COVID-19 infection in a classroom, simultaneous virtual and in-person teaching, using cameras in the classroom, and student social and emotional needs. There were additional questions about K-2 learning, plans for the return of middle school and high school students, and including vulnerable high school students in groups returning to in-person learning.

Ms. Gentry moved that the School Board approve pursuing a phased-in approach for in-person learning for all students grades PreK-8, beginning with our most vulnerable students with disabilities and English Learners; and later consider expanding student participation contingent upon capacity and staffing.

Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

Mr. Suarez offered a friendly amendment to change the motion to read “PreK-12” instead of “PreK-8” in order to show that ACPS is continuing to work on getting those additional students back to in-person learning.

Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

Ms. Gentry asked to remove the word “all” from the phrase “in-person learning for *all* students” in her original motion.

The vote to amend the original motion to change the phrase PreK-8 to PreK-12 was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

The vote to approve the motion to pursue a phased-in approach for in person learning for students in grades PreK-12, beginning with the most vulnerable Students with Disabilities and English Learners; and later consider expanding student participation contingent upon capacity and staffing, was unanimous, 9-0.

The motion carried. A roll call vote was taken.

New Business and Reports to the Board

8. Draft Presentation for Joint City Council/School Board Budget Work Session

Mr. Dominic Turner, Chief Financial Officer, introduced the draft presentation for the Joint City Council/School Board Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget Work Session to be held on November 17, 2020. Dr. Alicia Hart, Acting Executive Director of Facilities and Operations, and Ms. Erika Gulick, Director of Capital Programs, Planning and Design, presented information about past CIP budget challenges, projects being addressed now, such as the impact of COVID-19, and the vision for the FY 2022-2031 CIP budget. One change that was noted was the deferment of the replacement or modernization of the ACPS transportation facility from the year 2022 to the year 2023.

Board Members indicated they would like to see colocation, updated enrollment figures, and the *ACPS 2025: Equity for All* strategic plan mission and vision added to the presentation. Mr. Turner noted that more information will be available for discussion after the presentation of the FY2022-2031 CIP Budget at the November 12, 2020 School Board Meeting. This presentation will be further reviewed at the October 29, 2020 School Board Meeting.

Superintendent's Report

9. Report from Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

Superintendent Hutchings noted that there will be a special edition of the ACPS Express going out to the public on Friday to go over the details of the Enhanced Continuity of Learning Plan 5.0 that was approved this evening. He noted that the discussion about in-person learning will continue to be addressed at each Board Meeting and Work Session.

He also mentioned that he will re-start his weekly online videos on various topics which will be posted to the ACPS website.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

10. Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

There was no Closed Meeting held.

Adjournment

11. Adjourn

On a motion by Ms. Gentry and seconded by Ms. Greene, the Board voted unanimously, 9-0, to adjourn. The vote was taken by roll call.

The meeting ended at 11:13 p.m.



Cindy Anderson, Chair



Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were originally adopted at the November 12, 2020 Virtual School Board Meeting, and were revised at the December 3, 2020 Virtual School Board Meeting.