

MINUTES
VIRTUAL SPECIAL CALLED SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
November 23, 2020 (5:00 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, Shanel Hill, Dr. Terri Mozingo, Dr. Alicia Hart, Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, Dr. Stephen Wilkins, Natalie Hall, T. Michael Carson, Peter Balas, John Finnigan, Jennifer Abbruzzese, Dr. Stephen Haering

Call to Order

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Anderson

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:03 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 November 23, 2020 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the November 23, 2020 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting.

Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

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

Communications & Addresses to the Board

4. Public Hearing on the FY 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget

There were no speakers for the public hearing.

5. Written Public Comments

Ms. Ginger Root, ACPS parent, wrote to the Board to ask them to take into consideration the number of families traveling over the holiday break when considering the timeline for the reopening of schools in January. She suggested that ACPS should not return to a hybrid schedule until after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in order to allow students time to quarantine for two weeks after travel or possible exposure to COVID-19.

Ms. Bridget Shea Westfall, ACPS parent, wrote to advocate for her student and all children who deserve a healthy, safe return to school. She asked the Board and Dr. Hutchings to make the student's education a priority and create a plan that will return students to in-person learning.

Consent Calendar

6. 2020-2021 Talented and Gifted (TAG) Advisory Committee Scope of Work

7. Appoint Michael Johnson to the Athletic Hall of Fame Advisory Committee

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the Consent Calendar. Ms. Alderton seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the Consent Calendar was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. A roll call vote was taken.

Old Business & Action Items

8. Superintendent's Recommendation on the Renaming of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School

In June 2020, the School Board received a community petition to consider a name change for T.C. Williams High School. In August 2020, a similar petition was received to consider a name change for Matthew Maury Elementary School. The Board had voted in July and September to charge the Superintendent with establishing a robust community engagement process for renaming both T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School. The joint process, known as The Identity Project, was launched in September and included a series of student-led chats, community and family forums, and read-ins which helped to educate the community on the history of segregation in Alexandria.

Board Members gave remarks in support of Dr. Hutchings' recommendation to rename both schools and to move forward with the renaming process.

Ms. Alderton made the following motion:

“Madam Chair, I move to approve the renaming of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School; empower the Superintendent to seek the community's input and nominations in accordance with Regulation FF-R; and develop naming recommendations for

Board approval in spring 2021. The new names would become effective at the start of the 2021-22 school year.”

Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

The vote to approve moving forward with the process to rename T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

9. Update on Virtual+ Plus and Phased Reopening; Technology Update/Infrastructure Intent to Return Form Data

Dr. Terri Mozingo, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership gave an update on the *Enhanced Continuity of Learning Plan 5.0: Reimagining Schools* which was originally presented to the School Board at the October 15, 2020 School Board Meeting. Dr. Mozingo, along with staff members and guests, provided new information about the decision-making process for phasing students back to in-person learning, data on the ability of staff to return, and the various hybrid learning models being explored for implementation. In addition, opportunities and challenges related to concurrent teaching were explained that included technical considerations and budget impact. Dr. Stephen Haering, Director of Alexandria’s Health Department, reviewed COVID-19 transmission indicators for Alexandria which affect the reopening of schools.

Based on the health data information and the upward trend of COVID-19 transmissions, Dr. Hutchings recommended a transition of the current in-person learning students back to virtual learning, and defer the return or expansion of in-person learning for additional students until January 2021.

Board Members asked questions about CARES funding, concurrent teaching, professional learning, staff concerns about returning to in-person teaching, building ventilation, and the health metrics for Alexandria COVID transmissions.

At the October 21, 2020 Special Called School Board Meeting, the Board voted 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.” Dr. Hutchings suggested that the Board expand that motion to include health metrics as part of the contingencies for expanding in-person learning.

Mr. Suarez moved to add the words “community health metrics” to the motion adopted at the October 21, 2020 Special Called School Board Meeting.

Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

The vote to add the words “community health metrics” to the motion adopted at the October 21, 2020 Special Called School Board Meeting was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. A roll call vote was taken.

The revised motion adopted by the Board reads “that the School Board approve pursuing a phased-in approach for in-person learning for all students grades PreK-12, beginning with the most vulnerable Students with Disabilities and English Learners; and later consider expanding student participation contingent upon capacity, staffing and health metrics.”

10. ACPS 2021 Legislative Agenda

Each year the School Board adopts a legislative agenda which advocates for the needs of Alexandria City Public Schools. The 2021 ACPS Legislative Agenda supports increased funding to support students, staff and school facility modernization. In addition, the Board requests flexibility to manage resources and set policies at the local level that are in the best interest of the local community.

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the ACPS 2021 Legislative Agenda. Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

The vote to approve the ACPS 2021 Legislative Agenda was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. A roll call vote was taken.

New Business and Reports to the Board

There were no New Business agenda items.

Chair's Report

11. Report from Cindy Anderson

Chair Anderson did not give a report.

Superintendent's Report

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

Superintendent Hutchings did not give a report.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

13. Closed Meeting

14. Certification of Closed Meeting

No Closed Meeting was held.

Adjournment

15. Adjourn

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

The meeting ended at 8:12 p.m.



Cindy Anderson, Chair



Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the December 3, 2020 Virtual School Board Meeting.