

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
August 3, 2021 (7:00 p.m.)

ROLL CALL

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Shanel Hill, Robert Easley, Dr. Julie Crawford, Dr. Anthony Sims, Dr. Alicia Hart, Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Kurt Huffman, Dr. Terri Mozingo, Dr. Anne Gaddy, Julia Burgos

Call to Order

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Alderton

Chair Alderton called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. All members of the School Board were present at the start of the meeting except for Margaret Lorber and Cindy Anderson who were absent, and Ramee Gentry who joined the meeting electronically.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

2. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the August 3, 2021 Special Called School Board Meeting

Ms. Greene moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the August 3, 2021 Special Called School Board Meeting.

Dr. Rief seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the meeting agenda was unanimous, 6-0. The motion carried.

3. Allow Participation of Board Member Ramee Gentry by Electronic Means

Vice Chair Nolan made the following motion:

“Whereas Ramee Gentry has notified the Chair that she is unavailable to be physically present for tonight’s School Board Meeting due to a personal matter specifically out of state travel; and whereas she has not participated in more than two Board meetings by electronic means in 2021; and whereas Ramee Gentry requests the opportunity to participate in the meeting via video conference (Zoom) from Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia, where the video conference shall be heard by all participants in this Board room; Madam Chair, I move, pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3708 that the Board approve the participation of Board Member Ramee Gentry in this meeting by electronic means.”

Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous, 6-0, to allow Board Member Ramee Gentry to participate in the Board Meeting by electronic means. The motion carried.

Ms. Gentry joined the meeting through Zoom.

Moment of Silence

4. Observe a Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

Communications & Addresses to the Board

5. Public Hearing on Esser III (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) Plan Use of Funds Comments

Ms. Kristen Amundson, gave remarks in support of EduTutorVA and asked that the School Board use relief funds to expand the program from William Ramsay to Francis C. Hammond Middle School so that students can receive four years of targeted individual tutoring.

Dr. Asley Simpson Baird, ACPS parent, encouraged the Board to use this opportunity to strengthen Tier 1 instruction to ensure a foundation equitable education for all. She advocated for training for educators in research-based and content-specific approaches to accelerated learning and for investment in communication applications to inform all families regardless of language or education on their student's schooling.

Ms. Elizabeth Seltzer submitted written comments which asks ACPS to make it a top priority to use ESSER and other relief funds to improve outdated ACPS buildings; to improve services, equipment and staffing for students with disabilities; and improve equipment for students continuing with online learning in 2021-2022.

New Business and Reports to the Board

6. American Rescue Plan: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund III

Mr. Robert Easley, Director of Budget & Fiscal Compliance, and various staff members reviewed information about the approximately \$34.8M in funding received by ACPS through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III grant program. The purpose of the ARP ESSER III Fund is to help reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools, as well as to address the impacts of COVID-19 on students' social, emotional, academic and mental health needs. The ACPS ARP ESSER III funds will be used to drive the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan ACPS 2025: Equity for All and the plans outlined in our Continuity of Learning Plan 6.0 Fall 2021 Reopening Playbook.

Board Members asked questions regarding collecting data to support ESSER funding, Social Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL), how parents can get questions answered about their concerns, is it possible to get additional funding once the application is submitted, are the programs ACPS is funding through ESSER III funds able to be sustained, and how will the facilities funding be used.

7. Mask Wearing Recommendation

Dr. Julie Crawford, Chief of Student Services and Equity, reviewed how ACPS in preparation for opening schools for in-person learning 5 days a week this school year and how present health information related to COVID-19 is being considered in relation to the wearing of masks. Based on current conditions, many of the mitigating measures used successfully during hybrid instruction are being recommended to continue.

Vice Chair Nolan made the following motion:

“Madam, Chair, I move that to prioritize the safety of all students and staff as ACPS returns to in-person instruction five days a week; in alignment with recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics and local health

departments; that masks continue to be required inside all ACPS facilities and vehicles, regardless of vaccination status, for the fall 2021 semester. ACPS will continue to monitor community health metrics and guidance from federal, state and local health officials, and will reassess its masking requirements as new information is shared.”

Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

The vote to require masks in all ACPS facilities and vehicles for the Fall of 2021 semester was unanimous, 7-0. The motion carried. Ms. Gentry voted orally.

A Board Member asked for clarification on social distancing guidelines and how a close contact is determined.

Consent Calendar

- 8. Appoint Shawn Addison to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee and Grant a Residency Waiver**
- 9. Minutes from the June 23, 2021 Special Called School Board Meeting and the June 26, 2021 Meeting of Certain Board Members for the School Board Candidate Informational Forum**

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the Consent Calendar. Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the Consent Calendar was unanimous, 7-0. The motion carried. Ms. Gentry voted orally.

Items Pulled from the Consent Calendar

No items were pulled from the Consent Calendar.

Superintendent’s Report

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

Superintendent Hutchings reported on schools opening for in-person learning and announced his upcoming Leadership Academy.

Ms. Greene congratulated the 2021 Summer School Graduates from ACHS. She also announced that Noah Lyles compete in his race and reminded the public to tune in.

Ms. Gentry urged everyone to get vaccinated for yourself and for our community—it is a vital part of staying safe.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

11. Closed Meeting

12. Certification of Closed Meeting

There was no Closed Meeting held.

Adjournment


13. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Suarez and seconded by Ms. Greene, the Board voted unanimously, 7-0, to adjourn. The motion carried.

The meeting ended at 8:51 p.m.



Meagan L. Alderton, Chair



Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the October 7, 2021 School Board Meeting.