

MINUTES
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
October 21, 2021 (6:30 p.m.)

ROLL CALL

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Shanel Hill, Emily Milton, Sylvia Rahim, Dr. Julie Crawford, Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Dr. Anne Gaddy, Dr. Alicia Hart, Jennifer Abbruzzese, Dr. Gerald R. Mann Jr., Julia Neuffer, Dr. Carolyn Wooster, Jaime Pratt, Theresa Werner

Note: Due to a technical issue, the audio at the beginning of the meeting is not captured in the archived meeting video.

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.

Adoption of the Meeting Agenda

2. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the October 21, 2021 School Board Meeting

Ms. Greene moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the October 21, 2021 School Board Meeting. Ms. Gentry seconded the motion.

Ms. Gentry moved to amend the agenda to add the item “Personnel Actions October 1-19, 2021” to the Consent Calendar. Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

The vote to amend the agenda was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried.

The vote to adopt the amended meeting agenda for October 21, 2021 was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

3. Closed Meeting

Vice Chair Nolan moved that the Board convene a Closed Meeting pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3711(A)(1) for the discussion and consideration of employment, performance, and contractual matters for 15 specific public employees.

Ms. Gentry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 9-0, to convene a Closed Meeting. The motion carried.

The Board moved into a Closed Meeting at 7:05 p.m.

4. Certification of Closed Meeting

Vice Chair Nolan moved that pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3712, that the Board certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, and which are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act, were heard, discussed or considered by the Board in the Closed Meeting held on October 21, 2021.

Ms. Gentry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 9-0, to certify the Closed Meeting. The motion carried.

The Board returned to open session at 7:40 p.m.

Chair Alderton shared that due to technical difficulties members of the public who attended virtually were not able to hear anything at the beginning of the meeting; as such she gave an overview of the meeting votes and motions prior to the Certification of Closed Meeting item.

Moment of Silence

5. Observe a Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

Communications & Addresses to the Board

6. Public Comments

Mr. Matias Palavecino, ACPS parent, advocated for the School Board's support with the Outdoor Learning Initiative at Lyles-Crouch. The initiative would modernize the school yard with updated playground equipment, athletic fields and outdoor learning areas. Mr. Palavecino shared that Lyles-Crouch parents, teachers and community members are motivated to bring this project to fruition and asked the Board to prioritize funding for this in the upcoming budget cycle.

Mr. Zachary Roberts, ACPS student, advocated for the Board to allow programs such as Model UN to become an elective class.

Mr. Ricardo Roberts, parent, advocated for increasing school security measures by adding metal detectors to ensure students are not able to bring weapons into schools.

Ms. Laura Rose, former Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee (TAGAC) Chair, shared key highlights from the committee's end of year report that was recently submitted to the Board. Ms. Rose shared that the report addressed challenging issues such as racial and social economic disparities, testing challenges, communication barriers, virtual learning barriers and more.

7. Report from Student Representatives Emily Milton and Sylvia Rahim

Ms. Sylvia Rahim shared that the recent spirit week at Alexandria City High School (ACHS) was successful and uplifted students' spirits. She expressed her excitement for having their homecoming game under the new lights at the recently renovated Parker-Grey Stadium. Ms. Rahim also shared that City Council temporarily reinstated the School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools for the remainder of the year. She also reported on her involvement with Mayor Wilson's anti-bullying campaign, and the upcoming student roundtable with Board Member Jacinta Green and School Board candidate Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi.

Ms. Emily Milton gave an update on recent events at ACHS and in the Alexandria Community. She shared that the Theogony newspaper has its first 2021-2022 edition of the year posted online. She reported that Alexandria is hosting a "Drug Take-Back Day" where anyone can drop off unused prescription drugs at various locations throughout Alexandria and that on-site COVID testing centers are now available at multiple ACPS schools. Lastly, Ms. Milton reported that the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria has created a new scholarship in honor of the late Douglas MacArthur educator, Dr. Beverly Vick that will be awarded to a 2022 ACHS graduate.

Consent Calendar

- 8. FY 2022 Monthly Financial Report ending August 31, 2021**
- 9. Statutory Policy Revisions**
- 10. 2020-2021 Talented and Gifted (TAG) Advisory Committee End-of-Year Report**
- 11. Minutes for the September 23 and October 7, 2021 School Board Meetings and the September 23, 2021 Work Session**
- 12. Personnel Actions October 1-19, 2021**

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

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

Old Business and Action Items

13. COVID-19 Update

Dr. Julie Crawford, Chief of Student Services, and Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Executive Director of Human Resources, presented an update on COVID-19 health and safety measures. It included updates on current Alexandria COVID-19 transmission data, updated health and safety measures including an updated contact tracing process. The presentation additionally highlighted COVID-19 screening testing and staff vaccination and testing status data.

Board Members asked questions regarding staff vaccination data, the quarantine process at schools, roll-out plans for the vaccination for 5-11 year olds once approved by the FDA, and staffing concerns for contact tracers.

New Business and Reports to the Board

14. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management Plan and Policy Revisions

Dr. Alicia Hart, Executive Director of Facilities and Operations and Ms. Jennifer Abbruzzese, Director of Policy and Board Initiatives, provided an overview of the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) management plan for ACPS as well as recommended policy updates that support the plan's implementation. The IAQ management plan details the ways in which ACPS will take proactive measures to promote positive IAQ, respond to IAQ concerns, and/or improve (as necessary) IAQ throughout division facilities. The plan also includes information on accountability for the IAQ program, to include specific roles and responsibilities related to the internal IAQ Team. In addition, the IAQ management plan contains references to applicable policies that are integral to maintaining positive IAQ within division facilities.

Board Members asked for a simplified breakdown of these reports in order to ensure they accurately understand what the benchmarks are and how ACPS is doing in respects to what is needed. Additionally questions regarding the status of a previously contracted position of an "environmental specialist" and the communication efforts that were made in regards to sharing out the testing results.

15. Literacy K-4, Math Recovery, Accelerated Learning

Dr. Gerald Mann, Executive Director of Instructional Support, and various ACPS Staff shared a presentation on literacy for kindergarten through fourth grade, math recovery, and accelerated learning. The presentation highlighted how ACPS is accelerating learning in English Language Arts for students, the current status of implementation of the phonics program, how ACPS is accelerating learning in Mathematics for students, how the ELL Office is supporting students, and how Specialized Instruction is providing specific services to address student needs.

Board Members asked questions about the extended day learning program for students with disabilities, phonics resource implementation and student access to that tool, and for clarification of the term "accelerated learning."

16. Revisions to E, I, K, and L Policies/Regulations

Ms. Jennifer Abbruzzese presented School Board policy and regulatory revisions as part of the Board's continuing, five-year policy review cycle. Twelve policies and regulations from the classifications below were proposed for creation and/or revision:

- E Policies: Support Services
- I Policies: Instructional Program
- K Policies: School-Community Relations
- L Policies: Education Agency Relations

Board Members asked for clarification regarding remote learning days due to inclement weather the impact it has on make-up days, and shared their excitement for the anti-idling policy for buses and the communication methods to disseminate this information.

These policies will return to the Board for action at an upcoming Board Meeting.

Chair's Report

17. Report from Meagan L. Alderton

Chair Alderton shared upcoming events such as the Joint City Council/School Board Subcommittee Meeting on October 25, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., and the Joint City Council/School Board CIP Work Session on October 27, at 7 p.m. She noted that the FY 2023-2032 CIP Budget will be presented at the School Board Meeting on November 11, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent's Report

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

Dr. Hutchings reported that Dr. Steve Wilkins, Chief of Staff, will be leaving the division in November and thanked him for his dedication and service. Dr. Wilkins has taken a position as the Senior Vice-President of Human Resources and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in Washington, D.C. Dr. Hutchings congratulated him on this new opportunity.

Superintendent Hutchings also briefly addressed the substitute teacher shortage, the reinstatement of SROs in the middle and high schools, and shared his plans on how ACPS will manage this issue. Dr. Hutchings also acknowledged National School Lunch Week held October 11-15, National School Bus Safety Week from October 18-22, and School Bus Transportation Employees Appreciation Day on October 20. He also recognized Digital Citizenship Week which helps students reflect on how their digital lives impact their social and emotional well-being, and Red Ribbon Week which encourages communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities.

Announcements by Board Members

19. Announcements

There were no announcements by School Board Members.

Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting

20. Closed Meeting

21. Certification of Closed Meeting

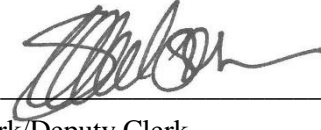
Adjournment

22. Adjourn

On a motion by Ms. Lorber and seconded by Ms. Gentry, the Board voted unanimously, 9-0, to adjourn. The meeting ended at 10:44 p.m.



Meagan Alderton, Chair



Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the December 2, 2021 School Board Meeting.