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Albemarle County School Board Interviews of Rio Magisterial District Candidates, Thursday, January 16, 2025

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBWC_V1t5KA

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[00:00:07] Good evening everyone, this is an open session, a special meeting for the sole purpose of interviewing candidates for the Rio District School Board seat, which is vacant.

[00:00:23] Before we get to that, first let's do a roll call, starting with you Mr. Black. Good evening everyone, I'm Josiah Black, School Division Counsel. Allison Spillman, at-large representative. Rebecca Verlin, Whitehall representative.

[00:00:39] Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Graham Page, Miller District. Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent. Matthew Hall, Superintendent. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board.

[00:00:54] Thank you. Now, let us stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. To open stands, one nation, one under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:01:18] We will now have a moment of silence.

[00:01:45] As you know, unfortunately, we have a vacancy in the Rio District seat on the school board for Albemarle County due to the passing of our former colleague, Chuck Pace. Under Virginia Code, Section

24.2-228, the school board has the option to appoint an interim school board member, provided that we do so within 45 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

[00:02:10] Additionally, the code provides that the school board must hold the public hearing at least seven days before the appointment at which time the candidates that are being considered are identified the school board decided to solicit applications and tonight we will interview the six seven individuals who have applied before we get to that i'd like to thank all of them who have indicated their willingness to commit to public service each applicant will be questioned with the same panel of questions each may begin with a one and a half to two minute opening statement after the interviews a school board will meet in a closed closed

[00:02:50] meeting tonight but will not make a decision at that time at a regular work session on January 23rd just a week from tonight we will hold a public hearing to receive comments from members of the community about the candidates then we will hold a closed meeting at which time the school board will deliberate and make a decision about an interim appointee. The school board will announce its decision in the open session following its closed meeting. The interim school board member will attend his or her

[00:03:23] first school board meeting on February the 13th. Note that this interim appointment will last through December 31st, 2025. There will be a general election for the RIO seat in November for a regular four-year term.

[00:03:41] As noted, the school board has received seven applications for the Interim Rio District School Board seat. Tonight, we will conduct interviews with each candidate. And now I will turn it over to Dr. Boleyn, who will manage the questioning.

[00:03:56] - Good evening. As noted by Chair Oakhoff, each candidate will have up to two minutes to deliver an opening statement, followed by 15 minutes to respond to a series of questions. To ensure consistency and fairness, all applicants will be asked the same set of questions.

[00:04:12] A timer will be projected on the screen to help everyone, keep everyone informed of the remaining time during each segment. Thank you for attention, and we look forward to a productive evening. We are ready to begin the interviews. Leslie Adier-Pryor, yep, please make your way to the podium, and I will ask the remaining candidates to wait in the atrium until it is your turn.

[00:04:48] Good evening. didn't we pronounce your name incorrectly or correctly? Could you just put, Leslie Pryor, okay. I'm gonna ask you to just pull that mic close to you in a place that's comfortable.

[00:05:03] - Sure. - Can we get the door shut as well? - Thanks, Mary. - Ms. Pryor, so the way this will go is we will, we'll have up to two minutes for your opening statement and you'll see the time projected behind me.

[00:05:20] And then we have five questions for you. So each of those will be about, we're looking for you to have about three minutes to keep within that 15 minute time allotment. Sure. So if you'd like to begin your opening statement now, I welcome you.

[00:05:38] Sure. Thank you. Good evening, members of the board and guests. My professional life has not been that of an educator. I do not have children, but I do have nieces, nephews, coupled with dozens of youth and families that I had an opportunity to serve as a probationary role officer.

[00:05:53] My desire to serve on the Almar County School Board aligns with my willingness, commitment, and compassion to serve youth, families, and employees with integrity, competency, adaptability, and tenacity. I welcome the opportunity to serve with a focus on the students. I would like to focus on the challenges of how the children are performing, with strong emphasis on the children who live below the poverty line.

[00:06:15] I want the children and their families to understand that I do care. I support an increase in teacher pay, enhance facilities where our children and personnel are safe, and all children are provided with services, no matter their socioeconomic background, their race or ethnicity, or their gender. I seek to improve the diversity within the staff and to improve the performance of black students.

[00:06:35] We need to work to reduce the pipeline of our children who end up in the juvenile justice system and imprisonment. We need an atmosphere of positivity fostered by truth, trust, and treatment services to improve a child's life. I believe lastly I believe that I'm a witness what I mean is that I'm not disqualified by what I do not know but rather I'm qualified by what I do know I'm a witness to what the Lord has done for me I'm a witness to poverty racial discrimination rejection for speaking the truth and a witness to being the best I can be it is for these reasons above and more that I seek to

[00:07:13] open appointment to the Alamo County School Board Rio District in 2025 thank you for your time Thank you very much. I'm going to also ask you the first question. What do you see as the role of a school board member? What are the biggest issues facing the students, families, and schools of the Rio District, and how will you represent your constituents?

[00:07:32] Yes. Well, the biggest role is always for the school board to hire a superintendent to be a top of the established school districts and their goals to adopt a budget, which is always a big thing. As I see the Ryo District, I must tell you that I was like most folk at how this process came about with the passing of Mr. Pace.

[00:08:00] And so, you know, as I've had the school board in my background for and in my view for some years, thinking maybe upon retirement, it would be something that I could run for. So with the special election, it just gave me the courage, I guess, to go forward at this time.

[00:08:22] You know, I'm mindful of the time that it takes to commit to the school board. But again, you know, I think the Rio district really needs the vision and the presence of someone as myself and an African-American female to serve on this board.

[00:08:43] a native of Charlottesville, though I went to Citi and graduated from Charlottesville High School. I've spent a lot of time, I've had nieces and nephews who came through the county school systems by way of Agner Hurt, Burley, and then Monticello.

[00:08:59] And so, you know, I think the Rio District, which is a growing district now with the new Rio Point units that are coming about, I just think that we need some flexibility and adaptability of individuals on the board. I commend you all for what you do. And so, you know, my desire to continue to be of service is what brings me here today. And I think that each and every family that's in the Ryo district, that I can be an asset to them, as well as the board. Thank you so much.

[00:09:32] Ms. Osborne. Hi, good evening. So you will be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process. It is the most exciting time for us. This is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed. What process will you

use to get up to speed on the budget process and determine your recommended budget priorities? First and foremost, not being an educator, you know, this is a steep learning curve for me. I have worked with budgets. I served as a probation and parole

[00:10:10] officer of Richmond, and we were fortunate to get a million dollar plus grant from the high to high intensity traffic program out of Maryland. And so I was fortunate to work within the budget analysis team as to the service and things that we're putting in place.

[00:10:30] Moving forward, I've served here in this community as the Family Treatment Coordinator through Region 10. And we also had a large grant and a large budget process. So if I'm the individual selected for this process, as I said to start, it would be a steep learning curve.

[00:10:49] However, I'm not intimidated by the process of budgets and working with individuals. So that's my response. - Thank you. - Hi, Ms. Pryor. board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019 in what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it and in what areas could you help us improve um i think you've been successful in a number of ways areas of improvement would for me personally be representation of more

[00:11:23] diversity on your board um the albon county school board as within the administration and I know it's difficult and challenging at times to hire individuals based on salaries and geographic locations and things of that sort.

[00:11:43] As I was reading through some of the information, unfortunately, I did not get the email about the session. It went to my spam, and we just learned that yesterday, so I would have been present on Tuesday. But I did get the second email, the follow-up that had a number of links and things attached to it in reference to the strategic plan and whatnot.

[00:12:02] so you know i i think with the anti-racist policy you know that's an ongoing um document dialogue and discussion um i think that we're in a climate now in a culture where there's so much sensitivity as it relates to racism and whatnot anti-racism amongst of the things um so i think we have to be authentic and genuine and really search one's heart as to where they really stand so often we see individuals who get in positions of leadership and they're responsible for not just our children but individuals and individuals have a tendency to

[00:12:44] not really be forthcoming with with their truth as it relates to things some individuals have an agenda and i can share with you that someone asked me when once i applied for this was this perhaps a stepping stone to another political agenda and my quick response was absolutely not so you know and i know individuals do have agendas um but my agenda at this time is seeking the open slot for open seat for the alma county school board rio district i've lived in the

[00:13:18] district for 40 years. Very familiar with it. And, you know, again, I just think we're in a culture that's extremely sensitive. And it's ever changing and evolving as it relates to anti racism policies.

[00:13:39] Thank you. Recruitment and retention of our employees is incredibly important. In what ways has the division done well? And what would you propose improving? I think the division has done well and and I think that it's an ongoing challenge.

[00:13:59] You know Charlottesville as a community and that's inclusive of Albemarle County has presented some challenges the past years whether it was 2017 and the Unite to Right or different things

that have put us in the forefront of the media.

[00:14:15] You know I always tell folks if you if you make it on the Today Show you know it's pretty significant and so um you know where we are overshadowed by a lot of bad there are some good things going on i i think that i've seen some improvement in numbers as it relates to diversity among staff i think it can be better um i i think that there are factors that attribute to that um you know sometimes for me as an african-american female um i'll go ahead and share i'm 60 but um you know i hear some of my relatives and friends who may be in the 35 to 55 range saying there's

[00:14:55] not enough to do here it's not culturally as diverse as they would like so i remind them we're not northern virginia we're not metropolitan richmond so you know i think all in all um the school board has made some strides in trying to improve and increase we have before us an assistant superintendent who's of african-american female um we have an african-american male on the board we have miss lee on the board so you know overall you know there's been a number of um

[00:15:31] assistant principals lately who have been put in place almar county schools and so you know i think it's an ongoing work i think it requires ongoing dialogue and um that's what i would say to that Thank you. Okay, thank you Ms. Pryor. Working on the board would probably have at least four main skills. Working for a team, even when, or working as a team rather, even when your view might differ from others. Being a problem solver. Focusing on long-term strategic and governance. And being able

[00:16:04] to thoughtfully engage with the public. How does your experience illustrate those skills? Well, the first one was I think problem solving. I've been a probation and parole officer for about 25 years first with juveniles with the 16th for I think close to five years prior to that I worked at the jail as a correctional officer so we're constantly solving problems and whatnot from the 16th I went on to Richmond as probation and parole officer with the drug court district one

[00:16:36] it's a long commute but 13 years I did it and I just think that problem solving is key and critical to life. I graduated from Virginia State University and I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Reserves. They gave us a lot of discipline and they taught us a lot about problem solving sometimes just like that for various situations. So you know problem solving I think it's in my nature too. I walked in here this evening the secretary I think was having some

[00:17:11] challenges with Wegmans or someone bringing food so I went down to try to find him. But you know I think we do what we do at the spur of the moment. I think that I'm an introvert, but I'm willing to engage and to help out wherever I can. And so problem solving is huge. And can you remind me of the other two? Okay, the other two were focusing on governance and being able to engage with the public. Okay, so yeah, focusing on governance. I think that's critical and we have to. I have served

[00:17:44] with families, law enforcement officials, political officials. I'm currently enrolled at Sorenson Institute as the program associate and alumni coordinator. I've been there since April, and we strive to ensure that individuals are getting the best of leadership training.

[00:18:05] We don't advocate for individuals running for office, but we do what we can as it relates to public policy and whatnot so government governance is always built into that um i served and this may go more to the third question i served as the um public information officer for the virginia probation and parole association for a few years a position that i was elected to by my peers and so as i was coming in i was messing with the young ladies who were 29 and tell them don't put Put the camera on me, please.

[00:18:36] But, you know, I think public relations is critical. As a former probation officer for, again, for 25 years, I was constantly in the public. I've served in that role for Charlottesville, Albemarle, and surrounding counties. I've served Richmond. I was promoted to senior probation officer, probation parole officer supervisor over West, and served as third in command at a facility of 150 men with intensive substance abuse services.

[00:19:04] and then to the Stanton District 12 Probation and Parole Office. So, you know, communication is always key. And sometimes we learn that individuals communicate differently. Just as students learn differently, I'm coming to accept and adapt to the challenges as it relates to communication and proper communication.

[00:19:28] So I know my clock is running. I can't remember how many more questions I have. So I'll stop there for that one. - Thanks. - Thank you so much. We are at the end of our five questions. - Oh, okay, could've gone on, but thank you. - Thank you so much.

[00:19:43] - All right. - Thank you. - And as you go out, would you mind letting Ms. Friedman know that it's her time to come in? - Okay, and am I able to leave? - You are able, yes, you're able to leave, yes. - Thank you.

[00:19:59] - Thank you so much for your time, we appreciate it.

[00:20:50] Give you a moment to set up. you can pull the microphone that's at your right to a comfortable place and what and what we will do is we will have a timer for two minutes um for your opening statement and then we'll reset the timer for 15 minutes um and then we'll have five questions um that you'll have that that 15 minutes

[00:21:29] to answer okay thank you so much i'm gonna go first um after your um two-minute statements whenever you're ready. Okay, I'll start now. I want to say thank you again for this opportunity to join what is the best school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. I think I can be a good choice for the school board because I have expertise and experience to bring to the school board and to the community that we serve, the Rio District. In particular, my experience includes Community Colleges, the Beaufort County, South Carolina School District, where I was School

[00:22:09] Business Community Partnership Coordinator, Economic Development/Workforce/Adult Literacy in Georgia, and in Texas, I headed the Texas Association of Partners in Education. Again, a group that's bringing educators, parents, business, and community members to the benefit of K-12 education. Here in Charlottesville, I've worked at MACA, Alzheimer's Association.

[00:22:41] I worked with workforce development in the economic development world. I spent time with the Jefferson School Foundation and the Jefferson School City Center, and most recently with CASPA, Charlottesville SPCA. So I think the experience, of course, is working with the school board having been on the school board from 2004 to 2007 and serving on three different committees i know graham and i served on the southern feeder pattern study committee i think

[00:23:12] in addition to expertise and experience i bring great value and knowledge with community how do we engage community to solve any issue any challenge to address any opportunity i think community is critically important for the Albemarle County School District. And I would be honored and look forward to the opportunity to bring community with my expertise and experience. Thank you so much. The first question is, what do you see as the role of a school board member? What are the

[00:23:48] biggest issues facing the students, families, and schools in the Rio District? And how will you represent your constituents? Well, the role of the school board member is to be that intersection between the community and decision making in other words the school board so being a representative for all those who live in the rio district for all students all parents all businesses in the rio district and so the role of the school board member is to understand to listen to be available and to bring that knowledge and information back to the school board as issues are addressed the

[00:24:27] The biggest issues in the Rio District I think mirror the issues for the Albemarle County School Board. When you look at the strategic plan, we still have achievement variances, and we need to continue to very, very conscientiously and purposely address those.

[00:24:45] I think we still have overcrowding issues that we need to address with the centers and what their best application will be to both help students and address the overcrowding issues and I think in the bigger picture community engagement is critically important. I looked through the bellwether report and that comes up very loud and very clear. We have to understand how to engage with our stakeholders and our communities in a way that is valued to them, in a way they hear,

[00:25:20] in a way they understand and so i think those are great opportunities for the rio district thank you very much all right so you will be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process this is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed how will you what will you use to get up to speed on the budget process and determine your recommended budget priorities well i look to you and to the staff and to the community to help me get up to speed on the budget process. I've already had a

[00:25:59] session with Dr. Haas and the strategic planning director and the budget director to give us baseline information. I've already gotten several documents. The good thing is I have time. I am officially retired at this moment. I have no paid employment, so I have plenty of time to get myself up to date i've been through it four times as a school board member so i that i haven't forgotten what that's like so i will make sure that i do the homework and spend the time with staff and learning that i need in order to be the productive board member you deserve

[00:26:36] to end the rio district deserves and your second part was how do i address issues for rio district um well how do you get her speed and uh yes that was it pretty much well again we've got seven applicants for this position there's a lot of passion there is a lot of interest in the rio district there's ptas there's parent groups there's neighborhood associations there's a lot of ways to make sure that we are hearing what the issues and the priorities are from our constituents and

[00:27:14] And again, bringing those back and very clearly and fully representing the Rio District for where their priorities are. I think just the questions that the seven candidates brought up in our meeting two days ago or a day ago make it very clear to me what some of the priority issues are.

[00:27:34] And so I think, again, you listen, you make yourself available, you invite yourself to things, you accept invitations when you receive them. and make sure that you are hearing what people have to say and bring that back. Thank you.

[00:27:58] The board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019. In what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it? And in what areas could you help us improve? I think the fact that that

policy was adopted is a great success. I think the school board standing up to lawsuits and naysayers and critics is another great success.

[00:28:22] It is important. It is necessary. And it is not something that can be undone. It must continue. And what I will do, or what I've seen the school district do, is very, very conscientiously through strategic planning, through the teaching and learning process, through the preparation of teachers and the selection and recruitment of teacher candidates, gone above and beyond to try and implement an anti-racism strategy across the board.

[00:28:53] board, and I think that's very, very important. The learning atmosphere as well as the staff, these are important strategies in order to continue to emphasize anti-racism policy.

[00:29:08] And I think the training that's being done with staff ongoing is very important. I think something as simple as the calendar. The calendar reflects a lot of different ethnic and cultural entities. And I think those small things, again, continue to be front and center to the teachers, to the students, to the parents in the community, that this is something we value and we're going to continue to pursue. And we invite everyone to join us in that pursuit. Thank you. Recruitment

[00:29:45] and retention of our employees is incredibly important. In what ways has the division done this well and how would you propose improving the division has made progress not as much as it wants when I look at the numbers that 13 of the teaching staff are people of color that's not reflecting of our demographics at all not our student population or our county population and so there's work that needs to be done I think the African-American teaching fellows is a great

[00:30:18] resource for the Albemarle County School District. I think growing your own can be a very good strategy and perhaps needs more emphasis. I also was very mindful of the information I read that do we have the school culture and perhaps the bigger picture, do we have the community culture that is going to keep our diverse teachers with us.

[00:30:48] And so how can the school district partner more with community entities, the Divine Nine, the sororities and fraternities? How are ways that we in the school division can collaborate more fully with those resources that are there in the community to make a place, a welcoming place for those who come to the community and are not Caucasian.

[00:31:15] Okay, Ms. Freeman. Working on the board probably requires at least four main skills. Working as a team, even when your view might differ from others, being a problem solver, focusing on long-term strategies and governance, and being able to thoughtfully engage with the public. How does your experience illustrate these skills?

[00:31:40] That's non-profit work in a nutshell I will say um when you look at the work the Jefferson School the Alzheimer's Association but most immediately and most um glaringly the Albemarle County I mean the Albemarle Charlottesville Albemarle SPCA one has to be a team player one has to help people understand that their views are valued, that their needs are valued, that their contributions

[00:32:15] are valued, and they are welcome. I think that's such a key. Not only do we hear people, but we value what they say and we welcome their input. We want them to join in making a better solution and collaboration and teamwork is the only way that a school a classroom a school board or a school system is going to be successful I believe that those are skills my sister said something to me when I was with her in Texas last week she said you know what your problem is you're a fixer and I

[00:32:55] said thank you because I don't see that as a problem I see that as an opportunity and i'm very aware that i can't do it alone and in fact i never will that it will take the collective to solve that problem thank you so much for your time this evening we appreciate it okay thank you thank you could you please let mr dylan beck know that he is next thank you

[00:33:25] good evening i will give you a second to um get settled and put the mic in a place that's

[00:34:18] comfortable for you. So you'll have two minutes to do your opening statement. And then we have five questions for you after that. And so we'll reset the clock and you'll see a 15 minute count. And that will be the time for all of the questions. Okay. Very good. Good evening, Chair Acuff, members of the board, Dr. Haas, Dr. Kaiser, Mr. Black. I appreciate you all taking time to interview us my name is jim dylanbeck like all of you i was saddened to hear of chuck pace's passing a few weeks ago i had the opportunity to teach and coach with him at

[00:34:58] albemarle high school a number of years ago and i really enjoyed our interaction over the years if appointed i plan to continue the hard work that he demonstrated in the last year like chuck i have the privilege i've had the privilege of teaching and coaching at albemarle and over the course of the last year i've had the opportunity to talk with hundreds of residents in the ryo community as well as teachers and administrators at each of the schools that serve the ryo district i've heard their concerns about mental health grading policies classroom

[00:35:35] management and poor test scores new curriculum demands etc i applied for this vacancy 15 months ago and campaigned for this same position because i served as a classroom teacher and coached for 10 years and I can understand many of the challenges that teachers face. I'm concerned about teacher retention in the near future as more and more veteran teachers retire and fewer younger people enter the workforce. I'm also concerned about those students who are not thriving, that is the majority of students

[00:36:12] at Woodbrook who are failing the SOLs and the 40% of students of color at Albemarle High School who failed the SOLs last year. For most of the 14,000 students in the acps there is no alternative to public schools if appointed i will work hard to see that all students are learning and given the tools to reach their full potential regardless of race economic status gender or background thank you for your service to this community thank you

[00:36:47] what do you see as the role of a school board member and what are the biggest issues facing the students the families and the schools of the rio district and how will you represent your constituents so i see the role of a board member as being an advocate for teachers administrators staff and also as a liaison between the staff of schools and the parents and members of the

[00:37:23] community and so it's really really important to me to to be a person who is able to listen to the concerns of teachers parents like i said i've had the opportunity to hear from a number of teachers and administrators and parents in the rio district their concerns i think to answer the second part of the question one of the biggest issues facing the rio district right now is the

[00:37:55] increasing number of immigrant families i was at woodbrook elementary school on november 1st talking with christy isaiah who by the way is the third principal there at woodbrook in the last three or four years and woodbrook i think maybe for the first time ever is a minority majority school and so i asked miss isaiah what happens when a family comes in and they don't speak english

[00:38:29] at home how did they how does this work in a classroom because when i was teaching many years ago you know i might have 25 or 30 students but all of them spoke english that was their primary language and that's changed dramatically in the last five or ten years so between the demographics of the the district changing as well as i think we're still recovering from the pandemic and the

[00:39:00] really tough ways in which students who didn't have the support of parents were really setback thank you very much sure ms osborne hi um so you'll be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process this is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed what process will you

[00:39:33] use to get up to speed on the budget process and determine your recommended budget priorities um i've spent the last 22 years as a financial advisor so i'm somewhat familiar with finances and i work with my clients on budgeting on a personal level so i understand that they're just like with most families there are more demands than there are dollars and it in my opinion

[00:40:12] we need to make sure that we are spending the \$270 million of county taxpayer money as well as possible. And so what I would suggest is that we do an audit of how that money is being currently spent. For example, if I'm correct, there are roughly 120 central office administrators or staff

[00:40:42] and approximately 60 or half as many school administrators um and so i'd like to know are we spending resources properly to make sure that those dollars are being spent to help educate students because at the end of the day that's our highest priority it's not having great sports programs or you know beautiful buildings it's educating all students and so in my opinion we

[00:41:22] need to be supporting teachers bus drivers increasing their pay i was talking with the principal at agner back in the spring who said you know we need to significantly increase salaries because we're going to lose teachers so i would do an audit of where the money is being spent now and maya's done a tremendous job of of explaining where the money goes and where it comes from i also have some ideas that i would share with the board of supervisors about how to perhaps increase

[00:41:56] revenues knowing that we have a responsibility to teach and we need to be spending that money wisely and effectively thank you the board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019 in what ways do you think we've been successful in implementing it and in what areas could you help us improve one of the things that comes to mind i guess i'll answer the second part of the question first and

[00:42:32] that is two sort of achievement gaps that i see one is in test scores between students of color and white students that persists it's maybe gotten a little bit better in recent years but it's still way too large the other area that is a concern for me is the gap between teachers of color and student population roughly 30 percent difference so in my opinion and this

[00:43:08] isn't directly related to anti-racism but if appointed to the board i would be very interested in trying to recruit teachers of color because i think you know as a white teacher and coach i could relate to all students but i know that for my black colleagues it was it was much easier to be a role model to black students and other students of color so i'd like to see us recruit

[00:43:45] more teachers of color i'd like to see us do more in terms of mentoring students of color and when I was back in the dark ages teaching middle school we had a program called junior achievement where we would invite business owners to come in and speak to our middle school students again another

great opportunity for students of all races to see people of all races in successful in business and be able to speak to students and mentor them so that they can have an understanding that

[00:44:25] i can be whatever i want to be regardless of my race or gender or whatever so i think the anti raising the issue i think is important and i think that that the county schools have done a good job of raising that as an issue that needs to be addressed rather than just ignored thank you um as you said in your opening statement recruitment and retention of employees is incredibly important in what ways has the division done a good job with this and how would you propose

[00:45:03] improving it yeah so i was really encouraged to hear maya and dr haas mentioned the five percent increase in teacher compensation that was just passed in the last year or so i think that's good i think it's a good start but you know i think we have to look at this situation through the eyes of a 23 year old just out of college and for him or her to decide to go into teaching

[00:45:38] knowing they might make 45 000 in the first year the average teacher salary in albemarle county is roughly 60 000 which by the way is less than it is in rockingham county where it's a lot cheaper to live i would add so we need to not just assume that people are going to go into teaching not for the pay but because they love working with kids now it's important that they do love working with kids but at the end of the day with all of the stresses on them they need to know that they're

[00:46:14] appreciated and part of that is we need to in significantly increase teacher pay in my opinion and i left teaching after 10 years because i couldn't afford to feed a family at the time we had we had three young kids living in charlottesville on a teacher salary just couldn't do it and so i know that there are others like me that have had the same the same course and so i i will do whatever it takes to make sure that we are compensating teachers well that we're training

[00:46:49] them well um you know the day that i was at woodbrook there were seven teachers absent for the day now this is the day after halloween so i can understand some teachers maybe wanted to take a day off but that puts a stress on miss isaiah and and the other staff so we need to make sure and in fact in talking with uh ashby johnson at journey and with mike irani at agner elementary i said what's the biggest issue that you're facing they said mental health and they both said that's

[00:47:28] teachers and students so i think we need to address not only compensation but what are the benefits why would somebody want to continue to teach and i can tell you as a former teacher that there are teachers in the system now who are just there because their pension goes away or is less if they leave before the 30 years and that's a terrible place to be so i think we we need to revamp

[00:48:04] rethink how we compensate teachers thank you mr tillenbeck working on a board requires at least four main skills working as a team even when your view might differ from others being a problem solver focusing on long-term strategies and governance and being able to thoughtfully engage with the public how does your experience illustrate these skills that's good so i've served on one other board we we're part of a fundraising group to raise money for the food bank and for

[00:48:44] world serve uh well drilling in africa and over the last 10 years we've raised about a million million and a half dollars and you know we have discussions among the other board members about the best way to do things we don't always agree but we keep our focus on the main objective and i think that's that's something that as a board member i've got to keep in mind that i might disagree with you on certain policies and details but as long as we're both as we're all focused on

[00:49:22] the main objective right it's to educate students then i think i've learned how to set aside some of my own thoughts and ideas if it doesn't lead to a unified decision in terms of communication with the public that's one of the main things that i uh campaigned on and if i'm appointed to the board i would be interested in making sure that i'm available to the public i would want to have

[00:50:00] kind of town hall meetings periodically so that i can listen to the residents of the rio district and be able to have that to to give voice to the their concerns and I think sometimes people whether it's teachers or parents may be hesitant to come before the board to express their concerns so I think it's it's really really important to have a safe landing space with the public so that they feel like they're being heard and their concerns are being addressed I can tell you from the many

[00:50:39] conversations i had with families in the neighborhoods in rio there are folks that who can afford to send their kids elsewhere they're they're doing that now they're they're i talked to a number of families that are sending their kids to the city schools and to private schools 20 some years ago when i was teaching it was the other way around there were city kids going to albemarle schools and so i'd love to see that go back to the way it was before so

[00:51:11] communication to me is super important thank you thank you so much we appreciate your time um and

[00:51:23] will you ask ms jenkins to come in for us i will thank you thank you give you a second to just kind

[00:52:12] of get comfortable make sure the mic is in the right place you can you can just be flexible so if you want to pull it up so you don't have to or so you don't have to lean down um so you'll have two minutes to do your opening statement and you'll see the timer in front of you and then there'll be 15 minutes during which um we will ask you a series of five questions within those 15 minutes okay so whenever you're ready okie dokie all right well uh thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me this evening my name is sarah jenkins um as an academic advisor

[00:52:51] at UVA. I have the pleasure of working with young adults who are one step removed from the K-12 system and I recognize the impact that their school experiences have on preparing them to succeed in college and beyond. I love working with college students and I believe that there is more that I can be doing to support our future generations before they graduate from high school.

[00:53:17] I care deeply about our school district being one where every single student can thrive. I believe that quality public education is a human right and that we have a responsibility as a community to care for each other. I've served on the board of the Sexual Assault Resource Agency for the past five years while also completing my doctorate in education and working full-time at UVA. Having now graduated, I am interested in turning my energies towards more community-based work. When I feel overwhelmed and discouraged by current events around the world, I look to ways

[00:53:57] that I can make a difference in my own community. Serving on the school board would give me the opportunity to make a positive difference for our 14,000 students, their teachers and staff, families. I recognize that our school system is facing many challenges right now, but I am eager to apply my experience and my love towards the ever constant improvement of ACPS and our community at large. I'm excited to speak with you today about the vital work that the school board is doing to support

[00:54:33] thriving students, empowered communities, and equitable and transformative resources and how i might be able to contribute to those goals thank you wow that was perfect well done thank you so much the first question is what do you see as the role of a school board member what are the biggest issues facing the students the families and the schools of the rio district and how will you represent your constituents okay that's three questions what was the third one represent constituents um what do you see as for the what do you see as the

[00:55:09] role of the school board member what are the biggest issues facing the students families and schools of the rio district and how will you represent your constituents school great thank you that's wonderful um so i i think the role of the school board is to be um uh a an arm for the Families and the people who are engaged in the school district the stakeholders That are in that have their children going to those schools the teachers and the staff that work at those schools

[00:55:48] So I see the role as one of A responsibility to know what's going on with the schools in the district, which I know it's quite a few schools and that is responsive to the needs of parents and families in particular and also teachers and staff. So I see that as taking time to meet with people at the different schools, getting to know the culture of each of the schools as best you can, and having a sense of what the

[00:56:25] challenges are for each of our schools that we're representing. In terms of biggest issues. I'm one of them I think is definitely just a quality keeping quality teachers and staff. I know that we are doing a kind of review of our salaries right now and that we have some room for improvement in terms of

[00:57:03] those being more competitive with other school districts and I think that that could go a long way in terms of attracting good candidates and keeping them in schools for longer periods of time giving them the resources that they need to succeed in their jobs and then in terms of issues facing students and families obviously transportation is a big one right now I know that we're still working on busing situations and having better transportation for our

[00:57:37] students and I know that there's a lot of conversation about opportunity and achievement gaps I think that I know that that's something that you all are working on and I definitely see that as a big area for us to continue to improve upon making sure that all of our students are getting the same access to the same quality education regardless of their background. And then in terms of how I would represent constituents,

[00:58:12] kind of going back to what I said about what the role is, I'd really want to listen to what the ACPS stakeholders are telling me that we need. Judy, I watched all of your little videos online and i you know uh in yours you talked about knocking on like a thousand doors and some of the conversations that you had with families and how impactful those were and um anyway i found that very inspiring and i'd like to do you know i i want to do something similar um in terms of being

[00:58:48] able to communicate with people and making sure that they feel like they're being heard thank you you very much. All right. So you'll be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process. This is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and there are new initiatives that are needed. What process will you use to get up to speed on the budget and determine your recommended budget priorities? It's a great question.

[00:59:24] In my experience serving on the SARA Board, we have had a lot of - I've learned a lot about managing budgets for organizations and I have been a part of the decision-making process of figuring out

where you allocate those funds.

[00:59:46] And I recognize how challenging it is to make some of those decisions when you do have a limited amount of resources that you're working with I think for me one of my first steps would just be to familiarize myself with the budgets for the county for the last probably five years or so and get a sense of kind of what what the changes have been where resources have been going and of course talk and listen

[01:00:22] to you all about um how how your experiences with building those budgets have gone and what you see as areas for improvement thank you yeah the board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019. in what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it and in what ways could you help us improve yeah great question um in terms of ways that uh i think acps has been

[01:01:00] successful in adopting the policy i think I know that there's a push to have all of the teachers have that kind of like mini credential for I'm blanking on the exact term but cultural culturally responsive mini credential I think that that's a wonderful thing to be working towards I think I when I was writing my dissertation I the focus of it was culturally responsive student engagement and one of the ways that they

[01:01:34] way that I researched about capacity building for culturally responsive engagement is making sure that that competency is a key indicator of success on employee evaluations.

[01:01:50] So I think that is a really strong way to measure that, having that kind of credential. And then I know other training for staff as well. In terms of areas for growth, I know that y'all in your interviews have talked before about just making how that anti-racism commitment gets translated into closing our opportunity

[01:02:25] and achievement gaps, which I think sometimes can go beyond credentials to some kind of deeper, more difficult conversations about some of our own unchecked biases or not unchecked but unconscious biases that we all have just from being human beings on the earth and the ways that we as individuals need to be able to know those things about ourselves so that

[01:03:01] we can better serve our students. you um recruitment and retention of our employees is incredibly important in what ways has the division done this well and how would you propose improving yeah um so uh in terms of things that i think are going well um you know i know that there's been um a push to have um professional

[01:03:34] development opportunities for teachers and staff and thinking about ways that we can have staff that represent the population that we're making sure that our staff are representational of the populations that we're serving. I think that that's incredibly important. I see that that is happening and I you know I think that's heading in the right direction and then in terms of

[01:04:10] kind of areas to for the future I think continuing to do those things thinking about how we can attract and retain qualified and diverse staff members i think is just kind of a continuous ongoing challenge for probably most school districts i would imagine or a lot of school

[01:04:42] districts i think there's still a lot of work that can be done there and a lot of conversations to have with the community about how we might be more attractive to those to different populations of people. We have similar challenges at UVA with you know our staff and faculty being about 75 percent white and not necessarily representational of the community that we

[01:05:17] as a university are part of and i think there's a lot of things to for us to continue to think about in terms of you know what is the culture at the school feel like for people and do they feel like they're safe and comfortable and represented in those spaces yeah okay thank you mrs jenkins Working on a board requires at least four main skills.

[01:05:51] Working as a team, even when your view may not agree with everybody else's, being a problem solver, focusing on long-term strategies and governance, and being able to thoughtfully engage with the public. How does your experience illustrate these skills?

[01:06:08] So problem solving, teamwork, sorry. Focusing on strategies and governance. Strategies and governance. and being able to engage with the public. - Great, public. Okay, wonderful. Thank you so much. So I, collaboration is my favorite way to work.

[01:06:29] On the SARA board, I've really enjoyed seeing the wonderful things that we can come up with as a team with all of our different backgrounds and personalities and interests. I really prefer to not be the person making decisions on my own. I think that the best decisions come from collaboration.

[01:06:55] And as an individual, I've learned a lot about making sure that I leave space for people to think through their ideas fully without getting too caught up in logistics too early on, letting that be something that you come at later. Similarly with problem-solving, something that I like to do collaboratively I think that coming up with creative solutions to problems is something I have done a lot in my previous role as well I was the mentoring coordinator for a mentoring

[01:07:34] organization called the young women leaders program which is in four different middle schools in ACPS and I would work with the different counselors at each of those middle schools to make sure that the program felt like it was a benefit to them and not just me coming in asking them to do more unpaid labor.

[01:07:57] And that did often involve finding creative solutions to specific things happening at each of the schools that we were working with. Strategies and governance. Yeah, so we just completed our strategic plan at Sarah.

[01:08:16] It was a really fascinating process to go through together and create that with some outside consulting help as well. I learned a lot about the strategic planning process and I am continuing to learn about how we're going to implement those things into our organization going forward.

[01:08:43] And then with the public, I think that transparency is really important. Making sure that I'm not holding things back just to hold things back.

[01:09:01] That as much as possible, I'm being transparent and upfront with people about the intricacies of a situation um uh that i'm not keeping those things to myself out of some sort of fear or anxiety thank you so much for your time tonight we appreciate it thank you thank you all very much the board will now take a 15 minute break so we will reconvene at 7 55 does that sound about right um and then at that time christine will have dr levitt come in after the break so we will return

[01:09:40] at 7:55. This board is now back in session. Dr. Berlin. Thank you. Christine, would you reset the

[01:10:17] timer to two minutes? I do not have a 15 minute. You don't have 15 minutes for an opening statement. Thank you so much. We appreciate it. So we'll have two minutes on the clock in front of you for your opening statement and then 15 minutes for questioning. And so there'll be five questions that are that

myself and my peers will be asking tonight excellent thank you so much so whenever you're ready you may start um it would be an honor to complete mr pace's term and represent my community i respectfully submit that i would be able to seamlessly step into the very

[01:10:56] large hole that mr pace left on the board i have the background knowledge and expertise in my community in acps and in education to hit the ground running as you know i have been a vocal advocate for my Rio district for over 10 years. I have 25 years of experience in public education working in and with school districts across Virginia and across the country as a teacher, an administrator, a reading specialist, a professor, and a consultant. As the at-large rep on long-range planning and as the co-chair of Family Council, I bring a demonstrated history of serving my Rio community. With many changes and initiatives ahead at the district, state, and possibly federal levels, the next year will be an important one in ACPS. I

[01:11:35] I bring an understanding of the rich diversity and strengths of our community along with our unique needs. Our RIO schools serve a significant population of students who are multilingual learners, newcomers, and are identified as SLIFE. These students are my neighbors, and they deserve access to a high-quality education.

[01:11:52] I acknowledge my own privilege in navigating the district's systems and structures, and if in this role, I vow to continue to engage with RIO caregivers to understand their needs and work to remove barriers to their engagement. Additionally, as a parent of a child with a disability, I bring that lens to everything I do.

[01:12:09] ACPS has made several positive changes since the Bellwether Report, including the Transformative Schools Initiative and the shift from a targeted to school-wide Title I model. These changes directly impact our Rio schools. However, as the State of the Division Report acknowledges, there is still work to be done in ensuring thriving students, especially in the Rio District.

[01:12:28] I have the experience and knowledge to ensure that the policies, allocations, and decisions made by this board including the adoption of a new math program take into account the needs of all rio students finally i'm a stakeholder in every decision the board makes for the next 10 years my oldest will attend admiral high school in the fall of 2026 and my youngest will graduate in 2034. the year ahead is an important one for the board as the plans for center two are finalized the annex is built and this will have a direct impact on my family thank you very much take a deep breath we will be I'm from New York so talking fast is a skill so what do

[01:13:07] you see as the role of a school board member what are the biggest issues facing the students the families and the schools of the Rio district and how will you represent your constituents um I'd like to start by saying I had the privilege and opportunity to engage with mr. pace over Rio throughout the course of the last year after his appointment we shared a dedication to ensuring educational equity for all students and he was incredibly generous with his time I was a recipient of many late-night emails and figured that that may be a pattern with him he was an incredible listener and a problem solver

[01:13:46] and I think he was a model for a school board member in that way and so I would hope to emulate that I see the role of the school board being a policymaker ensuring safety and success of all of our students a steward of our resources that we're entrusted with from the county from our taxpayers from our residents an advocate and a bridge between our community our Rio community and our caregivers within our community and the schools the school system the school board and I think their school board members especially in Rio are

[01:14:24] deeply responsible for the engagement of the community. I also see the role as a partner with district leadership so that we can work collectively to ensure that we are providing an equitable, high-quality education to all of our students. Was the second part of that challenges of that question? The issues facing the family schools of the Rio district and how you represent your constituents? So Rio, I like to start with strengths. We're incredibly diverse.

[01:14:59] Our population represents many home languages, many cultures. Our community brings such incredible funds of knowledge, funds of identity with them. We are very densely populated. Everywhere I drive, every day in Rio there is construction happening and with that becomes concerns around capacity and enrollment in the almost 12 years i've lived in ryo we have either been on the docket for redistricting or have been redistricted several times across school levels and you know that's

[01:15:39] going to continue to be a challenge for our district i also think a main challenge is just ensuring equitable and thriving equitable access to programming and thriving students two out of our three elementary schools are accredited with conditions all but one of the schools that serve Rio students have level two or level three achievement gaps according to the Department of Ed and so I think those are issues that are front and foremost for our community right now

[01:16:13] in the next year thank you so much all right so you'll be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process this is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed what process will you use to get up to speed on the budget process and to determine your recommended budget priorities so I have a lot of experience with school budgets I have been a school administrator I I have contributed to school budgets.

[01:16:45] I've worked within school budgets. I've given input on school budgets. I've also been a grant administrator of multi-million dollar grants where we've needed to prioritize the resources and the allocation of the resources to the schools that we've partnered with.

[01:17:03] In terms of getting up to speed in the process, I know this is the budget time. My time on long range, I'm very familiar with the budgets. I've been through several budget presentations, both as the Family Council Co-Chair, also on Long Range.

[01:17:19] I understand that the CIP request is a different entity from the school budget. When we met with Central Office, they talked about healthcare being a big concern. I know, and I've studied school finance throughout my education, that employees and benefits take up 85% of every budget, and we need to ensure that our staff, our classified staff and our teachers and our educators are compensated and compensated fairly.

[01:17:51] And so that would include having meetings with staff to understand the budget priorities and also taking into account what I feel and know and believe and have engaged with the community around our budget priorities for RIO.

[01:18:09] - Thank you. - The board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019. In what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it, and in what areas could you help us improve?

[01:18:24] I said this last year, and I'll say it again. I think the anti-racism policy and the supporting transgender students policy are two fundamental reasons that make me very proud to be an Albemarle County taxpayer.

[01:18:40] The success of the anti-racism policy first comes from the fact that it was developed by students. I think that's incredible. I think it's used as a lens and a framework for every decision that the district makes at the district level, at the classroom level, all the way at the school board level.

[01:19:00] And I think that's important. It recognizes and acknowledges that systematic racism exists and it's perpetuated in our systems. I think some challenges are especially pertinent to RIO in our achievement gaps, where we're seeing that our students of color are not as proficient in reading and in math as they need to be across grade levels.

[01:19:25] And so I think that's one of the biggest concerns right now. And I know that the board and the leadership are working through strategic planning, through Dr. Hitt's transformative schools program to really address that.

[01:19:44] Thank you. Recruitment and retention of our employees is incredibly important. - In what ways has the division done well and how would you propose improving? - So I said this last year as well, but I have been so impressed with the examination of pay and for teachers and educators and classified staff.

[01:20:07] And the fact that the district has done studies around that and that we are at the top of the pay scale in our markets. I think that's incredibly important. I also wanna recognize collective bargaining in recruitment and retention, giving our educators a seat at the table will absolutely help with retention.

[01:20:27] Dr. Claire Kaiser talked about working with keeping, doing stay interviews, you know, why are you staying? Working on what she termed as kind of the churn at some of our Rio elementary schools.

[01:20:42] We have a large number of brand new teachers and brand new teachers need a lot of support. was one I work with them I teach them and so the fact that the district has allocated FTE to do that to mentor teachers in schools that are accredited with conditions I think shows real promise I also think a lot about the vulnerable populations I am a parent of a student with this is a disability I navigated the special education process in Albemarle schools my son would not be where he is today without his incredible special education teacher at AGNR, Mr.

[01:21:19] Steve Burden. I nominated him for a golden apple last year. He is a miracle worker, so shout out to Mr. Burden. He's incredible. But you know, special education is an area that we as a field are struggling to staff, and so continuing with that pipeline, getting our special ed teachers who are provisionally licensed, supporting them in all the ways that we can with high quality instructional materials with professional learning and keeping that pipeline open I think is going to be crucial in the retention of that I also was pleased when I saw the state of the division that we've made progress in

[01:21:58] recruiting teachers of color that's incredibly important that our students especially your students of color are able to have teachers of color in the classroom I know that there is an entire department now devoted to talent recruitment which i think is doing incredible work in that way so i i know that teacher recruitment and retention is an issue it's an issue in a lot of places it is very very hard to be a teacher i know i was one just two two and a half years ago and so keeping our teachers

[01:22:32] informed and well compensated and really considering all of their needs their professional learning needs the one thing i will say is and i'll be the first to admit that i love professional learning but there's a lot on the plates of our elementary teachers right now across the state they're implementing a new curriculum they're implementing a new assessment they have to write student reading plans they are

in k-3 they are going through a lot of professional learning that's required by the state and i believe in albemarle some of that is letters training and And so that is a lot.

[01:23:06] So I always like to think if we're going to put on teacher's plates, what are we going to take off of teacher's plates at the same time? Okay, Dr. Lovett, I'm working on a board requires at least four main skills. Working as a team, even when your view may not agree with everybody else's, being a problem solver, focusing on long term strategies and governance and being able to thoughtfully engage in public relations.

[01:23:31] How does your background or your experience illustrate these skills? Specific to Almorale County, I spent a long time on Long Range and that was an incredible experience because it brought together people from across the county and they were represented, they were appointed by representatives and so we all had a large bank of experience and some of it aligned and some of it didn't and we all had opinions and we all advocated strongly for our communities and so that was a great experience in navigating and listening

[01:24:06] and communicating and taking other people's ideas and beliefs into account and then ultimately coming together to collaborate in those reports that you all see and presenting those reports which I have stood in front at this very podium and done a few times in terms of Family Council that in Albemarle I was the chair I was the chair when we were tackling equitable funding of PTOs and then I was the chair through the pandemic so you know that the that role

[01:24:41] shifted from fiercely advocating for our community to how do we enable dr. Haas and his cabinet to clearly communicate what's going on when we're all in this extremely challenging time. I've worked and liaised through my role at a university level with departments of education. I have worked collaboratively with district leadership around initiatives and then I've also served on the Agner PTO where I am engaging with my community and working to remove

[01:25:18] barriers for them to engage with us and that could be in terms of providing writing translation services, childcare, meals, things like that. So I think I hit all four of your points. I tried to take notes, but I can't read them without my reading glasses.

[01:25:35] Thank you. Thank you so much. We are finished with our questions. So Dr. Levitt, would you ask Mr. Moynihan to come in, please? Absolutely. Thank you. It was a pleasure to be here.

[01:25:47] Thank you.

[01:26:38] Hello and good evening. I would say members of the board, school division. And at least I know two people in there are from the Ryo district. Oh, apologies. I just wanted to give you just a teeny bit of information before you start it. Go for it. You'll have two minutes for your opening statement, and you'll see the clock.

[01:26:56] And then you'll have 15 minutes for questions, and we have five questions for you during that time. And whenever you're ready, please get started. You're welcome. Thank you. And you heard my brief introduction. My name is also Sean Moynihan, for those of it. And I've lived in the Ryo district for about 30 years.

[01:27:16] maybe just shy, a couple of months. Have a lot of experience with the residents and demographics of the Rio District. While my wife, Pam Moynihan, sat on this board for 16 years while

getting signatures.

[01:27:31] Guess who was the guy who went out and got all those signatures and stumping all across the Rio District and all sorts of weather to get those and collect those for her. And I had a wonderful opportunity to continue to speak to members of the community when I was doing that. We were very participative in school our children graduated from alma county school system our son starting in broadest wood all the way through alma high school our daughter in what is now known as journey and into alma high school during that period of time we were also quite active with the band greg thomas i spent eight years as a band parent going from eddie where he needed me

[01:28:11] to include two cruises while we used to sit there and that was always a challenge of containing those young students both doing what they wanted to do and making sure they didn't do what they weren't supposed to do uh while we were in the bahamas for that that also choir with jennifer morris and helping with drama with mrs cunningham so we are very focused on the arts as well for you those of you that don't know me i also have a masters of science and information systems

[01:28:46] as well as an MBA. So I am very technically oriented as well. Personally, so have one foot in the arts and one foot in the real science world. Having said been serving the restaurants in Alamo County and I went down to four seconds, I'm barely got anywhere. Really? I've been on boards for almost 15 plus years. Piedmont for eight years, chairman of the curriculum committee, chairman of the budget committee chair two years and vice chair for two years.

[01:29:18] So that's my period. And you'll be able to in the next kind of questioning include more of that information issue. So I will start with the first question. What do you see as the role of a school board member? What are the biggest issues facing the students, the schools and the families in the Rio district? And how will you represent your constituents? Three part questions. That's not fair, but that's OK.

[01:29:46] I believe in levity. If I can get smiles that's great. I think the uh I have a lot of experience on understanding the role of a school board member having lived with a school board member for all these decades and uh experiencing that with her. The uh the challenge obviously is when we talk about the Rio district with its diversity and it's about uh quite it's quite a diverse group of people 30% I believe is the diversity level of Rio with all the different cultures that reside with that

[01:30:21] district and to include not only race and religion but also socioeconomic issues when we look at Woodbrook especially some of the challenges of representing Albemarle High Schools which is part of the feeder pattern for the Rio district with his overcrowding and how we handle that looking at and talking with Dr. Haas in the last couple of days that with the new building going in in Center 2 and being able to put some of the regular classes into that building as well as his that is his plan will help alleviate some of that overcrowding that some of the parents to which we

[01:30:59] some of those will help with we're being on the board that's an interesting challenge in that we are the face of the school division in many respects, the public face. The school division does all the hard work and heavy lifting and thank God we have them because they do such a fantastic job. It is then our job to sit there and go out and work with the community to not only gather their concerns to bring them back to the school division and represent them, but also sit there

[01:31:35] and represent the school division to our constituents so that they understand what we're trying to do to help alleviate some of their concerns uh did i answer your question and all three parts thank you

so much all right so you'll be starting your board position at the beginning of the budget process this is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed what process will you USED TO GET UP TO SPEED ON THE BUDGET PROCESS AND DETERMINE YOUR RECOMMENDED BUDGET PRIORITIES.

[01:32:14] SO AS PREVIOUSLY EXPLAINED, I ACTUALLY WAS CHAIR OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE AT PVCC, AND I DID THAT FOR APPROXIMATELY SIX YEARS. I DID NOT DO THAT WHILE I WAS THE CHAIR, BECAUSE I WAS CHAIR OF EVERY COMMITTEE, IF YOU WOULD. I PARTICIPATED IN ALL OF THEM.

[01:32:31] BUT BETWEEN BEING A MEMBER AND ALL THROUGH THE VICE CHAIR PROCESS, I EITHER SAT ON OR WAS chairman of both of that budget committee looking on where we're looking at for the money being spent yes that is going to be a very quick process I will be working very closely with each of you to understand the budget process I've already started looking at what we saw for the CIP and what we wanted the priorities that you have established in the past and which ones did not

[01:33:06] make the cut. As I have experience coming before boards and asking for money as well as I've had to do that when I was chair at PVCC and I had to go to each of the surrounding county boards to include the Alamo County Board asking for funding for their new advanced technology center as well as the annual stipend that the board gives to PVCC. So I have a lot of that experience as well as as going to the state where I actually help lobby legislators to provide funding for that

[01:33:41] Advanced Technology Center and get the approval for its design. Thank you. The board adopted an anti racism policy in 2019. In what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it?

[01:33:59] And in what areas could you help us improve? So I'm one of those very firm believers that everyone counts where nobody counts. And it's very, very important that we work. with every student to eliminate any barriers for them to succeed.

[01:34:19] But each student requires different techniques, different resources to achieve that. I'd like to tell a small story, if you don't mind. When I stand here, what do you see?

[01:34:34] A white male. Well, then you've violated your own policy because I was a socially economic disadvantaged child. My parents were immigrants from Ireland. My father worked for Grumms sometimes when he wasn't laid off because even though he had a degree from a prestigious school in Ireland, it was not recognized here in the United States.

[01:34:57] My mother worked as a maid until she was 75, and she is still with us, fortunately, knock on wood, but she unfortunately now has dementia. So I went to a very rich high school in Long Island, New York. That area is called the Gold Coast, but I was the kid on the other side of the tracks.

[01:35:17] I worked on it. I lived and worked on an 86 acre estate for which I had lawns to cut, trees to cut, and leaves to blow, you name it. And that's what I did after school in between occasionally being on a sports team. So I have records going back that my social security payments started when I was age 12. You could say that was child labor. But that's how we survived back then. And thanks to family, we survived very well.

[01:35:49] So it's when you look at when we take a look at somebody we can't automatically assume what their advantages or disadvantages are. I have a I run this little enclave of I'll call it culturism in my own family. My son-in-law is African American and I have two grandchildren that are African American. My sister-in-law is South Korean and she was married to my brother in South Korea and I have two nieces that are South Korean as well.

[01:36:21] well and american i have one of my very very closest friends who sat at the place of honor at my children's weddings and my wife and i sat at place of honor for his uh eight children's weddings he's mother and he calls me his brother and i am his brother because we are as thick as steves we one of the things that military taught me being a military officer is that it doesn't matter what a person looks like what they believe in when you're in the foxhole I relied on them to

[01:36:53] watch my back and I had theirs and so how do I you know trying to take all of that and work with you know the educators and the staff on making sure that all of our children and all of our learners have all the necessary resources to succeed out there because we are building tomorrow's society and it is very very important that for us to succeed in tomorrow that they are there and ready

[01:37:27] to take the mantle from us thank you um recruitment and retention of our employees is incredibly important in what ways has the division done this well and how would you suggest improving so it's uh i was actually thinking about that the other day i mean it's a uh you know money's not everything when I was looking at the bellwether report and looking at some of the comments on a lot of the

[01:38:03] staff seem to be very concerned about the professional development they are receiving or how it could be better and you know only about I believe Dr. Haas had mentioned about a third of our teachers are certified in culturally appropriate instruction and how do we we sit there and increase that because that it seems to have stagnated a little bit from what if I remember the comment correctly on Wednesday and so how do we do something like that and how do we sit there and take a look at

[01:38:43] possibly just thinking outside the box a little bit because I don't know whether you've considered this or not but maybe during the summer actually providing an opportunity for intensive training to allow them to get their micro degree in in this culturally inclusive training but also providing them the child care so that they could come into this and that the whole goal was during the summer period of time they would get this or we would take another class because that's one of the other things they were very interested is you know they just didn't see the follow-up some of the professional development that they get and

[01:39:20] again we just kind of got the bellwether report but going through it i found it was extremely interesting and telling them what they were really staff was looking for as well as the teachers. Mr. Monaghan, working on a board requires at least four main skills. Working as a team, even when your view might differ from others, being a problem solver, focusing on long-term strategies and governance, and being able to thoroughly engage the public in communication.

[01:39:52] how does your experience illustrate these skills well having been chair of various committees I could tell you most of us I'll go back to even having sat 11 years on the electoral board we all know how contingent selections can be and going through and making sure that people have the right to vote when they and how they want to vote spent a lot of time working through that and actually that is working face to face with the communities and making sure that you know the protest vote

[01:40:29] recounts are not something new it's recounts we had when Virgil Goode ran for re-election and was uh it was very interesting and telling to see how the votes came out on when we did had a lot of provisional ballots where we had at that time uh John McCain was running. And you would have McCain for president, you would have the Hurriella for delegate, and then back to the Republican side. So when you looked at a Republican ballot, you never knew who it was. But when you saw for the for the write-in that the recounts,

[01:41:06] even though it was close, was not, you know, very interesting to see that. And then people sat there again complaining that says, oh, wait a minute, person didn't know that they were supposed to fill in the block or they circled the name and so having to work with the public on making sure they were educated on what a legal ballot looks like so to provide confidence in what they were doing as one of the most important things that we give ourselves is important. I also worked very closely with the school board staff and to make sure that for example schools were closed on

[01:41:46] election day because you have a very conflict in laws so schools felons are not allowed to be in schools per se except on election day because you can't stop them from voting and they don't have to vote by paper ballot or absentee they have a right to go in and vote so how do you separate a person that may have a separation order or something like that from the children and working back then with dr. Moran was very successful in trying to get teacher teacher work days on days that we had elections so that the children weren't in school.

[01:42:25] So we were maximizing their safety again, bringing that to the public because a lot of times they were, you know, you get the old adage. Why is school closed, really? Because it is a hamper on parents and, you know, we had to own that on the Electoral Board as well because it was we who were asking for schools to be closed on those days.

[01:42:46] was further to children's safety that we were focused on. Did I answer your question Mr. Graham? Thank you. Thank you Paige. Thank you so much for your time this evening. We appreciate it. And I hope I answered everybody's questions satisfactorily. Thank you very much.

[01:43:05] You all have a wonderful day and enjoy. Thank you. And would you ask Mr. Wharton to come in please?

[01:43:13] Thank you. Good evening Mr. Wharton. Good evening. Please call me John. Mr. Wharton was my father.

[01:44:23] Just a couple points about this evening, you'll have two minutes to make your opening statement and you'll see the clock right there. And then after that is done, my colleagues and I will ask you a series of questions. So you'll have 15 minutes on the board and there'll be five questions that we'll ask you. So as soon as you're ready, you can get started. Okay. My name is John Wharton.

[01:44:53] i've lived in the rio district for about 16 years now if my math is correct um i've had two kids that have gone through albemarle county schools uh one graduated in 15 one graduated in 22 with through the covid um my mother was a teacher in eastern north carolina told taught french in high school for 17 years and then taught another 20 in community college and she used to always have a statement she said that a mind is not a vessel to be filled but it is a fire to be lit and i

[01:45:32] always attributed that to my mother and i would always tell people my mother was a teacher and that's what she said until i got to college until somebody told me that was a quote from plutarch in his

lives and i asked my mother about that she said well i might have read that somewhere so what i'd like to do is be on the school board because chuck was a dear friend of mine and i loved him he was a good man and i felt this is the way to kind of honor his memory and i've gotten a lot from my kids being through the school system and i'd like to give back and that's it thank you

[01:46:08] so much sure the first question i have is what do you see as the role of a school board member what are the biggest challenging challenges facing the students the families in the schools of the rio district and how will you represent your constituents it's okay if i make notes of course what is the role of a member and i'm happy to repeat it if you want thank you i didn't have to remember all that um do you want me to take them sequentially or all at once however you are most comfortable okay what's the role of a school board member i believe is to represent

[01:46:46] the constituents uh the people that put them there either by assignation or the people in his community or her community and find out what is best for the students and the children and also get the engagement of the people that might not have children.

[01:47:06] You're involved with this, too, because these people that we are putting through the school system are going to be part of our civilization and we need to focus on why they need to be part of it. What was the second question?

[01:47:22] What are the biggest issues facing the students, families and schools of the Rio District, and how will you represent your constituents? The biggest issue that I think is facing the schools and the families and also the people that do not have children is I think it's something that's facing a lot of us and facing this country right now and that is that problems are not binary there are not simple solutions my father used to say that life is not a switch life is a dial and I think the hardest thing to do is to get people to realize that it takes

[01:48:01] discernment takes thought and issues are hard there's not a black and white solution to everything sometimes you may get 80% of what you want but the solution helps the 80 percent. And I think that that's something we need to address holistically as a country and as a people, that we're all together on the same planet and that we need to think that way because it can't just be A or B. It just doesn't work. There are some situations

[01:48:35] where that does, but overall it has to be something that we work together and we all pull on the same direction in the rope. And how would I represent? I think I would represent by finding out from my neighbors and the people in the Rio district what they want their schools to be. I would go around to the schools, not just in the Rio district, but in other places as well, seeing what works, finding out what works, what doesn't work, take chances. That's it. Thank you so much. Ms. Osborne.

[01:49:10] All right. Hi. Hello. So you'll be starting your board term at the beginning of the budget process. This is a challenging time for the board as there are so many important items to continue funding and new initiatives that are needed what process will you use to get up to speed on the budget process and determine your recommended budget priorities I think the processes that I would do

[01:49:46] is one review the budget talk to people that are knowledgeable I do not have an accounting background I do not have a budgetary background I think the important thing is to be able to say I don't know I need to learn and find out how I could learn and then also balance it out with the people like what

you had said, the constituents and finding out what that would work with. So I think without delving too deeply into it, I would have to basically get myself up to speed and then rely on people that I found

[01:50:24] trustworthy and knowledgeable. Thank you. Sure. The board adopted an anti-racism policy in 2019. In what ways do you think we have been successful in implementing it and in what ways could you help us improve? I will be blunt.

[01:50:56] without knowing what the policy is and how you have implemented and what you have done so far I think it would just be speculative to find out what I'd like to look and see my child was in ACPS when it was implemented my child is transgender I don't know how that's obviously not racism but I'd like to find out what it was and what steps have been done and then give my opinion

[01:51:28] about what i think had has worked and has not um recruitment and retention of our employees is incredibly important in what ways has the division done this well and how would you propose improving coming from being the child of a teacher i understand that reality very well um and again the same thing happens like what came up with ms lee without me researching what you have done

[01:52:03] obviously the kind of the proof is in the pudding. I saw the statistics that were the report that Dr. Haas gave out. It does look like retention is increasing slightly. So obviously something is being done correctly, but without knowing the exact steps, I'd hate to tell you what you should do or shouldn't do differently. Right. Thank you. Sure. And I'm not trying to be invasive. I'm just being blind. I appreciate your honesty. Okay. Mr. Warden, working on a board requires at least four main skills yes sir working as a team even when your view might differ from others

[01:52:41] being a problem solver focusing on long-term strategies and governance and being able to thoughtfully engage with the public how does your experience illustrate these skills i come from a background of sales uh both the broadcast industry and then business to business office products before we moved to charlottesville and actually while we're in charlottesville um you don't know how to work in sales unless you're successful working with people you don't do it you don't eat

[01:53:15] if you don't so the way i would go about that is basically like what i described in my opening statement is the or the challenge facing is that working together and getting for the majority of what needs to be accomplished and not to the point of it's all or nothing and expressing that to the

[01:53:42] community there has to be buy-in from the community or else it won't succeed okay thank you sure that concludes our questions so thank you so much for your time tonight thank you thank you for listening to me of course thank you now you don't have to i'm a w so thank you very much so i move that the school board of albemarle county virginia go into a closed meeting as authorized by the virginia

[01:54:20] Virginia Freedom of Information Act, section 2.2-3711A, subsection 1 of the Code of Virginia, to discuss the seven candidates for appointment as a school board member for the Ryo Magisterial District for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year. Second.

[01:54:36] We had a motion and a second. All those who agree? Aye. Opposed? We're in closed session. I believe Ms. Thompson, we're in 235.



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