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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, January 8, 2026

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Place Albemarle County Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bFz1ff4CE>

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[00:00:00] Good evening, everyone. I'm Matthew Hawes, Superintendent of Albemarle County Public Schools, and I now call to order the January 8th, 2026 organizational meeting of the Albemarle County Public Schools School Board to order. So at this time, we're going to certify the closed meeting. Ms. Lee, do we have any motions coming from the closed meeting?

[00:00:23] We have our certification, Dr. Hawes. I move that the board certify by recorded vote that, to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

[00:00:42] I second. Okay, and so we'll have a roll call vote, please. Ms. Lee? Yes. Ms. Osborne? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Dr. Acuff? Yes.

[00:00:57] Mr. Beard? Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck? Yes. Dr. Berlin? Yes. So the motion is passed, and at this time we will do a roll call, just do a mic check, and before Ms. Schmidt, we'll actually start with Officer Profit in the back there. All right, well, thank you very much for being here tonight. I couldn't see that you didn't have a mic. I'm sorry. Ms. Schmidt? Rosalind Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer.

[00:01:31] Lane Cox, Community Lab School. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Bob Beard, Samuel Miller District. Ellen Osborn, Scottsville District. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall District. Allison Spillman, at-large

representative. Jim Dillenbeck, Rio District. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Matthew Hawes, Superintendent. Josiah Black, Chief Legal Officer. Lauren Crawford, Acting Clerk of the Board. At this time, if we would all please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:02:00] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the republic, for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:02:21] Thank you. At this time, we will have our moment of silence, and I would like to please dedicate the moment of silence to Finn Kipp, fifth grader at murray elementary school who passed away on december 22nd 2025 our hearts go

[00:02:44] out to his family in the murray elementary school community thank you so we will begin with item 3.6

[00:03:19] it's our election of officers and so we will begin the 2026 calendar year for the acps school board with the election of officers for the school board i promise everyone i will work my way through this one item here as efficiently as possible my procedure has passed muster with our legal counsel to my left here and this is my eighth time uh conducting this process so i have a little practice so please bear with me though if you will we will begin with the election of the chair

[00:03:54] for the acps school board at this time would any board member like to nominate a board member to be the chair um i would like to nominate dr rebecca berlin for chair of the school board thank you miss billman would are there any other nominations would any other board member like to nominate board member to be the chair all right i will take that as our candidate is

[00:04:31] rebecca berlin dr berlin and so at this time then we will have a roll call vote for our candidate if you would please do that lauren please take it from here yes dr acuff yes mr beard yes mr dillenbeck yes miss lee yes miss osborne yes miss billman yes dr berlin yes all right thank you so our nomination carries and dr berlin will be the new chair for the albemarle county school board for

[00:05:10] 2026. i am now quite relieved to vacate this chair position there's a lot of pressure with it and i will now pass it on to you thank you very much i'm honored congrats oh sorry congratulations that's what i really need the next item on our agenda is the nomination and appointment of the vice chair do i have any

[00:05:43] nominations for vice chair chair berlin i nominate ellen osborne thank you very much i'd like to nominate uh allison spillman do i have a second for that second thank you so i have two nominations for vice chair um ellen osborne and allison spillman we will i'm just looking at my legal council and so we can do this as a roll call vote together with someone nominating or voting

[00:06:19] for each person or should we do this in order for the first person nominated and then take a yes or no vote and then the second person nominated. I think it's best to poll the board and ask each member how he or she casts their ballot. Okay. But I think it's important also to confirm that the nominations are accepted.

[00:06:37] Yes. Ms. Osborne, you were nominated first. I want to see if you will accept the nomination. Yes. And Ms. Spillman, I want to see if you'll accept the nomination. Yes. Thank you so much, both of you, for putting your names forward.

[00:06:55] Lauren, can we do a roll call vote? And instead of saying yes or no in this vote, you will say the person that you are nominating or that you are agreeing to. What's the correct language? Right. and each

board member can vote osborne uh or spillman or none of the above as they prefer thank you thank you for that clarification so osborne spillman or none of the above

[00:07:25] lauren would you please call the roll vote yes dr acon osborne mr dillenbeck miss spielman Ms. Lee. Ms. Osborne. Ms. Osborne. Ms. Spillman. Ms. Spillman. Mr. Beard.

[00:07:48] Spillman. And Dr. Berlin. Spillman. So we have four for Spillman and three for Osborne. So with a vote of four for Spillman and three for Osborne, Alison Spillman will be our Vice Chair for the 26th year. Thank you so much. Thank you for everyone for putting names forward.

[00:08:17] the next uh piece in our oh thank you dr haas um is a discussion of our committee assignments so as um uh i think people in the audience are aware and i know definitely our board members are aware that in addition to these public meetings that we participate there's a number of other things that the school board members do each and every week and what that is are number of committees that we are assigned to and so each year at this time

[00:08:53] when we nominate both a new chair and vice chair we also go through those committees and have a discussion amongst the board to see if it's a committee that you are continuing on your you have done like Ms. Osborne on the audit committee that you want to continue on or if it's a committee that you are interested in having someone else take a look at. It's good for us to have a variety of people on these committees in a variety of viewpoints. So I think this is also just a very interesting point for our student representative and everyone in the audience just to see the vast number of things that our board

[00:09:31] members do in different areas of the community in our school community to support all of our efforts. So in the past the way we have done this is share out the list of the committees and then have um uh the clerk actually that's a pause do we need to nominate the clerk we do we do so give me a second while i get do you have do you have the the run of

[00:10:08] show you don't have a run of show okay um what i know i know okay um so before we before we do well and actually this is a question i'm sorry are we nominating christine like what is going to be the process tonight because christine is not present to accept annually the clerk of the school board is appointed or reappointed and if it is your desire to reappoint miss thompson then that requires a motion and a voice vote correct but she is not here to accept the nomination but

[00:10:45] that is that is that doesn't matter okay that's okay you can you can make the appointment and she can accept it at a later time perfect thank you dr haas for giving me this i appreciate this um do i have a nomination for uh the reappointment um of our school board clerk for the 26 calendar year i move we reappoint miss christine thompson as our school board clerk second moved by dr acoff

[00:11:18] seconded by Ms. Spillman. We would take a roll call vote, Lauren, for this reappointment. Yes. Of Christine Thompson. Ms. Osborne. Yes. Ms. Spillman. Yes. Dr. Acuff. Yes. Mr. Beard. Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck.

[00:11:39] Yes. Ms. Lee. Yes. Chair Berlin. Yes. By a vote of seven in favor and no opposed, we are reappointing christine thompson is our clerk for the 26th school year and we will we will notify her of that so i was jumping on the committees because we have a lot of discussion about the committees so all of the school board members have in front of them the list of committees to which we need to do an appointment for the for the school year i'm going to go ahead i think to just read the

[00:12:16] name of the committee because I think it is helpful for the audience to hear the entire breadth of committees that everyone has. I'm not going to read a description unless the board would like me to since you have that in front of you.

[00:12:36] Because we have had people serving in all of those committees, if any of the members or especially any of the new members would like additional information on those committees regarding the content or the location or time. Any of us would be willing to answer that.

[00:12:56] And then we can move through the process for people to put their name forward. And this has been a very collegial discussion in the past. And I don't believe we've had to take votes on this in the past. But Lauren, I'm going to ask you to, as soon as we're ready, to take full records.

[00:13:15] I'll do that as well just to make sure we get the right people in the right boxes. We have the ACES Committee, which is the Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability, and Mr. Page and Ms. Lee were on that committee in the past year, and Kate Akoff was an alternative and was one of the founders of that committee.

[00:13:37] We have the Albemarle Foundation for Education, which is our foundation that supports the schools through fundraising and other efforts, and Dr. Acoff and I have been on that since the founding. We have the Audit Committee, which works with our auditors to review those proceedings and makes recommendations, and Ms. Osborne has been part of that for the past five years.

[00:14:05] We have our CIP Advisory Committee, which has been supporting our CIP with Dr. Haas, and Maya Kumazao, and Rosalyn Schmidt, and Dr. Acoff and Allison Spillman were on that last year.

[00:14:24] We've had our Communication Committee, which has been an important piece that the school board has talked about, but is one that we have said we are interested in revitalizing Again this year, we had some changes in our communications team at the county, and we're definitely interested in working with them going forward, and Ms. Spilman and I were on that.

[00:14:48] We have our discipline committee, which meets on Mondays, and Mr. Page, I hope, Mr. Page, that you are enjoying your first Thursday free on the second of the month tonight, and Ms. Spilman and Ms. Pryor were on that with Ms. Osborne and Judy Lee as alternates.

[00:15:11] We have our Diversity and Equity Committee, which Ms. Spilman was a part of. We have our Legislative Committee, which Dr. Acuff and I were a part of. As you can see, there's a lot that the school board does in addition to these monthly meetings.

[00:15:27] We have actually our School Board Orientation Committee, which Mr. Blacksmith's not something we have to vote on today. And then we have our Piedmont Regional Educational Program, our PREP Committee, which is a multi-school district organization that supports children and adults up through 21 with supports for delays and disabilities, and I was on that.

[00:15:54] And then we have our Thomas Jefferson Adult and Career in Regional Board that Ms. Osborne was. a newer committee last year a work session committee of one that working with um miss smith about uh uh making suggestions for our school board meetings so those are all of the committees that our uh school board is a part of in addition to spending time in our school so i always think it's interesting um for people to to learn about that because as i um it was as when i was a constituent i did not realize all the the things that the school board does um to support this work

[00:16:32] um so i'm just going to start from the top and kind of a committee and look towards the people that were were on it before to see if they are interested in being reappointed um or if they're interested in having um a new colleague join them um so the the aces committee on environmental sustainability, Ms. Lee was a part of, and Mr. Page, and so we will definitely have an opening.

[00:16:59] But, Ms. Lee, is that something that you're interested in doing again, or is that something you would like to step back to do again? As you mentioned before, and we're really collegial in this process, but I am interested in being in that again, but if other people feel really strongly, then I can step back as well. Others, so for some of these we have two positions and some of them one just because of the rules and regulations of the committees and their bylaws. This is one that we have too. So, Ms. Lee, if you'd like to be reappointed and is there another board member that would

[00:17:38] be interested in joining the environmental committee? I think Dr. Aikov or Ms. Lee, if you have any questions about that, if you could ask them about it as well before you your name forward i would say that i have also i really learned a lot on this i'm environmental sustainability is something that i'm very interested in but i'm i learn something every time about it even though i'm very interested in it i remember that this this is time we actually

[00:18:12] feel like a little bit like an auctioneer i have one going twice um um so the aces and and if there are things people are interested in i can pause on that except judy's and um we can come back to to it, but anyone off the top of their head interested in-- Yeah, Ms. Berlin, I would be pleased to honor Graham Page's legacy and serve again on the ACES committee.

[00:18:35] Thank you so much. So we have Judy Lee and Bob Beard for the ACES committee. The next committee we have is the Albemarle Foundation for Education that Dr. Acuff and I were a part of. Dr. Acuff, is that something that you're interested in continuing with?

[00:18:55] i would like to continue in that role thank you of course um uh and i talked about this one a little bit um this is one we've both been involved with she was involved with it even before i was um i feel like this is one that i would be interested in seeing if there's another board member who would be interested in um doing it i i take this time of year as a time when thinking about what i have been working on and where are things that sometimes it's just time for some from some new blood and some new ideas and this would be what I'm if there is someone else on the board that would be interested in participating we have a

[00:19:33] wonderful amazing new executive director that is supporting this foundation going forward and I think we are on a high road to move forward and to really make a name and to support the students in the county and this is one of the places is where we are are raising money for our community in schools program so this is this is a once a month commitment so i wanted to see if anyone is interested in joining dr acoff in the albemarle school foundation the foundation for education committee i would be happy to

[00:20:12] join this committee as well thank you thank you so much you can't join everyone i know i know So thank you, Dr. Acuff, for your years of service on this, and thank you, Mr. Beard, for joining this.

[00:20:29] It's a great organization, and I think you will really enjoy the mission. We have the Audit Committee. We said jokingly earlier that Ms. Osborne has bingo in this because she's been on it for five years, and we have discussed that this is one that you need continued presence because of all the learning to get up to speed.

[00:20:56] So Ms. Osborne, are you interested in continuing? I think I can do that. Thank you so much. So for the Audit Committee, we have Ellen Osborne. We have the CIP Advisory Committee, which is one, Dr. Acuff, I may be looking to you for a little bit of advisement before.

[00:21:17] This is one that we have had formally and informally over the years. this one that we are looking to to formally continue or you're kind of doing inform of how are we how are we structuring this going forward i mean previously the the committee was a joint committee with the board of supervisors uh and then we brought it in-house i think given our significant capital uh ask that i think we should continue it and i would be interested in remaining I would like to remain as well if no one else is interested.

[00:21:52] So for the CIP Committee, thank you, Dr. Acuff, for continuing. I agree that this is something that's always important, but definitely important as we look forward with the buildings that we'll be opening next year as well as things we're considering in the future. Mr. and Ms. Billman, are you interested in this?

[00:22:07] Is there anyone else? This one is not limited by bylaws, I would believe, but or would be your preference? If we had three members, we'd have to advertise it, and it would be a public meeting. So we're limited to two. So we will have two.

[00:22:23] That is right. Thank you. So for the CIP Committee, Lauren, we have Dr. Acob and Ms. Spillman. I do. The Communications Committee. This is a committee that I think we have kind of similar to the CIP Committee, has gone over changes over the years, but I think this is something that is important with our new new chief communications officer the past, in the past year, Alison Spillman and myself were a part of it. I definitely want to, I know we have a number of people with expertise

[00:23:00] in this on the board. So I wanted to see who might be interested in doing this. Ms. Villeman, obviously, if you're interested in continuing, but I am happy to continue, but I also know So we have a number of people with communications experience that I would like to look to if they are interested.

[00:23:18] Are you speaking to Bob Beard specifically? I'm speaking to Bob Beard, but also to Judy Lee. I know Ms. Lee has extensive experience in communications. I'm happy to step aside for the two of them if they're interested with their expertise.

[00:23:41] I'm happy to serve on this. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Lee. And as a former journalist, I would be happy to do it as well. Thank you so much. I'm so excited always for the great experiences that the three boards that I have worked on here bring to the table.

[00:23:58] And I am very excited for the experience that Ms. Lee and Mr. Beard have because I definitely think communications is something we as a board and we as a school district continue to strive to do better and to continue to both communicate with our constituents as well as our families.

[00:24:16] Okay. Moving through this. We're on the Ds. The discipline committee. This is one. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Acob, that we do have three members on just because of the type of work that we're doing. It's a public meeting and it's always communicated and in the same place that you'll find information about the school board meeting. So this is one that Mr. Page, Ms. Spillman, and Ms. Pryor were part of, and Ellen Osborne and Judy Lee or alternates.

[00:24:47] So this is one, I guess I should ask Ms. Spillman if it's something that she would like to continue on and then open it up to the board. - I would like to continue on this one. - Okay, so Ms. Spillman, excuse me, will continue on this and we have two openings for the discipline committee.

[00:25:06] This is monthly, the second and fourth Wednesdays, but it is an as needed meeting. And for this one, we will have three members and two alternates. I'd be honored to be part of that committee. Thank you so much, Mr. Dillenbeck.

[00:25:22] So we have Ms. Spillman, we have Mr. Dillenbeck. I'd be happy to serve either as on the committee or as an alternate if someone else would like to, because I have been able to run it before, but if someone else has a desire to do it, I'd like me to be an alternate.

[00:25:44] Ms. Lee, if you're interested in serving as the third, I would be interested in serving as an alternate for it. Great. I can be an alternate. So for this committee, for the Discipline Committee, I have Ms. Spillman, Mr. Dillenbeck, and Ms. Lee as the three official members, and Ms. Berlin and Ms. Osborne as the alternates.

[00:26:12] Thank you all for going through this with us as we do it. The next committee I have is the Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee, and Ms. Spillman has served on that the past two years, and Ms. Lee was on that before.

[00:26:30] Ms. Spillman, is that something you're interested in? - I'm happy to do it. We didn't really meet much in the last year, so I'm wondering if it's still something that's continuing. It is, okay, then yes, happy to do it, unless somebody else is interested in jumping in.

[00:26:51] - Seeing no other votes, bids, names coming forward, Ms. Spillman will be on the Diversity and the Equity Advisory Committee. The Legislative Committee, Dr. Acoff and myself were a part of that last year.

[00:27:10] Dr. Acob, is that something you're interested in continuing with? Resurrecting, yes. Resurrecting, right. I think this is another committee that we have on the books, but we've not been able to use it to the extent that we should be.

[00:27:26] I'll be part of the resurrection of this committee, yes. So for the legislative committee, I have Dr. Acob. I am interested in helping with the resurrection. again if there is someone else that would like to to do this um i'm happy to to step back seeing no other no other votes i will um i'm sorry for that put put uh lauren if you can note that for the legislative committee it's um doctors berlin and acoff and we will um ensure

[00:28:03] that this continues to move forward the new member i think committee i think is just josh So Josh is going to continue. The last couple of committees, the Piedmont Regional Education Program, which is the PREP program, which supports our coalition of school districts in special education that serve those services that we might not be able to hold in house.

[00:28:32] I have been on this committee in the past. But again, this is something if there is someone else that is interested in doing this work. It's a wonderful way to meet fellow board members from the eight other school districts, nine other school districts, as well as the special education directors and the superintendents or assistant superintendents.

[00:28:58] We're looking to see if this is a committee that anyone is interested in serving on. Seeing no voices come forward, I will continue.

[00:29:13] It's an honor to continue to work on that. I would say if there is anyone from the board who ever wants to join me just to see, I would be happy to have them with me. So Lauren, you can keep prep as me.

[00:29:30] We have the Thomas Jefferson Adult and Career Regional Board. I know that's something deep in your heart, Ms. Osborne, is that something you're interested in? Yes. I'd like to continue. I actually already RSVP to the January meeting. Okay.

[00:29:46] Perfect. Last but not late, Ms. Schmidt, I guess this was something we had done in the past, or we had started, Judy did it the year before, the work session committee. I know you and I met a few times to talk about work sessions. I think this is something that's helpful.

[00:30:02] I mean, one of the things we're gonna continue to do is get input from the board of sessions that they are, but if there is someone on the board that is interested in working with Ms. Schmidt on the work sessions. I'd be happy to, again, have that person work on that going forward.

[00:30:25] I'd be happy to, Dr. Berlin. That would be wonderful. Thank you, Dr. Acoff. I appreciate that. So just the last three were prep. Thomas Jefferson is Ellen Osborne, and then the work session committee is Dr. Acoff.

[00:30:42] I'm just going to take a look at this. We had a number of committees that we had done in the past that are no longer valid, but I just want to make sure to take a look at Dr. Haas, take a look at Dr. Acuff, mostly those who have been on the board for longer.

[00:30:58] Are there any that we may have missed or that are ensured that we should be resurrecting? Perfect. Okay, thank you all. There will be no quiz, but one of the things we have talked about in the past is doing a better job during school board and superintendent business of sharing a little bit of information about these about these committees and what happens um so is it possible to uh offer a comment about committees absolutely forgive me i'm the new one of the two new people on the board uh so this

[00:31:34] may not be the right time but i have ideas for three forgive me new committees uh as as possible areas of focus i know we've talked a lot about closing the achievement gap so one committee would be i would call it the gap committee as a way to work amongst ourselves and with others to try to come up with a way to to aggressively close the achievement gap i know that dr haas has initiatives in place already but it would be i think if that's a big priority for us

[00:32:10] we need to really apply some some work toward that goal a second one would be what I might call a PPP committee the public-private partnership committee as we all know there's been a talk of the cost of building a new high school and the enormous cost of the CI CIP projections and so on and we are operating budget is pretty significant so i would love to see some interactions with the business

[00:32:45] sector both in terms of raising funds but also in terms of partnerships where we have business people who are involved in in seeing the the schools continue to grow and improve and in the last committee i've talked to a number of teachers and as a former albemarle high school teacher Really really feel strongly about needing to hear from teachers So I'm planning to meet with teachers on a regular basis and would love to have teacher advisory committee where we're not advising them

[00:33:23] But they're advising us as a board of the issues that they're facing and the ideas that they have for how we can improve schools so forgive my ignorance and and Lack of experience, but I thought I would toss these out as further possibilities for committees in the future thank you so much I'm gonna as I always do look to our esteemed lawyer kind of according to school protocol what is the best way to do this to have a discussion to to move it to bring it to

[00:34:01] a motion in the future what what would you recommend I think it's really up to mr. Dillenbeck whether he wants to make that as a motion now or whether he'd like to have more dialogue with his colleagues first, and then bring it to a subsequent meeting for motion at that time. Yeah, I think further discussion amongst ourselves, but just wanted to offer that as a consideration at this point.

[00:34:26] Thank you. I appreciate you bringing that forward. As we know, as I said, there are a number of committees that we're a part of, but I believe we should always be continuing to look and see what we might be missing, and particularly what voices are missing at the table. So I look forward to future conversations about kind of thinking about how we could do an advisement committee around the gap, public-private partnerships, as we know, are so important, and teacher and staff advisory.

[00:34:53] Thank you. Thank you so much. So the next motion before us is approval of tonight's agenda.

[00:35:10] Do I have a motion for the approval of tonight's agenda? I move we approve tonight's agenda. Second. Motion moved by Ms. Osborne, seconded by Ms. Lee. Tonight's agenda is approved.

[00:35:25] Our next point of the evening, or our school-- - Do we have to vote on that? - I apologize. Thank you, Dr. Acob. I appreciate that. All those in favor? - Aye. - All those opposed?

[00:35:42] By a voice vote, that passes. Announcements in school board business. Tonight, I want to welcome Leighton Cox, our student representative from Community Lab School.

[00:36:02] As many of you know, we have an alternating school board student representative at each of our meetings, which is a wonderful place for you to come and share a statement, but also be a full part of our discussions. We will not make you join any of our committees though, but you're always willing and welcome to come and observe.

[00:36:25] But I'd like to say thank you for being here, and I know you have written a statement to share with the board. - Thank you, Ms. Berlin. Good evening, board members. Thank you for giving me a few minutes to share an experience that changed how I think about education, including my own.

[00:36:42] Last December, I traveled to Stanford University to participate in the lift-off design sprint. Principal Ratliff, who is here with us today, my classmate Nick Jensen, CLS alum, Chloe Root, and I were selected to attend. We spent three days at the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching at Stanford University, working alongside some of the most influential figures in American education.

[00:37:07] Learner Studio, the nonprofit that hosted this event, was founded by Kim Smith, who is also a founding team member of organizations such as Tech for America and Bellwether Education. The adult participants she convened included school founders, superintendents, philanthropists, ed tech teachers, and researchers.

[00:37:25] People who collectively shape policy and practice for millions of students. This was an invitation only gathering. Learner Studio focuses on accelerating what they call Horizon 3 learning, or H3 for short. Horizon 3 represents where we are headed, a system that is centered, flexible, personalized, and

prepares students to thrive in careers, communities, and a democracy shaped by artificial intelligence and rapid change.

[00:37:54] It's not about saying what we have now is broken. It's about recognizing that the world our generations will inherit will look different than the one now. I know this board already thinks this way, supporting Scholar Studios, Community Lab School, and thinking about a new high school.

[00:38:16] What made this event different from most education conferences was the students weren't invited to give feedback at the end. Learner Studio selected just 20 youth experts from across the entire country, and we worked alongside adults as equal contributors from the very beginning.

[00:38:34] The commitment didn't start or end with those three days in December either. We participated in pre-sessions before the sprint and will continue to meet for the next six months to carry the work forward. Dr. Shireen Elmala, an assistant professor at UVA's School of Education and Human Development, served as the youth partnership lead for the entire event.

[00:38:55] Many of you know Dr. Elmala for her long-standing research partnership with Community Lab School. Her role was to ensure that the youth voice wasn't just included, centered throughout the design process, that the collaboration between generations was authentic and not performative.

[00:39:11] On the first day, we drove straight into building immersive installations. These weren't PowerPoints or written proposals. We created physical, hands-on experiences designed to communicate viscerally what school could feel like in a Horizon 3 world.

[00:39:28] My team finished our installations right on time, and that evening we presented to adult participants. The second day was intense. After we set up at the Carnegie Foundation, we rotated through sessions and met educators and innovators from widely different contexts. rural schools, urban districts, and ed tech startups.

[00:39:46] Philanthropist foundations, excuse me, urban districts, ed tech startups, and philanthropist foundations. That evening, all 20 youth experts gathered for group activities and games. It gave us space to process everything together and build relationships with students from across the country who are thinking about the same questions we are.

[00:40:08] On day three, we shifted focus. My team worked on a promotional video articulating our vision of what we called an H3 adult, the kind of educator who can guide students in this new model. We weren't just imagining better teachers. We were designing a system where adults and young people work in tandem, where the educator's roles evolved alongside the students they serve. After finishing the video, we developed formal presentations. Each of the 10 teams picked their model on the final morning. Adults and students voted together. Our group placed in the top three out of all 10 teams which felt incredible but honestly wasn't the

[00:40:44] point the point was this I spent three days in rooms where adults debt with decades of experience and real institutional power treated my perspective as essential not as nice to have but not as a box to check essential I came home full for a community lab school for the sports willingness to support something different and for a chance to represent our community at a national level we're already trying to be a horizon 3 kind of place a school that centers student agency that values relationships that prepares us for a world that will actually inherit.

[00:41:17] This trip showed me that what that vision looks like, like when it scales nationally. And it showed me that students don't just benefit from educational innovation. We can help build it. Thank you for all you do to support all Albemarle schools and students.

[00:41:37] Thank you so much. I so appreciate it. Thank you so much. And for all of us, it is so important to have family and student voice and we so appreciate the time that you spend doing this and really value your authentic contributions because it really makes us a better school board and a better school system.

[00:42:08] So thank you so much. Dr. Haas, what do you have under school board and superintendent business? So I have a few items. First, I'm going to do the spotlight on education. Then I'm going to have Dr. Hayes come up to talk a little bit about our Go Tech Career Pathway grant that we recently won.

[00:42:28] And then Dr. Kaiser is going to come up, and we're just going to get any feedback that you might have, and we're going to seek approval for our legislative position so that we can start moving forward on that. So I do want to start out with the spotlight on education, but first I just want to congratulate Layton, and really that story that you shared was really inspiring.

[00:42:53] Thank you. Madam Chair and members of the board, at our last board meeting, we shared an update on Albemarle County Public Schools results from the Virginia Department of Education's new school performance and support framework, we noted that ACPS remains the strongest performing public school division in the region, and with 33% of our schools earning distinguished recognition, we significantly outpaced the statewide average for top performing schools. Tonight, we want to recognize excellence in leadership by bringing forward the principals of our distinguished schools. While the extraordinary

[00:43:29] work of our teachers and students is ultimately responsible for our results, their success is made possible by principals who set a clear vision, foster strong school cultures, and champion continuous growth and learning. Their leadership creates the conditions for high achievement, academic excellence, and pride across our school communities.

[00:43:50] And so we are pleased to recognize the principals of our distinguished level schools who are here tonight. As I call each name, I see that Dr. Hayes is ready to, she has a certificate for you and a handshake. I ask that each of you, after picking up your certificate, come up and shake hands with the board, please.

[00:44:11] And then we'll all gather down in front of the podium for see Dr. Grant's getting ready to take a photo. So our first principal is Jim Kiner, principal of Brownsville Elementary School.

[00:44:31] Joe McCauley, Hollymead Elementary School. Jennifer Underwood, Ivy Elementary School. Wendy Eckerle, Murray Elementary School, Maureen Jensen, Stony Point Elementary, Rick Verhoevack,

[00:45:07] Henley Middle School, Chad Ratliff, Community Lab School, and Jennifer Sublette, Principal

[00:45:23] of Western Albemarle High School.

[00:45:50] I'll just come up through here. Madam Chair, if you want to come down as well. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Look at us, we did it.

[00:46:59] And so as we transition, Dr. Hayes is already near the podium, so she's ready to roll. And I also noticed a familiar face who was really behind the scenes, really doing a lot of heavy lifting.

[00:47:16] from the uva center for community partnerships dr allen is here so we have him here as well and they're going to talk a little bit about our awards of the go tech career pathway absolutely good evening chair berlin dr haas and members of the board i am chandra hayes assistant superintendent of instruction and i am here to share with you some exciting news regarding opportunities for our students in acps over the past month albemarle county public schools has been awarded more than 2.5 million dollars in grant funding to expand career connected learning and

[00:47:53] academic acceleration opportunities for students in december acps was awarded a 1.7 million dollar regional go-tech grant the go-tech grant stands for great opportunities in technology and engineering careers this grant was written and led by miss megan maynard who couldn't be here with us tonight she's actually recruiting for scholar scoot studios in partnership with charlottesville city schools and greene county public schools 685 000 of those funds will be allotted directly to acps this regional collaboration ensures equitable access to

[00:48:29] high quality career connection labs in every middle school across the three divisions while also allowing divisions to share implementation expertise industry partnerships and professional learning gotech aligns directly with our scholar studio vision 3e accreditation goals with the 3e E standing for enrolled, enlisted, and employed, and the new Albemarle County Exploration Academies.

[00:48:55] GoTek is an anchor for our career-connected learning ecosystem, ensuring students in Albemarle County, Charlottesville, and Greene County have the skills, experiences, and opportunities to thrive in the region's most important industries. In addition, ACPS was awarded \$1.5 million through the targeted, extended, enriched school year and year-round school grant program.

[00:49:19] This grant aims to improve student achievement outcomes and support innovative approaches to instructional delivery and school governance. This amount is broken into two awards for two grants that were written. I wrote the first grant to support the Future Graduate Camp at Albemarle High School and Monticello High School.

[00:49:39] We were awarded \$300,000 per school for a total of \$600,000. The Future Graduate Camp is a summer bridge program for rising ninth graders who have experienced challenges with attendance, minor discipline, and academic risk to ensure they make it to graduation.

[00:49:56] The design gives students early access to relationships, routines, and resources to improve academic readiness on their first day of high school. Our hope is to determine the level of need and possibly expand to Western Albemarle in summer 2027.

[00:50:13] At this time, I'd like to invite Dr. Ben Allen with the Star Hill Pathways Initiative, who co-authored the second grant with Ms. Megan Maynard, to share more about how they will use the \$900,000 to strengthen career exploration, work-based learning, and post-secondary pathways for students.

[00:50:33] Thank you, Dr. Hayes. Good evening. Really glad to see you all tonight. It's truly exciting to be here. I briefed about this initiative with some of our older school board members. And now that we have some new friends, it's a nice update. about four years ago i like to always start with a story is we started with this pilot at burleigh middle school and it was 40 students over the summer was right after the pandemic and then we were trying to get back and re-engage with students and the whole point of it was how do you get college and career exploration starting as early as possible so that it ties in the strategic

goal with the county of getting students in early access and then making sure that they have the supports they need all the way through high school so they can go on amazing trips like all the way

[00:51:10] way to Stanford and present in front of experts and professionals. And so this program started four years ago, and I'm proud to say that we're up to 200 students in Amara County, 300 total because there's a hundred students in Charlottesville city schools, and we're in every school six through twelve in the county. And in that, this cohort model, we follow students all the way from middle school to high school, and they get access to college and career readiness. So that's work-based learning. What does it mean to be a lawyer? What does it mean to be an architect? What does it mean to be a police officer? And we get students those exposure with industry leaders in the community as well as around the Commonwealth. As students

[00:51:48] progress through the program past middle school, they also get paid internships. So the summer after the ninth grade, they're getting \$15, \$16 an hour doing internships in the program or the interests that they have. And as they get older, we're doing college and career. Our greatest partners are PVCC. And then also we have a lot of internal partners here at the school district.

[00:52:07] and so that 900 000 is not only going to be able to expand and have us more students it'll allow us to support with sel it'll also allow us to support the research functions of this which i think is dr kaiser has been critical and dr carlock who's not here tonight critical and not only understanding how students are developing from sixth grade all the way to our oldest kid is in 11th grade now but what are the things what are the barriers that are being removed for these students that are predominantly first generation students and students from low wealth communities and so uh just excited at this collaborative partnership i know mr dillenbeck mentioned uh private practice uh this is truly an investment not only in school districts but also in

[00:52:48] industry partners that are involved in this as well as the university so um thank you for the support that dr haas has put to this uh dr hayes and really excited to work uh in collaboration with this and the uh other initiative in this grant thank you dr allen dr hayes did you all did I was just going to say thank you, Dr. Haas and Dr. Acuff for your approval to submit these grants last year, and I would also like to again thank Dr. Allen and Ms. Megan Maynard for the amazing work they have done to provide opportunities for the students in ACPS and the surrounding divisions.

[00:53:20] Thank you, Dr. Hayes. Thank you so much. While we have Ben here, did you have any questions for him? That's what I was going to say. I wanted to see if we had any questions on any of the grants that we talked about today. amazing um that's an amazing accomplishment um questions just a quick question how are students identified to be a part of the program so i speak on the future graduate camp program so what we do we work with our school counselors um and in our high schools and then they partner with their feeder

[00:53:55] middle schools to identify students they have to meet the criteria of at least you know two of the the three criteria of attendance, minor discipline, or having not passed SOLs in middle school. And so we really wanted to make sure we were reaching out to a community of students that often can fall through the cracks or by the wayside and make sure that they are engaged so that they can make it through high school and graduate and move on to career, military, or college. That's great. Thank Thank you.

[00:54:27] And then the Star Hill Pathways. And then for Star Hill, similar, we work with counselors, principals at every single school. They identify students. We look for students that are first gen and low

income as our priority students. But it's a program that if you were ever come in, I invite you all to the programming days that we have in the summer camp over the summer.

[00:54:46] It's a two week camp that we do for students. It really is students from all walks of life. So it's a really exciting, I think, mix of students from not only Amarillo County, but Charlottesville City as well. That's great. Thank you. Dr. Allen, is it pretty much divided girls and boys in the classes or how is this?

[00:55:04] Is it pretty much balanced with these tech-type opportunities? With the tech opportunities that we have? Right. With, you know, the demographics, I'm asking. How many girls are in this program? I would have to get some information from Ms. GoTech hasn't just started quite yet, but I would have to get more information on the breakdown of the students that attended last year.

[00:55:27] information back to the board for future graduates urgent but I'm interested thank you any other questions or comments thank you thank you very much thank you so much so the next piece that I had I had sent out an email recently to the school board that outlined our essentially our positions that we wanted or the school board's positions that they wanted to share with the with our legislators and so in that email it said you know if you had any changes or updates that you wanted to make to please let me know before the meeting but there's also this

[00:56:04] opportunity right now there you do have a printout of the um of that so if you want to just take a look if there's anything that jumps out at you that you would like to see added um i am seeking a motion to go ahead and get approval from the board so that we can transmit them to our legislators and we're also working on inviting them to attend our early spring student senate

[00:56:31] and we'll make sure our school board members invitation to that as well i think it's strong do i have any well first are there any other any comments no i mean the one thing i would say is everything is important but i know some of the conversations that we have been having um you

[00:57:10] are absolutely around investing in our school facilities and so any help that we can get from our state government to support that so it doesn't all have to come out of localities. I know that's something that the state just hasn't been investing in. I mean everything is important so we're lifting up everything but I definitely think something that is something that is so important for us and other communities going forward. And then if there are no other comments I'm going to see if there's a motion on the floor for this. I move that we approve the provided legislative priorities. Second. Moved by Ms. Lee, second by Ms. Spillman.

[00:57:47] I believe this is a voice vote, unless, Dr. Haas, you would like a roll call vote? You can just do a voice vote. I really appreciate it. I just want to make sure. All those in favor of the legislative agenda? Aye. All those opposed?

[00:58:05] Thank you, Dr. Haas. This motion clearly passes, and we look forward to supporting you on this legislative agenda. Thank you. And I am sincerely looking forward to reviving the legislative committee, and working with our communications department.

[00:58:22] One of the things I've been recently attending the VAS conference on Monday and Tuesday that we heard from the legislators that attend a panel there is that they really would like to have closer relationships with school boards, meaning invitations to visit schools, graduations, performances, things like that.

[00:58:43] So I'm going to work with Dr. Grant around that, You know, try to identify a series of events throughout the year as a calendar for them that they could attend. I do want the board to know that I do have, as many of you do, a cell phone exchange with all of our legislators.

[00:59:04] And I know sometimes they will text you or call you and ask you for your view on a particular piece of legislation or a direction that even the state school board might be taking. And they do that with me as well. And that's also a best practice is for us to maintain that kind of close connection with our legislators.

[00:59:22] And I think it helps that our legislators have been school board members. And then the last thing I just want to point out is that following the December 3rd meeting with the Board of Supervisors, Dr. Grant identified a series of questions that came about through that discussion around the CIP.

[00:59:48] And so what we did was, through a process, gathered answers to those questions, and we're going to be, we want to transmit that to the Board of Supervisors. I spoke with the county executive about it this morning, and we're going to, I'll transmit it to him, and then he'll share it back with the Board of Supervisors.

[01:00:09] It is on the consent agenda, and you're just receiving it for information. It's not that you're approving it as adopting it as your views. You're just saying you received it because we didn't want to share it with the Board of Supervisors or staff at the county level without you seeing it first.

[01:00:28] So you'll have the opportunity to read that. But I wanted you to be aware that when you do approve the consent agenda, you're saying, I saw it. It's on there for information. Thank you. And thank you, staff, for putting that together for us. I know we had lots of questions come up in that Board of Supervisors meeting, and we wanted to make sure that we would get them the information that they needed.

[01:00:49] So thank you for doing that. You're welcome. Any other school board or superintended business before we move forward? Okay. Next on our agenda is public comment, and I've asked Ms. Spillman to do that tonight.

[01:01:05] We have one person for public comment, correct? We welcome public input at our school board meetings. To sign up to speak during the public comment period, you can do so in several ways. Online, signup is available from 9:00 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week until 2:00 p.m. on the meeting day.

[01:01:21] By phone, calling the school board clerk's office to sign up until 2:00 p.m. on the meeting day. Or in-person, signup at the meeting is available from 6:00 p.m. until the public comment period for in-person meetings only. Please note that public comment is not received at special school board meetings unless specified on the agenda.

[01:01:39] Each speaker will have three minutes to speak, but the chair with board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be 14 or more speakers. The maximum number of people or groups that may speak at a meeting is 20. In the event there are more than 20 people or groups who wish to speak at a particular meeting, each speaker will be assigned a number and numbers will be drawn to determine which people or groups will have the opportunity to speak.

[01:01:59] Those who do not have the opportunity to speak at a particular meeting may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or may submit written comments to the school board's consideration. Speakers should state their name, address, or voting district, address comments to the school board, limit comments to school board governance school division operations provide written statements and supporting material to the clerk the school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time once the time is up speakers are asked to wrap up their comments to maintain respect please refrain from clapping or other audible forms of support you may raise your hand instead debate with the school board is not allowed and the projection system is for staff presentations we have one speaker tonight

[01:02:39] mr chris dillbeck hello uh my name is chris dillbeck i'm from the bribana district i'd like to talk about actually a book that i'm reading right now it's called off the mark by jack schneider and ethan hutt as you all many of you all know i'm interested in teaching someday maybe in high school maybe in community college and this book is interesting to me because it talks about

[01:03:12] the future of the grading system in in both high school and college the authors seem to argue several problems with the modern grading system and i wanted to go through some of those with you all the first is that they say that grades effectively reduce students to a single line on a transcript. They condense a student excessively so they're just shown as computer science A and not the potentially rich and interesting record that a student has had.

[01:03:41] They also note that grades can have permanent impact on students and I have a personal example of this. I missed top honors at JMU by a very small amount. One of the issues there was that I received poor grade in theater at that school. I had no way to change that. I'm currently an IT architect i'm in the in the field but i could have had the top honors on my on my transcript if i had some way to to deal with that theater issue they also talk about grades being instantaneous so for example if a student gets a low grade in math in the 10th grade but that motivates them and

[01:04:17] then they get better by their senior year that that d in 10th grade geometry will stick with them forever just like theater issue did additionally they talk about games grades being gained by students so many of you who are teachers may have known students asking for asking to have their grades raised or sending aggressive parents to advocate for them additionally some of my opinion I also believe that grades being high pressure will cause schools to relax the grading standards citing the evidence of the minimum 50% rule that is in effect here at Albemarle County so what do we do

[01:04:56] about this we need to make grades better reflect the skills of students what they do instead of what they remember or what they can recite. I'd recommend looking into ways to make grades more updatable as students age and get better. So if you're that student who got a low grade in math in the 10th grade, find a way that they could update that grade if they apply themselves and do really well and to pass an AP math test in in their senior year. If I were designing this I go even further than what the authors say. I would build a private portfolio for all students with lists of skills ranging from things like sing your sing

[01:05:34] a song of your choice in kindergarten to solve a quadratic equation in high school math and then when you complete those you would attach evidence of that skill to the portfolio so I'd recommend to you all is read the book off the mark by Jack Schneider and Ethan Hutt and I just want to let you know it makes me very happy to come up here and give you all homework thank you thank you mr.

[01:05:57] bill back and that is the end of public comment and it's always thank you to everyone that provides public comment it is definitely something that I encourage all of our constituents to do as we

move forward particularly as we move forward into our budget season this winter the next thing on our agenda is approval of the consent agenda I move we approve the consent agenda dr. a cop has moved for the approval of the consent agenda do i have a second second approved by dr acoff

[01:06:31] seconded by ms lee all those in favor all those opposed our consent agenda for tonight passes do we have any other business um i just wanted to uh thank mr dylan back for the comments about the committees earlier um i know that sometimes we can just sort of move along and it's good to pull back and have these thoughts and i just wanted to share my thoughts about the potential of a gap committee because i think we may have discussed this a little bit when we were talking

[01:07:08] and it did it really stood out to me last year when we got the seac committee port that we have a handful of groups that we identify as gap groups but we hear from one of them because of law and it's great i love getting that feedback but there are so many groups we don't hear from regularly um so i really i agree with the desire to look into our other achievement gap groups however i will also mention that from my experience on the diversity and equity advisor committee that that

[01:07:46] work didn't always complement what was happening in the division so i think that with any of these committees and it would be good to look at all of them really um you know we need to be really intentional about what we're looking for from the committees and you know what best use of the committee would be so those are just my thoughts about that but thank you i thought all seven of of us were on the gap committee i mean i thought was worthy yeah i mean truly yeah yeah any other

[01:08:23] comments tonight with no other comments on no other things on our agenda i call it's adjourned for tonight. Thank you so much.



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