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## Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, March 12, 2026

Date Thursday, March 12, 2026  
Place Albemarle County Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia  
Length 3h 4m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axS5qo\\_XRrg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axS5qo_XRrg)

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-14. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:06:24] Rosalind Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer. Josiah Black, Chief Legal Officer. Erin Stone, Assistant Division Counsel. Trustee Thompson, Clerk of the Board. Dan Redding, Chief HR Officer. Chandra Hayes, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction.

[00:06:41] And also Dr. Haas. Welcome, thank you. And again, thank you to all of our officers who are here to serve and protect us tonight. We will now stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:07:15] We begin our meeting tonight. I ask that we all pause for a moment of silence.

[00:07:33] you so not much the next point on our agenda is the approval of our agenda do i have a motion for the approval of tonight's agenda i move we approve tonight's agenda thank you do i have a second agenda is approved by ms lee seconded by ms osborne all those in favor of tonight's agenda aye any opposed we will now move forward with today's agenda as planned and we will not be having a spotlight on education tonight that has been rescheduled to a future date

[00:08:08] so the next point in our agenda is 4.2 school board attendant and any committee updates does anyone have any updates dr husk would you like to begin with that or you're good okay any other any i have one but i also want to reveal the floor to my peers um so i have um i'm appointing two community members to the advisory committee for environmentality some of you have heard us call that aces that will be representing the white hall district i have two constituents jennifer

[00:08:44] williams and megan garritty who have asked to both share that seat and it has been approved so i would like to appoint those um tonight and have ms osborne send out that communication following this meeting me oh my gosh i do it so that for those of you so for those that you don't know for some reason this is just you have to have levity in life right for some reason every once in a while i can i use osborne and thompson so it is a little inside joke so apologies um the only

[00:09:18] other thing that i the only other uh piece of um i guess announcement is that uh for those of you about a month ago we had the western um ceramics class their teacher in their class come um for school board appreciation and give uh this uh the school board mugs and beautiful art um and so um just to honor uh though all of our students tonight i am using that mug um and i'm thinking about those students and our wonderful students across the county every time i take a sip so thank you

[00:09:50] again to miss katterson and her students for that amazing gift to us so the next uh part of our agenda 5.0 is our public comment I am going to start by reading our guidelines for public comments and then I will describe the process that we will be using actually I'm going to start the process we so we are going to be using a different process tonight according to our policy if we have over 20 individuals signed up to speak then we have to move into a lottery system and

[00:10:27] and so um as of uh five we had 29 is are there updates about the number of people who have signed up do we have an update how many of the total 34 and we have 34 people so we will be doing a lottery so I will first be reading our um our public comment script and then we'll be talking through the process for that the Albemarle County School Board welcomes public input on matters related to board governance and division operations for tonight's meeting we have more than 20 individuals

[00:11:03] signed up to speak in accordance with school board procedures speakers will be selected by number drawing and each speaker will have two minutes the total public comment period will not exceed 40 minutes unless extended by the board when you are recognized you will i will ask you to please come forward state your name and your address or managerial district for the record comments should be directed to the school board as a body and should relate to matters within the board's work and the operations of the division this is not a forum for debate for board members for personal attacks or for remarks directed at individual school board members or

[00:11:43] staff we ask that all comments remain respectful on this topic i'm going to pause on that um a few things uh as a reminder we are examples for the students of this county i am asking that everyone in this auditorium respect decorum use respectful language and follow the guidelines that i am calling out again we are examples for all of our students you need to follow those guidelines and

[00:12:16] show them how we can act if anyone is doing uh personal attacks against the school board or the staff we will i will ask you to stop and reframe your speech if you continue i will ask for the mic to be cut off a timer will be used to track speaking time when your time has expires please conclude your remarks promptly if you have written comments or supporting materials you may provide those to the clerk for the board's consideration to help us remain maintain decorum please do not

[00:12:52] clap please do not boo or please do not otherwise audibly express support or opposition during public comment if you wish to show support you may do so by raising your hand or standing please note that the board does not respond during public comment period board members may address matters raised later in the meeting under other business the other note is we allow you are allowed to have signs

but they cannot obstruct the view of anyone in this auditorium and i will be asking those on the dais to help me as because of my short stature i'm sometimes not able to see

[00:13:30] if you're blocking anyone's view we will ask you to lower your sign or just raise your sign at the back of the room i'm also going to read um our disruptive meeting management policy tonight as a reminder our public comment is governed by the guidelines just read each speaker will have two minutes to speak and all comments must be addressed to the board not to individuals please refrain from applause shouting interruptions so that each speaker can be heard and the meeting can proceed in an orderly fashion if disruption occurs i will give a first warning under school

[00:14:06] board policy b ddh and virginia code 22.1-79 the chair is responsible for maintaining decorum and orderly conduct during meetings this is a public meeting of the school board and not a public forum interruptions shouting or personal attacks are not permitted in addition disrupting a public meeting like this is a crime under virginia code 18.2-415 you will receive a warning and that further disruption may result in removal from the meeting if disruptions continue we will have a recess of

[00:14:40] the meeting for five minutes to allow order to be restored we are committed to hearing public input but we cannot continue while the meeting is being directed disrupted our ACPD officers will assist as needed to ensure safety and to restore order we will reconvene once order is restored and the redo is called if order cannot be restored and we are unable to continue it's a persistent to Virginia code 22.179 and school board policy BDDH well I will direct the meeting to recess in the room to be cleared the board will reconvene once order is established and

[00:15:15] individuals may be removed, may continue to review during live stream. Last, if order cannot be restored, I will ask the officers to remove a certain person and unfortunately have to charge them with disorderly contact under Virginia Code 18.2-415. So apologies for having to read all that but I do want to make sure we are able to hear from everyone tonight and to do that I need to make sure we have decorum and respect for everyone in this room. As I said because we have 34 speakers

[00:15:50] we will be doing a lottery. I do have one amendment to that. According to school board policy a group may ask for five minutes to speak for the group and Mr. Noah Kaufman did email me and make that request in the allotted time and so he will be given a five minutes to speak and he he will not be subject to the lottery.

[00:16:16] He will speak first, but I will ask him to hold while we do the lottery. So what we are going to do is, my colleagues Ms. Joshua Black, Erin Stone, and Christine Thompson are looking at the list, the list that was done online, and then the list if anyone signed up today.

[00:16:36] There are numbers next to each. One of them will call a number, and then the other will look at the, - I will look at the list and I will highlight the individual that will speak. Six, 32, 24.

[00:16:57] - Oh, go slow, sorry. - Okay, you have the first three. - We're gonna go and do all at once.

[00:17:12] I'm gonna use my handy highlighter. Number 32, we're gonna go, I'm gonna have you select all of them and then we will go and I will call people up in threes. Number 32 is Tom Sekele. Sekele, thank you very much and I always apologize if I ask that you correct me.

[00:17:31] - Can I just point out number six, what came before number 32? - Number six is Amanda Moxham. - And 24. - Number 24 is, almost like we're giving out raffle prizes today, is Adrian Eichner.

[00:17:53] You can continue, Ms. Stone. - Number three. - Jimmy Ballou. - 30. - Number 30 is Joss Heltzer.

[00:18:09] - Number 22. Number 22 is Will Woodrow. Number 19. Number 19 is Nancy Koenig. Number 7. Number 7 is Frankie Aherns.

[00:18:28] Aarons, apologies. My best friend is Ahern. Aarons. Number 1. Number 1 is Jennifer Lodovici. Number 28. Number 28 is Barbara Ruddy.

[00:18:48] Number 9. Number 9. Number 9 is Dolly Joseph. Number 11. - Number 11 is Phillip Hamilton. - Number 29. - Number 29 is Kim Albero.

[00:19:09] - 20. - Number 20 is James Powers. - 17. - Number 17 is Carmen Chandros. - 25. - How many more do we have, Ms. Stone? - One more after this.

[00:19:25] - Okay, you said number 25? - Yes, ma'am. - Number 25 is Rob Hewitt. - And 33. - And number 33 is Zach. Apologies for not being able to read your writing. Power hurts.

[00:19:43] Would you like me to read the full list and then go in threes? Would that be helpful for people? Anyone? - Just go in threes. - I'll go in threes. Ms. Osborne told me to go in threes. So as I mentioned, the first speaker is Noah Coffin and he was granted five minutes.

[00:20:03] So Ms. Thompson, if you would put five minutes. And then I'm just gonna go in order on my list instead of the order called. So the next three will be Jennifer Lodovacci, Jimmy Ballou, and Amanda Moxham.

[00:20:22] If you would just pause while we get the timer. And then the other thing I'll just ask, so I don't have to ask everyone, is the sound has been quiet, although I feel like it's a little louder today, so it's good. I just ask that we all are different heights, so there are two microphones as you come up.

[00:20:39] I just ask that you pull both of them close to you so that everyone in the audience as well as online can hear you. - And he will be given five minutes and all other speakers will be given two minutes per board policy.

[00:21:04] - Ms. Thompson, just let us know when the timer is fixed and Mr. Kaufman can begin. - My name is Noah Kaufman. I'm from the Samuel Miller District. It's an honor to be with all of you here tonight.

[00:21:21] I'm speaking to you not as a Turning Point USA chapter leader but as a student in the Albemarle County School District as who I've been most of my life. I mean this from the bottom of my heart. I hold a deep amount of respect for each and every one of you. Being part of the school board is not easy, and we certainly haven't made your job any easier, but I commend you for standing up and getting involved in the community.

[00:21:42] You all have a very unique and special opportunity to create positive change in the Albemarle County community. Unfortunately, this policy doesn't do it. Instead, it does three things. It bans all speakers from non-curricular clubs, it restricts all curricular clubs' fundraising abilities, and allows the school board to eliminate any club deemed at their discretion to be able.

[00:22:02] You know, with Western Alma High School 20 Point USA, we've done a whole slew of media interviews, newspapers, hit pieces. Out of all of them, my favorite was the very first one we did with our

local school newspaper. There was a student in it, a very liberal student, but attended all of our meetings, asked great questions.

[00:22:17] I'll never forget what he said. He said, I disagree with almost everything this club says, but the most important thing you can do as a citizen is create a space for civil dialogue. He was absolutely right. He realized something not a lot of people realize. He realized Western Albemarle High School in Albemarle County has the ability to platform free speech, to platform civil dialogue, to bring people from different ends of the cafeteria, from different races, religions, creeds, backgrounds, ethnicities, kids who would never talk to each other otherwise, to have civil discussion.

[00:22:44] Imagine that, talking about something we disagree with civilly. It was truly a wonderful thing to see, but it doesn't just affect Turning Point USA. It affects the Women's Empowerment Club. It affects the Young Democrats Club. We want to host our first female governor of Virginia. It affects the Habitat for Humanity Club who wanna bring in their CEO and founder.

[00:23:00] It affects athletic clubs who wanna bring in professional athletes to speak. It kills Western Albemarle's civil engagement. If you intended a Turning Point USA meeting, or frankly any meeting where a speaker was present, and I encourage you, all of you too, you wouldn't see divisiveness, you wouldn't see fight, you would see a bunch of kids gathered together having civil discussions.

[00:23:19] If you attended our meeting, you would see 700 students, over half of the school gathered together, asking questions, listening intently, being more engaged in a meeting at lunchtime than I've seen in class. A class where we follow the school curriculum, and so I wonder, why is that? Why are a group of teenage kids able to gather hundreds of students together once a month to participate in an active discussion when my teachers in class can't do that for 10 minutes?

[00:23:42] I really encourage you not to kill a good thing. You all have a very exciting opportunity to foster environment for free speech and civil dialogue, an opportunity to platform civil discussion instead of platforming the culture of a culture of hate, a culture of silence, a culture of keyboard warriors that's causing anxiety, depression, suicide rates in our community, despite the culture where we can talk to people that we disagree with. I really encourage you to make the right decision. As for the funding section of this policy, when I first read it, I asked myself, why? Why are we putting these restrictions on student funding? And it leads me to believe that Turning Point USA has more of an involvement

[00:24:22] in this policy than some of you are willing to admit. You know, media on both sides of the issue, both pro and against this policy, all agree on one thing, that Turning Point USA at Western Albemarle and Albemarle High School have been at the forefront of this policy. In November, when the school board moved to prohibit Ms. Cobb from speaking at our school, now we're looking at a ban on all speakers.

[00:24:41] At that same school board meeting, a young lady from Albemarle High School complained about her successful fundraising issues. Now we're looking at restrictions on those fundraising issues. A member of the Albemarle County School Board compared our club to a racist, hateful group. Now we're looking at the ability for the school board to have complete discretion to ban any club they deem as hateful.

[00:24:59] A lot of people in our community don't think that's a coincidence. This policy does a lot more than that, though. You see, there's a lot of unintended consequences. It cancels and instantly terminates a

lot of clubs, including a rugby, pickleball, fencing, and mountain biking club that rely entirely on parent support and volunteer support to operate.

[00:25:20] They operate just like a lot of sports teams, but they're not VHSO official sports, and rely on these parent contributions and help that this policy instantly eliminates. Did you talk to any of them in the 12-person survey and get their feedback? We put out a survey this morning to hundreds of students. What we heard was an overwhelming response.

[00:25:38] Over 300 students saying no to this policy and only 20 saying yes. You'll have a really special opportunity tonight. I've prayed for each and every one of you profusely throughout this week. I have a lot of respect for each and every one of you. Regardless of how this goes, I will continue to pray for you.

[00:25:56] I wish you all the best, and I hope you did the right thing tonight. Thank you so much for my time. Thank you so much. we will now move to our first three speakers as I said please come and state your name and please correct me as I apologize if I mispronounce anyone's name and please note your magisterial direction I have Jennifer Ludovici Jimmy Ballou and then Amanda Moxham just because we have a number of speakers tonight I just ask that the next two speakers just kind of come in to move closer to the mic so that they will be ready when it is their time and every Please, just apologies.

[00:26:34] Could we please change the timer to two minutes for the remaining speakers? Once that's done, you may begin. - Hi, my name is Jennifer Lidovici, and I'm a parent in the Samuel Miller District. I'm here to support the immediate adoption of the proposed changes to the student club policy.

[00:26:51] Yikes. I understand why people aligned with TPUSA and Club America feel like these revisions are targeted at them. I offer a different perspective. Club America has pushed the boundaries of what our community believes to be an appropriate use of school time and resources.

[00:27:09] This is the impetus behind an entire array of people taking a hard look at what we have on record and walking away feeling like the policy is lacking. Without that push, we would not be here today. But the reason we're here is not because Club America sponsors controversial events.

[00:27:27] It's because we have a lackluster policy that has failed to provide guidance to the principal, the school board, administrators, parents, students, and the guest speakers themselves about what is and what is not allowable on public school time in public school facilities.

[00:27:44] While it was the actions of one club that brought attention to the current policy, the lack of clarity in that policy is the actual problem we're here to address. Policies exist to provide clear directions. Not adopting improvements now that we have seen the myriad of faults in the current policy would be irresponsible.

[00:28:03] I'd like to specifically address the key revisions on fundraising, which have been misrepresented as a new process. I run the WAS Unity Fund, which supports inclusive events hosted by student clubs. We have supplied funding to seven separate clubs this year. The current practice is to make donations to student clubs through the school, designating the intended club, and the school manages those funds.

[00:28:24] The proposed revisions do not change current practice. They clarify the policy for those who may not have been following them properly all along, which again underscores the need for updated language. I encourage you to vote yes on the suggested revisions immediately. - Thank you so much.

[00:28:40] Mr. Jimmy Ballou. Mr. Jimmy Ballou in the audience tonight.

[00:28:59] Mr. Jimmy Ballou is not here, so I will yield his time back to the chair. Amanda Moxham. - Good evening.

[00:29:15] I'm an Albemarle County parent. I live in the Rio district and good evening. Albemarle County Schools should actually never be a place where racist, homophobic, and misogynistic political organizing is happening to recruit our impressionable teenagers.

[00:29:36] Our schools exist for one core purpose: learning. Classrooms should be places where every student feels safe, respected, and able to focus on their education. Turning Point USA be branded as Club America is not just another student club.

[00:29:54] It is a known national racist, homophobic, and misogynistic political organization that has repeatedly been tied to racist rhetoric, harassment, and confrontational behavior on campuses and in high schools across the country. Last year at Texas A&M, leaked screenshots from a Turning Point USA chapter group chat revealed hundreds of racist and homophobic slurs used by members, including repeated uses of the N-word and slurs targeting LGBTQ students.

[00:30:27] The messages sparked outrage because students saw in plain language the culture being normalized inside this organization. And increasingly, high schools are becoming the next target. In Michigan, the creation of TPUSA clubs led hundreds of students to walking out, creating division within the community.

[00:30:46] This community in particular, Charlottesville, knows all too well what happens when white supremacist ideology is allowed to organize openly with the support of the administration. And that history here, which is actually not that old, should guide the choices we make about what we allow in our public schools.

[00:31:07] School boards have a responsibility under federal civil rights law to ensure students are not subjected to hostile environments. Albemarle County should be known for protecting students and standing firmly against white supremacy, not for allowing. - Thank you so much, and please take your seat.

[00:31:25] I am going to call up the next speakers. Frankie Arends, Dolly Joseph, and Phillip Hamilton. Frankie Arends, please let me know if I mispronounced your name. - It's Arends. - Arends. - All good.

[00:31:41] Hi, my name is Frankie Arends. I'm a graduate of Albemarle County Public Schools a proud public educator in the county. I returned to this county to teach over four years ago. I've stepped wherever needed, teaching 18 unique preps across four departments. In my most recent evaluation, I earned four out of four marks in nearly every category, and my students saw a 30% increase in mastery on their county assessments this year.

[00:32:04] In February, I was told that I am to be rified. I was told that due to the opening of Ace Academy at Lambs Lane, Monticello's enrollment would drop, and my position, along with at least 10 others at my school, 16 at Albemarle, and more at Western, would be cut. The logic does not hold up. I was given my RIF notice well before student course selection will be finalized at the end of the month and before Ace Academy even began hiring teachers. As of this afternoon, teaching applications at Ace Academy are still not available online. There were ways to reshuffle staff without shattering lives,

[00:32:39] Yet the central office chose a path that has destroyed our staff's trust and cut dozens of excellent educators from our ranks. Sharing my news with colleagues, I've been met with resounding response. They've shared tears, they've launched into outrage, and consistently they've reprimanded the failures at central office that have led us to this reality.

[00:32:58] Our central office has been silent. For a county that values equity, this county has needlessly disrupted the specific support system, the teachers who our students rely on. For a county that values excellence, this county has cut dozens of proven high-quality educators. For a county that values family and community, this county just signaled to our staff that we need to provide that to our kids, but we won't have that provided to us. We have an exceptional group of young people growing up in this county.

[00:33:30] I see them every day. I'm tremendously grateful that I get to work with them. Our school system deserves a central office that supports their teachers in the same way and with the same dedication that our teachers support our students. Thank you. Thank you so much. Ms. Dolly Joseph. Dolly Joseph. Is Dolly Joseph in the audience? Ms. Joseph will cede her time to

[00:34:02] the chair. Philip Hamilton, you will have two minutes. Well, thank you for giving me time to speak today, I am Jack Jewett District and I'm certainly friends with Noah Coffin and members of his organization. They're a great group. I've been to multiple meetings that they've hosted and they are supporting Charlie Kirk's mission, which is free speech on campus and in our schools

[00:34:35] and in the public overall. And it's been six months since he was assassinated and, you know, his wife wants to come to Albemarle County. He wants to come and speak to these students and And I think that the board should be open to, you know, keeping the current policies in place, to not put forward these amended changes and to allow Erica Kirk to come to Albemarle County and to speak to these students.

[00:35:01] And one thing I do want to bring up is that if you are going to vote the other way and put forward this policy, there's a group called FIRE and they sent this earlier today to the board and it states dear board members the foundation for individual rights and expression fire a non-partisan non-profit that defends free speech nationwide is concerned by proposed revisions the Albemarle County School Board's policy governing student activities and organizations as written the amended policy would violate the first amendment which protects students rights

[00:35:37] to free expression the proposal also falls contrary surrounding a turning point USA club speaker invitation you know Victoria Cobb raising serious concerns that the board is targeting the group because of its views or the views of guest speakers fire calls on the board to reject the proposed revisions and to respect and uphold students first amendment rights so I urge you do not move forward with this and you'll be facing a lawsuit if you do thank you thank you so much

[00:36:08] Our next three speakers, Carmen Chandros, Nancy Koenig, James Powers.

[00:36:29] My name is Carmen Chandros and I will cede my place to Mr. Gene to talk. My name is Gene Locke. I live in Crozet. My grandkids attend Western. Unfortunately, I've heard from some students at Western Albemarle that the learning environment feels unsafe to some of them and that the learning environment is increasingly undermined by bullying, intimidation,

[00:37:06] incidents of bias and disrespect. The policy change that you're considering does not address that. It does address the time and place of outside speakers and I think it's a good idea to put it after school so that there's not disruption in the middle of the school day. But I urge you to address why there is this

increase in lack of safety and intimidation in hostile speech in our schools. Why is this happening? Your student representative spoke eloquently to

[00:37:46] the need to address that at your last meeting. I hope that you will realize that there are repercussions to some of the speakers that have been invited. It instills a normalization of certain kinds of disrespect, free speech must not be a cover for hate speech. You have to have a policy that helps your administrators define what constitutes speech that is harmful to the

[00:38:23] learning environment. I know that is difficult, it's tricky, but I think the time has come to do that. Thank you. Thank you so much. Our next speaker is Nancy Koenig. Thank you. Good evening and thank you. I'm Nancy Koenig from Scottsville. I'm a retired county teacher and parent of a 2002 graduate of Monticello High School. I commend the board for their recommendation as stated in procedure A4 that quote the total program of activities in the school should be comprehensive

[00:39:01] and well balanced providing many and very varied opportunities for all students and that an organization would not be denied access based on religious, political, philosophical, or other content expressed by the organization.

[00:39:20] This procedure allows for the opportunity to hear diverse information and opinions leading to the learning of critical thinking skills. One of your interview themes states that you want to "protect ability to associate with outside groups but the timing of these policy clarifications makes me doubt the true intentions.

[00:39:47] This process comes just before a speaker from Turning Point USA has been invited by a non-curricular club. I am concerned also that funds raised by clubs would be confiscated by the schools should the club be dissolved if enacted the policy would inhibit the ability of a club to raise funds because the contributions would not be guaranteed that they would be used for the purposes of promoting the club i ask that you consider these comments before voting on the proposed changes

[00:40:26] thank you and god bless thank you so much our next speaker is james powers good evening board my name is james powers i'm a parent of three two who have gone through the school system and one still in the school system out of rio district i'm here to speak about the proposed safety revisions of the student activities policy i support the proposed language and offer two considerations for the board the chesterfield revision you're going to see later on indicates

[00:41:05] that quote student organizations shall not engage in any activity which materially and substantially disrupt the school's learning environment. I ask the board to consider how will disruption be measured and how many kids need to have their learning disrupted for an action to be taken against the group. For our transgender kids in the district, knowing that there are student groups that seek to invalidate them and promote a culture of exclusion is enough to disrupt their learning.

[00:41:34] Metrics should be put in place that aim to support those most at risk and actions in response to the disruption must be clear to staff to the presentation reads that student organizations that promote or endorse violence harassment or hatred toward an identifiable person or group based on a number of characteristics that I won't go into for time or are affiliated with any organizations that do so shall not be permitted and district administrators need clear guidance in terms of how those terms are defined the primary consideration should be given to

[00:42:12] students being targeted, not the students expressing themselves. The targeted students should be at the center of the conversation regarding what it means to be harassed, for example, or what violence includes. Furthermore, if groups are associated with outside actors, then someone must monitor the words and actions of those outside organizations and respond appropriately. Getting these points right in practice will go a long way to addressing other concerns in the policy. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. Our next three

[00:42:43] speech speakers, Will Woodrow, Adrian Eichner, and Rob Hewitt. Will Woodrow, Adrian Eichner, and Rob Hewitt. You will each have two minutes. I yield my time to Ollie Woodrow. Good afternoon, Albemarle County School Board. My name is Ollie Woodrow, and I'm the vice president and co-founder of the Turning Point USA chapter at Western Albemarle High School. I want to start by saying thank you for the hard work you're doing to make Albemarle County Schools great. I have a great

[00:43:21] amount of respect for each and every one of you. It is because of that respect that I am certain you'll make the right decision on the policy you're voting on tonight. Any Western student can tell you that over the last year, Turning Point USA and other non-curricular clubs have radically changed the culture of Western High School from one where political topics were almost taboo to a culture where civil political discourse has become a norm. This dialogue provides students on both sides of the aisle the ability to formulate their own opinions and beliefs. And in our polarized world, where the youth gain the majority of their political knowledge from social media echo chambers, the ability to engage in political discourse

[00:43:57] is not only a good thing, it is necessary for the future of American democracy. The way our club functions is by hosting external speakers whose ideas spark discussions around the school for weeks following. At a school where over 85% of students engage in extracurricular activities, hosting speakers after school is simply not an option.

[00:44:16] Make no mistake, the policy you're voting on tonight would be a death blow to the culture of civil dialogue and respectful conversation that our club has worked so hard to create. If that is your intention, congratulations. However, I think better of you.

[00:44:33] When it comes to the vote tonight, I trust you all will make the decision that agrees with logic and with the values outlined in the American Constitution, not just your own political bias. - Thank you so much. Adrienne Eichner.

[00:44:56] - Hi, my name is Adrienne Eichner. I'm a graduate of Elmoreau High School. I'm very proud of being a graduate from Elmoreau High School. I enjoyed my school years. I was homeschooled before that. And it was very exciting to be in classes with boys, and I was just so excited to be there and learn.

[00:45:14] And I enjoyed the clubs. I got to meet a variety of people, and I got to learn new things and learn what their life was like, and you got paid for babysitting. I didn't know that. And there were just all these things that were just so amazing about being in clubs and getting to try new things that my parents probably wouldn't have promoted me to do or encouraged me to do.

[00:45:40] So why are you trying to restrict school clubs that are respectful, peaceful? If they're not peaceful, what are they doing wrong? And what are the penalties for that? And I just feel like the timing is very strange that when Turning Point starts asking to do things, you start changing things.

[00:46:05] And there was a particular board member that's now a vice chair and you- I didn't mention her name. It's all the same. You said board member. I'm sorry. You may continue, but you may not direct

anything to a board member whether the name is used or not used.

[00:46:24] Why was it appropriate for her to be chairman? Why? Stop. Please turn off the mic. Thank you very much. Rob Hewitt.

[00:46:42] Yep. If you want to move both of those mics closer to your mouth so that, yep, we're all just different mics. That's good. Good evening. My name is Libby Hewitt. Apologies. Christine, would you turn the mics on and just reset for time? Okay. It's not your apologies.

[00:46:59] Just one second. She'll reset the time in a minute. I want to make sure you get your two minutes. Thank you. Okay. My name is Libby Hewitt. I'm from the Samuel Miller District. Good evening, all. I just want to point out a couple of things before I start, and that is the Equal Access Act of 1984.

[00:47:18] I'm sure you're probably familiar with it. It gives a person a right to equal access and equal treatment. also on the uh your website it says talks about equity mission to end the predictive value of race and ensure each individual student's success my question is how is this new meeting policy achieving that goal my by forcing speakers to only speak after school hours you limit student participation not all students have transportation whereas at lunchtime their break in the school day

[00:47:52] they can easily show up if you pass this new meeting policy you are denying them the equal access that you say you value hate speech that's a question mark this club has grown by leaps and bounds 250 members currently 700 students at their last meeting students readily choose to spend their free time in this way and have you personally gone to the meeting um it would be worth your time every time i've heard um noah or other leaders speak there's they speak with respect and care

[00:48:29] and kindness i'm sure you've heard that tonight and that character perhaps that's the very qualities other students are attracted to and that is one reason the club is growing hate limits love attracts we should be nurturing students in their quest for truth not restricting them like this new policy would do they have a right to choose their speaker speakers manage their budgets and conduct their meetings this is how our future leaders will grow today students are looking for what is real they're generally not finding it on social media here's an in-person meeting that

[00:49:05] invites dialogue and search for truth thank you so much our next three speakers are barbara rudy Kim Albaro and Josh Hexler, Barbara Rudy.

[00:49:25] My name is Barbara Ruddy and I'm from the Samuel Miller District. I'm a 40-year resident of Albemarle County, a former high school educator of 10 years, and an Albemarle County Public School Central Office Administrator for an additional four years. Based on that experience, I believe I offer a bonafide frame of reference for my comments regarding policies that affect our student body, and the health, well-being, and safety thereof.

[00:49:51] I support the proposed changes to the policy regarding outside speakers for non-curricular student clubs and activities that occur during the school day. It's perhaps most important to point out first that the proposed changes to the policy do not include or result in the elimination of any existing student club or group, either curricular or non-curricular.

[00:50:18] Provisions and related requirements under the Federal Equal Access Act are maintained. To put a finer point on it, the proposed changes as written, neither discriminate against nor disallow said external speakers from being invited to present to non-curricular clubs.

[00:50:40] With the changes, such speakers are not precluded from being involved or invited to present at non-curricular activities. Rather, they are appropriately distinguished between external speakers who present during a school day at curricular clubs and activities versus external speakers who present at non-curricular clubs during the school day.

[00:51:04] The proposed changes in no way disallow freedom of speech or the free exchange of ideas between students. Both are critical to the intellectual development of students as informed citizens and future contributors to our nation.

[00:51:24] With the changes, there is likely, likewise, no inherent breach of federal. Thank you so much. Thank you. Kim Albaro. Good evening.

[00:51:52] I'm Dr. Kim Alberio. I'm a Crozet resident, mom to four, and a concerned parent. I'm here to talk about student safety during events with high-profile visitors who present elevated security risks. ACPS already has daily safety protocols at every school coordinated with administration and law enforcement. These protocols let students focus on learning and give parents a peace of mind while their students are at school. I'm a Navy veteran. I'm married to a Marine. We've both had multiple combat deployments so when i think about operational risk management i worry about

[00:52:27] specific things i had when i heard about the concerns about the upcoming event at our local high school lester now moral high school i looked for an operational risk management plan for a high profile visitor arriving during the school day i found one with just a couple clicks i found a confidential document for law enforcement and school administration only that outlines the security measures that would be needed in order to host a high profile individual who requires armed security. It's reassuring that the plan exists. It's alarming that anyone could access it.

[00:53:03] When a high profile visitor event disrupts the school day and requires additional security, parents need real assurance. If parents are relying on these protocols to keep their children safe, they deserve to know what those protocols are. And when an organization invites speakers who require armed security details into a public school during school hours, the benefit of that event must be weighed against the risk. Every parent knows there is nothing we will not do to shield our children from harm. I ask you to hear this not as an attack on any club or event, but

[00:53:41] as what it is: a parent's expectation that every child at that school is safe. If a voluntary club event creates increased risk for those who not wish to participate but are required to be there, that event should be held after school. Thank you so much. Josh Hetzler. My name is Josh Hetzler and I'm legal counsel for the Founding Freedoms Law Center. We represent Virginians to protect their constitutional rights to free speech, free assembly, and religious exercise. I am here tonight

[00:54:19] to warn the school board about the dangerous path that is considering going down with the student club's policy as currently proposed. While the school district certainly has the authority to set reasonable parameters for how its student clubs may function within its schools, that power is not unlimited, and we believe these proposed policies likely run afoul of important constitutional safe guardrails. To begin with, it is clear that this policy is targeted toward one particular group, the TPUSA chapters. Only after the Western Albemarle High School TPUSA chapter had Victoria Cobb speak about the reality of two genders did the school board decide to overhaul its policies,

[00:54:59] which disproportionately and adversely impacts TPUSA. There is ample evidence from statements by this board alone to show clear animus towards this club because of their viewpoint. It is also problematic that one person at his or her sole discretion can dissolve a club if they deem that club to have engaged in the promotion of harassment or hatred of an individual or protected class, or if their affiliated organization is deemed to have done so.

[00:55:27] At a minimum, this vague and over broad language will significantly chill otherwise free speech and it certainly could be used to shut down the TPUSA chapters based on what has already been said to falsely characterize these clubs. Many comments of which you've heard tonight from those who support this policy. There are other potentially fatal problems with this policy from a legal perspective as well. So I urge you to reject this policy and respect the constitutional rights of all your students. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[00:56:00] Our last two speakers for tonight are Tom Saifley and Zach Powerhurt. And please correct my pronunciation. Thank you for your time. It's Tom Saifley, and I am a father of a Lamar County student, and I'm here tonight to support the proposed restrictions on outside guest speakers during the school day.

[00:56:26] Our schools must be a sanctuary for learning, not a recruitment ground for outside political interests. I get it. I get it that folks want free speech. I'm all for it, too. We all are. and I get it that some group, that Turning Point USA, wants to have open debate, want people to come and engage.

[00:56:44] But I think really, Turning Point USA is a one-sided divisive group with a glossy cover. And I think if you have a rehearsed debate tactic and a charismatic speaker, that you can make an extreme message sound convincing to vulnerable kids.

[00:57:00] I think using marketing gimmicks like free pizza targets minors. It's not about diverse viewpoints. It's a calculated attempt to bait a captive audience of children. I think providing a platform for rhetoric that targets specific students, specifically our LGBTQ youth, directly contradicts this board's own anti-racism and non-discrimination policies.

[00:57:23] We can't claim to protect all students while simultaneously handing a megaphone to groups that marginalize them during lunch breaks. So while I'm all for free speech, and I think these clubs should be able to meet at other times when kids who want to participate in that can go and join them, I'm all for that, but I urge the board to vote yes to move these partisan events to non-school hours.

[00:57:46] Let's keep our instructional day focused on education, not, I'd say, political machines. Thank you. Thank you very much. Our last speaker for today is Zach Pawart. Hi, my name is Zach Pawart. I'm in the Whitehall District.

[00:58:11] For the last 23 years, I've had the privilege of wearing a uniform representing our nation, both in the Army, now in the Virginia National Guard. I don't wear a uniform for any reason other than to protect the organic right as a nation for us to disagree civilly and to work for freedom.

[00:58:34] I don't have a need for anyone to agree with my point of view, but it is critical we create a culture of mutual respect. Our schools should be areas of inherent inclusion, mutual understanding, and mutual support. I've seen a very disturbing trend at Western Albemarle High School.

[00:58:51] My two sons have reported that certain clubs are not academic in nature and have only resulted in increased animosity, increased division, and hate. To say that the school is at a pressure point

is putting it mildly.

[00:59:08] They come home feeling unsafe. When there are guest speakers, there are security risks at the school, and we have considered telling our kids, don't go to school today. The disruptions caused by TPUSA has destroyed the learning environment at Western Uppermore High School.

[00:59:30] Furthermore, when talking to the administrators of the school, there is no clear policy. There is no clear guidance for them. We need policies in place that equip our administrators to be able to do their job appropriately. This isn't a political issue.

[00:59:48] This isn't about just TPUSA. It is about any organizations whose actions and guest speakers can put students' lives at risk. This policy gives our administrators the ability to create an academic first and inclusive environment.

[01:00:09] Thank you. - Thank you so much. That now concludes our public comment for tonight. And I do wanna just say from this board how much I appreciate the respect that everyone was given to each and every one of the speakers.

[01:00:25] The next point on our, and I'd like to continue that respect as we move to this next section. And I will pause if I'm not given that respect.

[01:00:41] The next point on our agenda is our approval of our consent agenda. Do I have a motion for the approval of our consent agenda? - I move that we approve tonight's consent agenda. - Second. - Moved by Dr. Acoff, second by Ms. Lee.

[01:00:58] I have a motion on the floor for the approval of the consent agenda. All those in favor of the approval or consent agenda? - Aye. - Any opposed? Our consent agenda clearly passes. We have no items pulled from our consent agenda.

[01:01:14] So the next piece of business on our school agenda is school division business. The first piece of business on that is A1 policy, IGDA, intrascholastic and extracurricular activities for secondary schools.

[01:01:30] I am going to, this is how this next point, this next agenda is going to go. So we have heard from the public, both through public comment, as well as through comments through a written comment that has been submitted to us through email.

[01:01:49] I'm going to ask Dr. Russell Karlak to come to the podium. We've had several questions, both from board members on the funding and fundraising provisions, as well as I would say of the comments, both tonight as well as comments that I've responded to personally, that has been one of the largest questions.

[01:02:12] So before the board goes forward on anything, I'm gonna ask Dr. Karloch to just speak to those pieces of both what is in this policy, as well as what is in other policy. But just pause, Dr. Karloch.

[01:02:29] After he speaks, what I am going to do is, we are going to go across the dais for the board members and I'm going to ask each of them if they have any suggested revisions to the policy or any questions about the policy. If there are suggested revisions, what we are going to do is, I'm gonna actually call up Mr. Grant and we are going to have the policy up and we will discuss revisions and we will redline that and take a vote on specific kind of friendly amendments to that.

[01:03:05] Once that process is done, I will see if there are any motions on the floor and then we will move forward if there is a motion for a vote. So I just wanted to make sure people kind of understood where we were going from here. So without further ado, Dr. Carlock, would you mind just addressing the questions around fundraising, both in student funds, both what is included in this policy and then what is already included or not included in policies that already exist for the school division.

[01:03:40] - Certainly, thank you, Dr. Berlin. - One sec, Ms. Thompson. You will have more than two minutes. - Thank you, Dr. Berlin, certainly. So I'll go over the specific section about fundraising that was in the recommendations and then discuss how it connects to existing policy around fundraising in Albemarle County Public Schools.

[01:04:00] So the policy as suggested right now says the following, all fundraising by student organizations, both inside and outside of the school, requires prior principal or designated approval per school board policies KJA, KJB, and JL.

[01:04:15] All monies raised or collected by student organizations or clubs shall be school activity funds and shall be deposited promptly with the school. Fundraising by and for student organizations outside of the school shall comply with school board policies kja kjb and jl and all monies raised in this shall be expended only for the purpose approved by the principal or designee if a student organization is dissolved the student activity funds continue to belong to the school this came about as a result of a lot of confusion that was expressed by parents as well as students as well as staff members who supervise or monitor school activities around fundraising and this was

[01:04:54] also the last sentence was a line that was added as a result of advice from our financial department staff to explain what already happens with student activity funds so an example of that is if there's a reason that a student activity fund cannot be dispersed as the purpose set out in the original proposal before the fundraising that can be used for other purposes as close as possible to that existing purpose an example would be during covid there were quite a few school cancellations that led to a lot of fundraising that had been done to send students for example to competitions

[01:05:30] for orchestra or for choral competitions we were not able to comply with those existing proposals because we canceled schools and when we came back those funds were still in student activity funds and so administrators had to make a decision about how to apply them so they applied them to different competitions for music and there are other provisions within our crowdfunding policy that states something similar and so I'll go through some of the existing policies that we have around fundraising the first is in our student section of school board policy specifies student fundraising and I won't read through everything here but I will note a few of the pieces that are

[01:06:09] pertinent to the student activities policy the first is careful monitoring and regulation of student fundraising. So that's existent within our policy. It also requires fundraising to have advance approval in order for students to engage in fundraising for student activities. Fundraising in schools, KJB, says that in the school it reiterates a lot of what the other policy says and it also requires a written request 20 days in advance to engage in fundraising within our schools. Outside of school it notes that there are similar regulations in place for students to be involved in fundraising outside of school. It also

[01:06:49] adds that this fundraising needs to be done in compliance with local ordinances. It also prohibits door-to-door solicitation by students. Section 1D of our crowdfunding policy, this is policy KJA, has written approval from Albemarle County Public Schools for employees and eligible organizations to

engage in crowdfunding. For ACPS purposes or programs, student activity programs are school programs operated for the benefit of students. Section 2d notes that funds raised in crowdfunding campaigns must be sent to the school or ACPS finance. And

[01:07:27] 4 says that donated items become ACPS property. And Section 4f notes that items and proceeds acquired through crowdfunding for ACPS programming become property of the school board. So this, again, these are existing policies. It was outside of the scope of the review to look at our fundraising policies our goal was to clarify where our existing fundraising becomes fundraising policies become pertinent within the student activity policy and so what we set to do was to clarify those policies and to connect back to our fundraising policies one

[01:08:04] other piece I think it's important is noting that the part about student fundraising becoming student activity funds many other school districts do this and this particular language comes from Chesterfield and Virginia Beach as models thank you move into individual general questions because we raised this I wanted to see if there are any questions clarifying questions that my peers had regarding the funds or fundraising pieces that dr. Carlock just

[01:08:40] shared with us can you tell us a little bit about the accounting of those funds and who keeps track of that please yeah so an example would be when I I, this is many years ago, but it's under this similar policy, organized or helped students organize a fundraiser at Monticello High School.

[01:08:59] They wanted to do a soccer tournament to raise money for a charity organization, and they wanted to do it on a Saturday. And so we had to go through the process of renting the school facility. We had to make sure that we had a process in place for collecting funds. This was before a lot of internet was used for fundraising, so we were collecting checks and in some cases cash.

[01:09:18] And it was made very clear to me by my principal at that time, I was a teacher, that it was expected to have a process in place to gather those funds, to account for them, and to give them to the school bookkeeper as soon as possible. And then that school bookkeeper then deposited those funds into the school's bank account under student activity funds for that particular student group.

[01:09:40] This is how it's already operating in many of our schools in these situations. Again, the goal is to clarify how that operation works across our schools because there have been some instances in which it has not been applied consistently across our schools. And how do we get that to be applied consistently?

[01:09:59] I think that's, once a policy is in place, I think it's really important for the school district to work really hard to make sure that the policies are implemented in a way that's fair and across all of our student groups. So just to clarify, at this point, there may be a number of clubs operating in high schools, especially that are non-curricular, that are not submitting donations and running their fundraising through the school system currently?

[01:10:29] In the interviews and the focus groups that we ran, that seemed to be the case, that that was indicated in those groups. Were these groups that had the school name in it, like the Monticello Chess Club or the Almar High School Aeronautics Club?

[01:10:48] Yes, and looking back historically, and this isn't only happening right now, these are things that have happened in recent years. I was able to find instances in which the school's names were being used in online solicitation for funds. And when that's the case, and perhaps this is a legal question for Mr. Black, but in that case if something were to happen to those funds who would be responsible if the school name

is attached to those funds and something happens to them or there's something like that that feels like a governance thing that would come back as our responsibility correct potentially

[01:11:23] chair berlin may ask a question you may ask a question dr carlock um under existing practice what happens when a club ceases to exist and it has some activity funds on deposit under its account - So when a club ceases to exist, it's usually right now, to my knowledge, we haven't disbanded any clubs in my recent history in terms of when it ceases to exist, it would be most likely due to students no longer being interested in that club and not signing up for it.

[01:11:55] We've had situations in the past where, from my personal experience as administrator, where we've had funds in a student activity account that had been there for many years and the students had since graduated And the principal then made a decision to allocate those funds to a different student activity or a different purpose that was similar to what that original club was set up to do.

[01:12:17] Can you talk about how much money is in some of these funds? Do we know? I can speak from my personal experience as a former administrator. Often it's very little money. It's maybe a couple hundred dollars.

[01:12:35] There are situations where there's more funds, but generally most of our student activity funds are smaller. Other questions for Mr. Karluk on this fundraising question, the fund and fundraising question?

[01:12:54] Well, I'm sort of getting off the point a little bit, but if, I mean, there was, if a club disbands and the monies would stay with the school, I know that we are also in the fuller policy are having clubs write a charter on, could they designate in that charter, if they disband, their funding would go, they would prefer it to go, if it was a bicycle club and they wanted to go to the lacrosse club.

[01:13:28] I mean, could that be specified in advance? - I think the school board could specify that in the language if they choose to, if they wish to say something to that nature. - Thank you.

[01:13:44] Any other questions on this? Thank you so much, I appreciate it. - Thank you all. - So, I'm going to ask Mr. Grant, correct, and to come up to the dais.

[01:14:04] Oh, I'm sorry, that's right. You can do it right there. You don't have to stand in front of me. So just what you are seeing in front of you, and just a question, is this available, this version with the numbering available online?

[01:14:21] Is it, it's okay. It's okay if it's not, I just, no. It's okay. So for those of you here in the audience and online, What you're seeing, this is the policy, as you saw it, as discussed it last week.

[01:14:40] The only change right now is that there's just numbers on the left-hand side, so that as the school board is discussing the policy, if there are any potential amendments that we want to make, or changes that we want to make, it'll just be easy for both us, for Mr. Grant to make a note, as well as for you to see what we are potentially changing, or discussing changing, I should say, apologies.

[01:15:07] So what we are doing next is I am going to go around to my colleagues, I've asked Dr. Aycock to go first, I will go last, I'll skip myself, and we will be just bringing forth any questions for consideration or points that we want to.

[01:15:25] - Of course, yeah. - So will there be time to discuss the entire policy or just changes, should we do that now? - I think we should discuss both the entire and the entire part of the policy as well as the

changes.

[01:15:42] There will, if we do move for a vote, there'll be another point for time for discussion, but I think it makes sense to talk into a point in context as well. - Am I up? - Yes, thank you, Dr. Aikoff. - First of all, I'd like to thank Dr. Carlock and his team for the hard work that he's done over the past several months.

[01:16:02] we asked in November for a review of policies, not only in Virginia, but elsewhere, to clarify our thinking about our clubs. We have had many questions answered. I think the review was quite thorough.

[01:16:18] And I support adoption of the policy as written. I also wanted to extend my thanks to Dr. Carlock and all the people who were involved in the review.

[01:16:34] And I also wanna thank everyone who came out here tonight to speak and all the people who spoke and especially if your voice shook a little, I just wanna say I see you because mine does too and it just means that you're really speaking your truth, so I really appreciate that.

[01:16:52] A lot of people made a lot of good points tonight as have been in our emails, particularly Ms. Ludovici, I think, sorry. I think it was important for us to take a look at this policy and we have so many policies and we do look at them, but when we look at them through the lens of what is really happening and it's important the timing to understand how much is missing from a policy.

[01:17:26] So I thought that was an excellent point that you made about that. And I know some other people made this point too. What I really like about this policy is that it keeps the main thing the main thing. We talk a lot about student achievement. But at the end of the day, we're truly a curricular enterprise.

[01:17:44] And so the distinction, the clean distinction between co-curricular and non-curricular clubs while placing importance and value in clubs is really important in this policy. And so I too have no changes to suggest.

[01:18:05] - Ms. Osborne. - Yes. would like clarification on line 183 defining school day. We think we know what that means, but perhaps we could elaborate on that a little bit. Do we want to use the phrase bell to bell or what? I don't really care what we use, but I don't want it to be discombobulated into something else. Other than that, I'm fine with the policy the way it has been written. My concern is

[01:18:39] the division level and making sure that we have consistency in how the bookkeepers do their thing with the money and how the principals interpret these things as well so that it is consistent across the division. One thing doesn't happen at one school and another happens at another.

[01:18:59] So just that consistency, I would be looking for whatever that means, training or memos or whatever they get. Other than that, I'm fine with the policy as amended. Would we like to discuss the word changing right now from school day to bell to bell or something, or if someone else has a friendly amendment to that?

[01:19:23] I think we utilize that term now for putting our cell phones away and other devices. So I think that's an understandable timeframe. So I would support that modification. - One suggestion that somebody mentioned is that we think about the process of buses coming and going and perhaps set, define the school day as before the buses arrive or after the buses depart in the afternoon, just as another possibility.

[01:20:03] - I am in favor of something like that. I just, as a former teacher and administrator, knowing that that is a busy time to clear, that a speaker should not start before, should need to end before buses arrive and cannot start before buses leave.

[01:20:21] I think just adds clarity to that, but I'm open to. - It sort of adds clarity conceptually, but not clockwise. - Exactly, right, right. - Yeah, so I would still favor bell to bell. - Yeah, 'cause you're assuming that we won't have any more bus driver shortages and that buses are running on time and all that stuff too.

[01:20:42] It makes some sense, but... - Just for clarity, where I have right now is in-person guest speakers during the school day, which is defined as the time from the first bell to the final bell of the day, that's the part that's added, shall only be permitted for co-curricular student organizations and continues on.

[01:20:59] Is that the language? - I mean, I think if we did a straw poll or a handful of whatever we're talking about, I actually like the bus-to-bus idea as well, so this might be something to vote on.

[01:21:15] sorry um i like this idea too so this might be something to vote on my only concern is that it may require some time from the time i used to teach and coach at albemarle high school i know that from the time that last bell rings until students have the opportunity to leave the campus is shall we say chaotic would the board want a time frame before so we could have which is defined

[01:21:52] as x to 15 minutes 20 minutes before the first bell and 20 minutes after the final but do you want that kind of clarification the only other thing i um have thought of is and i bet i don't have teacher contract hours in front of me is we do have a term called teacher contract day i don't know if that has a time frame in it i don't know if i'm looking at mr redding i don't know if there's a time i don't mean to put you on the spot so i'm also fine with if we did a 15 minutes to 15 minutes I would offer that teacher contract time can be adjusted based on

[01:22:30] the needs of the position it could include okay we consider before after school okay thank you for that clarification I appreciate it do we want to do a straw poll or a vote I'm just gonna keep looking to my to my right to my left I just want to make sure clarification right now I don't I have which is defined as the time from the first bell to the final bell of the day I didn't hear whether or not there was any interest in editing that further.

[01:22:58] I am interested in, if we're going to do it a fine time, then something that's reasonable and I do see a former AHS principal right there that we can ask maybe if like 20 minutes makes sense or, I'm sorry, I don't mean to put anyone on the spot.

[01:23:17] I don't know if it's 15 minutes or 20 minutes, makes sense for people to be able to get in and get out before any such activity. I mean, I'm not a member of any club, but in some ways, it's more controllable, it seems to me, if you have other things to do that evening, if your club meets right after school rather than waiting until 20, 30 minutes until the buses are gone.

[01:23:44] It looks like this is something that we should take a voice vote on. I'm looking to my right and to my left. Right now, I'm looking, thinking about Robert's Rules. So right now the proposed change that is written right now is as defined the time from the first bell to the final bell.

[01:24:10] I propose we do the language that's up there. We can always, if it's not working, we can modify it down the line. Do I have a second for that motion?

[01:24:28] Second. I'm deciding if I should do a roll call vote on this or just, I'm going to do a vote. um all those in favor of the the amendment as uh made by which is up on the with dr acoff which is up on the which is on the board um i'm going to ask you to say aye and raise your hand all those in favor oops it sounds like i said i just because i was speaking it is um i just want a

[01:25:07] second to think about that because we can we can all take time to think about it yeah we should there's no rush because it did seem like an important part of this was people being able to leave if they wanted to and I know that you were just asking about defining the day which I think is important but then we're just taking on something a little bit different right now and I just want to be thoughtful of that and I'm slow so that's well they're both good points but Kate said about you know if you're

[01:25:43] staying for an after-school activity waiting around 15 minutes for buses to leave is it's kind of a pain but I'm fine on either way of this I just think need to pick something so that we have some guardrails i would as another former albemarle high school principal this school ends at 350. i recommend the board pick a specific time otherwise we're going to start haggling you see what's happening here right this will be happening

[01:26:15] at every school and so i would recommend a quite a buffer after school lets out um anything between 45 minutes and an hour so everybody can clear out if students are interested in attending an after-school club or presentation over the years as a school principal two high schools i've noticed that they will stay and do that where they'll go and then they'll come back so i i recommend specifying a specific time not doing it based on when all the buses are gone and and then as dr

[01:26:50] acuff pointed out we can make adjustments to that time if it turns out to be uh turns out to be impractical that's my recommendation how would that work with the different levels of school ending would we just specify all of them because i would presume yes so uh with what time is middle school up let out so all our high schools have a common bell schedule all our middle schools have a common bell schedule with the exception of henley so there's more consistency what time

[01:27:18] to middle school let out uh 405 and then henley's 410. well we uh as you probably noticed the attorney whispering in my ear uh we could also say 45 minutes after the final bell so it's very specific so oh so we do have an open motion on the floor so again can i ever send my motion

[01:27:55] so dr second i believe yes you can resend your second miss dr acov I'll give you a moment. - I don't mind withdrawing mine. As Dr. Haas said, we just need a time certain, or, and so, so do we have different times for middle and then high school?

[01:28:23] So we say 45 minutes after, that's a long period of time, isn't it? - That's a long period. - I think it's a lot. - I'm concerned with that, I'm compared, I understand why, but I also, they're a compromise. - What about 30 minutes? - For high school, but not for middle school.

[01:28:48] 'cause do I have a motion on the floor too? - I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna say 45. I have picked my child up from AHS and so I know that that last, that times can be quite chaotic and also from Lakeside.

[01:29:07] So we could do 45 minutes at the high school and 30 minutes at middle school if that makes you all feel better. - Yes. - Is that a formal motion or are you doing a struggle? - It has to get up to the pink right. - So make sure I capture what you're looking at.

[01:29:25] So I've heard, so right now we've got bell to bell, which does not specify middle school or high school. We can specify middle school or high school with a set time of day, or we can do a number of minutes before and after bells, and it's not time of day.

[01:29:42] So I think we would do 45 minutes after the high school bell and 30 minutes after the middle school bell. I'm going to give Mr. Grant a moment to type that in so we can all look at it.

[01:30:05] 30 minutes for middle school?

[01:30:23] Yeah, for middle school.

[01:30:35] there's nothing worse than being the person who is writing this while many people are watching here's what we have which is defined as the time school day which is defined as the time from 45 minutes before the first bell to 45 minutes after the final bell of the day for all high schools and 30 minutes before the first bell to 30 minutes after the final bell for all middle schools

[01:31:10] this um so this is a this is a policy for our secondary schools so only middle and high school are included i just want to make sure i'm looking to my right and to my left about that and but do are there any exceptions so i move that we uh accept the amendment as presented

[01:31:41] second all those in favor aye any opposed that amendment passes so that second on that mr dylan back or mr beer it was mr dylan back apologies for not stating that um there's any other points that you wanted to make or questions that you wanted to bring up. I'm going to pass it over

[01:32:16] myself as the chair always goes last to Mr. Dillon Beckett. Good evening. I'd like to also thank Rusty, Carlock, and others who've worked on this policy and those of you who've shown up tonight to voice your support one way or the other. It takes a lot of courage, especially for high school students. This is clearly a divisive issue. I want to encourage each person here to take a deep breath, put down the swords, and consider the perspective of the other side.

[01:32:53] Consider tuning out social media for a little while. We as a board are charged with just a few responsibilities, one of which is setting policy to govern the schools in this county. We have a duty to ask the question, will this policy enhance or inhibit student learning? While I agree with much of the provisions of this policy change, I have some significant concerns on several other important issues. We have a duty to enact a balanced policy which protects the rights of all students to a safe and effective learning environment and their

[01:33:30] rights of free expression. I've heard instances of harassment on both sides of the issue that needs to stop. I'd like to challenge students and parents to sit down sometime in the next week or two and have conversation with somebody who is in opposition to your beliefs. Not some campfire kumbaya scenario but some real honest and respectful discourse. That's healthy and productive and perhaps the only way we can overcome the

[01:34:06] incredible division that we see in our country and sadly in our county. We welcome productive input on this important policy and we've gotten a lot of it and we look forward to the time when students can get back to learning peacefully again. I have several specific friendly amendments that I'd like to offer up but first I'd like to propose that we cut out for now for this discussion the policy on financial

[01:34:43] donations and the distribution and management of fundraising because I think we can agree on much of the rest of the policy but in my opinion the fundraising piece still leaves a lot of unanswered

questions, and I have some disagreements with the way the policy is written in terms of money coming in from outside sources and the supervision

[01:35:19] of that. So a point of order. Mr. Dillenbeck has made a motion. If there is a second, there can be discussion. Do I have a second on that motion? I have it highlighted there on your screen. You can it makes sure that's the right section.

[01:35:42] Correct. And just to confirm, your motion is to delete Section 3, fundraising by student organization, and allow that to pull that out of the policy for now until additional work can be done.

[01:36:04] Correct. So to give us more time to address all of the complexities of the fundraising portion of this policy change. Do I have a second for that? Seeing no second on that floor, on the floor, we will continue our discussion.

[01:36:32] Okay. On line 63, I'd like to offer up an addition to the sentence that starts, student organizations that promote or endorse violence, harassment, or hatred toward an identifiable person or group based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, and so on.

[01:36:54] I'd like to add political beliefs to that list. Point of order, Chair, Mr. Dillenbach, is this a motion? Yes, this is a motion for a friendly amendment, I think is what it's called.

[01:37:17] No, it's just a motion. Just a motion. Yes, sir. So I just wanted to clarify for everyone in the public. So that would be to add after change the disability, comma, or political beliefs.

[01:37:43] Political affiliation. Sorry. That's fine. That's fine.

[01:38:01] As long as it's spelled correctly. So we have a motion on the floor from Mr. Dillenbeck to make a change in addition to line 64 to add political affiliation to the policy. I will second that.

[01:38:18] - I have a second moved by Mr. Dillenbeck, second by Mr. Beard. Do I have any discussion on that? People need a moment to.

[01:38:34] - I think there's a difference between beliefs and affiliation. So if Mr. Dillenbeck could clarify which he wanted to use and we get the in there, I would appreciate that. - I'll go with beliefs.

[01:38:52] - So Ms. Osborne, that would be a friendly amendment? - No, that was a question in the discussion because we had the second and then moved to discussion. I don't mind putting that in.

[01:39:14] I think it follows more naturally before or affiliated with organizations than where it is in the sentence, or disability, or political beliefs.

[01:39:30] I'm being challenged on my Robert's Rules tonight. That was a point of discussion. Do I need him to pull his original motion and redo it, or is this okay?

[01:39:47] I just want to make sure I'm following my Robert's Rules. I'm going back to my Model United Nations time, so. Well, he didn't say exactly where in the sentence he wanted. Yes, right. Chair Berlin, if we want to be hyper-technical about the rules, the appropriate procedure would be for Mr. Dillenbach to withdraw his motion and make a new motion.

[01:40:10] So I'll withdraw my original motion and make a motion to insert political beliefs after disability or and before our affiliated. And I will second that again.

[01:40:38] Moved by Mr. Dillenbach, seconded by Mr. Beard. Do I have any discussion? I'm disinclined to support adding a mutable characteristic to a list of immutable characteristics that have been listed out by—I'm sorry, I can't remember this, Dr. Hadlik might have to correct me on this, but the Virginia Human Rights Group, I think it's a very well understood

[01:41:16] list of groups and i i don't believe we should have that that's a good point miss lee i'm going to give everyone just a moment on the dais and then i am actually for this one just because it will be close i am going to ask um clip uh i almost did it clerk thompson um to do a roll call vote on

[01:41:51] this motion are you ready yes thank you mr pierre yes mr dylan beck yes miss lee no miss osborne - Yes.

[01:42:14] - Ms. Spillman is absent. Dr. Acuff? - No. - Chair Berlin? - No. - The motion is tied. - Fails four to pass. - Do we have any other motion?

[01:42:31] - Three times. - If there's a tie, the motion fails. - The motion by a vote of three in favor and three opposed, because the rules of parliamentary procedure are if something ties, the motion fails.

[01:42:48] And I know this is a long and extenuating process and I appreciate everyone's decorum during this time. - So I'm looking for the section on fundraising.

[01:43:06] Mr. Grant, if you can help me with that. - That's line 197, begins that section.

[01:43:22] - Thank you. I wanna present a hypothetical situation to demonstrate what I feel like is a poor policy that's trying to be passed, that needs to be qualified.

[01:43:43] Forgive me, Rachel Miller, who I believe is the club sponsor of the Monticello High Mountain Bike Club, if you're here or listening. What I'd like to do is to use that as an example, maybe a little less controversial or highly charged example.

[01:44:07] I don't know the conditions of that particular club, but imagine for a second if we have a wealthy donor in the county who wants to support the mountain biking club at Monticello High School and so makes a donation of \$100,000 to help with preparing trails, buying bikes for kids who can't afford them, going to sporting events.

[01:44:36] And this is not an athletic sport, an official VHSL sport at Monticello High School. So this is an outside, non-curricular club. So imagine this club gets a donation of \$100,000. And for whatever reason, the club is shut down, maybe lack of interest or whatever.

[01:44:57] The way I read this policy is that those funds don't get returned to, don't stay within the club, but they get transferred to Monticello High School.

[01:45:14] I have a strong objection to that. I believe that that's not good policy, in my opinion. And so, although I understand that there needs to be some management of funds for non-curricular clubs, especially for donations that are coming in from outside the school, I don't believe

[01:45:45] that this, the way that the policy is written, starting in line 202, I would suggest that's problematic to me. If a student organization is dissolved, the student activity funds continue to belong to the school what i would like to see instead is a policy that distinguishes between student activity funds collected within the school for the club use versus outside funds coming into

[01:46:23] non-curricular clubs because in my opinion although i do believe that there needs to be some adult guardianship of those funds we we don't allow minors to manage to manage funds my proposal would be that any club collecting funds that they would be under the management

[01:46:53] and direction of an adult and i would suggest perhaps a reporting required annual reporting requirement, for example, so that the principal of the school is aware of the fundraising activities, both the money coming in and the money going out. But if the club shuts down for whatever reason, those funds stay within the outside organization. I know that there are 501c3s. I know that there are clubs at Albemarle High School and other places where they receive money

[01:47:32] from outside sources. There are Albemarle High School clubs, rowing, other clubs that receive money. So I believe, and I have some specific language, but I would yield. All of our activity funds are managed by adults at schools. All of them have procedures regarding reporting and deposit and expenditure requirements. All of them require two signatures for any expenditure associated with it. Any donation has to be received.

[01:48:11] any donation that's made is generally received by adults in the school and it's retained within their accounts. Monies that are outside of our accounts are not controlled by us, so it is, we're discussing solely the monies that are under our control. So if someone makes a donation to a club and deposit it in our accounts, our principal is ultimately in control of our activity funds within that school they are aware of them monthly or more frequent reports are made to the principal

[01:48:49] regarding that and any expenditure generally requires their signature and at least one other person's signature within that school so we robust controls regarding our expenditures within schools and i would add jackson that and i thank you very much for your information but that's that's not just albemarle county this is it's based on virginia code 22.1-100 school activity funds that section allows school boards to establish and manage school activity funds for activities such as clubs athletics publications and student organizations the law requires that activity

[01:49:29] funds are accounted for and audited the principal is responsible for administration and funds are part of the school's financial system and then it goes further their virginia department of education provides there's a handbook that's it's virginia department education school activity funds manual it states that student activity funds are public funds held for the benefit of students so any funds that are put into school activity funds do become the property of the school system for the benefit of students they're not private property of the club or student officers the The principal has fiduciary responsibility for how they're used.

[01:50:08] The club disbands. The manual generally recommends that funds be transferred to a similar student organization or used for student activities consistent with the purpose for which the money was raised or placed in a general student activity fund account for student use.

[01:50:24] Divisions typically, when a student organization becomes inactive or dissolves, the remaining funds revert to the school activity fund and may be reassigned by the principal for as long as it is used for student purposes. So under legal principle, they just need to be used for student purposes.

[01:50:43] The principal cannot say, well, I'm going to do something for the staff or something like that. So making changes like that, while I'm sure there's good thinking and there's justification for that kind of

thinking, it would go completely against what is done as a best practice and a legal practice across public schools all over Virginia.

[01:51:12] And if the principal said to me, I'm going to recommend that a club be formed and have its own funds outside the school, then what we say is, well, if they're going to do that, then we're not managing any of it. And we have parent-teacher organizations that do that.

[01:51:29] At some schools, the PTO runs its account through the school, and others, they make their own tax-exempt fund, and we don't manage it. We can say that we're going to require that they report to us and give us an annual account of what they're doing, but we can't enforce that.

[01:51:49] And if an account is created inside the school in our accounts, then we have control over it, and it reverts. So what I heard you say just a second ago is that there is provision for outside clubs to have fundraising and collect funds that are separate from and not a part of the student activities fund.

[01:52:23] not with the school. We just heard Dr. Carlock say that there are clubs existing now that have funds that are not run through the schools even though they are school related clubs. I'm sure that's the case. I mean you think about the multitude of clubs and little organizations that students will put together. I mean right now it's tax season and we're all supposed to pay our taxes but all over the country there are people that won't and so it's very hard to enforce that

[01:53:01] what we can do is say in policy that if you're going to have a club in the school then we you need to have the funds run through the school the issue I think with non-student clubs or non-curricular clubs is that they're not supposed to have a sponsor that's running it So as an adult, so what happens is then the students can sometimes take it upon themselves to have an account outside the school.

[01:53:31] Now with the curricular clubs, you have a teacher sponsor, and that's all running through there. So you're going to have, just because it occurs doesn't mean it's lawful or it's in compliance with our policies. So I wouldn't, I mean, just my recommendation as an administrator, I wouldn't create something in policy that's going to make it easier or encourage something that's really not in the best interest of kids.

[01:53:59] That's just my take. I'm not a board member and I can't make an amendment or et cetera. And Jim, on your hypothetical of the \$100,000 for the mountain bike club, typically it seems like that would be something that would be run through the AFE now that we have the AFE.

[01:54:19] And in that case, the donor can put stipulations on their \$100,000 saying, I want this to be used for bike trails near Monticello, and then that's a different ballgame. and in your example does the school control those funds the foundation the foundation which would control those funds because that was a gift to the foundation which benefits a certain project and in that case the donor would

[01:54:55] say if that club were to disband I don't want the money back or do something else with it that in that case the donor would have that so based on this policy that's that's not allowed there's no provision for what you just described but the AFE is a different ball game right so those funds wouldn't belong to the school they would belong to AFE so again it just proves my point that I think we need to do some more work to refine the

[01:55:28] fundraising and fund management process because a what you just described wouldn't be allowed under this new policy and B, as one of the students pointed out, the impact on existing clubs

would be dramatic. I know, for example, that there are some clubs that are operating with parental involvement and parental funding that, according to the letter of this policy, that would be

[01:56:06] prohibited. I think any any club that has has Albemarle on a bike club or chess club or Monticello bingo club whatever I mean should run I mean that they are representing this school division and I think the school division needs to oversee the finances of those clubs. It seems to me that another way to go about it Jim would be to tell any large funder you know I'm I'm setting you know I'm

[01:56:40] donating this you know i i want to do a b and c and i can give you manageable amounts over a period of time i mean it's all i mean the concern you seem to have is that the donor might be disappointed that the funding for a new bike trail uh you know was in the possession of the school division after the bike club closed shop as a point of order i i just want to make sure there's there's been a lot of discussion I'm making sure I didn't miss it I don't have any motion on the

[01:57:17] floor so you've had a lot of discussion okay so I'll make sure I've missed in terms of the structure of order if there's no motion for discussion so I'll make a motion just to get

[01:57:31] it on the record so on in section three starting with line 194 section D fundraising I would add Any club receiving outside funds must demonstrate a competent adult guardianship of funds and disclose fundraising activity to the school administration on an annual basis.

[01:58:12] Clubs which require additional security and supervision will be required to pay for those services. And then I would amend the last sentence to, If a student organization is dissolved, the student activity funds collected inside the school continue to belong to the school.

[01:58:32] Any funds collected from outside shall be returned to the outside organization I have a motion on the floor I know you have that written I don't know if you want to maybe hand it to Mr. Grant Sorry, but before we go Chamberlain, did you want to recognize Mr. Zimmerman?

[01:58:59] That's up to you I will recognize Mr. Zimmerman Knowing that you are an expert Thank you, an expert Sorry, I was about to try to give your title and I can't So you're an expert on our accounting procedures, and I would appreciate your remarks.

[01:59:19] I apologize. I didn't identify myself earlier for those who are listening. My name is Jackson Zimmerman. I'm the school finance officer. I wanted to be a little clearer on when the funds are under our control. They are school board funds. They can only be dispersed under the policies of the school board and county of Albemarle.

[01:59:43] So those funds, when we receive them, they are our funds. We can only disperse funds upon an invoice or request for disbursement that is approved by staff.

[02:00:00] So returning funds after the school board receives them for a purpose, those funds generally, as a rule, belong to the school board and are not dispersed. They are utilized by the school board for the school board's activities. otherwise don't make the donation or give those funds to the school board.

[02:00:21] So with caution against a reversion of funds, that would create a long-term nightmare in terms of tracking over time. - And you're speaking specifically of school activity funds?

[02:00:38] - All funds. School activity funds are our funds. - So if there's a donation to the Albemarle Rowing Club? - So there are instances regarding donations. If someone wants to just give a check for \$100

to the rowing club and they don't want any tax documentation regarding it, they can just hand the check or hand \$100 into the school and the school will deposit it into that fund.

[02:01:13] If they want a commission to be recognized by the school board, it must be received by the school board. And in order for them to make the claim on their IRS taxes, they should have that documentation to back it up. That's why you receive those quarterly reports regarding that.

[02:01:29] So if someone wanted to make a \$100,000 donation for a mountain biking event, I would really highly recommend that be done through the school board directly and be brought before you. And administration would be involved in that. But if somebody is making a \$100 donation to the mountain biking club for their use for general purposes, that is typically handled at the school level unless they request IRS documentation and then it is brought directly to the school board.

[02:01:58] - Thank you very much, Mr. Zimmerman. We do still have an open motion on the floor. I wanted to see if my colleagues would like Mr. Dillenbeck to read that again before, to inform their decision if they want to second that.

[02:02:32] Seeing no request or no second, that motion fails. - Okay, one last item of clarification. There's been a lot of concern mentioned about possibility of a principal terminating a club for whatever, for reason that there is no recourse.

[02:03:01] And my question, I think Dr. Carlock addressed this last week, is no, that's not according to this policy. This policy, but I don't see where it's spelled out a process for terminating a club.

[02:03:19] Did I miss that? Just a point of clarity. you can pull it up so we can see it control f what are we looking for specifically is there a line or you want us to find i believe it was in the original um policy document looking at rusty

[02:03:49] to see if that has been deleted or amended somehow so i'll read the response so in section 3a the the policy prohibits clubs that one, violate the law, two, violate school board policy, or three, violate school rules, or the student conduct policy at the organizational level.

[02:04:10] That's in the part about creating clubs and which clubs are prohibited. There is no direct language about terminating an existing club. The prohibition of the club could be read as such. However, if the board wants to address the language to be more specific about termination, there is this language from Stafford.

[02:04:30] It says specifically that student organizations that do not follow what the basic stipulations are for creation of a club. It says, and this is direct quote from their policy, failure to comply with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action or revocation of recognition.

[02:04:47] It goes on to say non-curriculum related clubs and organizations that are denied permission to use school facilities by a principal may appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee. - I personally like that language.

[02:05:03] I feel like it is more clear than what's in this particular. So I guess my last motion would be to include Stafford County's language about the process of termination of a club.

[02:05:26] Could you read that again? Yeah. Well, I guess we'll wait for Jason to type it in. Spare him the trouble if he can read it. So the way Stafford's language is, failure to comply with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action or revocation of recognition non-curriculum related clubs and

organizations that are denied permission to use school facilities by a principal may appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee i would need to know where you would want that within exactly where would we be inserting

[02:06:04] this well my thought was would be toward the end after line 308 evaluating the program talked about how to charter programs and what's allowed and so on and then administering and then evaluating so i would probably insert that after line 322 321 so jim the line 65 that says failure to comply

[02:06:44] Would these provisions shall be grounds for individual disciplinary action or revocation of the rights to conduct meetings under this policy? Is that, I mean, that seems redundant. That line doesn't specify the process, the fact that the appeal.

[02:07:03] Okay. Yeah. Well, that might be where the new language could be inserted. That's fine. Either way, as long as an opportunity to get in there. For you to make a motion, I'm going to, apologies.

[02:07:19] My stomach's growling and you're going to start hearing it. For you to make a motion, I'm going to need you to be specific about where you would like it to be inserted. Line 67? Line 67. Does that work, Jim?

[02:07:34] Yes. Section 3A, Line 67. Is there just for people following along?

[02:07:52] So as Jason is typing, this is going into the Section 3 under student organizations. there's a policy statement and then at the end of mr grant to continue typing and then but there's

[02:08:23] a motion on the floor for this language okay so i have on okay i have on line 68 failure to comply

[02:09:18] with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action or revocation of recognition non-curriculum related clubs and organizations that are denied permission to use school facilities by a principal may appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee yes uh replace the failure to comply on line 65 delete the last sentence on that on line 65

[02:09:56] so for those of you listening um online mr dolenbeck is i'm just going to do some self-talk here is um making an amendment to his motion um to just delete line 65 um and add a statement on line 68 with more specifics and this is an open motion on the floor that has not been seconded yet You know what, I'll second this one.

[02:10:23] You beat me to it. This has been moved by Mr. Dillenbeck, second by Ms. Lee. All those, well, I'm going to give everyone a moment. My right to my left. All those in favor of this motion?

[02:10:44] Aye. Any opposed? By a motion of six in favor and zero opposed, this motion passes. So we now have two amendments to this policy. Thank you so much, Mr. Dillenbeck. Mr. Beard.

[02:11:02] I have no amendments to offer to the policy, but I know it's great. I'm a new school board member. I've never done this before. I've never run for office. I've never been in public office before, but I do have a little bit of a statement I'd like to read. I just want to thank everybody here for speaking out and for our excellent ACPS staff, especially Rusty Carlock.

[02:11:24] Thank you, Rusty, for proposing these changes to our rules for student organizations. I'm speaking as a taxpayer who loves our Albemarle County Schools and as a devoted parent to two young

men, twins, who graduated from Western in 2018. Our son's got a fabulous education there and have gone on to good careers and happy lives so far, knock on wood.

[02:11:49] But it pains me to see the Western that my family and other families know and love so much be torn apart by rancor and division and controversy over outside speakers during lunch by non-curricular student organizations. We need to focus continuously on student academic achievement.

[02:12:09] We need to get back to the business of loving and cherishing our young people, of educating them with rigorous academics to be the adults of tomorrow, the leaders of tomorrow, the mothers and fathers of tomorrow, if they so choose. We need to keep alive that special spark that is found in high school, the spark that animates our students' knowledge, their creativity, their passion, their athleticism, and yes, their teenage humor that we know so well.

[02:12:40] So end the distraction. I am in support of this new policy and thanks everybody for coming out tonight. Thank you so much, Mr. Miss Billman was not able to be here tonight And so I have a statement from her that I will read before I make any comments I regret that I'm unable to attend tonight's school board meeting because of a prior work commitment However, I want to make certain that my position in support of the recommended policy is clearly shared for the record I brought forward the motion in November asking Dr. Haas' team to review our policy on school clubs and outside speakers because of the significant number of concerns we as a board

[02:13:19] received about the operation of clubs in our schools. That motion was unanimously approved by the board to start the process, which will culminate tonight with public comment and board deliberation. This has been a very thoughtful and public process. It has taken months of careful review, public input, and student feedback to reach this point.

[02:13:36] I believe the recommended policy reflects that work. As drafted this policy aligns with other school divisions in our state, protects free speech, and helps ensure that our schools remain safe learning environments centered on our educational mission and curriculum. One of the most important duties we as a member of the school board is have is to create and adopt binding policies for the school division. So although I cannot be there tonight, I did not want my absence to leave any doubt on where I stand. I fully support this recommended policy update because I believe it is a balanced, carefully considered, and student-centered approach to meeting the needs of our students,

[02:14:12] sincerely, Ms. Allison Spilman. And so I think I am, as chair, the last to go. I'm gonna keep my remarks brief. One of the things I did want to do, of course, is thank everyone for both public comment, but also for everyone who reached out to the school board email.

[02:14:33] And I do have some data, thank you, Mr. Grant, regarding all of the emails that we received. And I know additionally my colleagues have received other emails, but these are emails that came to the full board and then I answered. So we received 44 emails regarding these policy changes.

[02:14:52] About exactly 35 were four. The changes, about 80%. Against were three, which is 7%. Neutral were four, 9%. and with changes, with two or five percent.

[02:15:07] And so I do support this policy. As a former teacher and administrator, I do believe that the school day should be focused on instruction in our curriculum, and that public safety and school safety should be our utmost concern. And because of that, I believe these changes are needed.

[02:15:23] I also believe that policies, while should stand this set of time, do not always. And one of the things you will see with me as a board member is review of policies, making sure that they stay current with our times. Thank you.

[02:15:40] Do I have any motions before me on the floor? - I move we approve IGDA as amended. - I have a motion on the floor from Ms. Lee asking that we approve policy IGDA as amended tonight.

[02:15:57] Do I have a second? - Second. - Seconded by Dr. Acoff. We will be doing a roll call vote for this. Do we have any additional discussion before the votes?

[02:16:16] Seeing no discussion, Ms. Thompson, would you go ahead and do a roll call vote? - Ms. Osborne? - Yes. - Ms. Spillman is absent. Dr. Acuff? - Yes. - Mr. Beard? - Yes. - Mr. Dillenbeck? - No.

[02:16:31] - Ms. Lee? - Yes. - Chair Berlin? - Yes. By a motion of five in favor and one opposed, this policy change is adopted and will go into effect immediately.

[02:16:47] Thank you so much for everyone's input tonight. I appreciate the decorum that we had. I know it is both difficult to stay for this long. We are going to move into an immediate 10 minute break before we have our school board approval of our budget.

[02:17:07] Our budget is one of the most important things that we have in front of us. So I would encourage everyone who came out tonight to stay, to listen, because these are your tax paying dollars at stake. And I think it is important for you to understand how we are using our money.

[02:17:24] as we will go into a break until five minutes to nine.

[02:17:28] Thank you so much.

[02:29:09] Thank you all so much for attending tonight's meeting. We are now moving into our budget. I would ask everyone to take their seats. We are moving, well, everything that comes before the board is very important. Our school board budget is the backbone of our work.

[02:29:30] And that is what we are talking about next. So 8.3 is the school board approval of our FY27 funding request. And we will be voting on this for action. - Good evening, I'm Maya Kumazawa, director of budget and planning.

[02:29:47] And as Dr. Billin stated, this evening, you're scheduled to approve your funding request for fiscal year 2026-27. On February 12th, Dr. Haas presented a draft funding request. And following that, we held three work sessions where we learned about the funding rests in a lot of detail and major topics are listed on the slide with links to the work session presentations for any of those who may have missed that.

[02:30:16] The funding request meets our six budget goals as approved by the board. It is fiscally responsible. It has engaged with the community. It provides for our competitive compensation. It represents sustainable operations. It aligns with our strategic plan and the decisions have been made based on data.

[02:30:37] This is a balanced funding request where our projected expenditures of \$311.3 million equal the available shared revenues as proposed in the local government's budget of \$311.3 million.

[02:30:55] With that, I'll turn it over to the chair for action. - Do we have any questions or any discussion? Or we have a motion, a requested motion in front of us.

[02:31:14] But I do wanna just take a moment to see if there's any follow-up questions. We have received 137 questions that I know you've responded to. I knew you'd ask. We have now posted and are finished as of now with 173 questions over 82 pages.

[02:31:33] So similarly with our survey that we released, we had the highest engagement there that we've had that I am aware of. And it was the same with the Q&A this year. So thank you to the board and to the community who've participated throughout this process. Thank you, and I'm sorry.

[02:31:52] question do we have 179th question before we move to a motion and they were thoroughly answered so thank you thank you i just note to the people who are listening this is a funding request it is not our final budget uh the chair and vice chair will make a presentation on monday at 5 pm to the board of supervisors and room 241. so do you need a motion i do if there are no other questions or

[02:32:27] discussions I do need a motion from the from the board or from a board member apologies I move that we approve a school board funding request of 311 million three hundred seventeen thousand no yeah one hundred fifty seven dollars in operating funds and thirty two million two hundred and eighty thousand six hundred two dollars in special revenue funds for fiscal year 27 do I have a second second moved by miss Lee seconded by dr. Acoff would we like to take a a roll call vote on this?

[02:33:00] Do we need to take a roll call vote on this? No. All those in favor? - Aye. - Aye. - Any opposed? By a motion of three, six in favor, zero opposed, our funding request moves forward.

[02:33:15] Thank you so much. And thanks to all the math teachers out there who taught us how to read the numbers because this is a motion that no one wants to make because it's a hard one, especially this late at night.

[02:33:31] - I just wanted to clarify that I didn't answer all those questions. It was a lot of staff help distributed throughout, so the credit goes to all the staff who helped out with that, so thank you. As mentioned, the next step for you all is to present this funding request to the Board of Supervisors on Monday.

[02:33:51] That is scheduled intentionally before the Board of Supervisors proposes their maximum tax rate and proposes their budget on March 18th, so it's just two days after that. So it'll move very quickly from then. And then we will be back with budget updates for all of the school board meetings starting two weeks from now.

[02:34:11] And so there is room for public comment and further public engagements. Although they're not labeled budget work sessions, feedback is welcome during the next three school board meetings. On April 22nd, the Board of Supervisors will approve the FY27 budget and set tax rates.

[02:34:29] We will approve the school board budget immediately after that on April 23rd. And that would conclude the budget development process. And as a reminder, this is how you can stay engaged and contact us at this email provided here. Thank you.

[02:34:45] - Thank you, Mara. - Thank you so much. - Thanks, Mara. - The next agenda item is 8.4 policy review, IKBA grading policy.

[02:35:02] Dr. Patrick McClough, Assistant Superintendent. - Hi, good evening board members. I'm Pat McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning and Policy, and I'm here tonight to provide a policy review of IKBA, our grading policy.

[02:35:23] All of our policies are embedded in the vision, mission, values, and goals of the school division, and it's a little bit strange to have a policy that's up for first read in a five-year review to come before the board like this, but we know that the grading policy is one that we tend to get a lot of questions on. And so as this was coming through the cycle, we got a request to bring it here for a little bit broader discussion with that. So tonight we are going to present the policy to you. Dr. Megan Wood is here to talk a little bit about how we shifted that from policy

[02:36:00] to practice over the last five years and is going to talk about some next steps in our work. So IKBA was initially adopted in September of 2020. It's guiding principles for what we believe grading should entail in the in the school division and it is grounded in a lot of research, two pieces of which are a research white paper that was produced by the Education Advisory Board, who is a research firm that we partner with, and other sources including a repair kit for grading by Ken O'Connor and some other publications as well.

[02:36:38] The policy itself is relatively short, right? And the heart of it is our guiding principles around grading, and there are three of those. The first is that we want grading to be accurate, and some of the bullets from the policy that reflect this are an alignment to standards of student learning, that grading should be separated from work habits, and that grading should use mathematically sound calculations.

[02:37:03] The second guideline is that it should be consistent, and when we talk about consistency, some things we call out are that it should reflect individual differences and rates of learning. It should encourage students to take an active role in setting goals and assessing progress, and it should promote practices that encourage continuous engagement in learning.

[02:37:22] And our final guiding principle is that it should be supportive of student learning. An example of that is being consistent within and across students, teams, departments, courses, and schools. When the board adopts policy, it then becomes staff's charge to implement that policy.

[02:37:38] And over the course of five years, staff has worked to develop guidelines and implementation practices for our school division. And I'd like to invite Dr. Megan Wood up at this time to talk through that portion of the presentation. Thank you, Dr. Moore Laughlin.

[02:37:56] Good evening. I'm Megan Wood, and I'm the director of professional learning. When the policy was first implemented, I actually was a principal at Lakeside Middle School, and now I'm in the role of director of professional learning. So before the policy was adopted in 2020, there was a lot of professional learning around grading practices and best practice in the classroom with both administrators and teachers.

[02:38:19] Ken O'Connor came to Albemarle County several times and led professional learning around best practices with grading. From that, a policy was written to support the guiding principles that Dr. McLaughlin just shared with you.

[02:38:34] and then in 2020 we shifted to helping support the implementation of those principles one of the things that was done that year was there were teacher roundtables that were created along with principal feedback loop for the development of a handbook which i'm sure you guys have heard of that that tried to help support meeting those guiding principles and then in 21 22 there were centrally developed resources to help administrators support the change in practice in the classroom around guiding practices.

[02:39:07] I think it's really important to note that those first three years included collaboration from central office classroom teachers and administrators in trying to help support the implementation of these practices. That first full year of the school year, the guidelines that were focused on the most were guidelines one through four because there are eight guidelines.

[02:39:26] And so we tried to reduce the amount of change that happened in one year. The second year of implementation were around guidelines five through eight. At that time, the handbook was also launched at all of the schools as well as an accompanying resource on how to use power teacher effectively to meet those guidelines.

[02:39:45] And then in the 23, 24 school year, we tried to shift to operational practices to help support the implementation of grading practices. So we switched grading orientation practices to the new teacher academy. So every teacher that came in in the secondary level was oriented to these guidelines and the handbook.

[02:40:03] And we also had a, we called it a grading champions team where every high school had teacher representation and school building administrators were a part of that team that helped provide feedback on both the implementation in the building and designing professional learning to help support identified areas of need for teachers.

[02:40:23] And then they would take that professional learning back to their buildings and deliver it to help support teachers. After that end of that school year, the feedback that we received indicated that we felt like we had operationalized it enough to that maybe that committee wasn't needed anymore.

[02:40:39] And so that committee disbanded. And then at this point in the stage, we feel like based on the feedback that we might need to get there some more focus groups and then focus on helping supporting implementation towards those guiding principles again. So our next step is to start thinking about how to engage high school focus groups to gather input on strengthening that consistency and expectations around the implementation of the policy.

[02:41:01] Those focus groups would include members from all of principals, teachers, students, parents, and guardians, and instructional coordinators, and then explore other potential resources and support structures to continue to help support the consistency and implementation around those guiding principles.

[02:41:18] And so I think at that point, we're ready for-- Yeah, so next steps with this policy, this is a five-year review, and it was presented without any changes to it. As you know, all policies are required to be reviewed at minimum once every five years.

[02:41:34] So at our March 26th meeting, IKBA will be on the consent agenda for action and readoption for the next five year period. And we would be happy to take any questions that you have.

[02:41:51] - I have one question. So could you pull back the guiding principles? - So I've been on board with this policy from the very beginning. I watched a pretty long Zoom from, I think, Dr. O'Connor maybe, just explaining the principles, and I've talked with Matt many times about it, about fairness, about accuracy, about it really focusing on student learning.

[02:42:19] One piece of feedback that I get consistently, and frankly, I understand as a parent, is the one part of this is that it's separated from work habits, which again, do understand and I agree with but then I

wonder if work habits are addressed somewhere else because I think that's the thing that holds people up is that it's hard if the grading is consistent I don't know I just I wonder if I guess that's the question are work habits addressed anywhere else in our policy so with the exception of saying that grading and work habits should be

[02:42:57] separated they are not addressed specifically in the policy one of the One of the initial intents around this when Dr. Haas first came on as superintendent was to think about a move towards standards-based grading, which would then allow grades to be separated out into individual standards and also have categories for things like work habits and timeliness, things like that.

[02:43:28] - One of the concerns during the grading champions conversations was around, we said practice shouldn't count for a grade anymore in the original guidelines And so based on some of that feedback, we actually modified that guideline to say that homework and practice can count up to 10% of the grade, but no more than 10% of the grade.

[02:43:46] So that Grading's Champion not only provided professional learning, but it did provide some feedback around the implementation. So that was one change that did come out of that conversation. - I have noticed that, but it also came at a time when my kid was just changing school.

[02:44:03] So I thought maybe it was a school change thing, but no, it was all in. Okay. - I would say I don't feel like we've abandoned the conversation around moving toward more of a competency-based grading system. We are, we're using the scholars pathways as a route of professional development for our secondary educators, because typically with CTE classes and moving toward credentialing in a particular career,

[02:44:41] or a particular work skill, and many of you served on the K-Tech board, so you're familiar with this, that the grading, for a better term, or evaluation of performance is based on competencies, and so it's not like a foggy, you get an A, and it's based on an average of points, and et cetera, it's more, this is a particular skill you need to learn for your credential and you're on a scale from not proficient to highly proficient this is where you

[02:45:16] sit ultimately that's it's probably one of the most challenging changes in in education to do in typical k-12 education public education um but we haven't given up on it and i think that as we make a lot of progress with the scholars pathways and the students are getting more used to being evaluated on what they can do and what they know, rather than they're turning in assignments or getting a percentage and not really understanding what it means, I do think that will start to influence what happens in the other classrooms.

[02:45:56] The other thing we've talked about is having these guidelines, but then also starting to broaden the conversation among teachers who are already using competency-based grading and start to build on that as a source of momentum.

[02:46:13] It'd be like a coalition of the willing, if you will. I know that our student database, PowerSchool, there's a considerable amount of work that was done for the lab school because at the lab school, that's how they grade students.

[02:46:31] It's on competency-based grading. So we know that there's configurations in our online gradebook that will work with that approach. So I just want the board to know we're not giving up on it. It is the best way to help students learn.

[02:46:49] It is clear feedback for students, and it helps them make progress. And we're going to keep moving in that direction and try to help our educators with the change, which is probably the most complex change that you'll ever try in a public school system.

[02:47:07] So sorry to interrupt, Pat. I obviously wasn't a part of the policy from five years ago but in talking to a number of veteran teachers they have some pretty significant concerns about the unintended consequences of the retake policy for example which their opinion and I don't have a reason to doubt this

[02:47:40] creates a lot of work for them and doesn't really address the underlying issues so know that tonight's not the time to get into that but will we have an opportunity to discuss some of what we're hearing from teachers and and parents uh regarding the specifics of the policy did you say well you so so one of the things i would say and Megan can probably uh help out with this is that one of the reasons we felt like there needs to be uh some continued conversation uh as

[02:48:20] as Megan alluded to, is because there are interpretations of the guidelines that are there. The guidelines themselves, I don't think anywhere, say retake in there. They talk about second chances for students and revision opportunities for students.

[02:48:35] And so I think that those inconsistencies are something that this team would want to address and make sure that everyone's clear on what those mean and what those look like for a classroom teacher. - Yeah, and we had this discussion about policy versus practice, and to me it sounds like we need to come up with either better policy or better implementation than what a number of teachers are experiencing.

[02:49:07] - Would you go to the, would you just mind going to the, 'cause you were just referring to that, the focus group piece. - So is this focus group piece post, sorry, post are reaffirming or are voting on the policy because it's part of the implementation or would this inform? I think the focus group is going to be put together regardless of the, you know, any shifts to the policy. That is something that, as Dr. Wood alluded to,

[02:49:44] we had a group of grading champions who were really kind of the representatives who brought this back and hoped for alignment and consistency within the schools. We got feedback that principals felt that was operationalized last year, I think, and so that was disbanded. But clearly, the feedback that we're hearing is that it would probably be helpful to continue to have that group meeting and discussing things that are coming up in the practice of grading so that they can be addressed. Yeah, because I feel like that is one of the pieces that we consistently hear, and I, you know, part of it is, like, in this word consistency, right, comes, it's like, you know,

[02:50:23] know every policy right but you're like how do we ensure the policy is a number one understood understood and then that there is a central document it sounds like this the notebook guide is the central like the central document the piece of truth that everyone goes back to and then how are they how are they trained on it so that it's it ensures that people are doing it I always think about policy like policy rollout right the first time you do it the first wave you a great job but you because of the turnover that just naturally happens in schools that's kind of my question is how do we ensure again I know that's on

[02:51:01] the practice implementation side but I do think is there any like is there anything you know as a school board I hear one of the consistent words that I hear across my peers is how do we how are we being more consistent and how our policies are being implemented so that is one of the things I think

about as we as a policy comes forward is, is there any language we can put in to ensure that consistent implementation, or do we trust the implementation? So I think that's, so the question, there's a question in there is, you know, these, you know, might these focus groups bring forward

[02:51:40] information that could inform a change in policy? So I think the question is, do you vote on a policy and potentially vote on a revision, and then have to vote on a revision, or is there a need to vote on that policy immediately? I think there's two ways to look at things like that.

[02:51:59] The policy itself, at least from my perspective, it's very hard to argue that there's really anything that would be objectionable in it. So we have policies that are informed by Virginia Code and best practice.

[02:52:17] And so in particular with grading, I think what you wanna do is you've gotta think about what's best for kids and not really anybody else. Because they are the ultimate recipient of that whatever's outcome with grades.

[02:52:34] So I think the challenge to the board on that is to really focus on what's gonna be best for kids with that. With regard to guidelines, I think the issue with it and really every other thing that's not consistent is that there's so much for our teachers and principals and frankly everybody, including the school board, to try to keep up with, you know?

[02:53:03] So I think what we try to do, and I think this is a good example, it's this is one of the, you know, we talk a lot about, or we don't talk about it, but I hear people talk about the big rock. You hear that expression because it was something Stephen Covey popularized where he does that thing where you put the sand in the jar first and then try to put the big rocks in and then you turn around and put the big rocks in, then the sand.

[02:53:30] What I would say is my failure in this, this is a big rock. And rather than saying, well, this is something we're gonna really try to be consistent with and really do all the best things to make sure that it stays consistent, I just took my eye off of it.

[02:53:50] You noticed it was 1920, 2021. I think we had other stuff going on then. But still, it's ultimately my responsibility to point out what are the big rocks and what's the sand. And this was a big rock. And one of the things you can do if you really want consistency on something is to govern it.

[02:54:09] And when I say governing, I don't mean board governance. I mean staff putting together what Dr. McLaughlin was talking about is a team that represents teachers from every school so that they can constantly give feedback on it forever, right, not when we think it's reached a tipping point, not when we think it's become operational, because there's so much culture behind it, and that's what makes it a big rock, is that it's not something that is easily embraced, because it's so student-centered in public schools that are not student-centered.

[02:54:49] They're centered on all these other things, besides students sometimes. So, I know that was a lot, but what we will do is we will always have a grading committee forever that will get together, they will talk about grades, and whatever iteration of the grades are moving forward or what the guidelines are gonna be, I feel like the policy stands.

[02:55:14] It's a strong policy. We will report back to you any changes to the guidelines, because that's the other part. I don't want you blindsided by emails or messages saying things that have been changed and

then having you react to them.

[02:55:32] But we're always going to have this. And there will be some other things that we're looking at that certainly the club's conversation earlier, that has turned into a big rock, right? I mean, we didn't think back in the day maybe it wasn't a big rock, but now it has.

[02:55:49] So I feel like we need a governing group that's always gonna meet, that's gonna review what's happening in the schools and ensure the consistency of it. And certainly from the board perspective, if there are things that you feel are bigger than maybe we're paying attention to, then please, by all means, let us know if there's something that turns into a big rock for you because then we can do that.

[02:56:16] And I'd much rather put in the effort on a continual basis of quarterly or bimonthly or whatever it is than to have it become episodic and then we all get blindsided by something that's a real problem.

[02:56:33] So that's how, I think that's a good way to address consistency is just ongoing governing by staff of whatever the change is that we're trying to manage. And we're learning to do a better job with that, I think. - Thank you for that. I do wonder, I don't know if there's any, if there would be any interest in my peers, and include to your point of having that group disbanding it, that having that group be part of the policy going forward, I mean, that's, I'm a sleep on it person, I don't know, like, that would be a question of, would the board have an interest in amending the policy

[02:57:12] so that that, however we call it, that group is in policy so that it has to, like, - We do have policies that do stipulate that there are particular groups that are gonna monitor. I think the equity policy is one example.

[02:57:30] There's others that do say. And it's not, you're not getting in the weeds, you're just saying have a group, right? And that's the expectation. That way, when you get to the point where you're reviewing the policy, if the group's not there, then you can correct it.

[02:57:48] You can get back on track. - Other questions are found? I know I would like to hear from teachers about the policy and changes that might be coming down the road.

[02:58:05] Yeah, and I would say students as well. It's a, again, it's a hard thing to ask students, but I do, just as, like, we had the conversation a while ago about bell changes, right? Like, it's important to get a student's voice. You know, they all want it.

[02:58:22] However, like, they understand, like, at the end of the day, they understand what's working and what's not. So if we wanted to make an amendment to this policy prior to taking action, we could do it next week, or we could ask for an amendment, for staff to look at an amendment now? What would be the best?

[02:58:46] So you could do either. That the board could, with the consensus of the board, an amendment could be put in there. It will be back in two weeks on the consent agenda. If you wanted to amend it at that time, you would pull it from the consent agenda. We would do it in the items pulled from the consent agenda, could amend it then, and then adopt.

[02:59:06] I think we're all tired tonight, but I think that's, well, I'm going to put that in my... - And we can take a stab at redlining it and bringing back an item, just run it by-- - Would my colleagues be-- - Just send it out to the board. - Would there be any interest in that? - Yes. - Or you could have Dr. Grant pull out his laptop again.

[02:59:24] - I know, I wasn't gonna ask you to do it right here. I had some eyes looking at me like, you gotta be-- - That's all-- - I know, I don't wanna, but yes, I think if, I don't think this needs a vote, but if it seems like that's the will of the board to have that included as part of the policy In a red line, we could look at it, and I heard my colleagues say, "Teach, making sure," and it's on here, but making sure there's teachers as well as, I think we think about how students are included, but having a student voice.

[02:59:53] - But it's already, I mean, in the next steps on the language could parallel that. - Yeah. - Yep, so what I hear is the consensus of the board is to bring an amended policy that includes a governance committee, for lack of a better term, for the consent agenda at the March 26th meeting.

[03:00:19] - Yes, yes. - Thank you. - Thank you so much. Item 9.0, other business. Is there any other business by board members or the superintendents before we adjourn?

[03:00:43] Seeing no business in front of us, I now adjourn today's meeting. Thank you all so much.



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