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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, July 9, 2026

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[00:01:46] schools effective immediately to serve through June 30th, 2027. Second. Moved by Ms. Spillman, second by Ms. Lee. Madame Clerk, could we do a roll call vote on this as well? Dr. Acuff? Yes. Mr. Beard? Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck? Yes. Ms. Lee? Yes. Ms.

[00:02:07] Osborne? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Chair Berlin? Yes. With the vote 7-0, the motion carries. Thank you so much. It is my pleasure to announce and to welcome Dr. Hayes as our acting superintendent. That is not official until I invite Mr. John Zug, I'm sorry, Zug to the podium to administer the oath of office for Dr.

[00:02:33] Hayes.

[00:03:03] the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia and that I will faithfully and impartially and I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform discharge and perform all the duties all the duties incumbent upon me incumbent upon me as the acting superintendent as the acting superintendent for the Albemarle County Public Schools for the Albemarle County Public Schools according to the best of my ability so help me God according to the best of

[00:03:27] my ability, so don't think I. Congratulations. Thank you. Would you like to take a picture with

[00:04:16] family or anyone while we're here? It's important. Rituals and moments are important, and I want to

[00:04:23] make sure we give you that. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the school board, colleagues,

[00:05:18] family, and community members. I wanted to begin tonight with a very heartfelt thank you. I am deeply grateful to the board for placing your trust in me to serve as the acting superintendent of Albemarle County Public Schools. I do not take that trust lightly. I understand the importance of this role and the responsibility that comes with it.

[00:05:36] And I am honored to step into this work on behalf of our students, employees, families, and community. Although I've only been a part of ACPS for three years, the division has already had a meaningful impact on me. I have had the opportunity to work alongside dedicated educators, committed leaders, and employees in every part of this organization who care deeply about children and the community they serve.

[00:06:00] That is what gives me the confidence as I begin this next chapter. I know the strength of this division is in its people and I am excited to continue the work together. Tonight is also very personal for me because my friends and family are here. I wanted to thank them for the love, encouragement, and values they have poured into me throughout my life.

[00:06:19] My love for education started early because my family taught me the value of learning, to believe in hard work, and to understand that education can change the direction person's life and this belief is not abstract for me it is a part of my own story i was a head start student and i benefited from the kind of early support that helps children build confidence curiosity and is a strong foundation for their future i know from my own personal experience

[00:06:58] that public education is truly the great equalizer it opens doors it creates opportunity and it helps students see the possibilities that may not have been visible before and that that is why this work matters so deeply to me i also want to thank my husband for his steady support serving as the acting superintendent is not a role that impacts only the person that holds the title it touches your entire family there are long days late nights difficult decisions and moments where the work comes home with you i am grateful for his patience encouragement and partnership as i take on this

[00:07:34] responsibility as acne superintendent i'm committed to working along alongside all acps employees in the year ahead i know that the success of our students depends on the collective work of many people and no one role is more important than the other every single role in this division matters every single person contributes to the experience our students and families have in our schools my commitment is to listen to learn to communicate clearly and to stay focused on what matters most supporting our schools, and improving outcomes for students. I believe we do our best work when

[00:08:10] we are connected, honest about our challenges, and clear about our priorities. I thank the Albemarle County Public School community for your support, and I look forward to the work we will do together in the year ahead. Thank you. Dr. Hayes, just from this board, I just wanted to give you our utmost thanks for number one, accepting the call when we called you, number two for accepting this acting position. I know it is a difficult one during a difficult

[00:08:50] time and I so appreciate the dedication that you bring to this and the support of your family and friends. So thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you all. We will now move to our roll call. We do

this so that those in the audience who may be less familiar with some of us as well as those online can put names with faces and voices during discussion. I am going to ask that Mr.

[00:09:18] McLaughlin start us out tonight. Thanks, good evening, everyone. Pat McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning. Roslyn Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer. Kate Acob, Jack Jewett District. Judy Lee Ravanna District. Ellen Osborne, Scottsville District. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall District. Allison Spillman, At-Large Representative. Jim Dillenbeck, Raya District. Bob Beard, Samuel Miller District. Chandra Hayes, Acting Superintendent. Josiah Black, Chief Legal Officer and Redding Chief HR Officer. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the

[00:09:51] Board. Erin Stone, Assistant Division Counsel. Thank you so much and thank you to our police officers who are here tonight to provide safety and security and are in our community each and every day. With that, I ask that we stand, if

[00:10:09] you are able, for the Pledge of Allegiance. We are now going to pause for a moment of silence, but before we begin our moment of silence, I would ask that

[00:10:44] everyone pause as we honor the memory of Brendan Rose, a rising senior at Monticello High School who passed away on Wednesday, July 1st. Brendan was a student, a teammate, a friend, and a deeply loved member of the Monticello High School community. His loss is felt by his family, his classmates, his teammates, his teachers, and many others across our school division. We also We also extend our care and support to Brendan's mother, Stephanie Rose, who is a member of our ACPS staff in building services.

[00:11:23] This is both a heartbreaking loss for our school community and for our staff family. In moments like this, we are reminded that behind every student, every jersey, every classroom seat, and every school community is a person whose life matters.

[00:11:41] We encourage our students and staff to care for one another, to check in on one another, and to ask for help when it is needed. No one should ever feel that they are alone. Please join the school board in a moment of silence in the memory of Brendan Rose and

[00:11:56] to support his mother, Stephanie Rose.

[00:12:25] Thank you so much. And may we keep them in our memory today, this summer, and as the school year begins. Before we continue with our school board agenda, I wanted to pause and acknowledge what has been a very difficult and unsettling time for our school division and for our broader community and make a statement on behalf of the school board.

[00:12:48] As a school board, we take our responsibilities incredibly and increasingly serious. Our role includes oversight of the superintendent, stewardship of the school division, and most Most importantly, ensuring that the safety and well-being of our students remain at the center of every decision that we do.

[00:13:09] When information was made available to the Board regarding the situation at Hollymead, the Board acted quickly and responsibly. There are limits to what we can share publicly, particularly when matters involve personnel, student privacy, or ongoing review purposes.

[00:13:26] pending criminal prosecutions with which we will give our complete cooperation and avoid doing anything to interfere. But I want to be clear, we understand the seriousness of this moment, and we know the community is looking at us not only for words, but also for actions.

[00:13:47] We are committed to earning back your trust through transparency where appropriate, accountability where required, and decisions that reflect the needs of students, family, staff, and our schools. As we move forward, we are so very grateful to Dr. Hayes, who has agreed to serve as acting superintendent for the upcoming school year.

[00:14:11] Dr. Hayes brings deep experience in public education, a strong understanding of Albemarle County Public Schools, and valuable leadership experience from outside our division as well. We are excited for her leadership during this important transition, and believe she will provide the stability, the thoughtfulness and focus our division needs in the year ahead at the same time the board is committed to conducting a nationwide search for the next superintendent that process will begin this fall and will include a meaningful feedback and input from the community from all levels of the school division including students families teachers staff school leaders and central office employees

[00:14:51] we know the selection of a superintendent is one of the most important responsibilities of the school board and we intend to approach that process with care, openness, and clear commitment to the future of ACPS. We know that trust cannot be restored by a single statement and a single decision.

[00:15:08] Trust is rebuilt through consistent actions over time. The board is committed to doing that work, to listening carefully, and to making decisions that help strengthen our schools and support every student that we serve. Thank you very much.

[00:15:25] The next item on our agenda is the approval of tonight's agenda. do i have a motion to approve tonight's agenda i move that we approve tonight's agenda move my business ms lee second second by miss billman all those in favor of moving forward with today's agenda any opposed we will now move forward with tonight's agenda the first point of tonight's agenda is our spotlight on education uh and dr ben allen executive director of the center for

[00:16:00] community partnerships will be leading that looks like it's not been and instead of ben allen i am so excited to introduce a dear colleague and past face of ACPS. My name is Dr. Lucy Montalvo. I work with Dr. Ben Allen at the Center for Community Partnerships. I am the director of Star Hill Pathways, which is a college and career access program by our center, Center for Community partnerships at the University of Virginia. And Star Hill Pathways serves almost 300 students

[00:16:40] in which 200 students attend Albemarle County Schools. Our students range from 7th grade to 12th grade. It is a long-term program where we continuously support students in their middle and high school journey. I'm here to provide an update on our students' activities this summer. Our 7th and 8th graders just completed a two-week summer program where they explored a career that they're interested in.

[00:17:06] Some career pathways explored were culinary arts, veterinary sciences, business and finance, STEM, neuroscience, environmental science, multimedia, along with performing and creative arts. Our ninth graders are participating in the counselor and training program at the Brooks YMCA.

[00:17:28] They received a week-long training and serve as assistant counselors. I observe students playing with younger students and assisting counselors with several different activities. Our 10th graders are participating in KUP, a program hosted by the city of Charlottesville, where students have one week of workforce training and then are placed in an organization or business for five weeks, working 20 hours a week and getting paid \$15 an hour.

[00:17:55] This is the third year our students have participated in this program and it has been very successful. Our students have enjoyed their experience very much. Our 11th and 12th graders, this year is our first graduating senior year.

[00:18:12] They have several jobs around town, but they still carve time to visit universities when we plan those activities. This year, students will be visiting Virginia Tech. Our seniors have a day of career and college advising from Advise Virginia.

[00:18:33] And students will have a one-on-one advising session with an advisor to create an action item timeline depending on their path that they think that they are going on. And it will create an action item list timeline for their senior year so that they can follow throughout that year and try to get to that goal that they have proposed for themselves.

[00:19:00] So many of our students also participated in an external opportunities coordinated by our program. And some examples are participating at WTJU radio station, CAM, Awareness to Action by St. Anne Belfields, and CARE 360 labs where students got to be a part of the five-year plan for the downtown mall.

[00:19:24] Our students are having an amazing experience in career and college readiness this summer, and we look forward to continuing our work this fall, where we will be providing programming, college trips, and visiting our students weekly at their schools to provide success coaching.

[00:19:41] Thank you for your time. - Thank you. - Thank you so much. - Do we have any questions? - I just wanna thank you and everyone from Star Hill Pathways for the amazing experiences that you give to our students throughout their seven years, six years.

[00:20:04] - It is absolutely our pleasure. It's a very fulfilling job. And I think for the community to know that this program exists. And if you have a not-for-profit or a business, and to connect with Star Hill.

[00:20:21] Because I think part of what makes this so powerful is the amazing kind of on the ground experiences that they give students. Learning about every aspect of our community so that students can think about the many pathways they have in front of us. So a huge thank you.

[00:20:37] Thank you. got a chance to attend the expo a couple weeks ago and just saw some of the amazing projects that these middle school students were doing at neuroscience they were designing AI remote control subjects and great courses in economics and finance that just weren't mind-boggling so yeah it's it's really impressive and dr. Allen spoke to us back in January or February about the fact

[00:21:11] that this is not just a two-week summer program but it's ongoing and I'd love to see that continue to grow and expand it's really helpful just a quick question do students apply are they nominated and when does that process start for the next it is a middle school it is an application process we work closely with the counselors of all of the middle schools in the city and in the county where they recommend our program to several families. Our application is

[00:21:46] open to everyone. It is on our website year-round. So sometimes they may apply in October and are maybe on the wait list, you know, for their specific grade. But we do open registration formally for a new cohort in mid-January through March and then they get accepted in April and then they begin our program with their first summer camp like our seventh graders did this year. Thank you.

[00:22:14] Thank you very much. Thank you. The next item on our agenda is school board superintendent and committee updates. Do we have any updates? I think I have a statement to read on behalf of the school board. The school board intends to conduct a competitive nationwide search for our next superintendent. We also agreed that the best way to do so is to contact contract the services of an executive search firm with a specific experience in education to manage the recruitment process we will select a recruitment firm through the county's procurement process this summer and we hope to have a firm

[00:22:52] under contract by october of 2026. we are looking for a company with experience recruiting school superintendents through a collaborative approach that allows for public feedback to inform the school board's decision once a firm is hired part of their scope of work will be to provide a timeline and strategies for community engagement, public feedback, and the overall selection process. Our goal is to name a school superintendent for the 27-28 school year no later than July 1st, 2027. We look forward to sharing more information with you as we move forward. Thank you, Ms. Spillman. One of my placements as a school board member is with the Albemarle Foundation for

[00:23:30] Education. This will be the second year that AFE is supporting the back-to-school bash back-to-school backpack bash which is going to be held on August on Sunday August 9th just a few days before school starts where students and families can come students can pick up backpacks filled with supplies they can get athletic exams vaccinations I think haircuts even get ready get all ready for school with your new pencils and your paper if you go to

[00:24:06] to our website volunteers are still needed not only to pack the backpacks which I did last year in an un-air-conditioned building which was we I bonded with a lot of people but to be there for the day and then the set pack the backpacks do the setup which is going to be at fashion mall at the old JC Penney's be there for the day of the event and then for cleanup so we're always looking for volunteers thank you dr. a cop I got a chance to visit upper

[00:24:43] elementary it is amazing so just remind although everyone in the public is that about the that it's a new school this is the first new school that we have opened in 25 25 years it is gorgeous it's come along beautifully it is ready a ribbon

[00:25:04] cutting for that is on the 24th of July. Correct. Yes, it's Friday 10 a.m. Yeah, and that is open to the public. Yes, it is. Any other? I have a few things. First, I would like to appoint Emily Potter to serve on the advisory committee for the environmental sustainability. Okay. I want to begin a new practice this year with my remarks during the superintendent's moment and during each business meeting. I want to take a few

[00:25:41] moments to update the board and the community about work happening in our division. I want to highlight some of the accomplishments, share some current activities taking place across our schools and departments, and provide a brief look ahead to the important work that's coming next. I hope this begins to create a steady rhythm of communication and helps our community better see the work happening across ACPS. There's so much good work taking place and I want to make sure we highlight that while also speaking honestly about the challenges and the things that we need to do to continue to grow.

[00:26:12] So last year, over 1,000 students graduated from ACPS, with 56% planning on attending a four-year college, 19% attending a two-year college, 5% planning on enlisting in the military, and 12% planning to enter the workforce full-time.

[00:26:27] Over \$5 million of scholarships were awarded to our students. Our trial nutrition team has the important job of making sure our students get nutritious meals during the day. Over 450,000 breakfast meals were served and over 1 million lunches were served over the course of the school year.

[00:26:45] Our transportation department, which is responsible for making sure our students get to and from their destinations safely, drove over 3.3 million miles this school year, and that includes home to school miles as well as field trip mileage.

[00:27:00] And it doesn't stop there. There are several great things happening this summer in addition to our traditional summer programming. summer school. We have MQ, the National Society of Black Engineering program, coding camp, and our summer jazz camp. But I also want to highlight some of the work of our hidden figures and our unsung heroes. Our custodial staff has been working tirelessly all summer to prepare our schools for the start of the school year. They are deep cleaning approximately 2.4 million square feet of facilities, refinishing more than 1.5 million square feet of hard floors, deep cleaning tens of thousands of square feet of carpet and applying more than 3,000 gallons of floor finish.

[00:27:41] Not the highlight, but they are also scraping gum and deep cleaning more than 16,000 desks and tables. Our technology team is refurbishing 14,000 student laptops, submitting over 140,000 records to the VDOE. They have 120 students participating in the summer coding camp, and they are expanding and maintaining over 45 miles of fiber optic networks.

[00:28:02] Our HR team has processed over 170 licensed staff and 65 classified staff. In the year ahead, as Dr. Acuff mentioned, our community partnership team is gearing up for the August the 9th back to school bash.

[00:28:17] We're going to stay the course with closing the gaps in academic achievement and Dr. McLaughlin will be here next week to provide an update around our progress on those things and assessments. The Berkeley group will be here on July 16th to present the findings of the special education review done with ACPS. The Department of Instruction will be investigating technology usage and screen time for our K-3 students. We will be getting the grading committee up and running and we will hope to work with communications to get the coverage of the great things that are happening at ACPS out to our broader community. And while this isn't everything that is occurring in our schools, it is important to highlight the amazing accomplishments of our

[00:28:57] students and staff and the work they do behind the scenes. Thank you. Thank you so much. I wish we could give her a hand. I appreciate that and I appreciate the update that that will be a regular update from Dr. Hayes at every business meeting. Thank you so much. Any other updates or statements or comments from the board? Okay, I have one before we go to public comment. As a school board, we have identified a number of areas

[00:29:36] where greater attention needs to be given to the policies that govern our school division. As you can see, tonight we are raising several key policies for significant revision, as we will again next week, and even creating new policies to strengthen the learning environments in our school.

[00:29:54] Our aim is to increase student safety, standardize instructional practices, and meet the needs of each and every student so that they receive a quality education that prepares them for their future. In addition to the policies governing the actions of students, staff, and community partners engaged with ACPS, we also need to strengthen our own policies governing school board activities.

[00:30:18] To that end, next week I plan to bring forward rules of procedure to clarify how school board meetings are managed. We need to establish rules for public comment that maintain decorum and limit personal attacks while still providing the opportunity for the public to raise their concerns in a respectful manner even if that means respectfully calling out specific board members or staff by name.

[00:30:42] We need to clarify how policy decisions are brought forward to the school board and public business is conducted so that the public can better engage in this process. The policies written are not always clear and I appreciate those who reached out to me directly to chair their concerns. My interpretation and application of the policies regarding public comment in my role as chair last week made it difficult last meeting made it difficult for some individuals to express themselves fully regarding their comments to the board and for that i am personally

[00:31:17] sorry and i take full responsibility i believe as a board we need to rectify that ambiguity so next week we will take up consideration of amendments to our rules and policies guiding the management of board meetings with the purpose of increasing public participation and providing clear directions for each of us as a school board.

[00:31:38] We will then ensure what is stated before public comment and ensure that matches what is on our website. Due to the number of items that we needed to complete before tonight's meeting, we were not able to complete those rules updates. So tonight we will be using the current rules as they stand, but next week we will, in a public meeting, be updating those rules with the full board.

[00:32:03] Thank you so much. So the next item on our agenda is public comment. We welcome public comment at school board meetings. To sign up to speak during public comment, you can do that in several ways. Online, sign up is available from 9:00 a.m.

[00:32:20] on the Monday of the meeting week until 2:00 p.m. on the meeting day. By phone, calling the clerk's office at 434-972-4055 to sign up until 2:00 p.m. on the meeting day. And in person, sign up at the meeting is available from 6 p.m. until the public comment period for in-person meetings only.

[00:32:42] Each speaker will have three minutes to speak, but the chair with board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be 14 or more speakers. Speakers should state their name, address, and voting district. Address comments to the board as a whole. Limit comments to school board governance or school division operations.

[00:33:00] Comments may not be directed to individual school board members, division leadership, or staff. Provide written statements and materials to the clerk. The school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time. And once the time is up, speakers are asked to wrap up their comments. To maintain respect, please refrain from clapping or other audible forms of support.

[00:33:19] And you may raise your hand instead to debate with the school board is not allowed. Tonight, we have nine people signed up. So I will call the first three, Jimmy Ballou, Megan Mitchum, and Superintendent William T. Coles.

[00:33:38] Mr. Ballou. Jimmy Ballou of the Scottsville District.

[00:33:54] Good evening, members of the board. Welcome to the new superintendent. It's great to see a fresh face up there. Generally, I'm here speaking about the failure of the special education system in

Albemarle County. But we're gonna give that a pause because I happen to read the proposed professional boundaries, prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse policy.

[00:34:14] My, first of all, the policy doesn't go far enough. My biggest concern is that this policy almost entirely on the school system to police itself. Complaints are reported to principals, human resources, and the Title IX coordinator, all internal employees.

[00:34:30] There is no requirement for independent investigations when allegations involve employees' misconduct. After everything our community has experienced, that's simply not enough. The policy also fails to require immediate notification of parents when allegations involve their child.

[00:34:50] parents should never be left wondering whether their child was involved in a serious incident. It also lacks the clear requirements for immediately removing employees from student contact while serious allegations are investigated. Student safety must always come before protecting the reputation of the school division, which didn't happen previously. While the policy defines grooming, it provides little accountability for administrators who ignore the warning signs or fail to act prime example of what happened recently finally there's almost no transparency

[00:35:24] transparency is key i would recommend that the board not say that this policy is a finished product that it's a working product and accept the community comment and involvement i want to remind i was at a high school graduation just this year and one of the board members spoke up and said speak up for those who can't i took that to heart but on the back side of that she failed to speak got for those who couldn't. And everyone kind of looked the other way on this whole incident.

[00:35:55] Thank you. Thank you very much. Megan Mitchum. Is Ms. Megan Mitchum? Just one more time, just in case. Megan Mitchum. Thank you so much. Superintendent William T. Coles.

[00:36:29] I'm Superintendent William T. Coles. I live in 1489 Monterey Drive here in the county. I'm president of the African American Parent Alliance, a parent organization founded in 1993 to address the achievement gap, disproportionately affecting the African American students and students of color.

[00:36:57] And some progress was realized in the 90s in closing the achievement gap. We find today that it has been exacerbated rather than continue to improve. Due to several causes outlined in the APS's 2023 Bellwether report. You all had a consultant come in and look at the division.

[00:37:19] Most alarming is the report's opening statement. Edmonton County Public Schools' SOL performance for students of color for K-5 reading, K-5 math, high school algebra is lower than the average of other students of color in the state, lowest in the entire state of Virginia.

[00:37:48] The performance data from 2024 reveals low progress has been made in addressing the recommendations outlined in the Bell Bell Report, which reveal grossly inadequate student outcomes, teacher hiring, training, and retention, and overall school environment.

[00:38:08] Currently, due to the future demands of the economy, our focus has broadened to all underperforming students. It is imperative that all our young people develop good character and are ready educationally at the advent of adulthood, ready to meet the rigors of adult life.

[00:38:29] Therefore, we request the following from the school board, an assessment of the performance relative to the recommendations of the Bell Brother Report. We want a plan of action to be presented and

tracked through each grading period that focus on optimum performance of student education throughout the division.

[00:38:50] We request a concerted commitment to hire and retain competent teachers and administrators that reflect the ever-increasing diversity of a student body. Also, we recommend that you use a customer relations management or CRM model or the like, where stakeholder expectations are met relative to safety, environment, and education.

[00:39:17] and measure the performance of every employee in the division as to how well they meet the objectives of optimal safety, environment, and education. Create a culture in the division that everybody's working toward that one goal.

[00:39:35] It will enable HCPS to achieve a level of excellence that will make it the benchmark school system in Virginia. A school improvement plan also we request to be established. - Thank you so much, sir.

[00:39:51] I apologize, but your three minutes has expired. - Three minutes, sir. I got one more second, I'm done. Can I take a look? - Unfortunately, I need to hold everyone to three minutes. You can submit your statement. We also have your letter that we are looking at and we'll respond to.

[00:40:10] Thank you so much for your comments. I have Jonathan Whitehead, but I have a note that they will not be speaking, but I just wanted to make sure, Jonathan Whitehead.

[00:40:26] The next three people are Nancy Koenig, Daisy Rojas, and Phil Reese. Ms. Koenig. I'm Nancy Koenig of Scottsville. I was an elementary school teacher at three different county schools from 1982 to 2014.

[00:40:48] Thank you all for the work you have been doing. I hope that your retreat was profitable. I have two areas of concern, falling scores and the position of the social emotional coach. With respect to scores, when considering the direction you would like to take in the coming school year, I would suggest that you consider refocusing your goal on instruction and academic achievement.

[00:41:14] I heartily agree with Dr. Acuff that the new superintendent be strong on instruction. The current mission statement for language arts never mentions the proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking skills.

[00:41:31] Instead, it states, quote, the core purpose of literacy teaching and learning is to establish a community which fosters curiosity and understanding through multiple literacies for all learners. Curiosity and community are very important, important, but they should not be the mission of the language arts program.

[00:41:52] As you know, the SOL reading cut score was lowered in 2020, resulting in a proficiency score at 57% versus the 65% required to maintain rigor.

[00:42:08] The cut scores are the lowest in the nation. This fact makes the current Albemarle SOL scores all the more appalling. And in math, Virginia ranks 51st in the U.S. in math recovery from 2019 to 2024.

[00:42:29] To my second point, I suggest the position of social emotional coach be eliminated. The counselor position is sufficient. The county has two different teams to support students who are struggling. Both teams involve parents as they should with a refocusing of mission on excellence And rigor in academics at moral schools can once again be those sought by parents for the highest quality education for their children.

[00:42:59] Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I ask that we not have clapping. You may stand. You may raise your hands and shake your hands in support.

[00:43:17] The next speaker we have is Daisy Rojas. Is Daisy Rojas here? Daisy Rojas is not here. Mr. Phil Rees.

[00:43:34] Chair Berlin, members of the school board, my name is Phil Rees. All three of my kids are Hollymead students. First and foremost, I am absolutely disgusted at the sexual abuse that allegedly occurred at Hollymead over a period of several years.

[00:43:55] I have had to have hard conversations with my children to confirm that they had no one-on-one contact with Michael Sweeney. Thankfully, they didn't, but there are many parents who can't say the same about their children. I am glad that Matt Haas is no longer our superintendent, but why was he not fired?

[00:44:17] I attended yesterday's school board retreat, and the public needs to hear this. You all claim that Matt Haas never informed you back in January that Michael Sweeney was under a criminal investigation. You found out in June with the rest of us.

[00:44:33] Why did Matt Haas withhold that information from you? Should that not be considered gross misconduct by the former superintendent? Instead of firing Matt Haas, you asked for his resignation, and by allowing him to resign, you gave him over a quarter of a million dollars in severance pay.

[00:44:55] Why are you rewarding him for concealing a criminal investigation from you? Had Matt Haas told you back in January, you could have started work on the sexual misconduct policy six months ago. So I am calling on you tonight to revoke his resignation and fire him for cause.

[00:45:15] He does not deserve another penny from Elmarle taxpayers. But we also learned today that Principal McCauley just resigned. How much severance pay is he getting? If he is guilty of gross misconduct for allegedly ignoring parents' warnings about Sweeney, his resignation should also be denied and he should be fired.

[00:45:37] but most importantly i'm calling on you to initiate a full independent investigation by a law firm with no ties to alamo county parents deserve to know how these alleged crimes were allowed to happen how was sweet why was sweeney transferred from woodbrook to hollymead why wasn't sweeney removed after parents warned principal macaulay about his alleged misconduct did school staff fulfill their mandatory reporting obligations to police tomorrow i will submit a comprehensive

[00:46:12] foyer request to get these answers myself but i shouldn't have to this board should order that investigation without parents having to demand it that should be blatantly obvious to you parents deserve answers the public deserves accountability and our children deserve protection Thank you. Thank you very much. The next two speakers are Chris Dilbeck and Joellen Pizaric.

[00:46:48] Hello all. I'm Chris Dilbeck. I'm in the Ravana district. I want to follow up on some comments I made several months ago about the grading policy. Some of you may know I was a student in Albemarle High School and generally had a great time there between 2001 and 2005. The kind of student I was, I was pretty good at the academics, but I was disorganized. I was all over the place. I would leave assignments pretty much everywhere. You might find still some papers from there for me in some unknown places. As far as the policy goes, I'd like to review the report that was released

[00:47:23] recently and provide my feedback on that. First off, there's some excellent things in this report about upgrading the grading policy. The retake policy, as someone who has taught before, going back and reviewing repeatedly student assignments over and over again is not something that I think we should consider. So the changes in here including things like limiting assignments to one retake, requiring teacher meetings and actual participation by the student in order to get a retake is a great change and I would support all of that. Consistent handling of late assignments

[00:47:59] across the board is also excellent. I ran into this plenty of times when I was a student. Some teachers would just give me a zero if I turned it in three minutes late. Some of them would tell me to go find it. Some of them would give me a lot of grace and tell me, no, I can bring it in the next day and I'll be fine.

[00:48:18] Students being able to know that would be excellent across the board. However, the grading floor of going down from a 50 to a 40 does not address the original concern that I had brought to the board in my original comment, and that was that students should not be given credit for doing nothing. Giving someone a 40 or 50 for not doing the assignment is not the way they're going to be treated in college, and it's not the way they're going to be treated in the real world.

[00:48:48] If they go into business and they do nothing, they won't receive a paycheck. So we need to make sure that that system is corrected in such a way that it rewards people who put forth effort. you should not receive credit for doing nothing.

[00:49:07] So I would recommend that a policy be built that does consider a lot of this report, including the retake policy, the late work, standardization, but I would recommend instead going back to a zero to 100 grading scale, giving zeros for assignments that aren't there, and then giving students who lose things and are learning academic and life habits a little bit of grace and tolerance along the way.

[00:49:37] And with that, I yield back. Thank you. - Thank you so much. Our last speaker today is Joellen Pizaric. Please correct my pronunciation if it was off. - Hi, I'm Joellen Pizaric, a Crozet resident and long-time educator.

[00:49:55] I appreciated the superintendent's remarks earlier about how the goals of the program should be supported by the culture. And that's what I wanna talk about today, culture. A few years ago, I attended a state board of education meeting in Michigan, where a group of folks from across the state came to read from books that were available in the local library and in their school.

[00:50:18] These books contained shocking, sexually explicit material, along with references to drugs, violence, rape, pedophilia, etc. As X or R-rated movies or video games, such material would not be permitted in school.

[00:50:35] But as books, just another part of the culture. One lady who testified at the meeting made a remark. I'll never forget it. She said, I was sexually molested as a child, and if I had read that, this book, then I would have thought it was normal.

[00:50:57] Normal. So as parents and educators, we know, folks, that sexual abuse is not normal. But when it's found in the classroom or library of a school, it becomes part of the culture.

[00:51:13] It is part of the culture in Albemarle County Schools. I've reviewed your challenge book list and find that some remain on the bookshelves. I also am aware that all of these types of books are available on

the Follett Destiny Library link that students can access and parents would not be aware of.

[00:51:37] So does a culture that exposes children to sexually explicit material at school make children more vulnerable to sexual abuse? Well, according to psychologists, social workers, teachers, pediatricians, it does. Sexually explicit pornographic and descriptive material harms children and increases the risk of victimization by confusing rather than reinforcing healthy, safe boundaries.

[00:52:06] Virginia Legal Code requires school boards and educators to provide family life education curriculum that protects children, promotes family values, teaches abstinence, the dangers of human trafficking, disease, sexual violence, inappropriate touching, sexual abuse, and harassment.

[00:52:24] But regardless of what you teach in family life education, if the opposite lesson is handed to kids in the libraries, you have failed your legal obligation. The highest priority going forward needs to fix the curriculum and the culture in ACPS, a culture that normalizes child sexual abuse.

[00:52:47] I hope you'll keep that front and center as you search for a new superintendent. Thank you. Thank you so much. That now concludes our public comment, and I thank everyone who came forward tonight. The next item on our agenda is approval of our consent agenda.

[00:53:03] Do I have a board member making a motion around our consent agenda tonight? I move we approve the consent agenda. Moved by Ms. Lee. Do I have a second? Second. Second by Mr. Dillenbeck. All those in favor of tonight's consent agenda? Aye.

[00:53:19] Any opposed? Tonight's consent agenda passes. We now move into our official school board business. The first item on our school board business is 8-1. It's our policy discussion, professional boundaries and prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse.

[00:53:39] Dr. Hayes and Dr. Karlock will be presenting this. And this is a presentation today, and there will also be a follow-up next week, correct?

[00:54:00] As they're pulling that up, I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who has reached out to us individually or as a full board with their suggestions and comments and reflections on this policy, we will be using those as we look at the draft tonight and then make changes as we go forward.

[00:54:28] - Good evening, Chair Berlin and other members of the board. Again, I'm Dr. Hayes, Acting Superintendent, and I am here tonight to present the first round of information regarding the professional boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse. And I'm joined tonight by members of the school team, the division team, and Dr. Russell Carlock, who did a lot of our research.

[00:54:53] As always, everything we do is rooted in our strategic plan, Learning for All, with a focus that we will know each and every student. So just to provide a bit of background, on June 11th, the school board informed the public that it would be addressing issues identified in the wake of the alleged sexual abuse of students by ACPS SEL Coach.

[00:55:17] On June 17th, after being appointed as acting superintendent, the school board directed me to review and recommend policies and procedures to codify adult-student interaction, reduce the likelihood of sexual misconduct and abuse towards students, and strengthen student safety, reinforce professional expectations, and to rebuild public trust.

[00:55:38] Our goal is not to change the caring relationships that exists between students and trusted adults. Our goal is to strengthen those relationships by ensuring that they are supported by clear

professional expectations, transparency, and accountability.

[00:55:57] Staff reviewed public comments from the June 10th Community Conversation public meeting, along with emails received by the school board, the division, and the acting superintendent to identify key areas of concern. Specific issues raised by the school board, staff, and families that should be addressed a clear policy include one-to-one meetings between adults and students, professional and appropriate communication between adults and students, parental notification of meetings between adults and students, and the reporting of violations.

[00:56:36] We reviewed our background screening processes and compared to other school divisions, government organizations and private sector businesses and found that our screening processes are as thorough as they can be. Our screening process is similar to that of the police department.

[00:56:55] The only exception is that they are permitted to conduct a polygraph exam of applicants. However, the Virginia State Code prohibits our use of polygraph examinations on employees or prospective employees. Before hiring any ACPS employee, applicants are fingerprinted and those fingerprints are submitted to state police.

[00:57:16] They run a criminal background search through the FBI fingerprint database to identify any arrest in the United States. If there is any felony conviction or crimes against a minor, we will not hire them. Additionally, we run the application information through the Central Registry for Child Abuse and Neglect for every state they have resided over the past five years. Our process is comprehensive and thorough in comparison to other places of employment.

[00:57:43] The unfortunate reality is that we have no way of screening out an individual who has never been charged with a crime or with an abuse or neglect finding. With all that said, we definitely have areas where we must strengthen our policies and make clear the expectations of our employees, volunteers, and other adults who engage with students.

[00:58:07] So I ask the staff to conduct research and to create a draft policy that addresses the concerns raised by the school board and the public to improve the safety of our students. What we are presenting today is a draft policy AG, Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse.

[00:58:25] I am recommending we place this policy within Section A of the board policies, which governs foundations and basic commitments, because policy must be foundational to our entire school division. You have had a chance to review the policy, and I want to walk you through the plan for getting to an adopted policy, which we will need this month in order to have it implemented by the start of the 26-27 school year.

[00:58:48] Tonight, Dr. Carlock will provide an overview of the policy itself, how we came to this recommendation, and how we came to this recommendation. From there, I have asked the staff to join us and we can answer any specific questions you may have regarding the policy.

[00:59:04] Finally, if you have any specific recommended edits, we can take those and incorporate them into a red line draft that we will post for a public hearing on the policy to be held at our next meeting on July 16th. At that time, the public will be asked to speak to the school board specifically on the recommended policy and any edits you may want to include from today's discussion.

[00:59:27] Following the public comment, the school board will offer any additional recommendation and edits in a markup session and ultimately vote to adopt a final policy. Unless there are any other questions at this time, I would like to turn it over to Dr. Carlock. Thank you, Dr. Hayes, and thank you, members of the school board.

[00:59:53] So I'm going to walk us through the process by which the school division has come up with this draft policy. We'll first discuss a literature review that was conducted of peer-reviewed as well as trade journals around best practices in preventing educator sexual misconduct and abuse. We will look at peer divisions and also divisions throughout the country that have similar policies and looking, we will also be looking at what are considered model policies throughout the country. We'll discuss the key components of the new policy and then open it up to questions.

[01:00:29] So first from June 22nd to 26th, we conducted the literature review and the policy analysis comparing ourselves to other school districts. And then in the second week, we drafted the policy and received extensive feedback from division level staff and some building level staff. I want to highlight that this has been a highly expedient process due to the magnitude and gravity of the situation.

[01:00:54] And in a typical situation, we would have more comprehensive public feedback, as well as staff feedback and review of a policy, especially a brand new policy that is being adopted. And for that reason, public feedback is going to be extremely important throughout this process.

[01:01:12] This is a draft document at this point, and it will be important for all of us to listen to the public as we bring it to its final version to be enacted in the next school year. And so we will be looking at possible revisions tonight based on your questions, and then July 16th will be the session in which we review public comment and can come further to adopt a new school board policy.

[01:01:37] So looking at the literature, these are the key references that we used in looking at how to prevent educator sexual misconduct. There are three in particular that I want to focus on that were specifically important in this, and these are coming from peer-reviewed journals in both criminology as well as in psychology, and journals that deal with child abuse.

[01:02:00] The first one, Grant et al. 2019, was extremely helpful because it did a review of school divisions that had experienced issues of sexual misconduct amongst their employees against students, and looked at what they did in the wake of that situation, that situation in order to ensure that it didn't happen again. Wertel et al's article on keeping students out of harm's way, reducing risks of educator sexual misconduct was also very important because it took a criminology approach. So it looked at other types of law enforcement and thinking about schools as a way to prevent that particular crime from happening. The

[01:02:40] final is from the Virginia Department of Education. In 2011, they issued guidelines for the prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse in Virginia public schools. This was in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky trial at Penn State, and it is a fairly strong document, and it went out to all public school divisions.

[01:02:57] Some of our peer divisions adopted some of the language from that report in 2011. Many did not, but the report itself is in line with the rest of the peer-reviewed literature in terms of best practices around preventing educator sexual misconduct.

[01:03:12] So first I want to talk about the definition and prevalence as well as underreporting of this issue. So the definition of educator sexual misconduct covers a range of behaviors that are both criminal and unethical. So that includes sexual harassment, sexual invitations, text messaging, email or social media contact of a sexual nature, showing or producing sexually explicit images, sexual touching and sexual assault and rape.

[01:03:36] And I want to highlight that this goes beyond criminal behaviors to include violations of boundaries with students that may not rise to the criminal level, and so the adoption of this policy is not only about preventing the most egregious of these incidents, but also unethical behavior that is not illegal, but it's also very important to keep out of our schools. As many as 9.6% of U.S.

[01:04:02] students are victims of educator sexual misconduct. This comes from a report in 2004. It is notoriously difficult to get good nationwide data on this because each state reports it in different ways. Some states do not report it at all.

[01:04:18] However, they did a comprehensive report in 2004, and based on survey data from students, that's where they arrived at that 9.6% data. It's important to note that that is sexual misconduct, so it's any of those unethical behaviors that may not also be criminal.

[01:04:33] There was a report in 2020 by the Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, that found 0.02% of students were involved in allegations, an incident that involved an allegation of sexual misconduct by an educator in a K-12 school.

[01:04:50] This shows that this is an issue that is very, much more prevalent than many people see and that it is often under-recorded. When they did a survey of students, only 6% of students said that they would be willing to report an educator that was performing some of these violated actions or violations of boundaries.

[01:05:11] That's why it's incumbent upon us as an institution to create the policy that will support prevention. The impact on victims of community art is clear, but I want to make sure that that's also in what we state is in the literature itself, that there are severe behavioral and psychological effects on students that experience educator sexual misconduct, and it goes further beyond the individual students that are involved to impact the entire community.

[01:05:41] And we know that, we're experiencing that to some extent. Harm does not stop with the victim, the community is shaken, this is a direct quote. There's often increased distrust, there's confusion, there's anger, there may be civil suits in trials. There are many repercussions to just one of these incidents occurring in schools, highlighting why it's important to look at the literature and what it says about prevention.

[01:06:04] So the key components within the literature saying that are most important for preventing this go along these six categories. And the first is having policies and procedures in place. So having a clear policy, the recommendation is that there is a policy specifically about preventing educator sexual misconduct in the institution.

[01:06:24] And that policy must be clear about prevention before it happens. And a lot of the literature around that says that you need to describe what is acceptable behavior, what are acceptable interactions between educators and students, and what is unacceptable behavior, and include in that descriptions of what is often considered grooming behavior.

[01:06:43] And so that's where the professional boundaries pieces come in, because what is a violation of a professional boundary that may not rise to a criminal offense is often the first step of grooming. And so it's important to outline for everyone to know what that looks like and to ensure that it is prevented.

[01:07:00] there also needs to be some sort of a training component so that everyone in the community especially the staff is aware of what the policy says and how it will be enforced and how it is to be implemented there also needs to be clear channels of reporting if there is both a concern about educator sexual abuse or misconduct so again including that violations of the professional boundaries there need to be clear understanding of how investigations occur there needs to be clear responses by the institution when these things are found

[01:07:34] to have occurred. So when we look at the key policy components of the Virginia Department of Education that they put out in 2011, the first is that there needs to be a statement of purpose. There needs to be a value statement and also it needs to be clear about why you are having this policy in the first place.

[01:07:51] There need to be clear rules governing staff and student communications and interactions, procedures for reporting discipline and disciplining employees who violate the policy, and training for staff and volunteers and distribution to parents. I want to highlight this is very clear that this is connected to that peer-reviewed literature, that there's a lot of overlap here between what BDOE said in 2011 and what best practice is from the peer-reviewed literature. Also there needs to be a stipulation that it applies to vendors as well. So now we're going to look at policies in our peer districts as well as some from across

[01:08:29] the country so the comparative policy analysis looked at the keywords sexual misconduct professional boundaries standards of conduct and abuse in the following school divisions we performed one round of open coding so just reading and looking at what each policy said and then putting it into categories and then one round of deductive coding so that means we use the categories from the literature that i just went over to see what each of these policies from these districts said regarding those categories from the literature i'm going to categorize our peer-reviewed policies

[01:09:07] our districts into three different groups in terms of where they put their policy and i think that's really important is understanding where these policies are located they're not all located in the same place so often i had to look in in multiple places to find this policy if it existed among these school districts so the first group is limited and or diffused so that means that the policy was broken up into different pieces. There were places where the the school division or the institution had language around prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse by employees, but it wasn't in one place and it was often scattered in different places and often that

[01:09:45] was overlapping with little explanation. So there was maybe one sentence here, one sentence in a different part of the policy. We fell into that category as does Charlottesville, Chesterfield, fluvana virginia beach and york the second group preventing sexual misconduct these are school divisions that have clear policies specifically around preventing sexual misconduct some of them use the term professional boundaries that's why we decided to use both and combine them because we think they're both important in terms of prevention as well as response so arlington fairfax harrisonburg penn manor pennsylvania portland oregon stafford west fargo north

[01:10:23] Dakota are examples that fall in that category. The four that are highlighted are ones that meet all of those six points that we talked about earlier. So that's why they're highlighted, and those became the basis of the language that we used in our policy to construct it.

[01:10:39] We did have a few peer districts, Augusta, Henrico, Loudoun, and Roanoke City, that had aspects of a prevention policy, and it was located in their standards of conduct for staff portion of their policy. So I'm going to go through now the key components of the policy this is not every single piece but it's what we feel like they're the most important pieces to highlight so the first part is the state statement of purpose showing that the prioritization of state and safety of students is at the forefront of what we are doing in this policy that we will provide a safe and supportive learning environment that will prevent and protect

[01:11:16] them from unwelcome behavior inappropriate activity sexual misconduct and abuse it also has a scope in terms of who it applies to, so it applies to all ACPS employees, practicum and student teachers, volunteers, community partners, and vendors providing direct services to students.

[01:11:35] And this last piece is important, acknowledging dual relationships. There are two states recently, Oklahoma and Kentucky, that have passed laws around student and educator communication, and we will talk more about that.

[01:11:51] One issue that those laws have faced are making sure that addressed in the policy is the fact that many employees have children who are also students and their friends are also, their children's friends may be interacting with them in the context of their relationship with that student outside of their educator role.

[01:12:13] And so there's two places in the policy where we describe that, and much of this comes from our peer divisions as well, where it's important for school employees who are in that situation to note what their role is and be very clear about when they're acting as a professional in the context of their role as an educator versus in their context of a parent of a student who is also in that public education system.

[01:12:38] So healthy relationships. This is the part where we describe what are the expectations. We support healthy relationships between students and adults that promote student achievement and success. Relationships are at the core of that, and it's very important. And part of what makes a healthy and strong relationship are clear boundaries.

[01:12:55] And so making sure that we protect students from boundary violations from adults that include inappropriate activities, sexual misconduct and abuse, and we also protect our educators from misunderstandings and false accusations. That's why it's really important to describe what these grooming behaviors look like, Not only to protect students, but also to protect our educators, so they understand what those clear boundaries are.

[01:13:21] Again, we note the dual relationship between students and educators if that issue comes up and what our expectations are for employees in those situations. Section 3 prohibits sexual misconduct and abuse. So the base language is from Arlington and Fairfax, and this is prohibiting engaging in sexual misconduct and abuse of students.

[01:13:44] We already have that in our policy GBC. It goes further and explains further that this is regardless of the age of the student or the proximity and age of the employee to this student. This is important as we have some students who are adults in our schools, and this prevents any of this with those students as well, regardless of the age of the student involved or the age of the employee involved.

[01:14:09] So this includes dating, making sexual advances, seeking romantic or sexual relationships, or having conversations of a sexual nature not related to the adult's professional responsibilities. Includes

unwanted touching or contact, grooming behavior, and sexual contact.

[01:14:28] The second part is about maintenance of professional boundaries. So Arlington and Harrisonburg provide the base language here. there's a long description of many of the ways that grooming can look and what those violations of boundaries look like we won't go through all of them they're in the draft policy basically we are laying out very clearly for our educators what those boundaries look like and what the expectations are for professional behavior this next part is based on in-person contact

[01:15:00] and communication so this prohibits the appearance of impropriety and then gives descriptions of how that might happen in a school setting. So conducting ongoing private conversations with individual students unrelated to the adults role in ACPS and supporting students well-being, school activities, or academics. It could be meeting with the student outside of regular school events and activities for any reason, tutoring, coaching, counseling, mentoring, having conversation without the consent of the parent or legal guardian. It could be transporting students and personal vehicles without the knowledge and consent of parents, guardians and supervisors.

[01:15:40] You will see that the word emergency is used here. We do have a definition of emergency. It is something that is critical to the operation of the school that deals with safety of students. So an example of that might be it's fourth block.

[01:15:56] It's 20 minutes before the bell rings in a middle school and you get a report that there's going to be a fight that happens at the bus loop. So administrators, counselors, school security personnel may have to activate very quickly to interview the students. We learned about this through a student. We have to interview the students who may be involved to try to diffuse that situation as quickly as possible.

[01:16:15] There may not be time in that situation to call parents prior to that. However, this policy would state the expectation that the parents would be notified afterwards in the case of that emergency situation. Taking a student out of class without a legitimate educational or health-related reason approved by administration would fall in this category of violation of in-person contact and communication, and parent-guardian consent must be granted if occurring on a consistent, regular schedule.

[01:16:45] Going to a student's home, seeking out, arranging a meeting with a student outside of the school setting without a legitimate educational reason, and any behavior that would lead the student to believe that the adult is interested in them romantically or sexually. This next part is distinct from our peer divisions.

[01:17:02] There were not many examples in our peer divisions of Virginia that have clear limits on one-on-one interactions. However, there are other school divisions throughout the country that do this, and many independent schools as well, and so we draw from them for this. That being said, this is the place where we need even more review, I would say, because this is constructed by us, not based on the peer divisions policy.

[01:17:25] So one-on-one meetings with students will be limited to employees with a legitimate educational or health reason to do so. Those are also both defined in the policy and the definition section. When meeting one-on-one with students for educational purposes, adults would ensure that they are in a space accessible and visible to other adults.

[01:17:44] Meetings must occur in a space designated by the school administration as an appropriate area for adult student meetings. The important piece here is visibility and accessibility. This next part is about licensed school counselors, special educators. Our counselors already have a separate policy where they have to inform families the beginning of the school year about what social counseling looks like and give families the opportunity to opt out of that we would work in this policy would expand that to our special educators and other staff whose job duties include regular one-on-one meetings so career counselors in high school for example would fall in that category they would need to lay out at

[01:18:24] the beginning of the school year what those one-on-one meetings look like and give parents the opportunity to opt out because these meetings are happening frequently they would not notify parents every time that they happen however they would be documenting them and the parents would be able to see that documentation whenever they requested it it does make exceptions for cases of child abuse that are co-investigated with social services and law enforcement for all other adults besides the ones mentioned here who are meeting regularly with students one-on-one the expectation would be that they are is that they would notify

[01:19:01] parents in writing prior to those meetings happening and then reiterating in this last part the only school personnel that should be meeting with a student out of view with a student would be a school nurse a special education or preschool health related teaching assistant in a space designated for those purposes electronic communication this is a existing policy we have GDB requires staff members to refrain from communicating with students through any personal social media platform. So that's already in our policy. We go further to

[01:19:40] describe that using the base of Harrisonburg and Arlington's policy saying that adults may not friend or follow students or accept friend or follow requests. We reference policy JO that they should never be posting photos of students in any location except for a professional media account with the consent of the parents. And this last piece will be a big change for our secondary educators. So, and this is where we have no peer policies that, peer divisions that do this. However, it is state policy in Kentucky and Oklahoma for

[01:20:16] the last year. Adults must restrict one-on-one electronic communications with individual students to accounts, systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to our by our schools. These systems must provide access to parents and guardians to observe all communication with their child. In the case of a communication system that does not automatically allow access to parents, for example email, ACPS email does not automatically CC the parents, the parent/guardian must be included in the communication. We have a new parent communication system, ParentSquare, coming on board that has this capability where a teacher can send a direct message, basically an email to a student

[01:20:55] with that system, answering their question about homework. Some students email multiple times asking about homework. The teacher may be concerned about always having to look up the parent's email. If they use ParentSquare, they don't have to.

[01:21:11] ParentSquare logs every communication with the educator and a parent can go on and log in and see all of the interactions that have happened with their child. This next part is about reporting violations and I know there was some public feedback this today, and so I think that this is an important place for us to look at in terms of enhancing this and making it better. So this distinguishes between the

two important types of sexual misconduct that may occur. The one is criminal in nature. If someone has clear understanding that a child is being

[01:21:47] abused, then we already have clear policies in place about how to report child abuse, and that needs to happen. This makes it even clearer about a connecting to our Title IX existing policy, GBA. That policy did exist before.

[01:22:02] This makes it clear that that is the policy that's also important to utilize in this case. However, there's this other part about, let's say you're a parent or you're a teacher and you see something that falls under the category of a boundary violation.

[01:22:18] It's not illegal, you don't see abuse happening, but you see something that makes you feel concerned. There is a channel to communicate that to the supervisor. We need to expand that so that human resources is also involved. And we've already had some internal discussion about that after this was posted.

[01:22:36] So there needs to be multiple channels by which different groups can report something that they see that they're concerned about that goes. And it can also be made anonymously. We do have the help me system that can already be used for anonymous reports. It could also be used for this case if we needed it to be used in that sense.

[01:22:56] It's important to have a whistleblower protection clause. And so that's why we have this that says retaliation against anyone reporting or thought to have made a report is prohibited. The next part is what happens after that, the investigation. So the first piece is, again, anything that is sexual abuse or harassment is investigated by the Title IX coordinator.

[01:23:19] And they do that in partnership with the principal department head, as well as human resources. If it is an issue of a professional boundary violation, that would be the principal, unless the principal was the one who was being investigated, and it would be in partnership with human resources.

[01:23:41] if someone is found to have violated this policy and the professional boundaries they would be subject to disciplinary action per our policy gbca employee discipline the next paragraph specifies pertinent virginia code for reporting founded cases and disclosure of employee violations to other divisions the last section is on training awareness and prevention and this is much more comprehensive than other school divisions in our peer network some do have training in there this goes further to say what the responsibility is of each

[01:24:18] group so our community partners and contractors are an important part of this we maintain many contracts for services directly provided to students and it will be important going forward that each ACPS staff member responsible for those contracts works with the the vendor to ensure that they are aware of this policy and they certify compliance with it for our employees the The expectation is that they will complete annual training regarding the professional boundaries as well as the prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse.

[01:24:50] For our parents and guardians, they will be informed of this policy as well as how to report concerns based on the response and investigation protocol that we laid out. For our student teachers, interns and practicum students, we will be working, if this is adopted, we will be working with our university and higher education partners around what those placements look like and ensuring those student teachers also have training on this policy. Our students shall receive age-appropriate instruction

around personal safety, healthy boundaries. We already have some of this in our curriculum, our health curriculum, however we're going to be looking at expanding

[01:25:29] that in a way that is appropriate for prevention. Our superintendent shall direct training and communication programs to ensure that our employees and our volunteers, our community partners, that we are working together to to implement this policy to keep our students safe.

[01:25:44] And finally, the expectation is that our volunteers will also receive orientation training around this policy. And now I will pause for questions and discussion.

[01:26:00] - Rusty, thank you very much for this, all of your work that you and your team did on this. I got a message today about Section 4C, just about, just sort of clarifying what that looks like.

[01:26:17] And I didn't quite understand when you were talking So would counselors notify every family that this could be something that you could opt out of? Or would it just be the students they were intending to meet with?

[01:26:32] Per Virginia code and our own counseling policy, counselors at the beginning of each school year are to notify parents of what the counseling program looks like. And part of that includes social counseling.

[01:26:48] counseling and that can include going and to distinguish from academic counseling which is about which course is best for you it's about helping students have a healthy mental health life social life in their school and parents are able to opt out of social counseling in our schools okay so every it's a blanket for everybody that's right okay i think it's really impressive that you pulled this together in just the last few weeks.

[01:27:21] So first of all, job well done. It's incredibly impressive, and it's a lot of work. How would you like feedback? Would it be better to do it now, or would it be better to send suggestions in an email, since we're going to be discussing in an open meeting next week, 'cause I know we're on a time crunch with the agenda, so I don't know what's appropriate or what the expectation is.

[01:27:43] - I think school council might want to chime in on what you feel would be best. - I mean, I defer to the school board. your meeting, but I think in the interest of time for me, I would probably send some comments, maybe a red line in between the two meetings. Sure. We're going to have a pretty fulsome discussion in the public hearing. Okay. All right. Well, then I have, I think it's 99.9% amazing. The only areas similar to Ms. Lee, I think there needs to be a little bit more clarification around the counseling section to protect some of the privacy issues and,

[01:28:19] you know things like crisis intervention and things like that um so i will send an email with all of that and then i look forward to the discussion but really great job you know oh oh sorry i think we have a couple more questions apologies i know we have other people from this

[01:28:48] oh yeah i just wanted to highlight uh an email that we got today from an astute community member who is supportive of a lot of these changes, but has some concern about the reporting mechanism, ways that this could be rectified and provide a safeguard so that the onus isn't just on the building principle, because that was one of the operational failures that happened.

[01:29:26] another recommendation is to make precise the legal codification of emergency exemptions just to make that super clear the third point was implementation of a parental right to know clause

mandatory disclosure clause if an employee is suspended or reassigned due to allegations of sexual misconduct the parents of students who interacted with that employee within the proceeding one or two year period must be formally notified within 48 hours of the administrative action so

[01:30:00] that quick notification of parents that was i think one issue one of many issues that was a failure and then the last one is just active digitized oversight of one-on-one interactivity logs there's got to be a way to digitize the recording of such meetings so thank you I just want to say thank you, Dr. Karlock, and your staff for this work.

[01:30:35] It is incredibly amazing so quickly. I wish ACBS had a policy like this within the last 10 years. I don't know why it didn't. And I'm wondering, I'm also in support of a parental notification, if somebody is suspended or reassigned due to sexual misconduct allegations.

[01:31:01] I think that's very important for parents and community members. But thank you for all that you've done. Look forward to hearing more next week. - Thank you. - Any other questions or comments? So I think a couple, actually I have one quick one, is around the notification, just as we're thinking about this, knowing that I think there's 84 languages spoken by our families and how that notification would occur, so that it is both in the, knowing that we have 84 languages

[01:31:40] so that the parents understand that notification and that it is done in a way that if it is oral or written that they can access that. So just a piece. Just a couple of things for the public, kind of wondering why we're not making lots of changes right now.

[01:31:58] So kind of for this and actually the policy that we will do after the break around grading, we thought that it is important to have two sessions. So we will be kind of, we are doing what you just saw. So there will be information shared, policy shared both with us and publicly.

[01:32:17] There is the opportunity for both the board as well as the public. All of the emails that you are sending with feedback and suggestions are being sent to Dr. Carlock's group through Dr. Hayes, so that everything you're saying to us, we are making sure is shared.

[01:32:36] Everything you said in public comment, and as they said at the beginning, all the comments that came prior to this meeting, and in the Hollymead meeting, were all shared. And then at the next board meeting, next Thursday, we will have a public hearing.

[01:32:51] And so, what a public hearing is, is we will still have public comment. Public comment can be on any issue before the board, or any school-based issue. The public hearing will be on this specific topic. So you have the opportunity to speak on this specific topic.

[01:33:08] And then at that meeting, we will go through, there will be a posted update, if there are updates based on your comments or our comments that will be posted. And then we will go through that again at the meeting and make line item changes if necessary.

[01:33:24] So I just wanna make sure this is not being voted on now. This is still in draft form. there is time to provide feedback. We just want to make sure that we can have a policy that is voted on next week, knowing that school starts the 12th.

[01:33:41] So we need a month, a little less than a month, to make sure that these things are in place. Principals, teachers, assistant principals, everyone, IAs are trained on these. So just an update. And a huge thank you to you and the entire team for your work on this.

[01:34:00] - Just one more question, if I may. I'm focused on the outside community members. We have a high premium on having our students placed in internships or job shadowing or outside of the building.

[01:34:17] And a lot of what you've covered is vendors coming into the schools. I think we need to make it clear that it's applicable in those situations as well? - So work-based learning, internships, placing students in employment outside of the schools and collaborating with those employers, addressing that.

[01:34:39] - Thank you so much. - Thank you so much. We appreciate it. - Thank you. - Jason Grantsley, Communication Officer. Just to make sure as we move this forward, so there's been a lot of suggestions of where you've read, to Vice Chair Spilman's point, having those edits there, so not just the comments that are there, 'cause next week we'll have to have some language for you all to vote on.

[01:34:59] so if you've got those comments, where might those be? Where would you suggest those? And reach out to staff, we can help with how to draft that. But make sure that we have something specific in hand next week beyond just the comments. It'll be helpful for us to get it adopted. - Thank you.

[01:35:15] - Thank you so much. The next item on our agenda is 8.2 FY27 budget update. State budget and state salary increase, Ms. Kumazawa. I am excited to report that we have a signed budget for the state of Virginia.

[01:35:37] And Ms. Kumazawa is gonna give us some updates on that and how it affects our school year going forward. - Thank you, and good evening. I'm Maya Kumazawa, director of budget and planning. And as Dr. Berlin stated, I'm gonna provide a brief update on where we are with the state budget and the impact to our adopted budget.

[01:36:01] This, our strategic plan does support our budget. In particular, the strategic goal of equitable and transformative resources is where this topic is focused around.

[01:36:18] So just last week, right before the new fiscal year started, the state adopted their budget, their biennial budget, which covers 2026 to 2028. There are four components of it that had an impact on our estimated state revenues.

[01:36:33] the first is an increase in the compensation supplement. This compensation supplement is provided to school divisions who will provide an average 4% salary increase in both this current year and next year fiscal year 28. In comparison, the governor's introduced budget had a supplement that represented a 2% increase. In the adopted budget, we have salary increases ranging from 3.75 to 4.25 percent and so this evening since we are starting the new year this is a more urgent

[01:37:07] topic to discuss as if we want to revise that in order to pull down the full state funds we have a recommendation for you this evening the second is an increase to sales tax projections the third is an increase in the infrastructure and operations per pupil fund and the last is an increase in the special education add-on. These last three bullets are new state revenues. We don't have to change our expenditures to receive these funds so we can continue with our budget as is and this would just be supplemental state revenues that are above and beyond what we have adopted in our budget. So it's

[01:37:45] great news for us. This is an overview of the adopted budget in terms of our revenues and then what we are now estimating. So what we are proposing to change. The local transfer and other local revenues are projected to remain the same.

[01:38:04] The state revenue is projected to increase by about \$2 million. So that's 2 million above what was adopted. That's a 2.4% increase. Federal revenues will also remain the same and one-time use of fund balance. Overall, for our school fund budget, that \$2 million increase represents about a 0.6% increase when compared to what was adopted.

[01:38:29] As I mentioned, based on the salary supplements that's in the adopted state budget that represents a 4% salary increase, staff recommends a revision in the FY27 salary increase that's currently in the adopted budget.

[01:38:46] For licensed staff, the budget supports a 3.75% increase currently. What's proposed is to increase that by a quarter percentage point to get to a 4% salary increase. For Employee Support Professionals, that's our classified employees, the adopted budget does include a 4.25% increase, but in maintaining that differential between those two groups, we propose a 0.25% salary increase above what was adopted to a 4.5% increase.

[01:39:20] I just wanted to clarify that in order to receive the state supplement, you can provide a salary increase lower than the 4%, the state will essentially prorate the amount that you're getting to 4%.

[01:39:35] So if it's 3%, you would get 75% of the supplement that's allocated. So we would still be getting whatever percent if we've continued with the adopted budget increases, we would get that prorated amount as a state supplement.

[01:39:51] The cost of this change would be about \$511,000. The funding of that would come from the additional state revenue that we're now anticipating. So we wouldn't be using up the full increase, but a portion of it.

[01:40:08] In the FY27 Collective Bargaining Agreement, that agreement states that a minimum salary increase be provided, and what we have in the adopted budget is that minimum. So by increasing it, we're still meeting the agreement because we're providing more than what was minimally required.

[01:40:27] this change would impact the salary scales for 27 and the scales for 28 and 29 were built upon a certain salary scale for 27 we may need to have further discussions with the aea to determine how the salary scales will be impacted for years two and three of the agreement um this here is just is up for information today next week what would happen is we put it an appropriation request for the Board of Supervisors on the consent agenda for action.

[01:41:00] So this evening, if you have questions or want to discuss anything, that's what this time is for. Thank you. Any comments or questions on this? Looks great. This is always concise and to the point. Looks good. And I'm very happy that the state did this as a percentage increase and not as a bonus because then it continues. I think that's an important piece to try to keep clicking

[01:41:32] away at the fact that the state of Virginia is 26th in either 24th or 26th. It's been a long day, I'm not sure if I remember today. Bottom half of salaries for teachers and professional staff, and it's important to continue to make a commitment to increase that. Thank you.

[01:41:56] Thank you so much. I appreciate it. So it is now, and that is, yep, that's it. It is now 8:15, And I would suggest that we take the 10 minute break as planned just because I know we have another big chunk of work to go through particularly with the grading policy, and I want to make sure that both Dr. Carlock as

well as ourselves our brains are sharp, so I think a 10 minute break is advised unless anyone wants to fight me on that one. Okay, so we will adjourn until 8:25

[01:42:35] according to my clock. Thank you so much. I would like to bring this meeting back to order and it is my honor to invite and he's already here so introduce Community Lab School Highlights and again Chad Radcliffe and I apologize he and head of staff and students here to do some sessions which says in the meeting last month that had to be abbreviated so I

[01:43:13] would like to formally thank them for their preparation and appreciate his understanding. So thank you. Thank you so much. I am Chad Ratliff. I'm principal of Community Lab School. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you our annual highlights report. It's a highlights report due to some structural innovations of themselves that I'll share with you briefly. And I also just want to say thank you board cabinet congratulations superintendent Hayes for all the work that you've been doing I know this is this is very difficult summer a lot of heavy issues but meaningfully from me I just appreciate

[01:43:52] that I know it's not easy so thank you so I am here to and to to share with you some of the things that we've accomplished this year I will warn you that this is a much condensed version this is the original slide deck so I'm going to jump through some things I'm going to try not to be too scattered but I do want to leave a couple of minutes at the end so that you have some time for Q&A if you'd like to and this is the the agenda that we're cover what lab is and isn't our approach to teaching and learning the highlights of celebrations what we're working on now and what's coming down the pike and then the

[01:44:32] breakout session I've just included a couple slides that we were going to talk about so hopefully by the end of this you'll know how we're organized and why which will be a refresher for some maybe some new information for others what we do differently how we're doing and where we're going first what is a lab school it's actually over 100 years old it was first conceptualized by John do at the University of Chicago to develop a school that experimented with non traditional approaches to teaching and learning in a real school environment generate knowledge that influences practices beyond the school and in that

[01:45:08] time over a hundred years ago that meant hands-on projects integrated content areas and multi-age learning which over a hundred years later that's still what we're working on in Virginia however there are formal designations for lab schools the college partnership lab schools are a little bit different than what we do. They have a governance structure that sits outside the public school board and are governed for the most part by universities. The charter school similarly was conceptualized in the late 80s by AFT president and

[01:45:45] education reformer Al Schenker to develop a similar school model where teachers worked within the school district to experiment with innovative approaches, drawing their own expertise and create educational laboratories from which public schools can learn.

[01:46:01] As you know, charter schools since that time have become more of a policy innovation than an instructional one. And are, particularly outside of Virginia, are often ways to develop publicly funded, privately operated schools.

[01:46:16] Virginia is a little bit different. It's in our state constitution that only local school boards can open and close schools. The language for that in charter territory is authorized. But even in Virginia, it's a lot of the structures and systems in Virginia charter schools are independent of the local school board.

[01:46:38] That makes us very unique. And that question is one of the points that we get the most, which is why I'm sharing this with you tonight, is what is community lab school? What's it for? What's it do? It's not one of those VDOE lab schools.

[01:46:53] And it is a charter school, but it's interestingly a fully integrated, comprehensively supported charter by the school district. I have been almost 30 years working in this sector. Many of those teaching and studying educational innovation in general and models across the country.

[01:47:12] I have yet to come across something quite similar to ours. but these are the policies and the legislation that governs what we do. The bottom, the Code of Virginia, those are the seven practices that we're expected to do. Your policy is unique in that it states the primary objective of charter schools is to serve as labs to improve opportunities and in line with the division's mission, vision, and goals.

[01:47:39] And that, as far as I can tell, is trifecta that makes this school the only one like it in the country that at least I have found by circumstance and design. So I thought this was an interesting tidbit that I thought was kind of cool, thought you might too.

[01:47:56] But the autonomy for innovation as a charter school, however deeply integrated into the district just like any other ACPS school in every way, but also with a lab school function. What that looks like on the ground is project-based learning, integrated content areas, competency-based grading, which I'll talk about in a second, multi-age levels and collective leadership what makes this unique is that these aren't isolated things that are happening in the across the school these are things that are happening all at the same time with with groups of students and those groups of students are have this organizational structure vertically

[01:48:35] instead of seven grade levels we have three levels grade six through eight grades nine and ten and then grades eleven and twelve six through eight is our group uh that those five components are all put together for english science social studies and then art ct and advisory are woven in grades 9 and 10 looks very similar with english 9 and 10 world g and government biology and earth science art entrepreneurship one and two are all integrated and rolled out over the course of two years and then in the 11th grade we roll into the ib diploma program which is a sort of a capstone for us that resembles a lot like what the rest of our school

[01:49:13] does all of our students are IV certificate candidates because it's not a track path it's a path that they all can they all take IV English in history they can opt out of the IV diploma if they want but they're available for them this is a quote from we just had our first comprehensive IV audit toward the end of last year this was from the organization itself as the school truly serves as a model of a learning organization. Teachers and school leaders demonstrate what it means to be learners within their own practice, which has

[01:49:50] built a school culture that encourages and rewards testing, reflecting, and learning from experience. That was very meaningful to us and we were happy to hear that. We do admit by a random lottery that is in state code and with the reflective local policy, nothing weighted in any way, not siblings, not demographics not geography it we roll it out over the course of about a year we do information sessions admitted students come in to spend a day with us and really get a feel for what that is and then we establish wait lists that we

[01:50:25] run through until the end of the cycle these are the growth trends for applications and enrollment over the last decade applications are the crimson line and started at roughly zero ten years ago and are at 288 in this most recent cycle we have been at between 250 and 320 the last five years I think and then enrollment started below 150 usually tapers off around 190 or so

[01:51:00] that's our program capacity to be able to run a program in this way with it with with the number of teachers and a grouped cohort like that, our program capacity is roughly 190, give or take.

[01:51:16] So I want to take this moment too. I know the board and the cabinet has, for the last two or maybe three years, really advocated for the approved facility development of lab school, and that means a lot to me, and I want to thank you for that ongoing support and advocacy.

[01:51:37] This particular cycle, again, 288 applications received. Grade six is a big one, that's our 4.4, oversubscribed on that in terms of applicants to seats. Grade nine comes in second, usually, and then back down to grade seven.

[01:51:57] And again, the fifth year of sustained 250 to 320 applicants for usually 50 or so seats annually. These are our SLL pass rates over the last three cycles. Of course, we're waiting soon. I think you're gonna hear maybe from Dr. McLaughlin next week or so about what those look like, but these are the last three years.

[01:52:20] The lab continues to do quite well on academic metrics, traditional academic metrics, even though we teach non-traditionally. For the previous two years, we were awarded an exemplar performance award for VDOE on all traditional metrics, not just academics.

[01:52:40] In this, when they changed that program, we were also awarded the equivalent of Distinguished this year with a 91.7 of 100 points honor. We're very, very proud of that. Panorama data shows that our students and families feel that Lab is a safe and positive place to learn, with 80% of families reporting their students feel safe when they come home and talk about Lab, 76% report a positive climate, 97% and 95% respectively do not worry about violence at the school at all in any way.

[01:53:17] And nearly 80% of parents say their children really just enjoy being there. They are also known and heard. Families feel like their children are CLS staff, she has a deep respect for them. Adults are supportive. 82% report it's easy to get help if they're bullied.

[01:53:36] 84% say it's CLS is a great fit for their child this is what we're especially proud of this year our staff engagement was at a five-year high one of those a statistically significant move one of the schools in our county public schools we moved up to 4.16 and this is something that we track in our research partnerships as well we were at a national level selected to be one of the schools in the Canopy Project, which is an ongoing collaboration between the Center on Reinventing Public Education at Transcend, which pulls together

[01:54:15] schools across the country that are doing non-traditional things or new and innovative things and create sort of a Netflix or Amazon filtering model. So if you want to see what a project base with interdisciplinary looks like, it'll filter down to those schools we were included in that.

[01:54:33] We were also selected as one of 10 schools in the country to be featured in research for competency-based learning in high school by full scale. Our partnerships and collaboration highlights were year nine of a collaboration with UVA School of Education.

[01:54:53] We work with Stanford, Stanford's program for reading and dyslexic research. We're piloting what's called a rapid online assessment of students' reading capabilities throughout the year. Quick 10-minute snips of how they're doing, how they're moving, how they're growing, and we're trying to align that to SOL work.

[01:55:13] And then we work with Darden for the second year to think about how to incorporate entrepreneurial thinking through our method of teaching and learning. And the last one, we do not receive any funds from these research practice partnerships. It's just collaborative in every way.

[01:55:30] So there's no income as it relates to those other than enriching what we know and learn about our work. However, RMC has become a great fundraising partner for us. Our students volunteer. If you go to a football game or a JPJ concert, you've probably seen some lab school students and families and staff.

[01:55:49] And they're probably taking your ticket. And that helps fund a lot of the things that we try to do. These are the three areas of research that when we create these partnerships that we're looking for. Does it intersect learning-centered education, the science of adolescent development, and equitable evaluation?

[01:56:06] Those are the three most important things. Here are the research questions that we're looking for. We want to know how students do both academically and otherwise, how teachers feel about that, and how other people think if they could adopt some of these models. This year, our primary focus was on grading.

[01:56:25] and I know you have a report coming up right after this about division-wide policies. I created this slide to sort of frame up what LAB is doing, how that's different from the conversation that you have, and this is sort of a continuum of what a trajectory of grading looks like.

[01:56:43] Traditional is probably what we all experienced when we got our number at the end of the semester, and you're not quite sure what that meant, but it had a letter with it. Standard space tries to drill down into that a little more and then mastery moves off and really kind of shifts the whole thing.

[01:56:59] So we're thinking about what the competencies are that students who come to labs seek to build skills and competencies and that we evaluate the academic work through the competencies. So it flips it. We did a soft pilot of that this year of a new template, rather, we've been doing that for years, but a fully comprehensive competency-based grading report card in grades full pilot, I'm sorry, in grades six through eight, and that's what our UVA partner researcher was researching for us.

[01:57:32] We haven't gotten a full report back, but depending on what we learned from that work, we're gonna move from soft pilot in 9-12 to potentially adopting that record. It's called the mastery learning record. More broadly, we're thinking probably another year two out simply because high school is is different uh stakes are higher for young people credits time it's challenging um so that's what we're working on uh the competencies that we're uh assessing toward were mostly grounded in alamara county public schools uh language uh

[01:58:09] we integrated uva's portrait of a thriving youth which is more around adolescent development in general and IB's approaches to learning which look a lot like album or so those are how we develop these competencies that we're assessing and academics within them and I'll let you look through those and as you can see the first competency is content that's one of the things that we value also creative and critical and creative thinking effective communication etc etc and the sub competencies below that and

what that looks like is students go through two three week project periods they think they've demonstrated that they are

[01:58:48] emerging in transfer of the writing in English paper or whatever then they will submit a product for the teacher to review and assess the teacher will give them feedback I think you're developing on that maybe more often than not students like to say I'm already illustrating on that we might say maybe you're developing how about some some refinement and that goes back and forth teachers this is a teacher view so they can see a heat map of what students are getting and how they're learning and where they are where some gaps might be class-wide or system-wide and then the student view is they can see there on

[01:59:26] the right you can see the feedback that that they've gotten and then families have access to this as well so they not only can see what the assessment is and these are our three it's a three-point scale emerging developing illustrating uh illustrating mastery uh they can see not only what the the record is but they can see the work and the feedback that went along the way to get there um how'd i do 20 minutes uh so this was where uh we go to the breakout session and we're basically the last couple of slides is what we're going to talk about um in that part but here now i'll just open it up for uh any questions

[02:00:11] sort of outside the instruction question you did mention capital and i'm always focused on that capacity i know when we unfortunately lab school is not in the top five of our priorities but remind me um it's my understanding that with the plans that were in the proposal we could you could admit up to 300 students four it would go to four 400 students which is you know double what you have now and you know we may want to look at that again because that

[02:00:47] could relieve some of the overcrowding and given really stellar academic performance of your kids there's a lot of demand for for that with at least 30 percent you know of the applicants being told to take a note that you can't accommodate them so both for academic and capacity issues I would support were you looking at that? Thank you. I have a question very much related to that but coming at it from a different perspective because I was thinking about lab school being the only one of

[02:01:26] our schools where high school students can be rejected. So I'm just thinking about whether the capacity determined at lab school has any reflection of the overcapacity that the other schools are having that might be better for Roslyn it might I don't know if it's a question that can be answered here but it just occurs to me that when the other schools are facing such overcrowding I think a consideration of that for the capacity of lab school would be important especially given that we go to the

[02:02:02] graduations and they're like a very small number of kids true did you mention it in one of the slides that there are roughly 4.4 times the number of sixth-graders who would like to be enrolled, so we're admitting less than 25%. Wow. I have to say, I had the opportunity to visit lab school on the Monday after spring break. I'm sorry that we were there, and it was a fantastic experience, and I came away from there thinking, of my four kids,

[02:02:41] at least two of them would have benefited greatly had that been around 15 years ago, so thanks for the work that you and the staff are doing it's really amazing yeah kudos to the staff it's a remarkable team truly thank you for everything you're doing we really do appreciate it beyond capacity what can we do for you you're doing it you're doing it superintendent Hayes since day one has been hugely supportive cabinet dr. McLaughlin Ross everybody has been good so you know I keep the

[02:03:17] question back to you let us know what we can do to be more helpful. I'm curious then kind of along those lines given the success of the lab school what what sort of sharing of information do we do with the other schools to share these successes and try to implement things that are working really well and granted the kinds of kids that are looking to go to lab school are a certain type of kid a certain type of student but given that there's so many kids that want

[02:03:53] to go that don't get in or maybe choose not to do it for other reasons sports or whatever else what are we doing to share that information yeah it's a good question our teachers typically present at you know making connections in our in our pd uh division-wide pd work um something like this you know with informing the board of what we're doing or other things that we're trying to do that right now it's all informal for the most part other than formal presentations but there's not a formal mechanism for something at lab that's working that is transferable the the systems and structures that particularly

[02:04:30] schedules and things that we're able to manipulate within the school day make a lot of the work simpler so I think that what what we would be able to inform most hopefully it would be hey you know we have a hundred students in X you know grade that would like to build out a program that looks like that sort of school within a school model yeah which also the literature tends to support is a way to roll things out that have you know sort of major systemic changes yeah and I think a criticism that we hear a lot and something we've noticed is a lot

[02:05:09] siloing in in the division and you know we get these presentations you know I remember a specific one we had where you know a science team was talking about how they worked together at an elementary school and how well their students were doing but there when I asked a similar question there hadn't been any sharing of that information with the other elementary schools and similar teams and so I think that's something I'm looking at you Dr. Hayes not that you don't already have a ton on your plate but as we're looking forward to improving test scores and things like that when something's working really well i would love

[02:05:42] to see plans for how we're spreading that information throughout the division to share in the knowledge we're not recreating the wheel and people can benefit from things we're doing really well yeah and lab school is the perfect example of this granted you can't take that model and just put it exactly in a school but i would imagine there are things that are working really well that could be implemented at our secondary schools that could have you know major impact yeah for sure and you know part of that too is in our work the work of schools and work with children you know time matters right and you want proof of concept and you want to see that you didn't have

[02:06:22] a couple lucky years and that sort of thing so i think now that we have some hindsight yeah i think you've proven that didn't work that worked better um that iterative part has been critically helpful to us yeah what what demographically what do your applicants look like we are representative of acps within about 10 to 15 percentage points overall we tend to shade much higher on students

[02:06:53] with disabilities 504s included in ieps and we shade much lower on esol students those are the and through the two divergences. - Yeah, I was actually just thinking about that with the 504s and the IEPs, because my husband and I talk about this all the time, that our kids with special needs don't fit into the boxes that society necessarily creates for them in these kind of environments that allow more exploratory and hands-on learning, and this lab idea really suits kids who don't learn typically.

[02:07:27] And so that would be a really interesting way to see how that may help our other SPED students in our other schools that aren't in this, taking some of those wins from lab school and how can we implement that in our schools to give these kids a better opportunity.

[02:07:43] - Yeah, it's a great point. - The other thing I would say is the number of research partnerships that you have. And about two months ago, a month and a half ago, we had a presentation about the Virginia UVA research practice partnership, and some of the other work of the ones in the state.

[02:08:06] And there's this evolving model of what researchers want to study in schools to what actually there's a mutually beneficial coming together. And I think, I'm saying this to you, but to all of us, and I think there's a meeting that they've invited us to, just about like, as we are approached about research, kind of having this like, what are the things that we are also interested in?

[02:08:28] And I think this question that, you know, Ms. Billman and others brought up of, what are the, you know, what is that magic sauce? Like, you know, is it the small, both class size as well as size of the school? Probably, but are there some other things that are the magic sauce?

[02:08:45] And then in particularly then how in a school that's housed in a larger school district, how do you pick some of those strategies up? So, you know, I kind of say it for all of us to think about Dr. Hayes and you and everyone kind of who are doing this work of as we are kind of re-engaging with the UVA team, you're to the teams that are working with you directly and then the research practice partnership, I think having conversations with them about like, hey, these are things we wanna know, like how do we come together and make some agreements so that, I used to use a certain, like research is going to us instead of with us.

[02:09:24] And I think that's a really important piece, so. - Yeah, for sure, I'm glad you're asking that question. Thank you. - Anything else? - Thank you. - Yeah, thank you so much. - Thank you so much. - Thank you so much, you so appreciate it.

[02:09:47] I would like to, there's someone in the audience who's been very busy with the team around him. So I would like to invite Dr. Russell Carlock back to the podium. And we are going to look at policy IKBA, the grading policy part one.

[02:10:06] and we have this marked as part one. As I mentioned earlier, this is a draft policy. Dr. Karloch is gonna bring us through the same model he did earlier tonight. We are not voting on this tonight. It is open for the public. Thank you for everyone who's already given feedback.

[02:10:23] We encourage you, both in public comment and in emails to us directly, as well as to Dr. Karloch, to share questions, concerns, ideas that you have. This is truly meant to be a collaborative approach. So we will have a presentation on this tonight, a little bit of discussion, and then we will have another discussion next week.

[02:10:48] - Thank you, Dr. Berlin, and thank you, members of the school board. We will be talking today about the process by which we came up with the recommendations that we're making in the report that was prepared, evaluating our grading policy as well as its implementation guidelines.

[02:11:05] We're gonna talk about standards-based grading. Chad Ratliff teed that up a little bit with some of the work that they're doing around grading at Community Lab. And then we'll talk about the methods that we use to evaluate our grading policy and practice in Albemarle County Public Schools, discuss the

key findings, and then some recommendations for the board, as well as next steps going into the next board meeting.

[02:11:28] So our policy process, review process, began back in March 26th. The board requested this review. We did the comparative policy analysis, quantitative regression, as well as a teacher survey of all teachers in Albemarle County in April. In May, we conducted six focus groups, three with parents, three with students, and we wrote the report up.

[02:11:49] And we were scheduled to make the June 11th presentation. We're giving it tonight. And then the board will offer revisions and finalization. So literature review on best practices in terms of grading. So I want to tee this up a little bit with talking about traditional grading system versus standards-based grading.

[02:12:06] And I want to say that traditional doesn't mean that it's older. Both of these grading practices have been around for a long time, over 100 years. And the traditional grading system is just the more common one. It's the one that most of us probably experienced. Some of us may have gone to a different school that did standards-based grading.

[02:12:21] Although I will say that most of us probably have experienced standards-based grading too, and I'll talk about that. So the first piece about traditional grading systems, they're variable. So there's often not a clear policy around how teachers are to grade. It can be very variable across different teachers and courses in schools.

[02:12:40] So each teacher can sort of grade in their own way. It uses a zero to 100 point scale. It combines behavior, effort, and work habits with academic outcomes. And often different teachers may weigh those things differently. So some teachers may privilege participation more.

[02:12:57] Some others may make it strictly about academic skills or you might have anything in between. They also average grades from multiple points in time to create a composite across the marking period that represents achievement. That is different than standards-based grading.

[02:13:13] So let's say if you start with, at the beginning of the year and it's very difficult for you, you don't understand, you may be getting Fs, but by the end of the year, you're getting As, you've learned the material, or maybe it's the end of the quarter. For the year overall, you might get a C because it's an average of those.

[02:13:31] Standards-based grading, it's gonna be what you were at the end of the year or the end of that marking period, and we'll talk about that as we look at these two report cards. So on the left is a traditional report card, mathematics, 95% equals A. Standards-based report card gives a score on math, and then it goes further to say what the student can do for each of those skills.

[02:13:53] So can they define a number sentence? Can they produce, can they add two digit numbers together? So you can see that standards-based grading gives a lot more information about what students can do. And you may see that this four to seven categories that standards-based grades use is what preschools use.

[02:14:11] My daughter just graduated from preschool. Her report card came home. This is what it looked like. You'll also see that in elementary schools, this is what we're using. We use a standards-based report card in elementary school. So most of us have experienced both of these types of grading systems.

[02:14:27] You'll also note that if a student at the beginning of kindergarten doesn't know how to read, but then they learn at the end, you don't give them a C because they didn't know at the beginning and they learned at the end, you're grading them on what they could do at the end of the marking period, right?

[02:14:43] You're showing that growth over time. They also separate academic product standards from work readiness and process standards. So again, thinking back to preschool, can the student share with other students? That's separated out from, can the student recognize a triangle from a circle, right?

[02:14:59] So they're separating out those two things. In a traditional report card, those things might get pushed together as a conglomeration of both the social and process skills, as well as the outcome skills that we're looking at. It also, as we said, we update grades throughout the marking period to indicate the current levels of performance on standards in a standards-based report card.

[02:15:19] there's a lot of research supporting standards-based grading. So categorical scales are more reliable than the 100-point scale. There's research on this that goes back over 100 years. In fact, it's why we have the letter grade system. Schools used to only use numbers, and then they did the research coming out of Mount Holyoke College and some other places that use standards-based grading, and they found out that it was more reliable, that teachers did a better job of integrated reliability when they used a scale system like that that was combined with a rubric, than using a zero to 100 scale that was combined with a rubric.

[02:15:52] It also separates process and product, and that provides more valid grades for both. It also, parents prefer often the transparency of grades reported on specific standards, because it lets them know what their child is strong in, and what they need to work on.

[02:16:07] If I see that a student got a B in math, that's great, and what could they have done better on, or what are they really strong in? I'm not sure, right? But I get to see that in a standards-based report card. It also helps learning.

[02:16:23] So there's been research on classrooms that apply it and randomized control trials that others that don't. And it is associated with better learning for students so that they can see their growth. All right, so the question is, if it's so great, why don't we just do it everywhere, right?

[02:16:38] Why isn't standards-based grading something that we do everywhere? There are different ways that divisions have responded to this research. So over the last 10 to 15 years, lot of school divisions change their policies, their grading policies, to try to make their traditional grading system more similar to a standards-based system. Some school divisions decided to discontinue with traditional grading. So in our peer districts like York, Loudoun, Harrisonburg, Roanoke fall in that category, most of our peers adopted a hybrid system. So they didn't go full standards-based grading. What they tried to do was to take the existing

[02:17:13] traditional grading system and modify it to incorporate principles of standards-based grading. So what does that look like? It looks like a grade floor. So instead of adopting a full categorical system, you truncate the 0 to 100 to make it smaller so that it's more reliable, is the hypothesis. The other piece is that you separate out grades on achievement from things like, is it turned in on time, right? There are some districts that fully adopted SBG, or standards-based grading. There's some schools like Community Lab not doing standards-based grading but going even further and trying competency-based grading. So there are those groups out there. They have their own issues and we'll talk about that. So

[02:17:53] what are the challenges of standards-based grading at a full district level of a district our size? One, and Chad Ratliss spoke to this, at the high school level it's really challenging because you're operating with multiple grading systems. We have to translate whatever grading system we do to what works for our institutional partners in higher education, right? So we have to translate letter grades and into GPAs for college transcripts. That gets complicated with standards-based grading because you have to create a system to do that, right? It doesn't just automatically appear. So there's a new layer of subjectivity and inconsistency unless you have really clear protocols of how are you averaging all those different standards into one grade that

[02:18:32] turns into a quality point for an institutional partner in higher education. There's also technical challenges. Our power school system and most student information systems are not set up to do standards-based grading well. It's difficult, it's challenging, especially at the high school level when you need it to communicate and create transcripts for college. The other piece that comes out of the research is it can be more work for teachers. It adds to teacher workload, especially if there's not the proper infrastructure created at at the division level to support teachers in implementing it.

[02:19:06] There are particular challenges to systems like ours, a hybrid system. One, there is some research that has come out recently that eliminating practice work without reporting on work habits and allowing unlimited retakes can reduce student motivation.

[02:19:21] Raising the grade floor without also raising the minimum passing grade reduces the work necessary to pass a class. If we're raising that floor, but we're not also raising what is a minimum passing grade, that makes the class easier to pass.

[02:19:39] Also, teacher and community concerns regarding these issues. So our questions were, you know, how do we compare our peer revisions? What's the relationship between students' grade and achievement? Has it changed since we adopted this policy? How are teachers rating the effectiveness of it?

[02:19:54] And how do teachers, students, and families describe the impact of the policy on their learning? our qualitative methods were looking at the 14 peer districts. We also had a teacher survey for all teachers. We had over half of our secondary teachers respond. We did not have many elementary teachers respond, about 10 to 15%.

[02:20:13] Part of the reason for that, and one of the findings, is that our elementary teachers see this policy as it exists as really for secondary schools. They don't see it applying to their work very much, and the ones who did respond said that they would like more guidance from the division around specifically how to grade in the elementary school context.

[02:20:30] Another piece was the focus groups and the qualitative surveys. We had 47 students, we had 28 families participate. We were able to create categories based on our coding and the frequency of those codes that appeared. I wanna specify that the quotations we use in this are representative of the themes that arose across all three groups.

[02:20:51] So when you read this presentation, you might see a quotation from a student. It doesn't mean that represents what the students thought. It represents one of the ideas that came out of all three of these groups. I'm doing that to make it more succinct, but within the school, the actual policy, you can see what did students think, what did the parents think, what did teachers think.

[02:21:10] For our quantitative methods, we used 19,000 student records, mapping their SOL scores back to the grades that they received in their course. And we took 18, 19 as our control group, the one that existed prior to this policy, and then we have two post-policy implementation to see if that relationship changed at all.

[02:21:32] For reading, we looked at grades six, eight, and 11, and then the SOL scores in those courses. For math, we looked at grades eight and nine. The reason those grade levels were chosen was because about how the SOLs map onto the particular courses that students are taking, and then we compared that to their end-of-year SOL scores.

[02:21:50] We also looked at elementary grades, So we averaged all of those standards into one composite score for fifth grade, and then we compared that to their end of year SOL score in fifth grade. We conducted ordinary least square regression analysis to see what that relationship was.

[02:22:08] So I'll go through that really quickly. The top line is there's no overall change in grade distribution. So if you look at the dusted grade distribution for everyone, there's not a lot of change. There's a little bit there, but there's not a lot changing in that overall grade distribution. If you look at validity, so how well did our grades predict SOL scores before and after this?

[02:22:29] There's mixed results. There was statistically significant improvement in secondary reading in terms of grades becoming more accurate. And part of that is because that was the least accurate before. So if you go back to 2018 and '19, our secondary language arts grades were the least likely to map on to what the SOL scores.

[02:22:50] For math, it really didn't change very much. and it actually decreased for fifth grade reading. But these overall findings really mask the significant differences and impacts for different groups of students. The biggest difference is for previous achievements.

[02:23:06] So if you look, if you break our students up into quartiles based on their previous achievement, you can see that this had a, there's evidence that this had a significant differential impact on students based on whether they're traditionally high achieving students or traditionally low achieving students in that subject area.

[02:23:24] So we looked at their previous year's SOL scores. We broke them up into quartiles. That first quartile group, you can see those bar charts going down. That means those grades became less accurate predictors of their SOL scores. The same was true, slightly not quite with the same magnitude for our second quartile achievers, but you see the opposite is true for our lowest achieving students.

[02:23:47] Grades actually became better predictors of their SOL achievement for our lowest-achieving students. The next chart I'm gonna show you is descriptive statistics, so you can just see what that looks like, and it might make a little more sense if we can explain it.

[02:24:03] So if you see like 2018 and '19 to '24 and '25, you look at that first group on the left, that's our lowest-achieving students. You see those students are actually earning more Fs than they did before the policy was implemented, And those Fs, because of the regression analysis, we know are better predictors of what their actual achievement is.

[02:24:26] There are a lot of reasons why this could be, the quantitative data tells us what, it doesn't tell us why, so we can look more at the qualitative data, but then look at the opposite side. If you look at Quartile

1, our highest achieving students, they are earning more As than they used to, they're earning more Bs than they used to, and their grades are less likely to predict what their SOL scores were.

[02:24:49] So, overall conclusions. grades have become more valid for lower achieving students and less valid for higher achieving students. So now we're gonna look at why that might be based on what the qualitative data tells us. First, we're gonna put ourselves in a context. I'll try to do this quickly.

[02:25:04] For each of the core issues that come up in the literature and have come up in our community. So one is around reassessment. So we look at our peer districts. Arlington limits it to one per summative assessment for students below 80. Fairfax draws the line at 90.

[02:25:20] Henrico says you can take one reassessment per test, but it's only for students earning a D and an F, and the new score is capped at 70%. Chesterfield limits it to extraordinary circumstances. I will say that many of these school divisions started out with policies similar to ours, and recently in the last couple years have modified them, and these have been newly modified policies.

[02:25:45] If we look at grade floor, We currently have a grade floor of 50 for all assignments and final grades. Arlington allows zeros for unsubmitted work, 50s for all work that has been turned in. However, they convert those grades back to quality points each semester for averaging, which puts it on a categorical scale again, which bumps up those zeros to be closer to a passing grade.

[02:26:13] Fairfax does something similar. They give 50s for reasonable effort, a zero for unsubmitted work. All grades below 50 are converted back to a 50 at the quarter mark for averaging. I wanna say, I'm sure they have reasons for doing it.

[02:26:29] Part of the reasons that we made the recommendations that we did is this is not very transparent. I think that these particular policies would be hard for the average parent to be able to figure out what grade their child is getting and why they're getting it.

[02:26:45] So that's why we didn't recommend doing what they're doing. Henrico allows zeros, but at the end of each marking period, the teacher has to give a remediation plan to the student to raise their grade to a minimum grade for passing.

[02:27:00] But that's only once per marking period per course. And then Chesterfield allows zeros only for unsubmitted work, no deadlines for late work, but there are penalties allowed for missing summative assessments. late work we do not have a clear guideline Arlington accepts within the teaching unit but gives a penalty of up to ten percent. Fairfax says that PLC teams can set reasonable deadlines and penalties. Charlottesville has no grade penalty for late work but they have to be turned in the quarter they are assigned and Chesterfield gives only six school days after the deadline with a

[02:27:37] penalty that is uniform to turn in late work. You can see there's a lot of variation across divisions. This one I'm not going to read everything but I just want to appreciate the depth of the language that peer school divisions give around parent communication around grades and note that we do not provide guidance on communicating grades to parents and guardians in our policy itself and that's a theme that came up not from the literature but just from the review of where we were out of line in terms of our peers and that will come up in our recommendations and be all of these peer districts require teachers to

[02:28:13] contact a parent if a student is at risk of failing their course. We do not have that in our policy. So overall we are a qualitative outlier in the level of detail that we provide on reassessment, unsubmitted work versus submitted work, accepting late work, communicating to parents, elementary grading scale and procedures, and a minimum number of assignments per quarter to give a grade to a student. Our focus groups, again for succinctness of the presentation I'm not going to go into what each group said, I'm just going to say overall what were themes that came up across groups. So when it comes to reassessment many teachers and students and parents all said that reassessment is a valuable

[02:28:53] learning tool. There are many stories around that and that retakes can be helpful for their learning. However they also said that in the context of no limitations it can decrease motivation for students and it requires additional time for teachers. Some teachers said that they're spending all of their time giving students retakes that want to get an A from a B and they really want to be able to spend more time with those students who are struggling but because they have so many students coming in for retakes they don't have time to give that one-on-one support to help them understand what they didn't get the first time. So many suggested that these retakes continue but they'd be limited

[02:29:32] to lower performing students in some capacity and have clear limits on their frequency. The next section was on attempted versus not attempted work. So many teachers, students, and parents support a grade floor for attempted work that was substandard. So a student didn't get something, but they tried really hard. All groups said in that context, a plurality of the comments were around, we understand why you would give a 50 to a student that's working really hard because a zero is going to make it hard for them to get caught up, and that could decrease

[02:30:06] motivation. However, there was also a plurality that had to believe that it was unfair to give the same grade to that student that worked really hard but didn't get the assignment to another student that didn't attempt the assignment. They wanted some differentiation between those two. This is an example from our teacher survey just showing the top one shows teachers support for the principles of standards-based grading. So the primary role of grading is to communicate progress aligned to standards.

[02:30:38] We had 88% of our teachers agree with that statement. Very strong agreement. But if you look at grading should be calculated using a 50% as the lowest grade, 83% of teachers disagreed with that, and quite a few strongly disagreed with it. Now, I wanna say there's nuance there.

[02:30:54] That doesn't mean that those who said that they disagreed want to go back to traditional grading. Many of them had that nuanced view where they said, again, I understand a grade floor for a student that's really trying and isn't getting it, but I want to distinguish that from a student who's not turning in work at all or making a reasonable effort.

[02:31:15] Also, there was agreement around clear procedures on late work, and the big feedback here from all groups was about consistency. There was discussion of some teachers will allow students to turn things in six months late. Some teachers will say if it's not in by two weeks, it's too late, and some had even stricter policies.

[02:31:38] Many schools have policies that are also different from each other, and so there was a request for greater consistency. Consensus arose around clear deadlines, making sense, having limited grace periods after reasonable penalties for late work. Students did say they want a grace period.

[02:31:55] No, there was no students said that they think they should get a zero if they turn something in late, but most students were okay with some kind of grace period and then penalties after that.

[02:32:11] So overall, our policy and procedures lacks details and procedural standards that are present in our peer divisions. We've made gains in validity for our lower performing students. That is something to highlight. That was one of the goals of this adoption of this policy.

[02:32:26] However, the opposite is true for our higher performing students. Their grades have become less valid than before. And while there's general support for the core principles of standards-based grading among staff, students, and teachers, and parents.

[02:32:42] There are deep concerns about our implementation right now. Students are a little more divided in their perspectives, with some supporting the procedures and others calling for change. So our recommendation, long-term, is to continue to look at standards-based grading as a superior based on the research model, with the understanding that adopting it for an entire school division of 14,000 students is challenging.

[02:33:07] And so thinking about how we move in that direction in a way that's responsible, looking at the research, and looking at pilots within our own schools, such as Community Lab School. In the short term, amend our current policy to address the most important concerns raised by the community, and call for updates to our grading procedures to address these concerns.

[02:33:29] So our specific policy recommendations, and one, to add language around communicating grades to parents and legal guardians. That was a big place where we were an outlier. and another is to call for a set of procedures not guidelines and adding these as administrative procedures in the school board so making sure that they're in electronic school board as well they're not guidelines these are administrative procedures connected clearly to this policy that address reasonable limitations for student reassessments a minimum grade that differentiates between attempted and unattempted assignments regulations on accepting late work from students and requirements for communication of low performance to parents and a minimum number

[02:34:09] of assignments per marking period and or a deadline for posting grades this is the specific language that we recommend it you have a redlined copy that you can look at it can be changed but the first piece is just a general description of explaining the grading system to students and parents at the beginning of each school year and communicating to parents and students on a regular basis and evaluation of the students' progress towards the academic objectives.

[02:34:38] This next part is about the specific concerns that the community raised, so looking at reasonable limitations for those reassessments and the other issues that we discussed. Also with those procedures, and so our suggestion would be for the specific language that was provided in the report as a starting point, but for the Department of Instruction to determine and what the specific procedures will be, and then bring those to you to review next week.

[02:35:07] It's important to know that those recommendations that are in the report are made based on existing policy within our peer division. So it's important for our Department of Instruction to look at what existing systems we have and think about how to adopt and adapt that language to the specific needs of Albemarle County.

[02:35:25] And then that would be brought to you for next meeting. So any questions? you sleeping at all in the last few weeks we really really appreciate the work that's going into this what we heard month or two ago when this topic of grading policy first came up was oh we've got to make changes it not necessarily the policy as much as the practice and so it's great that you've

[02:36:04] gotten feedback from students from parents one question I'm curious about why you sent out a survey to teachers instead of having a focus group or interviewing teachers any any thoughts there yeah so the school board made clear that they wanted feedback from teachers that that was one of their priorities and doing a survey we weren't sure we could do it at first but that we were able to explore, get the questions together, work with our AEA partners to get the survey out

[02:36:42] and make sure that the teacher voice, that every teacher in the school division had an opportunity to weigh in on this. - Yeah, and I think that's important. And one of the things that I discovered in my conversations with about eight or 10 veteran teachers is they see a problem that this unlimited retakes, this floor of a 50 for no work turned in, is not only burdensome to them, but it also harms the students.

[02:37:22] The fact grade inflation harms the students. I know for a fact in talking to Kathy Kaufman and another teacher from Albemarle High School, 99 students, rising ninth graders, coming to Albemarle in six weeks have never passed a math SOL, not once.

[02:37:42] And yet they are, you know, socially promoted to the next grade level. That's a significant problem. We're not doing those students any favor by passing them on. So I think we have to implement these changes.

[02:37:58] And based on feedback that we've gotten from teachers, I would say we've got a lot more detailed work to figure out should the floor be a 40 or I've had a number of teachers say it should be a zero.

[02:38:14] If somebody doesn't turn in an assignment, they shouldn't get any credit at all or others have suggested maybe a 25. It's been a lot of discussion as of even today about the retake, do we cap retakes for students who are making below a B Or do we allow students making below an A to retake?

[02:38:41] And what's the right cap for retakes? Do we average the two tests together, two grades together? So I think we have a lot more detailed work to do. But overall, it's really encouraging to hear that you guys and we are responding to the concerns of not just the teachers, but former students.

[02:39:10] We've gotten e-mails from former students who say, I arrived at JMU or other universities completely unprepared because, guess what, they don't let you take retakes in college. So I think addressing those issues is going to be critical.

[02:39:28] Thank you. One of the things you mentioned is that our elementary teachers would also like greater guidance. Does this policy get there? So it calls for procedures that address those concerns.

[02:39:45] In terms of for next school year, creating elementary grading, implementation guidelines is not possible because we don't have a clear set of guidelines right now that happens at the division level directly related to this policy. That being said, it is on a longer term, potentially even for the 27-28 school year, looking at uh providing those sorts of implementation guidelines for elementary teachers thank you so is my understanding correct um dr hayes that instruction will work on procedure

[02:40:24] and then we'll be able to look at those next week yes mr domer and the other members of the department of instruction are working on some language and updates around the next steps with procedures and then also um some updates on pulling together the grading committee fantastic thank you very much i know as a school board we've gotten a few emails from teachers since the revised policy was published have you received or the superintendent received feedback from teachers i'm just curious what their feedback is on the updates and if they have further input past what we've received that i have talked to teachers the sample size is small so i'm

[02:41:04] to say it's representative most teachers feel that I've talked to feel that these are common-sense changes that are appropriate that would make things better for students and for themselves it doesn't necessarily solve every problem there are still issues here and we talk about the larger question of grading it's been a question for a hundred years in our country and we're continuing to move hopefully in a better direction but in in terms of their general feeling they the ones again that I've talked to feel that this is a step

[02:41:39] in the right direction. I guess I would put this out there then for all the teachers that are listening at 9:30 on a Thursday night during summer break but we would love the feedback of the teachers over the next week that would be really helpful for us because we have a different person I mean you know Judy and I still have kids in the system so we have one perspective but we're not teachers in the system. So I think it would be really helpful to hear if these changes are what they're looking for. Are we missing something? Is there something we need to change that would be helpful for us? I'm just going to add, I've heard from a few teachers that, and the messages were

[02:42:18] along the same lines that you all shared around the question is, you know, can I retest after 80 or above, you know, below 80 or 90? And then I have a few meetings coming up with some staff,

[02:42:31] current teachers and retired teachers who have reached out that wanted to provide me with some feedback some of them are on vacation next week so you may not have it in time for the meeting but they still wanted to contribute as we move towards setting up the grading committee. Is there a way for you to share that feedback with us as you're getting it especially over the next week just for us to consider in our red lines. Absolutely. Great. Anything that's outside of what you all. Sure. Yeah. Thank you. I think it's going to be really important to to get this right knowing that we may need to make changes you know trial and error

[02:43:11] but i think it sounds like we're moving in the right direction one technical question maybe this is for jamie is power school are we able to tweak power schools so that teachers can enter if we decide that 25 is the floor or 40 is the floor that that they can enter that because they can't do that now i i've worked with mitchell lincoln who's uh our person over power school and those information systems and we explored some different ideas one of which was to move it right now so it's a 50 to 100 it's a 50 point system why is it not zero to 50 right right so you can still put in

[02:43:49] a zero power school doesn't let us do that we still have to work with that 100 point scale But in terms of the floor, we can set it wherever we want. So it can still be 25 to 100 as long as 100 is the top.

[02:44:04] - One of the things I think about just as we're talking about the policy and then the kind of the procedures and then the group, the grading group, is, you know, that, you know, Dr. Hager, so much even more focused than I am about this, you know, this August 12th date that school starts, you know, teachers come back, new teachers the 27th, everyone else that little after that is like what is like you know what is

possible a little bit like you said Mr. Julebeck like are there a few things that that we do now like my you know my short-term, mid-term, long-term like there's a few things we do now we test them out I don't know what like those

[02:44:43] then there's a timing piece I assume it would have to wait to the next school year I don't know and then we you know get feedback see what other pieces of because there's a number of, as you showed us, there's a number of pieces of this, of the procedure that we should look at.

[02:44:58] So are there some that would make the most difference based on the feedback we're getting to start with, and almost like a number that we're gonna spend some more time on because we have more differentiation in the results, not the results, but the feedback we're getting.

[02:45:14] And then, you know, then again, to Dr. Acoff, then you kind of do that, and bringing on elementary school at a later date. And so kind of, 'cause that's my piece. It's like, I don't want us to bite off too much and have it to these points of like, oh wait, in like power school, how do we do these while we're also trying to open schools?

[02:45:34] And so, you know, if there are my recommendations, as if there's a few things that like, we have the most agreement on and matter the most, could we start with those? And then that plan could be, what are those other things we can do with a deadline to say, okay, we will bring, we will do this type of research as part of that with that committee, and then we will bring these on at a X, like name that date, so.

[02:45:57] - We do have some schools with departments that are like early adopters in trying this work, and so one of the things we talked about is working with principals to identify either their school or departments within their school to pilot some of these recommendations and then provide that feedback to the grading committee, so this is more of an iterative process versus just something that's static.

[02:46:19] - Yeah, I appreciate it. - I guess I have a question about expectations around procedure, around these procedures. Because the policy language in the report that we're reading is our policy, our school board policy.

[02:46:37] And to put the procedures within ESB, but my understanding is that other of those types of procedures are not, they're made procedures so that we can't slow down the system basically so that the operational side can make quick adjustments as necessary.

[02:46:58] So as procedures are brought to us next week, what are we to do with them? Like I think the policy language is what we're supposed to be concentrating on, right? So what is the expectation for the board next week?

[02:47:14] I think so the policy would be the language here that we presented today, and you all would vote to determine whether or not that you want to add that to the policy. - The procedures would be for your review, and correct me if I'm wrong, my understanding is that the superintendent can change procedures, and the school board always can review it, but it's under the purview of the superintendent in terms of operationalizing what the procedure looks like.

[02:47:44] - That's right, I mean, code makes a distinction between policy and procedure, and it requires that policy be reviewed and approved by the school board. It does not require procedure to be reviewed and approved. However, in my experience, over nearly three years now, when rules or procedures are updated, they are brought before you, and you do get a chance to weigh in on them.

[02:48:08] But there are times when we don't want to go, where a change to procedure is so time sensitive that we want to expedite the process and not do what we do with policy, which is bring it up once for information and then bring it back at a subsequent meeting for action.

[02:48:29] - And we think we can get our teachers on board and up to speed on these new procedures by the school year? - I wouldn't say it's reasonable to get all of our teachers up to speed, but I think it is a reasonable expectation to identify those that are ready, willing, and able to implement these new changes and recommendations with fidelity by the new school year.

[02:49:01] - Other comments, questions? - So again, just a reminder, particularly to the teachers, but all kind of public as well as students, Everything is available online through the school board viewing agenda with the presentations that were made today.

[02:49:23] So we ask you to spend some time with those and message the school board, message Dr. Hayes about suggestions, recommendations, ideas, concerns about this policy and the other policy.

[02:49:40] and then we will come back next board meeting which is next Thursday to discuss this as well. There's not a public hearing on this, the public hearing is on the other one, but this is also something that you can come and share in public comment as well. Thank you. Thank you so much.

[02:50:06] Is there anything else, any other business before the school board tonight? I think we covered a lot lot of territory. Yes, I think we covered a lot of territory. So thank you to everyone online and in the auditorium. And I will now state that this meeting is adjourned. Thank you so much.



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