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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, July 16, 2026

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[00:00:11] - Good afternoon, everyone. It is my pleasure to bring this July 16th business meeting of the Albemarle County School Board to order. We will be beginning our meeting tonight with a closed meeting. Do I have a closed meeting motion?

[00:00:27] - Yes, Chair Berlin. I move that the School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia, go into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, section 2.2-3711A of the Code of Virginia under subsection one, which authorizes the discussions, consideration or interviews of perspective candidates for employment and the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees of any public body.

[00:01:02] Purpose of this item is to review three recent personnel issues. - Second. - Moved by Mr. Dillenbeck, seconded by Ms. Lee. All those in favor of moving immediately into closed session? Aye. Any opposed? We will now move immediately into closed session until 630. We will be in conference room 241 for the school board. Ms. Verlaine, Dr. Verlaine.

[00:01:34] Hello everyone. It is my pleasure to reconvene this July 16th Albemarle County School Board Business Meeting. Do we have a closed meeting motion? Yes we do. I move that the board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act

[00:02:10] and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting. Second. Moved by Mr. Dillenbeck, second by Ms. Spillman. All those in favor? Aye. Any opposed? That motion clearly passes. Well, welcome everyone. Ms. Osborne is absent today. Ms. Lee is here. We are going to begin our meeting with our

[00:02:44] roll call. Ms. Stone, will you introduce yourself to the... Erin Stone, Assistant Division Counsel, sitting in for the Chief Legal Officer. Chandra Hayes, Acting Superintendent. Bob Beard, Samuel Miller District. Jim Dillenbeck, Raya District. Allison Spillman, at-large representative. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall

[00:03:07] District. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett. Good evening everyone, Pat McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning. Jason Grant, Chief Communications Officer. Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships. Rosalyn Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer. Dan Redding, Chief HR Officer. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board. And thank you to our officers who are here tonight to protect us and protect us in our community every day and every evening. We will now stand for the

[00:03:41] pledge of allegiance. We will now pause for a moment of silence. Thank you very much. Our next

[00:04:34] item on the agenda is the approval of tonight's agenda. Do I have a motion for the approval of tonight's agenda? I move. We approve tonight's agenda. Second. Moved by Dr. Acuff, second by is Lee. All those in favor of tonight's agenda? Aye. Any opposed? I am very excited for our spotlight of education today. I would like to welcome Lanika Barnes from the science department

[00:05:04] to the podium and we will have Albemarle County's high schools 2026 NSBE Junior Summer Academy students who will presenting to us we are excited for you guys to come forward welcome it looks like

[00:05:36] you brought a lot of fun things for us to learn about and hear about okay i did we have i want to say good evening my name is pearl early i served as the national society of black engineer resby junior pre-college initiative program coordinator it is an honor and a privilege to present our division-wide educational program which has proudly served students for the past 17 years. Each year we select 15 students to participate in our partnership

[00:06:16] between Alamar County Public Schools and the University of Virginia Nesby Junior Summer Academy. This partnership provides students with hands-on experience in engineering leadership teamwork college readiness while inspiring them to pursue career in stem i would like to express my sincere gratitude to the school board and the previous boards for your continued support for this program your investment has made a lasting

[00:06:55] difference in the lives of our students i am so proud to share that many of our instructors our NSBE alumni, one of our teachers, is with us today returning for his second year.

[00:07:14] Their commitment, demonstration, and last impact of the program has former participants from Back to Mentors to inspire next generation. I ask the board if the students run over their allotted time, I respectfully ask that you extend the students additional time to complete their presentation. At this time it is my pleasure to turn the presentation over to our National

[00:07:50] Society of Black Engineers, students of Albemarle County School Division, as well as the University

[00:07:58] of Virginia. Thank you. Good evening everyone. I'm going to turn this over to our students who are

[00:08:54] just going to go ahead and introduce themselves. Thank you. Good evening, everyone. My name is Jaden Agee. I'm a rising ninth grader going into Albemarle High School, and this is my first year with the NSBE program. Hello, everyone. My name is Dalen Israel Hampton. I'm a rising senior at Albemarle High School, and this is my second year at NSBE Junior Academy. Good evening, everyone. My name is Joshua McDowell. I'm a rising senior at Albemarle High School. This is my third year with

[00:09:27] the NSBE Junior Academy. Good evening everyone. My name is Alex Payne and I'm a rising task grader in Albemarle High School and this is my first year in NSBE. Unfortunately, we don't have all of our students here with us tonight, but that doesn't mean we didn't bring along their contributions with us. And with that, we're going to turn over to our staff. Good evening. My name is Clifford Ayres-Brown. This is my second year working with NSBE and also ACPS. I previously

[00:10:04] graduated from Howard University and I'm a current graduate student at Johns Hopkins University. Alright, hi everyone my name is Navian Francis. I am the lead engineer instructor for this year. It's my first year with the Nesby Junior program. I'm a mechanical engineering PhD student at the University of Virginia, graduate research and teaching assistant. Thank you so much. Good evening everyone my name is Stanley Lewis B. Junior. I currently work at Journey Middle School.

[00:10:32] This is my first year as an instructor with the Nesby Junior program. I'm a graduate of Elizabeth City State University and also got my master's in mental health counseling at South University. Good evening, my name is Lanika Barnes. I am a current ACPS teacher. I will be moving to the ACE at Lambs Lane Academy this year and I'm currently a science teacher. I also teach biotechnology and the diversity resource teacher in the PULPS studio co-lead and

[00:11:04] And I also have the honor to thank Ms. Jess Mason, who is an ACPS special education teaching assistant at Albemarle High School. Mr. Thomas Chancey, Jr., ACPS student security office, and also a huge part of our team.

[00:11:20] And although her name is not here, we also want to thank Ms. Tyrese Ayers for her support of the Nesby Jr. Summer Academy. Community and communication. Before we touch a robot, we build something more important, a foundation.

[00:11:39] Communication helped us become a team. Community helped us understand why the team mattered. I think these two belong together better than any other pair because they are both fundamentally about people. As you can see from the photos on the left and right hand side, we played games, had discussions about current and historical events, which brought us closer together not only as a group, but as a family.

[00:12:05] Not only did we build robots, we built resilience. As you can see on the left, the bullet points highlight steps that we commonly see in the engineering process. My team and I went through this process when we worked on the mini-puppers, the other one you see on our left.

[00:12:23] At the start, things were going smoothly until we realized that we were given faulty batteries, missing screws, and very poorly 3D-printed parts. So we did what engineers do. We used parts from other robots, and we utilized tools from Mr. Francis' lab. In the end, our robot may have been an operational failure, but our engineering was a success.

[00:12:56] from guiding each other to making bite dance. Here are our building steps. We learned four important steps. Be clear, follow the right orders, fix mistakes, and repeat. In the human robot challenge and when coding our rover robot, we used these steps to give commands, test codes, and adjust when something did not work.

[00:13:19] These steps helped us keep improving until our robots moved, turned, and made the shapes that we wanted them to make. Some pictures are on the right and left of the screen.

[00:13:37] - At last, our robot dog breakdance. We program Byte, Black Youth Tech Educationals, something like that. We had to be clear, every robot, every move that Byte made had to be a persist command.

[00:13:57] If one wrong code, it would break down the dance completely. And then we had to build up from Directing humans to program robots and chronographing Byte. Each step prepares us for the next, which as you see, we have the Spiros and the mini robot over there.

[00:14:22] And sometimes our mistakes, if Byte didn't go the way we expect it to, we will put this back into the code, which our code was block code. And then we ran the program over and over again until we found the correct code.

[00:14:44] And now we would like to introduce you to Byte. Oh my gosh. Oh, wow.

[00:15:01] For those of you who are watching remotely, there is a robot walking through down the center aisle, so that's what people are looking at and commenting on. That's incredible. I love it but it's a serving.

[00:15:23] It's like a sci-fi movie happening in real time. Yeah, it's a little thing, it's a little bottle thing. One second, please. Alright, everyone get ready to see what your students have put together.

[00:15:46] And for those of you who are watching remotely, we are watching a dancing robot.

[00:17:29] Incredible.

[00:17:34] Thank you guys so much for patiently waiting.

[00:18:13] This is the culmination of just your students, which is just amazing. We didn't always have all the numbers that we wanted to because they have so many different programs that they do. You know, they're involved in their community and different things. So thank you so much just for your time.

[00:18:30] I'm amazed at just all the work that they were able to put into this because that might seem simple to some people, But we know the amount of teamwork, communication, dedication, and just everything that really went into that. So thank you so much for your patience and thank you so much for your time. Thank you.

[00:19:32] The video's really low, so I don't know how I'll end up a little bit.

[00:20:56] Thank you. And I'm hoping that what you've experienced here tonight with your students, our students, your support is really, really important.

[00:21:25] And this is always 17 years, and look where we are. Again, thank you. Thank you. Hey, that was the coolest thing we've ever witnessed from up here.

[00:21:41] That was really impressive. I know we may have a couple more. Before you break that down, I think we may have a few questions from the school board, if you don't mind, for the students or for... Yes, your questions.

[00:21:58] Yes. Do you have a theme each year in the program? Because I know I went to the presentation a few years ago and there was a microscope. I mean, there are different kinds of projects that the students did. Do you have a different theme each year or do they always select what they're going to do?

[00:22:14] - Well, we collectively come together and decide what they want to do. It's not just me, but my job is to bring the creative ideas to the students and let them both out they want to do my job is also to make sure that the materials are there the parents are on board and that it is a communication as well as community and i think that's really important because

[00:22:51] our students need to learn what community as well as becoming and being good citizens And through what you have seen tonight, we'll allow students to learn about all of that.

[00:23:08] We have middle school and high school students. They work together, and you would have known that they were in different grades because they learn to work together. They learn to listen to each other, which I think adults need to work on that as well.

[00:23:25] Amen. And so, yes. And Ms. Lee, thank you for your support always. Of course, I'm so impressed by this program and every year what you all are able to do, and especially this year with the robot dog, a little bit disturbing.

[00:23:42] But also, I appreciate the presentation showing the community and the communication because there is so much more to science and working than just the science. It's the community, so thank you very much. And you must keep in mind that I'm going to close my mouth.

[00:24:00] We're looking at the future. Technology is the future. Matter of fact, it's running us now. It's guiding us now. AI has, I mean, really, think about it. So we either need to step up to the plate and do what we need to do and support these students in all the areas that they need to become good citizens, one, outstanding students, two, and three, lead the country.

[00:24:33] Albemarle High School, Albemarle School Division should be able to do that. Thank you. I'd love to ask one question of a brave student or all the students. One of the things I always think about is, particularly during the summer programs, you know there are these special times where you come together and work on products. As you think about it, like if you had your wish, what is something from the summer and this program that you would love to see

[00:25:12] in your science classes, your math classes, something that was lifted up that could be continued. I would be curious to like things that we, you know, as we at the school board, part of our job is to think about the budget and to support the budget process and so we are already beginning to, while we're just starting the school year for next year, we're already beginning to think about what priorities are for the following school year so I would love to hear like what are some things you think would be helpful to have within your classrooms to you know to provide this like hands-on engagement um I really

[00:25:49] appreciate the question as a student here and as we I could answer the most important thing that we can have in our classrooms would be freedom of creativity and the opportunity to always work with each other in classrooms we're often just handed a packet and we're handed the materials that we needed and we're expected to do things on our own and I don't think that's the way students should operate I don't think that's the way that students should learn growing up especially everybody needs to learn how to work together and that's good audience

[00:26:27] behind you and you have a school board behind you as well on that thank you so much I appreciate that I think we have one did you want to say something as well yeah come on please you don't have to but I just it looked like you wanted to I think basically, you know how AI is being used?

[00:26:45] We should use it to help us, not to cheat, not anything. Because like Grammarly, for example, it's using AI to help you write, not do the entire paragraph on your own. And I feel like it is significant because people always say that AI is going to take over our jobs.

[00:27:06] But in reality, here's what we should do. use it to our advantage like ask questions about it ask like like can you summarize this in something like to guide you to the answer thank you thank you so much as you said these students are are i i always hate to say future because they are our present right like they currently are changing the world like we they we don't have to wait till they're 18 to change the world like they are currently changing the world and i think it's important to acknowledge that not to say you

[00:27:45] have to wait till you're 18. Like they're currently changing the world they're currently supporting their community working with each other and they make me feel very proud as well as just very confident in what's going to happen in the in the future. So thank you so much and thank you to all the the leaders and the in the and the teachers and the support people who make this happen.

[00:28:06] We so appreciate you. And maybe we want to keep the we have a long meeting ahead of it we might want to keep the the robot dancing to keep us all um it's gonna keep a smile on our face so thank you very much thank you the next item on our agenda 4.2 is school board superintendent and committee updates i'm checking uh and i know um last week um dr hayes um started a um a plan a tradition of some updates and so i will defer to her to begin if that's okay with my peers so there's just two

[00:28:42] There are two things I wanted to follow up on from last week's meeting when Principal Ratcliffe from Community Lab School shared one of his goals was to increase the enrollment of his ELL students to mirror that of the school division and so I've asked Ms. Ayanna Mitchell, the Director of Equity Education, to partner with him and his team to develop a plan to address that goal that he has and will bring back information on the plan and hopefully at the end of the year we'll see an increase there.

[00:29:12] And then also I've asked Ms. Monica Kabarkis, who is the secondary ELA coordinator, to come to a board meeting in September to provide an overview to the board, some of our new board members, and the community around our process of reviewing literature that is in our classrooms and our school libraries, and more information as relates to the law that was passed in 2023 around parental notification ahead of the usage of mature materials.

[00:29:41] Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Other announcements? Madam Chair, I have an appointment to announce. I'd like to appoint Lindsey Hauser to the School Health Advisory Board. Lindsey is the Director of Office of Community Outreach and Engagement at the UVA Cancer Center and she'll be an excellent member of this board.

[00:30:05] Thank you. Thank you so much. And thank you to her for her service to our community. would you want to buddy if he right i'm shamelessly plugging the albemarle foundation for education we have the back to school bash on the 9th which is a sunday before school starts and we're still looking for volunteers still looking for donations it's going to be a great event with back backpacks filled with school supplies

[00:30:39] with i think haircuts athletic exams vaccinations and it's going to be held instead of downtown it's going to be held in the county at the old jc pennies thank you so much would you remind us of the date of the sunday the ninth i think it's bob is it 10 10 to 2 12 12 to 4 12 to 4. okay before i had some of it yeah and that is on that is the fashion square mall the jc penny old jc

[00:31:14] penny part and that is on the bus line right and they're volunteering opportunities to pack the backpacks to set up the the site to be there to hand them out and then clean up detail after thank you so much any other updates seeing no other updates we're going to move to the next agenda item we have moved a few things around there it is what is presented but just I want to explain so as I spoke after our last board meeting we had comments on our public comment

[00:31:51] and we have done a review of a lot of policies and one of them is our public comment policies so I am going to invite Dr. Jason Grant Chiefs Comm Officer oh you moved to come up and to explained to the the board has reviewed these but to explain to the board of the public um the updates to these we wanted to do this before public comment because if we if we as we vote if this passes those will go into immediately into immediate effect and i just wanted to take a moment to again um thank everyone in the public for um their suggestions on these yeah madam chairman's board jason grant chief communication officer um hard to follow a

[00:32:29] dancing robot but we are so as we go through a couple things the the main thing we looked at is with policy bddh that is the policy that guides how we manage the public comment period it looks like a lot of markups all you all have that packet there in front of you but really it's codifying it's taking some of the things that were in procedures putting them in deep into the policy to make it clear to the public and they being a little bit more specific so there's clarity around what is expected as you notice here the first part of this are some of the general rules members of the public including students are encouraged to attend board sets aside 40 minutes for public

[00:33:06] comment time at the beginning of each business meeting and it specifies business meeting because sometimes you'll have special meetings or other meetings where there may not be a public comment there so just make sure people understand that within those 40 minutes individuals can sign up prior to the start and it gets three minutes of speaking if there's 13 individuals and we drop it down to two to make make sure we can maintain that if there's more than 20 speakers then we have a lottery system right so by lots they'll draw who those are and they get two minutes each on those chairs one with the authority to enforce this and the board and their majority can make amendments to these limitations as they deem necessary so there's a specific meeting that

[00:33:45] you feel you know what we need different types of parameters around this the board as majority can take that motion up and do that with any board meeting again the chair is responsible for for maintaining decorum. And so there's a rules of decorum we put here to be clear. This is where it became somewhat, was more ambiguous in the previous policy or what are those rules of decorum?

[00:34:03] So we wanna codify that a little bit. They still addressing the school board as a body. I think I'm loud on these things. Speakers can refer to, should not be, they can refer to board members. This is one of

the things that came up, right? So they can refer to individual board members, division leaders, staff, when comments relate to official actions, decisions, or matters within their authority.

[00:34:24] So clearly we can mention, you know, Dr. Grant didn't put something out. Like that's totally fine, right? So as you go through that, but Dr. Grant's a total jerk that may not fall in line with duties, right? So as we go through it, just kind of give clarity around that. Speakers have to refrain from these following things.

[00:34:39] They shouldn't make threats. They shouldn't use obscenity or profane language, disclosure of confidential information or private personal matters, or engaging in conduct that would disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting. The audience should refrain from speaking or shouting, applause, any kind of verbal distractions in creating an atmosphere that would be detrimental to the conduct of the meeting. The school board members, as members of this under decorum, they shall not respond nor engage with speakers during public comment. School board members should also limit their questions or remarks to the business before the board, so make sure that we're talking about the businesses there. Persons that are addressing the board, so this isn't only in comment, this is any time that you may have a speaker come up and address the board.

[00:35:19] They limit remarks to those relevant to the pending items and to answering questions presented by the school board. So people who are coming to speak stay on topic. And again, the chair is responsible for maintaining those rules of decorum. So again, laying it out, being specific, knowing where those are. The enforcement of the rules, this is a question that came up in a lot of the emails that we had gotten as houses get enforced.

[00:35:40] So just being clear, if there's a violation of decorum, the chair makes that aware. if it persists the chair can gavel them down from the lectern if they still aren't listening then our law enforcement officers who are present can carry out that order the chair can also call recess if groups or individuals in the audience are violating decorum so we feel there's too much disruption we can call recess dismiss the room and then and then we come back together that is the purpose of the policy that's what we codified and laid out we just want to make clear that people can see that there's also in the packet we won't go through but you know what what is this what is

[00:36:16] it that we speak to how the chair reads that the script of that when it comes up all that language is there not substantively changed in a lot of those because you had a lot of this but it wasn't explicit in some areas so if there's any questions i'll leave it at that would you go back one slide i just want to make sure it says school board members so shall limit questions and remarks to the business should that be public? No so as you look at it in the policy so as boards are asking questions or making remarks it's about the business before the board so they're not off topic of what that board is as they're maintaining

[00:36:49] decorum I think that's the structure. Questions are kind of just yeah just a comment if you go back this specifically refers to business meetings historically we have considered the first meeting of the month business meeting the second meeting the working meeting and so maybe you want to substitute the word regular meetings or regularly scheduled meetings or incorporate both. I mean historically we didn't have public comment in working meetings. We do now but they have been differently described. Did you get that

[00:37:29] Jason? Mr. Grant? Yes we can we can capture that and bring that into it. To your question about School board, I think that's line 28 and 29. If you look there, if that language is how you want that language

to be read.

[00:37:47] Actually goes through 30. Oh, I see. I see what you're saying. Okay, that makes sense. I guess the one other question I have for the chair or for you is frequently someone is managing public comment.

[00:38:11] And so is it that person who will and who gets the gavel? So but the language of this talks about the chair. I mean, ultimately, it is the chair, but there is that difference of we can clarify presiding officer if that if that creates better clarity.

[00:38:31] Yeah, yeah. And I think that it does say that in the long document that's been posted. Make sure that's consistent. Could you clarify personal matters on this personal matters on the slide?

[00:38:47] So under decorum, yeah, so some of the issues that come up, and this is looking at, again, looking at some other places that bring up rules of decorum in there. If there's any private personal matters, those are things that are, there are instances sometimes where people bring stuff to a podium to make public those which are not necessarily issues of the board or the school, to make that aware, those could be gaveled down.

[00:39:10] Yeah, but I mean, that seems awfully vague. How do we determine what that is? Again, we can strike that for sure. That's the justification. That is on line 25, Dr. Grant. Yeah, so again, we can strike private personal matters.

[00:39:32] That's where that language is coming through, though. I would suggest leaving it in and just saying something like, if it applies to only one person as opposed to of interest to the public, because we have had people who have come up and talked about their own personal case, which is of interest to nobody in the public except for that individual.

[00:39:55] And I would want you to make that exclusion. So I'm a little confused because, and I get that we're clarifying things, but you're saying that we can talk about a school board member while we're up here, which is fine.

[00:40:15] But for instance, at the meeting in October, I sat here and listened to people say that I generally mutilated my kid. is that something that would fall under this? You know what I'm saying? That's personal to me.

[00:40:31] That's about my kid, that's about my family. But where do we draw the line? What is a personal matter? - Well, that's excluded by the rest of it in the rules of decorum and not personally attacking the board members. - It just feels great to me.

[00:40:46] - It feels great to me too, thank you. - And I know the piece on confidence, like one of the first piece of this, which is, we have had some people share confidential student information, like that is one of the things we wanna make sure that someone isn't sharing confidential student because it's a public meeting.

[00:41:08] If there's something someone wants to bring to the board where they can bring it in an email or a call, that's one of the things we don't want someone to say, if I bring in confidential information, because that becomes part of the public record and we never want kind of a push.

[00:41:23] So I think that's the first piece, I think, is specific enough. I think the question is the second, just looking to my right and to my left, the second part of it. I think if we strike private, that clause, the or private personal matters, if that's stricken, most of these we can state that it still falls in line with that it

has to be on actions, decision matters, authority of the board or operation of schools, like it's still within the business conduct.

[00:41:52] so that that allows the presiding officer the ability to gavel down if it is not within the business of the board so a private personal matter would still fall under it's not under the issues of the board on those instances so then if that creates ambiguity i would suggest we could strike that clause and then it would still stand if the board feels that that's proficient and so we would strike that on line 20 line 23 I'm sorry yes 25 correct line 25 the or private personal matters

[00:42:30] would be stricken one of the things on my mind just because we have it today right we don't always have a public hearing we have a public hearing on kind of specific policies we have a public hearing on budget redistricting thank you redistricting I was trying to think of a couple other options. These, do we need to make a statement somewhere that these rules apply to the public hearing? Or is that, or is that, or is that, I mean, in my mind they do, like we should be using, because I think part of this is, you know, one of the other pieces I heard is consistency, right?

[00:43:06] Like, so we're going to make sure that what is posted that you see here, that we post online, matches what I read, there is some, but I just again for consistencies, I want the public to know and us to know that what we do for a public hearing is the same as what we do for public comment so is that or is that this is public participation so would we just cover everything okay do we all agree i just want to again to this ambiguity thing i just want i mean there's language in here about not disclosing um student confidential student information i think we should also have a phrase

[00:43:43] in there about identifying individual students. We always have that I'm just I'm just I'm looking up because I'm trying to think about positive negatives of is that not is that not the same as disclosing confidential it's not necessarily confidential you know that this thing happened to Kate on the playground I mean that's not by definition legal I mean microphone please

[00:44:18] pardon oh they just couldn't hear you oh i'm sorry i mean confidential i mean students i mean historically we've always um stopped people from identifying individual students in their in their remarks i mean i guess a parent could talk about it but um it's not strictly speaking confidential information i think you can talk about whatever i mean you have the right to talk about whatever you want with your own child i think it's just not disclosing other people's kids without permission I mean I don't you're getting into the weeds of but it

[00:44:53] nobody like in an important way it's no yeah you know it's right identified and that's strictly speaking not usually considered confidential right we just add disclose students names and confidential information well I mean you can identify a student by behavior like the the star football player at album you know whatever there's other ways to identify the student but it like a but it so to miss spillman's point like it is important to identify for a parent to be able to a fan need to a family

[00:45:33] actually to be able to um uh talk about their own students so i right you'll also there will be a challenge of managing here i think yeah yeah i mean i don't think that um i mean i think we're coming at this policy as thinking that, like, there will always be negative comments. I mean, I think if someone wants to come up and like say, Oh, my kid won this thing. Yeah, yeah, I don't

[00:46:09] know. Yeah, I feel like the kind of the confidential student information covers as much of that as is necessary. Okay. Speaking of confidential information, not exactly, but we do actually right now say

in the notes that we asked the people to say their district or their address, i'm actually not comfortable with people saying their address if it was me i wouldn't want to say my address so that is i don't know if we actually it might just be in the notes on the on the um website but that's one thing i just personally need we need to stop but and i i want to make

[00:46:48] sure we don't ask people to give so it should just be your your district your district your voting district sure yeah i agree with that okay good point i've been meaning to say that for a year so an apology and apologies that we have been asking for that i do want to i need to say that yeah yeah i know it's a practice i just right it's one of those um any other madam chair we might want to add some language to line seven uh the board shall set aside up to 40 minutes for public comment at the beginning of each business meeting or public hearing if that

[00:47:26] makes sense yeah yeah so are we ready for a motion the only again you know apologies that for those people in the audience but we do we wanted again we can come back to these there has been a i don't

[00:48:01] know if it's this is like if it's a policy or rule or i'll use the word practice where a member can a member of a group um and i can and i the aea used this right they wanted to make a statement um before the before the um vote on i believe collective bargaining if i remember correctly and so there has been a practice and i don't know if it's written or unwritten where where someone could request five minutes to speak for a group um and that was something i was just to say like i wasn't sure where that was written down but it's been a practice we've used my question is

[00:48:41] is that yeah we use it twice this year so again i just again to make sure the public is aware of what their rights are and what are the things they can request um is that something board that we want to include in this yeah i mean i believe that the last time it happened other members on the group just spoke anyway yeah that's yeah that's the yeah so to me i'm not sure that that is in practice useful okay i was going to say the same thing i just but i want to say it out loud to say if that is like but by not putting it into this at this point we're not if someone calls and

[00:49:21] says this practice has happened in the past right and again we can we can bring this back to the public and talk about this and there is feedback about that but that was one of the other unwritten pieces that i just wanted to tell you with line 17 and 18 the board does have the ability to make modification to any of those limitations. So if a circumstance comes up, we want to do that. You have the power to do that for a situation. Yeah. Any other updates changes? So does the board feel like, I know Mr. Grant has been editing this, do you feel clear enough with what we have said to feel comfortable to vote on this? Because I would like to use it for the public comment.

[00:49:59] I do. I do. Yep. All right. Then I would move that we would adopt the amended public comment procedures and policy revisions. Second. Moved by Ms. Spillman, seconded by Ms. Lee. I would like to do a roll call vote on this. And that's revisions as amended by the board? Yes, revisions as amended by the board at 723 on the 16th. Just for clarification, Dr. Berlin, the provision of Giving groups five minutes is on line 95.

[00:50:36] Oh, thank you. This is a motion to approve as amended by the school board on July 16th. Mr. Beer. Oh, so those are procedures, not policy.

[00:50:53] Yeah, so that can be changed. Okay. Oh, yes. So it doesn't affect this because that's a procedure. We can update those procedures and post those for the public. Mr. Beer. Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck.

[00:51:09] Yes. Ms. Lee. yes miss osborne absolutely osborne is absent miss spilman yes dr acuff yes chair berlin yes so moved by a vote of six to zero with one absence um that motion passes um so we will now i'm just taking a quick look at the to see if there's any changes to what we just what we what uh i have the i have a new public comment guideline that i am going to read um and we or and tonight we have a

[00:51:47] public hearing on the uh the misconduct policy and then we also have a um uh public comment um i'm going to read these and then i well when i get the the list i'm just going to say a quick something quick so i'm going to read these new guidelines the alberma county school board welcomes public input on manners related to the school board governance and division operations.

[00:52:14] Members of the public may sign up to speak during public comment in the following ways. Online, sign up opens at 9 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week and closes at 2 p.m. on the day of the meeting. By telephone, members of the public may call the school board clerk's office to sign up until 2 p.m. on the day of the meeting. In person, for meetings held in person, sign up is available at the meeting beginning at 6:00 PM and will remain open until the chair begins the public comment portion of the meeting.

[00:52:43] Public comment is not provided at special meetings unless included in the meeting agenda. When there are 13 or fewer speakers, each speaker will have three minutes. When there are 14 or more speakers, each speaker will have two minutes. The total public comment period will not exceed 40 minutes unless the board votes to extend the time.

[00:53:01] The maximum number of people or groups permitted to speak at a meeting is 20. If more than 20 people or groups sign up, each will be assigned a number and speakers will be selected at a random drawing. Those who are not selected may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting or submit written comments for the school board's consideration.

[00:53:18] When recognized, speakers should come forward and state their name, I'm just making an edit to that, and magisterial district for the record. Public comment should be addressed to the school board as a body and should relate to school board governance or division operations.

[00:53:34] Speakers may be referred to individual board members, division leaders, and staff when their comments concern official actions, decisions, or matters within the authority of the school board or the operation of the school division. All comments should be made in a professional and respectful manner. Public comment is not a forum for debate or for questions directed to individual board members or staff.

[00:53:54] Threats, profanity, obscenity, disclosure of confidential student information, and conduct that disrupts the orderly operation of the meeting are not permitted. A timer will be used to track the speaker's time. When time has expired, the speaker should conclude promptly.

[00:54:11] Written comments and supporting material may be provided to the clerk for the board's consideration. To help maintain order and to allow each speaker to be heard, please do not clap, boo, or otherwise audibly express support or opposition during public comment. Those wishing to show support may raise a hand or stand.

[00:54:27] The board will not engage in discussion with speakers during public comment. Board members may address matters raised during public comment later in the meeting under other business as appropriate. Use of the projection system is reserved for staff presentations associated with the scheduled agenda items.

[00:54:45] So let me just check my agenda. So tonight we have two pieces to our public comment. The first is our public hearing on policy. And that public hearing is on professional boundaries and prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse.

[00:55:02] As part of this, I just wanna verify that as you come up that what you are saying is related to the hearing on the policy. If you signed up and your preference is to just do a general public comment, which again is an all school matter business, we can move you to just the general public comment.

[00:55:23] They're both given three minutes. I just wanted to clarify that. Okay, thank you. So we have seven people signed up for our public hearing tonight. And I will call the first three people. Oh, Paula, I will not, I will not call the first three people. So again, first, I will call

[00:55:58] the people for the public hearing. Each of them will be given three minutes. And then we will have our general public comment tonight. Perfect. The first three people are Jimmy Ballou, Daisy Roja, and Heidi Gilman Bennett.

[00:56:30] - Good evening, board members, superintendent and other staff. I appreciate the work that went into the proposed professional boundaries and prevention of sexual misconduct and abuse. Every child in Albemarle County deserves to be protected. But after reading the policy, I have one question.

[00:56:47] Why should parents trust that it will be enforced? The biggest flaw is the school division continues to investigate itself. Reports go to principals, human resources and the Title IX coordinator, all of which are ACPS staff. There is no requirement for independent investigations, no independent oversight, and no meaningful accountability for administrators who fail to act.

[00:57:11] A policy is only as strong as the people who enforce it. Unfortunately, my concern is not hypothetical. On April 6th, 2026, I emailed this board after speaking with students at Monticello High School who reported and described security staff displaying aggressive and unprofessional behavior.

[00:57:30] I further reported the security staff were adding female students on social media, referring to them as honey, baby, sweetheart, beautiful, and commenting how great those leggings fit their body. Those are not professional terms and are inappropriate and clearly sexual harassment.

[00:57:45] The response I received from Chairwoman Berlin was simply, because this is an operational issue involving employees, the school board is not able to provide information regarding this situation. That response illustrates exactly why parents struggle to have confidence in this process.

[00:58:03] When parents raise concerns about employees' conduct, they expect more than being told that it is an operational matter. They expect to know that the concerns are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and addressed appropriately. The PROHO's policy still does not require independent investigations.

[00:58:23] It does not require automatic removal of employees from student contact during serious investigations. It does not require accountability. It does not establish meaningful consequences for administrators who fail to report or respond to warning signs.

[00:58:40] Policies alone do not protect the children. Accountability does, transparency does, independent oversight does. I urge this board to strengthen the policies before adapting it. I also urge this board, and really as a parent, I demand that this board launch an independent third-party investigation into the events that happened at Woodbrook and Holymead.

[00:59:01] If you folks sitting here tonight, some of you I've spoken to, most of you don't respond to email, you need to place a vote forward tonight to agree to launch a third-party investigation. If there's nothing to hide, let an independent law firm that has nothing to do with Albemarle County investigate it.

[00:59:22] you need references i'm sure i can provide some or any of these folks here in the audience i can assure you all agree with me how many times do you need to hear what you need to do if you truly cared you would do it and do it tonight thank you thank you so much i am asking that we uh standing is okay waving your hands okay i do ask that we do not do not clap that's just part of the policy i just read daisy roja for the record my name is daisy rojas rojas thank you um i just want to say that policy is not the problem. We have good policies in Almaral County. I'm standing here to

[01:00:01] talk to you on the hottest day of the year because as a mother of four children who all went to Almaral County schools, I am hurt, furious, and scared. I've held several meetings and spoken to many upset families and educators. Some of them are here tonight and I'd ask all concerned parents to please stand up with me. Rather than my own opinions, I want to share some of the comments folks have given to me and gave permission for me to share with you tonight. And I will have copies for each of you. Parent 1: I brought concerns up about what was happening but didn't get anywhere. There was a concerning lack of

[01:00:39] response from administration and the guidance department at Albemarle High School. Parent 2: Their plan did not align with her medical advice or the recommendations of the psychiatrist they used for the evaluation. The school insisted she could do all school online. Kevin Kirst threatened me with court for her absences because she was unable to meet with the home school person while she was hospitalized. No tutoring instruction was provided in a setting that felt safe to her. Instead, he advised that the alternative school was appropriate placement for her. He was to blame for the fact that she never did

[01:01:14] graduate. Parent 3: My nonverbal autistic child was coming home with bruises and acting out in unusual ways. I kept asking his teachers if something was different at school. After a few weeks, another teacher told me to call the principal and ask for the video of what happened to him. I saw my child kicked and pushed by his own teacher. Parent 4, Kevin Kirst, suggested putting an electric bracelet on my son's wrist. He stated that it would periodically buzz him to remind him to stay on task. My son was diagnosed with severe anxiety. I felt that

[01:01:52] shocking him to get his attention was not an appropriate accommodation. Parent five. Kevin Kirst denied my appeal to reduce the suspension of my daughter who was assaulted by another student at school. He was provided with video, photos and even a statement from other administrators that she did not cause the student to fight with her and attempted to step away multiple times. He responded to the appeal by stating that his decision was final and suggesting that an HR complaint be made to Brody Downs for the principal's failure to contact the parent in a timely manner. I even spoke to several current staff,

[01:02:30] faculty, and administrators who also had concerns about central office. Staff number one stated in April of this year, 2026, an LE at Albemarle High School was asked to resign and escorted off-premises. Staff were told not to talk about it. Several teachers made complaints to HR about what was going on with students in his office. That was a year and a half ago that the complaints were made. Thank

you so much for your comments. Yeah, and if you can give them to to Ms. Thompson and she will make sure we have copies of all of them. Ms. Heidi

[01:03:09] Gilman Bennett. Heidi Gilman Bennett, Samuel Miller. I support this policy generally, but agree that the policy is not the problem. I'm speaking tonight on a collective failure of central office leaders to prevent sexual misconduct. It has recently been brought to my attention that an assistant superintendent has allegedly, repeatedly, over the past three and a half years, projected a photo

[01:03:49] of me in my college dance team uniform at central office staff meetings. Up on a 60-inch display, huge. Patrick McLaughlin would allegedly smile and nod, then disparagingly say "there's our family council president hard at work dancing" and make inappropriate comment about the type of dancing. To be clear, I was a dancer at Stanford University, from which I graduated with honors in education. I was adorable in this photo, by the way, from 35 years ago. Why? To

[01:04:29] discredit me, to retaliate against me for my data analysis of reading scores that led to the bellwether audit, to humiliate me because I dared question his pet Career Learning Communities project and the Center's model as a warning to staff not to report concerns, which they did not do for three and a half years during this allegedly repeat occurrence. On a personal level I'm with AOC and being proud of my dance accomplishments and they were at Stanford

[01:05:03] University, right? So I'm here tonight to let my girl and all of our daughters know that you can be smart and beautiful and a talented dancer, be taken seriously and change the world. But also this behavior indicates a serious problem in ACPS. I learned of these incidents via an employee's Title IX and EEOC complaints which are far more broad and not my story to tell. For nearly four years I have served as an unofficial ombuds to families across ACPS who do

[01:05:39] not know how to get serious problems resolved. Families and students who have been actively or passively discouraged from reporting harassment and discrimination of all kinds. When ACPS leaders look the other way, when Pat McLaughlin repeatedly mocks a parent and advisory committee leader, it creates an icky sexualized environment which numbs staff to the damage of sexual misbehavior.

[01:06:06] It creates a culture of fear where employees do not feel safe reporting concerns, where HR passes the trash, and ultimately where students may be tragically harmed by sexual predators in our school. So in addition to passing this policy, I ask that Dr. Hayes remove the mediocre white male leaders whose bro club culture has consistently failed our kids.

[01:06:31] Thank you, thank you so much. Charles Abbey, I have a note that Charles Abbey is not speaking, but I just wanted to double check. That's correct, okay, thank you. Joellen Pisarczyk, Lisa Broadway, and Phil Reese.

[01:06:57] - Hi there. Congratulations, by the way, if they're still here, to the engineering students. What a wonderful presentation. I'm Joellen Pisarczyk, Whitehall. One thing I want to mention before I start, did you all know that in 2011, the Department of Education published guidelines to prevent sexual abuse in schools, and that those guidelines require your review and update every five years.

[01:07:32] I think that if that were being done, we wouldn't necessarily be here today. But I'd like to step back for a moment and consider where we're going next. How must a board deal with one of the most difficult cases or difficult crises any community can face?

[01:07:53] Last week, a Hollymead parent requested independent investigation into what went wrong at ACPS. This request represents due diligence to understand the failures and lay proper foundation to prevent them in the future. This request is standard operating procedure for a crisis of this significance. You guys can't fix a problem that you don't know about or fully understand and I think the previous testimony this evening has

[01:08:30] illustrated that point because you didn't know what you didn't know. We're now 40 plus days into the crisis and you still don't really know what you don't know because there hasn't been an independent investigation and frankly as we speak we don't know if there are other instances of sexual abuse occurring at ACPS. So why not get to the bottom of it once and for all? Why not send a clear message that this is unacceptable in this school system? You

[01:09:08] have a tremendous opportunity here to create the impetus and the model for best protective practices. You have an opportunity to restore your credibility and avoid permanent reputational damage and significant enrollment losses.

[01:09:26] The whistleblowers and the court of public opinion are watching whether you will do what needs to be done. Folks, an appalling 10 to 17 percent of school children report educator misconduct in K-12. This community needs authentic crisis corrective action. You have a moral and legal obligation to prevent foreseeable harm. Please find out what went wrong and fix it. I lost my mic.

[01:10:04] Thank you so much. Please find out. Thank you. Thank you so much. Lisa brought away. I actually have a question first before you start. Don't start my time yet. Hang on. I want to comment on both of them so I'm not sure like do I do it all now or should I come back up um come back up I can okay okay so I'll just stop okay so I'll stop halfway sorry so this so this is the public hearing this is the policy yes yes in the spring of 2019 I moved my family a thousand miles only for the Albemarle public school that's it that's what I wanted my kids to go to the

[01:10:44] school and I moved them thinking that they would have better opportunities and And instead, what I received was, my son has had his entire joy stolen from him. And that is the onus of this entire board, including the ones who won't do me the decency of looking at me.

[01:11:08] My son has been failed, like I said last time. I have asked the last time for an independent outside investigation into this. I understand that the policy has been created, and I appreciate that.

[01:11:24] That is what I asked for. But a policy alone is not going to make me trust any of you with my children ever again. My son cannot go to counseling to process what has happened to him, because the minute that door closes, all he sees is Sweeney.

[01:11:43] Trust is rebuilt through transparency, accountability, and a willingness to fully examine what has happened. And Albemarle refuses to take accountability. And you can just say what you want, but you are not taking accountability in the correct ways.

[01:12:02] Multiple accounts from staff and parents have come out since this saying that they have brought their concerns about Sweeney to the assistant principal of Whitbrook and the principal at Hollymead. Time and time again, they were ignored.

[01:12:19] For three years, I made complaints against Mike Sweeney, and I was told that my child was a problem, and that he needed, he needed Mike Sweeney. It was only after his arrest that I felt any of my

concerns were actually taken seriously, and I can promise you that even at this point, I don't feel like they're being taken as seriously as they should.

[01:12:46] As both a parent and a special education teacher, I know that students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population that we can help. They often rely heavily on trusted adults. My son, it doesn't matter, we need to understand how these concerns were evaluated, how they were brought forth to the board or to the superintendent, and who is responsible for none of these things being caught before now.

[01:13:17] My son, once again, is a black boy, a dark-skinned black boy who wants to be a pediatric neurosurgeon with autism. All of those factor into why he was chosen by this man and why it was so easy to keep him with him.

[01:13:35] And that needs to be understood. Thank you very much. Again, I'm sorry, but I ask that you stand in support or that you wave your hands in support.

[01:13:52] I'm just following the guidelines that we all just agreed to. Phil Reese. Madam Chair, is the microphone on? Just give us one second. Apologies. Madam Chair, members of the school board, my name is Phil Reese. Next month, my four-year-old daughter starts kindergarten at Howie Mead Elementary School. In that same school, at least four students were allegedly sexually assaulted by a staff member. We just heard about the mom of one of them. This happened on school property

[01:14:25] during school hours. If that fails to justify an independent investigation please tell me what would. I've heard this board talk about new policies to fix the problems. I fully support new policies but you don't really know what to fix until you investigate and know exactly what's broken. Now this board accepted two resignations with no findings of wrongdoing. The superintendent is gone and the principal is gone. But a resignation is not an investigation. A resignation protects

[01:15:03] the person leaving, but an investigation protects the children who stay. Parents ask how four children were harmed inside a school, and they're always told we can't share that because of employee privacy. But Virginia law makes employee confidentiality a choice, not a requirement.

[01:15:23] And our school division keeps choosing to put employee privacy before student protection. But an independent investigation also protects this board and its employees, too. If every employee acted properly, an outside review will prove it and protect their reputations.

[01:15:43] But here's something missing from the sexual misconduct policy you're reviewing tonight. On ACPS's own leadership chart, which you can find right on the website, one employee holds two titles. The Title IX coordinator is also the assistant legal counsel.

[01:16:02] One duty is advocating for students who may be victims of sexual misconduct. But the employee's other duty is to protect ACPS from lawsuits. Federal law requires that Title IX coordinators be free of any conflict of interest.

[01:16:20] So please explain to parents how this is not a conflict of interest. Some have suggested I'm seeking to make this issue political because I reached out to my elected officials, both Republicans and Democrats, asking for their help.

[01:16:35] This is not a right or left issue. This is a right and wrong issue. Next month, I'm supposed to walk my daughter through the front doors of Hollymead for the first time. She will spend time in the

school library, but she will not know that she is standing just a few steps away from where something truly evil took place.

[01:16:58] School board, your job is to put students first. Order an independent investigation tonight. Thank you. Thank you very much. Again, I ask that we not clap. We are now moving immediately into our public comment.

[01:17:14] I have three people on tonight's list for the public comment. Lizzie Batman, Phil Reese, and Lisa Broadway.

[01:17:36] - Hold on, I'm a little short. Hello, and thank you for your time this evening. My name is Lizzie Batman, and I'm a constituent in the Jack Jewett District. I'm here tonight to discuss two different topics, teacher and administrator retention, and the grading policy.

[01:17:51] All fun, a little different. I'm the mother of a rising second grader and fourth grader at Greer Elementary. If you haven't heard, some things have been happening at Greer this year. to put it in perspective we have had over 20 staff resignations since our former principal was sent to another elementary school in the district to give you context we normally have 10 max per year on average one of the most recent resignations was one of our two assistant principals who decided to follow dr saunders to crozet i will say that i have met our new principal

[01:18:30] mrs browdie and had a meeting with her and mrs newberry our other ap our primary ap and i trust that they will be able to take on the helm of Greer to make sure that we are successful and I'm grateful for that. However, there's still a lot of uncertainty as we move into a new environment.

[01:18:48] It's a new school for all of these students and this is a group that has the least and once again is giving up the most. What can be done to support our teachers? This is a huge turnover for Greer. How can we make sure our teachers and staff are taken care of? I'd personally not say no to bonuses for all of them for their hard work and staying with the school to support these students who need them but that's not for you to decide maybe influence so if you want to use some of that that would be great on top of greer we have baker butler with the revolving door of principals

[01:19:23] and then we have hollymead with an entirely different type of trauma who is taking care of these teachers who is making sure they are set up to succeed and have the support they need during these times of change not just the teachers but the staff as a whole in these schools and i'm most informed about the elementary side but what about secondary schools as well speaking of secondary schools this leads to my point about the grading policy if we are going to support our teachers in this time not giving students a fair grade i.e maybe if they've done zero work given zero effort they should get zero percent is passing the buck to

[01:19:58] future teachers if students continually get passed a little anecdote for you all my rising fourth grader took sols for the first time this year we felt prepared because on her homework and class assignments she got a number grade and when she got a 97 she said she was almost perfect and i was like very true good job and good times this helped shape and put in perspective her mastery of the topic at hand these grades also helped reflect to the students how they're doing how well they understand 40 credit for no work turned in is not going to magically predict how well someone's going

[01:20:33] to do in fact 40 credit is not going to prepare these students for anything in their future this reminds me a lot of no child left behind which occurred in my time in school spoiler alert many children

were left behind thank you very much mr phil reese i don't have a mic please i don't have a prepared speech for this one so i'm just going to speak off the cuff it's a

[01:21:06] pleasant surprise to having two opportunities to speak i want to read something from virginia code Virginia law. Code 2.23705.1 says this. Personnel information is excluded from mandatory disclosure but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion. What does this mean? I'm not sure if your legal counsel has informed the school board this when people put in FOIA requests or when they're asking about an employee did this or did that the school has the

[01:21:45] ability to restrict sharing that personnel information from parents but it's a choice it's a choice as I read right here you're not mandated to give that to parents or people but you do have the discretion to and I hope that your legal counsel has informed you this because so many times not just with sexual misconduct so many times parents say I hate this teacher did this in any there might be a report there might not parents were left in the dark right and it's putting employee confidentiality first ahead of students and you know at

[01:22:25] the school board retreat I was there what did the what did they say you're a school board you're supposed to put the students first but we're putting employees first and students I don't maybe they come second or maybe they're third fourth I don't know the students need to come first and their protections need to come first and I I ask you to ask your legal counsel for clarification on what I'm telling you because this is so important this is this is the biggest problem I see with ACPS is that parents are left in the dark I'm going to share something I know you know personal stories usually are not as

[01:22:59] effective but my son's my son was his his freedom of speech and freedom of religion was hindered by a teacher and I requested a meeting with that teacher met with that teacher eventually the principal was brought in the principal agreed with me that the teacher violated my son's freedom of speech freedom of religion I then asked that teacher well are you gonna do an HR report he wouldn't tell me I had he would not even tell me if he was gonna do a report I had to do

[01:23:37] some sort of HR thing I don't remember what it's called to document what this teacher did and still to this day acps has never told me that they did an investigation or that my that my son was correct that his freedom of speech was violated this is the fundamental problem i hope you school board put students first not staff thank you thank you mr reese again i i'm asking again that the applause stops lisa brought away this is easier for me to talk

[01:24:12] about so I'm not I'm talking as a parent who has other children still in ACPS and as a taxpayer I'm in the Rio district by the way sorry I spent time reviewing ACPS's policies and their budget in the last few weeks as well as their instructional initiatives and there's a question that I kept running into and it was how do we know that the investments that you guys are making are actually improving anything the kids are doing. We continue to face challenges with academic growth at Albemarle County. And like I said before, I moved my kids here

[01:24:49] because the school district at the time was one of the best. It is now falling. Teacher burnout, staffing shortages, continued cuts to things that the students actually need, these are all happening. While the money is being put into these programs, they're supposed to replace these people. Now I did research the programs that Albemarle County pays for, pays a lot for. And 85, I would say, percent of them have absolutely no peer-reviewed evidence showing that they actually help student outcomes. Yet, in favor of these, we have routinely cut

[01:25:28] student-facing positions. People who are trained and trusted to teach these children much better than a computer i am not against technology i think it is powerful i think it's useful i think that it can be used to help a lot of students especially in my field it is not a replacement for me and it is not a replacement for any other well-educated teacher who knows what they're doing a screen cannot de-escalate one of my children if my children one of my students is having a crisis i can't put a screen in front of them it's not going to do anything if i don't

[01:26:06] have an aid because of the continued cuts that the district has made I'm left there with what an ipad because they're going to do ixl on it this is not helping us in any way so moving forward I would like if the board would investigate these programs that they are pushing on to teachers expecting them to utilize and yet we are not seeing any kind of benefit from them so while Albemarle is continually facing lowered enrollment rates because people like myself have pulled their children to

[01:26:40] homeschool we are going to keep having this problem you cannot continually cut the actual people who want to do this job i am not a special education teacher for the money i can tell you that right now i am in it because i truly care about every single one of these children the exact same amount that i care about my own children and that is why i'm here because they deserve more they deserve better they deserve what we are capable of and we're not giving that

[01:27:14] thank you very much thank you i appreciate everyone's comments tonight both for our public comment as well as for our public hearing um i'm just going to talk people through the agenda if they don't have it in front of them we're going to do the approval and consent agenda and then we have three um actually four pieces for information we are doing um the special education review update the transportation update the assessment and accountability update we'll see where we need to take a break and then we have an update on

[01:27:53] the mental health and social emotional supports in schools and then we will be doing the um the policy discussion, reviewing the policy on professional boundaries and prevention of sexual misconduct, and then reviewing the grading policy, part two.

[01:28:09] So that's just, I know it is a long evening for all the staff as well as everyone in the audience, but it was important for us to have these all on the agenda prior to school starting. So the next piece on our agenda is the approval of our consent agenda.

[01:28:26] Do I have a motion regarding our consent agenda? - Chair Berlin, I move that we approve the Consent Agenda. - Second. - Second. - Moved by Dr. Acoff, I'm gonna say, seconded by Mr. Dylenbach.

[01:28:42] All those in favor of tonight's Consent Agenda? - Aye. - Aye. - Any opposed? Tonight's Consent Agenda passes, and we don't have any items pulled from today's Consent Agenda. The next piece of business we have is our Special Education Review Update.

[01:28:59] Dr. Hayes is going to introduce the Berkeley Group, who have done a review of it, and they are live here to provide an update to the board as well as the public. - Good evening, Chair Berlant. Sit on, are we on?

[01:29:15] Thank you. Good evening, Chair Berlant, board members, and the community. I'm Dr. Hayes, the acting superintendent, and I'm here to provide an update to the school board and to the community about the special education review conducted by the Berkeley Group. At the start of the 25-26 school year,

we had a transition in leadership in the special education department where we hired a new director, Ms. Ashley Struzik, and a new assistant director, Ms. Leslie Glover.

[01:29:42] And together we sat down, reviewed special education operations, academics in Albemarle County and determined now would be a good time to do a comprehensive review of special education in Albemarle County public schools.

[01:29:58] And at that time, I contacted the Berkeley Group, which is a consultant that works with a variety of organizations, whether corporate organizations or public schools, to see if they would be willing to partner with us to conduct this review here, and they agreed.

[01:30:16] And so tonight, I'm joined by Dr. Patrick Murphy and Dr. Scott Baker, who were the lead consultants on this project, and Ms. Leslie Glover, the assistant director of special education is here as well. So at this time I will turn the presentation over to them.

[01:30:37] - Thank you, Dr. Hayes, Madam Chair, distinguished board members, my name is Scott Baker. It is a pleasure to be with you this evening. Thank you for the opportunity for us to share with you just the highlights and kind of a high level summary of what our review entailed and what we learned and discovered throughout the process and what we're recommending.

[01:31:00] As the Director of Public Education for Berkeley Group, it's a joy to get to partner with school divisions like yours, and we wanna say in advance how much we've appreciated getting to spend time with, not only staff, but parents, and to learn more and more about the very important special education program and services that you offer.

[01:31:21] My colleague, Dr. Pat Murphy, who is an Executive Manager for us at Berkeley Group, is gonna be sharing the bulk of the slide deck, I'm going through that. It will be followed at the end with an opportunity for any questions that you have and any discussion that you'd like to have pertaining to the findings.

[01:31:38] But again, thank you for the opportunity to be here. And I will now turn it over to Dr. Murphy. - Good evening, thank you, Dr. Baker. Good evening, school board members. It's a pleasure to see you this evening and staff as well.

[01:31:56] My name is Pat Murphy, and I'm gonna lead us through this presentation this evening. I need just a slight little education, though, about how to advance the slides.

[01:32:12] Is it just using the mouse? Okay. - You may want to pull the mics up a little bit as well. - Okay, all right, thank you. So I want to give you folks a little bit of background as far as how we conducted the review and some of those pieces.

[01:32:31] I'll probably repeat some of this information, but it's always good to hear it more than once. We became involved with you folks at the end of March. And then Dr. Baker and I spent some time here in the district talking with folks and also distributing a survey.

[01:32:50] That was right around the spring break period of time that we conducted a lot of that review. I also wanna recognize that the board initiated this review along with the superintendent. There are no compliance issues that you were responding to.

[01:33:08] You want to do better. You see that continuous improvement is important. And I think that speaks volumes to what this board and the leadership and the direction that the district is going. So as part

of a little bit of additional background, we looked at three sources of evidence.

[01:33:30] The first was we looked at student academic data, specifically with the SOLs, standards of learning. We also looked at internal documents, such as policies, your budget, communication.

[01:33:46] We also looked at advisory reports. And I do wanna make a special note that your SEAC group report, having experience in other advisory groups, is a very valuable document. There were a wealth of information that we were able to gather from that.

[01:34:02] So I think that speaks volumes about that group. We also looked at the bellwether report and what you'll see in the review when you receive it. You will see that many of the recommendations that the bellwether group provided you folks are also aligned with the information that we're going to share with you.

[01:34:23] On the slide, you can also see that we had over 286 respondents for the staff survey. We also had a number of respondents for the parent and caregivers. So I think we had a wealth of information, not only from the survey, but then also from the focus groups that we attended and held here.

[01:34:45] And you'll also see in the report that much of that information is supported with evidence based on our recommendations. So the report is kind of grounded in both the qualitative and quantitative data that we were able to glean from you folks.

[01:35:00] You'll also see that we identified seven systematic strengths across, and I'll cover those. There were five consistent themes as we looked at the different groups and we looked at the survey information that consistently played themselves out as far as what those recommendations are based on.

[01:35:19] And then from there, we developed 12 recommendations that are broken down into three segments, short-term, mid-range, and then also long-term as far as how you folks would be moving forward with that.

[01:35:35] The other piece is we looked at your division strategic plan and we aligned many of those recommendations with your division strategic plan because that's a basis of direction that the board provides staff and the leadership of the district.

[01:35:52] So again, a little bit more background. You folks initiated this review that speaks volumes as far as your position on that every student when they receive special education services should have long-term success and a meaningful educational experience.

[01:36:11] The scope looked at a variety of different things from academic outcomes, to your organizational structures, to professional development, and then also examined leadership. And I do want to make a note, and you'll see this in the review report, that there is great optimism and also excitement about the new leadership that you have with special education and bringing on to new individuals into that role.

[01:36:36] So you have a moment of opportunity that I think you can strike at as far as making some significant changes that I think you folks wanna see. And I'll underline that the purpose of this was not a compliance issue. It was not neither an audit. This was something that you initiated in partnership with continuous improvement and growth.

[01:36:57] And you folks feel that you can do better. And I applaud you for that initiative to make that change. So whether we hear, and this is really a reflection of your staff talking to us about what they see as

systematic strengths across the district.

[01:37:17] There's a strong culture of commitment and inclusion. And everyone felt that these students are our students, whether they're receiving special education services or not, there's a strong ownership. And I think that speaks volumes about your staff and their belief systems and how they see supporting children.

[01:37:36] You do have a high inclusive placement rate of over 70% of your students are in 80% time in inclusive settings, being mainstreamed. Again, I think that speaks volumes about the district, but there's also room for improvement there.

[01:37:53] So how can that begin to happen? Several programs, most significantly the letters training was pointed out as an effective practice. So what this speaks to is you have the skills and the ability to be able to move forward and take strategic steps and implement those.

[01:38:11] It's how you set yourself up to be able to repeatedly do that when you have new initiatives or new practices that you wanna bring to bear. And I think there was generally a pretty openness and reflection about the idea that we do need to improve, we can improve.

[01:38:29] You also have a setting where you're bringing in new superintendent leadership and an interim role. So again, that married with the changes that you're seeing with your special education leadership, I think really sets you up for making some advances.

[01:38:46] You do have statewide, above-average academic outcomes. However, you recognize that you can do better and you're not satisfied with the outcomes that you are currently seeing. We heard, you know, the belief that a strong number of your teachers believe in students, they have high expectations, and the dedicated and caring staff that you have here, I think, is recognized.

[01:39:15] And I'll come back to that in just a minute, because there's a flip side to that, and I want to point that out. And then again, positive relationships, we heard in talking with families about that. But I want to break that down to the individual level.

[01:39:32] We heard about individual positive relationships either with teachers or principals or assistant principals or members of the staff. And families spoke very passionately about that, but they also felt that individual relationship was very important.

[01:39:50] So when we then looked at what each of those stakeholder groups talked about, and then we looked at that in relationship to the survey information we got a number of themes that played themselves out in listening to those groups we then took those themes from each one of the groups and we cross-referenced them or cross-tabbed them to see what played out across those different groups for kind of consistency to build on the recommendations and I think one of the things we

[01:40:28] heard about across all groups is consistency of practice. We heard about different practices and ways of doing business was inconsistent and that was across schools. That played itself out even more evidently going from elementary middle to high. So one of the pieces that we're going to suggest to you is that you look at how you can establish consistency as students move through the K-12 continuum, but also in addition to that, how can you set in

[01:41:04] place these practices so they help you as far as serving students. We also heard about the capacity of staff, time, and professional learning. And by the way, there's a strong thread through all this

information that your staff members, whether they're serving students in the classroom or outside the classroom, want to continue to learn they want professional development they want the time to be able for that to be able to happen but coupled with that there's a real press on time and there's a real press on the capacity of staff in the

[01:41:41] number of students that they're serving so looking at staffing formulas looking at caseloads I think it's going to be something that's going to be incumbent as far as how you move forward and that's also going to be tied to your your annual budget. As I may mention earlier, families felt they had good relationships with staff and they broke that down on an individual basis from my previous comment. But one of the pieces that they also felt strongly about is around communication and how that communication is disseminated maybe

[01:42:18] broadly or across the school and they feel that there can be a stronger network of communication at each level from the school board all the way down to the individual classroom and how that is established. So one of the pieces we're going to suggest to you is looking at some type of communication framework that establishes how those messages are delivered and then how can that that element be a critical piece of how you move forward with your community. We had tremendous discussion also when we heard a lot about your service model and

[01:42:57] instructional focus and that's really tied to the ABC base model and one of the pieces that I want to share with you is in my career I have not seen a design like the one that is articulated here so I want to give you the impression that I was very impressed we were both very impressed with the way that model designed and originally intended to work. However, the model has not been what we learned, the model has not really been looked at in over a decade. And when it

[01:43:35] was established, the student population was different, your staff was different, and you've had quite a changeover in personnel, which is just normal as people move through their careers. So we are highly recommending that you look at that base model. Reassess it. Don't need to start over. It is well intended and designed but coupled with that we recognize that the different components of the model are distributed across the district. I think there needs

[01:44:12] to be communication about why and how they're distributed so people have a better understanding. We were here for several days and we got many variations of the theme of what the ABC model is or the base model is and so again I think it goes back to communication and a clear understanding of how it was intended to work and I think it is an effective model for you to kind of build on as you move forward and then a lot of folks wanted to know what the direction for special education services was in the district so leadership vision

[01:44:51] organizational readiness is something that I think needs to be articulated. What are the intended outcomes? What are the intended designs? How is this going to work? All become critical components for how you're going to be able to move forward. Those major themes played themselves. Five major themes are kind of the foundation which then we built our recommendations on and I think the strength of them both from a qualitative and quantitative measure give you a sound footing to be able to begin to initiate some of these changes possible

[01:45:27] changes. So as I mentioned we've broken this down into three components of short-term, mid-range, and long-term. They they do have a little bit of a timetable design around them but that's just for structure initially and I also think you folks need to work with staff as far as designing how these

recommendations could possibly roll out, recognizing your staff and your leadership know the culture of the school division and the capacity as far as how you'd be able to move forward. So the first piece is establishing clear

[01:46:06] communication of the vision and a change management framework. So it needs to be articulated to everyone how we're going to initiate and take the first steps with the recommendations that we're providing. I do want to point out in this next recommendation is some of these things the staff has already begun to initiate and this one here with the internal review of identification access and transition is something that the staff has already begun to work on so I want We applaud the leadership for beginning some of the things that we've already mentioned

[01:46:42] in here, and we learned about that after we drafted the initial draft of this report. And then we did hear from teachers specifically around co-planning, the need for co-planning time and reestablishing that. When you have those co-teaching models, you need your teachers in both general ed and serving special education students to be able to plan together.

[01:47:06] And we see those as kind of the first phase of this. The next, and I expressed this already, is a division-wide special education practice framework. A lot of this has to do with how IEPs are developed, the meeting process, co-teaching.

[01:47:25] All the elements that surround special education services need to be articulated, they need to be grounded, and they need to be documented so they can be points of reference for folks to refer to and then hold folks accountable for how they move forward.

[01:47:44] There also needs to be benchmarking, which has already been underway, looking at other school divisions like yourself, size, number of students that you serve, and possibly learning from them the practices they have in place, and also comparing yourself.

[01:48:02] Are we among some of the best in the state or across the nation? Or can we learn from some of these other districts? You have done some benchmarking we did learn, but I think that you can build on what you've already done.

[01:48:17] Looking at the base model, I talked pretty extensively about that already. So review, reset, relaunch. I think you can do that with some type of consensus building approach and also informing the public how that moves forward. These next two, I think you may be able to collapse them together. I did mention that there is a need and a want for more professional learning. That may result for both educational staff and also paraprofessional staff about how that may look. Again, time was the element, looking at contract

[01:48:55] lengths, looking at when that would be provided and how that would be structured. This next one there has already been work underway as far as consistent performance monitoring of student academic performance. Staff is already beginning to look at that. I think that also relates to the initiative that was taken as far as how this Department of Special Education and the Department of Instruction are now sort of married at the hip and they are working together. So again a good step in that right direction. And then we did

[01:49:29] here sort of a little bit of a bottleneck or a pinch point with the caseloads of the school psychologists and how that is playing out and also the need to look at caseload management and their capacity and then finally the last two which are a little bit longer term and something that would give you

folks some time and opportunity to take under consideration articulating the special education improvements as well as for all service populations as part of

[01:50:05] your continuous improvement system or embedded in your strategic plan I think conveys a strong message about the priority of students who are being served with either special education or English language learners or other learners as appropriate so embedding that infrastructure within your continuous improvement system i.e. your division strategic plan and then finally the community spoke a lot about the resources that you have I do want to give a nod that access to many of your county resources was something that was

[01:50:42] reflected as a positive folks felt like hey we can make connections here there are resources in our community and staff by the way knows how to do that and make those connections for families I think you can build on that but in building on that what are your relationships with some of the higher education agencies in the area both community college and four-year institutions what could your you know relationship also be with business groups as far as providing transition services for all students so that they can move into a professional or the job market so there's a feeling that there's

[01:51:22] great greater resources in the community and you should have the ability to tap into those resources across that continuum so that would be a condition conditions for success for you just sustain these recommendations well one is consistent leadership and you've made some changes with leadership here most recently in the areas that i've already mentioned but having that leadership and the support of the board i think will present the opportunity for you to make the changes that you want to see

[01:51:59] communication plan about how all these things are going to happen how are they connected and making sure that those messages are consistent i think of this format the board meeting provides you that one opportunity to be able to do that. But a menu of communication and have an understanding to the public and the community about how you're going to do that is really foundational.

[01:52:23] The process that we engaged with I think was around consensus building. We came in, we listened to people, we asked them questions, we wanted their feedback, and that input I think was helpful in us coming back to you with something that is tangible and gives you the ability to move forward. I think building around all of these recommendations a type of consensus building process is going to be really important because one it creates buy-in and two it creates

[01:52:58] accountability and I think those two ingredients are really important to the success of any organization and then some type of monitoring system through project management framework that gets regularly reported to the board needs to be part of your diet. I don't think it needs to be here every meeting but I do think it needs to be evident that it's going to be on a consistent schedule and what you're going to monitor are based on the board's priorities. Wrapping up we've

[01:53:33] sketched out a tentative you know outline for you to consider leadership and communication infrastructure I think needs to be initiated here and you know within a short period of time launching some type of internal review that I made mention which is already underway the co-planning time may be something that you can implement here before the start of the school year but it may need to be something that you consider as you look at your budget for the next fiscal year. Establishing a continuous improvement cycle and I think this can

[01:54:13] be tied closely to your strategic plan. It could be possible too that you may want to amend your strategic plan based on some of the recommendations we're providing here. And then a roadmap for all staff around what professional learning system you want to be able to roll out. And again I'll just I'll just reinforce. People are hungry to learn, they want to learn, and they see that as an important piece in how they are going to serve students. The report has an appendancy, and within that report there's all sort of the details of how

[01:54:49] we conducted the focus groups, what those engagements look like, and then a quick crosstab reference of the recommendations at a glance by the the themes and then by the particular recommendations. So I will stop there and entertain any discussion or comments that the board has. I'm going to open it to the board and Dr. Hayes for questions, comments. I mean, I really, as a SPED mom, I really appreciate this. I know when we

[01:55:29] spoke, we talked about this, that I think our ABC model is great, but like I said, I'm a board member and a sped mom and I still don't completely understand it. So you know that it's really complicated and the communication is terrible on it. That said, I think communication is terrible in general when it comes to our sped students. We don't get a lot of information. It's inconsistent and I think that that creates a lot of anxiety and uncertainty which is really unnecessary when

[01:56:03] we're already advocating really hard for our kids. So I'm really encouraged to see that we are going to be pushing more on the communication side when it comes to parents. But I think a big issue that we're facing is that's just for the kids who have already gotten services. What do we do for the kids who don't have the parents who know how to advocate for them? What do we do for the parents and the kids who don't know what their rights are, don't know what their what resources we have for their kids? And also, what about when we try to get access for those kids

[01:56:40] and it's denied because we've been told that we don't have staffing in the school to be able to support our SPED kids or a kid that needs extra intervention? So I think this is a really great first step, but I think that we have a long way to go in our special education department before our kids are really successful. And I think that as we are looking at budget, something else we need consider is burnout for our sped teachers is very different than our regular teachers.

[01:57:11] There aren't even words to describe how exhausting it is to parent a child with special needs and these teachers are incredible. The fact that they can sit with these kids all day and try to make them successful in school. So I think we need to think about what our staffing levels are not just for TAs. At our camp we staff one-to-one and two-to-one for our campers and that's just at summer camp where it's really fun all day and they get to do fun things and they're not being forced to read and write and interact with their peers in in a high intensity environment like school.

[01:57:48] So I want us as we are going through this this report and we're thinking about what is it it's not just you know these things that are listed here but it's really listening to the parents and also thinking about how can we better staff our sped program so that our kids are successful and also while we're talking about it this provisional license is great but for sped that's a really hard thing because this is a really specialized job and to have people that

[01:58:24] are being moved from a TA to a teaching position, in my opinion, we are selling those kids short. They need to have licensed teachers teaching them from the beginning in order for them to be successful and be in gen ed classes as much as possible. And the last thing I want to talk about, well two

things actually, and I think it's touched on a little bit, but is discipline when it comes to our SPED students, for those of us that are on the disciplinary committee, the majority of the students that make it to a discipline hearing have a 504 or an IEP, and we are disciplining kids for

[01:59:03] their disability because the administrators don't understand the disability and they are reacting to the behavior and not understanding the behavior that leads to those reactions and what that disability plays into. So we have a SPED administrator at every school. These SPED administrators don't know SPED. A lot of them have never been a SPED teacher. They haven't read the IEPs of their students and they're disciplining them. So that's something that really really need to consider if we want to have a systemic change is how are we viewing our SPED students? Are they

[01:59:38] reacting as a disciplinary action or are they having a behavioral reaction with their disability and making sure that those administrators understand every child that they're representing, every IEP, they've read every IEP, they've read every 504, they understand the student that's in their office for pushing another student or, you know, flipping a chair. That's not usually a discipline issue. It's a behavior issue because of their disability. And last thing is I I really appreciate the data collection and sharing of those things, but we actually need to be taking the data.

[02:00:16] We need to be monitoring our students' success, and we are struggling with that. Some of our schools haven't done it in two years, and that's a tragedy. And we can't expect our students to be successful if we're not actually taking the data on our students and monitoring where they're struggling and where they're succeeding.

[02:00:37] And I'm just gonna say this. My son is 13, he can't read. He got exceptionally proficient on his SOLs in reading. Someone explained to me how that happened. I get that we read him the questions, but that is not.

[02:00:57] My husband and I actually laughed at it and threw it in the trash. So how are we actually checking on these students and seeing if they're succeeding, or are we pushing them through until they get to post high and then hoping that they get a job without actually giving them the tools that they need to be successful in life.

[02:01:16] So I will get off my soapbox, but this is obviously something I'm really passionate about, but also our students deserve better. And I'm really happy that we're at least taking the first steps to investigate it. And I hope that we actually implement some of these things and we're not four years down the road like we are with the Bellwether report and still haven't made much progress.

[02:01:42] - Other comments, questions? - That's hard to follow. sorry I guess my question goes to the professional development and the joint planning with other teachers and how how well we do that I sounds like we need some work on that I mean we have heard from SEAC several times over the years that the professional development about special ed needs to be with the the mainstream teachers as much as with the special ed teachers and I'm not sure how

[02:02:19] we what our what our rules are for that I have no idea actually but dr. Hayes is going to tell me I'll have them all but what I will say is well two things one as they mentioned sometimes the challenge that we have is the contract differences between our TAs and our licensed staff and so the time in which they return or what's counted as a teacher workday let's not can differ between the two contracts and so

sometimes that has posed challenges um in the past and that's something that we could bring up in you know budget discussions and things of that nature

[02:02:58] also at the beginning of the school year prior to the initiation of this review i asked dr megan wood who is our director of professional learning to work with miss ashley struzik and miss leslie glover to develop a three-year plan for professional learning opportunities for our staff TA's and our teachers that would provide them with additional training around content.

[02:03:25] What we were noticing was that there was a limited amount of training that they were receiving in some areas. CPI training was offered quite a bit, but trainings around the content and how to engage with the content in different courses was not offered as much.

[02:03:41] So they began working on that plan already. There are some guidelines that we have to follow around professional development with limitations that have been placed by the BDOE of how much professional development, academic, non-academic, that can happen, as well as making sure we are adhering to the AA guidelines.

[02:04:00] But that's a process that we have started. But that will take some work just depending on contracts and funding for different positions. And I appreciate you bringing up SEAC. I think that there has been discussion about SEAC being an official committee for the school board.

[02:04:18] And we've never actually done that. It's a committee that some of us try to attend a meeting. But I think it would be really important to have actual representation from the board at SEAC so that we know and hear and can report back to the board in our committee meeting updates what is going on in SPED and what our actual needs are.

[02:04:38] Because we're talking about 12% of our students have a 504 or IEP. That's a significant portion that I think deserves the representation on the board. Other comments or questions? I'm sorry, I was trying to pull this up on the ESB, but I was not able to click on the item.

[02:04:56] No, I was going to make an apology to the public. I did just notice that this presentation is not linked to the board's agenda tonight. We will make sure by tomorrow morning that that is linked so you have access to that.

[02:05:13] And so please take my personal apologies that that is not there. We want to make sure that you have access to this as well as the full report. And we will make sure that happens. So that's why you can't see it. Okay, also the update on mental health is not linkable while we're at that. So I was just trying to flip back and see what the 60-day, 90-day, whatever.

[02:05:31] Oh, yeah, could you go back to the timeline? To the timeline? To the timeline, the short-term recommendations and just. There, or you want to go back to the recommendations? I think back maybe it was short.

[02:05:48] Okay, there you go. Yeah, there you go. Okay, and just ask Dr. Hayes, like, how feasible or, you know, these recommendations are in implementing. So I believe all of them are feasible.

[02:06:04] And what I really appreciate from Dr. Murphy and Dr. Baker is how they broke out the timeline so that it was reasonable. Of course, we can't do everything all at once because some things may take budget proposals or conversations. But one of the things they agreed to, we are grateful for, is to stay on board to help us move this process forward.

[02:06:27] You know, just a personal concern is that as I was transitioning from Assistant Superintendent of Instruction to Acting Superintendent, I wanted to make sure that this work did not fall through the cracks. And so they've agreed to stay on board to help us monitor and make sure we move this work forward.

[02:06:42] And also, Ms. Claire Kaiser, the retired Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, has agreed to come back and support this work as well to make sure that things keep moving forward and to help us create a cadence for bringing information back to the board.

[02:07:00] So, we are already started on this process. And in terms of SEAC, we've instituted kind of a new practice of providing them with some updates. Ms. Struzik started this year with, you know, sharing different things with them throughout the year. We will share this full report once it's received with the broader community, but with SEAC, and they've agreed to come and do, and I'm speaking for SEAC, so I apologize. If they want us to come, we will come and share the entire presentation and work with them on ways that they feel the community would best receive communication, because we don't want this to

[02:07:39] be a one-way street. We want this to be a two-way street. Also engaging our family council, which we did throughout the process as well. They were invited in to come and meet and provide feedback. So those are some of the things we've already started. And I'll also say, and this was not Ms. Thompson, we got the proposal. I'm going to throw you out there just a little bit. They did share the presentation this afternoon, so that's why it's not linked. But we do, we will have it for you. Also I want to make a mention to some training we have coming up in respect to LEA, local education authority, and special education

[02:08:18] discipline. We realized that there were some challenges that were taking place and there was some disproportionality in the suspension rates and so next week at our leadership training with all of our principals from every school, Sans Anderson will be here to present for a half a day for our elementary staff and and for our secondary schools all around LEA designation, special education training.

[02:08:41] And in the spring, I asked the technology team to pull a report on discipline rates for every single school in the district to identify where there's disproportionality. Those schools were given that information and we've developed plans, especially on the secondary level for using their step eight FTE to address discipline issues.

[02:09:02] So those are some-- - That's amazing, thank you. - And that was a lot, sorry. - Other questions or comments? Okay, I have a few. Maybe some of these are requests. One is I appreciate you saying that the Berkeley group will be kind of following along.

[02:09:22] And if we can, as part of the scope, I think it makes sense. I'm thinking like every other month updates to the board on this, 'cause it almost seems like it's kind of 60 days out and that that information comes from the Berkeley group just to say, okay, I hate to use the word audit, a review to say, this is where we are, right?

[02:09:44] Green, yellow, red, or however you do it, to say like, are we on target for these, for where we're, once it's agreed upon what these timelines look like internally with your staff, to then say, okay, where are we on those? And having them look at that. And then have that just be a regular agenda item.

[02:10:02] And then with the person responsible, like who for each of these recommendations, if they're all, again, if they're all taken by the school district or if there's some that are or not or moved a little bit,

but making sure we know like what the timeline is and then who's the ultimate person responsible or people responsible.

[02:10:22] 'Cause I think that's an important piece as we kind of see the things going forward. The second, kind of the third tied together is we've talked a lot about budget. And so, you know, as I said earlier about something we're already beginning to think about budget even though we're just starting the school year and so again not sure if this is in scope or this is possible but as we think about some of these things particularly around you know caseload and teacher-child ratios right is there are there there's guidance from CEC Council for Exceptional Children right there's guidance from DOE but like

[02:11:00] in your work kind of across the country in your school districts you led are there some recommendations that as you look to us that you would and they don't have to answer this but that you would share with us you know based on some of these promising practices that are out there so that we could think about because my next question is you know can you help us think about costing some of these things out right because there's some that we could do potentially now and there's some that we have to make sure we know early enough as we move into budget and then And which are the pieces, as I think about, look out to my AEA lead, are that we will

[02:11:37] have to, you know, have conversations on and discussions. And it might be that there is some differentiation between special ed teachers and regular ed teachers around hours, and assistants around hours of professional development. So the more you can help us think about what are some of these potential costs.

[02:11:56] So again, kind of in this scope, we begin to say, okay, how do we do right by our students and give them the services that we know they deserve. I believe that's everything. I'm lowering it because I used to be taller.

[02:12:17] I just would like to close and do a little bit of a response to a number of things that we've heard, but to put a fine point on some of the things that my colleague, Dr. Murphy, shared.

[02:12:33] But I want to start with something that I'm remembering that you just shared. And the answer, I think, to both of those is yes, we would. The reason that we do what we do is not to provide a report that's static and then we leave. We understand as former system leaders, as folks that are still unabashed supporters of public education, we want to make sure that it's successful.

[02:12:59] And we all know that plans, whether they're full strategic plans or different types of plans that come from reviews like this, They live and die in implementation. And so we are really excited at the opportunity to continue to be a thought partner for you as a board, for your staff.

[02:13:18] And so we would certainly be glad to provide any number of recommendations and supports throughout this initial implementation phase. I would say one thing, Ms. Berlin, regarding budget. We haven't, you know, we don't want to be too presumptuous when we're engaging in a partnership.

[02:13:36] But my colleague, Dr. Murphy, is too humble to see. He's already put together a little budget sort of consideration. But that would be something that we would want to continue to be informed by the upcoming engagement.

[02:13:51] I also want to share something that ties to things that many of you shared about where the division needs to improve. And many of those things were borne out in this review process and the

findings. But I want to go back to something that I think is very important, and it's important for you to hear.

[02:14:12] I think it's important for your stakeholders to hear. What I often see and have experienced is when a school division doesn't need to, or a system doesn't need to improve, it's not required to, there's not a compliance issue, it's rare to see a proactive effort as this partnership, this engagement.

[02:14:35] And one of the things that I think is going to come naturally because of that is there are strengths that were reinforced earlier that can be really catalysts for how you move forward. And I'm just going to give one example that came up.

[02:14:52] Salih brought it up. A number of folks brought up this ACUF about how, and it's right up there on the screen, this idea of co-teaching and making sure that professional learning is provided for those that are trying to meet the needs of all of our students here in ACPS, but also specifically special needs students. What you have here that is very strong is a belief in and a mindset of inclusion. Sometimes you go and you find that there really isn't that belief

[02:15:28] that all students can be successful and that the best place for them to be successful is in that tier one core instruction classroom included with all students. Even though we know research bears that out, there are still situations where there isn't that mindset.

[02:15:46] You have it here in ACPS in abundance across all of your stakeholder groups, that belief that all students can learn at high levels in an inclusionary setting. What you see as a theme, and when you get the report, which we will have the full report available to you next week, that we would encourage everybody to go through.

[02:16:05] It's much longer than the highlighted presentation tonight. But you're going to see a theme that's overarching, which is taking these strengths and then making sure that there are structures, processes, systems put in place to move them forward.

[02:16:23] So everyone's like, I'm in on co-teaching, I'm a believer. How can there be enhanced structures, Opportunities, budget investments, professional learning, to help you move that forward and bring greater fidelity to the very practices that you believe in, but just right now are hindered in implementing across the division.

[02:16:45] So I just wanted to share that as we believe this is a strengths forward type of review. And so we look forward to continuing to support you. And again, thank you so much for the opportunity. a person who began my career as a special education teacher assistant. And that's not why that recommendation was in there about, but I think we are seeing that we are in a new era of challenge when it comes to staffing. And I do think that that's an example of assets that you have that you can continue to invest in at higher levels

[02:17:22] to kind of help move your capacity forward. So thank you so much for this opportunity, and we look forward to working with you again. Thank you very much. And thank you to all of our families, all of our teachers, all of our leaders who responded to the survey, participated in focus groups, had one-on-one conversations.

[02:17:42] This information helped guide this. And then we will, probably at the August meeting, know when we will be doing updates regarding. work with Dr. Hayes to know when we will be doing updates. My

thought is that we are going to do the transportation update and then do a break right after. Sounds perfect. Is that okay?

[02:18:09] And I apologize. I did not introduce you. I now introduce Ms. Jamie Gellner, Director of Transportation, to give us a transportation update. Good evening.

[02:18:34] My name is Jamie Gellner and I'm the Director of Transportation. So now you have it twice. this evening i will share a little bit about our department before discussing our current staffing status and the plan for open routes our employees connect strongly to the mission of acps particularly to know every student bus drivers van drivers and assistants form powerful connections to students and families and immediately impact each school day you can see the department reflected in goal three equitable transformative resources ensuring transportation for students who require bus service to attend school. One of the strategies under goal three is to remove

[02:19:14] transportation as a barrier to any division programs and we do work really hard to do that. Besides home to school transportation we take students to specialty schools outside of Albemarle County between schools within ACPS into before and after school programs. We take students home in the evening from places like the Boys and Girls Club and support all of the guaranteed field trips in the division as well as any other field trips that a school decides to do. We We support outside agencies with trips and work most evenings and weekends.

[02:19:44] We support our special education students to ensure they can be safely transported to school as well as work-based learning and internships. We support step and school suspension programs or any academic recovery on the weekends like Saturday school. We support emergency operations across the division and our maintenance shop maintains our vehicles as well as vehicles for the local government.

[02:20:06] We provide long range planning for the division and serve on many planning teams. We do even more, but those are some big buckets. I'm not going to read all these quick facts, but we have five major functional areas, operations which includes our daily operations for 29 schools and buildings and at least 11 other special education locations and our dispatch, the administrative team for all of our onboarding pay, budget processes, our maintenance team, training, which is constant throughout the

[02:20:39] year, and long-term routing and planning. We have many areas to continue to improve, but here are a few successes from the 25-26 school year.

[02:20:57] I won't speak to all of these, but just a note on special education support. We support students in foster care, students protected by the McKinney-Vento Act, and other students with special needs. Any student who cannot access their educational needs in an ACPS school may be sent to an alternative placement.

[02:21:14] We have at least 11 other schools outside of ACPS that we are responsible for transporting students to and with different school schedules and calendars from ours. Some of these schools are the Virginia Institute for Autism in Charlottesville, the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind in Stanton, the Faison Center in Richmond, and even Rivermont schools, of which there are many.

[02:21:37] And we transported one in Virginia Beach last year and one to Fairfield, which is between Lexington and Stanton. We do as third-party vendors when we need to in order to support our students. And so I just wanted to share a little bit more there. And we also, just as a note, because of the previous

discussion, we've been digging a lot into our sped over the two years I've been in there and working on all of our strategies, professional learning and structures.

[02:22:07] We're very proud of our in-service this year. There were some statistics on the previous slide, but we offered multiple sessions over the month of March and required all staff to take at least two classes. Our own staff taught all the classes and included student management, CPR, and first aid, and I taught a class called Leadership and Cultural Competency, to name a few.

[02:22:27] I'm proud of our 54% employee engagement rate, and the pictures are from a plaque that I gave our SHOP team for their heroic efforts to dig us out during a Snowcrete event the likes of which none of us had ever seen.

[02:22:43] I'd also like to highlight six staff members who earned employee recognition awards at the end of the year. Kathy Cobb is on the top left. She was our employee of the year. She's the lead driver for flex, activity, and substitute drivers. She's shown incredible leadership and commitment to our transportation team.

[02:23:01] She's the ultimate problem solver whenever a route needs coverage. Kathy is already working hand-in-hand with dispatch and lead drivers to find a solution and keep things running smoothly. Through a year of challenges and change, Kathy has remained focused on supporting her teams, our department, and our students.

[02:23:18] This MVP award is a true reflection of the positive impact she makes every day and the deep respect she has earned from her peers and leadership. Dorothy Spencer is our timekeeper and staff member of the year. She is not pictured on this slide, but I have an update.

[02:23:36] Lamar Lewis, our lead driver at Agner and our lead driver of the year. Lori Malone primarily drives for Baker Butler and she's our driver of the year. Charlene Austin, who primarily drives for Elk Hill and Keys Academy, and is our van driver of the year.

[02:23:52] And Sharon Thomas, who assists on a sped bus for Baker Butler, Albemarle and Journey, and is our assistant of the year. We also gave out 300 challenge coins throughout the department, ACPS, and in the community in recognition of service. And we're gonna continue that tradition, but I don't think I'm gonna have as many coins to make it more special.

[02:24:15] All right, so here's what you wanna know. The bottom line for the board, the schools, students, and families is that we do have enough staff to offer all students transportation service to start the year. We continue to offer an employee referral bonus to recruit school bus drivers and the 26-27 starting salary is \$24.43, tell all your friends.

[02:24:37] We've gotten creative with radio and TV ads and I'm working with a few stations to do digital marketing. At our job fair in June, we hired four school bus drivers. Last year, for the entire school year, we hired 34 staff members, and 17 of those were school bus drivers.

[02:24:53] At the end of the year, one and a half, because we have some that only do half routes, had left, so we netted 15 and a half drivers. In the previous year, just for comparison, we hired 38 and a half school bus drivers, and over the last two years, we lost 15 of those for various reasons.

[02:25:09] So you can see how we are constantly having to hire. we have three bus drivers and one substitute in training and four more who are in process with our annual turnover and taking all of these

numbers into account we have at least nine routes that need coverage and we still need to finalize our sped routes last year we added six buses at the start of the school year to accommodate changes in special education student needs we will likely start the school year with four to six open routes and we will cover them with our staff primarily our flex drivers who work as permanent substitutes and we have six flex

[02:25:48] drivers this year so last year we had five now we have six persistent better there we do plan to utilize ever driven again which is our third party vendor they ended last year with six routes and we do plan to start off the year with four routes with them they did the virginia beach route we will stack routes at some schools which means that we'll take some students to school early and and some students will stay late.

[02:26:18] In other words, at some schools, buses will do two bus runs. This does require elementary schools to provide staff to supervise students before and after the bell rings. You can see on the slides, the schools that will potentially have a stacked route and I'm aiming for five.

[02:26:33] The most likely elementary schools will be Agner, Greer, Baker, Butler, Collymead and Crozet. The most likely secondary schools will be Albemarle, Journey and possibly Lakeside and Henley, But it is easier for us to try to absorb some of these routes for coverage because fewer secondary students ride the bus.

[02:26:56] Okay, that was a lot of information on that one slide. Do you have any questions for me? - Can you remind us, Jamie, of both the number of routes and the number of students, generally speaking, that are served?

[02:27:12] I think people need to hear this. - Sure, so we have about 160 bus routes and about 30 of those are SPED. Those are just round numbers. We have 14,000 kids in the school division, about 10,000 request transportation, and 6,000 to 7,000 regularly ride.

[02:27:37] It's a big job. It is a big job. I'm wondering, is there any way to eliminate eventually stacked routes where elementary school kids might have to stay late? Yes. So I'll just-- a note on that is so in my first year, This is starting my third year.

[02:27:58] In my first year, we did have 12 stacked routes to start the year, and we removed them throughout the year as we could, and we ended with none. Last year, we didn't have any stacked routes, and we had some high turnover in the wintertime, which does happen for us due to illnesses and just regular turnover.

[02:28:21] And from March until the end of the school year, we covered 27 to 30 open routes every day between absorbing building staff. And then the schools had a brunt of that anyway, where the kids were staying after or they were getting to school late.

[02:28:38] And so having the stacked routes ensures that families and kids have a planned time and schools can plan, you know, that covers and it's not, hey, today you have six open routes at Albemarle, so you're gonna have 100 kids standing there waiting for a bus. That's a lot more difficult for everybody.

[02:28:55] So I'm trying to just be a little more proactive to start the year and I think five is not 12 and we can see how it goes thank you thank you and I think you've been doing a great job in your two and a half three years and as director with respect to the turnover I know it's a constant problem in terms of exit

interviews why do I'm thinking both the 24 dollars and change payments but also what are the reasons that you lose drivers? So we have

[02:29:34] a pretty good retention rate I've been monitoring that the past couple years so first year we have like an 85 percent retention rate and for two years it's about 74 and over three years it's 70 and in an average industry like those are pretty good numbers it's a hard job I wonder what our teacher turnover rate is for SPED in the first three years and how that would compare so the first answer is they leave in the first year because it's a hard job and it wasn't what they were expecting and they have to manage a lot of children and not just drive the bus

[02:30:09] in that second year we have a lot of personnel and family issues that might come up because of the age of some of our people they might they might be taking care of parents they might be taking care of other family members there's we have a just a small number of drivers that we have one driver this year who's going to be a teacher he was working for us while he was getting his degree so they just moved on and then regular retirements because we do have kind of an older demographic so I was

[02:30:41] just trying to identify something that we could do I feel very supported one thing that a driver just texted me about while we were talking is that there's a new county initiative for I guess housing and for full-time staff and I did have a question that I was gonna ask HR about what counts as full-time staff so more creative things like that might help some of our people who do fall on the lower end of the wage scale but they do work as I talked about we work a full

[02:31:18] day. They work a lot of hours for us. Are most of our staff from Albemarle County? Most of our staff does not live in Albemarle County. Does not, did you say? Does not. Does not live. So I'm curious, obviously I have a special needs student and having the monitor or the aid on the bus has been super helpful and with behaviors on the bus and I'm curious if that's something we've considered on all of our buses and if that might help with the retention if the driver doesn't have to also deal with the behaviors and I'm sure that's something you've thought of but I'm just

[02:31:58] curious as we prepare for the budget again are those things that in the long run may actually save us money as far as like training with drivers and and things like that yeah so yes we have considered it it's come up over the years traditionally it's been hard to staff we're short assistance. This year we did a lot of different things to recruit assistants and I had a surplus for a while and we piloted a few things. So we had like a student management position but as you know we need to we have to have assistance on special education buses that's required and so when we had

[02:32:36] a few surplus we tried that out on routes where maybe the driver needed some student management assistance. What we discovered is that it's really a different job that requires a little bit different training so we need to work on that but also we quickly needed those assistance to go back to special education buses you know that didn't last very long yeah and and thinking about the creativity around it you know something that I have thought about is you know when we're talking about people wanting these full-time positions can we get creative when it comes to like them having building positions and they're

[02:33:15] also staffed on the bus to and from and then are working at the schools during the day that would create a full-time position for them where they would get benefits and things like that just I completely trust you and I think you're doing a phenomenal job and have done a really remarkable job with what you took over but just kind of spitballing in thinking creatively how that might solve some of

those issues for the aides on the special ed buses their transportation department? Are they special ed department? They are transportation department. Yes. Jamie, I want

[02:33:52] to concur with everyone with the great job that you and your team are doing. When we were in more of a crisis mode, when we were seeing transportation updates every two weeks, I think, there was a lot of discussion of the numbers that you mentioned earlier where like 10,000 may sign up to ride the bus, but 7,000 actually do regularly. Is that something that you would consider to be a problem that's solvable or is that just sort of the cost of doing business with that where someone will come on every 10th day or something? Well I know that the staff tried that and it didn't yield. It was

[02:34:31] more work than it helped. I think with the demographics and the size of our county we're just we're not we're not there yet. I mean we still need to add bus routes in general to look at our service models. I think I talked a little bit about it last summer but generically speaking we've had the same number of bus routes for a very long time and the the right questions a lot of the times when we talk about instruction it's like what are the questions we're asking it's not like can we take all the kids to school it's how do we get them to school how long are the bus rides

[02:35:06] how many children are on each bus and we're just starting to crack into those questions and improve some of some of those and make continuous improvements on lengths of ride numbers students on bus so that we can have better student management and all of those things so I mean the answer is we need to keep hiring people okay I mean for them yeah but the only other thing the only thing I think everyone covered everything was um how I know this was a question

[02:35:41] in the past but how are parents notified when they are receiving second-party pick-up and drop-offs particularly for children with delays and disabilities?

[02:35:58] Do you mean just for like the initial contract? Yeah, so how would they know if, you know, it's going to be an Alvarez County bus or that? So first, we try to keep as much in-house as we can. And a lot of our third-party routes are the ones that are farther away.

[02:36:16] But we do a hand-to-hand with the parents to talk to them that this is the resource that we can provide. And we give them all of the EverDriven information and they have direct contact with EverDriven and us. We do get, if there's any complaints, we do get notified.

[02:36:35] They handle those complaints. Their contract has all of those requirements of background checks and things that we have. And I do plan to review the new policy with them when it is adopted to make sure they adopt it as well. So that part is working well.

[02:36:54] one of the areas that we want to improve this year is getting more data from ever driven about their arrival times and their communications with families and just making sure they're doing what they're supposed to do i didn't really ask for that last year and you know now that i'm thinking more about this i'm like yes i need to have all that um one quick question um the new parent is it parent square is that what it's called um is that how bus drivers will also communicate because we've been getting text messages um from our bus drivers um you know

[02:37:30] if they're going to be late or a substitute bus driver or whatever we always get our various bus drivers um have us on like a group chat for like our neighborhood or whatever um so i'm curious if it's all going to be centralized in parent square and trackable we have not had a chance to really talk about that yet i would like to move there eventually or maybe having all of my lead drivers have access to parent

square and they can contact um right now you won't see drivers communicating through parent square so what is the like standard then for is it text message um from the driver to

[02:38:09] the parents or what's the like a long-standing tradition has always encouraged drivers to reach out to families and we have always told them they don't have to use their own personal phone they can come into the office they can use the phones at school they can write a message and give it out on the bus they can use bright arrow now parent square and we'll help them do that but as you all know a lot of them just personally text right um so that is a discussion that's a conversation i just need to make sure that we're doing the right things to do that okay

[02:38:40] thanks any other questions no okay um i do think and you can tell me if it should be at the august this September, you don't have to tell me right now, meeting, but just because we are going to have some stacked routes, and if you could just give up, you know, like a five-minute update, I know those first couple days of school, so it could be the September meeting, but I would like to just get an update to see where we are. Totally understand the position we're in, but just to make sure we're staying on top of that. I can do that. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for staying

[02:39:19] wait um i am going to recommend a 10 or 15 minute break 10 minute break um and we will resume at um 9 20. perfect

[02:40:10] i'd like to call us back to order please i appreciate everyone um for staying but unfortunately i do think we have about two more hours in front of us um i'm guessing don't judge me but i'm gonna cry we want to make sure that all of these important issues are given the correct time straight to my main however um yeah chair i would like to move that we pull item 9.3 assessment and accountability update from the agenda and just have it submitted to submit the report for record

[02:40:43] do i have a second second all those in favor i'm sorry apologies moved by ms spillman seconded by Ms. Lee. All those in favor of pulling agenda item? Aye. That motion clearly passes. We will move on to the update on mental health and social emotional supports in schools. Good evening, Madam Chair, Dr. Berlin, Acting Superintendent Dr. Hayes, school board members, community and staff.

[02:41:15] I'm Dr. Keisha Lipscomb and I'm here to provide an update on mental health and social emotional supports in our schools. This presentation has been prepared by staff who are considered stakeholder input policy and operating procedures that will be effective for students and staff.

[02:41:41] This update will support our strategic plan as we train and monitor staff to provide and know every student. I don't know why this is working. Tonight I will review the history of the social emotional learning coach role, the qualifications for the school counselor, mental health support specialist, and the social emotional learning coach. I will also provide detail on the number of employees that we have in the mental health support

[02:42:17] specialist and social emotional learning coach roles. I will also discuss a potential title change to the social emotional learning coach title. I will share the delineation of duties, boundaries, and documentation and provide an overview of the supervision of duties and standard operating procedures. I will stop at the end of each section for questions and again at the end of the presentation. The history of the social emotional learning counselor coach, counselor assess coach position. In 2024, staff who held the position of SEL coach or SEL counselor were notified that by

[02:42:56] 2028, staff must acquire the necessary credentials to become a certified mental health support specialist. Staff have been given four years to fulfill the credential requirements for the position. Staff who do not meet the requirements for the mental health support specialist position by 2028, will receive reduction in force notification with a timeline for licensed employees during the 2027-2028 school year. For background information, the school counselor holds a master's degree and is licensed by the state of Virginia and endorsed in school counseling.

[02:43:28] The mental health support specialist also holds a master's degree in either social work, counseling, psychology, human services, or a closely related field and licensed by the state with an endorsement in the discipline that corresponds to the degree. The Social Emotional Learning Coach holds a bachelor's degree and is credentialed through the Virginia Department of Health as a qualified mental health professional certified person.

[02:43:53] Because staff were notified in 2024 of the change to the Social Emotional Learning Coach position, as previously mentioned, staff who were in the Social Emotional Learning Coach position have worked to obtain a license to become a mental health support specialist.

[02:44:09] We currently have 21 licensed mental health support specialists in 24 of our schools. Our two centers currently do not have the position, but do have full-time counselors. Based on data that I have, there is one mental health support specialist and six SEL staff that are working toward their licensing.

[02:44:30] The school support roles that will be reviewed tonight are the school counselor, the mental health support specialist, and the social-emotional learning coach. We are considering options to retitile the Social Emotional Learning Coach. One potential name is the Student Support Liaison, which will be referenced in this presentation.

[02:44:48] The potential title and duties will be realigned and also presented this evening. The Mental Health Support Specialist and Student Support Liaison will be supervised centrally by the coordinator of the counseling and wellness person. Are there any questions at this time?

[02:45:04] The next session will provide an overview of the delineation of duties, boundaries for the work with students, and how we will document the work. Our school counselors serve a key role in all schools on all levels.

[02:45:24] This is a snapshot of what the Virginia Code says our licensed schools counselors do. They coordinate the developmental programs for all students. School counselors direct academic pathways, respond inquiries for courses from students, parents, and teachers. They counsel students regarding career interests and support students with universal social-emotional growth strategies, resources, and time.

[02:45:47] They provide information on scheduling, conduct, but solution-focused counseling and interventions. Counselors provide a great deal of support through consultation and collaboration. They work in visible spaces and communicate with parents regularly. Parents can notify the school that they do not want their child to meet with the school counselor, and it will be honored.

[02:46:08] School counselors may have brief interactions with students regarding scheduling, attendance, or respond to immediate needs during the school day. If there's an emergency, such as self-harm or harm to others or other types of crisis, school staff will intervene and communicate with parents and guardians regarding the situation.

[02:46:27] Counselors follow the Virginia Department of Education's school counseling standards and the ethical standards of the American School Counselor Association, with emphasis both respecting parents' rights and protecting the student. School counselors maintain their logs and notes in our system called Branching Minds.

[02:46:44] Our mental health support specialists work to help students regulate their behavior so that they are able to access the curriculum. There are also key personnel in that they provide students with another support person to help them manage their thoughts and apply learned interventions to make decisions throughout their day.

[02:47:03] Mental health support specialists meet in secure spaces so the students can speak freely about their concerns. Unless there is an emergency situation, these will be established opportunities that were previously communicated with parents.

[02:47:18] Mental health support specialists also document their notes in our system called Branching Minds. The school support liaison, the potential new title for the social emotional learning coach, will provide tier one support in classroom settings or in visible spaces.

[02:47:37] Personnel in this role will have a daily schedule to support students during key parts of the day, to include arrival, transitions, classroom groups, and dismissal. Small groups will be assigned by the principal or counselor to support attendance or behavioral goals.

[02:47:54] This, the school support liaison will deliver restorative strategies to classrooms and groups of students as needed in visible spaces. The school support liaison will assist the principal or counselor in organizing school-wide events and supporting positive behavioral interventions for all.

[02:48:11] School support liaisons will document their work and branching minds as well. This is a matrix just to give you a quick overview of everything. The school counselor, mental health support specialist and school support liaison, beginning with their work in the primary tier, the school counselor will provide supports to all students as well as the school support liaison.

[02:48:34] The mental health support specialist will provide more intensive support as delineated regarding tier two and tier three. The core scope of the work of the school counselor, again, is academic, social, and career planning. The mental health support specialist provides more therapeutic support.

[02:48:52] And the school support liaison will support the school regarding restorative practices, so that students are able to attend to lessons in the classroom. School counselors will have one-to-one interactions that are centered around academic, social, career exploration, and check-ins with interactions, excuse me, with students.

[02:49:13] Mental health support specialists will provide intensive support in one-on-one interactions. And the school support liaison will work mainly in the classrooms with assigned groups. The approved spaces for this personnel group, the counselors will work in open door spaces with windows uncovered.

[02:49:31] Mental health support specialists will also work in designated office or classroom spaces. And the school support liaison will work in observed environments such as the classroom or an open office space. All roles still are gonna be required to document their work in Branching Minds.

[02:49:51] Branching Minds is our system in which we can monitor progress on all students. All three roles record interactions with students in Branching Minds. Branching Minds will automatically record

the dates of the meetings, staff will record the purpose of the meetings, there will be notes from the meetings, also who attended the meetings, they can add supporting documents, they can log family communication and the types of services provided.

[02:50:14] It also includes instructional information to include assessments, progress, and next steps for students. Are there any questions about the roles or the documentation? I want to say that this is the first time I've ever seen delineation of the roles like that.

[02:50:31] Thank you so much. We've asked those questions many times, so I really greatly appreciate that. Thank you. A couple of months-- or time is a weird accordion-- some time ago, we were told that there was going to be a third party available to give mental health support to our kids and I was just wondering if branching minds would cover those as well or if that's still a thing I don't know is are we still having the third-party potential am I making that up I think you're referencing like Cartwheel the organization that we work with for students to like teletherapy yes so we

[02:51:06] still we will be using that still okay yes thank you you mentioned under school support liaison the one-to-one being extremely rare and workgroup context can you flesh that out a little bit what does that what does that mean it rare meaning they would normally work with groups that would be assigned by the either the probably the teacher the counselor or the principal in the classroom so that of course it can be witnessed and we know what they're working with and what they're working on when I say extremely rare it may be

[02:51:43] they're escorting someone from one space to another so that's probably gonna be a rare occurrence or it may be something that helps assist a teacher take a kid to another room or help them go somewhere for testing purposes or what have you or even meeting with the counselor group and as they all collaborate together I want to add just one thing one of the things that we discussed when we were working on this process is around because we offered tele-help and teletherapy for students making sure that there was an adult once the student came out of the therapy session in case they were emotionally

[02:52:20] upset and everything so that could be a one-on-one interaction where they would walk the student from that teletherapy appointment to their counselor for additional support and if I might add for the teletherapy we had to find an assigned space for them so at least it would be closely monitored and just in case something is going on and they could alert someone else to come and assist like the principal or the other counselor or nurse or what have you one One of the concerns we've heard is who is monitoring the documentation.

[02:52:51] So the branching minds, is that documentation that's visible by principal, anybody in addition to the principal? I'm getting to that next slide. Thank you.

[02:53:07] The supervision of the roles of the school counselor, mental health support specialist, and student group liaisons will be explained in this last section. In the chart before you, to your left, starting at the bottom of the screen, the building principal will monitor log entries weekly that are placed in branching mines by the school counselor, mental health support specialist, and support liaison.

[02:53:28] The building principal will ensure that personnel are working with students in visible and safe meeting space. The building principal will monitor a calendar of meetings from the support personnel and handle first-level compliance reviews. If there are any concerns, the building principal will follow the protocol to contact the necessary persons as stated an updated policy the recent discussions it has been

decided to shift the oversight of mental health support specialists and school support liaisons to central office thus the coordinator of counseling and wellness will supervise these roles provide training conduct learning walks and evaluate the work they provide to schools

[02:54:04] the coordinator will also monitor entries and branching minds on a monthly basis the executive director will review audits of logs and branching minds as well as feedback from learning walks to ensure monthly compliance and effective training resources for staff. The division superintendent will review documentation quarterly to provide updates to stakeholders as needed. Per updated policy we expect personnel to be in spaces that are easily observable. We expect parents and guardians to be informed of services provided to their children and we expect that information for students to be documented and branching minds so that as a team we

[02:54:42] know every student and know how we can support them to help them be successful. We will continue to review and monitor stakeholder input in our procedures to ensure consistency in practice and provide thorough and responsive communication. Thank you. Are there any additional questions? And did that answer your question? Thank you.

[02:55:04] I have just a couple questions. So who hires the SSL? Is that building level or is it division level mental health? You or who's hiring the SSLs? it is not me previous practice that believe the principal has been hiring them lately as of late for the recent interviews the new coordinator of wellness has been involved in their hiring and we ended up hiring with the school personnel and then what will be the practice going forward she will be involved as best as possible yes okay um i think that's really important um that it not

[02:55:40] just be a building level i mean we're talking about um social emotional mental health issues i i think someone that's qualified and that is their job. And then what are the qualifications for the SSL? You know, I saw back on the first couple of slides you were talking about degrees or, you know, that they're trying to get licensure, but we're still tasking these people with, you know, some pretty serious, even if they're, you know, in a group setting or whatever, you know, we're talking about mental health of our kids and dealing with emotional responses to things.

[02:56:18] And I want to make sure that those people are actually qualified to do that and aren't you know i'll just leave it at that understood we are in the process of reviewing the job description along with the title change and work with human resources that is part of our process over this week and in the next couple of weeks to get that updated so we can provide an update on that soon i would be really interested in seeing that um and then on the operating um towards the end when you were talking about um either open doors or windows um

[02:56:52] what are the budget implications of retrofitting buildings to make sure that places have windows or doors that will allow us to abide by these new guidelines that will have to be investigated as well yeah i would imagine that our schools given our cip um issues may not uh meet all of those standards um that we're putting into place thank you questions um okay so a couple follow-ups one

[02:57:29] is i'm just thinking because we don't have another school board meeting before um the start of school is there a way to do to share the update i'm just thinking like with us in the public around that with your question around updated job description and then kind of the this question around places that may not fit this schools that may not have a place that follows these guidelines

[02:58:05] and what's being done about them i just feel like just knowing i don't know we can think about the mechanism because it's not a public i mean is there an update written update i tried to like for my former board members like it just just knowing that school is starting there's a couple things that i think us and the public would like to know i'd love to get information on that i know before school starts and so just figuring out i don't have to answer i'd like well i we can work with dr grant to figure out the best way okay the information to the board and this is okay into the the community okay um no I forgot oh and then similar I think this is an easier one is that like

[02:58:45] as as Ms. Lee said this is really helpful and I think making sure internal communications and to parents of like particularly about this is how this work like these are these positions in a way maybe this is like a principal's update I don't know I'm just trying to think like it's part of what the principals do making sure that this is shared out because I do think like even at the board level but the public level and even some teachers like I like making sure people clearly understand these distinctions because to know when to appropriately reach out so some type of internal communication that happens

[02:59:24] around that with staff but also with with families would be my other request okay and then my other so then and then my last question is just around the notification to parents when there is a one-on-one, if it's outside, is that through Parent Aware?

[02:59:45] Where, ParentSource, ParentSquare, Apologies, ParentAware is another company. - There's a lot of-- ParentSquare, would that be through that? How would that, I just, I always think about our families get information in different ways and speak different languages and read different languages. And so how does that, the operational piece of how that communication happens?

[03:00:05] Particularly, I think one of the things we heard in the special ed review and other things is like that there's some consistency about how that happens, right? Because so that Ms. Spillman doesn't get one, like it's not, it doesn't happen in one way and Henley in one way. So if centrally we can make a recommendation that this communicate, the parents are notified and it goes through X and it's done by Y so that there's consistency across the county.

[03:00:32] Does that make sense? Yes. Okay. communication and how it's done by school from the mental health support personnel yeah when that but you know without if the expectation is that one-on-one communication is happening just making sure there's some consistency on how that occurs and i think you know i don't know if this is the time to talk about it or when we're talking about the policy but um you know my heart breaks for the mom we heard earlier and her non-verbal child who can't tell us what went on in a one-on-one meeting how do we yes we want to document what's going on in these one-on-one meetings and i think

[03:01:12] it's great that we're going to be doing that but if we have a child that can't communicate to back up what was done in that meeting i think that that's something we need to consider you know do we have another person in there do we record those meetings what you know i and maybe we don't answer that tonight but i think that that's something we really need to consider for the kids that can't tell us something happened something didn't happen yes that's what happened in my meeting how do we document that and how do we make sure that that report that the parents are getting is accurate actually accurate because mr sweeney could have written whatever he wanted in that report and sent it home and that wasn't actually what happened thank you we'll provide

[03:01:50] clarity of that very soon any other questions or comments thank you thank you so much we appreciate it thank you thank you so the next um item on our uh agenda tonight i honestly don't know if we've we've ever gone to 9.6 and 9.7.

[03:02:29] And I don't mean that or-- 11:30 at night. So we have two important-- and we did want to put these together just so that we could kind of, in a way, be using that part of our brain.

[03:02:44] So we are going to start with the policy discussion continuation, professional boundaries, and prevention of sexual misconduct abuse. Dr. Russell Carlock, educational equity data scientist. So first of all, just to get us started, a huge thank you to Dr. Carlock and everyone who's worked with him on this.

[03:03:05] And even more so on both this and the grading policy, excuse me, a huge thank you to the public. Our teachers, our parents, we had a number of students write in on all of these. Constituents, we appreciate all of the feedback.

[03:03:23] So all the feedback that came to us directly was sent to Dr. Hayes and Dr. Carlock. And we've also, all the school board members have reviewed it and have kind of comments from some of that. So I will let you kind of tell us how this, like what kind of what you're gonna do, how this update is gonna work, and then how the finalization and potential vote will happen.

[03:03:51] - Great, thank you so much, Dr. Berlin. thank you members of the school board. We will be discussing the key issues that arose in public feedback and I want to reiterate what Dr. Berlin said that we are very appreciative to all of the many members of the community, our staff, our parents who communicated with the board during this time to provide feedback that we were able to incorporate into this updated version of the draft policy. We'll discuss what those incorporated changes look like and then open it up to questions in discussion prior to Dr. Grant coming to work with the board on adopting the exact language that you would like to include in the new policy. There were

[03:04:31] four key issues that came up in the public feedback. The first was around a dual reporting structure and ensuring that there was reporting not only to the building principle, that that was seen as insufficient, that there needs to be additional reporting, there needs to be a dual reporting structure to someone outside of the building. Another issue was improving the definition of emergency, so linking it to issues of security and safety. There's also a call for a centralized digital log for student meetings, logs that must be easily accessible at the division level for monitoring

[03:05:07] and review. And finally, parental notification in founded cases of abuse, so parents whose children have interactions with a staff member with a founded child abuse allegation should be notified unless doing so would interfere with law enforcement. So the first is around providing a dual reporting structure.

[03:05:29] So this section of the policy is new to address that. And it says, additionally, ACPS employees are required to report in writing suspected incidents of violations of this policy regarding professional boundaries, in-person, one-on-one, and electronic communications with students to the building principal and concurrently to the human resources department.

[03:05:51] At the beginning of each school year, the principal will share this policy with parents' guardians and include contact information for the school's human resources partner as a channel for reporting. A system for reporting concerns anonymously shall also be shared with the school community at the beginning of each school year.

[03:06:06] Currently, we have the Help Me system that allows parents and students to address issues anonymously. The second was around improving the definition of emergency, and so we added language around relating to health, safety, or security.

[03:06:23] And there will be additional language that you will see in the policy that was recommended by Ms. Spillman and Ms. Lee also gave additional feedback, but it was prior to being able to put it up in front of the public, and so we will address that separately in that section.

[03:06:45] The next part is around the centralized digital log for student meetings. This is part of the Section 4C limits on one-on-one interactions. It says all adults shall document when one-on-one meetings occur with students in a division-managed digital system. This digital documentation system will be monitored by principals, department heads, and division leaders and will be capable of producing lists of one-on-one meetings with students.

[03:07:08] Parents and guardians shall be provided a list of one-on-one meetings with their child upon request of such lists in writing directed to the building principal. This system, Branching Minds, as was referenced in the last presentation, exists in our school division. We worked with the Department of Technology. It does have the capability to rapidly produce all documentation that was provided in that system by the staff member.

[03:07:31] Also, per the Department of Technology, each teacher, each staff member who has children rostered to them in our student information system also has the capability to go into Branching Minds and document a meeting with that child. A notification for founded cases was the last of the four main issues that were addressed.

[03:07:57] That is when or if an adult, as defined in Section 1 of this policy, is suspended or terminated for sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child, or due to having become the subject of a founded case of child abuse or neglect, the superintendent or superintendent's designee shall inform the school board in writing within 24 hours.

[03:08:15] The school board shall determine whether the superintendent will inform the families of ACPS students who may have come in contact with said adult based on consultation with the Albemarle County Police Department and or the Albemarle County Commonwealth's attorney. There are a few other sections that we also wanted to bring up.

[03:08:38] These didn't come up as part of those four core themes that came out, but we do think it's important to highlight them. The first is around counselors and other specialized staff. The counselors have a special section of Virginia Code dedicated to them.

[03:08:54] It's also in part of Albemarle County Public Schools Code. We discussed a little bit in our last meeting around the requirement for families to be notified of the school counseling program each year with the opportunity to opt out of that program. Also wanted to make sure that we highlight that per Virginia Code cited here that licensed school counselors may provide short duration personal or social counseling to students that is needed to maintain order, discipline, or a productive learning environment without affirmative parental consent, that is in Virginia code, for all other services with counselors, special educators, and other staff, and we thought it was important because we were thinking

[03:09:31] about the other staff that meet regularly one-on-one with students, so career counselors in high schools is an example, school psychologists could be an example, our special educators who are

caseworkers for students with IEPs, we thought it was important to bring them under a similar framework that our counselors operate under in terms of notifying families at the beginning of the school year what that service looks like, what the parameters are around any one-on-one meetings, and giving families the opportunity to opt out of those services. As part of those services meeting regularly, there would not be notification every time a one-on-one meeting takes place. There would be documentation of that. However, families would have the option of opting

[03:10:11] out of those services. In addition to the one-on-one electronic communications that we thought was important, and this speaks to your question in the last presentation, Dr. Berlin, around the many different situations we have, we do have families who do not have email.

[03:10:31] We have students and families who don't regularly use electronic communication. We also have students who are unaccompanied minors whose families may be unreachable because they live in another country. And so we wanted to make sure there was some contingency in place for students in those situations.

[03:10:47] And so if an adult must contact a student via email and their parents email is unavailable, the adult shall include their direct supervisor in the communication to ensure that there's not a one-to-one direct communication being made to the student. We also wanted to just clarify that adults shall not use personal phones to communicate with students unless using an application provided by ACPS that allows for accessibility to parents and guardians.

[03:11:10] Those are the main changes. There are many other minor changes that you all can see in the red line version of the policy. First, I'll address questions, and then once those questions have been answered, Dr. Grant will come and lead the policy adoption process.

[03:11:28] I guess on the slide on documentation of one-on-ones, we had an example from Dr. Liskam of the special liaisons walking a student from one meeting or one classroom to the other.

[03:11:46] or would that be, I guess it's the definition of meeting. - Yes, and that came up in a conversation with teachers as well. I taught a course at Monticello High School this last year and it was a first period course. And there are times when every day, actually, the first student that comes into class is by themselves with me in that class, right?

[03:12:09] So is that a meeting? Is a student stopping by a teacher's classroom during lunch? Is that a meeting? Is a conversation in the hallway meeting. And under this framework, those are not meetings. However, it's going to be important in our implementation for all adults who are working with our students to understand that when you are alone with a student, the other parts of the policy still are in place. So you have to make sure that it's visible, that if you're in a classroom, the classroom has to be open. It's accessible to other adults. And then also understanding the other aspects of professional boundaries to ensure that those sorts of encounters are not leading to professional boundaries being violated.

[03:12:49] So that's how we've interpreted it at this point. So the meeting would be, so if I'm a teacher asking a student to come to my lunch for tutoring, that needs to be documented and that needs to have parental consent involved. But if it's a chance, sort of a student, you usually have in many of our schools, our high schools, for example, students may go to teachers' classrooms for lunch, and usually there's groups of students.

[03:13:12] but it might be that only one student comes that day. Because it's not a plan, it's not invited by the teacher, it wouldn't be considered a meeting in that situation.

[03:13:28] - I know my other board members, but I just don't want to forget this one 'cause it actually came up today, is for the board, who would we designate as our student? 'Cause we have students who message the school board about student voice, and so I wanna make sure that we also follow the policy,

[03:13:50] And so we should just designate who our there's well there's two pieces one who is our supervisor and who should we include if there is because oftentimes we don't know the pair we I would just say I've had one occasion where a student has messaged me with his parents, but every time else it's just the student messaging us independently.

[03:14:09] So yeah. Interesting point. I was thinking on that point, maybe we would do the rest of the board. Yeah, which we usually do, but just for the public to know that, because I don't, again, want to stop students from messaging us because they are bringing a very important piece of information to us, and so I just want to make sure that we, as well, are following that policy.

[03:14:35] They often send their messages to the entire board, so it's not one-on-one. I also, you know, have a question you were talking about being the first student in the classroom. Similarly, I think that especially in high school, students often go to a teacher's room for lunch as like a trusted adult because they don't like being in the cafeteria.

[03:15:02] It's overwhelming or I know my daughter is one of those people. So how do we consider that? Is it something where the teacher asks permission from the parents and you get a, I think that's one of those situations where it's gray, right?

[03:15:19] Like this is somebody that is a trusted adult in their mind, obviously keeps the door open or whatever, but do you have to document every time you have lunch with them if it's, you know, three times a week or whatever? So I think that's something else we may want to consider in this. Just to speak to that, the board can choose to make language around that so it's clearer.

[03:15:43] And, again, many of our high school teachers regularly eat lunch with students, and it's a wonderful practice for building. It's typically in groups. So I think if it's a one-on-one lunch meeting, then I think that teachers, it doesn't mean that it can't ever happen, but I think that any time staff are meeting one-on-one with students, then we need to be more aware of those professional boundaries and ensure that they are being honored and respected.

[03:16:09] Rissy, could you go back to the four points that were raised? So there was a question today about, and this a little bit came up earlier too, about like schools with trailers.

[03:16:30] Would there be appropriate rooms in those schools? And I'm sure that's something that everyone has thought about. Is there an operationalized answer to that? Yeah, so we looked into this a little bit.

[03:16:47] we changed the language from inaccessible to a closed door to make it clear that the door needs to be open because inaccessible was reported as being a little vague and we need to be more clear about that. There are some spaces in some of our schools and I used to work at Burley Middle School which is one of our older schools and looking thinking back to that there are some offices and spaces in that building and other schools as well that would not be appropriate for meeting, but there are spaces

there so there might be some staff who currently have an office that under this new policy would no longer be an office that is considered acceptable to meet one-on-one with a student and in

[03:17:26] those cases the administrators are going to need to work with that staff to either change their office or provide an additional location for them to have those one-on-one meetings when they need to happen. In a medium to longer term It may be important to look, as part of building reviews, where those spaces are and if there need to be changes made to the physical structure to make them more accessible for one-on-one meetings.

[03:17:50] Thank you. I wonder if that review needs to be more systemic than building-by-building, whether building services or long-range planning or somebody should look globally at all of the counselor spaces? Yeah. I look back at Mishvit.

[03:18:09] I'm just looking through some of the feedback, just to make sure if there's anything else. Other comments, questions?

[03:18:34] Just generally, assuming we passed some version of this tonight, how is this going to be implemented? How are our counselors and teachers and building supervisors going to be informed about the new regs?

[03:19:01] And also about if there are not appropriate spaces right now, what kind of timeline are we thinking about? Yeah, so as a foundational policy, it will not be one department responsible for implementation.

[03:19:17] It will be all of our departments working together. As Jamie Gellner mentioned earlier, she's already thinking about if this policy is adopted, how she will communicate it out to her staff, including bus drivers. So I think that that kind of review for all of our department heads at the division level will need to be important and considering how to implement and train staff around the new policy if and when it's adopted.

[03:19:46] Oh, there's a delay. Sorry, I couldn't hear you. I'm trying to see if it's pulling up on here. There might be a delay or it's not accessing. I see it.

[03:20:02] I see it. Yeah, we can see it. I'm sorry. There we go. So as we go through, there's a few changes that we've gone through in here that came in later. It's not showing.

[03:20:20] Might be a long delay here in between these. I do want to ask, I'm going to ask Dr. Hayes this, I think. Ultimately, you and I have talked a little bit about kind of every, like, chain of command.

[03:20:40] Like, ultimately, this is school board policy, but who is the person, everyone is a part of it, per Dr. Karlock, but at the end of the day, who is the person responsible for making sure that this is, you know, documented, communicated, okay, I just wanted to, I think it's just an important statement to make, yeah, this at the end of the day, this is, you know, Dr. Hayes will make sure that this is, she will work with her team, who then also working with the principals and teachers

[03:21:13] to make sure this is is um documented shared followed so along those lines who who is the supervisor for the coordinator of counseling and wellness dr lipskel okay okay so in under definitions uh there's languages added to what the red line is we had the red lines based on the comments from the last board meeting we had some other comments that came in after we posted it. So we've got these included in here for you all to see. So you know what you're looking at

[03:21:50] across the board. So on item D, this was from, I believe, Supervisor Spillman, Board Member Spillman. So relating to mental and physical health, safety, abuse, disclosure, suicidal ideation, threats of violence. Those are added to that. Anything any any concerns on those, we can then we go through line 101 Yeah, line 101 encouraging

[03:22:27] students to keep secrets that is under inappropriate boundary violations. So that's added. And as we're going through these, you'll see the red line versions that are there. These are ones that have gotten added in from your last comments. So if there's anything that you feel should not.

[03:22:43] be there or you want to stop and discuss we can do that as well i'm just moving kind of slow so you'll see where we are if you wanted to stop on anything so this one here is added on limits on one-on-one interactions that last sentence counseling offices shall maintain reasonable privacy while remaining oh not caps observable through windows or vision panel what is a vision

[03:23:21] panel um i think like um like sometimes they just have like the um openings in the door that's not a full window but you can like see what's going on inside got it okay and then this paragraph there's i'll let you read through that paragraph there's a lot of different additions into there i think you can read that and see if there's any edits that you want to make to that for lines 163 through

[03:23:49] 175 questions comments concerns on that i think those are good then through line 186 adding this

[03:24:41] system will document that a meeting occurred but shall not be required to include confidential counseling notes do you want to give any clarification on that um yeah i mean i think hold on i have notes on my computer hold on just a note i think maybe the building turned the air conditioning off at 10 o'clock just a note if you see me sweating i there's anything we can do but um this is on confidentiality is that right this is on the

[03:25:16] documenting one-on-one meetings so as they occur online yeah i think you know if um like for counselors psychologists social workers nurses confidentiality is an important part of their job so um that there are legal exceptions to that um including abuse report threats court orders things like that um but that you know if you're in counseling and parents have signed off on it you know you're going to say we've done this counseling and you know what is confidential is not for me to determine it's those professionals determine the confidentiality i just want to

[03:25:51] respect those profession professionals do we have a division managed this digital system to do this to maintain the notes yeah yeah yeah branch mine so it is a tool that we have it hasn't been mandated forced used all the way through there but it's there it can do that so that'll be part

[03:26:19] of the training to make sure that it's utilized called branching lines okay thank you next is that line can i just a quick question so i appreciate you putting the audit company partners because i think that's an important piece um sorry it's just late because this is probably in here and and I probably thought we already thought about this is but the that our seniors who are who turn

[03:26:53] 18. Yeah, so that's in here. That's in there. Okay. Yeah, under 203. I added that in there. Because they're legally different. Right. Yeah. So we have to like comply with FERPA and state laws. But once they're adults, right? Yeah, I request that we add one word in line 238.

[03:27:33] the advice that we stipulate adults may not knowingly friend or follow students or accept friend or follow requests young people are clever and sometimes they may disguise a friend request so i think the key is to stipulate that it's you know a prohibition on accepting a friend request

[03:28:09] from somebody who a teacher knows is a student knowingly yeah because they yeah being the parent of teenagers i don't even remember what do they call them spam i don't know there's some name they have for these other accounts so there's the ones the parents see and then there's the ones that only their friends see um and is it what is it finsta thank you obviously i'm not a cool mom um thanks judy thanks for uh showing how uncool i am um but i i think it's it's the knowing act of

[03:28:45] and i don't know i mean again that gets gray but you know i i can see that happening um and i think this is hard too because you know there are again best intentions right so there are trusted adults at the high school that i know you know coaches and things like that that follow the students and so you know that i think that's it gets a little gray at this point on social media because coaches are the ones that are helping them get recruited by colleges and your social media account is how

[03:29:22] you get recruited unfortunately now so um i think it gets a little bit difficult um in in this regard of what the intent is and and i don't know how we word that or how we work around that but i i don't in and i'll address both for the last one first so uh this does provide the opportunity for staff members to create professional social media accounts that are strictly professional uh and so in in that particular case if a coach wanted to have a coach so-and-so professional account

[03:29:55] and it was um it has to be open to the public it has to be fully accessible that is is permitted under this with the issue is with personal social media accounts being used for this private and yeah and i will say we we also discussed that this knowingly piece and uh josh is not here tonight but legal in legal counsel was around the exception the potential for the exception to swallow the rule and putting knowingly in there could potentially allow uh a lot of gray area yeah if that's okay with the board that that's fine but just from a legal standpoint putting knowingly in

[03:30:35] there opens up a lot more gray area so i mean maybe it's just you know if you don't if you're not sure then don't don't accept the friend request right like err on the side of good judgment um but i do i i appreciate you pointing out the professional because i do think that they're you know and it's not just sports i mean we've got you know our gis and and things like that that they're using this stuff in a really meaningful way through the schools and so i don't want to lose that because technology obviously blessing and a curse um it really

[03:31:09] is helpful for these students to have and look at filmmaking right i i think of our um like miss lee and i were just talking about the film club at albemarle and both of our kids are very involved in that and so you know how do we protect these things while still protecting our kids at the same time and and it unfortunately is kind of great but i do think you know the encouraging of the professional account may help with that so are you encouraging us are you discouraging us from adding knowingly or i think the issue unknowingly becomes the individual could knowingly

[03:31:47] be liking but say i was not knowing because of the policy so we want to make sure that i guess that's the guidance that was there that's why i said don't put it in there and if you're not sure then don't accept the friend request yeah that was the guidance what do you think jim yeah i'll defer to the attorney okay and the other thing on those professional social accounts of a coach or others are using those those will become approved through that right so it becomes clear and part of

[03:32:22] acps we added this photo part in here i want to make sure that this is clear when when parents register they opt out of allowing their kid to to be filmed or on video or anything so there's an action they have to take a registration to say don't otherwise you're in so we wanted to make sure that was clear on here that they gotta they gotta take some action to opt out of that authorization so that people aren't having to try to track down every parent every time if they've

[03:33:01] already had that approval but if there's obviously any request if someone says i don't want there Even if they didn't opt out and they said, I want to take that down, we will take that down still. So I just want to make sure that was clear why that language was. Or when you accidentally opt out of your kids' media and then they're not in a yearbook and they're real mad.

[03:33:19] Just as an editing thing, I think that first adult should be parent or guardian, right? It's not just from the definition of adult. Say that again, sorry. So, I'm sorry, yeah, line 245. Should that be parent-guardian has adopted out of this authorization during registration?

[03:33:37] Yes, sir. Yeah. got it this part here by email has created a lot of questions um on there so i wanted to pause on this a little bit um and we do have uh mitchell with technology who can address a little bit of the questions on parent square what it does and doesn't do a little bit um but the idea of copying

[03:34:11] every single time has raised some concerns from teachers and staff of some says hey i want my test grade they didn't copy their parent do we ignore it do we say you know what's what's sort of the action so we want to encourage people to utilize parents where but they may still email there is the potential of looking at this from the perspective of we talk about here we restrict one-on-one electronic communications with individual students to account systems and platforms that are provided by and accessible to albemarle county public schools there is a possibility to look at this and if it is to the official k-12 albemarle account because we do have

[03:34:49] access to k-12 albemarle accounts as well so we could the parent may not have access but we can pull that so that's another area to look at but there could be some communication where the parent is not engaged in this so that was one option was looking at it if a student emails us from their k-12 account can't is it okay to respond to that k-12 i suppose if they use their gmail account or something else we still wouldn't be able to do that but i don't know if you all had any questions about how parent square functions or around this because as written right now any email to a student

[03:35:26] is going to have to have a parent cc if it's if it's email and i want to make sure we understand the potential implications of that um more broadly that seems to me to answer the questions that i understand us to have gotten. But this is since this is a brand new policy. And I think that our usual cadence for reviewing policies is five years. I wonder if it should be in here or if it's in another policy that since if we make something out of kind of whole cloth, if we

[03:36:04] should if we could review it once a year, because I don't know if this will look the same to us next year. I mean, and I'm gonna look to a couple people here. I mean, I there's a piece. I don't want to change it mid-year but there is a piece of me that does wonder like is there some mid-year right like because i think sure we have the public has brought up many of the unintended consequences and ways it might make teachers it would be difficult like it'll make it harder for some teachers but we probably you know we can i always say you can figure out 80 of those unintended but

[03:36:39] we can't do 20 or we could get to 90 and i do wonder like me you know if there is a you know know how we kind of say that and we just like you know I think this should be regularly looked at every year but I do wonder about like if after the first X months of implementation if there are some things like I don't like that we can bring up again for discussion share them for public comment yeah I was actually just gonna ask that like what is our you know I know policies that have been in place we review every five years but what about new policies that we've never created before. Do we have a review timeline for that or does it?

[03:37:16] Per code, there are some policies that get reviewed more frequently. Some are annually, some are biannually that are there. The board can review a policy anytime it wants and so if you wanted to work some language into this that said we want to review this every year at the start of the year, that's totally up to the board on how often it would come back to you.

[03:37:39] then I think, you know, probably as we're implementing this, it would be at the end of the first semester. Yeah. And then again, next summer, then the second semester. Yeah, yeah. Before the language of the policy, we can we could adopt it with that recommendation. Yeah, so nothing prohibits at any time. You don't have to have in the policy. You don't need to codify when that review is the board at any time could add that to the agenda through the chair yeah and just for the public one of the things we are working we shouldn't say we have not started working on it yet but we will

[03:38:16] be working on it like a a calendar that the board is using to like to a long-term year-long calendar and so that it is easier to be we can we can put these types of things on and what does that assessment look like it's not just a presentation from dr lipsko yeah it's yeah what sort of feedback are we getting and i think that that's really important it's not just from you know even principals how are the teachers feeling about it how are the students feeling how are the parents feeling about it um and i think that needs to be laid out explicitly what we're looking for and when um and that doesn't again doesn't have to be part of the policy but i think that is an

[03:38:55] important determination and it's not an afterthought and we don't get to the end of the semester and then be like crap we did we need to pull this together um i would like to be a little more thoughtful about it um go ahead can we go back to the social media for a second um i have another concern so um for those of us that use real insta not finsta if you have a public account anyone can follow you you don't accept a request so how do we prevent a student i mean a student

[03:39:32] a teacher an administrator should not get in trouble because they have five thousand ten thousand followers and a student who they don't even know is following them doesn't mean you have to follow them back but someone should not be um get in trouble for having a public account and we as a school division can't tell a teacher to not have a public but these are just private these ones in 239. okay so adults may not friend or follow students or accept friend or follow requests

[03:40:11] from students on private personal okay but let's see there i'm sorry i should say on their private personal accounts well but i think that that still gets gray because it's their personal account it's just it they have their privacy setting to public so that you don't have to send a friend or a follow request it's just anybody can follow kind of like you do with a celebrity right like you just hit follow and they might get a notice but they you know if they're getting 20 or 30 a day how do they know which one's a student they can't go back and look at that so it's their private personal with their personal email account but it is a public open to the public

[03:40:49] anybody can follow them i think i think with the policy um you can't accept it right so you have to take an action to accept in this policy and so you cannot you can track that like if someone says i want to file and you get that request you can't accept that request if you're on a platform in some platforms you have to accept it anybody can make the request okay so i think we need to i don't know if we bold it or italicize it but i think there needs to be an emphasis on that

[03:41:18] except because that could easily get someone in trouble and yeah we're saying they can't follow that student but if it's not stopping a student and a public account from following them they can see the content they can see the content of the teacher it doesn't mean the teacher can see the content of the student but that that that minor has chosen to follow an adult with a public open and facing account and that student can see all of the teachers stuff yeah and we can't force a

[03:41:56] teacher to have a private account they can do whatever they want correct that's where i need my student rep to help us understand like the intricacies of this yeah and we're not cool remember cool enough um yeah it just it and this is where i think we're going to get a lot of feedback and you know and yeah and this is i think in the social media sphere too i mean we've got friend or follow there there's likes there's other way right we're just using these as the generic language and you're right if they if they're there we do have a way on a lot of these platforms that you do have to accept right so we can see who they've accepted or not and I think

[03:42:35] that's if an issue comes up we can at least see that part have we seen other districts have a similar policy around social media yes that particular line that is generating a lot of discussion comes from Harrisonburg public schools.

[03:42:55] So it sounds like this is potential question point. And this is I mean, this is a hard like I don't I understand the intention of I think this is a question of like, are we putting something out there that is difficult to monitor and makes it very difficult for staff?

[03:43:18] I don't know. I mean, I feel like this is a really easy path for someone who wants to grow. Okay. No, I agree. I agree. So I just want to make sure it's important. Yeah. Yeah. about the language and this might be i personally do because it says private and personal yeah so i i feel comfortable with it but i understand your point and i think as long as the we are prohibiting and i think it clearly states this from the adult following the student on their social media even if theirs is open in public they may not reciprocate the follow or the friend

[03:43:57] request or whatever so right now i've got the accept is italicized to put emphasis to that is that the direction the board wants to move i think yes yeah yeah yeah i have a question actually i just thought about this on the email email piece on the and again this is like it's like how is this implemented how is this shared you know across across the whole staff parents

[03:44:33] but also students so it is students second nature to just email something off to their um teacher right and so it then is it just assumed when that teacher responds i mean we can try to teach our students that about this policy and why and part of this is like in a developmentally appropriate way right like teaching our students about this policy but help like that that if you know if they're not if they're emailing their teacher through a cps account um that then the teacher

[03:45:10] is going to respond with that student's parents so i mean i just think that's a that's a change right from from students so i think it's just help making sure students and if they don't have the parent and

i think this is what it says if they don't get the parent or guardians and they include their supervisor at the school so there's another adult on the response from the adult yeah and i think making sure students understand that it's not your like interest because i think you know i could see my you know again i can see my my my one of my students my children who's graduated but is very self-conscious like oh my god i'm in trouble because you're including you're you're

[03:45:47] including the principal right and so i think it like it is just but making sure is part of this education really helping the students understand not just like not just the like this is happening but this is happening because of this of this policy because i think that's just that is going to be a change for students and i don't want them to think they're in trouble when their parents are included or their um supervisors and i think that it brings up another point um we're a month from school starting um and we heard this similar on the grading policy what is the grace period what is the leeway as people are learning these things you know i don't want a teacher to

[03:46:27] or a student to get in trouble because they accidentally forgot and just emailed like hey you forgot to turn in this assignment or this is due tomorrow you know whatever it is like i don't know yeah there's a big difference between oh i forgot and i'm grooming you right so yeah i mean this is a huge this is a huge shift from what has been done and um i guess i'm looking to dr hayes i don't know that you have the answer right now but um yeah um i think this is where we take it like

[03:47:04] you know we have the policy in place and then we'll look at each situation accordingly yeah If there's a situation where, you know, don't forget your test is tomorrow, we could say, you know what, that was an accident, you know, it was nothing nefarious in that communication, but call me later tonight and I can talk to you would be, wait a minute, that's something we need to investigate a little bit further.

[03:47:28] So I think as we work through the process, we'll probably just have to, you know, discuss it as we go forward. And then if the situation occurs, we'll have the policy to lean on as far as how we discipline or speak with that employee. And this is where one of the issues, so we say these systems must provide, we could change that to ACPS must provide access.

[03:47:51] We're talking about the system doing it automatically to the extent that the system allows that we can use that system. But then that that would sort of take some of that onus if we can provide them access to any emails of their k-12 email For example, they don't the system doesn't have that but we can easily provide it Because we're going to be moving towards parent square where all the communication is supposed to go The students still have their ACPS email and their Google Drive and all of those things which also I guess brings up a whole other point on like Google Drive and things like that is that something that needs to be a part of this policy or is that just like we hadn't even really

[03:48:28] considered so let me ask to hear would you rather it be the system so the technology has to automatically do that or acps must provide access well to me it's provide versus allow right i mean like provide is affirmative right it'll come out of it and then allow is it lets us look in so i I mean, like, am I expecting to see every email or every message that my son messages because he's missed an assignment?

[03:49:06] Cue the grading thing. I hope not, but if I have questions or concerns, I would like to be able to see it. So to me, allow makes more sense. Is that what you're suggesting?

[03:49:25] That's my suggestion, but I don't know what the rest of the board is interested in. Yeah, so that's what I'm, and I guess that kind of then pulls in, like, Google Drive and all that. other stuff but like i don't

have access to my kids acps email like i don't right i don't even know how i would do that right um would it be helpful if tech i know there's a representative from technology here to maybe share um the ability to access student google drive stuff

[03:50:00] google drives to you know emails if if necessary yeah because like you can see stuff on power school and schoology and the bazillion other platforms that we have that we try to find all the information but the actual email in Google Drive I don't have access to that.

[03:50:16] Hi, good evening. Mitch Lincoln, Assistant Director for Enterprise Applications from the Department of Technology. In terms of access, family access to Google Drive or email, the main way that we recommend folks do that would be for the student to give their password to their parents. There's no sort of built-in mechanism in those systems to do that.

[03:50:37] ParentSquare does have that functionality built in already, so ParentSquare will link the student and the parents accounts so that when a parent and a when a student and a teacher are messaging the parent has the ability to log in and view all of those messages so we're it's been said here before we're going to try to direct as much of that communication through parent square so that parents have the allowed visibility without getting their inbox cluttered up um but the that function doesn't exist in those other systems so we can't are you able to just share passwords with

[03:51:11] all of us theoretically yes some i mean aren't some security concerns about i was going to say yeah but aren't as i mean our kids are minors aren't we entitled to their passwords as parents yes so that's that is spinning yeah i think it is the it's right keep going to that i think on an individual basis that's not a problem like giving an individual parent their students password i think when we operationalize doing that for all of our students and we start sharing

[03:51:51] yeah massive yeah no i hear you i mean maybe by just putting allow yeah and maybe that does just cover it i keep going back to what's what they like original like what's the intent yeah i think what gets difficult is all the other all these systems that we have you know like i appreciate parent square is going to try to centralize some of this but they're still google drive and their email and schoology and power school and now what were all the other ones we were talking about

[03:52:28] tonight with mental health and i mean it's just never endings but it's those that allow that there's i hear right they're saying google drive that there's a communication component that is happening right like there are some things where there's not one-on-one communication right but but like google drive i mean a teacher coming on my essay on google drive exactly that's one-on-one communication and so how do we have access to that because if we're talking about one-on-one communication i mean and that's where it's getting really tricky because where do you where do you cut it off where do you say that's appropriate communication i don't need

[03:53:07] to see everything but it sounds like but then it's access to it yeah right so how do we and maybe that's just part of this communication strategy of listing every single system that your kid can be communicating with an adult yeah i mean that's where it gets really like yeah it gets tricky and also kids i mean in so many presentations that we've seen it's like if you set up a boundary kids are going to find oh absolutely yeah like dinosaurs in jurassic park

[03:53:40] so um i think the systems that are provided by and accessible from our school um yeah but i think my point is i don't even know all the systems that my kids have access to that are communicating

with yeah like is that dying right right my like all these things you know i help me you know i don't even know what all of them are and so maybe that's a conversation separate from this but it's that communication to the parents these are all the platforms that your children are communicating

[03:54:18] with adults in our division if you want their passwords or their permission and who do they reach out to i'm sure you're not going to want that bazillion emails but we have to think about that right if we're opening this can of worms we're opening a can of worms and we have to prepare to deal with it I also think it's worth noting too for something like email or Google Drive we have access to all this so like this is not happening in secret it's not being actively monitored by a parent or an adult but we can go back and find anything sure but I mean as Miss Lee said I mean if we're worried and and I appreciate this this conversation around

[03:54:58] grooming but groomers gonna groom right they're gonna find that the the opportunity to take it and so if i know that i can access that at any time and a groomer knows that it's not just the it department or the principal that at any time could but that a parent's going to and can be monitoring this that is one extra step of protection that i think is what we're talking about i think on a policy level i think what you're saying is valuable and needs to be part of the communication right certainly to parents but i think on a policy level to me this seems to cover those things. Right, I agree, I agree. Okay, I just wanted to make sure that as

[03:55:37] we're not missing anything and then it comes back to bite us. Right. So we've got again these here in this discussion. This must allow access to parents or guardians to deserve all communication with their child. In the case of communication system that does not allow access to parents or guardians, for example, non-ACPS email, the parent guardian must be included in the communication.

[03:56:05] so what that does is that they're using the k-12 email we're assuming that's trusted in that schools and we can see that and we can access that but if it's a gmail or something like that that's a non-acps email they're going to have to copy the parents on that i i don't think we i don't like that addition now okay um yeah i think eg email just email so you want on the k-12 email we want to copy parents that's the one that i think it's important that we copy parents on if i mean yes let's all use parent square um but i think that's where it feels most likely to be a problem is in

[03:56:44] everyone's email so i don't think narrowing it to non-acps email makes sense to me and then the addition if it's are you all because this was added here if an adult must contact student email and a parent's email is unavailable adult shall include their direct supervisor again that may be a lot of emails coming through every teacher to every principal right so how that Copying occurs so what the money are there that many? I mean, I'm sure there are a lot of families that don't have email

[03:57:22] Access, but do we say that it's that they I don't know that you're putting it as the supervisor or What is that like maybe that's not the best system? I don't know I also if we go back I don't think that we should kill the automatically in the in line 254 because as we noted you can get access it isn't automatic you have to request it so i think automatically makes sense there so you want to leave automatically the system has to allow it that we can't provide so yeah just take out

[03:57:58] automatically or no to no to put back in automatically because we delete it yeah don't delete it because gmail does allow access you can get it um but it's not automatic okay like that no i just thought of it this is and this is i'm just gonna say this out loud because this is an implementation thing yeah um we're all so hot here um rosin there's no way we can like everyone's gone there's no one we can talk to to turn the

ac back on i assume at this point well i reached out earlier and it was working yeah i think it automatically goes off at 10. so i don't know

[03:58:36] it's it might like someone might have to hardly set it um the on-call tech again sorry no sorry um oh i know what i was going to say so this is again like this is an implementation thing right like there's an email that i use for my children's like there's an email that i give the school with knowledge that this is like official communication there's this is going to put a lot of email into parents emails right every reason why again i think just in this implementation

[03:59:14] like this communication with parents making sure they're sure they know it's like like and i think there is something on the um like the the what parents fill out but it's like this is for like this is the phone number for emergencies this is for like the you know the school's closing because of snow like this is like if people are giving their email making sure they are aware what is coming i mean i think again this is like this is not a policy but an implementation but i'm just putting a little start is there an option for parents to like say i don't need to receive any more of these communications from this teacher like there i mean there haven't been like i think

[03:59:52] that's right that's what right point right like is there they would email the teacher to opt out yeah i just i'm thinking about allison there's four children right like so again it's like intention i understand it but it's like then this again i think is an implementation piece but just how does that like making sure parents aware that this is something that will be happening um i mean if you feel like the policy is sound then i think we definitely can have the

[04:00:27] implementation discussions i would like to get through the no i agree i agree like i will yep anything else on the communication piece these were all originally there so we can stop there's

[04:01:06] things you haven't seen are there multiple just on line 280 are there multiple when it says department's human resources partner is that because in hr there's a person for okay and i again i think again it's just making sure like as part of this communication like that you know

[04:01:31] those are outlined this edition here on line 298 is from miss lee terminated for allegations of sexual molestation so i do have a question about that too is like um as a matter of uh practice are people who are alleged to have molested sexually are they suspended and or terminated is there another category are they put on leave like is there something is there any

[04:02:09] category we're missing here um we also have discussed in our own meeting um when we'll be notified about things so i think there is a little belt and suspenders thing to that but i just wonder if this covers all the things that happen to someone someone who's put on administrative leave before they before they have had a finding or yeah so that's why i wanted allegations because allegations, I mean, justice takes years sometimes. So before suspended or terminated, should we have administrative leave? I feel like we should. Well, that's the question.

[04:02:46] Is there a category that we're missing of things that happen to people who are alleged to have done these things? I don't think there's a category you're missing. Okay. When these kinds of allegations come forward, it's highly likely that an employee will be placed onto in a leave state While is that the same? Yeah, I think that's it. I think it's a definition piece like we like you use it That you we use like there are different terms. I mean, I think again clarifying for the public There are different terms like suspended means administratively if that's the

[04:03:23] But is that what would be the right word to you? So is this what's the word? I guess what's the word we're using? So we're all using similar language It might be more consistent with language we use with employees to say is placed on leave - Don't leave.

[04:03:41] - Yeah. - Is that reading how? - And in line 299, subject of a founded case of child abuse.

[04:04:03] Is there a layman's definition? What makes a case founded? - Ms. Stone. - Yes, that's a term of art related to a CPS finding.

[04:04:24] - I'll make a footnote. - You could just insert CPS or DSS in front of founded, if you like. Yeah, just so insert the child protective services in front of founded with apostrophe.

[04:04:48] I think the apostrophe goes after the S. Oh, yes. Is there ever a case where someone is suspended or terminated just for allegations?

[04:05:14] Yeah, I mean, it's always the potential that someone would resign when faced with allegations and then they are terminated from employment when they resign, that's also a term of art.

[04:05:30] I think having all three covers us, if any of these things happens. Yeah, I think it's worth noting to the public that this is a new policy, you know, that the superintendent or designee shall inform the school board in writing within 24 hours

[04:06:02] of a staff member being placed on leave. Obviously, that didn't happen. in in the case that is you know the elephant in the room um so i think it's important that people hear this is one of many steps that we're taking to address that what we see as a gap that

[04:06:36] occurred i i the line 300 i i think this is like for the public i think this is a question is this you know, this kind of May and that there there isn't a timeline there.

[04:07:00] I know in things like this, it's difficult to put a timeline, but I mean, I hate things like in a timely matter, but it's just like, you know, it's like shell inform. But and if I had a parent head on, my question would be, OK, you could even inform me today, tomorrow, six months from now.

[04:07:19] So is there a way to put a timing piece into that? Is it separate from? no this is the school board shall determine whether the superintendent will inform the families of acp students who may have come in contact with said adults based on consultation with the police department and the cong wealth and turi i just we you know we notify the state students but there's no timing like there's no timing to parents and i know it's yeah i think that would yeah i think that's important yeah i wrote that line just i think it should be the school board's determination

[04:07:58] along with the superintendent and the police department how do we inform parents and what and i know you're working on a policy or legal language or something like that and you can correct me if i'm wrong i think the challenge would be the police department or the common right they tell yeah no i think that we maybe yeah i think that's the question we don't know yeah two days so you could say when and whether or whether and when and that gives you the

[04:08:32] opportunity um that mr dillenbeck did or maybe that just said you know you can it's at the discretion of the board in consultation with the superintendent and the police when you do it as well as whether you do it at all but you want to give some guarantee to the public that we are working on it quickly yes yeah i get that yeah that's my and i and i understand all the p like again it's like all the pieces but i don't know well this is also assuming that the school board

[04:09:05] is told so i mean it there's so many things that are i mean i think i feel like yeah i mean it's we have to defer to acpd but shouldn't we put in writing that with their you know in conjunction with or working with yeah yeah are you saying yeah when they say oh yeah yeah when we are told by acpd yeah contact the families because we don't want to ever hinder an investigation right

[04:09:41] that's the last thing we want but we also want to assure the public that we are taking the responsibility is when we are allowed we are immediately reaching out to families there are so many variables in these cases i think you want to maintain the discretion yeah whether and when you disclose and talk to families i know that families want to hear right away but there may be good reason why you don't want to do that when a case comes up i know i know i might be missing

[04:10:19] some important information but assuming we're we're talking about minors not not adult students if i'm a parent of a student and my child has met with somebody who has been placed on administrative leave, I want to know right away.

[04:10:43] And I believe parents have the right to know right away. Is there some other legal barrier that has to be overcome? Law enforcement, investigations.

[04:11:00] I mean, there are just I just think there are too many variables to tie yourself to it. And also, I think Dr. Hayes brought up in our retreat last week, like there's lots of reasons that someone goes on leave that you know what did you say like someone has a something on a t-shirt that you're whatever or they fell asleep in the closet like at what point you know are we i think we can i mean staff members going to leave for like i said a multitude of things could be maternity leave medical leave

[04:11:35] or it could be leave because i've worn an appropriate shirt to school i think in any case if a staff member is on leave and is going to be out for an extended amount of time we can notify families that Dr. Hayes is going to be out and Mr. Beard is going to be substituting during that time, which lets them know that that staff member is out.

[04:11:58] However, if there's a legal component to it, we're not sharing anything without the permission from the police department, commonwealth attorney, CPS, right. So I think we can, we can share, because we do, I mean, that happens not consistently, that's one of the issues. We can do that across schools, but I think When it comes to the legal portion and any investigation or allegations, that's where we'll have to take that guidance from the Commonwealth attorney or the police department.

[04:12:30] Okay. We're not talking about somebody being placed on leave because of a t-shirt here, right? Obviously, we're talking about allegations of sexual molestation and so on. So assuming that that's the issue at hand, I still have a really hard time understanding how we can withhold this information from parents who have, my understanding, an absolute legal right to know what's going on with their children.

[04:13:07] and how would the police be involved I'm having a hard time understanding a scenario where the police might be involved and the parents still not be informed of what's going on like how is that even possible so I understand we want to stay within you know the bounds of the law but I'm also hearing and as a parent I'm concerned about wanting to know exactly what's going on with my

[04:13:44] child in a timely way. We're calling ourselves the decision makers and we're only promising consultation. Say it again. In the policy, we are the decision makers and we're only promising consultation. I think that the issue would be if in any way, and so I can imagine in which charges or an

investigation on one count is being investigated, but there are other accounts that the person under investigation isn't aware that these other things are also being investigated.

[04:14:18] And then by releasing to all of those families, it could potentially compromise the investigation to other counts that are also happening for that particular person. And that's just one example in a way that that information release could potentially impact an investigation. And the bringing the person to justice for the crimes that they've allegedly committed is also really important to think about. And the prosecutor and the law enforcement are the experts in building that case. And as Ms. Lee points out, you all have ultimate decision-making power. However,

[04:14:54] making sure that that's in consultation with the ones who are running the investigation to make sure that it doesn't compromise that investigation, bringing the person to justice on potentially multiple counts is also an important consideration. And I think also protecting the the board if the allegations are unfounded or they're innocent and we've jumped ahead of the legal team. I mean, I think we need to remember that we're innocent until proven guilty in this country. And so, yes, we are, it is our utmost duty to protect the kids, but also we are legally

[04:15:30] bound by, you know, and I hear, I completely agree with you. I want to know what's going on with my kids and i think this is where it gets really hard because how i don't know what the answer is because i i agree with you jim like i want to know i want to know immediately and i also don't want to be hindering an investigation for a potential criminal right and i think this is where we take legal advice yeah yeah and i think your policy because because it is allegations so

[04:16:09] right with you're going to know within 24 hours that there's allegations are there you'll know information about the context of that um and then within the context you'll have more information and consultation with cps and police that you can then make that decision of when and where yeah that happens yeah i'm in favor of of the policy i think it is good i think we do need to drill down and be a little bit more specific but i also think it would be helpful to consult

[04:16:45] with police department commonwealth attorney to find out what are the boundaries and how can we is there a way to inform parents in such a way that in a timely way that wouldn't interfere with the investigation so i think you know in the interest of getting policy in place uh like we talked about before we can come back and well and what if it's is that highlighted section sufficient

[04:17:21] for the consultation with police and for now yeah yeah yeah we were all left out of that before um and i think there's a it's important to note too that there's a difference between inappropriate behavior and criminal behavior yeah so someone could be very guilty of inappropriate behavior that doesn't rise to the level of cps findings or the police and the commonwealth's attorney indicting someone but we still as a board or a superintendent would find that behavior and

[04:17:57] hr would find that behavior inappropriate and i would want to know if a teacher in my school was acting inappropriately even if it wasn't criminal so i hear you and i don't know what the answer is i think we could work on we could work on um yeah further delineating that so families can know if it was inappropriate you know in some form we can work on it i just don't yeah we'll have to work with i i can understand the anger of the church family absolutely didn't hear for months absolutely

[04:18:35] that's completely understandable yeah yeah and as a as parents we get it yeah 100 and we're angry too line 307 i want to clarify why it's structured that way from employee to licensed personnel the

section code is about licensed personnel so in the event where a person is not a licensed personnel there is no notifying of the state superintendent so i just want people to know that why that changes there this isn't trying to make it more difficult this is what the state code requires the the 10 days for licensed personnel so that's the reason for that change there

[04:19:15] i think that gets us to the end i don't know from here so we have it as amended is in this document you've seen those that the board is comfortable with this as amended understand you can bring it at the very next board meeting you can say we want to make a change right but if there was a motion to adopt this policy as amended and we could move that so we i just want for clarification we can adopt it as it's amended and then let's say we get further

[04:19:54] feedback or we have those conversations with acpd or sarah or whoever else that can provide further insight we could make a motion at the very next meeting that we want to amend it based on this information and it can be a continually working document yes you can bring it in at any board meeting and anybody who votes in a majority so the winnings or the prevailing side of a motion can always reconsider a motion within the same business meeting or the following so you could always do a reconsideration okay if you vote if you got to be in the size of that one uh that

[04:20:30] motion okay okay so that's another option i think i like the idea because i don't feel like this is done but i feel like it's enough that we are putting necessary protections in place before the school year with the notion that this is a evolving document and to be improved upon as we are yeah because it do it has to be in place we've got to get this in place for the start of

[04:20:59] school you're in less than 28 days 28 days 26 days jason can you add in line 295 we asked in 299 we inserted child protective services before founded so i'm sorry i got line 295 well below that we added child protective services as part of the definition i found it so for 290 yeah in 295 it should be added as well they should be consistent. So you're not in the mics it's hard for me to hear exactly what the request is. We inserted in 299 child protective services

[04:21:38] in front of founded but in line 295 we also have the word founded so we should be consistent in our usage so just insert child protective services. But is it applicable in 295 because Because that's for GBCA.

[04:21:55] It's a violation of the policy. It's a violation of an ACPS policy and not necessarily a CPS, I think. Yeah, because we would look at this policy, whether there was a finding by line 295. I also want to give Dr. Hayes, who is always smart enough to have a fan, none of us.

[04:22:14] I know, seriously. I know, we were all coming for some ways. I'll pay you for that right now. to just give us an idea of-- I know that this should continue to live, and there are going to be thoughts that come to us and feedback that we get.

[04:22:34] But the level of difficulty it will be for you to implement a policy knowing that there might be changes. Is there-- I mean, I just want to give you a second to-- I just want to name that and see if there was anything you wanted to talk about.

[04:22:49] Yeah, any concerns or things we need to-- Welcome to the job. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. Transparency, I texted the team and said, hey, do we need to pull together an implementation team that doesn't stand forever, but while we are working through this process to make sure it's reviewed, providing

feedback, you know, we're getting the feedback from the staff, we're providing it to the team and making sure that all our staff members are updated and our students understand the changes as well.

[04:23:23] so this will be a team effort as dr collard spoke to and i was just mentioning to mr beard our principal leadership meeting is next week so and then the week after that it's new teachers and full staff so right and we're not back together until after school starts until after school starts so okay thank you we can always call a meeting if yes sir am we ready for a motion then um i was just i move that we approve the policy on professional boundaries and sexual misconduct

[04:23:57] um as amended second moved by ms lee seconded by ms spillman i'd like to do a roll call vote for this ms lee yes ms osborne is absent ms spillman yes dr acuff yes mr beard yes mr dylan beck yes Chair Berlin. Yes. With a vote 6-1-0, motion carries. Thank you very much to the entire team for all of your work on this. And again, thank you very much. And again, thank you to the public for

[04:24:36] all of their comments on this. The next item, and again, I know it is 11 o'clock and I, again, apologize to everyone, but because school is starting, this is something that we just have to keep moving through. The next item on our agenda, the last item, is 9.7 Policy IKBA Grading Policy Part 2. Mr. Craig Dahmer, Executive Director of Curriculum Assessment Instruction, will lead us

[04:25:05] in this discussion. Thank you, Rusty. And the prior to the presentation, Craig asked me to, or I was asked to provide a little bit of context on how we got here. So I just wanted to remind the board that in the last meeting we discussed the policy and we talked about the grading policy and the changes that we were recommending to the policy itself and how that's separate from the administrative procedures and so administrative procedures connected to the last discussion we just had are

[04:25:45] something that can be changed fairly rapidly without the board reviewing it however the first we need to discuss the policy recommendations that were put forward though in the red line document there were Two main changes that were made. One was around communication to families and the second was around directing the Department of Instruction to create a set of procedures that incorporated some of the key elements from the findings of the evaluation of the grading system.

[04:26:15] And so now Dr. Grant will review that policy with you, similar to the one that you just did. it's a much shorter policy to see if you would like to make any changes to it prior to you vote are you voting for adoption when it has just the two paragraphs on the policy i'll let you figure

[04:26:40] we have it in a google doc so you'll bear with me for just a moment i will pull it up this was

[04:27:09] do you see it um jason here it is right here that's not it yeah we do have the hard copies they have the heart you do have the hard you walk through the hard copy that's there there's

[04:27:47] only two paragraphs if you all are comfortable yeah i'm sorry i don't know problem solving yeah i don't know if i have the that's not the one that changed no i'm sorry not tonight so you'll notice on line 12 we have to ensure effective communication of grades school staff shall provide an explanation of the grading system to students and parents and legal guardians at the beginning of each school year schools shall communicate to parents and students on a regular basis in evaluation of the student's progress toward meeting the academic objectives so again

[04:28:27] this goes to it's not a lot of the questions are the implementation part of it right the policy that you have is you are making certain that by this statement that ACPS is notifying parents what it is how it

works and we're not just leaving it for students to figure out with teachers the other addition to this policy is on line 61 on that second page and again i'm just reading since folks don't have it at home so the school division shall create procedures to support staff in implementing this policy and shall conduct periodic reviews with teacher and student input

[04:29:03] to ensure procedures are meeting the goals of grading accuracy consistency and support for student learning these procedures shall include requirements and reasonable limitations for student reassessments a minimum grade that differentiates between attempted and unsubmitted assignments regulations on accepting late work from students requirements for communication of grades and notifications of risk of failure to parents a minimum number of assignments per marking period and grading scales so that through this the policy is requiring through the superintendent to be able to make certain that we are looking at is this working is it not working are the goals that the grading

[04:29:41] policy is supposed to be put in place are actually working and so you all can be able to have access to that to know that reporting on what's working and not regarding the grading policy is expected by the board by the adoption of that paragraph. So those are the two additions. Everything else is the same. And then the implementation, and Gevers Donner talked about implementation for questions that you have, how that gets implemented, what that works like, and why we're recommending the specific grading changes. But this is the policy, if you're comfortable with that, a motion to adopt this policy. And then if you have

[04:30:17] questions though that you want to get to in that, we can speak to policy or if you want to talk more about the implementation to figure out then whether not this policy is there that's your discretion so what we're essentially voting on is just the policy we'll have a separate discussion about procedures and will we also vote on those as well the procedures are not part of the board policy that's through the superintendent so the policy gives direction to the superintendent that we need a policy in place that does these things

[04:30:51] and you're and that we report back to the board what those things how effective they are how it gets done in implementing that that that is not a board discussion on all those aspects discussion for sure but it's not a board action to take on that okay so you need a motion to pass this is there any do it is there any discussion i didn't mean to jump ahead of you chair okay then i move that we adopt the amended grading policy presented to us. I second. Jim and I did it in unison.

[04:31:29] Moved by Ms. Spillman. I'm going to give that one to Dr. Acob if that's okay. Sure. I would like to do a roll call vote on this one as well. Ms. Osborne is absent. Ms. Spillman? Yes.

[04:31:45] Dr. Acob? Yes. Mr. Beard? Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck? Yes. Ms. Lee? Yes. Chair Berlin? Yes.

[04:31:55] motion carries 15 close to that 16 all right i'm craig domer i'm the executive director of curriculum

[04:33:47] assessment instruction i'm here just to talk about how we're planning to implement some of these policy changes in the grading policy for next school year in four short weeks before i begin i also would like to thank dr carlock for his thorough report i know it was a lot of work and And also the parents, students, and teachers who responded to surveys, sat in focus groups.

[04:34:13] All of the quantitative and qualitative data is immensely helpful in trying to figure out the next steps in this policy. And we couldn't have done it without that report. I also, just a quick shout out to the

Elmira High School Math Department, who I sat with a few months ago, for all of their planning.

[04:34:33] The conversation with them was they brought great thought, candor, and care for students. And the feedback they were able to give us, I think, was also helpful in thinking about how we wanted to make some changes for next year. Again, the vision and mission.

[04:34:51] I think grading, right, is the communication of how students are learning the standards that they're mastering and how we communicate that to them and to their parents. And it really is through that clear communication that we're hoping they're able to be motivated and we are able to help close those achievement gaps.

[04:35:14] I'd like to talk about the key takeaways that the Office of Instruction had from the report. The purpose of our changes for the 26-27 school year, have some immediate next steps, and then happy to take questions. When we were thinking about what we wanted to implement in, you know, four to six weeks, we really focused on the grade distribution changes and the impacts in the report, the practices where we were outliers, and the long and short-term recommendations in the report, and which ones could be done in a short time frame.

[04:35:50] The next slides really are just from last week, but just the ones that we focused on, really trying to remember that the grades had become more valid for lower-achieving students and less valid for higher-achieving students. And to try and dig into that a little bit, we had to look at the qualitative data, and we tried to make recommendations in the short term that wouldn't damage the growth that we've had and the validity on the lower end of the grading scale, while also perhaps hopefully having some impact and bringing some more validity to the upper end.

[04:36:26] One thing we took away from this chart, right, is that while the distribution is still valid, both in reading and in math, there are more Fs given now than there were pre-pandemic, both maybe due to learning and just our thought was around thinking about that lower end of the scale. It hadn't really led to inflation on that lower end. The differential impacts, really thinking about those highest achievers having the most drop in validity, and in particular on this kind of chart,

[04:37:04] seeing that, again, on that lower quartile, there were more D's and F's given than there were prior to this policy, and in that upper quartile and second upper quartile, that's where we start to see additional A's and B's.

[04:37:22] I think we are a qualitative outlier around all these bullet points, as Dr. Carlack pointed out, and as you change the policy to really call upon the Office of Instruction to make sure that we have some procedures specifically around these.

[04:37:38] I won't read the long and short term recommendations. We tried to hit most of these bullet points and hit the ground running next month.

[04:37:57] When we thought about what we wanted to do in the Office of Instruction, all the curriculum coordinators came together to work along with the Office of Instruction Directors. We reached out and talked with every secondary school administrative team as well.

[04:38:15] And we really wanted to focus on changes that would be a start and not an end, So that the committee, when it's named, and when we start working with a grading committee, really has the room to

operate to make the decisions around some long-term changes around regulations. But at the same time, we recognize that there are some pain points around the policies and procedures around grading.

[04:38:35] We felt like doing nothing was not our best course of action either. And so we wanted to really focus on changes that would increase communication, reflect that community feedback. And what we are asserting the feedback is, at least at this juncture for the short term, is that we do want grades to show how much is learned.

[04:38:54] We want students to take their studies seriously. We all want our students to achieve excellence. And we really want teachers making sure they're spending time on designing instruction focused on student learning. And whenever possible, our changes, we would want to increase the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of grading across the school division.

[04:39:15] around communication and clarity to increase grading transparency and proactive family communication. Our recommendation is that teachers would be required to communicate with parents or caregivers regarding student progress if a student is at risk of failing or will fall two or more letter grades in a class at the six-week mark of each quarter. So I think again kind of in layman's terms right if you're at the six-week mark of any of the four quarters and a student is at risk of failing with a D or an F, or if they had an A in the previous quarter, now they have a C,

[04:39:50] that we would take proactive communication to let the parents know that that is the current grade. We're formalizing the rolling semester average, which has been the key practice since the policy, but I don't think it was ever in writing. So semester one and semester two grades each equal 50%, and final grades are calculated with each semester equaling 50% of the final grade.

[04:40:14] Thinking about work habits and how they may affect grades, we really wanted to think about what we wanted to say about late work and limitations for student reassessments. Our proposal for this year is that late work shall be accepted without penalty for the longer of two weeks or three class meetings from the due date.

[04:40:39] Following that time period, any late work may only receive a maximum grade of 85. I think that the discussion around this recommendation is kind of twofold. The two weeks or three class meetings is really just to protect students in times of snow days or days off of school for professional learning that should they miss an assignment or miss a due date and something happens, just really trying to be clear that they have three class periods or two weeks.

[04:41:09] In thinking about what the after that time penalty would be, again, trying to leave some room for the committee and thinking about the lower end versus the upper end, we didn't want to penalize students at that lower end where grades are becoming more valid, but we wanted to think about what it would mean to get an A if you're more than two or three weeks.

[04:41:33] and we felt comfortable. Administrators seemed comfortable with the idea that to get an A, you should turn your work in within two or three weeks most of the time, and that we could work with students if that was becoming a problem. For retakes, students may retake or revise each graded assessment project paper one time. To be eligible for that retake or revision, the student's initial score must be below 90, and their retake revision score cannot exceed 90.

[04:42:03] practice assignments tied to that assessment, and the current unit of study should be completed before the retake or revision. We got a lot of feedback, I think, in the last week or two around

that recommendation of 80 or 85, and how that would feel to students who have lived in this policy, and again, we felt leaving it at an A at 90 was the right step for the immediate future.

[04:42:28] I'm sure that the committee will discuss it kind of at length. We're calculating grades, trying to increase grading transparency and establishing a differentiated grade floor. Teachers at this point will be required to enter a minimum of five grades into the grade book over the course of each quarter, and these grades should be a combination of assignments and the summative and formative categories each quarter.

[04:42:59] Collaborative teams are required to set the grading design so that no one assignment or assessment counts for more than 35% within a quarter. This will ensure that no one assignment has a disproportionate impact on the quarter grade. We took that language from Fairfax and we had played around with a bunch of language around what kinds of assignments for those five for the minimum, but we really felt like if we just kind of said no, one assignment can be more than 35 percent, then it would require some variance in those assignments.

[04:43:33] And I think the recommendation at first had been seven in talking to high school administrators. They felt five would encompass what most teachers do now, and that would be a good place to start. This is our plan to publish the secondary grading scale.

[04:43:55] Just have one row for F, and that would be any average between 40 and 59, with the asterisk that the grade of 40 is reserved for missing work. All submitted work that is reasonably complete will receive a grade of 50 or higher. I think we need to leave it to our teachers and school employees to kind of be the arbiters of reasonably.

[04:44:17] If a parent or student disagrees with a teacher's assessment of that, I think that they would go to the teacher's supervisor and so on and so forth. Trying to kind of regulate that ahead of time might be difficult, but we will see again with what the committee says and as this becomes a living document.

[04:44:36] Our immediate next steps, we're going to revise and republish the grading handbook for 26-27. We're going to work with school leaders at Leadership next week on July 23rd.

[04:44:52] I think there may be a few final ironing outs of some of these things, in particular, the 35%. There's some talk about making it on the semester because it's a rolling semester average, so that no grade is more than 35% on a semester.

[04:45:09] And we need to do a little bit of work on assignments that are due, you know, right before the end of the semester, how we do the two weeks when grades close, things like that. But we need to make sure all the administrators are in the room to kind of have that conversation.

[04:45:25] But we'll make sure that the handbook is updated to reflect that before it's published out to parents and students before school begins. These changes have already been incorporated in the Learning for New Teacher Academy the following week. And then in pre-service week, principals will go over these changes with their staff, and we will have some FAQ sessions hosted by the Office of Instruction on the Friday of pre-service week.

[04:45:53] There's no real opportunity to bring all secondary teachers together to deliver the professional development, but we feel like for most teachers, having it delivered at school will be more effective and plenty. Those who have questions will be welcome to join us on that Friday at the end of pre-service week.

and before the first day of school we will send out the revised grading handbook highlighting these changes for parents questions I've

[04:46:33] had conversations with probably two dozen teachers and parents and I have to say I appreciate 90% of this I think it's definitely a step in the right direction and like you mentioned in terms of like the retake minimum cap teachers were sort of split 50 50. i know that kathy kaufman and the math department folks at albemarle said we think 80

[04:47:07] is is a good number um one one thing that was pretty much unanimous among all of the teachers and parents that i've heard from is that giving a 40 for no work turned in is completely unacceptable i understand i wasn't around when when the grading policy and implementation was enacted i guess five years ago the detrimental impact of a zero but i think what we are doing even

[04:47:42] reducing it from a 50 to a 40 sends the wrong message we're saying we're giving a student 40 credit for doing no work that's nowhere do we see that happen in the real world anywhere so in my opinion and i'm not speaking on behalf of myself but on behalf of the vast majority of secondary teachers that i've talked to we should give a zero when a student doesn't turn in work they they've failed because they've figured it out and i was talking to mr barfield yesterday

[04:48:21] they're smart they've they've done critical thinking and they can calculate how much i can get away with and still pass and that's we don't want to perpetuate that that needs to stop so i feel pretty strongly about this not just this isn't just jim's opinion this is i'm i'm relaying this from many many teachers that so yeah that that's the major tweak that I

[04:48:57] would suggest we make and I think we can trust teachers to work with students to explain this is this is the new rule and if students don't turn in work because they had a death in the family okay that's that's a different scenario and teachers can work with with students on those particular tough cases the other the other thing that I think rubs a lot of people wrong is the fact that we're saying there is no penalty for

[04:49:34] late work up to two weeks work that's turned in up to two weeks late has no penalty again where in the real world does that happen I think we need to we need to begin teaching young people there are consequences for the the work habits that they're building and if if we say oh it's okay to turn in work two weeks late you can get full credit no that's that that's to me that is teaching the

[04:50:08] wrong lesson so those were the two specific items um i think this is this is hard for me because obviously i have a kid who has had this grading system and i see the effects i also believe in grading that accurately reflects students knowledge so to me trying to shoehorn them both into one practice is what is problematic maybe maybe that's

[04:50:41] a thing so because work ethic is incredibly important but if our philosophy is the grades should accurately reflect students mastery of a subject then those are two different things I think that I think they're two different things and i don't know of a way to measure both of them accurately and to um yeah to measure both of them accurately and to balance both of them because again they're both very very important um and it's also a thing about educators time you know it's a it's a thing about all of

[04:51:21] those things i also want to stay in our lane stay in my lane of i guess just providing feedback and asking questions um the thing that i've gotten a lot of feedback on is the retake cap um and whether that accurately reflects students mastery of a topic by the end of the retake session or whatever um that's

the one that i've gotten the most feedback on i will say um one student suggested and i emailed back without replying to everyone so i'll forward it but um suggested doing the half

[04:51:57] like half point back thing this might be something that you all talk about all the time i had to ask my son where that meant um where if you got an 80 then you possibly could move it up to a 90 but not to 100 you know so there wasn't an hour arbitrary cap so i just wanted to ask if that was something that you all thought about and i see that you have this up so i'm sure that your cap makes this still accurate i don't know i mean to be honest i'll answer the questions right because I think even staying in lane or not right like it's warm up for August 7th I think for

[04:52:35] our FAQ session but just a couple of points one I just put this up to just talk about kind of that zero and where we looked at the quantitative data to try and see kind of where the anecdotes and we think that the qualitative data lie at least to the best that we can kind of judge but overall I think the other thing to keep in mind that we're hoping for is that we've made some changes that we think will produce maybe different data by the end of the first semester to also then allow the committee to see how these changes impacted this distribution and whether that

[04:53:14] accomplished the goal. So to kind of speak to the zero, I hear the same thing back to my assistant principal days at Henley when we started having these conversations just in a school level. I I think it is this math part of my brain, the parent part of my brain, right?

[04:53:35] Like it all kind of is in this kind of conversation. And I think it is hard to do it in one grade for sure. And we're not gonna be able to set up a work habits grade system in the next four weeks. So when we looked at this data and when I talked about it with Dr. Karlock a little bit, there are a couple of assumptions that we made and I'll just be totally in the front with that, is that even at a 50, it's hard to take a 50 and still get an A.

[04:54:07] And so that we think that these kind of A's over here in the top quartile are kids who are earning A's and scoring in the top quartile. And so we're going to assume that maybe some of these B's and C's and D's are the kids that we're talking about who might know all the material, scored high in some early tests and decided, because they got some critical thinking, that they're going to take some 50s and they're happy walking out of the class with a C or a D.

[04:54:37] And so we're really looking at this. And then we come over here and we kind of see an increase in Ds and Fs valid even with a minimum of 50 if they're not turning in an assignment.

[04:54:54] And so we really wanted to be careful on dropping that floor there and ruining kind of any validity gains we'd had in the lowest quartile. I think we're hoping that the two smaller changes can add to some bigger change. One is that by capping the retake at 90, because what I heard from some teachers, right, is that kids are just retaking until they can get up to 99, 100.

[04:55:18] And if you do that on several tests, you've banked more points to be able to take a 50 and walk out with a B and a C. And so if we cap it at 90, we might not have as many students up at the 97, 98, 99 after multiple retakes and then if they get a 40 instead of a 50 again we're hoping that these kids who were okay taking a B aren't okay taking a C and the kids who are okay taking a C aren't okay taking a D and we start to kind of

[04:55:53] move that shift and that they start turning in assignments and if they do we think that they are smart kids and they will get A's and B's and and their grades will go up and they will learn kind of some of

that work habit. I will say some of that's an assumption to be played out over the next 18 weeks, and I'm sure Dr. Carlack will help us run some data at the semester to see how that's going as far as grade distribution, but that was, again,

[04:56:27] I think we feel two small experiments that will get to the most critical issues. I think we heard from teachers, right, that they were giving a lot of retakes for kids who were already giving A's, and that that was really allowing kids to sit back and take 50s.

[04:56:45] The other thing we really tried to do just with doing the 40 is knowing that parents want an easy way to know in a grade book whether something's been turned in, not graded, or just was poor. So we think having that 40 is a quick way for them to see, oh, it's missing, and so we can kind of close that.

[04:57:05] I think that there are lots of solutions from a categorical grading scale to a different grading scale to a letter grading scale. And I look forward to kind of leading those conversations with the committee and hopefully coming up with a better permanent solution beyond next year.

[04:57:25] Thank you for all of that. That was helpful. I just have a couple of things and I actually agree both with Mr. Dillenbeck and Ms. Lee. I think if we're only allowing one retake, then we should allow them to get up to 100 because the whole point is to show mastery.

[04:57:43] So it seems to me if we are capping when you can retake and you can only take one retake, if you have mastered it and you did all the work and you've gotten it all right, then you should get the 100. It incentivizes them then with the only one retake to actually study and learn the stuff and prove that they've mastered it.

[04:58:08] I'm also not a fan of the 40 or 50 for no work. I mean, we don't give our kids their allowance if they don't do their chores. You don't get paid if you don't show up to work. And I have, my twins could not be more different.

[04:58:28] One is very strong academically, and I was just looking at his fourth quarter and year grades and guitar, which he had 100 in for three quarters, and then he had a 65 in the fourth quarter because he knew he didn't have to do any of the work, and he still got a 92 for the year, so he just boned it in for the last quarter.

[04:58:49] That's not the lesson I want to teach my kid who wants to go to an Ivy League. That doesn't look great. My other kid really struggles academically, super smart. Can't get her work done, but she knows if I can turn in a few assignments and I'm gonna get a 50 she's fine with a D or a C and she hasn't learned any of that work ethic and it doesn't matter how much her husband and I hound her there's no incentive and so I can see it from both sides but I feel like we're actually hurting them but on both ends whether they're strong academically or

[04:59:28] not the other thing and you touched on it is I really appreciate the more information for those of us that are tortured by the fact that we check our kids grades I love the fact that my parents never knew what my grades were told my report card got mailed home it was so great because the anxiety and the angst that I feel when something is missing and I think Judy can probably attest to this to teenagers are like oh they just haven't graded it yet for the whole quarter and and they're like I did it I swear she just hasn't graded it yet, and I don't want to hound the teachers.

[05:00:04] I would really like to see more accuracy reflected in the grading that's put online for parents and for students. Is it really just it's been submitted and hasn't been graded yet? Is it really a zero?

[05:00:19] My teenager is going to tell me what I want to hear so that they don't have to do the work at that moment. So it would be helpful to have that information accurately and timely without putting a ton of work on the teachers. but I also feel like we could actually be helping them by knowing accurately and timely if my kid did an assignment, if they missed it, if they've missed that two week window, whatever it is, it would probably end up causing less work in the long run.

[05:00:43] But okay, that's it. Thank you. - Yeah, I actually thought that was part of the communication piece at one point in the conversation. - Yeah. - I thought that like a regular time for assignments to be graded was part of that. I don't know if it got dropped off, but it seemed like that was part of the conversation.

[05:00:58] - Yeah, because I mean, I would look at some my kids grades and there were no grades for the entire quarter until after the quarter ended and then we were missing all these grades that they swore they did that they didn't do and it was too late at that point so i would love to have more timely update of that information so that we can help as parents stay on top of those things as well and truly i mean there haven't been regulations we are an outlier i mean like yeah yeah i get that but this is a great chance to move forward yeah one question one question i've had because a lot of the feedback that i saw what that hasn't

[05:01:34] been noted before is on the retake and the timing of this so based on what i'm reading is like we are putting a limit on turning in late work but from again this is coming from from the teacher's perspective of the teachers who wind up spending a lot of time on retakes um particularly significantly delayed from the time that test is so i that would just this is one of my questions is there a reason why we're not putting a time limit on that um because that came up particularly with a lot of math and science where people students are just

[05:02:13] waiting um yeah and and it seems to be the problem is that students who want to take a retake will wait until the last minute and it may be three four five weeks after the original test and so yeah i think it's not the best learning for them right they're already but also just i think about the teachers and like they have a plan for grading and then suddenly there are all these retakes i mean because i had some teachers i think one of them was here tonight

[05:02:49] who had specific timelines when you could take a retake and then none and then other teachers was like you can redo an assignment or turn it in throughout the whole quarter and so that inconsistency also when you're taking six or seven classes at once i think um creates a lot of challenges on on all ends was there any sort of time frame at some point in in some of these recommendations or was i just i might have been looking at i was looking at rockingham county's

[05:03:20] grading policy which they just adopted monday so as it stands we don't have a requirement i notice it says to be eligible to retake the student's initial score must be below 90 and so on practice assignments tied to the assessment in the current unit of study must be completed before the retake i agree with dr berlin that it might be helpful for both students and teachers to say within two weeks whatever the time frame is a reasonable amount of time not last minute before the marking

[05:03:59] period ends yeah i think in our conversation next week just about how we're going to navigate the end of marking periods both for kind of late work in general we can have that conversation with principals i think that when we had the original conversation we felt like limiting to one um for some students right like that could be a month later that they really have learned it before the end of the quarter and for others it could be kind of that two weeks so um again trying to think about what's one uh is is both policies right both the limit and the time

[05:04:37] frame um and the 90. um and so just trying to kind of land on what is enough change um to give some relief to teachers and what uh would be too much in one and so i guess my question is on all of of that I just want to make sure I understand you're talking about the committee so again this is an ever-evolving I'm guessing you know we've had this grading policy for a number of years and not much has changed in it I'm hopeful at least that this is an evolving process that we are moving you know taking what we're learning on all sides and and we're going to be adjusting

[05:05:15] it as necessary over the next I think it's something we'll get feedback from the committee on and I think just as a kind of starting point what is at least in my head I think in people that I've been talking to and thinking about this is right there'll probably be a large update to regulations next year and then it might be more of like they'll continue to meet and take feedback and look at evidence and then maybe make changes every two years I think we don't we don't want to be changing grading policies in the middle of the year probably and maybe not every year but five years might be too many without at least stamping them

[05:05:51] that yeah they're working and here's how we know great yeah i just again want to reiterate the you know the teachers that i talked to were divided on some of the issues cap and so on but the one thing that was nearly unanimous was you know zero for for no work turned in and so i just implore the committee to consider i think 40 is better than a 50 because there is

[05:06:23] some differentiation but i think we're missing the point the the main objective which is help students understand that they don't get credit if they don't do the work if they don't turn anything in and to not allow them to game the system because i guarantee that's what's been happening and uva discounts the gpas of albemarle county students i can i can attest to that because they

[05:06:56] know that our grading system is skewed to give a 50 for work that's not turned in and that's hurting that that hurts our students having said that i appreciate all of the other changes that you you guys have worked on I think it's we're making progress yeah thank you for this zero is think about that please these are guidelines used to be guidelines now they're regulations what is the difference and how much

[05:07:33] flexibility to teachers have around these regulations I think we're calling them regulations because we're gonna maybe start attaching the grading handbook to the policy as the regulations yes they have been guidelines in the past I think we will kind of have that communication we're looking for some more consistency I think we always want to have some kind of out for exceptions or certain courses or when we want to try new practices which I think the committee will also kind of be charged

[05:08:13] with kind of setting up like when what is the process for a teacher or a PLC to try something um different um because we we never want to kind of stop at least a little bit of that innovation as we move forward um and learn more through research and things like that thank you um i jim i i agree with most if not all of what you're saying but i will also note that this is not the first grading system that kids have gained by like by far so i think we should keep that historical

[05:08:47] perspective yeah i agree thank you thank you thank you very much um yeah nice there um is there any other business by school members and the superintendent can i just ask that um since it's so late if one of the officers could just be in the parking lot when we're leaving tonight um thank you um i probably i if we still have both officers i don't know if we do but i think most people are parked out front if we could get at least an officer standing out there when we're

[05:09:25] walking to our car that would be great and thank you to miss schmidt for getting the ac turned back on shout out to leo the tech with fez in this building he thanks leo thanks leo one thing we forgot to announce during superintendent's school board committee is and correct me if i have this is right still, I'm looking at Rosalyn.

[05:09:47] Mountain View Ribbon Cutting, July 24th, 10:00 AM. So everyone, Mountain View first new school. We are opening in 25 years, so we all need to be there to-- I will be out of town, but I will be there in spirit.

[05:10:03] And I'm sorry, I can't be there. We all need to be there to celebrate this historical time. So that was my last piece of-- Anything else? Thank you to you guys that stayed for this record-breaking school board meeting.

[05:10:19] A huge thank you. Thanks, everybody. Yeah. Seeing no further business and hearing no objections-- any objections with this? I call the Albemarle County School Board meeting adjourned. Thank you so much for your attention.



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