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Albemarle County School Board Special Meeting, Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Date Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Place Albemarle County Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia
Length 20m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc8eRIO8lz4>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-13. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] Good morning everyone and thank you for being here. I am calling this special board meeting to discuss and consider an independent review and investigation to order. Before we begin, Dr. Acuff is not able to be in the room today due to Family Matters, so I first have to ask the board if anyone has an issue with her

[00:00:31] joining remotely I just want for the record to note that the board is an agreement that dr. a cough can join remotely and just for everyone in the room I know there was a request to be in a larger room the reason we are in this room today is because of the sound system if we are in the main room there is a two minute delay for anyone on the phone so Dr. Acuff would not be able to participate in discussion and so we are here thank you to the board of

[00:01:09] supervisors and the technology team for making sure the sound is available and this will be is being recorded as well as being streamed currently so thank you Dr. Acuff for joining remotely we will begin as we usually do with introductions and I'm going to start with Clerk Thompson. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board. Erin Stone, Assistant Division Counsel. Josiah Black, Chief Legal Officer. Chandra Hayes, Acting Superintendent. Jason Grant, Chief Communication Officer. Ruby Goethe. Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent.

[00:01:46] Jamie Forman, Chief Technology Officer. Megan Wood, Interim Assistant Superintendent. Dan Redding, Chief HR Officer. Bob Beard, Samuel Miller District. Jim dillenbeck riot district um i'm allison

spillman i'm the at-large representative and chair i would like to respectfully ask that i make a quick announcement um today i'm announcing that i've made the difficult decision to step down from the albemarle county school board my final meeting will be next thursday evening august 13th sorry um this is not a sudden decision nor is a reaction to the

[00:02:25] very few people who have recently demanded the resignation of this board i've been considering this transition for months and had originally intended to step down at the end of the last school year but recent events made that timing difficult and I chose to remain longer than planned to help support the transition to our new superintendent. I'm leaving because I feel confident in the job I've done. I've served this community with integrity, worked tirelessly on behalf of our students and families, and consistently gone above and beyond what this role is required. I'm really proud of my service on the work we've accomplished. At the At the same time serving on this board has taken a significant toll on my physical, mental

[00:03:05] and emotional health. The personal cost has become untenable. My children deserve to have me fully present in their lives and they should not have to endure hatred, harassment or criticism because their mother serves in public office.

[00:03:21] I will continue to work hard on behalf of our students, staff, families and school division through my final meeting next Thursday evening. I intend to finish my service with the same commitment and dedication I brought to this role from the beginning. Serving on this role has been an incredible honor and I'm really grateful to the students, families, educators, staff members, and community members who've trusted me and worked alongside me. I leave knowing that I gave this position everything I had but now it's time for

[00:03:58] me to focus on my health and more importantly my family. Thank you. I am Dr. Rebecca Berlin, I'm with the Whitewell District.

[00:04:17] Ellen Osborn, Scottsville District. Judy Lee, Rybana District. Dr. Koff. K.A. Huff, Jack Jewett District. Dr. Berlin, we just skipped over the superintendent. Oh yeah, apologies, I missed it. Because this is a special meeting and not a regularly scheduled board meeting, there are specific parameters by which we must abide.

[00:04:41] Pursue it to code 15.2-1418 of the code of Virginia. And consistent with ACPS school board policy BDB, only matters specifically noted in the public notice shall be considered during the special meeting.

[00:04:58] And again, this is the discussion and consideration of the independent review and investigation. Before deliberating next steps, we will hold a closed session to receive legal advice about recent personnel issues and the division's policies and practices concerning the response to allegations of sexually inappropriate conduct by staff. Following our closed meeting, we will have a public discussion, deliberation, and consideration on the independent review investigation and how we move forward. With that, do I have a motion to enter closed session? You do. I move that the

[00:05:35] School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia go into a closed session as authorized by the Virginia freedom of information act section 2.2-3711a of the code of virginia under subsection 8 for the consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the school board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel the purpose of this item is for the school board to

seek legal advice regarding an independent independent investigation of recent personnel issues and the division's policies and practices concerning the response to allegations of sexually inappropriate conduct by staff do i have a second to this motion second

[00:06:12] moved by miss billman second by by miss lee i would like to do a roll call vote for this clerk thompson dr acuff yes mr beard yes mr dylanbeck yes miss lee yes miss osborne yes miss spillman yes chair berlin yes so moved we will now go immediately into closed session i do ask that everyone and we will need to remain in this room so that we can make sure that dr acoff has clear

[00:06:47] sight and sound i am asking that everyone leave this room until we are done with closed session I'm asking, I'm just checking with this, Mr. Black, Ms. Stone, Dr. Hayes to remain in and then we will invite others in as needed.

[00:07:11] 2:35 right now the corner is open and auditorium. Approximately how long will we close this door?

[00:08:58] i would like to bring this special meeting back to order do i have a motion do i have a closed meeting motion yes chair berlin i move with the board certified by recorded vote that to the best of each board member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the virginia freedom of information act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered in the closed meeting Second, moved by Ms. Spillman, but seconded by Ms. Lee, Clerk Thompson, I'd like to just do a roll call on just that motion.

[00:09:34] Mr. Beer? Yes. Mr. Dillenbeck? Yes. Ms. Lee? Yes. Ms. Osborne? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Dr. Acuff? Yes. Chair Berlin? Yes. So moved. And as a reminder, we don't have actual mics, but they're in the ceiling, so just speak up louder.

[00:09:56] Do I have any motions coming out of the closed session board? Yes, I move that the school board direct the division superintendent and chief legal officer to engage the law firm of Harmon Claytor to conduct a thorough independent investigation of recent personnel issues and the division's policies and practices concerning the response to allegations of sexually inappropriate conduct.

[00:10:28] by staff and to share the firm's findings with the school board at the earliest possible date. I further move that the chief legal officer be directed to ensure that Harmon Claytor is afforded access to all documents, data, witnesses, and other evidence that would be necessary to conduct such an investigation. Do I have a second? Second. Moved by Ms. Osborne, second by Ms. Lee.

[00:11:00] we are now open for discussion any members of the board want to discuss this at this time I would just like to say that we want a thorough timely and robust investigation by Harman Claytor and we anticipate that ACPS will give them a full access to the facts we want to know what happened and we want to know what to make sure that our our kids at ACPS are safe always our staff is

[00:11:37] safe our parents are safe and to make what happened allegedly happened at Holly means other schools never happen again thank you so in favor of this investigation I think it's vital for a healthy school division to have our practices examined and to get feedback I also will be proposing in the near

[00:12:15] future at some point contracting with an independent inspector general type of role or an annual review not just in this particular case and circumstances that we're we're talking about today but an annual audit and review of our policies and procedures by somebody outside of ACPS because I think it's

[00:12:46] important for us to have at some point that feedback from somebody in an inspector general type of role so I'll be proposing that at some point in the future we've gotten lots of feedback from various people those teachers parents and I want to raise some of the questions that that we're going to encourage the law firm to investigate these are from Taylor Greenwood question

[00:13:23] number one was there any mechanism to aggregate concerns about a single staff member over time so that a series of separate reports would be recognized as a pattern rather than handled as unconnected events number two was the reporting pipeline understood and followed consistently so that proper reporting didn't depend on any one person getting it right in the moment.

[00:13:45] Number three, what visibility existed above the building level so that concerns reached people with the authority to act. The goal isn't to relitigate one case, it's to find every point where a single failed a signal failed and to fix those systems so that the next time a concern is caught at the first signal rather than the fifth if the review maps the failures carefully and the findings are made public it will do more to rebuild trust and to protect children in any single personnel outcome thank you um yeah i'm

[00:14:25] fully in favor of this investigation i think it's really important that we find out what we got right and what we got wrong um and it needs to be from the top down it needs to not just be at the school level um but we need to figure out what the systemic failures are and how we can fix them um and so not just i mean and not just point out what was right or what was wrong but what actual items do we have going forward that we can put in place um our students as a parent an acps

[00:15:02] parent i want my kids to be safe in school um and i want to feel like when i send them to school that they're coming home safe. And so I have confidence in this division. I am proud of what we do but I think that there are gaps and I think that there are holes and I think we need to figure out where they are and I think having an outside attorney team looking at it in all aspects and giving us all the facts and giving us not just the facts but recommendations of what we can do to

[00:15:37] improve is what we deserve not just our staff but our students and our families so I fully support this. I'm in favor of this and I want us to keep our focus on the primary goal which is what can we do to come out of the situation that makes Albemarle County Public Schools a safer and stronger division for our students our parents and our employees and I want us to focus on that goal Moving forward, what can we do to make this a safer place?

[00:16:14] I'm also in favor of this, and I don't have anything profoundly different to say. After Allison leaves, I'll, for at least a time, be the only ACPS parent on this board, and it is very, very important to me that our kids be safe and that our staffers and everyone in the community, in the ACPS community, be safe.

[00:16:43] So I'm very much in favor of this. I don't have much to add. I'm in favor of this route to getting to the bottom of what happened, and I have confidence that we will do so.

[00:17:01] I too am in favor of this investigation. We need to have a robust investigation on how we can best protect the students that we are responsible for and provide improved safety for our children, our employees, and our families. we need to look at what the failures were in our system particularly the policies procedures and practices and how they can be improved for the future this is the best decision that is in the best decision of the students and the school division now and in the future so I have a motion on the floor with a

[00:17:38] second do I have any other discussion before we move to an immediate vote I think it's important to make sure to understand this is going to be quite a long process, and there may be information that we're not able to share with the public.

[00:18:01] And so we ask for patience. We're all committed, obviously, to greater safety and better structures, but it's going to take some time to share with the patients.

[00:18:18] And we asked for updates along the way so that it's not just waiting until the end. We committed to updates every 60 days with hopefully actionable items coming out of each of those closed session meetings with the investigators so that we can continue to be doing the work.

[00:18:38] And this doesn't replace the work that the division is already doing and that our interim superintendent is already putting in place to make our school safer and change and improve already any other discussion items to bring forward I just want to mention that in addition to 60 days if there are any insights that come up and need immediate attention we'll act on those as well I would click Thompson I

[00:19:14] would like now like to move to immediate vote does anyone need me to read the motion we read we're ready to vote mr dylan beck yes miss lee yes miss osborne yes miss spillman yes dr acove yes mr beard yes chair berlin yes with about seven zero the motion carries thank you so much i now declare this august 4th special board meeting adjourned



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