

MINUTES
BUSINESS MEETING OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, May 14, 2026
[Meeting Video Link](#)

Roll Call - UPON THE ROLL BEING CALLED, THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT:

Board Members - Dr. Kate Acuff, Mr. Bob Beard, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Mr. Jim Dillenbeck, Ms. Ellen Osborne, and Ms. Allison Spillman

Absent – Ms. Judy Le

Staff Members - Superintendent Matthew Haas; Chief Legal Officer Josiah Black; Assistant Superintendent Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent Daphne Keiser; Chief Operating Officer Rosalyn Schmitt; Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Officer Jason Grant; Erin Stone Assistant Division Counsel; and Clerk of the Board Christine Thompson

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

- Agenda Item No. 1.1** Call to Order
- Agenda Item No. 1.2** Roll Call
- Agenda Item No. 1.3** Pledge of Allegiance
- Agenda Item No. 1.4** Moment of Silence

Chair Berlin provided a [statement](#) regarding the 2026 Graduation ceremonies.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda Item No. 2.1 Approval of Agenda – Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to approve the agenda. Mr. Dillenbeck seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0)**. Ms. Le was absent.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Item No. 3.1 Spotlight on Education

The School Board honored the 2025-2026 Student Representatives for their service during the 2025-2026 school year. The Chair provided [remarks](#) recognizing the students' participation, perspective, and contributions to the work of the Board.

Letters of recognition were provided to each Student Representative and are linked below:

- [Amy Wang](#), Albemarle High School
- [Maxwell Keys](#), Alternate Student Representative, Albemarle High School
- [Leyton Cox](#), Community Lab School
- [Maximilian Kofler](#), Monticello High School
- [Claire Curry](#), Western Albemarle High School

Recognition of [2025-2026 Retirees](#) - The School Board recognized and honored Albemarle County Public Schools staff members retiring during the 2025-2026 school year and expressed its appreciation for their dedicated service to the school division.

Agenda Item No. 3.2 School Board, Superintendent, and Committee Updates

Mr. Dillenbeck shared that several members attended the Center I ceremony earlier in the day and recognized Mr. Thomas for his outstanding work. He noted that, as a former teacher, he was impressed by the work students are doing at Center I and appreciated seeing the culmination of students' hard work over the course of the year. Mr. Dillenbeck wished Center I continued success.

Dr. Haas then invited Dr. Kecia Lipscomb, Executive Director of SPED K-12, to provide an update on [summer programming](#).

Dr. Lipscomb provided an overview of summer programming initiatives. She stated that the goal of the summer programs is to support student readiness and academic continuity across grade levels. Schools use student data, including reading and math data, to identify students for summer programs.

She explained that pre-K-8 summer programs and rising freshman programs for selected students focus on foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Program effectiveness will be measured by tracking how well participating students are able to engage with grade-level content at the start of the school year. For high school students, effectiveness will also be measured through course completion for those participating in credit recovery or initial credit opportunities. She noted that programs include supports for English learners and special education students, and that extended school year services are available for eligible students. Dr. Lipscomb also stated that the document provided to the Board includes details on pre-K-12 summer programs, including dates, sites, and locations. Families with questions about summer programming were advised to contact their school.

In response to a question about meals, Rosalyn Schmitt, Chief Operating Officer, shared that breakfast and lunch will be provided through the National School Lunch Program and the Summer Food Service Program. At designated Summer Food Service Program sites, meals are available not only to summer school participants, but also to all children 18 and younger in the community. Identified sites include Agnor, Woodbrook, Walton, Journey, Earlysville, Red Hill, and Scottsville. She also shared that Albemarle County was approved for an additional grant supporting a hybrid non-congregate meal model. Through this model, qualifying schools, including Walton, Scottsville, and Red Hill, will be able to send home breakfast and lunch for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on Thursdays. A broader community communication plan will be developed now that the grant has been approved.

In response to a question about the number of students expected to participate in summer school, the final number is still being determined because student registration is ongoing and high school participation will depend in part on remaining assessment results and course registration. That information will be forthcoming.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Panarese, from the Rivanna district and a parent of an Albemarle High School graduate addressed the Board regarding the grading policy. Mr. Panarese expressed concern that current grading practices, including 50% credit for missing work, have reduced accountability and are not serving students well. He noted that teachers, parents, and students have raised similar concerns over the past several years and stated that students need structure, rigor, and meaningful consequences to support learning. Mr. Panarese encouraged the Board to take the work of the grading policy committee seriously, listen to teacher feedback, and make changes that better support students and instruction.

Jana Bailey, a librarian at Greer Elementary School and a resident of the Jack Jouett District, addressed the Board regarding the upcoming leadership transition at Greer Elementary. Ms. Bailey advocated on behalf of Greer staff, families, and students, stating that the departure of Dr. Steve Saunders after seven years has been unsettling for the school community. She emphasized the importance of strong and consistent leadership in Title I schools and cited research regarding the impact of principal turnover on student achievement, teacher retention, and school outcomes. Ms. Bailey requested transparency and open communication regarding the principal search process, including the number of candidates, staff involvement on the interview panel, and the timeline for a leadership decision. She also encouraged the division to uphold its stated values of equity, family, and community support as Greer moves through the transition.

Christina Ra, speaking as the Baker-Butler Elementary School Family Council representative, expressed concern about the school hiring its third principal in three years. She stated that Baker-Butler is now the largest elementary school in Albemarle County and serves a highly diverse community with significant needs. She said families and staff feel prior community feedback in the principal hiring process has been ignored and emphasized that the next leader must be chosen with the school community, not for it. Ms. Ra described concerns about school instability, including staff departures, behavioral challenges, inconsistent discipline, and impacts on special education families. She shared that one family reported an IEP-related transition support had not been provided for two years despite prior assurances. She said the Baker-Butler community is conducting its own survey to identify the priorities families and staff believe are needed in the next principal. She asked the division to use that data, involve the community in the hiring process, and ensure teacher and family priorities are reflected in candidate screening. She closed by stating that the community is organized, paying attention, and plans to return with data the following week. She also thanked Dr. Keiser for engaging with the community earlier in the week.

Holly Odom, a community member and librarian, addressed the Board in support of Greer Elementary School and its school community. She spoke about the importance of students feeling encouraged, supported, and safe at school, and expressed appreciation for staff and community members who have contributed to that environment. She thanked several individuals for their support and echoed previous calls for transparency and communication regarding Greer's leadership transition. She emphasized the value of the Greer community and thanked the Board for its time and service.

Lizzie Batman, a Jack Jouett district resident and Greer Elementary School parent, addressed the Board regarding Greer Elementary School and the appointment of a new principal. Ms. Batman emphasized that not all Title I schools have the same needs and noted Greer's large international student population, including Iranian, Afghan, and Latinx families. She expressed the importance of selecting a principal who can quickly build trust with students, staff, and families, particularly during a time of stress for many international families. She also raised concerns about the number of elementary principal openings across the division and requested

greater clarity and communication regarding leadership changes and how families can support students and staff.

Michelle Drago, a Baker-Butler Elementary School teacher and parent expressed concern about continued administrative turnover at the school, noting that Baker-Butler is preparing to hire its fourth principal in five years. She raised concerns about the prior principal hiring process, stating that although teachers served on the interview committee, the person ultimately hired had not been interviewed by that committee. The speaker said this damaged trust in the process and made staff and families feel their input was not meaningfully considered. Ms. Drago emphasized that Baker-Butler staff and families know the needs of the school and students best and asked that their input be taken seriously in the next hiring process. The speaker identified special education experience as an urgent priority for the incoming principal, sharing both professional concerns and personal experience as the parent of a child with multiple disabilities and complex needs. She stated that ongoing administrative turnover has negatively affected Baker-Butler's special education program, creating instability through changing leadership styles, communication practices, protocols, and expectations. Ms. Drago said the school is losing a significant portion of its special education staff, including five of seven full-time special education teachers, with many leaving Baker-Butler for other Albemarle County schools rather than leaving the profession or division. She urged the division to make hiring, retaining, and supporting special education staff and students a top priority in the principal search. Ms. Drago also called for transparency in the hiring process and for the selection of a strong, long-term leader with a deep understanding of special education.

Megan Jackson, from the Rivanna district. Speaking as both a Baker-Butler Elementary School parent and staff member, thanked division leaders for recent transparency and engagement with the Baker-Butler community. She advocated for the next principal selection to address not only administrative competence, but also the school's need for cultural and relational stability. She described the impact of repeated administrative turnover on students, noting that her children are preparing to enter fourth and fifth grade under their fourth principal. She said children need steady, predictable leadership and that frequent leadership changes affect school-wide behavior, expectations, discipline, accountability, and students' sense of normalcy. Ms. Jackson emphasized that Baker-Butler needs a principal who can build school culture, know students by name, celebrate their growth, and provide a safe and predictable routine. She also spoke about the effect of instability on staff morale, stating that a teacher's working environment is a student's learning environment. She said the next leader must prioritize relationships with classroom teachers and staff, listen to their expertise, value the school's history, and understand that supporting teacher morale directly supports student success. Ms. Jackson expressed concern that, given the number of vacancies across the division, the hiring process could result in another temporary solution. She closed by saying the Baker-Butler community is full of strong families, students, and resilient staff, but that resilience should not be the expectation for an elementary school. She urged the division to select a leader committed to staying, listening, and rebuilding pride, joy, and connection within the school.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - Ms. Osborne moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Beard seconded the motion. After discussion, Ms. Osborne amended her **original motion** and moved to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of Item 5.7, For Information: Achievement Gap Advisory Committee Charter. Mr. Dillenbeck **seconded the amended motion. A voice vote was taken, and the amended motion passed unanimously (6-0).** Ms. Le was absent.

- 5.1 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 5.2 Personnel Action
- 5.3 Approval of the Minutes
- 5.4 For Action: Policy Review and Revision
- 5.5 Exemption from Compulsory Attendance
- 5.6 For Information: Policy Review and Revision
- ~~5.7 For Information: Achievement Gap Advisory Committee Charter~~

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA – Mr. Dillenbeck pulled Item No. 5.7, Achievement Gap Advisory Committee Charter, from the Consent Agenda.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.0 – SCHOOL DIVISION BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 7.1 Third Quarter Financial Report – Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** to approve the Third Quarter Financial Report. Mr. Beard seconded the **motion**. **A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0)**. Ms. Le was absent.

[Third Quarter Financial Report FY 25-26](#)

[FY 2025-2026 Financial Report Ending March 31, 2026 School Fund Summary](#)

Agenda Item No. 7.2. Community Engagement Update: Student Senate Focus - The Student Senate provided the School Board with an update on the 2025–2026 Student Senate initiative and the ways students across Albemarle County Public Schools have engaged in leadership, advocacy, and school improvement efforts throughout the year. The Student Senate brings together student leaders from across the division to elevate student voice, strengthen cross-school collaboration, and provide meaningful opportunities for students to engage directly with school and community leaders. This year’s work included three countywide leadership summits focused on leadership development, budget feedback, legislative advocacy, and student-led problem solving. Students shared examples of projects and initiatives developed through the Student Senate process, highlighting how student voice has informed conversations around school climate, belonging, communication, wellness, and student leadership. The presentation also highlighted the Student Senate’s role in connecting students to division priorities and legislative advocacy efforts, including engagement with state legislators during the spring summit. The update reflected ongoing efforts to build authentic student engagement and strengthen partnerships between students, schools, and the broader community.

[Western Albemarle High School Student Senate – 2025-2026](#)

AGENDA ITEM No. 8.0 CLOSED MEETING

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Convene in Closed Meeting - at 8:19 p.m., Mr. Beard offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County Public School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia go into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia under Subsection 1, which authorizes the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment and the assignment, appointment, or promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The purpose of this item is to review and discuss: the appointment of a Principal for Greer Elementary School and the appointment of a candidate for Chief Technology Officer; the selection of Student Representatives to the School Board for the 2026-2027 school year; and the reappointment of Licensed staff for the 2026-2027 school year. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).** [Ms. Le was absent]

Agenda Item No. 8.2 Closed Meeting Certification - At 9:56 p.m., Mr. Beard offered a **motion** that the Board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each Board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the Closed Meeting. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).** [Ms. Le was absent]

Dr. Acuff **moved** to direct staff to enter into negotiations for the selection of an architect for the Northern Feeder Pattern Elementary School in the order discussed during the closed meeting. Mr. Dillenbeck seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).** [Ms. Le was absent]

Mr. Dillenbeck offered a **motion** to approve the list of licensed staff for the 2026-2027 school year. Mr. Beard seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).** [Ms. Le was absent]

Chair Berlin offered a **motion** to appoint Candidate A as principal of Greer Elementary School. Dr. Acuff seconded the **motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).** [Ms. Le was absent]

Chair Berlin stated that the Board had reviewed the Greer candidate's information and recommendation and was excited about the appointment. She noted that the Board believed the candidate's background aligned with the needs identified by Greer Elementary School teachers, staff, and families. She further stated that, due to the confidential nature of the hiring process and the need for the candidate to notify their current employer, the candidate's name could not yet be disclosed. She said the Board hoped to share the information as early as Monday.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 9.1 Other Business by Board Members and/or the Superintendent - None

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10.0 ADJOURNMENT – At 10:00 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Berlin adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk