

**MINUTES**  
**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD**  
**September, 26, 2019 (7:00 p.m.)**

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**ROLL CALL**

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Cindy Anderson  
Veronica R. Nolan  
Meagan L. Alderton  
Ramee A. Gentry  
Jacinta Greene  
Margaret Lorber  
Michelle Rief  
Christopher A. Suarez  
Heather Thornton

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Shanel Hill, Amiya Chisolm, Wilmer Carranza, Dr. Stephen Wilkins, Erika Gulick, Mignon Anthony, Dr. Terri Mozingo, Dr. Gerald Mann, Peter Balas

**Call to Order**

**1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Anderson**

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All members of the School Board were present at the start of the meeting.

**Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting**

**2. Closed Meeting**

**3. Certification of Closed Meeting**

There was no closed meeting held.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by students from Samuel Tucker Elementary School.

The students updated the Board on a recently implemented workshop model in math classes, which allows students to work in smaller groups, practice new skills and concepts, and discuss math with their peers to encourage critical thinking. Students thanked the Board for the Guided Math kits, a new resource recently purchased for teachers, and showed a video of the workshop model being implemented in the classrooms.

**Moment of Silence**

**5. Observe a Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was observed.

## **Adoption of Meeting Agenda**

### **6. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the September 26, 2019 School Board Meeting**

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the September 26, 2019 School Board Meeting. Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the meeting agenda for September 26, 2019 was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried.

## **Communications & Addresses to the Board**

### **7. Public Hearing on the FY 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and FY 2021 Combined Funds Budgets**

There were no public hearing speakers.

### **8. Public Comments**

Ms. Erica Bentley, community member, spoke about the support and empowerment that the Girl Scouts of America program has provided to over 500 female students in Alexandria. Ms. Bentley hopes ACPS staff will assist with providing information to families about the Girl Scouts program.

Mr. Peter Balas, T.C. Williams High School Principal, encouraged the Board to vote in favor of the Connected High School Network (CHSN) model for the High School Project. Mr. Balas highlighted that T.C. currently has over 400 program offerings and attributed the success of maximizing student access to the ability to align programming across the multiple campuses. He further reported that T.C. Williams' academic performance across all subgroups is currently on the rise and expressed that voting in opposition to the connected network would result in inherent inequities.

Ms. Lorraine Johnson, ACPS student, spoke in support of the Connected High School Network model. She shared her experience attending multiple information meetings and revealed that students are excited about the pathways and opportunities under the Connected High School Network. Ms. Johnson fears there will be blatant inequities if a second high school is built.

Ms. Kamari Brown, ACPS student, spoke in support of the Connected High School Network and believes this method will avoid inequities and divisiveness, protect diversity, and honor T.C. Williams' history.

Ms. Rebekah Lamarre, ACPS student, shared her experience of being exposed to a variety of course offerings at T.C. and acknowledged that this method ensures that she and her peers are ready for their next step into higher education. Ms. Lamarre encouraged the Board to vote in support of the Connected High School Network.

Ms. Mikaela Pozo, ACPS student and founder of Operation Integration, a student-based organization that advocates for education justice and immigrants' rights, spoke in support of the Connected High School Network. She believes that the connected network model will offer a greater range of classes as opposed to building a second high school, which she believes will contribute to segregation and educational inequalities.

Ms. Angela Mills, ACPS parent, spoke in support of building a second high school. Ms. Mills reported that statistically, low income children have lower graduation rates in bigger schools. She believes that adding a second high school will spark the decision to build more schools in the future and does not believe the campus model will benefit ACPS students.

Mr. Alex Morales, ACPS parent, shared his personal experience as a minority male who was a product of the Alexandria City Public Schools. Mr. Morales felt that he got lost in the shuffle as a student at T.C. and spoke in support of building a second high school, so that his children and other minority children would be less likely to share his experience.

Mr. Ryan Morales, ACPS parent, spoke in support of building a second high school. Ms. Morales expressed that research shows there are lower achievement rates for low-income children who attend bigger schools versus smaller schools. She does not think a Connected High School Network will benefit minority children.

Mr. Ricardo Roberts, ACPS parent, spoke about overcrowding issues at the middle schools. He spoke in support of building a second building at T.C. Williams High School to make it a connected campus model similar to college institutions. He also encouraged the Board to use funds to repair the roofs and solve building maintenance issues at the schools.

Mr. Marc Solomon, ACPS parent, encouraged the Board to vote to build a second school for T.C. Williams in order to address the capacity issues at all levels of education. He further expressed that the data shows this would result in more academic benefits for the most at-risk students. He believes that a second school will result in additional programs, which will encourage participation from more students.

Mr. Adam Harris, community member, expressed his frustration with the lack of information on the ACPS website about the High School Project and that there was no informational session held at Mount Vernon Community School. He questioned the data used to support the proposals and indicated his support for building a second high school for Alexandria to offer students more opportunities.

Ms. Mary Bell, ACPS parent, spoke in support of building a second high school. She believes a second high school will support all students with more capacity. She further expressed her concern that if a second high school is not built at this time, it will be more difficult to do so in the future.

Ms. Cindy Hart, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Chair, informed the Board that this year's committee is composed of members with a strong special education background. They are well positioned to advise and assist the Board and Superintendent while the Students with Disabilities Action Plan is being finalized and implemented. Ms. Hart is looking forward to working with the Board this year.

Mr. Anthony Cain, community member, spoke in support of building a second high school. He advised that a second high school will eventually be needed and will be cost prohibitive in the future.

Ms. Jewelyn Cosgrove, community member, spoke in support of building a second high school for the flexibility to accommodate future capacity issues. Ms. Cosgrove also asked the Board to devise a plan to address inequities at the elementary and middle school levels.

## **9. Report from Student Representatives Wilmer Carranza and Amiya Chisolm**

Ms. Chisolm shared that one of her and Mr. Carranza's goals as Student Representatives to the School Board is to increase minority achievement and inclusion of the International Academy (IA) at the T.C. Williams King Street Campus. She explained that the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN), a student organization that works toward achievement in all fields for minorities, implemented a two-year solution to address the achievement gap between white students and students of color in Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment (DE) courses.

Mr. Carranza added that currently, the second phase of the two-year plan is being implemented to find out why students are not taking AP and DE classes or dropping out of these classes. MSAN students are meeting with administrators and the leadership class teachers to involve the IA students. They will work to find ways to encourage IA students' involvement in rigorous courses and to support their success in them.

Mr. Carranza also informed the Board that Back to School Night was recently held, which gave parents the opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss expectations and to stay informed about their students' classes. He also announced that the T.C. Homecoming Game will take place on Friday, October 4, 2019 at 7:00 pm at the Saint James Sports Complex, with the Homecoming dance being held on Saturday.

### **Consent Calendar**

- 10. FY 2019 Monthly Financial Report Ending June 30, 2019**
- 11. FY 2020 Monthly Financial Report Ending July 31, 2019**
- 12. FY 2021 Combined Funds Budget Priorities**
- 13. FY 2021-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget Priorities**
- 14. FY 2019 Budget Transfer Report for Quarter 4**
- 15. Superintendent Contract Provision: Other Work Activities**
- 16. 2018-2019 Budget Advisory Committee End of Year Report**
- 17. Appoint Alex Cooley to the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee and Grant a Residency Waiver**
- 18. Appoint Lyndsi Cooper to the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee**
- 19. Appoint Zion Bezu to the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee**
- 20. Appoint Reese du Pont to the Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee**
- 21. Minutes for the September 9, 2019 and September 19, 2019 Special Called School Board Meetings**

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the Consent Calendar. Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the Consent Calendar was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried.

### **Items Pulled from the Consent Calendar**

No items were pulled from the Consent Calendar.

### **Old Business & Action Items**

#### **22. Human Resources Audit Update**

Superintendent Hutchings introduced Dr. Stephen Wilkins, Chief Human Resources Officer, to provide an update on the Human Resources Audit. Dr. Wilkins shared that progress has been made on the audit recommendations since the last update. As of September 2019, of the 25 recommendations listed in the audit:

- 11 (44 %) recommendations are in progress;
- 1 (4 %) recommendation is ongoing; and
- 13 (52 %) recommendations have been completed.

This report on the Human Resources Audit is the third in a series of quarterly updates.

### **23. The High School Project**

Chair Anderson opened up the floor for questions and comments by Board Members about the High School Project. Board Members' remarks addressed equity, diversity, capacity, programming, costs and the merits of the Connected High School Network model versus building a second high school.

Mr. Suarez moved that:

the School Board adopt a Connected High School Network strategy to address Alexandria's future high school capacity needs.

He further moved that the School Board empower the Superintendent to proceed with the development of a Connected High School Network site concept to include construction of a high school building and the associated site amenities on the Minnie Howard campus.

The site concept will include sufficient capacity for:

- 2,900 students at the existing T.C. Williams King Street site;
- 1,600 students at the Minnie Howard site;
- 100 students at the Satellite campus;
- 40 students at the Chance for Change Academy; and
- 400 students at the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) Alexandria campus.

Ms. Gentry seconded the motion.

Dr. Rief moved to amend the motion to add the language:

“The design and rebuild at the Minnie Howard site shall be done in such a manner that, with minimal effort and cost, it can be converted to an independent school at a later date.”

Ms. Greene seconded the amendment.

The vote to adopt Dr. Rief's proposed amendment was 2-7. The motion failed. Dr. Rief and Ms. Greene voted in favor of the amendment; Ms. Alderton, Chair Anderson, Ms. Gentry, Ms. Lorber, Vice Chair Nolan, Ms. Suarez and Ms. Thornton voted against the amendment.

The vote to adopt the original motion by Mr. Suarez to develop a Connected High School Network was 6-3. The motion carried. Chair Anderson, Ms. Gentry, Ms. Greene, Ms. Lorber, Vice Chair Nolan and Mr. Suarez voted in favor of the motion; Ms. Alderton, Dr. Rief, and Ms. Thornton voted against the motion.

Board Chair Anderson called for a brief recess.

### **24. Facilities Audit Update**

Dr. Hutchings introduced Ms. Mignon Anthony, Chief Operating Officer, who reported that since the last audit update on December 16, 2018, progress had been made on all of the recommendations. Of the ten recommendations made by the auditor, nine will result in significant improvements to Educational Facilities capital investments, maintenance and operations.

Four of the ten recommendations have been completed. Of the remaining six, five of them are projected to be implemented by the end of the December 2019.

## **New Business and Reports to the Board**

### **25. Proposed Revision to the 2019-2020 Traditional Academic Calendar**

Superintendent Hutchings introduced Dr. Gerald Mann, Executive Director of Secondary Instruction, Mr. Peter Balas, T.C. Williams Principal, and Dr. Stephen Wilkins, Chief Human Resources Officer. They proposed revisions to the 2019-2020 Traditional Academic Calendar to address the following:

T.C. Williams High School administers the PSAT, SAT, and PSAT/NMSQT to students in grades 9-12 on three different dates during the school year. Each of these testing days will need academic calendar adjustments for the non-testers. The requested changes are:

- Change October 16, 2019 to an early release day for both campuses of T.C. Williams, and restore October 9, 2019 to a full school day.
- Change October 30, 2019 to an early release day for the King Street Campus only.
- Change April 14, 2020 to an early release day for the King Street Campus only.
- Allow non-testers at the King Street Campus on October 30, 2019 and April 14, 2020 to not report to school on these days.

Ms. Gentry moved to approve the recommended changes to the 2019-2020 Traditional Academic Calendar. Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

The vote to amend the 2019-2020 Traditional Academic Calendar was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried.

## **Chair's Report**

### **26. Report from Cindy Anderson**

Chair Anderson did not give a report.

## **Superintendent's Report**

### **27. Report from Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.**

Superintendent Hutchings thanked staff for working hard on the High School Project. He also thanked the School Board for being a high-functioning Board and being able to make the tough decisions for ACPS students. Dr. Hutchings also thanked the Communications Department, Dr. Mann, Ms. Anthony and Dr. Mazingo for their service, leadership and hard work.

## **Announcements**

### **28. Announcements**

Ms. Greene thanked Dr. Hutchings and the teams at Jefferson-Houston and Patrick Henry for her recent visits to the schools. She witnessed how excited the staff was about what they will be doing this year and how their excitement resonated through the students.

## **Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting**

### **29. Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting**

No closed meeting was held.

**Adjournment**

**30. Adjourn**

On a motion by Ms. Lorber and seconded by Ms. Greene, the Board voted unanimously, 9-0, to adjourn. The meeting ended at 11:27 p.m.



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Cindy Anderson, Chair

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Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the November 14, 2019 School Board Meeting.