

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD
March 27, 2020 (12:00 p.m.)

Meeting held via Zoom

On March 12, 2020, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared a State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2(A)(3) and Acts of Assembly Chap. 1283 § 4-0.01(g), virtual School Board meetings held during the State of Emergency are limited to:

- addressing the public health emergency declared on March 12, 2020 (Va. Code § 44-146.17); and
- business that is necessary to continue school division operations and to discharge the School Board's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

Notice of any virtual School Board Meetings will be posted on the ACPS Calendar and on the School Board Meeting web page, where the public may link to join or watch live meetings. Virtual Special Called School Board Meetings may also be watched live in Alexandria on Comcast Channel 71. Video recordings and minutes for these meetings are posted online as soon as available after the meeting.

ROLL CALL

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

BOARD MEMBERS: Cindy Anderson
Veronica R. Nolan (arrived at 12:16 p.m.)
Meagan L. Alderton
Ramee A. Gentry
Jacinta Greene (arrived at 12:23 p.m.)
Margaret Lorber
Michelle Rief
Christopher A. Suarez
Heather Thornton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Shanel Hill, Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, Dr. Terri Mozingo, Terry Werner, Dr. Bethany Nickerson, Dr. Julie Crawford

Call to Order

1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Anderson

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. All members of the School Board were present at the start of the meeting except for Ms. Greene and Ms. Nolan who joined the meeting after the Adoption of the Agenda.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda

2. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the March 27, 2020 Special Called School Board Meeting

Mr. Suarez moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the March 27, 2020 Special Called School Board Meeting. Ms. Gentry seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the meeting agenda for March 27, 2020, taken by roll call, was unanimous, 7-0. The motion carried.

New Business and Reports to the Board

3. Board Q&A with Superintendent Hutchings

Dr. Hutchings gave a report about staff work being done during the second week of the school closure. He noted the additional communication methods being utilized to reach ACPS families such as the daily updates, the FAQ page on the website, videos, and more frequent publishing of the ACPS Insider and Express. He asked the community to be patient as staff is responding to issues as quickly as possible.

Dr. Elizabeth Hoover, Chief Technology Officer, gave an update on how Technology Services is responding to concerns from the public such as the lack of internet access for some families. She noted that additional Chromebooks and hotspot devices are being mailed directly to students and a more permanent, viable solution for connectivity for all families in ACPS is being developed with community partners. Dr. Hoover also reported that the Helpdesk staff, who are working diligently to follow up on technology issues, have already handled a significant portion of technology questions and problems that have been brought to their attention.

Dr. Terri Mazingo, Chief Academic Officer, reported that ACPS is working to provide information to both staff and students on how learning will look for the near future. Work groups have been formed to review re-teaching, enrichment and the introduction of new content, while also providing home learning tips, setting up processes and developing schedules for both teachers and students. Dr. Mazingo described how teachers have been teaching and recording online lessons, as well as providing video learning and offline activities to create balanced learning environments for students. She noted that staff have been working to provide many learning resources to the community, including teacher read-aloud sessions of well-loved books.

Board Members asked how ACPS is providing new content, how families with barriers to student engagement, especially non-English speaking families, are being supported, and if students have access to textbooks during the school closure.

Questions were also asked about services for students with disabilities, how IEP renewals would be addressed, and the plan for tracking students with special placements in non-public schools, some of which may be located in other states.

Board Members asked questions about how staff supports during the shutdown and whether feedback was being collected on any difficulties they were facing. Many of the Board Members thanked staff for their hard work, coming together to make the continuity of learning successful and making sure that families have meals during this difficult time.

Adjournment

4. Adjourn

On a motion by Ms. Lorber and seconded by Ms. Gentry, the Board voted unanimously, 8-0, to adjourn. Dr. Rief was not present for the vote. The meeting ended at 1:16 p.m.



Cindy Anderson, Chair



Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the May 15, 2020 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting.