

The Amherst County School Board met in regular session on Thursday, March 8, 2018, in the Board Room of the School Administration Office, Amherst, Virginia at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:           W. Michael Henderson, Chairman  
                  Priscilla M. Liggon, Vice Chairman  
                  David S. Cassise  
                  Jennifer E. Cumby  
                  Francisco D. Mayo  
                  Craig S. Terwilliger  
                  Abby J. Thompson

Haleigh Tomlin, Student Representative

ABSENT:           None

Mr. Henderson called the meeting to order, asked that a moment of silence be observed and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Henderson asked if there were any changes to the agenda for the March 8, 2018, regular School Board meeting.

Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda for the March 8, 2018, regular School Board meeting.

Upon motion by Mrs. Thompson, seconded by Mrs. Liggon and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda for the March 8, 2018, regular School Board meeting.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was a presentation by students from Temperance Elementary School.

Dr. Nichols introduced Mr. Michael O'Brien, Principal of Temperance Elementary School. Mr. O'Brien introduced students from Temperance Elementary School. The students made a presentation to the Board concerning "Family Literacy."

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was a presentation by students from Central Elementary School.

Dr. Nichols introduced Ms. Wanda Smith, Principal at Central Elementary School. Ms. Smith introduced students from Central Elementary School. The students made a presentation to the Board regarding "Peace Keepers."

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was public comment.

Mr. Henderson asked if anyone wished to address the Board:

Mrs. Cheryl Fails, Teacher at Amherst County High School, invited Mr. Henderson to come in and teach her students. Mrs. Fails invited other Board members to visit the school.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was to consider approval of proposed Policy, File: JR, Videotaping of Students, to the Amherst County Public Schools Policy Manual.

Dr. Nichols introduced Mr. Frank Wright, School Board attorney. Mr. Wright reviewed, discussed and answered questions regarding the proposed Policy File: JR: Videotaping of Students.

Board members reviewed and discussed the proposed policy. Board members asked for clarification on parts of the proposed policy.

After much discussion, Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to approve the proposed policy.

Mrs. Thompson made a motion to remove paragraph one from proposed Policy File: JR and approve everything from paragraph two down. The motion was seconded by Mr. Terwilliger. Mr. Wright stated he did not recommend taking paragraph one out of the policy.

AYES: Thompson, Terwilliger

NAYS: Henderson, Liggon, Cumby, Mayo, Cassise

Mr. Cassise made a motion to approve proposed Policy File: JR as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Cumby.

AYES: Henderson, Liggon, Cumby, Mayo, Cassise

NAYS: Thompson, Terwilliger

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was to consider approval of the profile for the employment of Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools. Mr. Henderson introduced Dr. David Martin, President of Real Synergy, L.L.C.

Dr. Martin stated on Saturday, March 3, 2018, the members of the Amherst County School Board had a special meeting to review and discuss the Superintendent's profile and application. Dr. Martin stated based on the special meeting, the revised profile and application had been provided to Board members for their review and approval.

Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to approve the profile for the employment of Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools.

Upon motion by Mrs. Cumby, seconded by Mrs. Thompson and unanimously carried, the Board approved the profile for the employment of Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools.

Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to approve the application for the employment of Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools.

Upon motion by Mr. Mayo, seconded by Mr. Cassise and unanimously carried, the Board approved the application for the employment of Superintendent of Amherst County Public Schools.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was the consent agenda. Mr. Henderson asked if there were any changes. There being none, Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Upon motion by Mrs. Ligon, seconded by Mr. Terwilliger and unanimously carried, the Board approved the following consent agenda: minutes of the February 7, 2018, special School Board meeting, minutes of the February 8, 2018, regular School Board meeting, minutes of the February 28, 2018, School Board Retreat, minutes of the February 28, 2018, special School Board meeting, minutes of the March 3, 2018, special School Board meeting, and confirmation of the Superintendent's personnel actions for the period of February 5, 2018 through March 2, 2018.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was the Proposed 2018-19 School Operational Budget. Mr. Henderson stated there was no new information. Mr. Henderson asked if anyone had questions.

The Board discussed whether or not to include the Y – Program at Temperance Elementary School in the 2018-19 School Operational Budget. The consensus of the Board was to continue the Y program at Temperance Elementary School for the 2018-19 school year.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was the report on School Safety and Security.

Dr. Nichols reviewed and provided Board members the following three documents regarding school safety and security:

### **Safety and Security in Amherst County Public Schools**

#### ***Superintendent's Statement***

*Lately in the national news, we are informed of events where individuals have entered schools to commit harm to children. The Amherst County Public Schools (ACPS) have reviewed again school division Crisis Plans, and other procedures affecting student/ staff safety and security. Following are points of information in this regard:*

- All schools have a Crisis Plan in place that addresses procedures to be followed in the event of a serious breach of the peace. These plans are specific to an individual school, and are vetted by the division's Safety Committee and local public safety agencies. Each Crisis Plan is reviewed and revised annually to reflect the latest information/ recommendations from these public service agencies. School-based coordination of efforts as well as an assessment of success is assigned to the Crisis Team (each school is required to have a functioning Crisis Team made up of school leadership, key staff, and School Resource Officer). All state and local police agencies, as well as Emergency Services, have current print and digitized copies of the individual Crisis Plans.*
- Substitute Teachers are made aware that the Crisis Plan can be found in the same place in each school. As a part of their pre-service training, emergency drills and procedures are reviewed to make certain they are aware of steps to be taken.*

- Schools are supported by three School Resource Officers, assigned by the Sheriff's Department, who work closely with the school's leadership to provide for threat assessment and steps to be taken to insure school security.
- All schools (including the Alternative Education Center) are equipped with cameras both inside and outside the building. There are presently more than 300 cameras in operation in and around all ACPS facilities. Additionally, all school buses are equipped with cameras and sound systems to monitor behavior, and to monitor the area immediately around the bus. In both systems, a record is made of all activity, and has been utilized in hearings in various scenarios to promote student safety. There are currently 75 camera equipped buses transporting young people.
- All schools are required to hold lock down drills as well as training with students to address issues of following directions, being observant, etc. Procedures within the school require teachers to monitor students, and maintain information as to the whereabouts of students in their care at all times. Student Emergency Care Cards (this card provides contact information and other material that may be needed in an emergency) are reprinted and made available to staff to insure information is in multiple spots for added security in an emergency. It should be noted that ACPS conducts more drills than required by the state with these being totally unannounced to promote preparedness.
- Any class that is conducted outdoors for any reason (for example physical education), the adult assigned to the class carries a radio that is monitored in each school's Main Office should there be a call for assistance.
- No one is permitted to remove any child from school without (1) being listed as an appropriate individual (parent, grandparent, selected neighbors, etc. -- all as identified by the parent in advance on the care card) who is authorized to pick up the child, and (2) providing for inspection a current photo ID (this applies even if the individual is "known" by school staff).
- All schools hold drills in which a full school evacuation is conducted. All schools have an identified off-site facility where students, under proper direction, are moved in case of an evacuation order. Students/ staff are removed quickly from the building (even planning/ drill addresses the evacuation of handicapped individuals) following a silent protocol with hands on their heads (as directed by local public service agencies).
- All schools have camera/ entry buzzer access to school buildings. All exterior doors remain locked, any outside individual must be badged, and numerous radios are scattered throughout each building for access to an administrator. Students and staff are encouraged to stop and seek identification of all those without a badge. All classrooms have phone access to the Main Office. Each school is served by a School Resource Office, provided by the Amherst County Sheriff's Office.
- Administrative staff is trained in measures related to school safety/ security.
- Bus drivers have undergone training for safety procedures as well. Each driver is also tasked with being observant of areas around schools, and to utilize their on-bus radios to send a pre-determined coded message to the

Transportation Office that would generate immediate calls to the police as well as the Central Office.

- All threats to the peace within a school facility are fully coordinated with local public safety agencies. Once involved, the Sheriff's Office takes control of the facility/ site.
- A specialized alert computer program, which was developed in house by the ACPS Technology Office, and placed on all adult controlled computers, allows for immediate notifications of a situation. This alert button, now on the toolbar of all adult-controlled computers, allows for the adult to send a pre-programmed, silent alert message to all adult computers within the building. This alert generates an immediate lock down situation until the matter can be resolved.
- Students throughout the division are never left in a situation where they are without supervision. Additionally, students are trained as to what to do should they be outside the classroom when a lock down is announced. Professional Development for all employees is provided in this regard to be certain they understand procedures so they may better protect the children.
- Each day, the principal conducts a perimeter walk of the school to insure there is an awareness to any activity/ changes to the area immediate to the school. Any unusual activity or situation is reported to local police and the Central Office.
- Under guidance from the Commonwealth of Virginia, students/ staff are trained in procedures to be followed during a tornado drill situation.
- The Central Office which houses the Superintendent and top level staff is being trained in procedures for lock down. The Central Office also maintains a Crisis Plan as well as participation in all Professional Development, drills, and training.
- When parents are to be notified, the school division will utilize every avenue at its disposal. The Message Alert system that uses phone and text, the division's web site, and local media would all be used. The ultimate aim is to keep all students/ staff safe at all times, and the families of these individuals informed.
- Working with the Amherst County Sheriff's Office, ACPS is developing training modules for Active Shooter training. The planning for this continues as we determine how to provide training without raising unnecessary fears.
- The school division is actively involved in state threat and security assessments made by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice. These assessments require full reviews of process and procedure and the feed-back provided by VDCJ are used in improving our services.
- The school division has been awarded approximately \$275,000 state grants over the last five years for school safety from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Plans for all expenditures were committee developed, vetted by administrative staff, and again by Virginia Department of Justice before award.
- Some procedures for keeping schools safe are not made public for security reasons, but are a part of planning, training, and security.

*Student/ staff safety and security remain a constant concern. These steps as outlined above are in place to promote that safe environment. It is not perfect as any school – anywhere - can still be attacked, but ACPS has taken concrete steps to protect “our kids.”*



*Dr. Steven Nichols  
Superintendent*

*Spring 2018*

**Information to parents and guardians regarding the student walkout.**

*March 2018*

*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

*In recognition of the fatal school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida there has been a call across the nation for students and schools to unite in memory of the seventeen individuals who lost their lives. The Amherst County Schools have elected to permit secondary students to participate in the national “walk-out” scheduled for 10:00 AM on Wednesday, March 14, 2018. We believe this event should be a solemn occasion that will be designed to honor the victims and unite the school around the issue of school safety in a safe and dignified manner.*

*Each secondary school will allow students to leave their classroom at 10:00 AM to stand silently in the hallway. Students not wishing to participate will stay in their classrooms under the supervision of their teacher. Each school plans to allow the students to create unity chains in which they have written their thoughts or remarks on a paper link. Each school will have members of the student body read the names and have a moment of silence for each of the victims who lost their lives. We are asking that the students stay inside the school so we can provide a safe and secure environment for this event.*

*This event is not intended to be a political event. Instead, the student “walk-out” is designed as a solidarity and unity event to allow our students an opportunity to show support for the victims of the school shooting and to express their concerns about school safety. Amherst County Schools wants to facilitate our students’ ability to express their concerns in an orderly fashion that does not cause a disruption to the educational environment.*

*Please feel free to contact your student’s respective school if you have any specific questions about the student “walk-out” events.*

*Sincerely,*



*Dr. Steven Nichols  
Superintendent*

**Letter to Sheriff Viar regarding additional school resource officers for Amherst County Public Schools.**

*Dear Sheriff Viar:*

*As you are aware professionally and personally, schools are not the safe havens they once were. Over the last several years we have found young people attacking other young people with often deadly results.*

*I want to begin by expressing to you my deep and heartfelt thanks for the assistance provided the school division through the School Resource Officer Program (SRO). These officers not only provide a level of safety; their presence also offers a level of security our school folks need to perform their task of educating children*

*In light of increasingly frightening behavior on the part of some of our students, and the current national tragedies played out in school buildings, I am requesting that you consider adding two additional SROs to the school division. Under this plan, the new officers would share services to the elementary schools, with each secondary school having its own assigned officer.*

*I realize budgets are exceptionally tight, but would hope that at some point you could react favorably to my request.*

*Again, many thanks to you and the men and women of the Amherst County Sheriff's Office to this school division. We could not do what we do, as effectively as we do, without your help.*

*Sincerely,*



*Dr. Steven Nichols  
Superintendent*

Board members thanked Dr. Nichols for the information he provided.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was student accountability.

Dr. Nichols stated that Dr. Norman would provide the update on accountability measures.

Dr. Norman provided the following information to the Board.

Although our Standards of Learning Test results are not official, our instructional team spent this summer making plans to provide leadership and instructional support related to

literacy for our three schools that are not fully accredited. Below is a summary of the support that has been or will be provided for these three schools.

Type of Support	Personnel Involved	Timeline
Literacy and Math Instructional Leadership Workshop	CES Principal MHES Principal Director of Academics Literacy Supervisor Math Supervisor	Completed Summer 2017
Struggling Readers Academy (four sessions)	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Amelon, CES, and MHES	10-16-17 (completed) 12-13-17 (completed) 02-05-18 03-16-18
Professional Development in the areas of Co-Teaching and paraprofessional utilization in the classroom. Provided by the JMU Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC)	Special education and Regular education teachers at CES and MHES	Central: 9/5/17 10/3/17 11/14/17 Madison Heights: 9/21/17 10/10/17 11/15/17
Increased support by the Special Education Instructional Specialist for targeted special education small group instruction.	Special Education Instructional Specialist. Special education teachers at CES and MHES	See attached Chart
Increased job embedded professional development with special education staff related to effective instructional practices in Reading and Math.	Special Education Instructional Specialist. Special education teachers at CES and MHES	See attached Chart
Provision of additional evidence based instructional resources for reading intervention in the areas of phonemic awareness/decoding (Really Great Reading), fluency, and comprehension (Reading Plus) for students with disabilities.	Special education and Regular education teachers at Amelon, CES, and MHES	-Beginning of School Training for additional resources in regards to supplemental fluency and comprehension intervention 8/9/17 and 8/11/17 (Intervention ongoing) -Phonemic Awareness/decoding intervention training 8/25/17 with targeted special education students(intervention ongoing/Semester End analysis of progress).
Reading Plus Program (webinar support on how to use program with all 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Amelon, CES, and MHES	2017-2018 school year (webinars completed during teacher work week)
Reduced Division Testing (every nine weeks rather than every three weeks)	All teachers at all elementary schools	2017-2018 school year (See local testing calendar.)



Title I Literacy Coaching	All teachers and administrators at Amelon, CES, and MHES	2017-2018 school year (Ongoing)
Common Reading Lesson Plan Template	All teachers at Amelon, CES, and MHES	2017-2018 school year (CES and MHES using similar lesson plan design. Template shared with Amelon's administration.)
Common Tiering System (identifying levels of supports for struggling students)	All teachers and administrators at all elementary schools	2017-2018 school year (Literacy Rubrics completed 10-27-17. All elementary schools now using same rubrics.)
Summer School Program (operated at central location and included K-2 students)	Teachers and administrators at all elementary schools	Completed Summer 2017
Division liaisons attending Professional Learning Community (PLCs) Meetings	3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers at Amelon, CES, and MHES	2017-2018 school year (Ongoing)
Provided professional development related to Literacy Plan, Table of Specifications, and Backwards Planning	All teachers and administrators at CES and MHES	Completed during teacher work week

Dr. Norman shared with Board members information regarding the Comparison of the New Accreditation System Using 2017-2018 Data. Dr. Norman stated the purpose of the information was to begin planning for the transition to the new state accreditation system that will become effective SY 2018-2019. According to VDOE communications, the state will use the system that is the most beneficial to the schools and division.

Board members reviewed and discussed the information provided. No action was taken.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was an update from Human Resources.

Dr. Nichols stated Dr. Rogers did not have an update from the Human Resources Department.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was budget monitoring, revenue receipts and other financial reports.

Dr. Nichols stated Mrs. Crouch would provide an update on this matter.

Mrs. Crouch stated the Board members had at their places revenue receipts and budget monitoring reports for the month of February 2018. Mrs. Crouch stated the budget summary by object code and enrollment information was also at their places.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was an update on facilities.

Dr. Nichols stated Mr. Cocke did not have an update on facilities.

Dr. Nichols stated a list of student suspensions for the month of February 2018 was available to Board members on BoardDocs.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was additional items from the Superintendent.

Dr. Nichols reminded Board members that March 30, 2018, is scheduled as a Day of Giving by Amherst County High School students.

Dr. Nichols asked Board members if they plan to go to the VSBA Art Contest in Mecklenburg, Virginia on April 23, 2018. Mr. Henderson and Mrs. Liggon plan to attend.

Dr. Nichols stated the last day of school, May 25, 2018, would be a half-day of school.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was public comment.

Mr. Henderson asked if anyone wished to address the Board. No one addressed the Board.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was items from School Board members.

Ms. Tomlin stated the students are thankful and feel supported regarding the walk-out.

Mrs. Thompson talked about the Transportation Committee scheduling a meeting.

Mrs. Cumby shared information with the Board regarding the CVGS Science Fair at Central Virginia Community College.

Mrs. Liggon asked why the Amherst County High School Prom was so early. Staff explained the change was made based on scheduling issues and Spring Break.

Mr. Henderson shared with Board members an invitation for the "Evening of the Arts" to be held at Second Stage.

Mr. Henderson reminded Board members of the March 15, 2018, special School Board meeting for budget discussions.

Mr. Henderson reminded Board members of the School Budget Presentation to the members of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors scheduled for March 20, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Henderson reminded Board members of the Special School Board meeting on Thursday, March 22, 2018, for budget discussions.

Mr. Henderson stated the next item on the agenda was a closed meeting.

Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), of the Code of Virginia, upon motion by Mrs. Thompson, seconded by Mrs. Cumby and unanimously carried, the Board convened a closed meeting for personnel matters – evaluation and performance of an employee(s)

Upon motion by Mrs. Cumby, seconded by Mr. Mayo, the Board resumed their meeting in open session.

**CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

**WHEREAS**, the Amherst County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative record and in accordance with provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and

**WHEREAS**, Section 2.2 - 3712 (D) and 2.2 - 3711 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in accordance with provisions of the Freedom of Information Act; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Amherst County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each members knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirement by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which certification applies, and (ii) only such public matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

Upon motion by Mr. Cassise, seconded by Mrs. Liggon and unanimously carried, the Board certified that they discussed only permissible topics.

AYES: Henderson, Liggon, Cumby, Mayo, Thompson, Terwilliger, Cassise


NAYS: None

Mr. Henderson asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Mayo, seconded by Mrs. Thompson and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.



Teresa C. Crouch, Clerk  
Amherst County Public Schools



W. Michael Henderson, Chairman  
Amherst County Public Schools