



# MEETING MINUTES

School Board of Stafford County  
Regular School Board Meeting  
August 10, 2021  
7:00 p.m.  
School Board Chamber  
31 Stafford Avenue  
Stafford, Virginia 22554

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

### 1.01 Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 7:00 p.m.

### 1.02 Authorization to Participate Electronically in the Meeting

All school board ("Board") members were physically present. None participated electronically.

### 1.03 Roll-Call

The following Board members were in attendance:

Holly Hazard, Chair (Hartwood District);  
Susan Randall, Vice-Chair (George Washington District);  
Dr. Sarah Chase (Falmouth District);  
Patricia Healy (Rock Hill District);  
Irene Hollerback (Aquia District);  
Dr. Elizabeth Warner (Griffis-Widewater District); and  
R. Pamela Yeung (Garrisonville District).

Also present on the dais was Superintendent Dr. Scott Kizner.

## 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 2.01 Pledge of Allegiance

## 3. AGENDA APPROVAL

### 3.01 Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Warner moved, and Ms. Yeung seconded, that the Board approve the meeting agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## 4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

### 4.01 Presentation by BWP & Associates of the Proposed Leadership Profile and the Results of the Recent Community Engagement Process

Consultants Dr. Kevin Castner and Dr. Wayne Harris of BWP & Associates provided [a presentation](#) regarding the recent [community engagement process and their proposed leadership profile](#). The gentlemen requested the Board's approval of the draft leadership profile.

Dr. Chase and Dr. Warner stated that the proposed leadership profile looked acceptable to them for the most part, but there are a few items they would like to see changed slightly.

Ms. Yeung stated that she does not want the Board to make drastic changes to the community report, and she also stressed the importance of transparency in the process. She stated that she may agree to add some things, but she does not want anything to be subtracted from the report.

Ms. Healy agreed with Ms. Yeung's point about not making substantive changes to the report. The report was prepared by a neutral third party and was based on input from the community.

Dr. Chase stated that the report has two separate bullet items regarding Critical Race Theory, which to her seems like a small thing since it is not part of our curriculum. Also, there is a bullet item which states, "Demonstrates a conviction to follow the current guidelines regarding teaching approved histories, civics, and social studies." She stated that she wants our educators to demonstrate conviction to follow the entire curriculum, not just these three subject areas.

Dr. Warner agreed with Dr. Chase's comments, stating that she herself had concerns about the same bullet points and for the same reasons.

Ms. Yeung asked if the consultants feel that, statistically speaking, the respondents in the community engagement process are representative of the rest of the 30,000 students in the school system. Dr. Castner responded by providing an example: When he and Dr. Harris conducted a community engagement survey for Prince Williams County Schools, the trends remained largely the same in the early responses (i.e., the first 500 responses) as they were at the end of the process when all 5,000 responses had been reviewed. He therefore believes the almost 600 responses received during our own community engagement process very likely do reflect the trending opinions and concerns of the whole community overall. He also added that the trends revealed in this process are extremely similar to the findings of our last community engagement process which was conducted in 2018.

Dr. Chase noted that the timeline provided by Dr. Castner and Dr. Harris indicates that the Board will receive BWP's slate of recommended candidates in September. She asked if the Board will be expected to make a decision that same evening about which candidates should be invited to interview. She also stated that she would like to see the candidates' resume packets before making such a decision.

Dr. Harris responded that they anticipate bringing a slate the top four to six candidates in a closed meeting in mid-September. In addition to the top four to six names, they will also share a list of the names of all individuals who have submitted applications. He and Dr. Castner will talk briefly about each candidate and explain why they are (or are not) being recommended for interviews. For each of the top four to six candidates, they will provide a one-page synopsis explaining why they believe those individuals are the best fit. Dr. Castner stated that each Board member will receive a unique log-in for a secure online drop-box where they will be able to review all of the materials provided by each candidate.

Ms. Yeung stated that in addition to hearing why the consultants are recommending the top four to six applicants, she will also want to hear why they are not recommending the others.

The Board will meet next Tuesday to discuss and vote on the proposed leadership profile.

## 5. STAFF REPORTS

### 5.01 Transportation Update

Dr. Kizner reported that, setting aside the many transportation issues, most other aspects of the first two days of school were very successful. He recognized, however, that there were indeed significant transportation challenges. Dr. Kizner then introduced Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration Chris Fulmer, who provided [an update](#) on the transportation issues that we experienced during the first two days of school.

Following the briefing, Ms. Yeung stated that the community is eager to help. In fact, there are many parents who are carpooling for their neighbors. She wondered if we could offer a gas voucher to those parents since they are helping us to both reduce the number of vehicles in the car lanes at schools and also free up seats on the buses.

Dr. Warner stated that she is wondering if we also need to look for some longer-term solutions, because growth and traffic patterns are clearly only going to worsen over the next few years. Can we work with the County and Virginia Department of Transportation to look for ways to improve and expand the access points for our schools?

Ms. Hollerback asked about our sign-on bonus for newly recruited bus drivers. Mr. Fulmer stated that it is \$1,000 (\$500 upon completion of the training, and another \$500 after the first 30 days of driving). Ms. Hollerback asked if we have reached out to the sheriff's office to ask for help with directing traffic at the schools. Mr. Fulmer stated that we have reached out to them, and they sent several officers to be at some locations during the past two days. However, the officers are present to ensure safety, not to direct traffic. It is our responsibility to provide staff to direct traffic. Dr. Kizner added that he intends to contact Sheriff Decatur early tomorrow morning to discuss additional options.

Ms. Hollerback stated that parents are trying to call the schools and Transportation, but are often unable to get through. She suggested that to avoid this issue when school starts next year, we should hire some temporary employees to staff a "phone bank" for the Transportation Department during the first week of school. Parents have experienced a great deal of frustration due to the lack of communication from Transportation and the inability to contact anyone to obtain information. This lack of communication is a serious problem.

Ms. Randall thanked the bus drivers who came back to work today under very difficult conditions, and also the staff who pitched in to help cover the routes. She also recommended creating a public service announcement for parents about the most effective way to do car-rider lines at our schools.

Ms. Randall reported that some parents have informed her that no bus has come to pick up their children at all during the first two days of school. Ms. Randall is very worried about attendance and tardy policies and lost instructional time for those students. She is also worried about the travel students.

Dr. Chase echoed the other Board members' comments about thanking the bus drivers and other staff who have been covering all of the routes for the past two days. She pleaded with parents to please be kind to our bus drivers. Dr. Chase also stated that we should be careful not to overpromise something. When staff presented their original recommendations for school start times, the Board pushed for changes to the proposed start times. Staff complied with the Board's request. However, in requesting the changes, the Board may have inadvertently exacerbated the transportation problem. We may need to readjust the start times.

Dr. Chase also stated that she is very concerned about the bus driver shortage, which could be worsened substantially if any of them have to be quarantined due to possible exposure to COVID-19.

Ms. Healy asked for specific details about the plans to improve communication to parents. Mr. Fulmer stated that we are going to work to ensure our secondary families receive direct notifications when their child's bus will be late.

Ms. Healy stated that the school board and school system has failed its students and parents. There are kids sitting at bus stops for hours in unbearably hot weather. Some parents have reported that no bus arrived at all. It was a shock for her to hear that this is happening. It is unacceptable. She apologized to parents. Ms. Healy also stated that many parents likely had to miss work today so that they could transport their children to and from school. There has to be ways for us to fix the problems. Why not use some of our paraprofessionals to help to direct traffic at the schools? Why not hire contract bus drivers?

Dr. Kizner reminded the Board that he and his administrative team came to the Board in the spring with two recommendations that the Board chose not to follow: The schedule for the school start times and the transportation opt-in requirement. Those two decisions by the Board have had an adverse impact. The Board at that time stated it was unfair to make parents opt in for bus transportation, even though Dr. Kizner felt exactly the opposite because it would help us to avoid having children waiting on the streets for buses to arrive because we would be able to know exactly who we needed to pick up. He stated that he and his administrators felt all the way back in May that if the Board did not follow their recommendations, we would run into exactly the problems that we have experienced for the past two days. If the Board is always going to override the administration's recommendations, then we must all be ready to take responsibility for the outcome.

Ms. Healy stated that if Dr. Kizner anticipated this situation, why did he not make that clear to the Board back then? She does not recall any discussion about the Board's decision possibly having such a horrendous effect. The Board needs all of the facts in order to make an informed decision. Additionally, the Board is obligated to provide transportation for students, so she had issues with requiring an opt-in from parents. Further, as of last month, the Board was being told by Dr. Kizner and his administrators that "we were looking good" for the start of the school year.

Ms. Yeung asked what we plan to do in the immediate future (tomorrow) to improve communication to parents about late and missing buses. She is very concerned about students walking to school on dangerous roadways such as Courthouse Road. Also, can we temporarily relax the cellphone policy so that students can contact their parents when needed? Mr. Fulmer stated that we have six or seven Central Office staff who have been fielding parent phone calls in addition to the Transportation staff. It is only when the phone lines are overloaded that calls are sent directly to voicemail. We are trying to find a solution for this. We also definitely need to consolidate some of our bus routes to improve efficiency, which will enable us to reduce the number of late and missing buses.

Dr. Kizner stated that one new incentive we can offer to potential new drivers who live outside Stafford County is to amend Policy 2105 (Nonresidents). He believes our bus driver recruitment efforts will be improved if we change the policy to allow our nonlicensed staff who live outside Stafford to enroll their children in our schools.

Ms. Hollerback asked about the feasibility of adding more walking zones. For example, we have some students who live only one street away from their school but do not have a walking zone. Dr. Chase advised that this very suggestion is on the next agenda of the Joint Schools Working Committee. Unfortunately, that committee's past two monthly meetings have been canceled so it has not been able to discuss the issue yet. Ms. Hollerback stated that the school board should first have a work session to talk about where new walking zones could potentially be added. Mr. Fulmer agreed that the issue of new walking zones does need to be explored.

Ms. Hazard stated that the only thing the Board and administration can say is that we have failed our families. She also stated that it seems that the outer edges of the county experienced the most problems with late and missing buses. Can we come up with ways to pool those more distant neighborhoods? She urged families to treat our bus drivers with kindness. We cannot afford to lose the ones we have.

Ms. Hazard stated that she recently watched the video of the spring school board meeting in which Ms. Healy asked Dr. Kizner and his staff to re-evaluate their recommended school start times. Ms. Hazard then asked Mr. Fulmer to let the Board know what can be done to immediately improve the transportation situation.

Ms. Randall asked for an explanation of what we plan to do differently to improve the situation for our travel students. She also asked about providing transportation for our after-school sports activities. Executive Director of Transportation Keba Baldwin responded that we are looking at our routes to see where can optimize some of the late morning elementary school drivers so that we can designate a few of them to the travel students. As for transporting the athletes to their competitions, which begin this Friday, we will be able to consolidate some of the high school afternoon routes so that we can free up a few drivers.

Dr. Kizner stated that we need to be honest with the community. The Board heard tonight from Mr. Fulmer that we are short by 40-45 bus drivers, and 12 of the people driving buses this week are Transportation office staff (which is why parent phone calls have not been answered). Additionally, on any given day, we have drivers calling in sick. So we need to be honest with the community that everything we have done in the past may not be possible during these first few months of school. Getting students into the classroom so that they can receive their required instruction is of paramount importance. All other activities are secondary to that goal. Dr. Kizner stated that we have to make it clear to families that with the current severe driver shortage, it will quite frankly be impossible to provide transportation for other activities. This is just the second day of school. He asked the Board to be pragmatic about the situation. He also stated that it should not be a surprise to the Board that we are suffering a shortage of drivers. This is something he has been telling the Board about for a very long time.

Ms. Hazard stated that the Board is open to analyzing the problems and hearing about potential solutions. Everyone wants the situation to improve. Communication with parents is very important.

## **6. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

### **6.01 Citizen Comments**

The Board heard comments from [the following citizens](#): Mary Radowicz, Philip Stephenson, Cassandra Corcoran, Dillara Wentz, Michael Wood, Emily Powers, Alexandria Noel, Dan McCleese, Cormi Larson, Susanna Schneider, Isaiah Escobel, Marcia Whaley, Amanda Grace, Deanna Fisher, Joshua Pacheco, Cheree Iurale, and Maya Guy.

## **7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **7.01 Standing Committee Reports**

Finance & Budget Committee (FABC) Chairwoman Dr. Warner reported that the FY23 budget calendar has been vetted by the committee and is on tonight's Board agenda for final approval (Action Item 11.01). The committee recommends several changes to the draft calendar: Add a work session and a brief special called board meeting on August 17; and move the Board's annual budget meeting with the PTO/PTA representatives from September 21 to September 23 (with a

virtual option to be offered for those individuals who are unable to participate in person).

Dr. Warner also reported that the FABC will be meeting on Thursday morning (August 12) to discuss several issues, chief of which is potential options to immediately improve bus driver recruitment and retention. The committee will also be reviewing and discussing Policy 2105 (Nonresidents).

## **8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

### **8.01 Board Member Comments**

Ms. Yeung commented that our COVID-19 mitigation strategies do not seem to be clear to all parents. She asked what we are doing to sanitize playground equipment and indoor furniture and equipment. Further, what is our quarantine plan in the event of a virus outbreak in a classroom or school? How will we provide instruction for quarantined students? Ms. Yeung also asked if we can invest in specially-made, lightweight children's face coverings that children seem to be more easily able to wear properly?

Ms. Randall stated that she heard of a disturbing incident involving a parent and teacher at the car ride line at one of our schools this morning. The parent called the teacher a very derogatory term. She urged parents to treat our staff and faculty with respect and courtesy. Children are watching our behavior.

Ms. Healy stated that it was brought to her attention today that the superintendent has been invited to attend or send a designee to a meeting of the board of supervisors to discuss Critical Race Theory. The superintendent apparently was advised by the school board's chair and vice-chair that this should be postponed until after he presents the information to this Board first. She asked why we would not accommodate the Supervisors' request.

Ms. Hazard observed that our community and school system is growing exponentially. This is the underlying factor behind our current transportation issues. We need to work on creating neighborhood schools. We are going to have large class sizes until we build more schools.

Ms. Hazard also reported that a brand new, unfunded mandate has just come down to us from the State for contact tracing. Unless we can use some of the federal stimulus funding to hire contact tracers, this new responsibility will fall on the shoulders of our school nurses, who are already overworked. This Board has fought tirelessly to put at least one full-time nurse in every school. Our nurses have responsibility for many children with many health issues. They need to be available to deal with those students, not be tied up doing contact tracing on the telephone.

In response to Ms. Healy's comment, Ms. Hazard stated that the invitation had come from the board of supervisors several times and was canceled by the Supervisors on each occasion. The most recent invitation from the Supervisors was for him to speak at their August 17 meeting. Ms. Hazard stated that in the past, our Board has traditionally been prebriefed on any issue that the superintendent or his staff planned to discuss with the board of supervisors. For this reason, she asked Dr. Kizner to provide a briefing on Critical Race Theory to this Board on August 24. It was not placed on tonight's meeting agenda because the agenda was already quite lengthy. Ms. Hazard also stated that she feels it is incumbent upon the Board's leadership to protect the superintendent's time, especially during these first two weeks of the school year. Ms. Randall agreed, stating that as the Board's employee, she felt it was important for this Board to hear his presentation before the board of supervisors hears it.

Ms. Healy requested that all members of the Board receive a notification of any future invitation or request from the board of supervisors, as a matter of professional courtesy.

Ms. Yeung stated that she is appalled that the Board and the superintendent are even being asked to discuss the non-issue of Critical Race Theory. She refuses to discuss something that is not being

taught in our schools. She also expressed concern that she as a Board member often seems to hear of these types of issues after the fact.

## 9. SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

### 9.01 Superintendent Comments

Dr. Kizner agreed that the school board's and board of supervisors' relationship could be improved. However, that is not unique to Stafford; it is true all across the country. He encouraged the Board to bolster the relationship by rejuvenating the Joint Schools Working Committee. The only behavior we can change is our own.

Dr. Kizner spoke about some things that went well during these past two days of school. He also reported that our enrollment numbers this week have been quite close to our projections, and we have already exceeded our projections at the Kindergarten level. Our enrollments have rebounded completely from the pandemic lows in the 2020-2021 school year. Staff will present the September 30 official enrollment figures at the Board's first meeting in October.

Dr. Kizner reported that when the Board made its decision to mandate mask-wearing in our schools, the incidence of parents choosing virtual instruction for their children has slowed to a trickle.

In closing, he encouraged the Board members to highlight something positive in their "Board Members Comments" at each meeting.

## 10. CONSENT ITEMS

### 10.01 Approval of the August 10, 2021 Personnel Report of Resignations and Appointments

### 10.02 Approval to Purchase Bulk Fuel from Quarles Petroleum, Inc., in the Amount of \$1,200,000 Using Budgeted FY22 Transportation Services Funds

Dr. Warner moved, and Dr. Chase seconded, that the Board approve Consent Items 10.01 and 10.02. The motion passed unanimously.

## 11. ACTION ITEMS

### 11.01 Adoption of the FY23 Budget Development Calendar

Dr. Chase asked for clarification about the start times of the three joint meetings with the board of supervisors. Board Clerk Melissa Hall stated that the joint meetings on October 19 and March 1 will each begin at 5:15 p.m. and will be dinner meetings. The December 7 joint meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Warner moved, and Ms. Hollerback seconded, that the Board adopt the proposed FY23 Budget Development Calendar with the following revision: Add a 6:30 p.m. work session on August 17, and change the date of the Board's annual meeting with the PTO/PTA representatives from September 21 to September 23. The motion passed unanimously.

### 11.02 Appointment of a Delegate and Alternate Delegate for the 2021 VSBA Annual Delegate Convention

Dr. Warner and Ms. Randall volunteered to serve as the delegate and alternate delegate.



Dr. Chase moved, and Ms. Hollerback seconded, that the Board appoint Dr. Warner and Ms. Randall as the Board's delegate and alternate delegate, respectively, for this year's VSBA Annual Delegate Assembly. The motion passed unanimously.

## 12. INFORMATION ITEMS

These items were brought to the Board for a "first reading" and discussion today. Unless otherwise indicated, the items will be brought back to the Board for action on August 24, 2021.

### 12.01 Award of Four Contracts for Food, Milk, Bread, and Non-Grocery Items for School Nutrition (Using Budgeted FY22 School Nutrition Funds)

Dr. Chase reported that she has heard tales of some students discarding their lunch food because they do not find it appetizing. She asked that staff look into this.

### 12.02 Award of a Construction Contract in the Amount of \$692,624 to Atlantic Constructors, Inc., for the Replacement of Two Chillers at Park Ridge Elementary School (Using VPSA 2020B Bond Funds, Subject to Appropriation by the Board of Supervisors)

Ms. Yeung asked if this project can be started right away, during the warmer weather. Executive Director of Facilities and Operations John Anderson explained that chillers normally are replaced during the winter months when they are not being used.

Ms. Randall noted that the facility assessment report on this school indicated way back in 2007 that the chiller needed to be replaced. She thanked Mr. Anderson and his staff for making sure the project finally gets completed, but it disturbs her that it has taken so long.

Dr. Chase asked that Mr. Fulmer be prepared to describe what type of warranty this new chiller will have when the agenda item comes back to the Board for final approval on August 24. She has heard concerns from constituents that we sometimes end up with worthless warranties when we choose the lowest bidder on a project and the vendor later goes out of business.

### 12.03 Approval of the Proposed FY23-FY32 Stafford County Public Schools Capital Improvement Project and "3R" Infrastructure

Supervisor of Planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Lionel White provided [a briefing](#) on the proposed FY23-FY32 SCPS CIP and "3R" Infrastructure Report. The recommended large capital project list for the 10-year window of FY23 through FY32 are:

1. High School #6 (requested opening date is August 2025);
2. Elementary School #18 (needed opening date is August 2026);
3. Drew Middle School (DMS) Renovation (needed opening date is August 2026);
4. Additional early childhood special education (ESCE) capacity (needed date is August 2026);
5. Middle School (MS) #9 (needed opening date is August 2029);
6. North Stafford High School (NSHS) Fine Arts Wing renovation (needed opening date is August 2029);
7. Elementary School (ES) #19 (needed opening date is August 2031); and
8. High School (HS) #7 (needed opening date is August 2035).

Ms. Yeung asked why the Hartwood Elementary School (HES) renovation is not on the list. Is one of the proposed new elementary schools supposed to replace HES? Also, we need a new elementary school in the northern sector of the county. She also asked about the ranking order of ES #18 and the DMS renovation. Mr. White explained that last year, the HES renovation was moved from the large capital project list to the "3R" list. The best location of the proposed ES #18 has not been posited yet. Mr. White also pointed out that both ES #18 and the DMS renovation are needed at the



same time (August 2026). Both projects are equally urgent, as is the additional ECSE capacity. Mr. Anderson added that in the interim, his staff is talking with the DMS staff to identify some 3R projects that can be accomplished in the very near future. The same applies to HES; his staff is working with the school staff to identify 3R projects to start in the near future.

Ms. Healy asked if our middle school capacity is not projected to be over 100% since we are not asking for MS #9 until 2029. She suspects we are already very close to 100% capacity at the MS level now. Mr. White stated that with the exception of HS #6, our requested opening dates are based on when we will reach 100% capacity in the aggregate at that school level.

Dr. Chase noted that the board of supervisors often tells us how much they can afford to spend and when they can afford to spend it, which usually does not match our needed timeline and costs. She asked what the ramifications will be if and when the Supervisors say they will not be able to provide the needed funding in the amount or timeframe that we need. Mr. White stated that the County's CIP Technical Review Committee has started the process of reviewing the project requests, and will make their recommendations to the two boards at the joint meeting on October 19. We will find out some of the answers to Dr. Chase's questions at that time.

**12.04 [Appointment of a School Board Member to Serve as Liaison to the Head Start Policy Council for the Term of September 2021 through August 2022](#)**

Dr. Warner stated that she would very much like to continue as the Board's liaison to this committee for the new term.

**12.05 [Authorization for Newly-Elected School Board Members to Attend the 2021 Virginia School Boards' Association \(VSBA\) Annual Convention in Williamsburg, Virginia, at an Estimated Cost of \\$1,600 from FY22 Operating Funds](#)**

There was no discussion regarding this matter.

**13. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**13.01 [Next Meeting of the School Board](#)**

The Board will hold its next regular meeting on August 24 at 7 p.m.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**14.01 [Adjournment](#)**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

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Holly H. Hazard, Chair  
School Board of Stafford County

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Melissa D. Hall, Clerk of the Board