



Board-to-Board, December, 2023

A monthly report from the Albemarle County School Board to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

School Board appoints representative for Rio Magisterial District—Following candidate interviews on October 18 and a public hearing on November 9, the Albemarle County School Board selected a new school board representative for the Rio Magisterial District. Board members voted to appoint a former Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) teacher and central office administrator, Charles Pace, to the seat vacated by Katrina Callsen, who served the Rio district from November 2017 through October 2023. Pace was sworn in on Monday, December 18.

In accordance with state law, the Rio seat will be on the ballot during the next general election on November 5, 2024, and the winner of that election will serve the remainder of Callsen's term, which expires on December 31, 2025.

Among his qualifications, Pace spent 18 years of his career teaching biology and chemistry at Albemarle High School, first from 1986 to 1998, and then again from 2009 to 2015. In between, he served as the division's K-12 science instructional coordinator from 1998 through 2015. After 29 years as an ACPS educator and athletic coach, Pace served as science department chairperson for Blue Ridge School from 2015 to 2022.

When asked about his areas of expertise and knowledge relevant to school board service, Pace focused on his experience with school construction, education and curriculum development, and, as a nod to his time in the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program, the military.

Relevant to school construction, Pace previously worked with the ACPS Building Services Department to upgrade equipment in the division's middle and high school science labs. He also participated in the planning process for the Math, Engineering & Science Academy wing at Albemarle High School.

During his interview, Pace highlighted his extensive high school background, both in the classroom and on the athletic fields; the experience he gained at the elementary and middle school levels as the division's K-12 science coordinator; and his background in instructional technology. He also talked about his complete support of the division's strategic plan, particularly the measurable objectives aligned with each goal, the Portrait of a Learner, and the plan's focus on reducing the achievement gap, creating cutting-edge curriculum, and recruiting high-quality staff.

Pace was one of six residents of the Rio district who applied to fill the vacancy created when Callsen announced her resignation on September 14, 2023. Pace's interview, which was open to the public, can be viewed in the recording of the [October 19 Special School Board Meeting](#), beginning at the 2:11:20 mark.

The board's organizational meeting on January 11, 2024, will be Pace's first meeting as the Rio district representative. During that meeting, board members will select a chair and vice-chair for 2024, decide committee appointments for the new year, and set meeting dates for the year.

New School Board Attorney—The Albemarle County School Board has chosen Josiah Black, a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law and a former director of admissions for the school, to be the division's next School Division Counsel. Black succeeds Ross Holden, who announced in October that he would be retiring at the end of the year.

Black most recently was the Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel for Ark Behavioral Health in Boston, MA, where he was responsible for the health care company's human resources and compliance activities, its governmental relationships, and advising senior executives on growth strategies.

As a member of the Superintendent's Cabinet, Black will be a senior advisor to the school board, the superintendent, and the division's leadership team on policy; litigation; legal documents; real estate transactions; compliance with county, state and federal regulations; human resource matters; and the hiring, when necessary, of outside counsel.

Prior to joining Ark Behavioral Health, Black was the deputy general counsel for Steward Health Care System, where he advised the executive leadership team and directed labor relations for 37 hospitals across the U.S. He also was the company's lead negotiator for collective bargaining agreements with employees and conducted training sessions with human resources teams on compliance and employee relations.

The new school board attorney will be returning to a community that launched his professional career. Black is a graduate of UVA Law, where he served on the editorial board of the *Virginia Environmental Law Journal*. He later was the school's director of admissions. Prior to his positions with Ark Behavioral Health and Steward Health Care Systems, Black was a partner with LeClair Ryan in Charlottesville, a law firm that specialized in startup and early stage companies in the technology field.

His leadership experience also includes serving as a founder and managing partner of a law firm, chairing the Northeast Human Resources Association and the Town of Wellesley's Human Resources Board, and serving pro bono as Chief Legal Counsel for Lighthouse Studio in Charlottesville.

Black's selection was approved by the school board during their meeting on November 10. Black formally joined the division this Friday, December 1.