



**MINUTES**  
**CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School**  
**Thursday, February 6, 2025 (5:00 PM)**

Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on February 6, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., in the Division Annex/SPED Conference Room.

**PRESENT:** Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Torres, and Ms. Richardson

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, and Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

**1.1 Call to Order:** Emily Dooley, School Board Chair, called the closed session meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**1.2 Closed Meeting:** At 3:30 p.m. Ms. Burns offered a motion to go into a Closed Session as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) (6) of the Code of Virginia, I move that the Charlottesville City School Board convene into Closed Session for the the discussion of personnel matters and to consider and discuss the investment of public funds involving bargaining with the Charlottesville Education Association, where initial public discussion would adversely affect Board financial interests. Ms. Richardson seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Torres, and Ms. Richardson voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Mr. Morse was not present for this vote.

**1.3 Closed Meeting Certification:** At 4:34 p.m. Ms. Burns offered a motion that the board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each board member’s knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered. Mr. Morse seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Torres, and Ms. Richardson voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

There was no action.

The board recessed from 4:35 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

**2.1 Moment of Silence:** Ms. Emily Dooley, Board Chair, asked all those present to observe a moment of silence.

**3.1 Pledge of Allegiance:** The board began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**4.1 Roll Call of Board Members:**

The following Board Members were present:

Ms. Amanda Burns	Ms. Shymora Cooper
Ms. Emily Dooley	Mr. Dom Morse

Mr. Chris Meyer  
Ms. Lisa Torres

Ms. Nicole Richardson  
Anya Hudock,  
Student Representative

The following Board Members were absent: None

The following Staff Members were present:

Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr.	Dr. Katina Otey
Mr. Pat Cuomo	Ms. Kim Powell
Ms. T. Denise Johnson	Ms. Maria Lewis
Ms. Rachel Rasnake	Ms. Renee Hoover
Ms. Beth Cheuk	Ms. Carolyn Swift
Ms. Julia Green	Ms. Leslie Thacker

The following Staff Members were absent: None

**5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda:** Ms. Torres made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

#### **6.1 Comments from Students:**

- Alison Bird and Cyrus Wyatt, CHS BACON Club Students, addressed the board, advocating for the retention of the current four-level engineering program, including the Capstone project. They shared poll results from 75 engineering students showing overwhelming preference for the hands-on Capstone experience over a proposed virtual dual enrollment option. The students argued that the virtual classes contained redundant material, presented accessibility challenges due to software requirements, and lacked the rigor and college preparation benefits of the Capstone project. They also emphasized the negative impact on student engagement, noting that many students had already dropped the current dual enrollment offering, and warned that further changes would damage the program's reputation and success. They concluded by stressing the cost-effectiveness of the current Capstone project, which doesn't require additional specialized instructors.

#### **6.2 Comments from Members of the Community:**

- Ian Mullins, a parent and UVA professor of sociology, addressed the school board regarding School Resource Officers (SROs). He reiterated his previous year's concerns about bringing SROs back into schools, stating that the district does not control police actions and that officers are not trained in de-escalation. He raised a new concern about the potential for local police to become involved in immigration enforcement, posing a risk to many students and their families. Mullins argued that students needing help require services, not police presence, and advocated for increased funding for social workers and other support staff instead. He criticized the board's study on SROs, claiming that a firm with a vested interest in providing police services cannot conduct an objective evaluation. He concluded by emphasizing his love for the city schools and his desire to keep students safe.
- Charlottesville High School teacher Peter Davis addressed the board, beginning by thanking several individuals and teams for improvements in school safety (alarms on exterior doors, fully staffed CSAs), staffing (substitute availability), and budget development. He specifically acknowledged Mr. Koogler, Ms. Powell, Mr. Byers, the technology team, the HR team, and Dr. Gurley, noting the positive impact of these changes on the school environment and staff morale. He then shifted his focus to the budget, expressing interest in exploring ways for the school division to join the city council and UVA student council in lobbying UVA for payment in lieu of taxes. He cited UVA's substantial revenue and endowment figures, suggesting that the university could be a better neighbor by contributing financially to the community,

given the services the school system provides to UVA faculty and employees' children. He expressed a desire to be involved in any such lobbying efforts.

- Kathryn Laughon, parent of CHS graduates and actively involved in supporting a family with children in the district, addressed the board regarding SROs. She expressed frustration at the recurring discussion, referencing a previous "incredibly good, thorough, long engagement process" that resulted in a plan she feels is constantly being revisited. Laughon, a UVA faculty member specializing in trauma and violence, stated that research indicates student safety decreases with police presence, particularly for Black students and boys, negatively impacting school attainment and graduation rates. She highlighted the current climate of fear among students concerned about immigration raids, arguing that uniformed officers would exacerbate these anxieties. Laughon urged the board to cease the SRO discussions and instead engage in well-designed community surveys, avoiding biased external firms or methods that might intimidate community members. She emphasized the importance of reaching out to the most affected and least likely to speak up communities.
- Sandra Aviles, representing Charlottesville United for Public Education (CUPE), advocated for a comprehensive investment in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for all Charlottesville City Schools students. Citing a recent community survey, she outlined specific investment recommendations: 1) Hiring 10 additional counselors to meet the American School Counselor Association's recommended ratio of 250 students per counselor, at an estimated cost of \$700,000 annually. 2) Implementing an SEL curriculum like Second Step, costing approximately \$219,550 per year. 3) Providing professional development for educators in SEL, estimated at \$181,000 annually. 4) Establishing peer support and mentorship programs for around \$100,000 per year. The total estimated annual investment is \$1.2 million. Aviles argued that this investment, while significant, would yield an \$11 return for every dollar spent through improved behavior, academic achievement, and long-term economic benefits. She emphasized that SEL equips students with essential life skills, fosters a positive school climate, and lays the foundation for future success, urging the board to prioritize SEL funding.
- Chinica Bowles, also representing Charlottesville United for Public Education (CUPE), presented findings from a community survey emphasizing the need for improved social emotional wellness and school safety. Key results included: 70% of respondents calling for increased access to mental health professionals, particularly trained counselors for students facing trauma; 65% emphasizing training on healthy relationships and conflict resolution; 68% supporting expanded mental health and crisis intervention resources; 50% calling for stronger anti-bullying programs and conflict resolution efforts; and 45% backing restorative justice programs. Bowles shared direct quotes from community members highlighting the need for mental health resources, trauma-informed counselors, and conflict resolution skills. She concluded by urging the board to advocate for increased funding to support mental health professionals, restorative discipline approaches, and conflict resolution programs.
- Charlottesville resident Andy Orban, with three children in the city schools, spoke against reinstating School Resource Officers (SROs). He referenced the previous committee review process that led to the current CSA model. Orban emphasized the cost of SROs, noting that the funds would be better allocated to mental health and conflict resolution programs. He also raised concerns about the impact of police presence on the student learning environment, questioning the appropriateness of having officers in schools and the potential negative effects on student learning. He concluded by stating his opposition to any SRO program.

### **6.3 Public Hearing/Comments on the Proposed 2025-2026 Budget:** There were none.

**7.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report:** Student representative Anya Hudock thanked the board for the opportunity to represent CHS students and Ms. Burns for her mentorship. She raised several concerns: First, she asked that classroom supply funding be considered during budget discussions, as current supplies are low. Second, while acknowledging the benefits of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), she relayed student requests to reschedule SEL time within the school day, suggesting integrating it into existing classes rather than using dedicated

time (BKT) that students need for academic work. She offered to collaborate with Dr. Malone and Ms. Rasnake on this issue. Third, she reiterated concerns about the unsafe and inefficient student parking lot and asked for CSAs to direct traffic for safer arrivals and dismissals. Fourth, she raised the issue of the inefficient late arrival process, suggesting tardy sweeps during the school day rather than focusing on arrival tardiness, which may be due to external factors like traffic. Finally, Hudock addressed student concerns about some teachers potentially using ChatGPT for grading, citing similar feedback responses and inaccuracies in feedback compared to assignment directions and rubrics. She expressed interest in discussing this further with Dr. Malone and the CEA union representative, Mr. Davis.

## **Student and Staff Recognitions**

**8.1 [Virginia School Principals' Appreciation Week](#):** Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, invited the School Board and community to join her in recognizing Charlottesville City Schools Principals for Virginia School Principals' Appreciation Week. Governor Glenn Youngkin signed a Certificate of Recognition declaring January 12-18, 2025, as Virginia Principals Appreciation Week.

**8.2 [National School Counseling Week](#):** Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, invited the School Board and all those present to recognize National School Counselor Appreciation Week as February 3-7, 2025. This week is also recognized by the Virginia Department of Education. School Counselors will be recognized for the many services they provide to students, teachers, parents, and administrators by the Charlottesville City Schools' administration and School Board. During the week, School Counselors will share information with students, families, and staff about their role. Charlottesville City School Counselors: Rebecca Baber, Abigail Lawhorne, Jacob Horen, Kristin Ullrich, Allison Pillow, Sarah Shedd, Delaney Desman, Jaclyn Jacobson, William Ullrich, Tessie King, Kirstena Lilley, Kira Maker, David Wilkerson, Melanie Key, Maddie Bryant, Jermando Towler, Aloise Phelps, and Adriane Butler.

**8.3 [Virginia School Boards Association School Board Appreciation Month](#):** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, stated that the month of February has been designated by the Virginia School Boards Association and proclaimed by Governor Glenn Youngkin as "School Board Appreciation Month" and asked the community to join her in recognizing Charlottesville City School Board members for the service.

**8.4 [Virginia School Boards Association School Board Clerk and Deputy Clerk Appreciation Week](#):** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, stated that the VSBA Board of Directors has designated the third week in February as "VSBA School Board Clerk Appreciation Week." The VSBA encourages all school boards to adopt the presented proclamation. Appreciation was expressed to Clerk Leslie Thacker and Deputy Clerk Julia Green.

**8.5 [Teacher of the Year Recognition](#):** Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, recognized the Charlottesville City Schools Teachers of the Year. She explained the criteria for the award, emphasizing the teachers' skills, dedication, community involvement, and active teaching status. Dr. Otey also acknowledged the committee that reviewed applications and helped select the division winner. Each school-level Teacher of the Year was called forward and received an award. The school-level winners included: Laura Melton (Burnley-Moran), Desiree Connor (Greenbrier), Elizabeth Jones (Jackson-Via), Elena Ar (Johnson's), Rachel Peler (Summit), Leslie Hunter (Trailblazers), Casey Leair (Walker), Sienna Wasberg (Buford), Justin Newberry (CHS), Adrien Butler (Kex), and Eloise Phelps (Lugo-McGinness). The division-level Teacher of the Year was Adrien Butler from Kex. Otey noted that Ms. Butler's application had been submitted to the state for regional competition. Both the committee and all the teachers of the year were thanked and photographed with the board and superintendent.

**8.6 [Elaina Pierce - Gatorade Virginia Girls X-Country Player of the Year](#):** Andy Jones, CHS Athletic and Activities Director, recognized CHS junior Elena Pierce as the Virginia Gatorade Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. He highlighted the significance of this award, the highest individual recognition in high school sports, emphasizing not only athletic achievement but also academic excellence and community involvement. Mr. Jones noted Pierce's undefeated season against in-state competitors, culminating in the VHSL Class 4 cross country state title and a top-50 finish at the Nike Cross Country Nationals. He stressed that her success reflects perseverance, excellence, and

community commitment, making her a role model. As part of the award, Gatorade will donate \$1,000 to a sports program of Pierce's choice, which she designated to encourage girls' participation in athletics in Charlottesville. Jones praised Pierce's achievements and character, then invited her to be recognized.

**9.1-6 Adoption of Consent Agenda:** The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations](#), [Minutes - December 7, 2024 School Board Advance](#), [Minutes - January 9, 2025 School Board Meeting](#), [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#), and [2025 School Board Member Committee Assignments](#). Ms. Cooper made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the adoption of the proposed consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

## Action Items

**10.1 Action - Reconfiguration Furniture Purchase for 5th Grade Classrooms:** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented a proposal to the board on January 30, 2025, for the purchase of new furniture for 5th-grade classrooms. This is necessary due to the planned reconfiguration for the 2026-2027 school year, which will move 5th grade back to the elementary schools and preschool to the current Walker campus. While preschool furniture will be moved from the elementary schools to Walker, the existing 5th-grade furniture at Walker is incompatible with the newer furniture in the modernized elementary schools and will not be reused. The same vendor that provided the elementary school furniture has quoted comparable furniture for the 5th-grade classrooms. To avoid anticipated price increases, the vendor has arranged for Charlottesville City Schools to place an early order for both the 5th-grade furniture and furniture for the new middle school. Delivery and installation are scheduled for the summer of 2026. The staff recommends the board authorize the use of fund balance, up to \$379,150, to issue purchase orders beginning in February 2025 and secure the needed furniture at the current price.

Mr. Meyer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Torres, to authorize use of fund balance to enable issuance of purchase orders starting in February 2025 up to a total of \$379,150 in order to secure the 5th grade furniture needed for reconfiguration and avoid manufacturer scheduled price increases as much as possible. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

## Items for Discussion

**11.1 New Accountability Overview:** Carolyn Swift, Assessment & Accountability, presented information on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) implementation of a new accountability system called the School Performance and Support Framework. This framework aims to provide a more comprehensive and transparent picture of school performance.

- Overview of Virginia's New School Performance and Support Framework
  - Aimed at enhancing academic achievement and effective school operations (2023-2028).
- Strategic Priorities:
  - Priority 1: Increase Academic Achievement
    - Targets include
    - Graduation Rate
    - Post-Secondary Readiness
    - AP/DE Course Enrollment
    - Mastery in Tier 1 Instruction
    - Access to Rigor (Critical and Creative Thinking)
    - College, Career, and Civic Readiness
    - Reading and Math Achievement
    - Reducing Student Group Failure Rates
    - Early Literacy

- Priority 2: Provide a Culture of Safety, Wellness, and Belonging
  - Target Decrease Chronic Absenteeism
- Priority 4: Ensure Effective and Efficient Operations
  - Target Budget Allocations
- Implementation Timeline:
  - Summer 2022 - June 2024: Development of the new framework through discussions and expert presentations.
  - July 2024: Board approval of the School Performance and Support Framework and final Virginia Standards of Accreditation.
  - August 2024: Approval of revised ESSA State Plan; data collection begins.
  - November 2024: Preliminary modeling of school performance using 2023-24 data.
  - January 3, 2025: Approval of amendments to Virginia's consolidated State plan under ESSA.
- Overall Performance Calculation:
  - Percent of possible points (Rate) = Points earned divided by number of students times 100.
  - Index value = Percent of possible points times weight.
- Resources:
  - School Data Toolkit and VDOE Resources for support and guidance.

#### Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Torres questioned Ms. Swift about the new accountability program. She first asked if the program would use only SOLs and VAP scores. Ms. Swift confirmed that VAP scores would be included, even though they were absent from the preliminary results. Ms. Torres then inquired about the status of VALLS and MAP testing. Ms. Swift clarified that these tests are still required but will not be included in the new accountability model. Ms. Torres followed up, asking if there would be any changes in testing time or if existing data would be used. Ms. Swift confirmed no additional testing would be added and noted that EL student growth would be included in the Mastery component. Ms. Torres then asked if the recently approved funding aligned with anticipated school performance categories, particularly for schools needing intensive support. Ms. Swift responded affirmatively, explaining that schools federally identified based on student group performance could be lowered a level, even if they are otherwise "on track," and would then require additional support from both the VDOE and the school division. Finally, Ms. Torres questioned the long-term implications of federal approval of the program. Ms. Swift acknowledged the uncertainty and mentioned a potential budget amendment at the state level, noting that while some had pushed for a delayed rollout, the program appears to be moving forward.
- Ms. Richardson asked if the new accountability program would affect classroom sizes, citing a document mentioning minimizing class sizes from 30 to 15. Ms. Swift clarified that the document referred to student group size, not classroom size. Previously, student groups of 30 or more were included in accountability calculations. The new Virginia Consolidated State Plan lowers this threshold to 15 students. Ms. Swift further explained that this means some smaller student groups, such as English Learners (ELs) with fewer than 15 students or students with disabilities with fewer than 15 students, may not be included in the accountability model's student group calculations.
- Ms. Dooley expressed her appreciation for Ms. Swift's explanation of the new accountability system, but also noted its complexity and incomplete nature, as the state is still developing it. She requested that Ms. Swift provide ongoing updates on changes to both the accountability framework itself and its implementation within the curriculum. Ms. Swift acknowledged the significant shift from the previous model, confirming the elimination of the level-based accreditation system (levels 1, 2, and 3, and the red, yellow, green designations) and the move to a four-category, point-based system.
- Mr. Morse commented that, ideally, if students are reading at grade level by third grade, then the focus should shift from growth (measured between 4th and 8th grade) to mastery. Ms. Swift confirmed that third grade serves as the baseline year for measuring student growth.
- Mr. Meyer noted the complexity of the new accountability system, especially given that most schools were accredited under the previous system. He pointed out that the new system appears to penalize

schools that have demonstrated growth, as that growth was previously factored into accreditation. He mentioned that a preview of the new scores showed five schools potentially falling short of standards. He considered this timely, given the ongoing rezoning discussions, suggesting that rezoning could help some schools. He also touched on the budget implications and how Dr. Gurley plans to address them, particularly regarding EIC. Mr. Meyer then asked if there was a way to preview school performance during the year and make adjustments, rather than waiting for SOL results.

- Dr. Gurley responded that school success meetings provide a platform for this. He explained that the instructional team reviews data at the beginning and middle of the year, tracking indicators like chronic absenteeism. He acknowledged the "points game" aspect of the system and noted that some indicators can be monitored throughout the year. He agreed that SOL performance is the most significant unknown until testing.
- Ms. Swift added that the state has provided templates, and the division is using winter MAP results to project proficiency and identify areas of focus. She mentioned meeting with schools to review MAP data and target specific student groups. She confirmed that spring MAP results will also be used for this purpose.
- Mr. Meyer expressed relief that systems are in place to track progress and avoid surprises when official results are released.
- Ms. Torres expressed her frustration with the frequent changes to the state's accountability system, noting that this was the third iteration in her seven years on the board. She emphasized the difficulty of keeping up with these changes and acknowledged the hard work of the staff. She recalled a previous modified SOL system used to gather growth data, which is no longer in use.
- Ms. Swift confirmed that WorkKeys assessments for high school reading will not be included in the new model; instead, the reading EOC will be used. In response to Ms. Torres' question about a "mini SOL" used at the beginning of the year, Ms. Swift explained that the division replaced that assessment with fall, winter, and spring MAP testing. The rationale was to reduce over-assessment and that MAP provided more detailed information about student progress. She added that MAP testing has been used for years, so teachers are familiar with it. Ms. Swift stated that MAP scores, along with quarterly assessments and other assessments, are used to gauge student progress, and this data is reviewed during school success meetings, as Dr. Gurley mentioned.
- Ms. Cooper asked if tutoring, clinics, or after-school programs had been established to support students at schools identified as "off track" based on MAP data. Ms. Swift confirmed that tutoring, remediation, and intervention programs are in place. She reiterated Dr. Gurley's point about the "points game" aspect, noting that even small improvements in student performance (e.g., moving a few students from "below basic" to "basic" or "proficient" to "advanced") can significantly impact a school's overall score. She also mentioned that reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing enrollment in advanced coursework (Algebra I, Geometry, and 7th-grade math advanced) at the middle school level contribute to improved readiness scores.
- Ms. Dooley emphasized that despite the focus on "points" in the new accountability system, the core mission of ensuring all students achieve mastery remains unchanged. Ms. Swift concurred, stating that student mastery is the primary goal.
- Mr. Morse then raised a related point about grading practices. He stressed the importance of aligning classroom grading rigor with standardized testing rigor, citing the example of students performing well in class but poorly on SOL tests. He argued that this alignment is crucial not only for SOL performance but also for students pursuing certifications in high school. He wanted to ensure students are prepared to succeed both in the classroom and on relevant tests.
- Ms. Swift acknowledged the importance of this alignment, noting that the new English and math SOLs, which will be implemented and tested this school year, have increased rigor. She also mentioned that the cut scores for these SOLs will change next year, though not at the end of the current year.

**11.2 [Safety Audit Action Steps \(including Decision-Making Process for SROs\)](#):** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented Safety Audit Action Steps (including Decision-Making Process for SROs) for Board discussion. Information presented outlined various aspects of safety and security measures in schools. It included recommendations for



ALICE training, recovery planning, and resource officers. The presentation summarized the analysis of preparedness levels in different areas and detailed an independent safety/security audit conducted by Navigate 360. Additionally, it addressed school resource officers, as requested by the school board in May 2024. The supporting "Procedure for Review of School Safety & Security" document detailed the process developed to evaluate whether School Resource Officers should be included in the safety model. It included steps for ongoing evaluation, the purpose of the review process, and the background leading to the development of the process. The document outlined the staff working group's responsibilities in identifying best practices for officers working with youth, determining budget implications, and drafting a proposed MOU for School Board review and discussion.

- Safety Audit Overview
  - Recommendations categorized as:
    - Already in Place
    - In Progress
    - Planned
    - Item for Discussion/Clarification
  - Preparedness levels assessed:
    - Hazard and Threat Assessment: Moderate
    - Emergency Operations Plan: High
    - Prevention Programs: High
    - Response and Training: Moderate
    - Technology and Infrastructure: Low
    - Recovery Planning: Low
- Independent Safety/Security Audit:
  - RFP issued in July; contract finalized in September with Navigate 360.
  - On-site assessment conducted by safety/security professionals in October.
  - Final report is confidential due to safety vulnerabilities.
- Recovery Planning Initiatives:
  - Coordination with area hospitals and family support systems.
  - Community Assistance Center (CAC) established.
  - Continuity Of Operations Plan (COOP) developed in response to COVID-19.
- ALICE Training Program:
  - Ongoing modules designed for flexibility in delivery (10 to 60 minutes).
  - Training integrated into staff meetings and professional learning days.
  - Key trainings include summer orientation and pre-week safety meetings.
- Proposed Next Steps:
  - Identify best practices for youth-focused resource officers.
  - Assess budget implications for resource officer programs.
  - Draft MOU for Board review before the 2026-2027 budget work session.
  - Community engagement for implementation if MOU is accepted.
- Audit Recommendations on Resource Officers:
  - Assessment of SRO presence in schools; recommendations vary based on needs.
  - Emphasis on the necessity of highly trained officers in high and middle schools.
  - Recognition that SROs are part of a comprehensive safety plan, not a standalone solution.

#### Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer asked what specific problems a youth resource officer (YRO) would solve. Ms. Powell explained the benefits of having a dedicated YRO by addressing several key areas. She emphasized that while the current partnership with the City Police Department (CPD) is solid, a YRO would improve efficiency and reduce stress in several situations. Specifically, a YRO would streamline mandatory threat assessments, a state-mandated collaboration with law enforcement. Currently, even with improvements, the process could be more efficient with readily available youth-focused officers. Mandatory reporting



also presents challenges, as administrators must determine if an incident requires reporting, leading to frequent calls for support. A YRO would provide consistent expertise and reduce the stress of these decisions. Disposition of contraband, especially when it reaches certain thresholds, and weapon searches, including those prompted by social media rumors, would also be smoother and less stressful with a YRO present. Communication between the school and CPD would be enhanced, as a YRO would be aware of community events that could impact the school and vice-versa. Ms. Powell cited an example of a large fight at the media center where communication with CPD after the fact, while helpful, could have been more proactive with a YRO. Finally, she stressed the importance of pre-existing relationships in stressful situations. While the police are still part of the safety model, the lack of established relationships with individual officers creates inefficiencies. She concluded by stating that while a return to the old model isn't necessarily the answer, exploring ways to improve efficiency and collaboration is crucial.

- Dr. Gurley emphasized the value of the current CSA model, praising its focus on building student connections. However, he also pointed out that CSAs are being asked to perform duties outside their intended role, specifically law enforcement tasks. He cited an after-action meeting following a basketball game fight as an example, highlighting that CSAs are sometimes expected to enforce the law, which they are not trained or intended to do. This, he believes, is a critical gap that needs addressing. While acknowledging that the board's current focus is on the proposed MOU for SROs, Dr. Gurley stressed the importance of keeping the CSA model at the forefront of the conversation. He reiterated that CSAs are a valuable asset and that he doesn't want the discussion of SROs to blur the lines of the CSAs' intended role. The issue, he clarified, is not about SROs disciplining students (as that culture has changed), but rather about situations where the law is being broken, an area where CSAs are currently struggling and shouldn't be tasked with handling.
- Ms. Powell affirmed her strong support for the CSA program (whose members are certified as School Security Officers - SSOs) and clarified that she does not favor SROs over SSOs. Instead, she emphasized the need to determine what additional support CSAs need to be successful and less overwhelmed. She acknowledged the legitimacy of stakeholder concerns and stressed the importance of addressing them. She countered the notion that police officers can't de-escalate situations, stating that they receive de-escalation training and that she has personally witnessed successful de-escalation by officers. She also noted that even before 2020, the MOU standards were already shifting towards shared decision-making and accountability. Ms. Powell likened the situation to the recent rezoning conversation, where guiding principles sometimes seem to conflict, but the ultimate goal is to find the optimal solution. She concluded by stating that if the outcome of the process is not to have dedicated, youth-focused officers in schools and the community, then that is acceptable, but a thorough conversation on the topic is essential.
- Mr. Meyer thanked Ms. Powell for clarifying the problems the district is trying to solve. He stated his understanding that the discussion does not center around having officers primarily as security outside schools. He also noted that the focus seems to be on older children, indicating that the proposed solution is not intended for elementary schools.
- Ms. Powell clarified that while the officers wouldn't necessarily be stationed outside elementary schools, they would be the first responders for threat assessments at those schools when needed. She emphasized that simply having officers dedicated to schools in general would improve coordination. She explained that the MOU development process will include determining where the officers add value and where they are not needed. She stressed that the goal is not to create a culture of surveillance, but rather to address legitimate operational and safety needs that necessitate collaboration.
- Ms. Hudock, student representative, shared feedback from her peers, revealing mixed opinions on the return of SROs. Many students recalled positive connections with previous SROs, feeling comfortable and safe. Those supporting the proposal emphasized the need for personable and welcoming officers. Conversely, students opposed to SROs expressed concerns about a potentially negative atmosphere and disruption to the positive community growth and established rhythm, particularly among upperclassmen who are pleased with the current rules and expectations. Ms. Hudock acknowledged the limitations of

her sample and suggested a comprehensive community survey and outreach to neighborhoods by CHS and Buford students to gather broader perspectives.

- Ms. Powell thanked Ms. Hudock for the feedback and emphasized the importance of the next engagement phase focusing on a draft MOU. This, she explained, would prevent people from relying on idealized memories of the past or imagining worst-case scenarios. Presenting a draft MOU would provide concrete details for discussion. Ms. Hudock reiterated the importance of communication with students, saying that her peers primarily want more frequent and accessible communication, and a sense that their opinions are valued and incorporated.
- Ms. Burns suggested creating a comprehensive matrix outlining existing support systems, including social workers, guidance counselors, restorative justice partners, community partners, and CSAs. This matrix should detail how many staff are in each role, their job duties, and where they might be overextended or where there are gaps in service. She noted that the school board often discusses sensitive disciplinary matters in closed session, which impacts their decision-making process, and having a broader understanding of available resources would be beneficial. Ms. Burns also expressed interest in understanding the Commonwealth Attorney's perspective on how criminal negligence involving students in schools is handled, including any related programming. She and Ms. Dooley recently attended a community conversation about Project Safe Neighborhoods and the collaborative efforts of various agencies, including the Equity Center, UVA, and Albemarle County. Ms. Burns emphasized the importance of engaging with such community initiatives, recognizing that issues outside the school walls directly affect the school community. She stressed that the focus should not solely be on bringing police into schools, but also on how the school system can contribute to the broader community in a thoughtful way.
- Ms. Powell shared an insight she gained last spring during initial discussions with the City Police Department (CPD). She learned how closely CPD already collaborates with social services and Region 10 in the community. A key difference, she noted, is that when CPD supports social services or Region 10, they go to the problem area and manage the coordination. In contrast, the school system typically requests CPD to come into the school environment, where the school is already managing the situation. This highlighted the extent of CPD's existing community involvement with social services, which Ms. Powell had not previously realized.
- Ms. Burns suggested a campaign to raise awareness about the existing sections in the Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook that outline when law enforcement might be involved. Recognizing that not all families thoroughly read the document, she proposed a more digestible approach, perhaps in smaller segments throughout the year, rather than relying solely on the initial distribution of the full handbook. The goal would be to highlight the potential long-term consequences of certain actions and ensure the community is aware of the existing protocols for law enforcement involvement.
- Ms. Cooper asked about the timeline for a draft MOU. Ms. Powell expressed hope that work on the MOU could begin after the rezoning process concludes, aiming for a draft sometime during the summer. She acknowledged the busy period leading up to the end of the school year and the need to coordinate with colleagues, so she refrained from committing to a specific deadline. She also mentioned the need to plan community engagement, particularly in areas where input has been lacking, noting the ongoing challenge of achieving desired participation levels.
- Ms. Cooper then raised concerns about police accountability, referencing an incident at a football game where officers allegedly stood by without intervening during a fight involving adults and children, while CSAs handled the situation. This raised questions for her about the relationship with police and how to ensure they are held accountable for fulfilling their duties, regardless of an MOU. She stressed the importance of having trained personnel for tasks like threat assessments and ensuring that officers on school grounds are performing the duties they are paid for. Her experience at the football game made her hesitant about bringing officers into schools and entrusting them with children, given their apparent inaction in a situation where she felt they should have intervened.
- Ms. Richardson expressed concern about the "when in doubt, call law enforcement" standard, believing it needs policy streamlining. She wants clear protocols for when law enforcement must be called before

SROs are reintroduced. She also questioned data collection and documentation of these "when in doubt" incidents.

- Ms. Powell clarified that the "when in doubt" phrase refers specifically to situations involving seized contraband. She explained that administrators and CSAs shouldn't be expected to determine if quantities of contraband meet mandatory reporting thresholds. The "when in doubt" guidance is meant to ensure these situations are properly handled by law enforcement. She also mentioned a past media allegation of a missed mandatory report (which they were able to disprove) and how the absence of an officer made them vulnerable to such claims. Ms. Powell emphasized that there was previously a hesitancy to involve law enforcement, which they've had to overcome, as administrators were concerned about repercussions for calling them. The "when in doubt" guidance is partly a response to that prior reluctance.
- Ms. Richardson asked how incidents requiring law enforcement are documented.
- Ms. Powell explained three data sources: 1) E911 call data from the regional center, showing police dispatches to campuses. 2) Data from the Police Civilian Review Board, which includes incidents and reports even if they don't involve 911 calls. This data, shared with the board, shows police responses to schools have actually increased since SROs were removed. 3) Ms. Powell also personally records incidents like wellness checks that might not be captured by the other two sources. This combined data is included in quarterly reports.
- Regarding budget, Ms. Powell stated they haven't estimated costs yet, pending the outcome of the current discussion. However, they can easily calculate costs based on the average officer compensation. She reiterated the potential three-officer model discussed previously (one for middle school, one for high school, and one for evening/community interactions), noting that this model is about more than just in-school issues.
- Mr. Morse emphasized the importance of relationships between students and SROs, sharing a personal anecdote about a positive relationship with a former SRO that began in high school and continues to this day. He recounted childhood experiences, highlighting that his experience with law enforcement was one of seeking help, not fear. He cautioned against overgeneralizing negative perceptions of police and stressed the importance of positive interactions, particularly for young Black men, to avoid perpetuating a cycle of fear.
- Ms. Richardson responded, stating that as a mother of two Black sons, she does not want their primary introduction to police to be in schools. While acknowledging that her sons are not afraid of the police and understand their role, she expressed concern about the idea of schools being the place where Black boys are introduced to law enforcement and built relationships with them. She believes that it shouldn't be the school's role to facilitate these introductions and that the focus on building police relationships with Black boys in school is misplaced.
- Ms. Torres inquired about community-based youth work by the police department since the spring meetings, referencing the Cambridge model and Strategies for Youth program. She reiterated the importance of community relationship-building, not just in schools. Ms. Torres also raised the issue of inconsistent police response to schools, asking if the police chief has considered training a dedicated group of officers for school-related incidents (like threat assessments) to ensure smoother transitions and familiarity, even if those officers aren't stationed in schools.
- Ms. Powell responded that she can't fully speak for the police department, but cited a past example where the chief doubled the number of trained officers for threat assessments to address delays. She noted their cooperation with a suggestion to establish monthly threat assessment review meetings, reducing the need for constant on-call officer involvement. Ms. Powell stated that the police have been responsive to their requests for smoother processes. While acknowledging the current liaison and improved availability, she conceded that on-duty schedules still affect who responds. She noted significant improvements compared to earlier issues but acknowledged the validity of Ms. Torres's question about further options and made a note to follow up.
- Mr. Meyer clarified that the topic was presented for informational purposes, meaning no action would be taken that day. He confirmed that the next steps, as outlined in Ms. Powell's presentation, involve staff working on a draft proposal to be presented to the board in September. He requested that a school

board member be included in the staff working group and asked the administration and board leadership to consider his suggestion.

**11.3 Presentation of the 2025-2026 Budget:** Dr. Royal Gurley, Division Superintendent, presented the Proposed FY 2026 Budget for informational purposes. This proposed budget is developed with input and support from various CCS stakeholders. It is based on revenue and expenditure changes from FY 2025 to address and support student needs.

FY 2025 - 2026 Budget Development Update

- Agenda
  - Statutory Guidelines
  - Budget Priorities
    - Ensure effective and efficient operations
    - Provide a culture of safety, wellness, and belonging
    - Increase academic achievement
    - Support Staff
  - School Operating Budget

<b>Staff Salaries and Benefits</b>		
Collective Bargaining	Revise the Teacher’s Pay Scale with an even 1.5% step spread	\$ 2,216,615
Collective Bargaining	Annual 5.5% salary increase (1.5% step + 4% raise)	2,595,480
Administrative and General Staff	3% salary increase (1.5% step for an average 3% raise)	677,799
Health Insurance	6% increase	585,248
Savings	Vacancy and Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Hybrid Rate Separation	(2,500,000)
	<b>Total Increase in Personnel Cost</b>	<b>\$ 3,575,142</b>

<b>Non-Discretionary</b>		
City Maintenance Contract	8.94 % increase due to the implementation of the new Collective Bargaining Contract	\$ 434,525
CATEC	Increase resulting from loss of student tuition from Albemarle and program purchase of services contract	207,353
	<b>Total Increase in Non-Discretionary</b>	<b>\$ 641,878</b>

<b>Positions Needed to Support Student Needs</b>		
Additional Positions	FTE	Cost
Teachers: ESL	3.0	\$ 284,646

ESL: Family Engagement Liaison	1.0	74,995
Teacher: Reading & Math Specialists	2.0	189,764
Teacher: Health & Medical Sciences (CHS)	.5	59,260
Human Resource: Recruiting Specialist	1.0	103,343
Transportation: Coordinator	1.0	125,206
Clinical Social Workers		239,207
One-Time Walker Retention Bonus		179,500
<b>Total Additional Support Student Needs</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>\$ 1,255,921</b>

○ Summary of FY 26 Budget Changes

<b>Expenditure Summary</b>	
● Salary and Benefits	3,575,142
● Non- Discretionary	641,878
● Students Needs/Improvements	1,255,921
<b>Total Expenditure Increases</b>	<b>\$ 5,472,941</b>
State Revenue Increase	538,553
<b>Net City Request</b>	<b>\$ 4,934,388</b>

○ Proposal FY 26 Budget Summary - ALL Funds

<b>Funds</b>	<b>FY 2024-25 Budget</b>	<b>Proposed FY 2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>Amount Change from 2025 to 2026 Budget</b>	<b>Percentage Change from 2025 to 2026 Budget</b>
General (Operating)	\$ 94,115,547	\$102,776,598	\$8,661,051	9.14%
Special Revenue	24,678,680	22,139,692	(2,538,988)	(10.29%)
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 118,794,227</b>	<b>\$124,916,290</b>	<b>\$6,122,063</b>	<b>5.13%</b>

● School Capital Projects

○ Background: School Capital Projects

- Capital projects are funded separately from the City & School’s operating budgets.
- Budgeting for capital improvement projects via the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is part of the overall decision making for the allocation of the City’s financial resources.
- Beyond critical maintenance, modernization efforts are essential to bring 50+ years old school facilities up to current standards for safety, efficiency and learning.

○ Adjust City’s CIP Budget for School Priority Improvement Projects

- Current \$1,250,000 allocation for School Priority Improvement Projects is not keeping up with construction inflation.
- Construction inflation in 2021 ~ 19.6%.
- A 20% increase (\$250,000) is necessary to adjust for rising costs, bringing total CIP budget line to \$1.5M million.
- This adjustment will ensure the continuation of critical school improvement projects, including:
  - Restroom renovations
  - Ceiling replacements
  - Day-lighting enhancements
  - Security vestibule installations
  - This increase is essential to maintaining safe, modern, and functional learning environments for students and staff.
- Strategic Use of Fund Balance for Capital Needs
  - School Board-Approved Investments in the Past 12 Months
  - To help address significant capital project needs, the School Board has allocated fund balance toward:
    - Lighting for CHS Track & Field Facility - A long-standing request to enhance usability and safety. (\$350,000)
    - Furniture for 5th Grade Transition - Supporting the move from Walker to the elementary schools as part of grade reconfiguration with the completion of the new Charlottesville Middle School. (\$379,150)
  - These targeted investments address critical facility improvements while supporting student experience and long-term planning.
- Addressing Critical School Safety & Facility Improvements
  - Several high-priority projects have been identified to enhance school safety and infrastructure.
  - Charlottesville High School (CHS): Over \$250,000 in door replacements identified before the fall safety audit.
  - Cost estimates are still in development and will require collaboration with City Facilities:
    - Lighting improvements
    - Fencing improvements
    - Exterior stair repairs
  - We request that the City allocate funds to help prioritize and initiate these critical improvements.

- Budget Key Dates
- FY 2025-26 Funding Request (Changes to FY 2025)

Strategic Plan Priority	SALARY & BENEFIT ACTIONS	AMOUNT	FTE
3	Teachers: Change Pay Scale to 1.5% even spread & 5.5% increase	4,812,095	
3	Administration: Average 3% increase	279,737	
3	General (Support): Average 3% increase	398,062	
3	Benefit: Health Insurance (Estimate 6%)	585,248	
	<i>Total Salary &amp; Benefit Actions</i>	6,075,142	
	<b>RECURRING &amp; NON-DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS</b>		
4	City Contract: Maintenance (Estimate 8.94%)	434,525	
4	CATEC: Sustain Academic and Operation Services	207,353	
	<i>Total Recurring &amp; Non-Discretionary Contracts</i>	641,878	

Strategic Plan Priority	SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM SUPPORTS & IMPROVEMENTS		
1	Teachers: English Second Language	284,646	3.0
2	Liaison: ESL Family Engagement	74,995	1.0
1	Teachers: Reading and Math Specialists serving Division Wide	189,764	2.0
1	Teachers: Health & Medical Science (CHS)	59,260	0.5
3	Specialist: Human Resource Recruiting Specialist	103,343	1.0
4	Coordinator: Student Transportation	125,206	1.0
3	Clinical Social Workers	239,207	
3	One-time Walker Retention Bonus	179,500	
	<i>Total School-Based Program Supports &amp; Improvements</i>	1,255,921	
	<b>REDUCTIONS</b>		
	Vacancy savings & Separation of the VRS Hybrid Rate	(2,500,000)	
	<i>Total Reductions</i>	(2,500,000)	
	<b>Total Increase Expenditures</b>	5,472,941	8.5
	<b>REVENUES</b>		
	Increase: State	538,553	
	<b>City (Estimated Request)</b>	<b>4,934,388</b>	
	<b>Total Increase Revenues</b>	5,472,941	

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley raised concerns about commentary from the city council regarding school CIP allocations. The council suggested that schools couldn't manage additional summer project funding due to operational constraints. Ms. Dooley characterized this as an "excuse" to avoid allocating more money, acknowledging the limited summer timeframe but emphasizing the schools' ability to manage projects even under challenging circumstances (citing the current operational environment of a middle school). She stated she assured the council that given the funds, the schools would find ways to make projects work. Dr. Gurley concurred, stating that if the funds are provided, they will ensure successful project completion.
- Mr. Meyer advocated for adding a dedicated legal counsel position to the school system's budget, citing concerns for staff, administrators, the system, and students in the current environment. He proposed using \$175,000-\$200,000 from the existing \$9 million fund balance, considering it fiscally sound and replenishable. He acknowledged the budget's overall strength in addressing public concerns and preparing for new state grading criteria.
- Mr. Morse questioned the need for dedicated counsel, asking what such counsel could do that the current hired counsel does not.
- Mr. Meyer responded that dedicated counsel would offer greater responsiveness to urgent situations like the recently discussed executive order impacting the budget and the new union contract. He emphasized the need for swift dispute resolution to avoid lengthy processes that negatively affect staff and students. He also highlighted the benefit of having readily available legal guidance during meetings on state and federal matters, especially for community questions.
- Ms. Torres thanked the team for the slide on critical school safety and facility improvements and reiterated her interest in the safety audit. She requested regular updates on the audit's punch list items, including what is in process, planned, and completed. She inquired about including a line item for these improvements when meeting with the City Council, specifically asking if items from the list of concerns could be addressed.



- Dr. Gurley clarified that while a prioritized list of safety improvements from the audit could be drafted, it would not include cost estimates. He explained that the total cost would likely be in the millions and that the city's capacity to manage projects is a key factor. The focus should be on short-term needs. He suggested presenting the list to the council and discussing potential funding amounts, allowing the city to determine how many projects could be completed.
- Ms. Torres agreed that prioritizing safety-related items from the audit is crucial. She expressed concern about delays and emphasized the need for a partnership with the city. She hoped that Ms. Powell and Dr. Gurley had discussed these issues with their city counterparts and that the list would be presented to the council to avoid repeated delays on these projects. Dr. Gurley confirmed that the non-confidential components of the audit had been shared with the city.
- Ms. Torres expressed her support for the differentiated staffing approach for specialists, emphasizing its importance for equity and strategically placing staff where they are most needed.
- Ms. Dooley reiterated that the list of items for which they are seeking surplus funds is extensive because it largely comprises projects that were neglected under existing city contracts. She emphasized that this ties into the non-discretionary spending line item, which reflects charges from the city. She stressed the importance of making this point clear during the upcoming meeting with the city council on Monday, highlighting that the list wouldn't be so long if the contracted work had been completed as agreed and paid for.
- Ms. Richardson inquired about the use of weapon detectors at sporting events, noting their inconsistent presence. She asked about the criteria for deploying them.
- Dr. Gurley responded that a protocol exists for weapon detector deployment, triggered when the anticipated attendance exceeds 250 people.

**11.4 Overview of Rezoning Plan:** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented a rezoning process update for Board information. The process involved an advisory committee of parents and staff, along with a staff working group, to develop and refine options based on public feedback. Dr. Gurley's recommendation was published last week, and feedback is still being collected. The presentation highlighted the challenges of accommodating growth, particularly at Summit Elementary, which is projected to be significantly over capacity if current boundaries remain. The proposed changes aim to balance capacity and socioeconomics across schools, improve transportation efficiency, and accommodate future development.

Information presented included:

- Purpose of Rezoning: To rebalance school utilizations among the six elementary schools in Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) due to shifting populations and anticipated residential developments.
- Key Recommendations:
  - Move students from specific neighborhoods to different schools to improve socioeconomic diversity.
  - Priority exemptions for incoming 4th and 5th graders to remain at their current schools.
  - Allow early start students (incoming kindergarten) to attend their future school.
- Phased Implementation:
  - Most changes will not occur until the 2029-30 school year, allowing current students to finish at their existing schools.
  - Specific phasing recommendations for different neighborhoods, with some changes proposed for 2027-28.
- Community Engagement:
  - Scheduled community Q&A and feedback meetings to gather input from residents.
  - Online survey available for additional comments.
- Considerations for Rezoning:
  - Maximize walkability and bus efficiency.
  - Keep neighborhoods together and maintain demographic balance.
  - Ensure longevity of school assignments (at least 5 years).

- Capacity Concerns:
  - Anticipated overutilization of Summit Elementary by the 2030-31 school year.
  - Current underutilization of several elementary schools.
- Timeline for School Board Meetings:
  - Overview of recommendations on February 6.
  - Discussion on rezoning on March 6.
  - Potential vote on rezoning on March 27.
- Overall Goal: To better balance enrollments among schools and prepare for the impact of housing developments while accommodating community feedback where possible.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Richardson expressed appreciation for the rezoning work and the recent Q&A session, requesting more information on after-school care options before the rezoning plan is finalized. She also inquired about the timeline for updating the online application forms for transfers and where families could access them. Ms. Powell stated they would work with Ms. Cheuk to update the existing online registration form, anticipating its availability soon. Ms. Cheuk cautioned against families applying before the board's vote on the rezoning plan. She indicated that she and Amanda Korman, Community Relations Coordinator, would begin preparing the updated forms and aim to release them immediately following the final vote.
- Ms. Burns focused her comments on the post-approval process of the rezoning plan. She raised concerns about staffing the application intake process, emphasizing the need to avoid overburdening administrative staff. She stressed the importance of clearly identifying point people for parent inquiries to ensure consistent communication and avoid confusion. She also highlighted the need for clear guidelines regarding application timelines, particularly for future exemptions. Finally, Ms. Burns suggested collaborating with community partners in new development areas to inform potential residents about school assignments before they move in, preventing mismatches between expectations and reality (e.g., families assuming their child will attend Summit Elementary when they will actually be zoned for Burnley-Moran). She expressed appreciation for the work done but emphasized the importance of planning for the logistical challenges of implementation.
- Mr. Meyer expressed his satisfaction with the rezoning plan, connecting it to earlier discussions about city demographics and school challenges. He referenced specific slides in the presentation, noting how the data illustrated the need for change and the projected positive impact of the proposed boundaries. He emphasized the benefits of better space utilization, increased student diversity, and improved educational opportunities. He also highlighted the plan's responsible use of taxpayer resources and commended the committees' work, stating they had successfully incorporated the school board's November guidance. He expressed excitement about the plan and his intention to vote in favor of it in March.

**Board Response to Written Reports**

**12.1 [School Board Member Committee Reports](#):** Board members shared updates on recent activities in this written report.

**13.2 [Outcome of Student Disciplinary Matters - January 9, 2025](#):** On Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 2:30 p.m., the Charlottesville City School Board met in closed session, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 (A) (2) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing student disciplinary matters. The outcome of those meetings is listed below. The outcome of the meeting was shared as a written report.

**13.1 [Comments from Members of the Community](#):**

- Alix Heintzman thanked the board for their statement on safe and welcoming schools but expressed dismay at the recommendation to bring back armed officers. She reiterated previous community concerns, including the lack of evidence of current safety failures, the high cost of officers compared to unmet needs, and statistical evidence suggesting that SROs do not significantly decrease school violence but do increase arrests for minor offenses and lower graduation rates, disproportionately impacting students of color and students with disabilities. She argued that the current proposal fails to address these concerns, does not justify the need for officers, and ignores the negative impacts of policing in schools. She criticized the process for consulting with the police and Navigate 360 before engaging with the community. Finally, she emphasized the potential conflict of interest given Governor Youngkin's push for cooperation with ICE, noting that police officers are not school employees and ultimately answer to the state, raising questions about the compatibility of armed officers with the board's commitment to safety for all students.
- Becca Cole, a Greenbrier resident and parent, echoed Alix Heintzman's concerns about armed officers. She then raised two additional points. First, she challenged the idea that the school system needs to build relationships with police by having officers in schools. She argued that the police department should already have officers trained in interacting with children, as children are part of the community, and that the city, not the schools, should address any training deficiencies within the Charlottesville Police Department. Second, she questioned the "if in doubt, call" policy regarding police involvement in schools. She shared personal anecdotes of police being called for situations (threat assessments) that she felt school staff should have handled, emphasizing that the officers' conduct wasn't the issue, but their presence was unnecessary. She expressed concern about the threshold for police involvement in threat assessments and questioned the increased number of police calls since officers were removed from schools, suggesting that the increase isn't necessarily due to higher threat levels and that internal school resources should be sufficient for handling such situations.
- Z Howard, a city resident and community worker, thanked everyone for their hard work. She expressed concern about the lack of representation from certain communities at school meetings and in school events generally. She asked the board and those who know her how she could encourage greater attendance from these underrepresented groups, mentioning that some parents may feel intimidated by school environments. She offered to collaborate with the school system to improve outreach and engagement with these communities, specifically mentioning her desire to speak with Ms. Powell about safety and community issues and her existing positive relationship with Ms. Rachel. She reiterated her appreciation for the work being done and her commitment to advocating for students, emphasizing her desire to help increase family participation in meetings and school events like parent-teacher conferences.
- Mimi Fitzpatrick, a CCS mom, CHS graduate, and former teacher, reiterated her opposition to police in schools, stating that the facts supporting their ineffectiveness remain unchanged. She emphasized the value of school counselors, provided there are enough of them. She urged the board to demonstrate democratic principles by allowing those most affected by the decision to have a voice. Echoing the student representative and Alix, she stressed the importance of community involvement and suggested that past outreach efforts, such as CPD knocking on doors, were insufficient. She believes there are better ways to engage the community and thanked the board for their continued involvement.
- Zyahna Bryant raised several concerns, emphasizing the importance of considering the current political climate and its impact on students. She highlighted the issue of early interactions between Black boys and police, adding that Black girls also face challenges with school resource officers and policing in general, particularly regarding push-out. She urged the board to consider the needs of undocumented and immigrant students. Regarding rezoning, she appreciated the Summit Elementary conversation and cautioned against coded language being used to mask underlying issues in equity discussions. She stressed that all priorities, including walkability, are equally important and that the board should be aware of euphemisms. Finally, she encouraged the board to remain steadfast in their commitment to equity, particularly given the attacks on a neighboring district for similar initiatives, and thanked them for their work.

#### **14.1 Board Member Comments:**

- Mr. Meyer brought several items to the board's attention. He announced that applications for the Charlottesville Scholarship Program, which primarily benefits CHS graduates, will soon be available. He noted the program's budget challenges, linked to the Community Foundation's investment returns, and suggested exploring ways to increase funding, including a potential \$50,000 contribution from any future surplus. He also requested a presentation from the scholarship program to review recent results and activities. Regarding after-school care, he acknowledged the YMCA's report and new day-long program but expressed concern about continued waitlists, reiterating the need to brainstorm solutions. He agreed with Mr. Davis that UVA could do more to support the community, given their role in some of its challenges, suggesting a pilot program as a minimum effort. Finally, he expressed interest in the upcoming MOU regarding school security, emphasizing the importance of addressing the specific problems identified and hoping the community will judge the MOU based on its effectiveness in solving those problems, rather than perceived misalignments.
- Mr. Morse highlighted two student concerns. First, he suggested investigating the results of a survey regarding Project Capstone to determine if students are genuinely interested in pursuing Capstone projects without dual enrollment (DE). He noted that this could address staffing considerations for the program, ensuring appropriately credentialed teachers are available. Second, he reiterated his concern about the use of AI in schools. He mentioned that he found no existing policy on AI in the school system and suggested that the board discuss creating one, noting that other districts have already done so.
- Ms. Dooley reminded everyone that the following day is a professional learning day for teachers, hoping parents had remembered and made childcare arrangements. She mentioned her intention to attend the SkillsUSA competition at CATEC. She also announced that the Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP) had signed a lease on Monday to relocate the Ivy Creek School to the former A&U building on Route 29 North. This move was necessitated by Albemarle County ending the lease on the current building, and Ms. Dooley expressed hope that the new location will serve the program well for the foreseeable future.
- Ms. Cooper thanked everyone for their comments and assured them that their voices are heard and valued in the board's decision-making process. She emphasized that all perspectives are carefully considered. She encouraged attendees to not only communicate with the board but also engage with the city council, as they play a crucial role in funding decisions. She stressed the importance of expressing the need for school funding and support to city councilors, both individually and at council meetings. She concluded by thanking everyone for attending and sharing their thoughts, concerns, and feelings.
- Ms. Richardson expressed her thanks to everyone. She mentioned that serving on the board sometimes means missing other events, citing the Trailblazers' Soulfest (where her son had a solo performance) and a junior varsity game as examples of events she had to miss that evening. She emphasized her dedication to the board while acknowledging these sacrifices. Finally, she noted that it was Black History Month and expressed excitement about attending the Walker celebration at the end of the month, inviting others to join her.
- Ms. Torres expressed appreciation for her colleagues, the team, and community members who shared their input during the meeting. She then promoted the Family Partners in Special Education conference, hosted by the Parent Resource Center at CATEC on Saturday, March 1st, from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. This free conference aims to build partnerships between families and educators in special education. She encouraged registration via QR code or link (which she offered to share) and highlighted the workshops offered, including topics like navigating IEPs, positive IEP meetings, collaboration strategies, success stories, and available resources. She emphasized that the conference is geared towards parents/caregivers of children with special needs and adults concerned about child development, suggesting it could benefit many people. Finally, she mentioned another upcoming event, "Life After High School" at PVCC, and said she would share more information about it closer to the date.

**15.1 Superintendent's Comments:** Dr. Gurley thanked everyone for attending, specifically mentioning and acknowledging a UVA class present for part of the meeting. He expressed gratitude for the school board, stating he

felt "extremely blessed" to work with such a dedicated group committed to ensuring a safe space for every student and staff member, contrasting it with situations elsewhere in the country. He also acknowledged Black History Month, stating his belief in celebrating Black history year-round but appreciating the dedicated month to honor those who paved the way. He thanked the families and students, promising to send Cyrus and Ally an email regarding their contributions to the meeting. Echoing Mr. Morse, he expressed confidence in finding solutions to challenges, emphasizing the intelligence of those around him. He then wished everyone a good evening.

**17.1 Work Session Wrap-Up:** There were no requests from the board

**18.1 Upcoming Meetings:** Ms. Dooley read the upcoming meetings.

**19.1 Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

A video of the February 6, 2025 meeting can be located at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TFBhRaVTQVvbisXVInu1qddRh27tDfmm/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TFBhRaVTQVvbisXVInu1qddRh27tDfmm/view?usp=drive_link)

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Emily Dooley, School Board Chair

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Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk