



**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS  
Charlottesville High School Media Center, 1400 Melbourne Road  
Thursday, August 3, 2023 (4:00 PM)**

Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on August 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., in the Division Annex/SPED Conference Room.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, and Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations

**1.1 Call to Order:** Mr. Bryant, Board Chair, called the closed session meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**1.2 Closed Meeting:** At 4:01 p.m., Mr. Morse offered a motion to go into Closed Session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Sections 2.2-3711 (A) (1) (8) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel engaged by the Board regarding specific legal matters involving the application of statutory legal authority and requiring the advice of counsel. Dr. Kraft seconded the motion, the motion passed with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

**1.3 Closed Meeting Certification:** At 4:51 p.m., Mr. Morse 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. Dr. Kraft seconded the motion, the motion passed with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

There was no action.

The board recessed from 4:51 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

**2.1 Moment of Silence:** Mr. Bryant 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:	Mr. James Bryant	Ms. Lashundra Bryson Morsberger
	Ms. Emily Dooley	Dr. Sherry Kraft
	Ms. Lisa Torres	Mr. Dom Morse
	Ms. Jennifer McKeever	

The following Board Members were absent:     None

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

The following Staff Members were absent:     None

**5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda:** Dr. Kraft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Torres, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

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

- Matthew Ray, Charlottesville CAT Driver, addressed the Board with comments of concern around the bus driver shortage and walk zones and advocated for a 40 hour work week with benefits for drivers as well as other strategies to address burn-out of drivers.
- Sandra Aviles-Poe, Community Organizer for Charlottesville United for Public Education (CUPE), addressed the Board with comments of concern around student transportation and urged community members to attend the transportation forum on Thursday, August 10.
- Deb Tewksbury, CHS Teacher, addressed the Board with comments of support for a better cell phone policy to help with student achievement.
- Jesaun Johnson, recent CHS graduate and Student Representative to the School Board, shared comments of support for a more comprehensive cell phone policy and a better approach around disciplinary action and increased community outreach to build better participation among students, families, and staff.
- Greg Frank shared comments of support for providing teacher professional development for the delivery of differentiated instruction.
- Stella Gunn, recent CHS graduate, addressed the Board with comments of support on a more comprehensive cell phone policy.

Mr. Andy Jones, Director of Student Activities, recognized Girls' Track Coach Ronald Green and Boys' Soccer Coach Martin Braun, the Central Virginia Coaches of the Year in their respective sports. In addition, Mr. Jones brought the state championship trophy collectively won by CHS academic competition teams (in areas such as debate, film, and theater).

**8.1-4 Adoption of Consent Agenda:** The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations, June 1, 2023 School Board Advance Meeting Minutes](#), and [Policy CBA \(Qualifications and Duties for the Superintendent\)](#). Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the adoption of the proposed consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

As required by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3112(8){1}, Ms. Dooley read a statement regarding personal interest in a transaction of the Charlottesville City School Board. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the Clerk of the School Board for five years. A copy of the full statement can be found on the Board's [Electronic School Board site](#).

Dr. Gurley recognized a number of recent hires (or recent changes in role): Mr. Jason Bennett, assistant principal at CHS; Dr. Kathleen Gentry, assistant principal at Walker Upper Elementary; Ms. Georgette Mickens, principal of

Johnson Elementary; Matthew Resnick, dean of students at Walker Upper Elementary; Mr. Lamont Trotter, administrator of Lugo-McGinness Academy; and Ms. Yumeca Webb-Jordan, assistant principal at CHS.

## Action Items

**9.1 [Approval - 2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#):** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, presented the final draft of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan for Board approval. Staff recommended that the Board vote to adopt this plan, the culmination of six months' work by the Steering Committee, Executive Committee, School Board, and more. An electronic dashboard will be developed to show progress on the plan's metrics.

Mr. Morse made a motion, Dr. Kraft seconded by , to approve the adoption of the proposed consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Ms. Torres asked if staff still receive training that was first put into place when unleveling was implemented. Dr. Otey responded that this is something that they know they need to focus on and Ms. Thomlison is the expert and we will look at bringing this back. Dr. Gurley shared that we will need to build the capacity into the instructional coaches to train the trainer for the teachers in the differentiation of classes.

Mr. Morse

## Items for Discussion

**10.1 [Pupil Transportation Update](#):** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented an update on Pupil Transportation including information on changes in operations and the outlook for bus service when school starts. Information presented included:

### New partner for pupil routing - School Bus Logistics

Advantages:

- Experience & expertise with VersaTrans (the routing system)
- Back-ups (multiple routers assigned)
- New tool for communicating requests/requirements (RouteHub)

### Capacity & Waitlists

- As of July 25th, City Transit Pupil Transportation reports no change or decrease for the number of buses per tier.
- Waitlists fluctuate - for reference, at the end of the 22-23 school year:
  - ~100 students on waitlist (0 high or medium need students waiting)
  - Waitlist was almost entirely split between elementary & middle grades
  - Targeting release of bus assignments & route info no later than August 14th/15th

### Type A Bus Update

- One of two 14 passenger activity buses received
- Second bus canceled by vendor due to State contract change

HELP WANTED: CCS Staff with CDL-S or S-endorsement on regular license

## Continue Moving Forward

- Weekly Meetings:
  - TRIP (Transportation Routing Improvement Project)
  - Special Transportation
  - Safe Routes
    - Continue Collaboration for Infrastructure Improvements with the City
    - Continue Walking School Bus Groups and Crossing Guard Supports
- Support for City Driver Recruitment Efforts
  - New TV Recruitment Ads
- Expansion/Improvement of CAT Service to Increase MS & HS Ridership

- Continue Collaboration with City to Determine Optimal Transportation Model Visit  
<http://charlottesvilleschools.org/>

Ms. McKeever shared comments of concern around the service provided by the City Transportation Department. Dr. Gurley responded that there has been discussion around moving student transportation to the school division.

Ms. Bryson Morsberger spoke in favor of providing bus drivers with benefits.

**10.2 Middle School Project Update:** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented an update regarding items completed to date and work to be completed over the next several months. Information presented included:

#### Progress To Date

- Mobilization
- New Reception Area
- Fencing
- Erosion & Sediment Control Measures
- Surveys, Testing & Inspections (on-going)

#### In Progress

- Tree removal
- Breezeway removal
- Draining refrigerant
- Sediment pond
- Electric service for construction trailers
- Meetings with CFD to finalize evacuation, access & egress plans
- Additional salvage from gym building
- More surveys, testing & inspections

#### Moving Ahead

- Project teams & routines are in place:
  - Bi-weekly construction progress meetings
  - Monthly environmental graphics team meetings
    - community outreach & engagement (1st-2nd quarter)
- Looking Forward:
  - Asbestos abatement for gym building (late August)
  - Geothermal well installation on field (mid August - November)
  - Gym building demolition & removal (September)

**10.3 School Nutrition Update:** Carlton Jones, School Nutrition Administrator, presented an update on School Nutrition for Board information. All CCS schools are expected to be part of CEP this year, meaning all students will be eligible for free meals. Information presented included:

#### Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

- What is the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
  - Community eligibility allows schools to offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost. Removes the burden of processing free & reduced household applications
  - Uses Directly Certified/Categorically Eligible student data as of April 1st of the prior school year
  - Provision program that operates on a 4-Year Cycle
  - Eliminates negative balances
- Charlottesville City Schools CEP Growth
  - SY 2018-2019 The district began participating in programs at Johnson, Jackson Via and Clark.
  - SY 2021-2022 The district added Walker, Buford and CHS.

- SY 2023-2024 The district submitted an application to add Burnley-Moran, Greenbrier and Venable.
- Success of Participating in CEP
  - Increased participation
  - Eliminate negative balances
  - Erased stigma of free lunch

The board thanked Mr. Jones for making this happen in all of our schools.

**10.4 [Communications Updates:](#)** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, presented Communications Update on ParentSquare and SmartSites for Board information. Information presented included:

#### **ParentSquare**

- One Unified Platform
  - Mass Notifications
  - Classroom Comms
  - School Services
  - School Websites
- Make it Easier for Everyone to Communicate: Save time, streamline work. Send everything-mass notifications, classroom posts, one-to-one messages, forms, sign-ups-using tools built to work together, not pieced together.
- Smart Alerts!
- One Tap Participation
- Two-Way Communication
- How ParentSquare Works
  1. Teachers & staff share school-related news on ParentSquare.
  2. Parents receive, respond & sign up, and get automated reminders!
  3. Everyone has easy access to all interactions in one place.
- Extra Functionality (We May Roll This Out Slowly)
- Extra Functionality, Cont'd: Payments, Forms, & More All in One Place
- ParentSquare: Now with "SmartSites" integrated websites
  - Unified Website & Communications Tools
  - Easy-to-Use Interface
  - Create Once, Publish Everyone (COPE)
- In July, we'll ask families and staff to download the app.
  - First steps are to set up notification preferences.
  - ParentSquare offers training videos for administrators, staff, and families.
- Timeline
  - ParentSquare Communications
    - 1-way communications launch in July
    - 2-way communications launch mid-August
    - Staff PL during pre-week
    - SmartSites Website Launch- July 1 expected launch date

**New website, same URL: [charlottesvilleschools.org](http://charlottesvilleschools.org)**

Board members shared comments of appreciation for the implementation of these new communications tools.

**10.5 [School Safety Update:](#)** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented an update on School Safety including information on infrastructure projects completed year-to-date, the Summer Summit and pre-week training sessions, and next steps for school safety/security. Information presented included:

#### **Safety & Security Infrastructure 2023 Projects Year-to-Date**

- LMA - Access control and security film projects completed
- CATEC - Aiphone ordered and wiring completed, hardware installation pending
- CHS - Aiphone system installed for CHS main entrance and vestibule access control, camera system replacements and upgrade 85% complete
- Johnson - Vestibule construction & access control completed, master rekey to be completed in August, initial camera system install complete - full system install pending
- Burnley-Moran - Vestibule construction & access control completed

#### **Safety & Security Training June 14th - Summer Safety Summit**

- Owning School Climate & Culture - Owning School Safety - Group Activity ●
- Break
- Threat Assessments
- Break
- Response Protocols - Review & Activity
- Stop The Bleed - Presentation
- School Crisis, Emergency Management & Medical Response Plans - Overview & Updates
- LUNCH
- Stations
  - City Emergency Management: What-If Scenarios (Jeremy Evans, Emergency Mgt. Coordinator)
  - CFD: Stop The Bleed Hands-On and Other Safety Info (Joe Phillips, CFD Acting Deputy Chief)
  - CPD: Searches, Communications, etc. (CPD Lt. Jones & Sgt. Thomas)
  - CCS: Crisis, Emergency Management & Medical Response Plan Support and Other DCJS Requirements (CCS Kim Powell & Leslie Thacker)

#### **Safety & Security Training Pre-Week School-Based Sessions**

- Designated time for focus on safety at each school (morning of August 17th for most)
- Presentation, script & activities provided for school admin to lead training for their school
- Extension of the Summer Safety Summit:
  - Owning School Climate & Culture - Owning Our Safety (guided discussion)
  - Threat Assessments (review for all staff)
  - Response Protocols (review for all staff)
  - Individual review/assessment & response for each classroom (closing activity)
    - Flip-Charts
    - Keys & Door Lock Operation
    - Window Coverings
    - Primary & Secondary Evacuation Routes

#### **Next Steps & Moving Forward**

- August 2nd crossing guards meeting & training
- August 16th custodial specific safety training sessions
- August 17th Narcan training for nurses and MS & HS medical management teams
- Complete access control installations followed by master rekey projects
- Continue camera system installations for elementary schools
- Expand security film installations
- State funded digital mapping initiative (in progress)
- Emergency communications app project (must be coordinated with ACPS & ECC)
- Weapons detection
- Continue collaborations and refinement of procedures & practices:
  - Care & Safety Assistants (CSA) program
  - First responder partners
  - School admin & Crisis Management Teams (CMTs)
- Annual DCJS requirements Special thanks to the CCS IT Team, CFD & CPD for their continuous support of our school safety systems and initiatives!

**10.6 [Cell Phone Update](#):** Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Ed.D., Division Superintendent, presented a Cell Phone Update for Board information. Information presented included:

### **Here's What!**

What do we know about the matter and how is it impacting Charlottesville City Schools?

- Schools around the country have been faced with how to support development and social emotional needs of students, while trying to decrease students screen time on cellphones at school.
- Teachers have solicited school-wide and division-wide support to curb the impact of cellphone use in school.
- Work was conducted during the SY 21-22 to plan for cell phone restrictions at CHS for SY 22-23. - During the SY 22-23, there were issues with the fidelity of implementation and a delayed rollout which occurred after the start of school.
- The cellphone committee, which was tasked by the school board back in May of 2023 to develop a cellphone plan for students, was unable to reach a consensus with regards to the appropriate next steps.
- Pencil boxes have been purchased to support the Tier I implementation of a cellphone regulation for all students.

### **So What? What's our interpretation of the matter?**

- We must ensure we prioritize the learning and social emotional needs of every student in our schools when developing policies and regulations.
- What problems are we attempting to solve?
  - Documented Concerns
    - Learner dependency on cell phones
    - Mental health declines associated with cell phones/social media
    - Teacher-student relationships (school culture)
    - Student engagement issues
    - Teacher pedagogy
    - Disruptions to teaching and learning

### **Now What! What is our plan of action for the 2023-2024 school year?**

- Educate our students about with regard to promoting healthy practices, including development of interpersonal skills and minimizing screen time
- Engage families and communities throughout the school year in conversations about Tier I expectations, school safety, and cell phone protocols, as well as how teachers will engage students with meaningful instruction
- Engage teachers in professional development regarding safety practices, setting a positive school climate, participating in a collaborative conversation regarding cellphone expectations, and accountability
- Set schoolwide cellphone expectations that MUST be implemented by every teacher with consistency and fidelity (non-negotiables)
- Relationship building ongoing
- Cellphones in pencil boxes in instructional spaces (no breaks)
- Guest wifi at all schools will be limited to school-issued devices
- Monitoring of appropriate cell phone use in hallways and lunch
- violations of school-wide expectations can lead to the loss of privileges for as long as the school year - Consistent expectations / implementation from all teachers
- Bimonthly data checks (September, November, January, March, May) to determine if plan is working and what enhancements and / or modifications may be needed

Dr. Gurley shared comments with the Board noting that change is difficult and input has been received from teachers and students on both sides of the aisle with some teachers reporting that it isn't a problem in their class. Dr. Gurley also stressed the importance of helping the community see the advantages of removing cell phones and intentionally work in the best interest of students.

McKeever supports implementing a policy that says put away your cell phones and work to hold students, staff, and families accountable for violations. Dr. Gurley responded that there have been some challenges among staff on who will address violations and agreed to the need of holding each other accountable.

Dr. Kraft, a member of the Cell Phone Committee, supports removing cell phone access and shared comments of concerns around the complexity of the issue and destructive effects on students' wellbeing. Dr. Kraft acknowledged and shared Dr. Gurley's concerns around the importance of the process and gathering community support.

Ms. Bryson-Morsberger supports removing cell phone access and the implementation of more simple consequences (fewer tiers).

Ms. Torres, a member of the Cell Phone Committee, provided an update on cell phone committee meetings noting that it was clear that the committee was divided and was not going to agree with the number of proposed interventions which will require additional work to get to a good policy and community support.

Ms. Dooley stressed the importance of clearly articulating that cell phones will be off and away during instructional time and suggested using incentives to foster compliance (and to reduce disciplinary measures). Dr. Gurley confirmed that "off and away" is the policy and plans further communication and partnership with the community are under way.

Mr. Bryant stressed the importance of consistency and buy in around the cell phone policy.

Dr. Gurley shared that staff will clean up the policy to ensure minimal teacher disruptions.

Next steps:

- Work with principals at Buford and Walker
- Communication team
- Community Engagement
- Off and away
- Succinctly outline the policy

## **Board Response to Written Reports**

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

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

- Jennifer Horne, CHS Teacher, reiterated her support for implementing a cell phone policy and shared comments from students around cell phone use.
- Brian Mason, parent of two Walker Students, addressed the Board with comments of support for implementing a cell phone policy.
- Andy Josselyn, CHS Teacher, shared comments on his negative experiences in the classroom involving cell phones and stressed the importance of implementing a policy.

### **13.1 [Board Member Comments](#):**

- Ms. Torres expressed her appreciation for Mr. Josselyn and Ms. Horn for their work around the cell phone policy and asked if there were funds to purchase Yonder Pouches.



- Ms. Bryson Morsberger thanked staff for coming out and speaking and sharing their perspective of the cell phone policy and also spoke in support of purchasing Yonder Pouches.
- Dr. Kraft addressed the Board with comments of support for purchasing Yonder Pouches and also shared information on the passing and memorial for recent CHS Graduate Aidan Peters.
- Mr. Morse read a quote from the newly approved Strategic Plan around personal fulfillment and shared some of his positive experiences.
- Ms. Dooley announced that the Charlottesville High School Summer Graduation Ceremony will be held on Friday, August 4.
- Ms. McKeever expressed appreciation for those who provided public comment around the cell phone policy.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Bryant read the following statement on behalf of the Board and Dr. Gurley: Since we last met, new state guidance has been issued about the treatment of transgender students. As a Board, we want to be clear that we will continue to honor, support, and protect our transgender and nonbinary students, staff, and family members. Our policies have been carefully crafted to both support our students and to partner with our families, and we intend to maintain our current policies and procedures. As we have said before, when we take steps to support one group of students, we make our schools better for all of our students.

**14.1 Superintendent's Comments:** Dr. Gurley expressed his appreciation and support for teachers who are working hard and stressed the importance of identifying and amplifying their hard work.

**15.1 Work Session Wrap-Up:** There was **one** request from the Board:

- Follow up report on professional learning: specifically regarding differentiation

**16.1 Upcoming Meetings:** Mr. Bryant read the upcoming meetings.

**17.1 Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

A video of the August 3, 2023 meeting can be located at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_INdHnRmGW15j3yi9924ChsuVdHJioIV/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_INdHnRmGW15j3yi9924ChsuVdHJioIV/view?usp=drive_link)

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James Bryant, School Board Chair

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Julia Green, School Board Clerk