



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
Thursday, January 4, 2024 (5:00 PM)

Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on January 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., in the Division Annex/SPED Conference Room.

PRESENT: Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson and Ms. Larson-Torres
ABSENT: None

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

1.1 Call to Order: Dr. Gurley, Superintendent, 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) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. Ms. Larson-Torres seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

1.3 Closed Meeting Certification: At 4:44 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. Ms. Larson-Torres seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

There was no action.

The board recessed from 4:49 p.m. until 5:03 p.m.

2.1 Moment of Silence: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, 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. Nicole Richardson
	Ms. Lisa Larson-Torres	Margaret Heaphy, Student Represe

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. Carolyn Swift
Ms. Renee Hoover	Ms. Beth Cheuk
Ms. Julia Green	Ms. Leslie Thacker

The following Staff Members were absent: None

5.1 Elect a Chair: In accordance with School Board Policy, BCA, School Board Organizational Meeting, the School Board will elect a Chair of the Board. Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve Ms. Larson-Torres as Chair of the Board. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

5.2 Elect a Vice Chair: In accordance with School Board Policy, BCA, School Board Organizational Meeting, the School Board will elect a Vice-Chair of the Board. Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve Mr. Morse as Vice-Chair of the Board. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

5.3 Appoint Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Board: In accordance with School Board Policy, BCA, School Board Organizational Meeting, the School Board will, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, appoint a Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Board. Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Larson-Torres, to approve Julia Green as Clerk and Leslie Thacker as Deputy Clerk of the Board. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

6.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, 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. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

7.1 Comments from Students: There were none.

7.2 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Derek Hartline: Lifelong resident and Jackson-Via Teacher inquired about the location of the Joe Wescot memorial bench that was removed during site work for the new Charlottesville Middle School.
- Jeri Lloyd: former Buford teacher expressed concern about the destroyed memorial garden for Joe Wescot and requested its restoration.
- Amy Gardner: CHS parent urged the school board to acknowledge and address the ongoing issues at Charlottesville High School.
- Tom Cormons: Father of a CHS student addressed the board with comments of concern around safety and Charlottesville High School, expressed appreciation for Mr. Leatherwood's service and for Dr. Gurley's acceptance of accountability. He emphasized the importance of a safe learning environment for student and staff well-being and highlighted the importance of the community's shared responsibility for positive change.
- Chuck Moran: City resident urged the board to carefully review the writings of Phil Varner due to perceived dishonesty.

8.1 Student Representative Report: Student Representative Margaret Heaphy expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve and asked about the duration of the additional staffing support at Charlottesville High School.

9.1 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations](#), [Minutes - October 19, 2023 School Board Work Session](#), and [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#). Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dooley, 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. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Action Items

10.1 Approval - 2024-2025 Program of Studies: Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer; Jason Bennett, CHS Assistant Principal; Rodney Jordan, Buford Principal; Summerlyn Thompson, Walker Principal; Lamont Trotter, Program Administrator for Lugo-McGinness Academy; and Dr. Stacey Heltz, Director of CATEC, presented the 2024-2025 Program of Studies for board information on December 7, 2023. Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the proposed 2024-2025 Program of Studies. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Ms. Larson-Torres asked if the number of students interested in Unmanned Aircraft Systems II would affect staffing or who would teach the course. Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, responded that unmanned drones courses had two additional sections added this year, as two Avid courses taught by engineering teachers were removed. This change resulted in minimal impact this year. Next year, Unmanned Aircraft Systems II will be added to the Program of Studies to create a sequential opportunity for students to become CTE completers. She noted that if every student who took Unmanned Drones I wanted to become a completer and take Unmanned Drones II, there could be some impact. We would need to add two courses to accommodate those students and any new students interested in Unmanned Aircraft Systems I. This would impact engineering because the same engineering teachers also teach unmanned drones. Decisions would need to be made about which courses are offered based on student interest in engineering and unmanned drones as the program of studies progresses.

Megan Fitzgerald, CTE Instructional Specialist, shared that there is a slight decline in engineering enrollment data, with lower numbers in engineering I courses this year. This could potentially allow room for the Unmanned Aircraft Systems 2 course next year. While half of the current Unmanned Aircraft Systems I students are seniors, requiring only one section of Unmanned Aircraft Systems II for next year. While acknowledging the difficulty of predicting future enrollment numbers, she stressed the importance of avoiding a situation where increased engineering enrollment leads to a lack of teachers for Engineering 1. The board discussed prioritizing Engineering 1 in case of scheduling conflicts and offering Unmanned Aircraft Systems 2 only if enrollment allows. The enrollment cap for unmanned drones is currently suggested to be 12 due to equipment and safety concerns. The curriculum is under review, and the cap may change. Ms. Fitzgerald estimated that 10-12 students from Unmanned Drones 1 might be interested in taking Unmanned Drones II next year. While acknowledging the challenges, the board expressed commitment to offering innovative courses while making responsible decisions. They will monitor student interest and enrollment data to inform future course offerings.

10.2 Approval - CATEC Superintendent Signature Authorization on Memorandum of Understanding: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent, presented the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) Memorandum of Understanding for board information requesting Superintendent Signature Authorization on behalf of Charlottesville City Schools.

Dr. Gurley stated that Charlottesville City Schools has worked collaboratively with Albemarle County Public Schools with regards to the CATEC transition and have jointly drafted the proposed MOU that supports both organizations and continues to help Career and Technical education thrive in the Charlottesville area. Dr. Gurley expressed appreciation for the efforts of Ms. Powell and both legal teams.

The MOU defines how tuition slots will be made available for ACPS students, and the process for ACPS to make slot reservations for CATEC programs.

- Programs Offered and slots available

- Slot determination time table

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the recommendation that Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Division Superintendent, to act as a signatory on the Charlottesville City Schools / Albemarle County Schools Memorandum of Understanding.. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Items for Discussion

11.1 CHS Safety Updates: Kenneth Leatherwood, Charlottesville High School Interim Principal; Dr. T. Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Equity and Inclusion; and Todd Koogler, Coordinator of Safety and Security, presented updates on safety at Charlottesville High School.

Charlottesville High School Systems Update Included (presented by Mr. Leatherwood and Dr. Johnson):

- Moving Forward as a Black Knight Nation
 - Reset: November 27
 - Be Present
 - Be Respectful
 - Be Responsible
 - Be Safe
 - Be a Learner
 - High-Level Infractions Relating to State Discipline Codes at CHS from 11/27-12/16
 - 5 - Behaviors That Endanger Self/Others (BESO)
 - 1 - Behaviors Related to School Operations (BSO)
 - 3 - Behaviors Of A Safety Concern (BSC)
 - This list includes:
 - 2 Verbal altercations (another 3 were resolved through restorative practices)
 - 3 Physical altercations
 - 3 Drug, tobacco, and vape-related offenses
 - 1 Refusal to comply
 - Systems Updates
 - Incorporating community partnerships
 - New student sign in/sign out process
 - Main office entry only
 - Student parking passes
 - Additional support staff hired and positions repurposed.
 - Improving and streamlining systems including building coverage
 - Facilities walk-through

Mr. Meyer asked if the infractions that are listed are any different from the beginning of the year. Dr. Johnson shared that she did not have that information and she could get it back to the board.

Dr. Gurley shared that two of our crossing guards are going to start as hall monitors next week. This will help having extra hands during lunch times.

Safety & Security Initiatives for 2024 included (presented by Mr. Koogler):

- Topics
 - Communications
 - Currently communications within the schools varies depending on the technology and resources available

- Intercom systems
 - Reliable technology, but antiquated and sometimes difficult to maintain
- Two way radios
 - Simple technology with limited range and capabilities
- Phones
 - Not available in every classroom
- First Responder communications & coordination is also an area for improvement
- Options for integrating technology into communications protocols:
 - Upgrade radios
 - Allows CCS to utilize the existing regional radio network for increased functionality and range
 - Considerably more expensive than existing radios
 - Allows for better direct communication with first responders during a crisis
 - Addresses radio range concerns for walking bus safety
 - Computer based applications
 - Utilize communications functions within existing software systems to reduce radio traffic
 - Allows every teacher a means of immediate and discrete communication
- Physical Security Improvements
 - Access control system expansion
 - Upgrade exterior doors to card access points with local alarms
 - Directly addresses previous vulnerabilities of students accessing doors and defeating locking mechanisms through active measures.
 - Still allows staff to use these access points for outside educational opportunities
 - Opportunity to optimize use of the Genetec system through their mobile application to free staff from using their laptops for all functions
- Camera system upgrades to remove “blind spots” in public access areas
- Coverage for more points of entry as well
 - Interior cameras on tertiary exits which are Fire Exits not commonly used during the day.
- Weapons Detection
 - Moving forward with the Ceia OpenGate System
 - Lightweight and portable
 - Can be utilized indoors and outdoors
 - Unlike typical metal detector gates, OpenGate detects metal threats without mechanical or electrical connection between the two pillars
 - Reporting software measures false alarms, throughput, and sensitivity
 - Currently utilized by Louisa County, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, and UVA

Discussion:

Mr. Meyer requested historical disciplinary data the weeks prior to the presented data (11/27 - 12/16). Dr. Johnson responded that staff will prepare and share that information with the board.

Dr. Gurley stated that two current crossing guards will be serving as hall/cafeteria monitors and that additional staffing helps keep students centered in a space.

Ms. Heaphy inquired about the two new staff members at CHS and whether they will assume CSA roles and duties. Dr. Gurley responded that they will not, they will serve in the front lobby area as a barrier and will ask students for passes.

Ms. Dooley inquired about the radio system upgrade cost, receiving an estimated \$100,000 from Mr. Koogler. She further questioned its effectiveness in resolving communication issues with first responders, to which Mr. Koogler explained limited compatibility, allowing only one-way communication with the CCS channel.

Mr. Meyer inquired about CHS radio systems, to which Mr. Koogler responded they have limited range and single-speaker limitations, causing issues during multiple events.

Mr. Meyer inquired about supply availability for quick implementation if funds are allocated. Mr. Koogler confirmed the Division has dedicated security funds, and this isn't a current budget request.

Ms. Cooper inquired about the procedure following a weapons detection alert. Mr. Koogler explained students walk through with backpacks, and if something triggers an alarm, they walk back for further inspection.

Ms. Dooley requested specific high school protocol details, including communication timelines, staff roles, and next steps following a weapons detection alert.

Ms. Richarson inquired about the expected timeframe and cost for implementation. Mr. Koogler estimated 4-6 weeks and \$120,000.

Ms. Larson-Torres inquired about budget inclusion. Ms. Hoover confirmed final costs will determine if vacancy savings cover them.

Mr. Meyer asked if the proposed weapons detection system will deter students from bringing contraband items into school. Mr. Koogler responded that other divisions do see decreases in contraband.

Ms. Larson-Torres inquired about safety mechanism integration in Buford renovations. Mr. Goddard confirmed Nielsen will adapt to the chosen system.

11.2 [Accessing Student Mental Wellness Support](#): Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, presented information on the process for students, staff and caregivers to access student mental wellness support.

Ms. Rasnake shared that school counselors act as the initial point of contact for student mental health concerns. They assess needs, offer brief counseling, and connect students to community resources when needed. For more intensive support, a multidisciplinary team steps in. Additionally, the district provides various programs like Care Solace, TDT, and Evergreen to further connect students with help.

Discussion:

Ms. Dooley inquired about staffing comparison to SOQ standards. Dr. Gurley confirmed CCS exceeds the region in social-emotional support.

Mr. Meyer inquired about Medicaid eligible Therapeutic Data Treatment staff. Ms. Rasknake responded that CCS does have TDT workers in school buildings and provided further explanation that the previously available Medicaid program for deep mental health services was canceled and hasn't been directly replaced. However, efforts are being made to address the gaps. The TDT program partners with organizations to offer similar in-school services, but eligibility is limited to Medicaid-eligible families. It's expanding, with a new staff member recently added at Walker Elementary. She also shared that CCS offers additional support through programs like Region 10 and Evergreen, staffed by our district personnel.

Ms. Heaphy asked if calm spaces might be offered at CHS. Ms. Rasnake responded that those are determined at each school but discussions about creating one are ongoing.

Mr. Meyer inquired about the five most critical positions to address current student mental health demands. Ms. Rasnake responded by prioritizing the skills and services offered over specific job titles, emphasizing the need for professionals capable of providing individualized and targeted counseling support.

11.3 Facility Improvement Projects Update: Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, and Michael Goddard, City Facilities Development Manager, provided an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process and an update regarding projects recently completed and currently in progress. Information presented included:

- Assessment Priority Definitions
 - Priority 1: Legal mandate. Critical/major functional loss. Direct impact to health or safety. Code required. Consideration of external financial leveraging.
 - Priority 2: Asset preservation – critical. Impacts use of the facility. Critical code compliance.
 - Priority 3: Asset preservation – non-critical. Impacts use on overall facility. Operating efficiency. Cost savings.
 - Priority 4: Partial space or function loss. Quality of space/function.
 - Priority 5: Future, long range improvements. Non-critical code compliance.
- Projects in Construction and Completed
 - Middle School Reconfiguration
 - Greenbrier Modernization
 - Johnson Modernization Phase 1
 - CHS Electrical Equipment Replacement (phase 1, 2)
 - CHS Roof (Phase 1,2)-Various Roof Small Replacements
 - CHS Ticket Booths
 - Johnson, Burnley Snow Guards
 - Lugo Puff Roof
 - Clark Lower Level Drainage
 - CCS Admin Building ADA and Security Upgrades
- FY 25-29 Planned Work
 - CHS Restroom Reconfiguration (Priority Improvement)
 - Burnley Moran Roof Replacement FY27- \$1.5M
 - Jackson Via Roof Replacement FY28- \$1.5M
 - CHS Generator Upgrades FY25- \$550K
 - CHS Turf Field Replacement FY26- \$900
 - Jackson Via Modular Classroom FY25- TBD
- FY25-29 CIP New Requests
 - Pre-K Center at Walker campus \$25M-\$30M FY27
 - Johnson Elementary Roof Replacement \$1.5M- FY29
 - Clark Window Replacement FY25- \$450K
 - CCS Phase 1 Classroom A/C Unit Replacement Program

Mr. Morse inquired about the timeline for the Central Office construction project. Mr. Goddard responded that its completion is expected at least a month from now.

At Ms. Larson-Torres' request, Mr. Goddard shared the following comments around capacity with focus on current capacity concerns at Jackson-Via Elementary due to new housing development.

Background: A school capacity study was conducted 7-8 years ago, identifying schools needing additional space. Modular classrooms were planned for all schools except Jackson-Via due to site constraints. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily paused capacity concerns.

Current situation: New housing development near Jackson-Via is creating an urgent need for additional capacity. No readily available solution exists at the school.

Action: The district is working on an emergency solution for Jackson-Via. Recognizing the urgency to avoid a critical situation.

Mr. Meyer inquired about the status of electric buses. Ms. Powell responded that Crystal Rittervold from the Office of Sustainability would be a great person to ask because there are ongoing conversations at the City in regard to electric buses. Mr. Goddard added that if electric buses become a permanent fixture in the City, Facilities will likely build the facilities to charge them and make any necessary expansions at the Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) facility if that's where they will be housed. While electric buses aren't currently part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), they might be pursued through the Office of Sustainability in collaboration with the Transit department.

Ms. Powell responded to the inquiry about the memorial bench at Buford Middle School. She noted that she and other staff members made multiple efforts to locate the family of Mr. Wescott to offer them the plaque mounted on the bench. However, during initial site work for the renovation, it was determined that the bench could not be removed intact due to the way it was installed in the ground with footers and the top being epoxied to the two legs. Therefore, despite their efforts, they were unfortunately unable to connect with the family before the bench's removal.

11.4 [2024-2025 Budget Development Update](#): Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, provided an update regarding the projected state funding for fiscal year 2024-2025 based on the Governor's budget proposal that was released in December. Information presented included:

- Understanding the Local Composite Index (LCI)
 - Determines distribution of all state K-12 funding except the sales tax school age population distribution
 - Dates to the 1970's
 - Intended to measure a locality's residents basic capacity or ability to pay for K-12 education versus other localities:
 - It does not measure or compare the actual level of revenue generated by a locality
 - It does not consider poverty level of the students served
 - LCI computes the locality's relative state share of three revenue capacity indicators:
 - True market value of real estate (50%)
 - Virginia Adjusted Gross Income - VAGI (40%)
 - Taxable sales (10%)
 - The revenue capacity indicators are then divided by a locality's relative share of the state's:
 - Public school ADM (66.6%)
 - Population (33.3%)
- Understanding the LCI Calculation
 - There is an adjustment to the standard calculation for localities with non-resident income above 3 percent of VAGI.
 - The only changes adopted to the LCI since its inception have been adding the one-third population to the denominator in the 1980's, and later the non-resident adjustment to VAGI.
 - Sometimes hold-harmless funding is provided to help mitigate the impact of significant LCI changes in the first year of a new biennium. This is usually politically contentious, so difficult to count on until the state budget process is completed.
 - After the weighted revenue factors are divided by the ADM and the population numbers, and the ADM and population components are added together, the total is multiplied by .45 to get the relative 45% local to 55% state weighted average share of SOW costs.2024-26 Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay
- 2024-26 Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay
 - LCI increased 7.5 percent over the 2022-24 biennium budget.
 - Charlottesville is required to pay about 77.02 percent of the minimum educational program set by the state.
 - State aid and sales tax provides only 22.98 percent toward the minimal state education program requirements.

- Actual impact of LCI changes can only be assessed using VDOE’s “Calc Tool” issued with the adopted and proposed budget.
- LCI Components: Indicators of Relative Populations to be Served
- Charlottesville’s student (ADM) decreased significantly more than the state average while the general population increased significantly more than the state average.
- Charlottesville’s rate of ADM loss contributed to the pandemic. CCS experienced a significant loss of students in FY 2021.
- Budget Priorities
 - Student Achievement
 - Literacy ○ Intervention - Alternative Pathways
 - Academic Learning & Resources (Small Classes, High Expectations)
 - Building Modernization
 - CATEC
 - Compensation & Benefits
 - Safety & Security
- Key Budget Development Dates
 - January 18 School Board Work Session - Superintendent Presents Recommended Budget Changes
 - January 30 Community Budget Update
 - February 1 School Board Regular Meeting - Superintendent’s Proposed Budget and Public Hearing
 - February 7 Joint Meeting with School Board and City Council to Discuss Budget
 - February 15 School Board Work Session
 - February 22 School Board Special Meeting - Approve Budget to City Council

Ms. Dooley recommended that the Local Composite Index (LCI) be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Joint Work Session with City Council on January 10, 2024 .

11.5 [2023-2024 Recruitment Plan](#): Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, introduced Josh Herndon, Human Resources Coordinator, who presented the 2023-2024 Retention and Recruitment Plan for board information. Information presented included:

Other Information presented included:

- Vision and Mission for Recruitment and Retention
- 2023-2024 New Licensed Staff Hire Data
- Teachers Leaving the Classroom in Virginia
- Reasons for Departures in CCS (All Staff)
- Current Needs in Charlottesville City Schools
- Teacher Openings by Department
- Retention in Charlottesville City Schools
- Retention Highlights Unique to CCS
- What New Teachers are Saying About Support
- Recruitment Strategies

Mr. Meyer shared appreciation for the presentation and asked how Charlottesville City Schools retention rates compare to other districts and or the state level. Ms. Lewis responded that she did not have those statistics on hand and would provide that information to the Board. She and Dr. Gurley highlighted the challenge of retaining diverse teachers, mentioning a pattern of initial recruitment followed by departures after a few years and elaborated on the need to create a more welcoming environment, particularly for teachers of color. Dr. Gurley noted the lack of social outlets, professional networks, and a sense of community for these teachers.

Ms. Larson-Torres shared comments around teacher retention strategies including emphasis on compensation as a key factor, considering the high cost of living in Charlottesville. She proposed creating programs to connect minority teachers with local networks for better integration into the community. Additionally, Ms. Larson-Torres questioned if there were enough administrators to provide adequate feedback to teachers, suggesting this could be an area for improvement. Finally, she expressed concern about the limitations of exit interview data and the need for a deeper understanding of why teachers leave, particularly regarding support within the classroom and from administration.

Ms. Lewis explained the 30-60-90 day feedback program for new teachers highlighting the benefits of this early feedback for both teachers and administrators. Ms. Larson-Torres suggested extending the program beyond 90 days, possibly to the end of the school year, to see if initial concerns are addressed. She also proposed incorporating mentor follow-ups to get a more complete picture of new teachers' experiences.

Mr. Meyer asked if Charlottesville City Schools was competitive around employee compensation and asked if there were other monetary compensation that the Division should be offering. Mr. Herndon responded that one area of improved compensation could be an increase in the tuition reimbursement rates.

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

12.2 [Outcome of Student Disciplinary Matters - December 14, 2023](#): On Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 5:00 pm, 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 the meetings were shared as a written report.

12.3 [Proposed 2023-2024 School Board Committee Assignments](#): The proposed 2023-2024 School Board Committee Assignments were shared as a written report. The assignments will be presented for approval on February 1, 2024.

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

- Karen Little, parent of CHS and Buford student, spoke against the recommendation to use metal detectors in schools. She argued that there is no evidence that metal detectors make schools safer and that they can make students feel less safe. She cited research from West Ed, a reputable education research organization, to support her claims. Little urged the board to consider alternative solutions that address the root causes of school violence.
- Jerri Lloyd, former teacher at Buford, voiced opposition to the proposed school renaming. Highlighting the cherished memories and connections forged during her tenure, Lloyd expressed concern that renaming Buford Middle School would not only sever the sense of belonging for current students but also diminish the historical identity valued by teachers. She fears the sterile environment absent of historical references could negatively impact students' well-being. Her sentiment extends to current faculty, who, like herself, have built their careers within the existing historical context of the school.
- Amy Gardner, parent of a CHS student, raised a series of concerns about staffing and budget priorities within Charlottesville City Schools. She expressed doubts that current teacher satisfaction surveys adequately captured the reasons for teacher departures, suggesting more options to reflect dissatisfaction with the school environment. Regarding teacher pay, Gardner compared Charlottesville to other districts, but questioned if the comparisons were truly relevant. She emphasized the high cost of living in Charlottesville, suggesting that current teacher compensation might not be sufficient to retain staff. Staffing levels were another point of concern, with Gardner citing the reduction of occupational therapists from two full-time positions to one. She also inquired about the budget allocated to CATEC, a program about which she admitted limited knowledge, but for which she noted recent teacher departures.

14.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Richardson shared comments of appreciation for those who presented and stated that is looking forward to serving.
- Ms. Dooley apologized for the lack of communication regarding staff concerns. She assured the public that the board prioritizes staff well-being and outlined several actions taken to address these concerns, including expanded parental leave, prioritizing teacher voices through collective bargaining, and providing additional educational opportunities. She also highlighted efforts to improve student experience through initiatives such as free meals and mental health support.
- Ms. Cooper expressed appreciation for the presentations and voiced concerns about the proposed implementation of metal detectors in schools. She highlighted potential negative impacts on African American and marginalized communities. Ms. Cooper requested more information, including data on the success of metal detectors in other districts like Louisa, before the board makes a purchasing decision. She acknowledged being new to the board and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate.
- Mr. Morse welcomed the new board members and expressed his enthusiasm for working with them. He complimented them on having a successful first meeting.
- Ms. Burns expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the school board and highlighted her commitment to student success. She praises Charlottesville High School students for their improvement and staff for their collaborative efforts. While acknowledging concerns about metal detectors and their potential impact on certain groups, she remains hopeful for a positive outcome. Finally, she commends efforts to recruit staff that reflects the student body's demographics.
- Mr. Meyer shared appreciation for the opportunity to serve and expressed doubt about the efficacy of metal detectors and expressed a desire for alternative solutions. Mr. Meyer emphasized the importance of teacher retention and requested exploring specific actionable steps to improve it, potentially through collaboration with the city. Finally, he encouraged the public to attend the next school board meeting to advocate for their funding priorities.
- Ms. Heaphy thanked the school board for allowing student voices to be heard, and expressed concerns about implementing weapons detection systems. She acknowledges the safety benefits seen in Louisa County, but noted that Charlottesville High School has a different demographic and implementing metal detectors should be a conversation that includes students. She concludes by thanking the board for their efforts and recognizing the positive changes made in the school.
- Ms. Larson-Torres raised the issue of weapon detector systems in schools. She spoke in support of allowing additional time for the board to discuss this further and gather data on how staff and students feel about safety and the detectors. Ms. Larson-Torres acknowledged concerns about both school safety and the use of weapon detectors and emphasized the importance of considering all viewpoints, including those of staff, students, and the community, before making a decision. Ms. Larson-Torres shared appreciation for those who provided public comment as well as for the new board members and their service.

15.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley expressed appreciation for public comments and assured the audience the board considers them while making policies. He highlighted the board's commitment to transparency and acknowledged the hot topic of weapon detectors, particularly for Charlottesville High School. He proposed a data-driven approach using information on local weapon use to inform a potential work session on the issue. He also emphasized valuing all voices in the decision-making process. Dr. Gurley also thanked returning board members and welcomed new members.

16.1 Work Session Wrap-Up: There were **two** requests from the board:

- Provide current CHS behavior report (compared to previous months)

- Provide a Safety/security & communication update to the board & (to possibly include survey data from students & staff- weapons detectors)

17.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Larson-Torres read the upcoming meetings.

18.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

A video of the January 4, 2024 meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nMFq4y_4A6dpaSGQliR_yW8ZM4hdXNLg/view?usp=sharing

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Julia Green, School Board Clerk