



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
Thursday, November 7, 2024 (5:00 PM)

The closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on October 10, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., in the Division Annex Student Services Conference Room.

PRESENT: Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, and Ms. Larson-Torres

ABSENT: Ms. Richardson

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, and Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, Cynthia Hudson, Attorney with Eppes Hudson (via Zoom)

1.1 Call to Order: Ms. Larson-Torres, School Board Chair, called the closed session meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1.2 Closed Meeting: At 4:00 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), to discuss personnel matters regarding specific licensed personnel, and to consult with legal counsel engaged by the Board regarding specific legal matters involving the application of statutory legal authority regarding collective bargaining and requiring the advice of counsel. Ms. Dooley seconded the motion, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays.

1.3 Closed Meeting Certification: At 4:54 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. Burns seconded the motion, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Action: None

The Board recessed from 4:56 p.m. p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2.1 Moment of Silence: Ms. Larson-Torres, School 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 Larson-Torres
Nulia Obiorah,	

Student Representative

The following Board Members were absent: Ms. Nicole Richardson

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

The following Staff Members were absent: None

5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

6.1 Disclosure of a personal interest in a transaction under Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3112 (B) (1) and 2.2-3115(H): At the recommendation of Bradford King, Attorney with Sands Anderson, and as required by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3112(8){1}, Ms. Cooper 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.

7.1 Comments from Students:

- Elle Polifka, a senior at Charlottesville High School, addressed the board with comments advocating for the preservation of instrumental music education in fifth grade during the upcoming school reconfiguration in 2026. Having been a member of the Charlottesville City Schools Orchestra program since fifth grade, she valued the positive impact it had on her life, providing a sense of belonging and fostering her passion for music. She emphasized the importance of early musical training and the significant progress students made in just a few years. Polifka highlighted the collaborative nature of orchestra and band programs, which built strong bonds among students. She believed that maintaining these programs was crucial for the continued success and unique character of Charlottesville City Schools.
- Sydney Rasmussen, a sophomore at CHS and a member of the CHSO Orchestra, emphasized the significant role music has played in her life. She shared how her early exposure to the stage through dance, starting at the age of three, has positively influenced her confidence and public speaking skills. Rasmussen highlighted the benefits of starting instrumental music in fourth grade and expressed her brother's excitement about the potential to play drums in a band in fifth grade. She believes that early musical experiences contribute to personal growth and development.
- Xavier expressed his support for the continuation of the band program, citing his younger brother as an example. He hopes his brother will have the opportunity to play an instrument in fifth grade, just as he did.

7.2 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Carlehr Swanson, a fourth-year PhD candidate at the University of Virginia and Miss Virginia 2024, emphasized the transformative power of music education. She shared how her participation in band in fifth grade, despite being a frequent new student, helped her connect with peers, develop social and academic skills, and build self-confidence. Swanson highlighted the positive impact of early music education on students' attendance rates and academic performance. She urged the board to maintain band in fifth grade to ensure future generations of students have the opportunity to benefit from these advantages.
- Jean Chase, a retired educator with 40 years of experience, including 14 years in Charlottesville City Schools, emphasized the invaluable nature of the music program. She highlighted the program's positive impact on students' personal growth and development, citing instances of students pursuing music professionally.

- Ms. Chase encouraged the board members to memorize the C poem, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and determination. She advocated for maintaining the music program in elementary schools, urging against any fractionalization.
- David McCormick, a product of the Charlottesville City Schools Orchestra program, emphasized the significance of starting instrumental music education in fifth grade. He shared his personal experience of how early exposure to music, under the guidance of Laura Thomas, inspired him to become a professional musician and educator. McCormick highlighted the noticeable difference in the quality of high school orchestra programs based on the starting grade, with fifth-grade programs consistently producing exceptional results. He urged the board to consider the long-term benefits of maintaining the fifth-grade start, citing his experience as a national administrator in making difficult budget decisions. McCormick advocated for preserving programs that are effective and contribute to the overall success of the school division.
- Jenn Horne, a CHS teacher, urged division leadership to prioritize communication with teachers. She emphasized the importance of teacher input in decision-making, particularly during budget season. Horne suggested that consulting with teachers would lead to more effective and student-centered decisions. She used a football metaphor to illustrate the roles of teachers and administrators, highlighting the crucial role of teachers in directly impacting student learning. Horne concluded by emphasizing the value of teacher expertise and the positive impact of proactive communication on student outcomes.
- Jacob Beckham, a Charlottesville resident, proposed abolishing school zones as a relic of segregation. He suggested repurposing Charlottesville High School into an elementary school and converting current elementary schools into magnet high schools. He stated that this approach would allow for more walkable schools and diverse learning opportunities for high school students. Additionally, it would enable the continuation of a consolidated elementary music program. Beckham urged the school board to reconsider traditional school zoning and explore innovative solutions that better serve the needs of all students.
- Karen Honeycutt, a concerned parent of two Charlottesville City School students, emphasized the importance of starting music education in fifth grade. She shared how her children's early exposure to the band in fifth grade ignited their passion for music, leading to continued involvement in various musical activities throughout their school years. Honeycutt highlighted the positive impact of music on students' mental and emotional well-being, especially during the challenging years of adolescence. She urged the school board not to cut music programs from fifth grade, as it would deprive students of valuable opportunities for growth, creativity, and community. Honeycutt's own experience as a former CCS music student further underscored the significance of early music education and its potential to shape future academic and artistic pursuits.
- Bellamy Brown, a product of Charlottesville City Schools, emphasized the importance of music education, particularly in fifth grade. He highlighted the positive impact of band on student relationships, social-emotional development, and overall well-being. While acknowledging the challenges of budget and staffing, Brown urged the school board to explore alternative solutions before eliminating fifth-grade music programs. He emphasized the potential consequences of such a decision on students' educational and social experiences.
- Claire Landes, a former Charlottesville City Schools student, shared a deeply personal account of how the fifth-grade music program significantly impacted her life. She described how the early exposure to instruments in fourth grade sparked her passion for the violin and provided an invaluable outlet for emotional expression during her challenging middle and high school years. Landes emphasized the unique and positive impact of music on students' mental health and academic performance. She argued that eliminating fifth-grade music programs would have a detrimental effect on the overall quality of the music program and the opportunities for future students. By sharing her personal story, Landes urged the school board to reconsider their decision and prioritize the continuation of fifth-grade music education.
- Barbara Gehrung, a parent of Charlottesville City Schools students, expressed her disappointment and concern regarding the proposed changes to the fifth-grade music program. She emphasized the importance of music education in fostering harmony, empathy, and personal growth among students. Gehrung highlighted the unique opportunity provided by the Charlottesville City Schools program to introduce children to instrumental music in fifth grade, regardless of their socioeconomic background. She shared her personal experience of how the program positively impacted her daughter's transition to public school and

academic success. Gehrung urged the school board to maintain and expand the fifth-grade music program, ensuring that all students have access to the benefits of music education.

- Leigh Dick, a former Charlottesville City Schools student, emphasized the transformative power of music education, particularly in fifth grade. She recalled the excitement of being introduced to instruments in fourth grade and the sense of pride and accomplishment she experienced as a young musician. Dick highlighted the role of music in fostering confidence, creativity, and emotional well-being, especially during the challenging years of adolescence. She shared her personal experience with mental health struggles and how music provided a much-needed outlet and source of joy. Dick urged the school board to reconsider cutting funding for fifth-grade music programs, emphasizing the long-term benefits for students' academic, social, and emotional development.
- Peter Davis, a teacher at Charlottesville High School, suggested adding a new agenda item, 7.3, for board comments and responses to community members. He believes this would enhance the dialogue between the school board and the community, making the meetings more meaningful and impactful. Davis emphasized the importance of acknowledging and responding to the heartfelt speeches and concerns raised by community members. He suggested that this could encourage more students to participate in future meetings, creating a more inclusive and engaging environment.
- Ms. Larson-Torres acknowledged the concerns raised by Mr. Davis and other community members regarding the lack of direct responses from the school board. She assured the audience that the board values their input and is actively listening to their concerns about the music program. She mentioned that the board is currently awaiting a report on the proposed reconfiguration plans and will share the information with the public at a future meeting. Ms. Larson-Torres encouraged community members to continue expressing their views through emails and to follow up for further clarification.
- Victoria Hamilton, a parent of two Charlottesville City Schools students, emphasized the transformative power of music education. She highlighted the positive impact of the Orchestra program on her daughter's social and emotional development, as well as her academic success. Hamilton stressed the importance of early exposure to music in fifth grade, as it fosters creativity, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning. She argued that music education enriches students' overall education and prepares them for a well-rounded life beyond academics. Hamilton urged the school board to consider the long-term benefits of maintaining the fifth-grade music program and to prioritize the arts in education.

8.1 Student Representative Report: Nulia Obiorah, the student representative, raised several concerns about school policies and practices. She advocated for more flexibility regarding BKT schedules to accommodate club meetings, suggested a more considerate approach to phone collections, particularly for students with medical needs, and expressed concerns about the impact of phone collections on the school environment. Additionally, she highlighted the need for improved food options, especially for students with dietary restrictions, and raised concerns about the quality of school lunches.

STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITIONS

9.1 National School Psychology Week: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, recognized Charlottesville City Schools Psychologists for the exceptional contributions they make to enhance the well-being of our students, families, and community. National School Psychology Week is identified as November 11-15, 2024. A Proclamation for National School Psychology Week was presented for approval. Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dooley, to approve the adoption of the proposed National School Psychology Week proclamation. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

9.2 Family Engagement Month: Bianca Johnson, Family Engagement Coordinator, emphasized the crucial role of community partnerships in supporting student success. She highlighted the collaborative efforts with organizations like EdZone, Seille Sock Love, the Emergency Food Network, and the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to address the basic needs of students and families. These partnerships provide essential resources such as food, hygiene products, and clothing, aligning with the division's strategic plan. Johnson expressed gratitude to the organizations and individuals involved and committed to sharing more detailed information about the impact of these partnerships in future presentations.

CONSENT AGENDA

10.1-5 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations, October 10, 2024 School Board Meeting Minutes, October 15, 2024 School Board Meeting with Legislators Minutes, 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. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

ACTION ITEMS

11.1 Approval - Budget Development Process (2025-2026 Proposed Budget Development Calendar): Ms. Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented the 2025-2026 Budget Development Calendar for Board information on October 10, 2024. The budget development calendar is being presented for action. The budget calendar sets the public meetings schedule for the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget development process and outlines the proposed budget preparation, discussions, and approvals. Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Development Calendar as presented. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

11.2 Approval - CIP from Fiscal Year-End 2024: On October 10, 2024, Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented information on the 2024 Fiscal Year End (FYE) including designating a portion of FYE funds to capital projects. A preliminary, unaudited FYE 2024 increase of \$2,654,639 is projected. The fund balance is a one-time funding source. Staff requested \$1.2 million of the FYE funds be designated for capital improvement projects including CHS Athletic Track & Field Lighting (\$350k), CHS Girls Softball Field Scoreboard (\$10k), CMS Student Restroom Safety (\$290k), and Other Safety/Security Infrastructure (\$500k).

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the designation of \$1.2 million in funds from the general/operating fund-fund balance for capital projects. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

12.1 Literacy Update: Stacy Reedal, PK-12 Literacy Coordinator, presented a Literacy Update for Board information. Stacy Reedal, Coordinator of Literacy, provided an update on the current state of literacy in Charlottesville City Schools, focusing on kindergarten through second grade. The division has transitioned from the PALs assessment to the Virginia Language and Literacy Screening System (VVS), which provides a more comprehensive look at students' reading skills.

Information presented included:

- Agenda
 - Fall 2024 Data
 - VALLSS
 - DIBELS
 - MAP
 - Literacy Plan
 - K-8 Updates
 - 9-12 Updates
 - Next Steps
 - December Update
 - Monitoring Process

Ms. Reedal provided a detailed explanation of the VVS assessment, highlighting the specific criteria for identifying students in different risk bands. She emphasized that the increased number of students identified in the high-risk band, particularly in kindergarten, is partly due to the higher expectations of the new assessment.

Regarding the DIBELS assessment for grades 3-6, Ms. Reedal explained the different levels of support indicated by the colors: blue/green for minimal support, yellow for strategic support, and red for intensive support. She noted that a significant number of students were initially identified for intensive support, but through targeted interventions and support, the division aims to move students to lower levels of support.

Questions/Discussion:

- Ms. Larson-Torres inquired about the specific strategies employed to support students identified as high-risk in the VVS assessment. Ms. Reedal explained that interventions are tailored to individual student needs, involving collaboration between reading specialists, classroom teachers, and ESL teachers. These interventions ensure students receive the required 2.5 hours of additional reading instruction.
- Ms. Dooley raised a concern about the apparent disparity in the number of Black students identified as high-risk in the transition from VVS to DIBELS. She questioned whether this disparity was a result of differences between the two assessments or if it reflected underlying issues in student performance.
- Ms. Reedal explained that directly comparing the two assessments is challenging due to their different methodologies. While VVS focuses on discrete reading skills, DIBELS assesses students' ability to apply those skills to actual reading passages. She emphasized that the increased number of Black students identified in the high-risk category on DIBELS may be due to challenges in applying reading skills to complex texts.
- Ms. Dooley further inquired about the possibility of analyzing specific subtests within VVS to gain a more detailed understanding of student performance. Ms. Reedal clarified that the risk band identification in VVS is based solely on code-based skills, while language-based skills are not considered. This suggests that students may be proficient in foundational skills but struggle with applying them to reading comprehension.
- Ms. Larson-Torres inquired about the specific strategies implemented at the high school level to support students identified as high-risk in reading. Ms. Reedal explained that two full-time reading specialists have been added to provide targeted interventions. These specialists work collaboratively with classroom teachers and special education teachers to provide additional support. Additionally, the district has introduced novel study plans to encourage student engagement with complex texts. Ms. Reedal also mentioned that approximately 117 high school students are currently identified as high-risk and are receiving targeted support.
- Ms. Reedal clarified that while student reading plans are not mandated at the high school level, the district has implemented them as a best practice to support student learning. These plans are designed to provide targeted interventions for students who need additional support, similar to the approach used in elementary schools.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about the level of family involvement in supporting students who are struggling with reading. Ms. Reedal explained that family engagement is a crucial component of the support process. The district communicates with families, seeks their permission for interventions, and involves them in discussions about their child's progress. Additionally, the district provides families with specific strategies to support their child's reading development at home.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about the specific methods used to engage families in supporting their children's reading development. Ms. Reedal explained that the district utilizes a multi-faceted approach, including automated communication through ParentSquare, personalized follow-up through phone calls or in-person meetings, and tailored support strategies based on individual student needs. The goal is to collaborate with families to ensure students receive the necessary support to improve their reading skills.
- Ms. Larson-Torres commended the district for expanding the use of student reading plans to grades K-12, even though they are not mandated for grades 3-12. She acknowledged the additional workload for reading specialists but emphasized the positive impact of this approach on student learning.
- Mr. Meyer expressed concern about the high percentage of high school students identified as needing intensive reading support, as indicated by the MAP assessment data. Ms. Reedal clarified that while 117 students are receiving targeted support from reading specialists, this number does not include students who are receiving support from classroom teachers or special education teachers.

- Kaylin Bryce, the Secondary Literacy Specialist, further elaborated that the MAP scores were used as a screening tool to identify potentially at-risk students. However, not all students who screened at risk ultimately qualified for additional support after further assessment.
- Ms. Burns expressed concern about the high caseload of two reading specialists supporting 117 high school students. She questioned the feasibility of providing adequate support to such a large number of students. Ms. Reedal clarified that while two reading specialists are primarily responsible for the intensive interventions, additional support is provided by classroom teachers and special education staff. Ms. Burns also inquired about the potential involvement of community partners, such as UVA College Mentors, Madison House, and 100 Black Men, in supporting reading interventions. Ms. Reedal indicated that trained staff are currently providing these services.
- Mr. Meyer asked for clarification on the current approach to teaching spelling in the lower grades. He inquired about the methods used to assess spelling skills and how they align with the overall literacy curriculum. Ms. Reedal explained that encoding, the process of spelling words correctly, is now integrated into assessments and instruction. Instead of memorizing lists of words, students are taught to recognize patterns and rules, which helps them to spell words accurately.
- Mr. Meyer expressed interest in the support provided to students with dyslexia. Ms. Reedal explained that the district's intervention programs and explicit instruction in the core curriculum are designed to support students with dyslexia. This includes both in-class support and targeted interventions for students who require additional assistance.
- Ms. Larson-Torres thanked Ms. Reedal for her presentation and expressed her appreciation for the district's ongoing commitment to literacy. She emphasized the importance of tracking student progress and measuring the impact of interventions. Ms. Larson-Torres suggested that future reports could include data on the progress of students who have received targeted support, demonstrating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

12.2 [ESL Update](#): Dr. Jeannie Pfautz, ESL Instructional Specialist, provided an overview of the ESL program in Charlottesville City Schools.

Information presented included:

- ESL Program and Multilingual Learners Overview
 - 2023-2028 Strategic Plan References
 - Priority 1: Increase Academic Achievement
 - Target 5: 80% or more of students will demonstrate mastery and proficiency in tier 1 instruction.
 - Target 9: Increase reading achievement for all students to at least 75% proficiency across all student membership groups.
 - Target 10: Increase math achievement for all students to at least 70% proficiency across all student membership groups.
 - Priority 2: Provide a Culture of Safety, Wellness, and Belonging
 - Target 5: Establish a baseline and increase family/student engagement.
 - Target 6: Maintain strong community partnerships across the division.
 - Target 7: Decrease chronic absenteeism to 15% or less for all students.
 - Priority 3: Support our Staff
 - Target 3: Make annual progress toward hiring a licensed staff of color. The goal is for staff minority representation to match or exceed Charlottesville's area demographics as measured by census data.
 - Target 7: All staff will annually demonstrate culturally competent and equity-focused teaching practices.
 - Priority 4: Ensure Effective and Efficient Operations
 - Target 4: Eliminate waitlists for all students eligible for bus transportation.

- Target 5: Annual increases in numbers of students walking, biking, or taking the CAT bus to and from school through continued partnership with the City of Charlottesville.
- Agenda
 - Welcome Center SY 23-24
 - 224 English learners enrolled
 - 1st division contact
 - 155 families
 - Language screener
 - ESL Program enrollment
 - 104 English learners transferred out of CCS
 - 44% of students transferred from another country
 - 11% transferred from another state
 - 23% transferred from Albemarle
 - English Learner Enrollment and Staffing Changes
 - Enrollment Changes from 2021 to 2024
 - 455 Spring 2021 - 757 Fall 2024
 - Staffing Changes

Staffing Changes				
	2022	2023	2024	2024 With new SOQ
Number of Students	613	699	757	757
Number of ESL Teachers	19 FTE	22 FTE	25.5 FTE	28.5 FTE
Staff change	+2	+3	+3.5	+3

New Standards of Quality (SOQ)	
Student English Proficiency Level	SOQ Staffing Requirement
1	1 position per 20 ELs
2	1 position per 30 ELs
3	1 position per 40 ELs
4	1 position per 50 ELs
Monitors	1 position per 100 ELs

- English Language Proficiency Data (VDOE)
- SOA Adjustments (with current SOL scores)
- SSAS Initiative
 - School Support for Afghan Students Grant
 - 4 Bilingual Instructional Assistants
 - IRC Staff embedded at CHS

- Family workshops (TJACE)
- Collaboration with area nonprofits
- Summer camp and internship opportunities
- Adjustments and Enhancements
 - Summer School Partnership with ACPS
 - English 10/11 credit for 6 CHS students
 - SIOP Training (Structured Instruction Observation Protocol)
 - All CCS staff have had Intro to SIOP training (school-based) and SIOP 1 training (division PL)
 - Continue with SIOP 2 training this year
 - SIOP 3-4 training SY 25-26
- Next Steps
 - Continue SIOP training and other PL for all CCS teachers
 - Increased ESL Staffing budget request
 - Ongoing support for the CCS Welcome Center
 - SSAS Grant Implementation

Questions/Discussion:

- Ms. Larson-Torres asked if housing instability was a factor in the frequent transfers of students in and out of the district. Dr. Pfautz confirmed this, explaining that some families may not have permanent housing when they initially enroll their children. Additionally, as families become more established, they may move to more affordable areas, often due to job opportunities and the ability to purchase transportation.
- Ms. Larson-Torres asked about the number of students transferring from Albemarle County. Dr. Pfautz explained that roughly 23% of the 224 total new English Learners came from Albemarle. She suggested that housing and job opportunities were likely factors in these transfers, particularly given the number of families staying in hotels in Albemarle the previous year. These families were allowed to remain in Albemarle schools for the year but then transferred to Charlottesville City Schools the following summer.
- Dr. Pfautz notes that while enrollment has increased since 2021, it has slowed down recently. This may be due to changes in IRC policies regarding family housing, limiting the number of families coming to the area. Additionally, the unpredictable influx of families from Central and South America makes accurate enrollment projections difficult. Despite these challenges, the additional staff approved last year has been crucial in maintaining a high-quality program. However, recent changes in Virginia's education standards, specifically regarding language proficiency levels, have introduced new staffing requirements. While Charlottesville has historically exceeded state standards, the new ratio necessitates hiring three more ESL teachers to ensure full compliance by the next school year.
- Ms. Dooley inquired about the timing of determining student language proficiency levels and how they impact staffing needs. Dr. Pfautz explained that students typically take the ACCESS test between January and March. The results from this test are used to calculate the new staffing ratios, which were reported in May. However, the school budget is typically developed before these results are available, making it challenging to accurately predict the exact number of additional ESL teachers needed to meet compliance.
- Mr. Meyer asked for clarification on whether the new staffing requirements would result in additional funding or simply a mandate to hire more staff. Ms. Hoover explained that additional funding is provided based on the Local Composite Index (LCI), but the increase for Charlottesville City Schools is likely to be minimal. Dr. Gurley emphasized that this is an additional service requirement, not an increase in student enrollment. Dr. Pfautz added that the district is fortunate to not need to hire as many additional staff as other districts might.
- Ms. Larson-Torres expressed gratitude for the support and advocacy shown at joint meetings between the School Board and City Council. She believes that this support, along with thorough presentations highlighting the state's significant push for these new standards, will be crucial in addressing the challenges posed by the increased staffing requirements.
- Ms. Larson-Torres asked for clarification on the term "monitor" and its implications within the new Standards of Quality (SoQ). Dr. Pfautz explained that monitor students are those who have exited the ESL program with

a 4.4 or higher on their language proficiency assessment but still require some support. ESL teachers provide limited services, including accommodations on assessments and quarterly progress monitoring, to ensure these students continue to thrive academically.

- Ms. Larson-Torres asked about accommodations for math and science assessments for newcomer students. Dr. Pfautz explained that students can use bilingual dictionaries, English dictionaries, and audio accommodations. However, these accommodations might not be as helpful for newer arrivals who may not have strong literacy skills in either language.
- Dr. Pfautz also confirmed that the state is reducing the time frame for students to meet proficiency standards from four to three semesters and increasing the rigor of the expectations. This shift will make it difficult to directly compare student performance between this year and the previous year, necessitating a focus on raw data analysis.
- Ms. Larson-Torres asked Dr. Pfautz how many students would benefit from the new grant for Afghan students. Dr. Pfautz responded that the district's estimate is around 180 students out of the total 750 English Learners, but they are still waiting for the official number from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).
- Mr. Meyer inquired about the attendance patterns of English Learner students. Dr. Pfautz responded that, while there are some families who struggle with regular school attendance, English Learners are included in the district-wide attendance improvement initiatives. Additionally, the district has a dedicated family engagement specialist who works with language learner families to address specific attendance barriers. Dr. Pfautz noted that attendance challenges are not unique to English Learners and seem to be a broader issue affecting the entire student population post-COVID.

12.3 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 School Year Calendars: Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, presented the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 School Calendars for Board consideration upon first reading. Annually, the Charlottesville City School Board is charged with the development and approval of a calendar that must incorporate 180 days or 990 hours of instruction for students served in the school division. Draft copies of the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 School Calendars were posted on the Charlottesville City Schools website for review and comment. All comments received were taken into consideration when developing the proposed calendar.

After researching 4-day and year-round calendar models, the committee decided to stick with a traditional calendar structure. The new calendars include key features such as mental wellness days, adjusted conference days, and strategic placement of work days. The proposed calendars align with Virginia Department of Education requirements and aim to balance instructional time, breaks, and professional learning opportunities for staff.

Copies of the proposed calendars were presented for Board review.

Questions/Discussion:

- Ms. Larson-Torres asked Dr. Otey to share the makeup of the calendar committee. Dr. Otey explained that principals were asked to nominate teachers and parents, and some administrators also volunteered. The committee had between 10 and 12 members at its meetings, with fewer participants at the second meeting where survey data was presented.
- Ms. Larson-Torres asked if CEA was invited to participate in the calendar committee. Dr. Otey confirmed that she reached out to CEA in September to request a draft calendar, but CEA was unable to form a committee due to time constraints and difficulty finding volunteers.
- Ms. Larson-Torres suggested involving Andy Jones, Director of Student Services, in the next calendar committee to address potential conflicts between academics, sports, and activities. Dr. Otey confirmed that she would invite Mr. Jones to participate.
- Ms. Dooley asked for clarification on the calculation of student days and half days. Dr. Otey confirmed that half days count as full days if students attend through lunch. She then questioned the decision to include a half-day before spring break, as the community generally dislikes half-days. Dr. Otey explained that the committee requested an additional work day after spring break, and the half day was a compromise to gain credit for student attendance.

- Ms. Dooley pointed out that the two mental wellness days would need to be made up somewhere, and the half-day seemed like a compromise to accommodate them. Dr. Otey acknowledged the trade-off and expressed hope that teachers would appreciate the mental wellness days. Finally, Ms. Dooley inquired about the number of teacher days compared to the 200-day contract, and Dr. Otey estimated it to be around 192 days.
- Ms. Burns expressed concern about the timing of the October 3rd family-teacher conference days in relation to elementary testing. Dr. Otey explained that MAP and VALs testing is administered early in the school year, usually within the first two or three weeks of school. This allows for early assessment and tracking of student growth throughout the year.
- Mr. Meyer referenced a JLARC study that suggested year-round calendars positively impact Black students. Dr. Otey confirmed this finding but also noted that overall research doesn't definitively support year-round calendars for all students. She mentioned Chesterfield County's year-round pilot program and the subsequent decision to discontinue it in most schools. Dr. Otey emphasized that while 80% of staff and a majority of parents in Chesterfield County appreciated the year-round calendar, there was minimal academic benefit observed. She also questioned the effectiveness of long summer breaks, acknowledging the summer slide phenomenon but highlighting the opportunity for remediation through summer programs. Dr. Otey shared her experience with the year-round calendar implementation in Chesterfield County and expressed her hope for the success of the model but acknowledged the lack of conclusive evidence supporting its benefits.
- Mr. Meyer expressed disappointment with the lack of a year-round calendar option for review. He proposed a motion to ask staff to present a one-year year-round calendar option for the 2025-2026 school year, including a fall break after the first quarter, a week off during Thanksgiving, and enrichment programs for all students. He argued that a year-round calendar could potentially address academic challenges faced by Black and Brown students and English Language Learners.
- Ms. Burns expressed concern about the feasibility of this request, given the significant workload and other pressing priorities for the staff. She also questioned the level of community interest and support for such a drastic change.
- Ms. Dooley echoed Ms. Burns' concerns, emphasizing the practical challenges of implementing a year-round calendar in a short timeframe, particularly considering the need for coordination with surrounding counties and community partners.
- Ms. Larson-Torres also expressed reservations about the feasibility and potential financial implications of a year-round calendar. She highlighted the importance of considering the current workload and priorities of the staff and the potential impact on students and families.
- Mr. Morse noted that the discussion from the October 19 Advance suggested a more modest approach, such as incorporating additional wellness days for teachers.
- Dr. Otey clarified that the community survey focused on the two proposed traditional calendar options and did not include options for year-round or 4-day school weeks.

Mr. Meyer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to ask staff to present a one-year year-round calendar option for the 2025-2026 school year, including a fall break after the first quarter, a week off during Thanksgiving, and enrichment programs for all students. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion failed with Mr. Morse voting aye. Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting nay. 1 ayes, 5 nays

12.4 School Board Salary Increase: Director of Finance Renee Hoover prepared a compensation analysis to inform the School Board's discussion on a potential salary increase during their October 19, 2024 advance meeting. At the meeting, the board requested a specific analysis for a \$10,000 salary for the Chair and \$8,500 for other members. The last salary adjustment for the Charlottesville City School Board occurred on December 4, 2014, increasing the Chair's salary to \$5,300 and other members' to \$4,500, effective January 1, 2016.

Ms. Hoover informed the board that the presentation presented is the same as the one presented at the October 19th meeting, with the exception of an added salary increase for the board chair and members. The chair's salary would increase by 89% to \$10,000, and member salaries would increase by 85% to \$8,500, resulting in a total budget

increase of approximately \$28,750. This information is being presented for informational purposes only and will be brought back for action in December.

Questions/Discussion: None

12.5 Revised Policy GCBE (Family and Medical Leave Act): Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, provided the board with recommended updates to the Family Medical Leave Policy.

Ms. Lewis proposed two changes to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy. First, she suggested updating outdated language by replacing terms like "husband/wife" with "married couple" to reflect modern family structures. Second, to align with federal FMLA guidelines, she proposed removing the option for intermittent leave for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. This change is intended to minimize confusion and ensure consistent application of the policy.

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the adoption of the proposed revised policy GCBE (Family and Medical Leave Act). Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays

Questions/Discussion:

- Mr. Morse asked about the potential unintended consequences of the proposed change to the FMLA policy, specifically regarding the removal of intermittent leave for childbirth, adoption, or foster placement. Ms. Lewis explained that the division had already encountered a situation where an employee took intermittent leave without prior approval, making it difficult to enforce the policy.
- Mr. Morse inquired about the practical implications of this change, particularly for teachers and the potential need for substitute coverage. Ms. Lewis confirmed that the affected individual was a certified teacher.
- Ms. Burns emphasized that the proposed change aligns with federal FMLA guidelines and is not a decision made by the division to punish employees. Dr. Gurley further clarified that the federal law requires continuous leave for the birth of a child, but employees can choose to delay taking the leave. The main concern is ensuring that the leave is taken continuously, rather than intermittently.

Board Response to Written Reports

13.1 School Board Member Committee Reports: Board members shared updates on recent activities in this written report.

13.2 Pupil Teacher Ratio- 2024: Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, prepared the 2024 Pupil Teacher Ratio written report for Board information.

Ms. Dooley provided an update on the rezoning process, highlighting the ongoing community listening sessions and the focus on specific neighborhoods like Kindewood and Prospect. She encouraged community members to participate by visiting the designated website and completing the survey.

Ms. Larson-Torres shared updates on the school renaming process, indicating that the committees were actively engaged and making progress in selecting new names for elementary schools. She noted the positive participation and dedication of the committee members.

14.1 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Jacob Beckham expressed disappointment with the lack of consideration for a year-round calendar option and argued that such a model could address various issues, including the need for additional ESL teachers, the accommodation of diverse religious practices, and the mitigation of summer learning loss. Jacob also

criticized the timing of the October 19th meeting, suggesting that it was inconvenient for many stakeholders. Beckham emphasized the importance of providing the community with real choices and opportunities for meaningful participation in the decision-making process.

15.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Obiorah expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the School Board and thanked everyone for their support. She expressed excitement for the next student representative to continue the tradition of student voice on the board.
- Ms. Dooley expressed gratitude for the incorporation of mental health days into the school calendar. She acknowledged the challenges of staying engaged in long meetings and encouraged community members to consider the broader context of the school board's decision-making process. She emphasized the importance of community-focused decision-making and the need to prioritize the well-being of all students. Finally, she encouraged everyone to be gentle with one another and to prioritize the needs of the community as a whole.
- Ms. Burns reflected on the recent election results with a heavy heart but remained inspired by the community's resilience and dedication. She acknowledged the unwavering strength of black women in leading the charge for justice and equity and expressed solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community. Ms. Burns encouraged those feeling weary to take time to grieve, rest, and reset, emphasizing the importance of upcoming races for Governor, City Council, and School Board. She urged the community to turn disappointment into action, recommitting to the work ahead with unity and purpose, and building a community that lifts everyone up.
- Mr. Meyer expressed his support for restructuring school board meetings to include a short period for immediate feedback and more informative presentations from the administration. He also praised the recent enforcement of the phone policy at the high school, acknowledging the need for flexibility for students with medical needs.
- Mr. Meyer encouraged greater community engagement in school board elections and urged individuals passionate about specific issues, such as fifth-grade band, to consider running for office. He emphasized that discussions about significant changes, such as the potential restructuring of elementary schools, should be prioritized and addressed promptly, considering the budget implications and the timeline for implementation.
- Ms. Cooper thanked Ms. Obiorah, the student representative, for their attendance and contributions to the board meetings. She encouraged community members to participate in the rezoning process by completing the survey and reaching out to board members for clarification. She also emphasized the importance of proactive outreach by school staff to engage with community members, particularly those in neighborhoods that may be significantly impacted by rezoning. She highlighted the need for collaboration with community organizations and residents to ensure that all voices are heard.
- Ms. Larson-Torres expressed gratitude for the supportive comments from Ms. Dooley and Ms. Burns. She acknowledged the emotional impact of current events on younger generations and encouraged everyone to prioritize self-care and check in with each other. She also expressed appreciation for the civic engagement of young people and the unique qualities of the Charlottesville community.

16.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley expressed gratitude for the supportive words from board members and acknowledged the challenging week. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a safe and supportive environment for students and staff. He also highlighted the ongoing work within the district, including reconfiguration conversations and discussions with staff, particularly regarding the future of band and orchestra programs. Dr. Gurley assured the community that the district is committed to maintaining high-quality arts programs while also addressing the needs of all students, especially Black and Brown students. He encouraged continued community engagement and advocacy for both arts programs and academic interventions.

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

- update on the progress of high school reading interventions

18.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Larson-Torres read the list of upcoming meetings.

19.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

A video recording of the November 7, 2024 meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RYXD3Ci9jJbEVDm9OLbKt4-00pKRjvCH/view?usp=drive_link

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk