



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
Thursday, May 1, 2025 (5:00 PM)

Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on May 1, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., in the Division Annex Exceptional Education Conference Room, 1400 Melbourne Road, Charlottesville, VA.

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent; Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources; and Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT: None

1.1 Call to Order: Emily Dooley, School Board Chair, called the closed session meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1.2 Closed Meeting: At 4:00 p.m., Ms. Burns offered a motion to go into a Closed Session as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) (3) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion of personnel matters and the discussion or consideration of real property transactions (acquisition or disposition) when open meeting discussion would harm the body's negotiating position. Ms. Richardson seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Ms. Cooper was not present for this vote.

1.3 Closed Meeting Certification: At 4:49 p.m., Ms. Burns offered a motion that the board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered. Ms. Torres seconded the motion, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

There was no action.

The board recessed from 4:49 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

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

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

4.1 Roll Call of Board Members:

The following Board Members were present:

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

Ms. Shymora Cooper
Mr. Chris Meyer
Ms. Nicole Richardson

Ms. Lisa Torres

Harper Ullrich,
Student Representative

The following Board Members were absent:

None

The following Staff Members were present:

Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr.
Mr. Pat Cuomo
Ms. Carolyn Swift
Ms. Rachel Rasnake
Ms. Beth Cheuk
Ms. Julia Green

Dr. Katina Otey
Ms. Kim Powell
Ms. Maria Lewis
Ms. Renee Hoover
Ms. T. Denise Johnson
Ms. Leslie Thacker

The following Staff Members were absent:

None

Ms. Dooley opened the meeting by noting that on April 30, 2025, the U.S. Department of Education approved CCS's application to receive the campus of the Federal Executive Institute, which was recently closed by Executive Order. CCS intends to use the Barracks Road-area campus to house its centralized preschool program and a central office, including a family welcome center. This, in turn, frees up other space throughout the division for alternative education, programs to serve students with special needs, and other educational programs. Noting that this was a fast-moving, intense process, she thanked Dr. Gurley and Ms. Powell, along with other CCS staff, as well as their counterparts and key staff at the City. She concluded that the work was just beginning, but it is a generational moment that will make our schools shine brighter.

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

Student and Staff Recognition

7.1 Student Services Recognitions: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, highlighted April as Autism Acceptance Month, emphasizing understanding, inclusion, and celebrating the strengths of all individuals, noting a meaningful community event at the Tournament of Champions. She also recognized Occupational Therapy month and the invaluable contributions of the school district's occupational therapists and assistants in developing students' daily living skills. Finally, Ms. Rasnake brought attention to School Nurse Appreciation Day on May 7th, underscoring the essential role of school nurses in supporting student health and well-being, especially given the significant number of students with chronic health conditions, and asked those present to join her in recognizing these people and their contributions.

7.2 2025 Golden Apple Award Winners: Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, recognized the 2025 Golden Apple Award Winners. For the last two decades, Mr. Richard Nunley and Better Living Building Supply and Cabinetry have sponsored the Golden Apple Awards. These awards are presented to faculty members from the public and private schools in Albemarle County and Charlottesville City, including the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) and several area private schools.

The Golden Apple Award is a means of selecting and honoring some of our outstanding teachers. Teachers are most important in nurturing our children's inquisitive minds and preparing them for the challenges of the future.

This year's Golden Apple Teaching Awards were awarded to Emily Waters, Charlottesville High School; Madison Eure, Buford Middle School; Laura Lindemann, Walker Upper Elementary School; Mary Yowell, Hospital Education; Heather Rose, Lugo-McGinness Academy; Karen Brown, CATEC High School; Jessica Scott, Burnley-Moran Elementary School; Susan Mahone, Greenbrier Elementary School; Derek Hartline, Jackson-Via Elementary School; Becca Covington, Johnson Elementary; Ariel Bruner, Summit Elementary School; and Ladi Smith, Trailblazer Elementary School.

7.3 Staff Appreciations: Teacher Appreciation Week, National School Principals' Day, School Lunch Hero Day, and Administrative Professionals Day:

Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, led the recognition of several important appreciation events. She highlighted Teacher Appreciation Week, which takes place from May 5th to May 9th, emphasizing teachers' roles as trusted professionals, creators of learning experiences, partners with families, and champions of student success. Dr. Otey encouraged everyone to reach out and thank a teacher during this week. She then recognized National Principal Appreciation Day on May 6th, celebrating principals as leaders, mentors, and visionaries. Looking ahead, she acknowledged School Lunch Hero Day on May 7th, honoring the food service staff who nourish students with care and kindness. Finally, she reflected on Administrative Professionals Day, which was on April 23rd, expressing gratitude for their essential behind-the-scenes work that keeps the school division running smoothly. Dr. Otey asked those present to join her in acknowledging the incredible contributions of teachers, principals, school lunch heroes, and administrative professionals.

8.1 Comments from Students: There were none.

8.2 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Derek Hartline addressed the board with ongoing safety concerns regarding grounds maintenance at Jackson-Via. He recounted previous issues with uncollected leaves leading to a vehicle fire, overgrown vegetation along fences, and delayed snow removal. His current concern focuses on the outsourced mowing at Jackson-Via, where a non-uniformed individual in a personal vehicle mows during student recess, creating a safety hazard by kicking up dust and debris and operating too close to children. Hartline emphasized the danger of projectile injuries from mowers, citing statistics and the lack of debris inspection. He questioned the city's responsibility allocation between the school system and parks and recreation, the rationale for a single individual handling the mowing, and the timing of the work during recess. Hartline urged the board to contact the relevant department to address these safety issues, especially considering the potential liability and the city's capacity to maintain
- Natalie Aviles, a parent in Charlottesville City Schools, addressed the board regarding the 4-2 vote on March 27th to reinstate armed police officers in schools. She expressed concern over a perceived lack of transparency, stating this vote contradicted prior assurances and reversed a 2020 policy established after community input. Aviles noted the vote was unexpected as it was not explicitly on the agenda. She referenced two external reviews of local police departments, highlighting a 2014 finding that School Resource Officers referred Black students to the juvenile justice system at almost six times the rate of white students. Aviles expressed alarm at the reported reason for the reinstatement – the police department's requirement – and the potential impact on vulnerable students, including undocumented individuals, especially given recent state actions on ICE enforcement. She also cited national ACLU statistics on the harmful effects of school policing and called for greater accountability and a transparent, evidence-based process in the decision-making.
- Shamika Terrell, a 1997 graduate of Charlottesville High School and current employee, expressed her deep gratitude for Superintendent Dr. Gurley's leadership, describing him as leading with love and genuinely caring for employees, students, families, and the Charlottesville community. She shared her positive experiences working at CHS, emphasizing the importance of a school environment where individuals feel like assets, seen, cared for, valued, and appreciated, noting this requires a collective effort to build a positive culture that increases retention, attendance, trust, and overall well-being.

Terrell then identified areas for growth based on her observations over the past five years, including focusing on internal development for the school community to boost morale, planning to increase minority recruitment and retention (recalling a past collaborative effort with ACPS for minority bonding and support), implementing a school-wide virtual program with a certified teacher, and offering additional dual enrollment courses. In closing, she thanked building-level administrators, school counselors, and Dr. Gurley for their work and encouraged continuing the division's forward-moving vision.

- Nick Steiner, a parent of two Charlottesville City Schools students, expressed his frustration and disappointment regarding the process of voting for School Resource Officers (SROs). He stated that the superintendent and administration have repeatedly failed to uphold the current safety model, citing the resignation of the former school safety coordinator, teacher walkouts, and administrative admissions of failure in communication and transparency. Steiner referenced concerns raised by Ms. Powell regarding the administration's lack of clarity on police involvement, weapon searches, and threat assessments. He criticized the decision to outsource safety to the police for half a million dollars instead of addressing internal issues. Steiner alleged the administration had been pushing for SROs despite contrary public statements and called for transparent leadership. He argued that the process lacked accountability and transparency, noting the administration's disregard for community input, including students, parents, teachers, and CSAs, as recommended by the Federal Organization of Community Policing. Steiner expressed skepticism about promised "guard rails," assessment, oversight, and transparency for the new SRO program, citing a lack of such practices in the past. He advocated for better leadership and a fair process, and thanked board members Richardson and Torres for their no votes.
- Alix Heintzman, parent of two CCS students, voiced disappointment with the school board's vote to bring back police into schools. Urged the board to seriously consider community concerns while developing a model over the summer. Promises include a model with unspecified guard rails, limiting police presence to the high school or possibly middle school as well, and eventual school community input. Assurance was given that police would not handle student discipline but would enforce school rules. Observing the process led to questions about the reliability of these promises, given the board's vote without community feedback, the administration's perceived lack of support for the existing safety model and failure to consult staff or offer alternatives, and the CPD chief's refusal to sign a previous agreement with guard rails. A suggestion was made that the board hoped the vote would end community input, acknowledging the desire to cease receiving what had been termed "ridiculous emails," but asserted these concerns are fact-based and rooted in local history.
- Sarah Gottlieb, parent of two Charlottesville public school students and a law professor specializing in criminal legal reforms, expressed disappointment with the school board's vote to allow SROs back into schools, citing a perceived lack of transparency after assurances that a vote would not occur. Had knowledge of an impending vote been available, attendance would have occurred to share expertise as a former public defender with 15 years of experience in the criminal legal system. The speaker would have conveyed firsthand observations of the lasting trauma inflicted on children arrested at school and work, representing adults who were first arrested as students, emphasizing the school-to-prison pipeline. The current climate was also noted as particularly risky for reinventing SROs, mentioning instances in the Commonwealth of SROs sharing students' names with ICE agents and the potential for ICE agents to enter schools. Research indicating that SROs disproportionately negatively impact vulnerable student groups, including students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, immigrant students, and minority students, was highlighted. The board was urged to prioritize the safety and well-being of these students and to conduct a more transparent process with greater community involvement to ensure student safety in schools.
- Peter Davis, CHS Teacher, shared a brief point regarding the school's Care & Safety Assistants (CSAs). Following the vote last month, the CSAs immediately had questions about the implications for their roles, leading to some uncertainty. After contacting Ms. Powell, confirmation was received that their jobs were secure. However, through ongoing conversations with the CSAs, particularly with Chris Byers, the head CSA, a strong desire for representation in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) drafting

process was expressed. Davis stated his assumption that this was already planned but wanted to explicitly convey the CSAs' wish for a seat at the table, emphasizing their valuable experience.

9.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report: In her final report, CHS student representative Harper Ullrich expressed gratitude for her service and thanked Dr. Malone and Ms. Burns for their support. She highlighted ongoing efforts to refine the CHS grading policy for equity and student support, and advocated for arts teachers' resource needs. Ms. Ullrich noted successful inter-school collaborations like mentor programs with elementary schools and the positive impact of Link Crew. She conveyed student interest in expanding the CATEC program and excitement about addressing attendance issues next year. Finally, she praised the AP Language seminar for showcasing student work and CHS academics.

Ms. Dooley thanked Ms. Ullrich for her service, expressing the board's appreciation for her contributions and suggestions. Ms. Dooley also thanked Ms. Burns for her leadership in the student representative program, noting that there were already many applicants for the following year.

10.1-8 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations](#), [Minutes - March 27, 2025 School Board Meeting](#); [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#); [2025-2026 Student Annual Fee Schedule](#); [Authorization of Signature in Absence of Division Superintendent through June 30, 2026](#); [2025-2026 Albemarle Regional Migrant Education Program Certification](#) and [Fiscal Year 2026 Technical Budget Amendment](#). Mr. Meyer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the adoption of the proposed consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Action Items

11.1 Action - 2025-2026 Special Education Annual Plan: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, presented the proposed budget for the Federal Flow Through Funding for Special Education for 2025-2026 for both school-aged and preschool for Board consideration on March 27, 2025. Ms. Rasnake detailed a slight modification before requesting action: the division will fund the structured teaching teacher position at CHS via the general fund, allowing for the transfer of some support staff from employee services to personnel to enhance physical therapy services.

Ms. Cooper made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the proposed 2025-2026 Special Education Annual Plan as presented with the budget modification described by Ms. Rasnake. 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.

11.2 Authorization of Retention Bonus FY25: At the March 27, 2025, School Board meeting, Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented an update on the Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) budget for fiscal years 2025 and 2026. Since that presentation, CCS has decided to pause any amendments to the FY 2026 budget until after May 2, when the Governor is expected to take action on the General Assembly's (GA) conference budget.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is moving forward with the GA's budget action to distribute funding to support the \$1,000 bonus per instructional and support SOQ position. This funding will be released as soon as the state budget is officially adopted. In alignment with this action, CCS staff recommended the approval of a one-time retention bonus to all CCS employees. The cost of the bonus is \$921,710, with \$471,712 covered by the state and \$449,998 funded by CCS through fiscal year-end funds.

Mr. Meyer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the proposed one-time retention bonus for Instructional & Support Staff (all employees) using funds from the FY 2025 Budget. 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.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer commented on the retention bonus, reiterating concerns from the previous meeting. His concerns were twofold: the state consistently providing only partial budget funding and the compensation disparity between the school division's lowest and highest-paid employees, questioning the fairness and mindfulness of this difference. He stated this item might not be the time for strong opposition, but he wanted to express his concern for future discussion. Following his comments, the board reviewed the motion to authorize a one-time retention bonus for all employees using FY2025 funds, and the motion passed with all members voting in favor.

11.3 Action - Elementary School Rezoning & Policy JC Update (School Attendance Zones): Public presentations and discussions focused on elementary school rezoning began on September 5, 2024. Rezoning is needed because housing developments approved and in process for the current Summit attendance zone are projected to increase student enrollment to over 140% of the school's capacity within the next five to eight years. This school, which is surrounded by significant high-density development planned and in progress, is also land-locked with no options to expand the capacity of the school facilities.

The comprehensive process to arrive at a recommendation is chronicled at <https://charlottesvilleschools.org/zoning>, and this web page links to another website constructed by the consultant (Woolpert), which provides additional information, including an interactive map with an address lookup tool.

The final rezoning recommendation included phasing designed to maximize flexibility for families and Charlottesville City Schools as we navigate the upcoming changes. Furthermore, in conjunction with the proposed phasing, an update to Policy JC, School Attendance Zones, was presented on March 27, 2025, for Board consideration.

Mr. Morse requested two votes, explaining there was prior discussion regarding policy JC, and he wanted to propose removing a specific part. He then moved to approve policy JC with the exemption of section A, bullet point five, which concerns athletic participation for students attending schools outside their residential zone. He clarified his motion, stating he wanted to strike out only that specific bullet point, not the entire section A.

Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Torres, to approve Policy JC (School Attendance Zones), striking bullet 5 in section 1 ("A limitation on participation in certain athletic activities for a student who chooses to attend a school outside the attendance zone in which he resides"). 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.

Mr. Morse made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the March 27, 2025, recommendation for elementary school rezoning and phasing. 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

12.1 2025-2026 Federal Programs Applications - Title I Application, Title II Application, Title III Application and Title IV Application: 2025-2026 Federal Programs Applications were presented by Stacy Reedal, Literacy Coordinator, PreK-12 (Title I); Dr. Adam Hastings, Administrator of HR and Student Data (Title II); Dr. Jeannie Pfautz, Coordinator of Gifted Programs, ESL Program, & AVID (Title III); and Patrick Farrell, Intervention and Support Supervisor (Title IV).

Dr. Hastings provided preliminary remarks, highlighting key updates from the Virginia Department of Education training, including enhanced state oversight of equitable services and the division's commitment to current operational guidelines amidst federal-level uncertainties. He emphasized the integrated nature of these programs within the division's strategic framework.

Ms. Reedall presented the Title I application, focused on ensuring equitable and high-quality education to address achievement gaps, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds. The FY24 allocation of \$1,483,963.68 supports initiatives in literacy, mathematics, and family engagement. Adjustments will be made upon receipt of final allocations in November.

Dr. Hastings further detailed the Title II application, centered on the recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators. He noted that evolving state regulations regarding the utilization of Title II funds for class size reduction would necessitate a significant reallocation towards professional development (increasing from \$25,000 to approximately \$200,000). In response to a clarifying question from Ms. Torres, Dr. Hastings affirmed that while Title II funds could no longer be used for this purpose, the division remained committed to class size reduction through alternative funding sources. A comprehensive needs assessment will inform the strategic deployment of the reallocated Title II resources, and site-based funding priorities will be evaluated. The Board will receive detailed Title I expenditure information. Burnley-Moran will transition from Title I status based on current eligibility criteria, though support will persist. The Title I application is subject to annual review.

Dr. Pfautz outlined the Title III application, supporting English Language Learners and their families with an anticipated allocation of \$73,000. These funds facilitate accessible instructional resources, targeted tutoring, and professional development. Contingent "immigrant and youth" funding (estimated at \$8,000-\$10,000) may further support extended learning opportunities. The current Title III funding serves approximately 750 ELL students.

Mr. Farrell presented the Title IV application, a consolidated grant designed to augment core programming according to local needs. Funding priorities include well-rounded educational opportunities, the promotion of safe and healthy school environments (encompassing social-emotional learning and restorative practices), and the effective integration of technology to enhance student outcomes.

The Board is scheduled to consider these applications for action on June 5, 2025.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer inquired about the flexibility in utilizing Title II funds, noting the shift from funding positions to professional development. Dr. Hastings clarified that historically, the state provides several allowable categories for Title II expenditure, and the division had previously prioritized class size reduction. Due to new state forecasts, this will no longer be the primary use, allowing funds to be directed to other allowable areas as defined by the VDOE and federal guidelines. He mentioned learning from best practices across the Commonwealth in leveraging Title II for recruitment, retention, and training.
- Mr. Meyer then expressed interest in the potential of Title II funds to support staffing in the neediest schools serving challenged students. Dr. Hastings responded that the required needs assessment process for Title II includes examining site-based funding, allowing for targeted allocation based on individual school needs rather than a blanket approach across the division.
- Ms. Torres returned to the topic of Title I funding, expressing a desire to understand the specific allocation of the nearly \$1.5 million across programs and staffing. Dr. Gurley responded that the grant application details expenditure by object code (e.g., professional services, personnel) and would be shared. Ms. Torres requested that this information be presented in a way that is easily understandable for board members. Dr. Gurley confirmed that the board would be notified of any significant changes or cuts in funding for collaborative discussion. He also provided an example of Title I funding changes, noting that Burnley-Moran would not be a Title I school in the 2025-2026 school year due to their low-income percentage falling below the 40% threshold, although the school would still receive some level of support.
- Mr. Meyer expressed surprise that the total additional federal funding (Title III) for all immigrant students was only \$70,000. Dr. Pfautz confirmed this amount. Mr. Meyer then inquired about a per-student allocation. Dr. Pfautz stated there were around 750 English learners, implying a very low per-student amount, which Mr. Meyer acknowledged as "not enough."

12.2 Policy Updates (February 2025 VSBA Policy and Local Policy Updates): Carolyn Swift, Director of Assessment and Accountability, and the Executive Leadership Team presented the February 2025 VSBA Policy Update and CCS Local Policy Update for Board consideration upon first reading. Virginia Code 22.1-253.13(7) requires that School Boards review all policies, at a minimum, every five years. In addition, the Board's policy service provider, the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), provides updates for consideration by the Board. Staff has reviewed several existing policies for revision, deletion, or review. A table summarizing the types of changes in each policy is attached. The Board will take action on June 5, 2025.

Four policies were highlighted for closer examination due to significant revisions: new Policy IIBC on artificial intelligence; Policy DN on the sale and disposal of property, including CCS-specific language and disposal methods; Policy KG on community use of school facilities, prioritizing partners and prohibiting partisan political events; and Policy GA on personnel policy goals, outlining CCS standards of professionalism.

Ms. Lewis explained that policy GA, the personnel policy for goals, was updated to offer more explicit guidance to staff regarding professionalism and standards of professional conduct. Previously addressed through evaluations and school handbooks, the division has proactively incorporated professionalism expectations directly into the policy to ensure consistent expectations and standards. Topics covered in the update include time and attendance, certification/licensure expectations, respectful interactions with students and colleagues, work expectations, and employee-student relations. She clarified that the outlined standards represent minimum expectations for acceptable conduct and performance for Charlottesville City Schools employees and are not exhaustive.

Ms. Powell explained that the policy regarding the sale or disposal of surplus property (Policy DN) was updated for two main reasons, largely modeled after recent changes in Loudoun County. The previous policy contained an outdated reference to seeking city permission for disposition, which was not the current practice. Additionally, the upcoming donation of surplus furniture to underprivileged communities necessitated an update, as this scenario was not previously addressed in the policy. Policy DN now includes CCS-specific language authorizing staff to manage surplus items (with school board approval for items over \$500) and outlines multiple methods for responsible and cost-effective disposal. Ms. Powell stated that Loudoun County's updated policy served as a useful model for these necessary revisions. She then indicated that there was one final policy update to discuss.

Mr. Cuomo introduced the new policy, IIBC, addressing artificial intelligence, particularly generative AI, as a powerful tool requiring training, knowledge, and boundaries for optimal use. The policy aims to establish these parameters, recognizing AI's transformative potential while emphasizing the need for careful management to make the best decisions for staff and students. While acknowledging AI's value in enhancing learning and expanding access, Mr. Cuomo also noted the risks of misuse, such as plagiarism, which fall under the acceptable use policy. He announced the formation of a committee to develop regulations over the next few months and summer, aligning with acceptable use policy and student rights and responsibilities, based on current research. Given the rapid evolution of AI, both the regulations and the policy will be reviewed annually to remain current.

Ms. Cheuk stated that while she was scheduled to discuss the community use of facilities policy, she felt Ms. Swift's presentation adequately covered the topic and responded to board member inquiries below.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Ullrich, having reviewed the personnel policy, noted its flexible wording regarding staff professionalism and inquired about the possibility of including students in these standards, particularly concerning dress code and professional conduct, based on student feedback. Ms. Lewis acknowledged the merit of this consideration, clarifying that student dress is currently governed by the student code of conduct, separate from staff policies. However, she indicated that adding a relevant section to the student code could be evaluated.

- Mr. Meyer inquired whether the increased detail in the updated personnel policy GA would expedite the evaluation process for non-disciplinary employee matters or accelerate disciplinary procedures. Ms. Lewis clarified that it would not accelerate the disciplinary process, as that is governed by a separate grievance policy with established timelines aligned with Virginia code and VSBA guidelines. However, she explained that the policy's detailed descriptors of professionalism aim to enhance staff understanding of expectations, potentially leading to a reduction in disciplinary hearings through increased clarity. Mr. Meyer concurred, suggesting that this enhanced transparency could indeed support such a reduction.
- Ms. Dooley inquired about the approval timeline for the AI policy and its accompanying regulations. Dr. Gurley clarified that the board would vote on the policy the following month, while the regulations, being developed by a committee formed by Mr. Cuomo (with invitations for participation sent to the school division), were expected to be in place by the time they returned. Ms. Dooley then questioned the overlap between the AI policy's references to the acceptable use of technology policy and student rights/responsibilities, and its application to staff through Ms. Lewis and the HR team. Mr. Cuomo responded that the regulations would include an approval process with supervisory guidance to prevent the unmanaged use of AI, particularly generative AI, emphasizing a training aspect and a formal approval process for its use by staff.
- Ms. Burns raised concerns, based on input from the student representative, about teachers using AI for feedback and potential grading. She inquired if the proposed AI policy would address this practice, advocating for staff accountability in their feedback methods, similar to expectations for students. She then asked Ms. Ullrich if she had anything further to add on this point.
- Ms. Ullrich affirmed the point, stating that students, having reviewed the agenda, provided feedback expressing the need for limitations on AI use. While acknowledging AI's valuable but limited applications requiring careful scaffolding to prevent plagiarism and unhealthy use, she highlighted instances of teachers using AI this year where students were told no action could be taken due to the lack of a policy. Ms. Ullrich conveyed that students strongly desire a policy that includes staff and teachers, ensuring they are held to similar standards regarding grading and feedback, and preventing AI from replacing direct instruction or direct feedback.
- Mr. Cuomo assured the board that the AI policy would address the concerns raised, emphasizing that direct instruction remains the primary mode of teaching and learning. He stated that the policy acknowledges the significance and scope of generative AI, and the forthcoming guidelines would outline appropriate "scaffolding" for its use, drawing on research that identifies various levels of AI application. He clarified that the goal is to discourage the independent use of AI to generate complete answers or reports by students, and similarly to prevent staff from substituting their expertise with AI in student instruction and feedback. Instead, the policy aims to ensure AI serves as an enhancement tool, not a replacement for the expertise of school system professionals at all levels.
- Ms. Burns sought clarification on the community use policy, specifically regarding political use. Ms. Cheuk explained that the policy would prohibit the use of school buildings to support partisan politics, aligning with restrictions on staff using their roles for such purposes. She noted that while various existing policies alluded to this, the updated policy explicitly states it. However, she clarified that politicians visiting schools for non-campaign-related activities, such as addressing civics classes, would still be permitted.
- Ms. Dooley acknowledged the significant amount of information regarding the policies and urged everyone to thoroughly review the policies and their associated regulations, particularly the new and revised ones, between then and June. She encouraged them to reach out with any questions or requests for clarification.
- Ms. Burns initiated a discussion on the promotion and retention policy (IKEC), expressing concerns about the criteria for student advancement, particularly in reading and math, and suggesting the inclusion of attendance as a factor. She called for a comprehensive review and further discussion. Mr. Morse added that former board members had previously raised similar concerns about student preparedness for the next grade level. Mr. Meyer expressed interest in reviewing potential modifications to the policy. Ms. Dooley anticipated a more in-depth discussion, potentially in a future work session, involving an examination of current practices and relevant research. Ms. Burns inquired if any such work had been

done previously. Ms. Dooley stated that, during her tenure, there had not been a substantive discussion specifically on this policy. Mr. Morse recalled a past discussion where Dr. Otey referenced research indicating that student retention could increase the likelihood of dropping out.

- Dr. Otey acknowledged the conflicting research on student retention. She explained that the updated promotion and retention policy was crafted to explicitly outline the collaborative approach between teachers, administrators, and families in supporting student progress. The policy aimed to avoid surprises regarding retention by emphasizing early and ongoing communication about a student's performance, recognizing the importance of home support alongside classroom instruction. Dr. Gurley added that the school division had been working diligently to strengthen attendance procedures, emphasizing the importance of presence for learning. He noted the complexity of directly linking chronic absenteeism to automatic failure, suggesting that a multi-faceted approach, as discussed in retention and student success meetings, was necessary.
- Ms. Dooley pointed out that the policy seemed to focus on school-directed retention or promotion and lacked language addressing parent-initiated requests for retention, which she felt occurred, particularly at the elementary level. She suggested considering the inclusion of specific policy language regarding such requests made outside of the school. Dr. Otey responded affirmatively, indicating that language addressing parent-initiated retention requests could be added to the policy.
- Ms. Burns emphasized that when discussing attendance, it was crucial to consider not just presence in the school building but also attendance in individual classes. She stressed the importance of evaluating whether a student attended specific subjects like algebra, English 9, or geometry. She highlighted the need to communicate this distinction to parents and families, emphasizing that while being in the building was a good start, consistent classroom attendance was essential. She concluded by indicating she had two further points to make.
- Ms. Richardson shared her personal experience of receiving immediate text notifications when her son misses a class, emphasizing that parents should be involved and are indeed being informed about their child's absences. She indicated that receiving and checking this information was a common occurrence.
- Ms. Ullrich stated that the connection between attendance and passing subjects was a significant concern raised by the SCA and student representatives in a meeting with Dr. Malone and Mr. Rod (Durrer), a topic about which many students felt strongly. Following up on this, she had further conversations with students before the current meeting. She conveyed the students' belief that attendance should play a role in academic progression, arguing that it is not equitable for students to graduate high school with inadequate reading skills, limiting their future opportunities in college, employment, or the military. Students felt that a system incorporating attendance, while not necessarily a "one-size-fits-all" approach, would be fairer and could involve support mechanisms, potentially including retention in some cases.

Board Response to Written Reports

13.1 [2025-2026 School Board Meeting Schedule - Written Report](#): Leslie Thacker, Clerk, prepared the proposed 2025-2026 School Board Meeting Calendar for Board consideration upon first reading. This item will be presented for approval on the Consent Agenda on June 5, 2025. There were no questions regarding this report.

13.2 [School Board Member Committee Reports](#): Board members shared updates on recent activities in this written report. There were no questions regarding this report.

13.3 [Outcome of Student Disciplinary Matters - Written Report](#): On Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm, the Charlottesville City School Board met in closed session, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A) (2) of the Code of Virginia, to discuss student disciplinary matters. The outcome of those meetings was included in the supporting information. There were no questions regarding this report.

13.4 [Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Update - Written Report](#): Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, and staff prepared the Social Emotional Learning and Mental Wellness Update to provide the Board with information

regarding the implementation and utilization of social emotional programming. There were no questions regarding this report.

13.5 Field Trips - Written Report: Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, provided a written report to summarize field trip opportunities held during the 2024-2025 school year and detail new safety protocols and request processes for field trips. There were no questions regarding this report.

13.6 Chronic Absenteeism - Written Report: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, prepared the Chronic Absenteeism written report for board information. There were no questions regarding this report.

14.1 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Peter Davis, CHS Teacher, thanked Ms. Burns for raising the issue of the promotion and retention policy (IKEC), stating it reflected conversations happening among teachers. He felt the policy contained points worth examining and expressed his intention to review it along with the board. He thanked the board for taking on the policy review.

15.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Ullrich expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve as a student board representative.
- Mr. Meyer expressed excitement about recent news, congratulating Dr. Gurley and thanking staff and the Chair for acknowledging it. He described it as a potentially "generational" opportunity, a \$100 million benefit for the school district and city, promising enhanced educational opportunities. He anticipated increased activity in the coming months. Transitioning to absenteeism, he noted an increase in the provided report for March and urged the administration to explore innovative strategies to improve attendance, especially in the final month, given potential traditional norms of decreased attendance. He specifically highlighted the chronic absenteeism rate at Charlottesville High School (around 31-32%) and hoped to see a reduction. He emphasized the board's focus on this issue and wished to hear about different approaches being implemented.
- Mr. Morse shared two brief personal anecdotes connected to Mr. Alex Zan, a speaker who had impacted him since his youth. The first story recounted a chance encounter with Mr. Zan in Atlanta. The second was related to wearing a yellow hat, a style he associated with Mr. Zan. He then read a message from Mr. Zan: "Yes, you matter. Thank you. Yes, you matter at this moment in time. Help, love each other, and always be kind. Good times, bad times, they come and go. Yes, you matter more than you'll ever know." Mr. Morse emphasized the importance of this message, particularly in the context of mental health struggles within the community and his own family, underscoring the significance of the "Yes you matter" message for students and the wider community.
- Ms. Burns expressed her gratitude to the outgoing student board representatives, Harper, Anya, and Nulia, for their leadership, dedication, and engagement. She acknowledged their contributions and wished Anya and Nulia well in their future endeavors at Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia, respectively, while also congratulating Harper on her French honors. Ms. Burns voiced her hope that the student board representative role would become a permanent committee position. She encouraged interested students to apply for the upcoming student representative role, noting the application deadline and the subsequent interview process leading to a June announcement. She also promoted the City of Charlottesville's Youth Council, which has specific student vacancies from various schools and attendance zones, urging students to consider applying. Finally, Ms. Burns acknowledged and thanked Dr. Gurley and his team, including Ms. Powell and Ms. Hoover, as well as Sam Sanders from the city, for their work on a comprehensive and dynamic application that addressed the needs of the youngest and most vulnerable learners. She also expressed gratitude for the community's, teachers' union's, Livable Cville's, and individual teachers' and community members' outpouring of support and advocacy, which she felt highlighted the exceptional nature of Charlottesville City Schools.
- Ms. Cooper commended the student representatives for their excellent job in representing the students of Charlottesville High School. She also congratulated Dr. Gurley and his team, along with the City of

Charlottesville, for their hard work. As an advocate for early childhood education, she expressed her excitement about the direction they were heading and looked forward to future work.

- Ms. Richardson began by echoing Mr. Morse's sentiment, "Yes, you matter," noting its importance in light of the recent loss of two young men in Charlottesville, highlighting the mental health struggles of youth. She thanked Mr. Morse for his message. Regarding the federal program applications, she expressed her appreciation to all the presenters, drawing on her experience as a part-time grant reviewer to acknowledge the demanding nature of these applications and thanking the team for their ongoing annual work.
- Ms. Torres thanked everyone for their comments and apologized for not bringing it up earlier during the policy discussion. She expressed strong support for a deeper review of policy IKEC and requested a work session or information from Dr. Gurley on the matter. She emphasized the importance of addressing students graduating without adequate reading skills, a long-standing issue requiring community partnerships. She asked for this to be added to their list of items to examine. Finally, she congratulated all students and seniors on the upcoming graduation on May 22nd and thanked Harper, wishing her a good end to the school year and summer, and looking forward to future updates.
- Ms. Dooley noted that the celebration season was approaching, mentioning the upcoming graduation at JPJ and the celebration at Buford. CATEC Completer Ceremony and signing day were also highlighted as opportunities to celebrate students. Student achievements were recognized as not possible without teachers and all staff. Gratitude was expressed to everyone as the following week was Teacher Appreciation Week.

16.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley acknowledged Leslie Thacker as the "unsung hero" behind the FBI building application, emphasizing that application's completion was due to Thacker's efforts in compiling it. Dr. Gurley also praised the "amazing" and "phenomenal" Charlottesville choirs performance, particularly highlighting a young man's rendition of "Good Vibrations." Dr. Gurley mentioned the numerous events occurring in May and directed attendees to the detailed news and highlights compiled by Amanda Korman and Beth Cheuk for information. Personal events for Dr. Gurley included throwing the first pitch at a baseball game, speaking at the Buford Farewell, and delivering the keynote at the 100 Black Men Scholarship breakfast. Finally, Dr. Gurley thanked Ms. Terrell for her positive remarks, stating that such acknowledgments of daily work were personally meaningful and appreciated. Dr. Gurley also noted that critiques regarding transparency were well-received and expressed gratitude for both the feedback and Ms. Terrell's supportive comments.

17.1 Work Session Wrap-Up: The Work Session concluded with three requests from the Board:

- Policy JC: Remove bullet point 5 from Section 1, which pertains to limiting athletic participation for students attending schools outside their designated attendance zone.
- Policy IKEC (Promotion and Retention): Conduct a further review, specifically addressing concerns related to attendance and considering relevant research.
- Title 1 Funding Breakdown: Provide a detailed breakdown of Title 1 funding, including its allocation to specific programs and staffing.

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

19.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

A video of the May 1, 2025, meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k3YMLnrqIV1kqDXVPTHEOCjNPIrvjMIZ/view?usp=drive_link