



MINUTES

Charlottesville City School Board/City Council Joint Budget Work Session

February 7, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Walker Upper Elementary School Cafeteria, 1564 Dairy Road

1.1 Call to Order: School Board Chair Lisa Torres and Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2.1 Roll Call:

The following School Board Members were present:

Ms. Amanda Burns	Ms. Shymora Cooper
Ms. Emily Dooley	Mr. Dom Morse
Mr. Chris Meyer	Ms. Nicole Richardson
Ms. Lisa Torres	

The following School Staff Members were present:

Dr. Royal Gurley	Dr. Katina Otey
Ms. Kim Powell	Ms. Renee Hoover
Ms. Beth Cheuk	Ms. Carolyn Swift
Ms. Leslie Thacker	Ms. Denise Johnson
Ms. Julia Green	

The following City Council Members were present:

Mayor Juandiego Wade	Vice Mayor Mr. Brian Pinkston
Ms. Natalie Oschrin	Mr. Michael Payne
Mr. Lloyd Snook	

The following City Staff Members were present:

Mr. Riaan Anthony	Mr. Garland Williams
Mr. Mike Goddard	Ms. Kyna Thomas
Mr. Jacob Stroman	Ms. Krisy Hammill
Mr. Sam Sanders	

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

4.1 February 7, 2024 School Board City Council Budget Work Session Presentation: Dr. Royal Gurley, Division Superintendent, and the Executive Leadership Team presented the February 7, 2024 Joint Budget Work Session Presentation for information and discussion. Information presented included:

- Alignment of Strategic Plan to Budget Priorities
- Demographics & Enrollment
 - Enrollment Overview
 - Summary of Projected Regular Enrollment Changes for Staffing

- Elementary K-4: 69
 - Walker: 5
 - Buford: 19
 - CHS/LMA: 25
 - **Total: 118**
- General Ed Teacher Recommendations:
 - Budget 2 additional positions for Elementary to support enrollments
 - Venable & BME graduating small 4th grade cohorts
 - Need to monitor K & ELL enrollments and housing developments across the 6 elementary zones to maintain target class sizes
 - Budget 2 additional positions for CHS to support master scheduling needs
 - English
 - Social Studies
- Projections - Elementary Class Sizes
- Demographics - Race
- Demographics - Disadvantaged
- English Learner (EL) Enrollment Changes
- Projections & Ratios for EL Students
 - State regulations require a ratio of 50:1
 - CCS strives for a ratio of 30:1
 - Project 109 students for School Year 24-25
 - Fall 2023 to Present had an increase of 47 students
 - FY 2024 Budget added 3 FTE Teachers
 - Additional 3.5 FTE Teachers are needed for SY 24-25 to maintain CCS's ratio
- Understanding the Local Composite Index (LCI)
 - Determines distribution of all state K-12 funding except the sales tax school age population distribution
 - Dates to the 1970's
 - Intended to measure a locality's residents basic capacity or ability to pay for K-12 education versus other localities:
 - It does not measure or compare the actual level of revenue generated by a locality
 - It does not consider poverty level of the students served
 - LCI computes the locality's relative state share of three revenue capacity indicators:
 - True market value of real estate (50%)
 - Virginia Adjusted Gross Income - VAGI (40%)
 - Taxable sales (10%)
 - The revenue capacity indicators are then divided by a locality's relative share of the state's:
 - Public school ADM (66.6%)
 - Population (33.3%)
 - There is an adjustment to the standard calculation for localities with non-resident income above 3 percent of VAGI.
 - The only changes adopted to the LCI since its inception have been adding the one-third population to the denominator in the 1980's, and later the non-resident adjustment to VAGI.
 - Sometimes hold-harmless funding is provided to help mitigate the impact of significant LCI changes in the first year of a new biennium. This is usually politically contentious, so difficult to count on until the state budget process is completed.
 - After the weighted revenue factors are divided by the ADM and the population numbers, and the ADM and population components are added together, the total is multiplied by .45 to get the relative 45% local to 55% state weighted average share of SOW costs.
- Relative Weight of the LCI Factors
- 2024-26 Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay
 - LCI increased 7.5 percent over the 2022-24 biennium budget.

- Charlottesville is required to pay about 77.02 percent of the minimum educational program set by the state.
- State aid and sales tax provides only 22.98 percent toward the minimal state education program requirements.
- LCI Comparisons (Charlottesville/Albemarle/State)
- LCI Components: Indicators of Relative Populations to be Served
- LCI Components: Indicators of Relative Wealth/Resources
- State Revenue
 - Revenues where LCI is part of the funding formula decreased by \$1,186,063.
 - Incentive type revenues decreased by 1,532,027. These revenues are Hold Harmless - COVID 19 \$538,144 and Grocery Sales Tax \$993,883.
 - Overall loss in state revenue is \$2,924,973 or 13.5%.
- Governor's Proposed Budget
 - Technical Adjustments to routine State Share for K-12 education for SOQ, LCI, and ADM.
 - Updated the Estimate Projections on State Sales Tax Revenue Dedicated to K-12.
 - One-time bonus payment of 1% for SOQ funded instructional and support positions.
 - Salary increase of 2% in FY 2026 for SOQ funded instructional and support positions.
- City Revenue
 - City budget guidelines allocate 40% of new personal and real property tax revenues to CCS.
 - Five year trends for school contributions increase range from \$2.7 - \$4.2 million.
- Schools Contribution Percentage of City's Operating Budget
- Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) 2022 Comparative Cost Report - Per Capita for Cities
- FYE 2023 Gainshare with City
 - Additional funding from schools fund balance and gainsharing were committed in March 2023 to offset the cost of the \$91.8 million Buford Reconfiguration before the \$17.7 million school construction grant was awarded (in May 2023). This is outlined in the City's 2024 Capital Improvement Plan.
 - Strategy to fund the gainshare was to use ESSER funding to reimburse the division for instructional, technology, social emotional counselors, and sanitation materials and supplies.
 - For the 2023 fiscal year end, per the gainshare agreement and commitment, CCS remitted \$4,422,395 to the City for school construction projects.
- Expenditures by Categories
- Instructional Staff Comparison for SOQ Funded To CCS Positions
- Specialized Student Support
 - State categorize as SOQ Funded Support Position
 - Positions include licensed and unlicensed nurses, social workers, psychologists, licensed behavior analysts, licensed assistant behavior analysts, and other licensed health and behavioral positions.
 - 3 positions per 1000 students standard or 12 positions for 4300 students.
 - CCS has 36.5 FTEs. Exceed the SOQ by 24.5 FTEs.
- Teacher Compensation
 - Starting teacher pay with the 2% mid-year raise on 1/1/2024 with a bachelors, step 0 is \$55,029 salary or \$39.31 hourly (200 days, 1400 hours)
 - Compared to other school divisions with bachelors and step 0
- Implement Compensation Study Administration & Support Staff
 - Commissioned Evergreen in 2022-23 to prepare a compensation study. Time is of the essence to implement.
 - Recommend implementing new pay plans and pay grades for:
 - Administration - Assistant Principals, Coordinators, Directors, Principals, and Supervisors
 - General (Support) - Administrative Technicians, CSAs, Custodians, Instructional Assistants, Nutrition Workers, Technical Support Specialists
 - Provide competitive pay structure and improved ability to hire, attract, and retain employees.

- Provide a 1.5% even step progression. This addresses the 1% compression of custodians, instructional assistants, and nutrition support pay scales.
- Aligned staff’s current hourly rate to the nearest hourly rate on the recommended pay plan and grade for their position. This is an average increase of 1.67%.
- City Contract: Maintenance
 - Cost FY 24 - \$4,768,096 - Projecting a 6% increase of \$272,172
 - Maintenance
 - HVAC & electrical systems and elevators
 - Plumbing & water testing
 - Other structural maintenance (painting, wood floors, glass, doors, etc.)
 - Facilities Development
 - New construction, renovations & capital maintenance (roof replacements, etc.)
 - Utilities - Electricity, Gas, Sewer & Water
 - Sustainability
 - Monitoring utilities
 - Educational programs
 - Parks & Rec
 - Large area mowing, trees and campus landscape areas
 - Playgrounds, basketball & tennis courts
 - Parking lot snow removal
- City Contract: Pupil Transportation
 - Cost FY24 - \$3,982,480 - Projecting a 25% increase of \$975,708
 - Daily regular transportation services
 - Transportation for special needs and alternative placements (including foster care & homeless needs)
 - Field trips within Charlottesville
 - After school activity bus services
 - Transportation for district & regional athletic competitions
 - Bus maintenance & purchases
 - Bus fuel
 - Bus insurance

Changed
Removed
Added

Modifications to Budget Change Document From 1/18/2024 School Board Work Session			
STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY	SALARY & BENEFIT ACTIONS	AMOUNT	FTE
3	Teachers: One step plus 1.75% for average 3% increase	1,354,860	
3	Administration: Average 3% increase	182,506	
3	General (Support): Average 3% increase	312,909	
3	Teachers and Staff: 2% Mid-Year Raise implemented 1/1/2024	1,231,977	
	Teachers: Step increase	564,525	
	Administration & General: Implementation of Evergreen Plan	323,197	
3	Benefit: Health Insurance (Estimate 7.7%)	901,512	

	Total Salary & Benefit Actions	3,083,765	
	RECURRING & NON-DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS		
4	City Contract: Pupil Transportation (Estimate 25%)	975,708	
4	City Contract: Maintenance (Estimate 6%)	272,172	
4	Subscription: Parents Square	12,000	
4	Security: Access Controls Software Subscription	8,000	
4	CATEC: Sustain Academic and Operation Services	441,904	
4	CATEC: Sustain Academic and Operation Services	290,518	
	TOTAL RECURRING & NON-DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS	1,700,784	

Modifications to Budget Change Document From 1/18/2024 School Board Work Session			
STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY	SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM SUPPORTS & IMPROVEMENTS	AMOUNT	FTE
1	Teachers: Enrollment Growth - Elementary, English Second Language, English & Social Studies	764,745	7.5
1	Teachers: Enrollment Growth - Elementary and/or Second Language	189,762	2
1	Teacher: CATEC Special Education	101,966	1
2	Support Staff: CHS Attendance Specialist	111,290	2
2	Support Staff: CHS Care & Safety Assistant	55,645	1
3	Teachers: Site Base Substitutes at CHS, Buford, Walker, and Elementary Schools	1,233,592	12
1	Teachers: Reading & Math Specialists at Walker	209,030	2
1	Teachers: Reading & Math Interventionists at Buford	203,932	2
1	Teachers: Reading & Math Specialists at Buford	203,932	2
1	Teacher: Math Specialist at Clark	101,966	1
1	Knight School	213,688	
3	Teacher: Special Education Instructional Compliance Additional 10 Days	15,295	
3	Instructional Assistants: Special Education Stipend Increase	16,775	
4	Technology: CATEC Hardware & Software	67,000	
4	Consultant: Evaluate Elementary Student Attendance Zones	50,000	
3	Tuition: Increase Division Reimbursement Rate	42,300	
3	Collective Bargaining: Labor Relations	9,000	
	TOTAL SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM SUPPORTS & IMPROVEMENTS	3,390,156	
	TOTAL INCREASE EXPENDITURES	9,083,704	30.5

Modifications to Budget Change Document From 1/18/2024 School Board Work Session

REVENUES	
Decrease: State	-2,999,801
Increase: State Revenue 1% "One-Time" Bonus	74,828
Use of Fund Balance	772,832
City (Estimated Request)	6,000,000
TOTAL INCREASE REVENUES	9,083,704

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2024-2025 Funding Request (Changes to FY 2024)			
STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY	SALARY & BENEFIT ACTIONS	AMOUNT	FTE
3	Teachers and Staff: 2% Mid-Year Raise implemented 1/1/2024	1,231,977	
	Teachers: Step increase	564,525	
	Administration & General: Implementation of Evergreen Plan	323,197	
	<i>Total Salary & Benefit Actions</i>	2,119,699	
	RECURRING & NON-DISCRETIONARY CONTRACTS		
4	City Contract: Pupil Transportation (Estimate 25%)	975,708	
4	City Contract: Maintenance (Estimate 6%)	272,172	
4	CATEC: Sustain Academic and Operation Services	290,518	
	<i>Total Recurring & Non-Discretionary Contracts</i>	1,538,398	
	SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM SUPPORTS & IMPROVEMENTS		
1	Teachers: Enrollment Growth - Elementary and/or English Second Language	189,762	2
	<i>Total School Based Program Supports & Improvements</i>	189,762	
	Total Increase Expenditures	3,847,859	2
	REVENUES		
	Decrease: State	-2,999,801	
	Increase: State Revenue 1% "One-Time" Bonus	74,828	
	Use of Fund Balance	772,832	
	City (Estimated Request)	6,000,000	
	Total Increase Revenues	3,847,859	

- Summary of Budget Changes

State Revenue Decrease	\$2,924,973
City Contracts	1,247,880
Essential Actions**	2,599,979
Increase in City Contributions	\$6,000,000
Use of Fund Balance	\$772,832

- Essential Budget Action For FY 2025
 - Proposed budget is leveraged on “one-time” funds from CCS’s fund balance in the amount of \$772,832.
 - Supports a step (base pay increase) salary action for teachers and support staff. This is equivalent to the State’s 1% “one-time” bonus.
 - Positions CCS to certify to VDOE that the division has met the minimum pay requirement.
 - Aligns to the strategic plan to retain teachers and staff.
 - Front loads the FY 2026 City Appropriation Ask. Like the 2% mid-year salary action did this fiscal year
- Proposal Budget Summary - ALL Funds

Funds	Amended Budget FY 2023 - 2024	Proposed Budget FY 2024 - 2025	Change From 2024 to 2025 Budgets	% Change From 2024 to 2025 Budgets
General (Operating)	\$86,626,337	\$91,720,289	\$5,093,952	5.88%
Special Revenue	\$21,331,565	\$24,678,680	\$3,347,115	15.69%
Total Funds	\$107,957,902	\$116,398,969	\$8,441,067	7.82%

Funds	Amended Budget FY 2023 - 2024	Proposed Budget FY 2024 - 2025	Change From 2024 to 2025 Budgets	% Change From 2024 to 2025 Budgets
General (Operating)	\$86,626,337	\$91,720,289	\$5,093,952	5.88%
Special Revenue	\$21,331,565	\$24,678,680	\$3,347,115	15.69%
Total Funds	\$107,957,902	\$116,398,969	\$8,441,067	7.82%

General Fund		Special Revenue Fund	
City Appropriation	\$4,996,530	CATEC	\$3,270,711
State Revenue	(\$2,924,973)	VPI	41,474
Fund Balance Change	\$3,022,395	WALK	34,930
Total Changes	\$5,093,952	Total Changes	\$3,347,115

- School Board Request - Additional \$3 million in City Appropriation

Use of Fund Balance - Step Increase	772,832
Health Insurance	349,314
Teachers: Enrollment Growth - Elementary, English Second Language, English & Social Studies	560,813
IA: CATEC Special Education	46,156
Support Staff: CHS Care & Safety Assistant	55,645
Teachers: Site Base Substitutes at CHS, Buford, & Walker	379,524
Teachers: Reading & Math Specialists at Walker	189,762

Teachers: Reading & Math Interventionists at Walker	189,762
Teachers: Reading & Math Specialists at Buford	94,881
Teacher: Math Specialist at Clark	94,881
Knight School	213,688
Tuition: Increase Division Reimbursement Rate	42,300
Collective Bargaining: Labor Relations	9,000
Total	2,998,558

- Looking Ahead
 - Budget is Subject to Change
 - State Process (House, Senate, General Assembly, Governor)
 - City Funding
 - Budget Work Session
 - Thursday, February 15th at 5 p.m. - Walker Cafeteria
 - School Board Budget Approval
 - Thursday, February 22nd at 5 p.m. - CHS Media Center
 - City Council Meeting - School Board Budget Presentation
 - Tuesday, March 5th at 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
 -

Mr. Wade asked what an ESL students day might look like and questioned the 90% economically disadvantaged rate among black families in Charlottesville. Dr. Gurley confirmed the significant rise in Charlottesville schools' English Language Learner (ELL) population. Nearly 90% of African-American students are identified as economically disadvantaged, a factor external to the schools. The number of ELL students has grown dramatically, from 467 pre-pandemic to the current 747, with projections indicating a further increase to almost 900 by next spring. Dr. Gurley explained the challenges faced by ELL students, particularly at the secondary level where they're expected to meet regular graduation requirements despite language barriers. Sheltered classrooms offer some support, but students still integrate with mainstream classes. This situation highlights the need for increased funding. Dr. Gurley stressed that exceeding minimum requirements is essential to effectively support ELL students' language development and ultimately help them transition out of the ESL program. This necessitates ongoing collaboration between general education and ESL teachers.

Mr. Pinkston asked if the current Local Composite Index (LCI) number was caused by the pandemic and if there were any efforts underway to update the calculation. Ms. Hoover responded that a committee will be convened to study the LIC, hopefully to have it changed in a few years.

Charlottesville City Schools are facing a funding challenge due to a state school funding formula called the Local Composite Index (LCI). This formula considers enrollment, property values, and income to determine a locality's ability to fund education. However, the LCI uses a two-year enrollment lookback period, and Charlottesville's enrollment dipped during the pandemic. This outdated data misrepresents current needs, as student numbers have since risen significantly. As a result of the high LCI, Charlottesville schools lost nearly \$3 million in state funding. To maintain current operations with their growing student population, they estimate needing an additional \$4 million annually. They are advocating for adjustments to the LCI or alternative funding sources to ensure they have sufficient resources to provide quality education.

Mr. Snook questioned what "True market value of real estate (50%)" means in relation to the LCI. Dr. Gurley responded that "True Value" likely refers to the estimated market value of real estate based on recent sales, rather than the assessed value used for taxation purposes.

Mr. Payne asked for clarification on the proposed employee compensation plan. He questions whether it incorporates all the suggestions from the recent wage and compensation study. Dr. Gurley responded that the intent is to partially implement the recent wage and compensation study. Instead of recommending a 2-3% raise,

it was recommended that the division implement a 1.25% step increase over a 1% bonus. The step increase is more valuable because it contributes to employee retirement plans, a top priority for staff. Dr. Gurley emphasized the importance of "creditable compensation" which ensures employees reach their appropriate pay grade and meaningfully contribute towards retirement. He clarified that "creditable compensation" refers to benefits that impact retirement savings, unlike bonuses which do not.

Mr. Snook asked where the pupil transportation estimate came from (25% increase). Ms. Powell responded that the estimate was provided by Ms. Eubanks and Mr. Williams from City Transportation.

Mr. Wade inquired if healthcare benefits are being eliminated from the budget request. Ms. Hoover clarified that items highlighted in yellow (removed recommendations) were necessary due to a significant increase in healthcare costs (around \$901, 512). Alternative quotes for the administration part of the health insurance plan are being sought (being self-insured offers some flexibility) to reduce administration costs.

Dr. Gurley shared concerns about removing the proposal for site-based substitutes explaining how this forces specialists, like gifted teachers, to cover absent teachers' classes. This disrupts core operations as these specialists are then not able to provide specialized support to students.

Ms. Larson-Torres highlighted recent efforts to hire site-based substitutes as a direct response to teacher feedback as this will allow teachers to focus on their core duties and reduce their overall workload.

Mr. Payne questioned vacancy savings and asked how many positions are funded through them. Ms. Lewis responded that the division currently has 26.5 vacant positions. Mr. Payne also asked about the challenges of filling ESL teacher positions, particularly for languages like Farsi and African languages. Dr. Gurley responded that ESL teachers in their district don't necessarily need prior experience with the specific language their students speak (like Farsi or African languages). He highlighted the importance of teaching methods (pedagogy) for English language acquisition, not fluency in a particular language.

Mr. Snook asked for the division's current fund balance and asked what the recommended amount is. Ms. Hoover responded that the current fund balance is \$4 million fund balance and the targeted amount is \$12 million.

Ms. Torres expressed dissatisfaction with the reduced budget request from Dr. Gurley. She acknowledged the board's understanding of city-wide budget constraints but emphasizes the needs of the school district. Ms. Torres highlighted the following points to justify their request for an additional \$3 million. Alignment with the values of equity and needs-based budgeting. Supporting student needs and addressing learning loss. Addressing achievement gaps identified in specific student subgroups. She emphasizes that this revised proposal is a scaled-back version of Dr. Gurley's initial request. Ms. Torres concluded by requesting the council to consider the revised proposal and collaborate on finding solutions to move forward. She acknowledged the council's past support and expressed hope for their continued investment in the Charlottesville City Schools.

5.1 Comments from Members of the Community;

- Christine Esposito, gifted teacher at Walker, advocated for fully funding Dr. Gurley's original budget requests and he explained the importance of having site-based substitutes (subs) for the gifted program. She said that without site-based subs, it would be difficult to implement the new gifted model and teachers would be pulled from PLC meetings to cover classes. Ms. Esposito also explained that the lack of subs would have a negative impact on other specialists and teachers in the schools. She mentioned that instructional assistants (IAs) would not be able to assist classroom teachers as planned. Finally, she highlighted the importance of site-based subs who get to know the students. She said that these relationships help keep students in class. Ms. Esposito concluded her speech by saying that she could not find anything frivolous in Dr. Gurley's original budget and asked the council to fully fund it.
- Heather Blakley, teacher at Walker, highlighted the importance of specialists and interventionists in schools, and the challenges students are facing due to the pandemic's lingering effects, particularly in reading. She emphasized that classroom teachers, while qualified, lack the specialized training, resources, and time to

effectively address these reading gaps. Specialists, on the other hand, possess the necessary expertise to diagnose problems, develop interventions, and support teachers in creating effective strategies. Ms. Blakeley argued that reducing or eliminating specialist positions would be detrimental to students' achievement. She emphasized the data showing ongoing learning gaps and the immense pressure on teachers to manage regular content delivery, struggling readers, data analysis, and interventions – all while lacking the necessary support.

- Jessica Taylor, teacher at Clark, shared a statement from Ms. Gillikin advocating for the school board and city council to prioritize student needs in the budget. She emphasized the importance of basic needs for all students and advocated for funding reading specialists, math specialists, and special education professionals, highlighting their crucial role in student success. Ms. Gillikin's statement expressed concern that the proposed budget cuts these essential positions. While praising the work at Charlottesville High School under Mr. Leatherwood's leadership urged continued support by funding attendance initiatives and additional CSAs, sharing that these are vital for the school's momentum.
- Sabra Timmons, teacher at Jackson-Via, spoke about the challenges faced by the division's growing population of English Learners (EL). Highlighting the 1:30 student-to-teacher ratio and recent academic gains, Timmons emphasized the need for additional support. She shared stories of students with limited English proficiency and traumatic experiences, urging the board to approve additional positions. Timmons warned that without sufficient staff, both EL students and native English speakers would suffer due to overwhelmed teachers. The speech concluded with appreciation for the board's efforts.
- Deborah Hartline, a Leap Instructional Assistant with 15 years of experience, spoke about the critical role of Leap in supporting students with multiple disabilities. She highlighted the demanding yet essential tasks of Leap IAs, including hygiene and feeding assistance, which go beyond traditional academic support. Hartline emphasized the importance of these duties for student health, safety, and social inclusion. She requested the board and council to fully fund the proposed stipend in recognition of the often overlooked but crucial work performed by Leap IAs.
- Raul Arbelaez, a parent and president of the Black Knight Athletic Club at Charlottesville High School, addressed the board voicing strong support for the school system's request for additional funding, acknowledging its importance for the community's future. Arbelaez then presented a separate initiative. The Black Knight Athletic Club is fundraising to install lights at the school's track complex, aligning with the school's focus on student well-being and community engagement. He requested a \$200,000 one-time contribution from the city to supplement their fundraising efforts and highlighted the project's benefits for students, athletes, and the entire Charlottesville community.
- Nic McCarthy-Rivera, teacher at CHS, expressed concern about the revised budget recommendation (with items removed), highlighting their negative impact on teacher morale and workload. He emphasized the strain caused by a lack of substitute teachers, which disrupts instruction and reduces time for planning and grading. Rivera shared a personal experience where subbing duties interfered with his own professional development. He voiced his concern about low teacher morale and potential departures from the profession due to workload and resource limitations. Rivera concluded with a strong urge for the board to approve the full budget request.
- Laura Sirgany, parent of a CHS student, spoke against proposed revised budget recommendations (with items removed) that might bring back metal detectors, phone confiscation, and police in schools. She argued these methods are ineffective and harmful, creating a fearful environment that hinders education. Sirgany urged the board to allocate funds towards evidence-based solutions for student mental health and fostering a strong school community. She proposed staff professional development, hiring specialists in restorative justice and culturally relevant teaching, increased family engagement, hiring more on-site support professionals, and collaborating with students to develop solutions. Sirgany concluded by emphasizing the importance of following through on the school safety promises made in 2020 and investing in positive change.
- Amy Gardner, parent of CHS student, commended the School Board for considering a needs-based budget. She praised Dr. Gurley's approach, believing it directly addresses the challenges faced by CHS and likely other schools in the district. Gardner emphasized the importance of investing in students now to prevent future issues. She framed the decision as a choice: address student needs proactively or deal with them later, potentially after graduation or with dropouts.

- Ang Conn, community member, argued against increased funding for school resource officers and echoed prior concerns about criminalizing students and urged the board to prioritize support. Conn suggested allocating those funds towards additional staff training in social-emotional learning and conflict resolution, which could better address the underlying challenges faced by students. Conn emphasized the importance of providing support to students who may be struggling with interpersonal relationships and emotional regulation, rather than resorting to punishment and concluded by highlighting the need to prioritize accountability over punishment, regardless of a student's age.

Mr. Wade expressed appreciation for the public's participation, highlighting its value in understanding community needs. He noted positive discussions about the school system and acknowledged his past experience on the school board, empathizing with the board's budgetary limitations. Highlighting the needs of disadvantaged students, Wade stressed the importance of love, trust, safety, and security. He recognized the increasing number of such students and the need for additional funding. While acknowledging recent budgetary adjustments, Wade raised concerns about teacher compensation and its impact on retaining staff. He emphasized the importance of further discussions and the city council's commitment to finding solutions. Finally, Wade stressed the importance of a strong school system in attracting residents to the city.

6.1 Upcoming School Board Meetings: Ms. Torres read the upcoming meetings.

7.1 Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:32pm

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

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PTHB1V2Um1bLC5ARf8tG2m-BP2H5MunV/view?usp=sharing>

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Julia Green, School Board Clerk