



**MINUTES**  
**CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School**  
**Thursday, December 7, 2023 (5:00 PM)**

Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on December 7, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., in the Division Annex/SPED Conference Room, 1400 Melbourne Road, Charlottesville, VA.

**PRESENT:** Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres  
**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent; Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources; Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer; Andrew Selman, Attorney with Sands Anderson.

**1.1 Call to Order:** Mr. Bryant, 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) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel engaged by the Board regarding specific legal matters involving the application of statutory legal authority and requiring the advice of counsel. Dr. Kraft seconded the motion, the motion passed with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Ms. Bryson Morsberger was not present for this vote.

**1.3 Closed Meeting Certification:** At 4:52 p.m., Mr. Morse offered a motion that the Board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered. Dr. Kraft seconded the motion, the motion passed with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

There was no action.

The board recessed from 4:52 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

**2.1 Moment of Silence:** Mr. Bryant asked all those present to observe a moment of silence.

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

**4.1 Roll Call of Board Members:**

The following Board Members were present:	Mr. James Bryant	Ms. Lashundra Bryson Morsberger
	Ms. Emily Dooley	Dr. Sherry Kraft
	Ms. Lisa Larson-Torres	Ms. Jennifer McKeever

Mr. Dom Morse

Jayla Turner, Student  
Representative

The following Board Members were absent: None

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

The following Staff Members were absent: None

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

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

- Derek Hartline, city resident and Jackson-Via Elementary Teacher, addressed the Board with comments of concerns around safety at Charlottesville High School and requested that the Board remove the proposed naming policy from the agenda and discontinue the process.
- Berdell Fleming, NAACP member and longtime educator, shared comments of concern around safety at Charlottesville High School.
- Cale Jaffe, parent of Charlottesville High School (CHS) students, shared comments of concern around safety at Charlottesville High School.
- Quinn Curtis, parent of CHS student and Speech and Debate Coach, shared comments of concern around staffing and safety at Charlottesville High School.
- Janet Miller, parent of CHS student, shared comments of concern around safety at Charlottesville High School.
- Jenn Horne, CHS Teacher, thanked the Board and Division Administration for their efforts to address the current climate and disciplinary concerns at Charlottesville High School.
- Peter Davis, CHS Teacher and parent, shared comments of appreciation for the support being provided at Charlottesville High School, encouraged community members to continue with support, and shared that he is seeing a positive change in the climate.
- Pat Edwards, former Charlottesville City Schools Teacher, shared comments of concern around potentially renaming Lugo-McGinness Academy and shared reflections on the service of Ms. Alicia Lugo and Ms. Rebecca McGinness to the Charlottesville community.
- Alexa Earnest, CHS Student, shared comments of support for allowing students to use earbuds or headphones during non-instructional time.
- Rob Warner shared comments of appreciation for Dr. Gurley and his personal efforts to address issues at CHS and for his frequent presence there. He also shared comments of support for keeping the name of Johnson Elementary School, Burnley-Moran Elementary School, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Performing Arts Center.
- Tanesha Hudson addressed the Board with reflections of her experience at Charlottesville High School years ago, adding that there was shared responsibility between parents, staff, and students around discipline. Ms. Hudson also shared comments that there is an issue in Charlottesville around supporting Black leaders in the community.
- Tad Miller shared comments of concern around the lack of transparency around disciplinary issues at CHS and stated that phones are the only way that parents are able to get true notifications. He also urged accountability for student behavior.

- Rebecca Cole addressed the Board with comments of appreciation for the way the Board and Dr. Gurley is listening to the community and she encouraged community members to stay engaged in school issues and not just when there is a single issue they care about. She also urged the community to advocate to state representatives for school funding.
- Paul Engleheart, CHS Parent, shared comments of concern around safety at Charlottesville High School.
- Nic McCarthy-Rivera, CHS History Teacher, shared comments of concern around safety at CHS and advocated for improved translation services and improved cultural conversations to address more fundamental issues at play in the community. He also advocated for additional Care & Safety Assistants (CSAs) and for a more robust restorative justice approach.
- Laura Santiago addressed the Board with comments of appreciation for the Board's service and shared comments of support for teacher voice and for a safe work environment for teachers.
- Leslie Harris Scott, Charlottesville High School graduate, shared comments of appreciation to board members and Dr. Gurley for listening to the community.
- Nikuyah Walker, Charlottesville High School graduate and parent to three former students, shared comments of concern around the outcry by the community to place blame, stereotype, and speak negatively about the most vulnerable citizens in the community. She also stated that many students are dealing with trauma and that those needs have to be met before students can sit down and learn and grow and highlighted the importance of getting to the root cause of the behaviors, and that metal detection systems are along the lines of criminalization and have not worked in other places.
- Melvin Grady, Lugo-McGinness Academy and Knight School Teacher, shared comments of concern around the negative and sometimes inaccurate media coverage of Charlottesville High School and Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA) and stated that there are good things happening at CHS and LMA.
- M. J. Smith stated that weapons detection systems are found at hospitals, sporting events, and many public places. She acknowledged the worry around the school environment potentially becoming an incarceration environment but disagrees and stated that this seems to be the reality of the world we live in now and that the path of least resistance would be to deal with the lax gun control situation in Virginia and across the country. Weapons detection would at least mitigate bulleted weapons from coming into Charlottesville schools.
- D.B. shared comments around a recent Charlottesville Police Department statement around an investigation into to the handling of a potential sexual assault.
- Maggie Heaphy, CHS Student, shared comments of appreciation for Dr. Gurley, board members, and teachers for their support of students and their wellbeing.
- Lisa Green, CHS Parent and CHS Mountain Bike Club Team Director, shared comments that there are many good things happening at CHS, and wanted others to be clear that she is getting her information from students within the school, not the media, and noted that even though those students haven't been involved in the incidents, they are directly affected as well.
- Kisha Lashley, CHS Parent, addressed the Board with comments encouraging the identification of teacher needs and for hearing from all stakeholders.

Ms. Cheuk shared the following statement on behalf of Charlottesville City Schools:

“Our policies and practices are in alignment with Virginia state code and Virginia School Board Association policy. We take any reports—even third-hand reports—of sexual assault seriously, and we follow our policies, procedures, and legal obligations with fidelity and in careful consultation with legal counsel. Charlottesville City Schools is in contact with the Charlottesville Police Department to address any concerns they may have and to continue strengthening our working relationship. Because of confidentiality considerations, we will not comment on any specific situation.”

Ms. McKeever offered a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse to move agenda item 7.2 School Board Member Farewell to item 14.2. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

## Special Recognition

**7.1 [2001 Charlottesville Girls High School Basketball Team Recognition](#):** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, invited the community to celebrate the 2001 undefeated girls' basketball state champions, who will receive their long overdue recognition and rings between the girls' and boys' basketball games on Friday night. On behalf of CCS, she apologized for the long delay in this recognition.

**8.1-3 [Adoption of Consent Agenda](#):** The following items were included in the consent agenda; [Personnel Recommendations](#) and [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#). Dr. Kraft offered a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the adoption of the proposed consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

## Disclosures

**9.1 [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. Dooley read a statement regarding personal interest in a transaction of the Charlottesville City School Board. This disclosure will be reflected in the public records of the Clerk of the School Board for five years. A copy of the full statement can be found on the Board's [Electronic School Board](#) site.

## Action Items

**10.1 [FY 2024 Budget Amendment and Authorize Additional 2% Increase](#):** Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented information to the Board on November 2, 2023 that the General Assembly Special Session adopted a budget that amends the fiscal year 2024 budget. The school division received an additional funding of \$217,277 for compensation supplement to support the state share of the 2% raise and \$946,637 for the ALL In Tutoring Program for a total budget amendment of \$1,163,914. It also included an additional 2% raise for teachers and staff effective January 1, 2024 with an implementation cost of \$637,803.

Ms. Larson-Torres offered a motion, seconded by Mr. Morse, to approve the amended FY 2024 budget in the amount of \$1,163,914 for additional state funds for a total amended FY 2024 budget of \$107,957,90. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays

Ms. Larson-Torres offered a motion, seconded by Dr. Kraft, to approve the additional 2% raise to teachers and staff effective January 1, 2024 as adopted in the state's amended budget. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger, Ms. Dooley, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting yes. 7 ayes, 0 nays

**10.2 [Approval - Revised Policy FFA \(Naming of Facilities and Grounds\)](#):** Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Equity and Family Engagement, shared revised policy FFA regarding Naming of Facilities and Grounds for Board consideration on November 2, 2023. The policy is now being presented for action. Board had discussion on the naming policy.

Ms. McKeever offered a motion, seconded by Ms. Bryson Morsberger, to approve Revised Policy FFA-Naming of Facilities and Grounds excluding the sentence "no new facilities, rooms, or grounds shall be named after people". Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bryson Morsberger,, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, and Ms. Larson-Torres, voting yes. Ms. Dooley and Mr. Morse, voting nay. 5 ayes, 2 nays

## Items for Discussion

**11.1 2024-2025 Program of Studies:** Dr. Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer, introduced Jason Bennett, CHS Assistant Principal; Rodney Jordan, Buford Principal; Summerlyn Thompson, Walker Principal; Lamont Trotter, Program Administrator for Lugo-McGinness Academy; and Dr. Stacey Heltz, Director of CATEC, who presented the 2024-2025 Program of Studies for Board information. The Board will be asked to approve the 2024-2025 Program of Studies at the January 4, 2024 meeting. Information presented included:

- Sum and Substance
  - Purpose of the Program of Studies
    - Planning of a sequence of academic, career and technical, or other elective courses that incorporate secondary education
    - In addition to required courses, this Program of Studies publication contains a complete list of electives that may be offered within Charlottesville City Schools' 6-12 program
    - Each school's elective offerings are based on student interest and staffing ability
  - General updates
    - Aligned course descriptions with the VDOE Standards
    - Prerequisites have been updated to create more inclusive pathways
    - Updated language throughout the document (including some course names and expectations)
    - Consolidation of some courses
  - Grading changes
    - Current grading scale for all courses except math, which uses standards - based grading is as follows:
      - A = 91-100
      - B = 81-90
      - C = 71-80
      - D = 61-70
      - F = 60 and below
  - CCS Secondary Courses
    - Recommendations from CCS Grading Committee (10 point grading scale):
      - A = 90-100
      - B = 80-89
      - C = 70-79
      - D = 60-69
      - F = 59 and below
    - Why Move to a 10-pt scale
      - Fair Assessment:
        - Ensures a fair and equitable assessment framework that considers diverse learning styles and individual student abilities.
      - Increased Clarity:
      - Enhances clarity in grading criteria, promoting transparency and reducing ambiguity for both students and educators.
      - Alignment with Standards:
        - Aligns with broader educational standards, making it easier to compare and communicate student achievements consistently across institutions.
      - Mitigating Bias:
        - Helps to mitigate potential biases and ensure that grades reflect true academic achievement rather than external factors.
  - Specific school changes
    - CCS Secondary Courses
      - CCS Program of Studies committee developed a document for quick access to courses and pathways
      - Embedded in the PoS

- Walker
  - Band / Orchestra: includes 1st / 2nd year for 6th grade
  - Grading changes: aligning with BUF/CHS as far as grading scale (A, B, C, D, F), including Standards-based grading for math
- Buford
  - Middle School Theatre: includes a Level 1 / Level 2 option for first year and second year students.
  - Spanish II part I: removed
- Charlottesville High School - Recommendation to add
  - Unmanned Aircraft Systems II:
    - For students interested in aircraft engineering, mechanics, aircraft pilot, and aerospace engineering
    - Creates a sequential pathway (allowing for more CTE completers)
- Charlottesville High School - Recommending removal from the Program of Studies
  - Concepts of Lab Science
  - Literacy Lab
  - Survey of Foreign Films
  - Algebra 1 Part 2
- Lugo-McGinness Academy
  - No changes for 2024-2025
- CATEC
  - Updates to align with current programming
  - Updates to some language due to transition & MOU
  - Automotive Body Technology-no longer offered as a program
  - Removed embedded math courses as they are no longer offered
  - Removed English 11 as it is no longer offered
- Next steps
  - Questions / Comments
  - Board review
  - Board approval of changes at the January School Board meeting

Discussion centered on improving student outcomes in various areas. Ms. McKeever emphasized ensuring all students reach Algebra by 8th grade and maintaining strong foreign language programs. Ms. Turner applauded the expansion of Career & Technical Education (CTE) classes, while Ms. Larson-Torres inquired about the literacy lab. Both Mr. Morse and Ms. Bryson Morsberger expressed appreciation for the increased CTE offerings. Mr. Morse further advocated for embedded courses, teacher planning partners, and a defined grading policy before implementing grading scales. Ms. Dooley seconded his point about the grading scale, and ultimately the Board agreed to remove it from the Program of Studies and include it in regulations.

**11.2 [Knight School Introduction](#):** Lamont Trotter, Program Administrator at Lugo-McGinness, presented an update on Charlottesville City Schools' Knight School. Information presented included:

- Why Knight School
  - Individualized Learning Pace:
    - Allows for smaller class sizes and increased attention from teachers, catering to diverse learning needs
  - Alternative Learning Environment:
    - Provides a change of setting that may be more conducive to students' academic success
  - Reducing Dropout Rates:
    - Can help reduce dropout rates. It provides a second chance for students who may have struggled in traditional daytime settings
  - Targeted Support for At-Risk Students:

- Offers additional support services, counseling, and resources to help students overcome challenges
- Who are the students
  - Students Not Meeting with Success in Comprehensive Setting
    - Students facing academic challenges, at risk of dropping out, or needing additional support
  - Students Behind in Credits
    - Those who are behind in credit accumulation and need an opportunity to catch up
  - Students with Personalized Learning Needs
    - Individuals who require a more individualized pace of learning
  - Students Seeking a Second Chance
    - Individuals who may have faced challenges in traditional settings and are seeking a second chance
  - Students in Need of a Supportive Community
    - Those who would benefit from a supportive community environment in an alternative setting
- Days and hours of operation
  - Start date: November 27, 2023
  - Monday through Thursday at Lugo McGinness Academy
  - 3:45 pm - 6:45 PM
- Knight School Staff
  - Lamont Trotter - Orientation Facilitator
  - LaToya Brown - Co-Site Facilitator/ Teacher
  - Joseph Patterson - Co-Site Facilitator/Teacher
  - Melvin Grady - Teacher
  - Dominique Williams - Student Engagement Facilitator
  - Charmaine Williams - Teacher
  - Aloise Phelps - School Counselor
  - Holly Faulkner - Special Education Teacher
- Knight School / Student resources
  - Virginia Career Works
  - Community Attention Youth Internship Program: 10 students/possibly 15 students
  - Uhuru
  - Rise Above
  - DBT Skills in Schools
- Instructional programming
  - Face to Face Instruction
  - Learning Management System: Edgenuity
  - Special education office coordination for additional services
- Other School Related Services
  - All students receive transportation home
  - Coordinating with CHS activity bus for the 6:45 PM pick-up
  - Hot meals Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday - 4 PM
  - Cold meal option delivered on Thursdays with regular lunches
- Next Steps
  - Continue to identify students who will benefit from the Knight School program (starting with 5-7 students and adding increments of 5-6 students every few weeks as needed with a cap of 30 students)
  - Monitor student progress
  - Consider expansion possibilities

Board members shared comments of appreciation for Mr. Trotter’s work at Lugo-McGinness Academy and for the Knight School Program.

**11.3 [CHS Safety, Security & School Climate Update](#):** Dr. Gurley and staff expanded on the presentation from the community information & feedback session held on 11/30/2023 at Charlottesville High School to address questions raised during the forum. The presentation from the 11/30/2023 community session is posted with this agenda item for reference.

Dr. Gurley shared the following statement:

Remarks about CHS by Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent Charlottesville City Schools Board Meeting | December 7, 2023

“Good evening, Charlottesville community.

Baked into our small city are many things that divide people. Some of them are very painful and run very deep. But Black Knight pride runs deep, too. Over the years Charlottesville High School has often been a beacon of shared light. It is a place where opportunities for excellence and education span these divides.

Recently, though, I bet almost everything you’ve heard about Black Knight Nation has been shared with a frown, a head scratch, a sigh.

CHS belongs to all of us in Charlottesville, and as your superintendent I wanted to speak to not only the School Board but the broader community about how we got to this juncture, and where we are going.

I made the decision to cancel classes at CHS on Friday, November 17, because we didn't have enough teachers and substitutes to safely staff the school. On top of normal staff absences, plus six staff vacancies, that day about 10 additional teachers called in sick after a number of recent student fights. These teachers wanted classes canceled to make time for teachers and administrators to “reset the culture” at the school.

Let me tell you more about the culture that needed to be reset. At CHS this year there have been six fights that became large and unruly enough that we needed to call in CPD. There have been sixteen additional fights that involved two or three teens and were resolved quickly. In total these 22 fights involved 46 of our students.

How did this happen? Perhaps more to the point, how did your school leaders allow this to happen?

This fall, to address these challenges, my colleagues and I in Central Office were working on long-term solutions for CHS students who needed another path for learning, including Lugo-McGinness, our new alternative learning program, Knight School, and plans for work-based learning.

We also spent time in the halls of CHS this fall to offer support. But the bottom line is that in retrospect it is clear that I should have done a lot more for CHS a lot sooner.

The number of fights truly turns my stomach. I know that’s how our teachers felt, too. That’s why they called in sick that Friday.

Before I go on, I want to say a few important things about these fights and the students involved. We are talking about our youth, not criminals. There have been no weapons involved in any of these fights. All of them stem from familiar teen conflicts: insults, relationship troubles, social media posts. We’ve seen boys fight one another and girls fight one another. We’re talking about mostly fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds with a lot to learn about how to resolve their differences.



Fighting in school is unacceptable—period. And it is up to us, the adults, to make that clear. These are our children, and they need our guidance, our boundaries, and our unconditional care. Only with this support from us can they find a new path and reach their fullest potential.

Students who need another educational path have been a focus of my superintendency since I arrived in Charlottesville 2 years ago. Our schools are only as strong as our weakest points. In closing the school, we faced, together, what those are.

I will provide a summary here of the main underlying issues our staff identified. There is also a comprehensive FAQ on our website, including discipline data and a new dashboard tracking student behaviors.

This is what we have to own and fix for our school community.

- Staff vacancies meant teachers were overburdened with extra subbing duties. This left less time for these trusted adults to support students outside of class.
- Some students routinely wandered the halls instead of going to class. They behaved disrespectfully. Despite receiving out of school suspensions, the students returned with the same behaviors.
- As I have already mentioned, 22 fights – 6 of which were very disruptive – occurred just this fall.
- There was turnover in leadership: the principal announced his resignation midyear. And an assistant principal vacancy was only recently filled in October.
- The way the school and the division communicated about CHS – both the conflicts and the daily happenings – was inconsistent and often confusing. Parents and students have come to feel they cannot trust what they hear from us.

The Board and I closed CHS for an additional two days before Thanksgiving so that staff could work together on a plan to address these issues. Since returning from break, we

are seeing some early signs that we are turning a corner. I will provide some examples of what I mean here, and direct you to our website for a full FAQ.

One example of early success is that we had an infusion of support from division staff and community volunteers acting as extra hall monitors. Now, most “wandering” students are either back in their classroom, or in discussions about alternative learning options.

Here are other changes that I am prioritizing based on the staff reset and feedback from the community:

- We will address staff vacancies at CHS. Already, we have hired 2 licensed science teachers to begin after winter break and have added an extra employee to help manage people arriving at CHS. We have plans to bring on more employees who will manage hallways, monitor doors, and improve visitor protocols.
- We will better support substitute teachers through training and in-school resources.
- We will stabilize the school’s leadership.
  - In the short term, this means hiring experienced interim principal Kenny Leatherwood. Additionally, Dr. Denise Johnson has agreed to serve as Strategic Advisor at the school. She will be in charge of shoring up systems and processes, and building greater connection between our central office and CHS.
  - Long-term, this means hiring and supporting a new CHS principal. This person will most likely join us in July 2024.
- We will make our communications clearer and more transparent. That starts tonight, with this presentation, and the detailed information on our website.
- We will make greater efforts to build positive school culture: In short this means building relationships, having fun, and celebrating the great things our students are doing. One of our CHS staff committees is working on a plan for this.

I don't have to tell you that Charlottesville is a tale of two cities, but we meet at Charlottesville High School. Even in times like these, our students love this school. Here, students excel in their studies while balancing jobs and clubs, sports and friendships, family responsibilities and future planning, and the ups and downs of adolescence. Here, students achieve excellence as they define it for themselves and make us all proud in the process.

CHS got off track this fall, but it's a special place, and it's ours to nurture back to its full potential.

Thank you for your time. I would be glad to accept any questions from the Board."

**11.4 Recap of 2023 Fiscal Year End:** Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented information detailing Charlottesville City Schools' fund balance at the close of fiscal year 2022-2023, Gain Sharing with the City, Drawdown of ESSER Funds, and Funding Strategy. Information presented included:

- **CCS's Fund Balance**

Beginning Fund Balance 7/1/2022	\$ 2,301,428
Increase from Fiscal Year 2023	4,522,395
Ending Fund Balance 6/30/2023	\$ 6,823,823
Less Disbursement to City - CIP	1,500,000
Adjusted Fund Balance Total	\$ 5,323,823

- **Gain Sharing with the City**

- CCS remitted to the City \$4,422,395 per the gain sharing agreement. These funds will be applied toward the City's CIP - School Construction Projects as presented in the City's March 30, 2023 Budget Work Session.
- CCS added to the fund balance \$4,522,395 per the Gain Sharing agreement.

- **Drawdown of ESSER Funds**

ESSER Grants	Spend Down Deadline	Grant Awarded	Total Spent through 6/30/2023	Grant Remaining
ARPA ESSER	9/30/2024	\$ 10,073,068	\$ 6,739,276	\$ 3,333,792
Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF) Ventilation Improvement	12/31/2024	\$ 808,685	\$ 638,145	\$ 170,540
ESSER III State Set-Aside Funds	9/30/2024	\$ 2,456,525	\$ 978,164	\$ 1,478,361

- **Funding Strategy**

- City Council for the last two fiscal years provided an increase each year of \$4 million in City appropriation .
- CCS added and maintained services for example Social Emotional Counselors in the face of and wake of pandemic response. Allowed CCS to use the ESSER grant funds for reimbursement of personnel, technology, supplies and materials and not face the funding cliff from the use of ESSER grant funds expiring on 9/30/2024.
- City and CCS funding strategy resulted in higher than typical Gain Sharing support to essential capital projects.

**11.5 FY 2025 Budget Update:** Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented information on the FY 2025 budget development process, budget priorities, and the alignment of the strategic plan to the budget priorities. Information

presented included Budget Development Process, Budget Priorities, Alignment of Strategic Plan to Budget Priorities, and Key Budget Development Dates.

- Budget Development Process
  - Budget development process is a collaborative process involving many stakeholders.
  - Superintendent prepares a needs-based budget, incorporating School Board guidance and alignment with Strategic Plan Goals.
    - Virginia Code, Section 22.1-92 mandates that it is the duty of the Superintendent to prepare a budget with an estimate of the money deemed to be needed to support the school division. This is commonly referred to as a “needs-based budget.”
  - Budget planning process includes seeking guidance from the School Board members on priorities
- Budget Priorities
  - Student Achievement
    - Literacy
    - Intervention - Alternative Pathways
    - Academic Learning & Resources (Small Classes, High Expectations)
  - Building Modernization
  - CATEC
  - Compensation & Benefits
  - Safety & Security
- Alignment of Strategic Plan to Budget Priorities
- Key Budget Development Dates

## **Board Response to Written Reports**

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

**12.2 [Outcome of Student Disciplinary Matters - December 4, 2023, December 5, 2023, and December 6, 2023](#):** On Monday, December 4, 2023, Tuesday, December 5, 2023, and Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 5:00 pm, the Charlottesville City School Board met in closed session, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(2) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing student disciplinary matters. The outcome of the meetings were shared as a written report.

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

- Ariel Bruner, Clark Teacher, addressed the Board with comments of support for Charlottesville City Schools and CHS and shared that there are disciplinary concerns at elementary schools around student needs for social emotional and mental support for both families and children. Ms. Bruner advocated for additional support at the elementary level and for the hiring of highly qualified staff.
- James Burnett, CHS Parent, addressed the Board with comments of concern around safety at Charlottesville High School and recommended an objective independent report on how the high school got to the current situation. Mr. Burnett also highlighted the need for full transparency in the CHS Principal search process.
- Nikuyah Walker addressed the Board with comments around an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study and stated that black children are often looked at as if there is something wrong with them for having these experiences. She encouraged the Board to keep this in mind as they create policies and encouraged consistent responses. Ms. Walker also shared concerns around the brief hours of Knight School and noted the plethora of non-profit resources to help meet these needs.
- Chris Meyer, Jackson-Via Parent, addressed the Board with comments of appreciation to the retiring school board members and for Dr. Gurley’s remarks around the situation at CHS. He also encouraged a budget to reflect the needs at CHS and what resources are needed to address the challenges.

#### **14.1 Board Member Comments:**

- Ms. Turner, Student Representative, highlighted positives at CHS like the snack bar, clubs, sports, and specifically recognized several teams and clubs. She noted fewer students in hallways and bathrooms, but called for better communication and organization. She expressed gratitude to the board, staff, and her parents for their support.
- Ms. Larson-Torres shared comments of appreciation for Ms. Turner and her service and shared comments of reflection and appreciation for retiring school board members.
- Dr. Kraft shared comments of gratitude for the opportunity to be involved in the important work of the Board, the need for humility, and shared comments of admiration for board members and staff in Charlottesville City Schools.
- Ms. Bryson Morsberger: In her farewell address, Ms. Bryson Morsberger noted the difficulty in running and serving as a school board member and shared comments of appreciation for fellow board members, staff, and Dr. Gurley. She wished oncoming board members the best of luck.
- Mr. Morse shared an update on a recent morning meeting at Venable and emphasized the importance of recognition, evident in the joy sparked by birthday and group acknowledgements. He also highlighted the value of movement in fostering community and shared energy among young learners. Mr. Morse urged bold action and breaking away from national trends in education. Instead of merely "patching holes," he advocated for building an entirely new, innovative educational model that serves as a national leader.
- Ms. Dooley expressed gratitude to departing colleagues on the Board, acknowledging their impact on her and the community. She highlighted the valuable lessons learned from them and appreciates their dedication to the schools.
- Ms. McKeever, in her farewell address, shared comments of appreciation for being able to serve and to witness the school division and community's progress. She also addressed concerns about transparency and encouraged direct communication with Dr. Gurley and school board members. She highlights the board's ongoing efforts, citing their work on security, discipline, and other issues. While acknowledging public perception may not always reflect reality, she encourages critical thinking and open communication. She expresses pride in the board's achievements and Dr. Gurley's leadership, concluding with well wishes for the future and gratitude for the experience.
- Mr. Bryant, in his farewell address, shared comments of reflection on his journey from disadvantaged beginnings to a fulfilling career in education. He expressed gratitude for his time on the school board, applauding the collaboration and progress achieved. He highlighted the importance of education, encouraging students to embrace learning and teachers. Addressing new board members, he emphasized building on the established legacy and trusts they will bring their unique perspectives. He praises Dr. Gurley's leadership, appreciates community support, and commends the dedication of teachers, staff, and clerks. While leaving the board, he assures their continued presence and concludes with heartfelt thanks.

**14.2 [School Board Member Farewells](#) (moved from 7.2):** Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, asked those present to join her in offering a farewell to outgoing School Board members, noting that the challenges that CHS is currently facing is an indicator of the effort and dedication required of Board members. Outgoing members are: Ms. Lashundra Bryson Morsberger for 4 years; Dr. Sherry Kraft for 8 years; Ms. Jennifer McKeever for 12 years (including her service as Board chair); and chairman, Mr. James Bryant, for his 6 years of service to our schools on the School Board, as well as decades of service as an employee in our schools.

**15.1 [Superintendent's Comments:](#)** Dr. Gurley expressed heartfelt gratitude for the community's engagement through emails and concerns. He acknowledged the value of diverse perspectives, stating that differences and open dialogue make Charlottesville unique. He voiced optimism for the community's continued progress, using the phrase "rising" to suggest overcoming challenges together. Additionally, he commended teachers for choosing

Charlottesville City Schools and expressed appreciation for their dedication to students and families. He extended his thanks to the entire staff, highlighting Ms. Turner and the retiring board members for their significant contributions.

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

- Consider future opportunities for more embedded courses at CATEC (such as English & SS)
- Create a Grading policy (prior to grading scale changes in Program of Studies)

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

**18.1 Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

A video of the December 7, 2023 meeting can be located at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tJpgDaHlfh6m-89uVVGHrtVVEWZQlzQS/view?usp=sharing>

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Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

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Julia Green, School Board Clerk