



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
Thursday, November 6, 2025 (5:00 PM)

A Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on **November 6, 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

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

1.1 Closed Meeting: at 4:00 p.m., Ms. Burns offered a motion to go into a Closed Session as authorized by Sections 2.2-3711 (A) (1) (2) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion of personnel and student disciplinary matters. Ms. Torres seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Mr. Meyer arrived after this vote.

1.2 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. Mr. Morse seconded the motion, and 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:

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

1.3 Call to Order: The School Board Chair called the public meeting to order at 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 will begin the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

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: Roll call was conducted to confirm attendance.

The following Board Members were present:

Ms. Amanda Burns
Ms. Emily Dooley
Mr. Chris Meyer
Ms. Lisa Torres

Ms. Shymora Cooper
Mr. Dom Morse
Ms. Nicole Richardson
Solly Schwartzman

The following Board Members were absent: None

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

The following Staff Members were absent: Ms. Renee Hoover

5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, 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. The motion carried.

Student and Staff Recognitions

6.1 CHS Theatre Program Recognition Virginia Theatre Association Success Top State Winners: Beth Cheuk, Supervisor of Community Relations, and Aaron Eichorst, Fine Arts Coordinator, recognized Theatre CHS for their outstanding achievements at the recent Virginia Theatre Association high school festival. It was reported that the program's presentation of scenes from *The Secret in the Wings*, directed by David Becker, was named one of the Top Two productions in the state, a distinction that qualified the team to represent Virginia at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in March. The coordinators highlighted the group's excellence across multiple disciplines, noting awards for Best Ensemble, Best Musicians, and Best Use of Music, and a 3rd place finish in the Stage Craft Olympics. Additionally, student Esme Ogden Amt was commended for winning 1st Place in Costume Design.

6.2 National School Psychology Week: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, recognized the district's school psychologists for their dedication to enhancing the well-being of students, families, and the broader community. In honor of National School Psychology Week (November 3–7, 2025), Ms. Rasnake presented a formal Proclamation to the Board.

Ms. Torres made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the Proclamation for National School Psychology Week. 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.

6.3 Family Engagement Month: Bianca Johnson, Family Engagement Coordinator, recognized November as National Family Engagement Month, emphasizing that strong partnerships between schools and families are essential for student success and align with the division's goal of providing a culture of safety and belonging. Ms. Johnson formally invited families to remain actively engaged as their child's first learning community. During the presentation, she introduced Dr. Jones-Lewis as the new Director of Community Schools, noting her extensive experience in strategic planning and engagement. Ms. Johnson concluded by thanking community organizations for their crucial support and acknowledging building leaders and staff for their dedication to fostering welcoming and supportive environments.

Special Recognition

7.1 Recognition, Moment of Silence for Mr. Eugene Williams: Ms. Cheuk and Dr. Denise Johnson honored the life and legacy of Eugene Williams, a prominent civil rights leader who passed away on October 18 at the age of 97. They recognized Mr. Williams and his late wife, Lorraine, for their pivotal role in desegregating Charlottesville City Schools,

specifically citing their 1962 lawsuit, *Dillard v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville*. Dr. Johnson read text from the historic marker at Tall Oaks Elementary (formerly Johnson Elementary), detailing how the Supreme Court ruling forced the end of discriminatory transfer policies and led to the integration of the school by the Williams' daughters and other students. The presentation also noted Mr. Williams' broader impact on the community through his advocacy for affordable housing and historic preservation. The Board observed a moment of silence to reflect on the Williams family's contributions.

8.1 Comments from Students: The Charlottesville City School Board welcomes comments from students. Speakers are encouraged to keep their comments to three minutes.

- Mia Gold, a student member of Theatre CHS, offered public comment regarding her personal experience in the program. Ms. Gold shared that participating in theater helped her overcome social anxiety and find her voice, transitioning from a reserved student to a confident performer. She expressed pride in the ensemble's dedication and their recent success at the VTA competition. Ms. Gold highlighted the significance of qualifying for the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC), noting that while the program had qualified previously during the COVID-19 pandemic, this upcoming trip represents their first opportunity to fully attend and compete. She concluded by emphasizing the team's excitement to represent Charlottesville and the Virginia region.
- Ixchel Paz-Gonzalez, a sophomore at CHS, addressed the Board to share her appreciation for the theater program, describing it as an inclusive environment where creativity is fostered, and every student has a voice. She highlighted the collective dedication of the entire company—including actors, costume designers, and technical crews—that led to their recent success and qualification for the SETC. Ms. Paz-Gonzalez also noted the upcoming production of *West Side Story* and appealed to the Board for continued support regarding the significant costs associated with travel and production materials.
- Esme Ogden Ampt, a junior and the production's costume designer, spoke on the professional and educational value of the recent theater competition. The student described the VTA festival as a significant career development opportunity, citing the ability to network with professionals, engage with college representatives, and attend skill-building workshops. Ogden-Ampt explained that the upcoming SETC conference would expand these opportunities on a regional scale. Highlighting the collective effort of the ensemble, the speaker requested support to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent any student from participating in this experience.
- Aiden Clare, a senior at Charlottesville High School, reflected on his four years of participation in the theater program, noting that attending the VTA festival has consistently been a highlight of each year since his debut in *Book of Will*. He described the festival as a vital space for schools to celebrate a shared passion for the arts and learn new skills. Mr. Clare expressed that qualifying for the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) had been a goal of his for the past four years and anticipated that attending the regional competition would be the pinnacle of his high school experience. Acknowledging the high cost of the trip, he urged the Board to provide financial support to ensure every member of the ensemble is able to attend this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.
- Joshua, a senior, expressed excitement about the upcoming trip to the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC). He shared his pride in the group's accomplishment and emphasized the value of spending quality time with his peers and friends during his final year in the program.

8.2 Comments from Members of the Community: The Charlottesville City School Board welcomes comments from community members. Speakers are encouraged to keep their comments to three minutes.

- Derek Hartline, Jackson-Via Teacher and lifelong Charlottesville resident, addressed the Board to follow up on items raised during the October meeting. He expressed sincere gratitude to the Superintendent, the Board, and staff for facilitating the removal of leaves at Jackson-Via and Tall Oaks on November 3, noting that this action addressed potential safety hazards. Mr. Hartline requested that the Board coordinate a second city pickup around the Thanksgiving break when the parking lots will be empty, adding that he plans to assist with leaf removal in the interim to mitigate fire risks. Additionally, he

provided a positive update regarding traffic safety on Harris Road, thanking the district for the recent installation of a real-time speed indicator, which he observed has successfully helped to reduce speeding.

- Jenn Horne, Charlottesville High School Teacher, addressed the Board regarding the implementation of Standards-Based Grading (SBG). Ms. Horne argued that SBG is not an appropriate assessment tool for the humanities and expressed concern regarding a lack of teacher input during the decision-making process. While acknowledging the Strategic Plan's goal of equitable grading, she contended that SBG is not the only method to achieve it. Ms. Horne urged the Board to pause the implementation process to allow for consultation with humanities teachers, specifically suggesting the possibility of making the grading system optional for those disciplines.
- Zyahna Bryant addressed the Board to support the request made by the Theatre CHS students regarding funding for their upcoming competition. Ms. Bryant emphasized the importance of student voice and commended the students for their courage in speaking publicly. She suggested that if the Board is unable to provide direct funding, they should facilitate connections between the program and local philanthropists or nonprofits willing to support the arts. Ms. Bryant characterized this effort as a valuable opportunity to strengthen community engagement and urged the Board to ensure a meaningful follow-up with the students.

9.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report: Solly Schwarzman, CHS Student Representative, offered congratulations to the newly elected School Board members and the CHS Theater program for their recent state-level success. Providing an update on student sentiment regarding School Resource Officers (SROs), Mr. Schwarzman described the student body as "cautiously optimistic." He noted that while the presence of firearms remains a source of concern, student acceptance of the program increases when they are educated on specific implementation details, such as training and weapon security. Consequently, he advised the Board to maintain continuous educational outreach regarding SROs. Additionally, Mr. Schwarzman provided feedback on the grading system, expressing student support for the use of zeros to prevent grade inflation. However, he requested the Board review the policy of hiding grades in PowerSchool at the end of quarters, noting that it inadvertently leads to increased student inquiries to teachers.

10.1-5 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda: [Personnel Recommendations](#); [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#); [Minutes October 9, 2025 School Board Meeting](#); and [Approval Facility Rental Rates](#). Mr. Meyer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Torres, to approve the adoption of the 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.

11.0 Items Pulled From Consent Agenda: None

Action Items

12.1 [Amanda Burns - Nomination for Virginia School Boards Association \(VSBA\) Central Region Vice-Chair](#): Ms. Torres presented the nomination of Ms. Amanda Burns for the position of Central Region Vice-Chair of the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA), noting that the nomination required Board approval before submission. During the discussion, Ms. Richardson inquired about Ms. Burns' motivation for seeking the role. Ms. Burns highlighted her current involvement with the VSBA, particularly her work on the task force for students in challenging environments, and expressed a desire to further legislative advocacy for the region. Mr. Meyer spoke in support of the nomination, commending Ms. Burns for her passionate leadership and extensive engagement in state-level school board matters.

Ms. Cooper made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the nomination of Amanda Burns for the office of VSBA Central Region Vice-Chair. 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.

Items for Discussion

13.1 Literacy Update: Stacy Reedal, PK-12 Literacy Coordinator, presented the Board with a Literacy Update. Information presented included:

- Introduction and Strategic Plan: Stacy Reedal presented the Literacy Update, which aligns with Priority 1 of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan: increasing academic achievement. The goal is for all learners to demonstrate mastery in reading and math, aiming to eliminate achievement gaps. Specific targets include 80% mastery in Tier 1 instruction and increasing reading achievement to at least 75% proficiency across all student groups.
- Fall Assessments Overview: The division utilizes the Virginia Language and Literacy Screener (VALLSS) for PreK-2nd grade and DIBELS for 3rd-8th grade as universal screeners. MAP Growth is administered in grades 3-12 to measure student growth and guide instruction.
- Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Data: Fall 2025 VALLSS data shows a significant decrease in Kindergarten students identified in the high-risk band (dropping from 36% to 19%) compared to Fall 2024. Second grade saw a slight decrease in the high-risk band from 37% to 34%.
- Kindergarten - 2nd Grade Instruction: Instruction focuses on Structured Literacy, utilizing decodable libraries and explicit instruction. Reading specialists are pushing into classrooms to support these efforts.
- 3rd - 5th Grade Data: In grades 3-5, approximately 62% of students are meeting grade-level expectations without intervention. Data indicate that about 75% of reading needs are met in the Tier 1 setting.
- 5th Grade Cohort Data: Longitudinal DIBELS data for the current 5th-grade cohort indicate fewer students require intensive intervention now (27%) compared to when they were in 2nd grade (31%).
- 3rd - 5th Grade Instruction: Instructional strategies include writing in response to reading, novel studies, and the use of paired and complex texts. The curriculum is aligned with the 2024 English Standards.
- 6th - 8th Grade Data: In grades 6-8, about 68% of reading needs are met in the Tier 1 setting. Approximately 62% of students meet grade-level expectations without intervention.
- 6th - 8th Grade Instruction: Supports include Lexia PowerUp, fluency routines, and explicit comprehension instruction. Two full-time specialists are assigned to each site.
- Student Reading Plans (Grades 4-8): Students who fail the Reading SOL (or pass with audio/read-aloud accommodations) are required to have a Student Reading Plan outlining appropriate interventions.
- 9th - 12th Grade Data: MAP data indicates a decrease in the percentage of students performing "Below Average" in grades 9, 10, and 11 compared to previous years.
- 3rd - 12th Grade Cohort Data: The board reviewed longitudinal district Fall MAP data tracking the percentage of students in the Average-High band across cohorts from 2026 to 2035.
- 9th - 12th Grade Instruction: Interventions involve vocabulary and comprehension routines, including "Get the Gist" strategies. Staff are participating in professional learning with Dr. Jade Wexler.
- Advancing Data Analysis: The Division Instructional Team and principals are conducting deep dives into MAP and SOL data. This includes analyzing data by membership groups (Black students, SWD, ELs), conducting longitudinal cohort analysis, and drilling down to the individual student level to inform instruction.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer discussed the cohort trends displayed on Slide 13, questioning the performance dip between grades four and five and the increase between grades eight and nine. He suggested these trends might result from students leaving for private schools, but Ms. Reedal noted that enrollment numbers—such as the slight difference in the 10th-grade cohort—do not fully explain the performance shifts. While Mr. Meyer noted high proficiency in later years, he emphasized the need for those results earlier; Ms. Reedal responded that increased rigor, complex texts, and novel studies are being implemented to address this. Mr. Meyer requested future data analysis for students requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 support to include variables such as chronic absenteeism and student interests.

- Mr. Morse inquired how the data analysis efforts undertaken by the instructional team and principals are communicated to classroom teachers and whether evidence suggests certain approaches are more effective than others. Dr. Isley responded that principals, as instructional leaders, are being equipped to fully understand the available reports. She explained that coordinators and secondary literacy specialists are facilitating this work within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) by preparing data analysis for teams. Dr. Isley added that she is collaborating with instructional coaches to ensure they are prepared to support teachers, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that data analysis discussions in PLCs lead to actionable instructional decisions.
- Ms. Burns inquired whether the current number of reading specialists and coordinators is sufficient to support high school students, noting the limited time available to assist them before graduation. Ms. Reedal said the high school employs two specialists and focuses on the effectiveness of the current staffing model. She explained that the program utilizes a "wraparound" strategy where specialists push into classrooms to support students as they apply learned strategies in the general education setting. Ms. Reedal confirmed that the team is executing intentional interventions to address student needs within the available timeframe.
- Ms. Richardson acknowledged the presentation's focus on Black students, Students with Disabilities (SWD), and English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, but requested that future reports include data on other backgrounds for comparison. She expressed that viewing broader demographic numbers is necessary to effectively compare performance and verify the data. In response to a clarifying question from Ms. Torres regarding the specific nature of the request, Ms. Richardson confirmed that she was seeking comprehensive demographic data.
- Ms. Torres requested that future data presentations include trends for Students with Disabilities and other membership groups to align with the division's strategic goals. She inquired about the criteria for assigning reading plans to students who utilize read-aloud accommodations; Ms. Reedal explained that such plans are not automatic and are determined by reviewing a preponderance of evidence for each student. Ms. Torres also asked about current guidelines for read-aloud accommodations in math, to which Dr. Isley clarified that a team, based on the student's specific needs, such as an IEP, 504, or English Learner status, determines allowable accommodations. Regarding the capacity to act on data, Ms. Torres asked if the division has the resources to individualize instruction effectively. Dr. Isley affirmed that resources are in place, explaining that staff analyze individual student trajectories—distinguishing between students with steady scores versus those on an upward or downward trend—to inform instruction. Finally, Ms. Torres sought clarification on the Kindergarten-to-First Grade cohort data; Ms. Reedal confirmed that the cohort showed a decrease in the high-risk band (from 36% to 31%) and an increase in the low-risk band as they progressed to first grade.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about the strategies used to engage families of students requiring additional support, specifically asking how the division moves beyond sending notifications home to facilitating collaborative discussions regarding Student Success Plans. Ms. Reedal explained that at the elementary level, these plans were reviewed during parent-teacher conferences to explain student data and share home support strategies, efforts which are further reinforced through literacy events. Regarding middle schools, she noted that parents of students on reading plans are invited to team meetings, though she acknowledged that the division recognizes the need to further expand and improve these partnerships. Ms. Cooper emphasized that having parents actively involved in these conversations is a critical component of closing the achievement gap.
- Mr. Morse asked how the administration supports teachers who may lack planning time to effectively utilize data for instruction. Dr. Isley responded that the division focuses on actionable steps and provides tools like EduClimber and prepared data sets to reduce teacher workload. She noted that professional development emphasizes immediate, applicable resources and remediation materials to ensure consistency. Mr. Morse concluded by suggesting that the Board initiate a discussion regarding the district's retention and promotion policy in light of the presented cohort data.
- Ms. Burns expressed support for the suggestion to revisit the division's retention and promotion policy. She highlighted the strong correlation between literacy and attendance, noting that reading deficits significantly impact high school instruction and discipline. Citing feedback from high school teachers

regarding the difficulty of teaching students who cannot read, Ms. Burns advocated for focusing intervention and potential retention efforts specifically within the Kindergarten through third-grade levels rather than in the upper grades.

- Ms. Dooley recommended that the discussion regarding retention policies be scheduled for a future work session to allow for a more comprehensive conversation. Regarding upcoming school visits in the spring, she suggested that Board members observe School Success meetings or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) instead of, or in addition to, standard classroom visits. Ms. Dooley noted that observing these meetings would provide members with valuable insight into how staff conduct practical data analysis and determine actionable next steps.

13.2 EL Program Overview: Dr. Jeannie Pfautz, ESL Instructional Specialist, provided the Board with an ESL Program Overview. Information presented included:

- Strategic Plan Alignment (Priorities 1 & 2)
Jeannie Pfautz, EL Specialist, presented the English Learner Program Overview, beginning with its alignment to the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.
 - Priority 1 (Academic Achievement): The program supports goals for 80% mastery in Tier 1 instruction and increasing reading and math proficiency to at least 75% and 70% respectively, across all student groups.
 - Priority 2 (Culture of Safety/Wellness): Efforts focus on increasing family engagement and maintaining community partnerships.
- Strategic Plan Alignment (Priorities 3 & 4)
 - Priority 3 (Support Staff): The division aims for annual progress in hiring licensed staff of color and ensuring all staff demonstrate culturally competent teaching practices.
 - Priority 4 (Operations): Goals include eliminating transportation waitlists and increasing the number of students walking, biking, or using CAT buses.
- Welcome Center Data (2024-2025)
 - The Welcome Center enrolled 214 new English Learners (ELs).
 - Demographics: The majority of new enrollment is at the elementary level (55.4%), followed by CHS (23.9%).
 - Origin: 48% of new Kindergarten students came from CCS PreK, 30% transferred from other countries, and 25% transferred from Albemarle County Public Schools.
 - Transfers Out: 145 English Learners transferred out of the division.
- Enrollment Trends
 - EL enrollment has grown from 460 students in Fall 2021 to a peak of 760 in Spring 2025.
 - As of Fall 2025, there are 721 English Learners. This slight decline correlates with 55 students exiting the program and a current pause on refugee resettlement.
- Staffing Levels
 - Based on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Standards of Quality (SOQ), the division requires 25.27 staffing positions to support the current proficiency distribution of the 721 students.
 - CCS currently employs 28 English Learner teachers, exceeding the state requirement.
- District Proficiency Data
 - VDOE data indicate that while the total number of ELs has risen to 719, the percentage of students making progress is 49%, which is below the VDOE target of 56%.
 - The percentage of students achieving proficiency and exiting the program has risen slightly to 7%.
- Proficiency by Grade Span
 - Elementary: Shows the strongest performance with 391 ELs achieving a 57% progress rate.
 - Middle School: 146 ELs showed a 38% progress rate.
 - High School: 182 ELs showed a 43% progress rate.
- School Support for Afghan Students (SSAS) Grant

- Updates for the 2025-2026 grant cycle include funding for four bilingual instructional assistants (at Tall Oaks, Jackson-Via, Walker, and CMS) and one Afghan family liaison at CHS.
- The grant also supported summer camps at Wildrock and Rivanna Conservation Alliance, and family programming focused on home-school connections.
- Challenges and Next Steps
 - Professional Learning: All CCS staff will receive SIOP 3 and 4 training this year to support English language development.
 - Demographics: Due to the pause in refugee resettlement (which historically brought 70-100 new students annually), the division is modifying services to better meet the needs of current students.
 - Facilities: A permanent location for the Welcome Center must be identified as the division completes school reconfiguration next year.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Torres inquired if the lower English proficiency progress rates observed in middle and high schools were attributable to an influx of new students at those grade levels. Dr. Pfautz clarified that growth data excludes newcomers present for less than two years and attributed the disparity to the rigorous academic language requirements of the assessment, noting that the gap between language skills and content expectations widens significantly in secondary grades. Ms. Torres also requested information regarding absenteeism rates among English Learners. Dr. Pfautz reported that the chronic absenteeism rate for EL students is approximately 30%, significantly higher than the division average, particularly in secondary schools. She highlighted that the bilingual instructional assistants funded by the SSAS grant have been effective in identifying barriers through family relationship building. Additionally, Dr. Pfautz noted the challenge of older students balancing work and school, suggesting that future planning should consider alternative programming options.
- Ms. Richardson inquired about the status of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) position, noting it was slated to end after the current year. Dr. Pfautz clarified that while the specific grant-funded staff member would depart, the IRC's core youth programs team would continue to partner with the division. She explained that the IRC is authorized to support families for up to five years and, given the current pause in new refugee arrivals, is pivoting to assist families who have been established in the area longer. Dr. Pfautz added that division staff can now identify families receiving IRC support, facilitating better coordination. Addressing Ms. Richardson's question regarding work hours, Dr. Pfautz distinguished between the bilingual Instructional Assistants, who are full-time division employees, and the IRC representative, who provides targeted, case-by-case support primarily at elementary schools such as Greenbrier and Summit.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about additional factors contributing to absenteeism among English Learners beyond age and employment obligations, asking what specific supports are being implemented to assist these families. Dr. Pfautz identified the student's level of comfort and social connection—specifically the presence of peers who speak their language—as a significant factor at the secondary level. She reported that connecting students with extracurricular activities, such as sports and the arts, has proven extremely positive in improving engagement. Furthermore, Dr. Pfautz highlighted the role of school counselors in providing check-ins to foster a sense of belonging and suggested that increased focus on social-emotional support could further enhance student comfort within the classroom.
- Ms. Burns inquired about the City of Charlottesville's role in supporting English Learner families, expressing concern that the responsibility currently falls disproportionately on the school division. Dr. Pfautz responded that while city representatives attend quarterly meetings hosted by the International Rescue Committee, there is currently no direct operational connection between her role and city partners. Ms. Burns suggested that the Board advocate for stronger collaboration with the city to enhance student engagement. She highlighted the success of the cricket team at Charlottesville Middle School and proposed facilitating transportation to Darden Tower Park while waiting for the planned

cricket pitch at Tonsler Park to be completed. Dr. Pfautz agreed with the value of such partnerships, citing SOCA as a positive example of community organizations successfully engaging immigrant youth.

- Mr. Meyer commended Dr. Pfautz on the program's success in graduating students from English Learner status, identifying this as the ultimate outcome. Noting the recent stabilization in enrollment numbers, he asked the Superintendent to consider whether the current staffing levels should be maintained to ensure continued program exits or potentially redeployed to assist students in other capacities. Mr. Meyer echoed Ms. Burns' sentiments regarding the value of extracurricular activities for student integration, specifically advocating for the implementation of low-cost options, such as soccer or cricket, at the middle school level. He concluded by anticipating future modifications to the program as it continues to evolve.
- Student Representative Solly Schwarzman inquired whether the decline in progress rates after elementary school was driven by new student enrollments or if students successful in elementary school were facing challenges continuing that success in middle school. Dr. Pfautz explained that the data cohort changes annually as students successfully exit the program, noting that a large group typically exits in fourth grade; those who do not often remain until eighth grade due to the difficulty of the assessment grade bands. She detailed recent instructional shifts intended to address this, specifically the implementation of co-teaching models in middle school English classes to support Level 1 learners. Additionally, Dr. Pfautz noted that because the ACCESS test is a four-hour assessment but not a graduation requirement, testing fatigue may play a role in lower scores at the secondary level.

13.3 Update on Memorandum of Understanding with Charlottesville Police Department and accompanying Standard Operating Procedures:

Dr. Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Strategic Initiatives, presented an update on the process of finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) with the Charlottesville Police Department. Information presented included:

- SRO Program Update Overview
 - Dr. Gurley provided an update on the development and refinement of the foundational documents for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program.
 - The presentation focused on updates since the October 9th meeting, reviewing community feedback and introducing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
 - Copies of the draft SOP were distributed to the Board and made available to the audience.
- Two Foundational Documents
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):
 - Establishes high-level scope, goals, and principles of collaboration between CCS and CPD.
 - Draft 2 was presented in October; the document is currently being finalized by the working group with input from the City Attorney's office.
 - Once signed by Dr. Gurley and Chief Kochis, the MOU will remain unchanged until officially updated.
 - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP):
 - Published on October 23rd, this document provides detailed guidance for daily operations, training, and selection.
 - The SOP is a "living document" subject to continuous refinement based on feedback.
- Community Engagement
 - Feedback was gathered through in-person/Zoom events, info sessions at schools (CMS, CHS, LMA), student surveys, and canvassing by the student representative.
 - Student Themes:
 - Importance: Over 60% of students reported the issue was not pressing for them; 14% said it was very important.
 - Sentiment: Opinions ranged from supportive to opposed, with a general sense of "cautious optimism."
 - Concerns: Focused on firearms and potential negative impacts on students of color and students with disabilities.

- Priorities: Students prioritized training in mental health, de-escalation, and cultural competency. They identified knowing how to act in a crisis as their top safety priority.
 - Success Metrics: Maintaining a warm, welcoming culture with fewer safety incidents and no increase in student arrests.
 - Introduction: Students prefer to meet SROs as people first, suggesting spring lunch visits or August open house events.
- Community & Staff Themes
 - Community:
 - Feedback continues to emphasize accountability and oversight.
 - Community members feel their input is reflected in Draft 2 of the MOU.
 - Actionable suggestions include ensuring SROs are not assigned conflicting police tasks when not in school and identifying additional accountability resources.
 - Staff:
 - Changes in the second draft MOU were well-received.
 - Emphasized the need for training all staff—not just SROs and CSAs—on the safety model and the rule that teachers should not directly call SROs for behavioral issues.
 - Highlighted the need for more input from Care and Safety Assistants (CSAs) regarding their daily collaboration with SROs. CSAs from Walker, CMS and CHS have been added to the working group.
- SOP: An Overview
 - Operational Overview (p. 2): Confirms staffing of two SROs (one at CHS, one at CMS) filled from CPD vacant positions with no new budget impact.
 - Selection Process (p. 5-6): Clarifies that students, staff, and parents will participate in the co-selection of officers.
 - Training (p. 6-8): Details required training for SROs, CSAs, and administrators, including mental health, implicit bias, and restorative justice.
 - Accountability: Currently detailed in the MOU (p. 6-10); the working group is considering whether to move some of this language to the SOP.
 - Special Victims (p. 3): Addresses guidance for interacting with "special victims."
 - Body-Worn Cameras: Covered in the MOU; specific guidance on protected spaces (e.g., nurse's office) is being developed for the SOP.
 - SRO Engagement: Includes a matrix (p. 2-3) outlining specific scenarios for when SROs should and should not be involved, reinforcing that they do not handle minor misconduct or school discipline.
- Implementation Timeline
 - August 2025: Gathered feedback on draft MOU.
 - September 4: Board report on feedback.
 - Sept.-Nov.: Finalization of MOU ("the what") and SOP ("the how").
 - Winter: City budget season (no budgetary impact due to reduction to two officers).
 - Spring: Hiring and training SROs.
 - August 2026: Program launch with two trained officers in place.
- Next Steps
 - The task force continues to meet, now including CSAs, to focus on the SOP.
 - Continued coordination with CPD and the City to ensure full alignment.
 - Possible reassignment of specific content from the MOU to the SOP for clarity.
 - Goal: Presentation of the final MOU at the December 4th Board meeting for subsequent signing by Dr. Gurley and Chief Kochis.
 - The Google feedback form remains open at charlottesvilleschools.org/SROs.

Discussion/Questions:

- Student Representative Solly Schwartzman commended the presentation for effectively representing student voices and inquired about protocols to prevent School Resource Officers (SROs) from intervening in non-criminal contraband issues, such as possession of vapes. Ms. Powell clarified that SRO involvement is generally reserved for situations involving distribution quantities as mandated by the Code of Virginia, noting that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) include a matrix to clearly define these boundaries. Mr. Schwartzman also expressed concern regarding potential legal consequences if a student accidentally harmed an SRO while the officer was breaking up a physical altercation. Ms. Powell explained that officers, similar to school staff, exercise discretion in such scenarios and are expected to distinguish between inadvertent contact and intentional harm, a quality that will be prioritized during the officer selection process. Dr. Johnson added that these specific student concerns would be used to inform future training sessions for the student body.

Board Response to Written Reports

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

14.2 [Chronic Absenteeism - Written Report](#): Rachel Rasnake provided a written report on Chronic Absenteeism.

Mr. Meyer expressed appreciation for the written reports and provided observations regarding chronic absenteeism and staffing. He noted recent upticks in absenteeism at Charlottesville Middle School (CMS) and Charlottesville High School (CHS), contrasting the communication regarding attendance incentives he received from elementary schools versus the lack thereof from CMS.

14.3 [Pupil-Teacher Ratio 2025 Written Report](#): Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, prepared the 2025 Pupil-Teacher Ratio written report for Board information. The Standard of Quality reporting requires School Boards to report the actual Pupil-Teacher ratios in elementary classrooms by school. The pupil/teacher ratio includes full-time classroom teachers. Enrollment projection data provided notes enrollment increases across the division, predominantly in elementary schools.

Mr. Meyer highlighted the district's favorable teacher-student ratios compared to state averages. However, he pointed out that Jackson-Via Elementary appeared to have higher class sizes relative to other schools, particularly when considering the English Learner population, and emphasized the importance of allocating staff equitably based on specific student needs.

15.1 Comments from Members of the Community: There were none.

16.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Torres, serving as the VSBA Delegate for the upcoming assembly in Williamsburg, highlighted a new legislative proposal that the body will vote on. She explained that the proposal seeks to remove chronic absenteeism as an indicator in state accountability and accreditation models. Ms. Torres requested Board consensus on the item and agreed to circulate the specific language via email for review. Additionally, she thanked the community for their participation in the recent election and expressed gratitude for the support she received, noting that she looks forward to the upcoming budget discussions with the City Council.
- Ms. Richardson noted the approaching holiday season and expressed her hope that everyone is preparing to spend time with family and friends. She also acknowledged the recent distribution of report cards, celebrating students' hard work and congratulating her own children on their academic success.
- Ms. Burns announced that the Community Attention Youth Internship Program is currently accepting applications for students aged 14 to 21. She highlighted the program's value in providing workplace

readiness skills and paid opportunities through partnerships with local organizations such as the JMRL library, the Music Resource Center, and the Virginia Discovery Museum. Ms. Burns concluded by thanking Director David Becker and the theater students for taking time away from rehearsal to present to the Board.

- Mr. Meyer offered congratulations to Ms. Torres and Ms. Dooley on their re-election and welcomed newly elected member Ms. Bryant to the Board. He highlighted a recent City Council budget presentation that projected a 5% annual growth for the school budget, characterizing it as a positive development, and encouraged the community to continue advocating for school funding. Mr. Meyer also expressed hope that new state leadership would pass legislation for a sales tax referendum to support necessary school infrastructure upgrades. Finally, he paid tribute to the late Eugene Williams, sharing personal reflections on the lessons he learned from Mr. Williams regarding local history and encouraging the public to visit the historical marker at Tall Oaks.
- Ms. Cooper extended congratulations to Ms. Dooley, Ms. Torres, and Ms. Bryant regarding the recent election results.
- Ms. Dooley reflected on the recent election cycle, expressing gratitude to teachers, staff, and administrators for their hard work, which allowed her to highlight the division's successes during the campaign. She noted the high level of community interest in the School Board race, attributing some of the enthusiasm to the contest's competitive nature. Ms. Dooley concluded with a plea to the community to maintain that level of engagement with public education even outside of the election cycle.

17.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley paid tribute to the late Eugene Williams, recalling that meeting him was a priority facilitated by JuanDiego Wade upon his arrival in Charlottesville. He shared a personal anecdote about receiving a bow tie from Mr. Williams, characterizing it as a cherished piece of history. Dr. Gurley announced the upcoming launch of "Royal Recognition," a new initiative designed to honor teachers and support staff who embody the division's core values. Additionally, he reported on a successful recent engagement at the library attended by students of various ages and noted that another community event is planned for December.

18.1 Work Session Wrap-Up: There were no requests from the Board.

19.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Dooley read the list of upcoming meetings.

20.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

A video of the November 6, 2025, meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BFRQyfZ1T83MfEYRHcGiMfEq0g_Inso/view?usp=drive_link

Emily Dooley, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk