



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
Thursday, December 4, 2025 (5:00 PM)

A Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on December 4, 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 Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion of personnel matters. Ms. Torres seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Morse, Mr. Meyer, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 5 ayes, 0 nays. Ms. Cooper and Ms. Richardson were not present for this vote.

1.2 Closed Meeting Certification: At 4:44 p.m., Ms. Burns offered a motion that the board certify by recorded vote that, to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered. Ms. Torres seconded the motion, 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: None

The board recessed from 4:44 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. Renee Hoover
	Ms. Julia Green	Ms. Leslie Thacker

The following Staff Members were absent: None

5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Cooper made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, 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.

Special Recognition

6.1 Recognition - Student School Board Representative (Solomon “Solly” Schwartzman): Superintendent Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. recognized Solomon “Solly” Schwartzman for his service as the first Student Representative to the School Board for the 2025-2026 school year. A junior at CHS, Mr. Schwartzman was commended for his active involvement in morning choir, Model United Nations, and speech and debate, notably qualifying for the state championship in Lincoln Douglas debate. Dr. Gurley highlighted Solly’s commitment to listening to his peers and representing their concerns, celebrations, and questions with authenticity and nuance.

6.2 Recognition - School Board Member Service (Dom Morse): Superintendent Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. recognized Mr. Dom Morse for his distinguished service to the School Board, which began in January 2022. Dr. Gurley reflected on the significant changes overseen during Mr. Morse’s tenure, including the transition from the pandemic, the implementation of new cell phone policies, and the securing of funding for the middle school. He highlighted Mr. Morse’s contributions to the new Strategic Plan, the expansion of career and technical education, and the acquisition of the Oak Lawn property. Dr. Gurley specifically praised Mr. Morse as a stalwart champion for teachers and noted his unwavering commitment to centering student voices and advocating for underserved students.

Ms. Torres expressed appreciation for Mr. Morse, reflecting on their four years of service together. She described his contributions as having a profound personal impact, noting that despite his quiet nature, his perspectives were deeply moving and insightful. Ms. Torres thanked him for the knowledge and wisdom he shared during their time working together and invited him to stay in touch with the board in the future.

Mr. Morse expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve alongside current and former board members, including James Bryant, Lashundra Bryson-Morsberger, Sherry Kraft, and Jennifer McKeever. He attributed the accomplishments mentioned during his tenure to the collective process rather than his own individual actions, noting he was only one voice in the work. He concluded by thanking Dr. Gurley and the administrative staff for their efforts during his time on the Board.

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

- There were none.

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

- Jenn Horne, CHS Teacher, addressed the Board regarding the implementation of Standards-Based Grading (SBG), specifically advocating for it to be made optional in the humanities. Referencing a recent Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) session on performance-based assessments, Ms. Horne argued that the state is moving toward authentic, project-based learning that emphasizes the "Five C's": critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship. She contended that SBG is antithetical to this approach, as it "dilutes and hamstring" multifaceted assessments by focusing on isolated standards rather than "standards-rich" projects. Ms. Horne shared her experience that teaching holistically—focusing on literature, writing, and research rather than individual standards—has historically yielded comparable or better testing data. She concluded by noting that SBG is often optional for humanities nationwide and requested the Board reconsider the current mandate.

8.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report: In his final report, Student Representative Solomon "Solly" Schwartzman highlighted recent school events and offered parting advice regarding the reintroduction of School Resource Officers (SROs). He commended the success of the recent diversity week, noting that it was a "wonderful time" for students to celebrate and educate one another on their diverse cultures.

Addressing the SRO program, Mr. Schwartzman emphasized that while some students are hopeful, many remain anxious. He advised the Board that if SROs are to be a permanent fixture, the flow of education and information to students must be continuous and transparent to address "real fears and allegations." He urged the Board to remain flexible, suggesting they should not be afraid to change or even dissolve the program if it is found to be ineffective. He concluded by thanking the Board for the opportunity to serve and reminding them to keep the student body at the heart of all future decisions.

9.1-5 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda: Personnel Recommendations; Minutes from the October 23, 2025 School Work Session and Meeting with Legislators; Minutes from the November 6, 2025 School Board Meeting; Business, Financial, Routine Reports; and VSBA November 2025 Policy Update to LBD (Home Instruction). Ms. Burns 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.

During the adoption of the Consent Agenda, Mr. Meyer raised questions regarding the updates to Policy LBD (Home Instruction), specifically seeking clarification on how student progress is monitored for homeschooled children.

Dr. Gurley and Ms. Rasnake explained that while homeschool parents are not required to follow the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), they must demonstrate "adequate progress" annually. Ms. Rasnake noted that families provide a range of documentation, such as assessments from private providers or end-of-curriculum results from purchased homeschool programs. Dr. Gurley added that parents must possess a high school diploma and provide proof of a specific curriculum. Mr. Meyer contrasted this with the district's reliance on SOLs for its own students, noting that the requirements for showing progress differ significantly.

10.0 Items Pulled From Consent Agenda: None

Items for Discussion

11.1 Capital Improvement Update: Kim Powell Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, and Michael Goddard, City Facilities Development Manager, provided an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process and an update regarding projects recently completed and currently in progress. Information presented included:

- Overview and Agenda
 - Report Date and Scope: The report is dated December 4, 2025, and details the Capital Development projects for Charlottesville City Schools, covering work currently underway, recently completed projects, and the plan for FY26–30.

- Project Categories: The agenda categorizes projects into "In Process" (such as the Middle School Reconfiguration and Greenbrier Restrooms) and "Recently Completed" (such as CHS Electrical Distribution and CATEC Solar).
- Middle School Reconfiguration (CMS Campus)
 - Scope: This major modernization involves a significant addition and renovation to the existing CMS (Charlottesville Middle School) campus to add a new academic and athletics wing while renovating the remaining buildings.
 - Background: The project addresses the need for modernization and reconfiguration of the middle years school buildings.
 - Financials: The total project budget is \$91 million.
 - Project Team: VMDO serves as the Architect/Engineer, Capital Development is the Project Manager, and Nielsen is the General Contractor.
 - Status by Phase:
 - Phase 1: Completed on time and is currently occupied.
 - Phase 1B: The Kitchen & Cafeteria are scheduled to open after the Christmas break.
 - Phase 2: This phase is currently under construction.
- Early Childhood Learning Center
 - Scope: This project will create a new Pre-K Center, marking the final part of the school reconfiguration process.
 - Site Strategy: The plan pivoted to the Walker campus to retain all existing buildings, leaving options open for future use as expanded Pre-K or "swing space" for elementary modernizations.
 - Oak Lawn Property Development: UVA has expressed interest in conveying the Oak Lawn property outright rather than through a long-term lease. The City Manager and Attorney are working on this, with confirmation expected by the end of the calendar year.
 - Financials: The budget is \$36 million, with funds allocated in the 2026 to 2028 CIP budgets.
 - Project Team: VMDO Architects is the A/E, and Capital Development is the PM; the GC is to be determined.
- Walker Temporary Pre-K Outdoor Play Space
 - Scope: Construction of a high-quality outdoor learning environment and play space on the north side of Building A.
 - Background: While interior work for the temporary Pre-K at Walker is minor, teaching staff requested designated outdoor space. The space is designed to be usable long-term if the building transitions to a "swing space" for future elementary projects.
 - Financials: The project budget is \$650,000.
 - Schedule: Design is currently ongoing, with construction planned for summer 2026.
- Trailblazer Priority Improvement
 - Scope: The modernization of small group instruction spaces and the creation of new break-out spaces, along with a new intercom system.
 - Background: This effort is identified as the seventh school modernization project.
 - Financials: The budget is \$1.4 million.
 - Status: Furniture has been provided, and construction is scheduled for summer 2026.
 - Project Team: Thrive Architects is the A/E.
- Greenbrier Restrooms
 - Scope: Renovation of the restrooms adjacent to the gym, involving the construction of new single-occupancy stalls based on the CHS and CMS models.
 - Condition: The existing restrooms are described as being in "desperate need of upgrades" and among the worst in the system.
 - Design Standards: The new facilities will be modern, gender-agnostic, and ADA accessible.
 - Financials: The budget is \$700,000.
 - Schedule: Currently in the design phase, with construction expected in summer 2026.
- CHS Turf Field Replacement

- Scope: Replacement of the turf at Charlottesville High School and the installation of a safety net behind the northern goal.
- Safety Context: A yearly safety report indicated the need for replacement to maintain a safe playing surface; the new product has fewer seams than the previous turf. The safety net addresses the risk of spectators being hit by balls.
- Financials: The budget is \$1 million.
- Schedule: Installation is set for the fall.
- Summit Window Replacement
 - Scope: Replacement of failing windows at Summit Elementary.
 - Financials: The budget is \$1 million spread over three years.
 - Schedule:
 - Phase 1: Completed in summer 2025.
 - Phase 2: Scheduled for summer 2026.
 - Project Team: Design is handled In-House.
- CHS Roof Replacement
 - Scope: Replacement of the failing roof at CHS, executed in three phases.
 - Background: The roof was past due for replacement and had required numerous patches; the replacement anticipates a follow-up solar installation.
 - Financials: The budget was \$6 million over three years.
 - Status: All phases are complete.
 - Project Team: Grimm & Parker served as A/E.
- CATEC Solar Installation
 - Scope: Installation of solar panels on the CATEC roof.
 - Background: As part of the City's sustainability program, roofs are fitted with solar power as they are replaced; CATEC was selected following its recent roof replacement.
 - Financials: The budget was \$800,000.
 - Status: Project complete.
 - Project Team: CMTA EPC (A/E) and Tiger Solar (GC).
- CHS Track Lighting
 - Scope: Provision of lighting for the CHS track.
 - Background: Lighting was part of the original 2018 track and fieldhouse design but was cut due to budget; however, bases and conduits were installed at that time, reducing the cost of this current installation.
 - Financials: The budget was \$30,000.
 - Status: Work complete.
 - Project Team: Musco served as the GC.
- CHS Front Office Flooring
 - Scope: Replacement of aged carpet with polished concrete flooring.
 - Reasoning: The carpet was past its useful life and becoming a safety concern; concrete was chosen for low maintenance and sanitation (does not harbor dirt/germs).
 - Financials: The budget was \$90,000.
 - Status: Project complete.
 - Project Team: Centimark served as the GC.
- FY26–30 Planned Work
 - Upcoming Projects List:
 - MLK PAC Interior Restoration and Lighting.
 - Walker Pre-K Adjustments (primarily play area).
 - CHS Track Lighting (listed again in summary).
 - Summit/Trailblazers Window Replacements.
 - Burnley Moran Roof Replacement (planned for FY27 at \$1.5M).
 - Pre-K Center at Walker campus (planned for FY27 at \$25M–\$30M).
 - Jackson Via Roof Replacement (planned for FY28 at \$1.5M).

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Burns inquired about the status of the grates on the exterior of the gymnasium. Mr. Harding clarified that these are "vision panels" and confirmed that the subcontractor is committed to replacing them. He noted that mockup panels are currently being prepared to ensure the replacements meet the district's standards before the remaining panels are installed.
- Mr. Meyer inquired about the budget and the original vision for a "net-zero" school featuring solar panels. Mr. Goddard confirmed the project is currently on budget and reported significant progress on solar initiatives. He shared that structural engineering reports indicate both the Middle School and Charlottesville High School are capable of supporting large solar arrays. While the City's sustainability office is managing the proposal through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), a specific timeline for installation has not yet been determined.
- Regarding the Oak Lawn property, Mr. Goddard reported that negotiations for the transfer are moving quickly. He noted that while the property is roughly five acres, development is complicated by its status as a historic site, which includes a cemetery and protected "viewsheds" (historical lines of sight).
- Mr. Meyer inquired about the total buildable area. Mr. Goddard explained that while the house itself is small, they are investigating how to maximize flexibility, specifically identifying at least two "bars" of land—approximately one acre each—that appear buildable. He clarified that current viewshed concerns relate to sightlines across the property (e.g., from the house to the cemetery) rather than vertical building height, but emphasized that the city is working to ensure the site remains as functional as possible for the Early Learning Center.
- Ms. Torres expressed a desire for more information regarding the Oak Lawn property, citing concerns about historical preservation and the need for the Board to weigh in on its potential use. She emphasized that any move to this site should be balanced against the district's more pressing, prioritized needs and voiced concern over possible delays. Dr. Gurley and Mr. Goddard clarified that exploring the property has not impacted the three-year project timeline for the Pre-K center. Dr. Gurley committed to making evaluation data available to the Board as it becomes finalized and promised to share an exhaustive historic survey of the site to assist in their review.
- Ms. Burns echoed Ms. Torres's sentiments, noting her personal familiarity with the neighborhood and the existing architectural documents. She emphasized that the Board has yet to have a robust conversation to ensure all members are aligned on the potential and limitations of both the Walker and Oak Lawn properties. Highlighting past instances where property agreements fell through, she expressed hope for a finalized deal by the end of the year. While acknowledging the three-year opening timeline, she stressed that a decision on where to break ground is needed soon to stay on track. Mr. Goddard agreed that the time spent in evaluation is impactful and offered to facilitate the requested dialogue with more data.
- Mr. Meyer sought clarification on the relationship between the upcoming Trailblazer priority improvements and other planned work. Mr. Goddard explained that the specific modernization of small group instruction and break-out spaces at Trailblazer is being funded through the "large cap lump sum" program, rather than the smaller priority improvement budget. Mr. Meyer expressed his support for the continued progress in securing funding for these additional capital projects.
- Mr. Meyer asked if the high school turf replacement would be finished in time for spring and if fiber optic issues had been settled to allow for state-level games. Mr. Goddard reported that the turf replacement is currently in progress and will be completed within three to four weeks. He noted the addition of a safety net behind the goal to prevent building damage and confirmed that the fiber optic issues have been resolved, enabling the school to host high-level athletic events.
- Ms. Torres initiated a discussion regarding the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) spreadsheet, specifically seeking clarification on why the Walker Pre-K Center budget had increased from \$30 million to \$36 million. She also expressed concern that there was no financial placeholder for the Oak Lawn site, suggesting that both locations should be minimally represented in the CIP. In response, Mr. Goddard and Ms. Powell explained that the \$6 million increase was due to inflation and the "sharpening" of budget estimates as the project moves from a rough concept to a realized plan. Regarding the two sites, Mr.

Goddard clarified that the city currently views the Early Learning Center as a single project rather than two distinct ones, with the final location to be determined by ongoing site findings and discussions with the School Board and City Council. He concluded by noting that a collaborative schools planning effort is currently underway to evaluate broader facility needs across the division.

- Ms. Torres expressed ongoing concerns regarding the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) spreadsheet and the advocacy required for school projects. She specifically highlighted the lack of a financial placeholder for the Oak Lawn site, noting that Planning Commission members had also questioned the "zero" dollar amount currently assigned to it. Ms. Torres emphasized the importance of the School Board having a clear, direct voice in these planning meetings to advocate for school needs and ensure consistent progress.
- Mr. Goddard and Ms. Powell clarified that the \$6 million budget increase from \$30 million to \$36 million was due to inflation and the "sharpening" of estimates as the project nears realization. Regarding the Oak Lawn site, Mr. Goddard explained that the city currently views the Early Learning Center as a single project with a location yet to be finalized, and that placeholders for future needs would be established as a broader "master plan" or schools planning effort takes shape. He concluded by noting that the current funding environment is significantly more positive and collaborative than in years past, with the city actively working on long-range development plans.
- Ms. Dooley inquired about the status of the new lighting project, prompting Mr. Goddard to confirm that his team is prepared to move forward. Mr. Goddard indicated that a plan is being developed with a strategic focus on shifting state-level funding trends. He explained that the project's momentum will be dictated by these external financial opportunities; the team aims to be positioned for rapid implementation if state funding is secured, while remaining prepared to pace the project more gradually if those resources are unavailable.
- Ms. Burns highlighted the importance of advocacy regarding the potential reinstatement of the sales tax referendum. She emphasized that the organization must focus on community education to clearly communicate the vision for these funds and why they are necessary for the future. By being prepared for this potential influx of revenue, the team will be positioned to execute more projects, which Ms. Burns noted would significantly increase the upcoming workload for the staff.
- Mr. Morse advised the team to remain mindful of long-term facility costs as the plans for the Early Childhood Learning Center progress. Regardless of whether the Oak Lawn or Walker property is selected, he urged caution regarding the ongoing maintenance expenses associated with whichever property remains unused, suggesting that these costs should be a key factor in the project's overall development strategy.
- Mr. Meyer commended the team's increased efficiency and successful project execution, specifically noting the Greenbrier bathroom renovations and the addition of new staff. He confirmed the formation of a multi-programmatic task force to develop a 15-to-20-year infrastructure plan, which will serve as a foundation for educating the community ahead of a potential sales tax referendum this fall. Regarding the Early Childhood Learning Center, Mr. Meyer noted the budget has increased to \$36 million and expressed concern over further delays, urging a swift decision on the location to avoid rising costs. He also suggested exploring whether certain lagging city workflows should be transferred to Mr. Goddard's team given their high performance. In response, Mr. Goddard expressed confidence in the current progress, noting that after consulting with staff, he is encouraged by the momentum and believes the projects are moving forward effectively.

11.2 Exceptional Education Preliminary December 1 Child Count: Rachel Rasnake Rachel Rasnake, Director of Exceptional Education, provided an update on enrollment information related to the Special Education December 1 Child Count for Board information. The information provided during the December 1 child count is used by the Virginia Department of Education to allocate flow through funding and measure Charlottesville City Schools relative to indicators for least restrictive environment. Information presented included:

- Preliminary Child Count Data

- Total Enrollment: The total number of students receiving special education services for December 1, 2025, is 571. This is a slight increase from 568 in both 2023 and 2024.
- Service Level Breakdown (Ages 2-22+):
 - <50% Special Ed Service: 436 students (an increase from 428 in 2024).
 - =50% Special Ed Service: 135 students (a decrease from 140 in 2024).
- Preliminary Child Count by Designation
 - Designation Trends (Dec 1, 2025):
 - Autism: The largest single category with 129 students, marking a significant increase from 106 in 2024.
 - Specific Learning Disabilities: 112 students, an increase from 106 in 2024.
 - Other Health Impairment: 108 students, a slight decrease from 114 in 2024.
 - Speech or Language Impairment: 68 students, down from 80 in 2024.
 - Emotional Disability: 54 students, steady from 2024.
 - Developmental Delay: 39 students, down from 45 in 2024.
 - Intellectual Disability: 37 students, down from 42 in 2024.
 - Multiple Disabilities: 15 students.
 - Hearing Impairment: 4 students.
 - Visual Impairment: 3 students.
 - Private Residential: 3 students.
 - Public Residential: 2 students.
 - Orthopedic Impairment: 1 student.
 - Traumatic Brain Injury: 1 student.
 - Deaf-Blindness: 0 students.
- Preliminary Child Count by Placement K-12
 - Total Placements: The total count for K-12 placement is 518 students.
 - Settings:
 - Public Day School: 473 students.
 - Private Day School: 29 students.
 - Public Separate School: 11 students.
 - Private Residential: 3 students.
 - Public Residential: 2 students.
 - Homebased: 0 students.
- K-12 Least Restrictive Environment
 - Current Metrics:
 - Students included in the regular classroom 80 percent or more of the day: 72.11%.
 - Students included in regular classrooms less than 40 percent of the day: 19%.
 - Students served in separate public or private school residential, home-based, or hospital facilities: 8.65%.
- Preliminary Child Count by Placement Preschool
 - Placements:
 - Regular Early Childhood Program: 40 students.
 - Special Education Separate Class: 6 students.
 - Service Provider Location: 2 students.
 - Special Education Separate School: 0 students.
 - Special Education Residential Facility: 0 students.
 - Home: 0 students.
- Preschool Least Restrictive Environment
 - Current Metrics:
 - Percent of children in a regular early childhood program receiving the majority of services there: 40.81%.
 - Percent of children with IEPs in a preschool program attending a separate special education class: 12.2%.

- Percent of children who receive services in the home: 0%.
- Students with Intensive Support Needs
 - Definition: Students served 85% of the instructional day with designations including Autism, Emotional Disability, Deaf-Blind, Hearing Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, or Traumatic Brain Injury.
 - Application: The application offsets the cost of providing instructional and direct services. Reimbursement is based on the "actual cost" multiplied by the local composite index.
 - Count: There are 49 students identified for 2025-26.
- Special Education Caseloads
 - Teaching Roles (Average):
 - Special Education Teacher: 10.56.
 - Intensive Special Education Teacher: 6.1.
 - Early Childhood Special Education Teacher: 5.33.
 - Therapy/Support Roles (Average):
 - Speech Language Pathologist: 9.33 (SLI only) / 26.6 (total served).
 - Occupational Therapist: 36.5 (direct) / 54.5 (total).
 - Physical Therapist: 25 (direct) / 41.6 (total).

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer inquired whether the decreasing number of students sent to private schools has resulted in cost savings for the school division's budget. In response, Ms. Rasnake explained that the financial impact is not a simple reduction in spending, as the costs for private separate schools are primarily borne by the community and the Children's Services Act (CSA) rather than the school's direct budget. While she noted that keeping students in their home schools is less expensive than funding "per slot" placements at public separate schools, the shift toward in-district services is not necessarily a cheaper alternative. Instead, the focus remains on increasing the division's internal capacity and space to provide inclusive services, even if the primary financial responsibility for external placements often sits outside the school's immediate bottom line.
- Ms. Torres raised concerns regarding the stability of federal funding and the long-term support for the growing number of preschool-aged students. Ms. Rasnake clarified that while there is widespread discussion about cuts to other federal programs, there is currently no indication that Title 6B funding—which supports special education—will decrease. She noted that CCS is well-prepared for any potential changes, particularly since this federal funding only accounts for a small fraction of their staff, supporting approximately 15 or 16 of the more than 100 special education positions in the division.
- Regarding the influx of early childhood special education (ECSE) students, Ms. Rasnake addressed both the budgetary and operational impacts. She explained that the division has already made significant financial investments, such as implementing structured teaching across all schools and adding an ECSE teacher position in recent years. Looking ahead, she highlighted that the consolidation of the Early Learning Center will eliminate the need for itinerant teachers to travel between six different elementary schools. This centralized model is expected to improve the delivery of inclusive services and allow for more co-taught classrooms without requiring additional specialized teaching staff. Ms. Rasnake also noted that the division can provide future data on "exiting" trends to track how many students no longer require services by age seven.

11.3 2026-2027 Program of Studies: Dr. Anna Isley, Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Justin Malone, CHS Principal; Rodney Jordan, CMS Principal; Dr. Stacey Heltz, Principal of CATEC and CTE Coordinator; Aaron Eichorst, Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts; Jessica Brantley, Coordinator of Health/PE; and Dr. Jeannie Pfautz, ESL Specialist presented the 2026-2027 Program of Studies for Board information. Information presented included:

Strategic Plan 2023-2028

- Priority 1: Increase academic achievement via rigorous, inclusive, relevant learning.

- Target 2: 100% of graduates equipped with a post-secondary plan.
- Target 3: Increase CHS enrollment at CATEC by 10% annually.
- Target 4: AP/Dual Enrollment demographics to match school demographics.
- Target 8: 85%+ of seniors meet College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI) standards.
- Strategy 3: Expand middle school CTE/advanced courses and work-based learning.
- Strategy 4: Use unlevleed courses to scaffold rigor for AP/Dual Enrollment prep.

Purpose of the Program of Studies

- Plan sequences for academic, CTE, and elective courses.
- Lists 6-12 electives; offerings depend on interest and staffing.
- Framework: "3R" Readiness (Enrollment, Employment, Enlistment).

Program of Studies Updates

- Goal: Accessible pathways aligned with state expectations.
- Changes: New pathways added; existing pathways clarified/visualized.
- Requirement: Graduates must complete a sequential elective (intro courses excluded).

3E Readiness Framework

- Enrollment: Prep for post-secondary education.
- Employment: Prep for workforce entry.
- Enlistment: Support for military service.

Universal Certificate of General Studies (UCGS)

- Earn 32 college credits (free) via CHS DE courses and PVCC virtual courses.
- CHS Courses: Composition I/II, Pre-Calc, Applied Calc, US/State Govt.
- PVCC Virtual: Life Science, US History, Philosophy, Art History.

Charlottesville High School Recommendation

- Add: AP African American Studies (No FTE needed).

Student Interest Survey

- Arts & Music: 42.6%.
- Business & Marketing: 34.8%.
- Healthcare: 32.6%.
- STEM: 25.9%.
- Architecture & Construction: 19.5%.
- Law & Public Safety: 19.1%.
- Farming & Agriculture: 17%.
- Teaching: 13.5%.

6th Grade Electives Structure

- Slots: 4 slots total (2 A-day, 2 B-day); PE takes 1 slot.
- 2-Slot Electives: Band, Orchestra.
- 1-Slot Electives: Music, Chorus, Art, Drama, Young Knights.
- New 1-Slot: Intro to Tech/Eng, Intro to Ag, Exploratory Spanish, World Languages.

Agriculture / Urban Farming Pathway

- Tracks: Vet Science (CATEC), Natural Resources, Urban Farming.
- Implement: Add Introduction to Animal Systems at CHS.
- Staffing: 0.5 FTE needed.

Technology Pathway

- Tracks: Engineering (leads to PVCC), Robotics, Aerospace (New).
- Implement: Add Aerospace Technology I & II at CHS.
- Staffing: No FTE needed.

Business & Marketing Pathway Options

- Tracks: Fashion, Sports/Entertainment, Digital Marketing, Urban Farming combinations.
- Implement: Add Principles of Business & Marketing at CHS.
- Staffing: No FTE needed.

Health & Medical Sciences Pathway

- Tracks: Medical Terminology, CNA/PCT, EMT, Practical Nursing.

- CHS Implement: Add Medical Terminology (0.5 FTE needed).
- CATEC Implement: CNA becomes 1-semester; add Patient Care Technician (PCT) to semester 2 (No FTE).
- Nursing: Practical Nursing approved in 24-25 (No FTE for 26-27).

Personal Fitness Pathway

- Sequence: Personal Fitness I → Personal Fitness II.
- Implement: Add Personal Fitness & Conditioning II.
- Staffing: No FTE needed.

Visual Art Pathway

- Tracks: Fine Arts (Drawing/3D), CTE (Photo), Digital.
- Implement: Split Studio Art into Art III/IV (No FTE).
- Implement: Add 3D Sculpture & Design (\$17k startup, No FTE).
- Implement: Move Photo Capstone to Photography III (Fine Arts).
- Implement: Add AP 2D Design (Photo emphasis, No FTE).

Theatre Pathway

- Tracks: Musical, Performance, Tech.
- Implement: Add Musical Theatre II at CHS.
- Staffing: No FTE needed.

Band Pathway

- Tracks: Concert/Symphonic, Jazz, Marching, Percussion.
- Implement: Add spring Marching Knights option (No FTE).
- Implement: Add 1-year Jazz Band option (No FTE).

Orchestra Pathway

- Sequence: Beginning (MS) → Concert → String Ensemble.

World Language Pathway

- Options: Depth (5 yrs), Breadth (3+2 yrs), Variety (2+2+2 yrs).
- Implement: Add ELD I, II, III and MS ELD at CMS.
- Staffing: No FTE needed.

Additional Pathways

- Vocal: Concert Choir, CVILLE Singers, Knightengales.
- Comp Sci: Exploring CS/App Dev, AP CSP, AP CSA.

Removals and Clean-up (2026-2027)

- Remove: Standalone Work-based learning/Co-op (must embed in CTE).
- Remove: Courses with removed SCED codes or not offered in 5+ years.
- Remove: Misaligned scheduling courses (e.g., 9-week courses).

Next Steps

- Process: Board review, then approval at January School Board meeting.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley initiated a discussion regarding the transferability of the Universal Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) to four-year public institutions in Virginia. Dr. Malone clarified that since these are Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) courses, they transfer to other state schools and count toward graduation requirements, provided students meet the minimum GPA threshold. He noted that the pathway generally involves two years of coursework and a minimum GPA of 3.4 for guaranteed acceptance frameworks.
- Ms. Dooley expressed strong support for expanding this initiative, envisioning a future where students can graduate high school with an Associate degree or UCGS certificate, ensuring guaranteed admission to state universities. Dr. Malone confirmed this is the district's ultimate objective, stating that the administration is actively working to extend credentialing and course options to make the Associate degree more accessible to Charlottesville High School students.

- Mr. Morse noted that while the new framework is promising, previous associate degree programs have been underutilized. He cautioned the team to verify credit transferability with specific institutions, citing a past instance where Virginia Tech accepted a student but did not accept their associate degree credits.
- Dr. Gurley addressed the concern regarding underutilization, acknowledging that past participation was low because the district did not previously offer the full suite of courses required for the degree. She highlighted that the new partnership with PVCC bridges this gap by offering the remaining necessary courses virtually and free of charge. Dr. Gurley emphasized that with these barriers removed, the district will begin encouraging students much earlier, making the completion of an associate degree a truly attainable goal for Charlottesville City students.
- Ms. Cooper questioned the role of guidance counselors in ensuring all Charlottesville High School students are aware of these pathways and actively mapping out their academic plans. Dr. Gurley emphasized that the district is shifting the responsibility onto the administration rather than the students, stating that the district cannot wait for students to inquire about unknown opportunities. She noted that a strategic plan is in place to ensure every student has an individualized roadmap, supported by new interactive platforms that help students and families visualize career paths and their financial implications.
- Dr. Malone detailed the proactive measures currently underway, including workshops hosted during school hours and in the evening to highlight opportunities with PVCC and CATEC. He explained that the upcoming master scheduling process and curriculum fairs in January will focus on making information clear and accessible. The goal is to ensure that all families understand the strategic and financial benefits of these rigorous course options, providing equitable access to every student through a more formative and visual communication style.
- Mr. Burns inquired whether the district would continue to offer early morning Physical Education (PE) for sixth-grade students, noting that this option has historically allowed students more flexibility to enroll in additional electives. Mr. Jordan clarified that the current plan for the 2026-2027 school year does not include an early morning PE option for the sixth grade.
- Mr. Morse requested an update on how Career Exploration is integrated into the middle school elective structure. Mr. Jordan explained that the district is currently refining the course to increase student engagement and instructional quality. He noted that while the course was previously delivered asynchronously, the plan for the upcoming year is to transition to an in-person model.
- Ms. Dooley raised a concern regarding the lack of entry points for students to begin Orchestra or Band at the high school level, noting that requiring students to start in middle school forces life-long academic decisions on sixth and seventh graders. Mr. Eichorst and Mr. Schwarzman explained that the ensemble nature of these courses makes it difficult to integrate true beginners with experienced players, unlike visual arts where instruction is more easily differentiated. However, Mr. Eichorst noted a current pilot where a small group of beginner band students was successfully accommodated together in a specific section.
- Mr. Morse advocated for formally adding an "Intro to Band" course for ninth graders to the Program of Studies to create a purposeful entry point. Dr. Gurley clarified that while such a course is possible, it would require either additional FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) staffing or the "sunsetting" of an existing course to fit into the current master schedule. Mr. Morse emphasized the importance of these conversations, specifically regarding cultural relevance and representation. He highlighted the need for pathways that allow students to connect with opportunities like HBCU marching bands, even if they do not start their musical training until high school.
- Mr. Meyer inquired whether there is sufficient student demand to justify the current structure of the world language pathways. Dr. Pfautz clarified that the presentation did not propose new languages, but rather reflected the courses currently offered and utilized at Charlottesville High School. She explained that the updated visuals in the Program of Studies are intended to better illustrate the existing course structures and sequences for students and families, rather than representing a change in offerings.
- Mr. Schwarzman sought clarification on whether exploratory language courses at the middle school level qualify for high school Spanish 1 and 2 credits. Dr. Pfautz explained that these exploratory courses are classified as general electives and do not count toward high school graduation requirements. She noted

that because these classes operate on an A/B day rotation, they only meet half the time required by the state. In contrast, language courses that carry high school credit must meet every day to satisfy the mandated instructional minutes.

- Ms. Burns advocated for the inclusion of languages spoken within the local community, such as Pashto or Dari, as formal course offerings to foster community and peer-to-peer engagement. Dr. Pfautz noted that while formal coursework is not yet available, the district currently offers Heritage Spanish classes and utilizes the STAMP test for the Seal of Biliteracy. This allows bilingual students to earn graduation honors and credits for their native languages (including Arabic and Dari) even if those languages are not currently taught as a class.
- Dr. Gurley suggested that the immediate solution for peer-to-peer language learning might be through student-led clubs, citing the difficulty of finding certified teachers for specific community languages. Ms. Burns expressed interest in the club idea but emphasized that students often prefer credit-bearing opportunities due to their busy schedules. Dr. Pfautz concluded by noting that the district does award transfer credits for high school work completed abroad and remains committed to exploring ways to recognize the linguistic assets of all students on their diplomas.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about how the new Program of Studies applies to students at Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA) and the Night School, ensuring these students have equal access to the expanded course options. Dr. Trotter confirmed that students transitioning into alternative programs undergo a course audit to ensure their academic pathways continue uninterrupted.
- He expressed support for a hybrid model, explaining that depending on the specific course and scheduling, students may continue certain electives at Charlottesville High School while completing their core academic requirements at LMA or Night School. Dr. Trotter noted that this model is currently in practice, allowing students to maintain specialized elective sequences during the day before attending their primary academic sessions.
- Ms. Burns and Ms. Cooper raised questions regarding whether the PVCC/UCGS pathway is available to students at Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA) and the Night School, emphasizing the need for equitable opportunities across all district programs. Dr. Trotter indicated that while this has not yet been fully explored, it will be a priority for the upcoming school year.
- Dr. Gurley provided a transparent assessment of the logistical challenges, noting that much of the UCGS curriculum relies on specific, person-dependent Dual Enrollment (DE) courses taught in person by Charlottesville High School faculty. She cautioned that moving to a smaller, alternative environment like Lugo might naturally conflict with accessing the full, in-person UCGS suite. However, Dr. Malone noted that because many PVCC components are delivered asynchronously via Canvas, highly motivated students at LMA or Night School might still access virtual portions of the certificate, provided their schedules align with PVCC instructor requirements. Dr. Gurley concluded by stressing the importance of counseling students before they self-select into alternative programs so they understand which in-person resources may be more difficult to replicate outside of the main CHS campus.

11.4 Update on School Resource Officers (SROs): Dr. Denise Johnson Dr. Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Strategic Initiatives, presented an update on the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the continuing refinement of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) with the Charlottesville Police Department, as well as next steps for the process, including Dr. Gurley and Chief Kochis signing the MOU.

School Board Update: SRO Program MOU and SOP (December 4, 2025)

- Finalization of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):
 - The final MOU incorporates edits from the City Attorney's Office and is scheduled to be signed by Dr. Gurley and Chief Kochis in December 2025.
 - Key Revisions:
 - Preamble: Language was simplified for clarity and broadened to state that the SRO program or specific officers can be removed for any reason, at any time, and without cause.

- Complaint Process: Refined language distinguishes between complaints regarding an SRO versus a CCS staff member; complaints about an SRO can be initiated through either the schools or the CPD directly.
- Definitions: The definition of "mechanical restraints" was moved to its first mention in the document for better flow.
- Ongoing Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP):
 - A work group, including Care and Safety Assistants, continues to refine the SOP as a "living document".
 - Student Privacy: Further clarification is being developed to protect student privacy in sensitive areas (such as the nurse's office) given that SROs will use body-worn cameras per CPD policy.
 - Next Review: The next public review of the SOP is expected in Spring 2026 or upon the hiring of the first SROs.
- Program Implementation Timeline:
 - Winter 2025: City budget season; notably, the reduction to two officers has eliminated the program's budgetary impact.
 - Spring 2026: Hiring and training of the two SROs.
 - August 2026: The SRO program will officially launch at the start of the 2026-2027 school year with two trained officers.
- Community Engagement:
 - The Google Suggestion Form remains open for ongoing community feedback.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Schwartzman expressed his appreciation to the committee for their diligent work and high level of responsiveness to community feedback. He noted that it has been remarkable to observe the MOU and SOP evolve based on stakeholder input. He stated that he has high hopes for the program's success due to its ability to adapt easily to the specific needs presented by the community. Dr. Johnson thanked Mr. Schwartzman and expressed the committee's appreciation for the Board's support.
- Mr. Meyer identified a potential contradiction within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding termination timelines. He noted that while page two states the agreement can be terminated "at any time," the final paragraph on page 23 (above the signature block) still included language requiring a 45-day notice.
- Ms. Torres and Ms. Burns clarified the intent behind the recent revisions on page two, explaining that the language was broadened to allow for immediate termination for any reason. This change was made following community feedback to ensure the document was robust enough to protect all student groups without needing to list specific vulnerable populations or federal changes as triggers for termination.
- Ms. Powell acknowledged the oversight, stating that while the committee focused heavily on the preamble and high-level principles, the legacy language near the signature block remained unedited. She committed to removing the 45-day notice requirement to ensure the entire document aligns with the preamble's sentiment of allowing immediate termination.
- Mr. Morse raised a concern regarding the use of the acronym "SLEP" (School Law Enforcement Partnership) within the program documentation. He noted that from a communication and marketing standpoint, the acronym resembles the word "sleep," which could lead to negative community perceptions or optics in the event of a critical incident involving an officer.
- Ms. Powell clarified that "SLEP" is the official terminology utilized by the state to refer to these partnerships. However, she acknowledged Mr. Morse's point and noted that while it is a standard shorthand at the state level, the acronym is not used extensively within the local document. She expressed a willingness to remove or minimize its use in local communications to avoid potential confusion or negative connotations.
- Ms. Burns concluded the discussion by extending her gratitude to the committee and specifically recognizing Mr. Schwarzman for his extensive outreach efforts on behalf of the work group and the Board. She highlighted the significant contribution of student voices, noting that student representatives,

including Harper Ullrich, dedicated their personal lunch and "impact" times to engage with a diverse range of peers and gather critical feedback. Ms. Burns emphasized the importance of this ongoing commitment to transparent communication with the student body and the value of integrating student perspectives into the refinement of the SRO program.

11.5 FY 2026 Budget Development Update (Budget Priorities): Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, presented the FY 25-26 Budget Priorities that the school division will use to guide the budget development process.

2026-2027 Budget Development Update (December 4, 2025)

- Budget Development Process:
 - The process is collaborative, involving School Board members, leadership teams, program leaders, collective bargaining units, and the community.
 - Development is guided by the division's Strategic Plan through 2028, focusing on academic achievement, safety/wellness, staff support, and efficient operations.
- Key Budget Priorities:
 - Staffing & Retention: Prioritizing compensation and supporting collective bargaining agreements for licensed and school support professionals.
 - Student Support & Achievement: * Strengthening Tier 3 literacy supports for early elementary students, specifically targeting Black and Brown students to reduce the achievement gap.
 - Expanding literacy planning to middle and high schools and implementing mandatory restorative practices across all schools.
 - Facilities & Safety: Advocating for increased Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding from the City to modernize aging facilities and create purpose-built spaces for interventionists and specialists.
 - Early Childhood Education: Prioritizing preschool expansion, developing a plan for the Oak Lawn property as an early learning center, and exploring expanded eligibility for families above low-income thresholds.
- Strategic Plan Alignment:
 - Budget priorities are mapped directly to strategic goals, such as recruiting teachers of color, modernizing facilities, and ensuring all learners are equipped with a future plan.
- Upcoming Budget Calendar:
 - Joint Budget Work Session (City Council & School Board): December 18, 2025.
 - School Board Budget Work Sessions: January 22 and February 12, 2026.
 - Regular School Board Meeting: February 5, 2026.
 - Second Joint Budget Work Session: February 9, 2026.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer requested clarification on the specific nature of proposed student support and achievement initiatives, asking whether "Tier 3 literacy supports" would manifest as additional staff training or new Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. Dr. Gurley responded that while several requests for additional instructional support positions have been submitted, the administration is currently analyzing data to determine if these needs require new hires or the strategic relocation of existing staff. He specifically noted a focus on enhancing support for new teachers, evaluating whether this requires dedicated on-site staff or continued assistance from the professional learning team.
- Mr. Meyer expressed support for this analytical approach, emphasizing the importance of "repurposing" positions that are underperforming or failing to meet intended impacts. He noted that in the current budget environment, the priority should be maximizing the effectiveness and impact of the existing staff count rather than solely adding new positions. Dr. Gurley confirmed that high-level budget items related

to collective bargaining and compensation would be prioritized alongside these refined FTE requests in time for the upcoming budget turnaround.

- Ms. Burns requested an accounting review regarding the services rendered by the City versus the costs assessed to the school division. She expressed a need for clarity on whether the division is receiving the specific services for which it is billed, particularly concerning shared resources managed by Public Works, Parks and Recreation, or City Maintenance. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of shoring up "safe routes to school" with city partners in anticipation of winter weather.
- Dr. Gurley reported that James Freas, Deputy City Manager for Operations, is currently drafting a formal agreement between the City and the school division. This document aims to define service expectations and increase financial transparency regarding what the schools are receiving from the City. Ms. Torres echoed these sentiments, noting that while the Board is frequently told these agreements are in progress, it is essential to review a final contract alongside the financial data during upcoming budget sessions.

11.6 Fiscal Year-End 2025 Update: Renee Hoover Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented the FY 2025 year-end close and settlement update to the School Board. The school division added \$1,564,765 to the fund balance as a result of the fiscal year-end close, bringing the total fund balance to \$10,655,333 as of June 30, 2025. The fund balance reflects the cumulative effect of prior-year surpluses and deficits. It is typically used for one-time expenditures or to offset shortfalls in federal and state revenues in a given year. In accordance with the City and Schools Gainshare Agreement, the school division's gainshare remittance for FY 2025 is \$1,464,765.

2025 Fiscal Year End (FYE) Update (December 4, 2025)

- Strategic Alignment:
 - The update aligns with Priority 4 of the 2023-28 Strategic Plan: Ensure Effective and Efficient Operations.
 - The division aims to demonstrate fiscal stewardship through timely, accurate, and transparent financial communication to the School Board and community.
- Fund Balance Status (as of June 30, 2025):
 - Beginning Balance (7/1/2024): \$9,090,568.
 - FY 2025 Increase: \$1,564,765.
 - Ending Balance (6/30/2025): \$10,655,333.
 - The fund balance acts as a financial cushion for non-recurring, one-time expenditures such as unexpected enrollment growth or revenue shortfalls.
- FY 2025 Revenue Surplus:
 - Excess revenue over expenditures totaled \$3,029,530 as of June 30, 2025.
 - A significant portion of the surplus resulted from the July 1, 2024, separation of Virginia Retirement System (VRS) rates between hybrid employees' defined contributions and employer defined benefit contributions.
 - These VRS rate savings have already been incorporated into the FY 2026 Adopted Budget.
- Gainshare Agreement:
 - Under the agreement between the City and Schools, the first \$100,000 of surplus is retained by the school division.
 - The remaining surplus is shared equally (50/50) between the Schools and the City.
 - For FY 2025, the Schools will remit a gainshare of \$1,464,765 to the City.
 - Historically, the City applies these remitted funds toward the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for school construction projects.

Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer acknowledged the progress toward the two-month expenditure benchmark but emphasized the importance of balancing reserve growth with the immediate need to fund student education. He

expressed concern regarding federal funding exposure and questioned how the fund balance would safeguard the division against federal budget uncertainty. Ms. Hoover clarified that the federal government contributes approximately \$5 to \$6 million annually to the division, with \$2 million allocated for nutrition and the remainder for Title I and Title 6B programs. She noted that the fund balance would be utilized to cover these expenditures if federal funds were lost mid-year, though a long-term revenue plan would be required if given sufficient notice. Additionally, Ms. Hoover confirmed that the projected budget surplus for the current fiscal year is estimated to be between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

Board Response to Written Reports

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

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

13.1 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Peter Davis, a Charlottesville High School teacher, alumnus, and parent, spoke in strong support of the expanded partnership with Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) during the public comment portion of the meeting. Drawing on his personal experience as a parent, he noted that while one daughter successfully transitioned to James Madison University after attending PVCC, another found the high-stakes environment of AP courses discouraging. He argued that dual enrollment offers a "safe way" for students to gain college experience in a familiar setting with known teachers, sharing that his daughter successfully transferred those credits to an out-of-state private university. Mr. Davis critiqued the national and local "obsession" with AP courses, expressing concern for students taking excessive AP loads and questioning the financial influence of the College Board. He concluded by advocating for the push toward earning an associate degree, stating that the step-by-step progress of the PVCC pathway is more accessible for all students than the singular pressure of AP testing.
- Zyahna Bryant, a Charlottesville resident, former student and newly elected board member, expressed two primary concerns regarding the Program of Studies during the public comment period.
- First, echoing Ms. Cooper's earlier point, she emphasized the need for intentionality and accountability in student-counselor meetings. Drawing from her own experience as a student at Charlottesville High School where she felt not all possibilities were discussed, Bryant suggested implementing a tracking system or "exit tickets". These data points would allow the district to measure whether students feel their concerns are being addressed and if they are gaining meaningful insight from these planning sessions.
- Second, Bryant expressed significant concern over restricted entry points into arts pathways, such as orchestra and band, particularly for students who may discover their talents later in high school. She noted that with the loss of exploratory opportunities in fifth grade due to school reconfiguration, the district risks missing students who may not engage with school until they find a creative outlet. Bryant advocated for the addition of introductory classes or "intro to band" courses, even if it requires additional Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions, to serve as a culturally responsive way to maintain student attendance and engagement. She concluded by stating that keeping these opportunities available is essential for supporting students of color and underserved populations who may find their motivation through the arts.

14.1 Board Member Comments:

- Mr. Schwarzman concluded his remarks by expressing his sincere gratitude to the School Board and staff. He described his participation in the process as a "really, really fun experience" and emphasized how much he enjoyed and learned from the collaborative work on the district's initiatives.
- Mr. Meyer concluded his remarks by addressing several operational concerns, beginning with a noted increase in chronic absenteeism across the district between October and November. He suggested that

the Board evaluate the academic calendar to consider a full "fall break" during Thanksgiving week, noting that holding classes on the Monday and Tuesday prior often results in low attendance. Mr. Meyer also issued a plea for public respect toward school crossing guards following an incident where a staff member was verbally harassed and threatened by a parent. He emphasized that these employees are vital to the district's safety ecosystem and deserve cooperation as they work to protect students and families. Finally, he requested a future work session to review the use of technology, screens, and AI in the classroom. He expressed a desire to investigate whether these tools are effectively closing the achievement gap or contributing to it, while also ensuring staff are properly trained to leverage these resources.

- Mr. Morse concluded his remarks by offering a public apology regarding the manner in which he had previously provided feedback, emphasizing the importance of leading with humility and learning from personal mistakes. Reaffirming his earlier stance on the Program of Studies, he advocated for maintaining open access to band and orchestra for students in the ninth through eleventh grades, noting that new motivations can emerge later in a student's high school career that are vital for retention. He further urged the Board to begin formal conversations regarding student retention and promotion policies. Finally, Mr. Morse reiterated his strong support for standards-based grading; while acknowledging teacher concerns in the humanities, he stated he has seen it successfully implemented and offered to assist staff with the transition as a community member after his term on the Board ends.
- Ms. Burns concluded the meeting by highlighting her attendance at the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) annual convention, where she participated in several informative sessions. She noted the heavy emotional impact of a session on technology, teenagers, and mental health, which she attended with Ms. Torres, and expressed a desire to address these student struggles within the division. Additionally, she attended workshops regarding school threat assessments with the Virginia Beach Police Department, strategies to combat chronic absenteeism, and a collaborative school-city recreation center model used in Alexandria. Ms. Burns also extended special thanks to student representative Solly Schwarzman for his exceptional peer engagement and welcomed incoming representative Ginger for the following month. Finally, she offered a tribute to outgoing member Mr. Morse, praising his "quiet, gentle wisdom" and expertise while expressing a hope that newer board members could continue to lean on his experience as he transitions off the board.
- Ms. Cooper concluded her remarks by thanking student representative Solly Schwarzman for his powerful and well-articulated student perspective and offering a heartfelt tribute to outgoing member Dom Morse. Reflecting on their shared history from campaigning together four years prior, she praised his calm spirit and the impactful nature of his voice, noting her appreciation for his work both on and off the Board. Regarding district operations, Ms. Cooper echoed previous concerns about rising chronic absenteeism and requested more detailed data on the specific barriers families face. She inquired about the specific roles of social workers and case managers in this process and asked how the Board might better support these families. Additionally, she noted that while Charlottesville is "nonprofit rich," the current service and agency list appeared short; she urged the administration to tap into the city's extensive nonprofit resources to connect struggling families with services and, crucially, to ensure there is follow-through to confirm those connections are successfully made.
- Ms. Richardson expressed enthusiasm for the addition of AP African-American Studies to the Program of Studies, noting that she personally took African-American history at Charlottesville High School and credited her former teacher, Ms. Trent. She also highlighted the Oak Lawn property, recounting her childhood curiosity about the site and its "creepy" appearance before learning of its rich historical significance, including the presence of gravestones. Ms. Richardson emphasized the need for the Board to have a more in-depth discussion regarding the property's history and potential future use. She concluded by thanking the presenters for their information, wishing the community a happy holiday break, and noting the upcoming two-hour delay for school the following morning.
- Ms. Torres shared highlights from her participation in the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) annual convention, emphasizing a session on the developmental impact of technology and social media. She shared a resource, yourbrainonsocialmedia.org, and noted a researcher's striking finding that human brains are not developmentally ready for smartphone technology until age 25. Ms. Torres also attended a

General Assembly update where she learned that many previously vetoed bills are expected to resurface and pass following recent elections. She expressed optimism regarding the potential passage of a long-awaited sales tax bill, noting its significance for school funding.

- Additionally, she detailed a session presented by Roanoke County Public Schools titled "Producing Opportunity Ready Graduates," which focuses on empowering students through project-based learning and student-led conferences. This program culminates in a senior portfolio defense where students must demonstrate mastery and readiness for graduation. Ms. Torres noted how these concepts align with the priorities of outgoing board member Mr. Morse and offered to share program materials with Dr. Gurley. She concluded by expressing her gratitude to the board and wishing the community happy holidays.
- Ms. Dooley concluded her remarks by commending student representative Solly Schwarzman, noting that the decision to have fewer representatives for longer terms has paid off through deeper engagement. She shared a heartfelt farewell to Dom Morse, with whom she was elected four years prior, thanking him for his graceful leadership and wishing him well with his family. Reflecting on the recent VSBA convention, Ms. Dooley highlighted that while the Board often critiques presentations to drive improvement, the district is performing exceptionally well compared to surrounding jurisdictions. She specifically cited the positive reception to the district's presentation on Night School and Lugo-McGinness Academy, as well as successes in CATEC and PVCC partnerships, special education services, and the expansion of the early childhood center. Additionally, she praised the Human Resources department for maintaining low vacancy rates and noted that the district's collective bargaining efforts and capital improvements—such as the nearly completed middle school and Greenbrier bathroom updates—are significantly ahead of neighboring counties.

15.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley expressed deep gratitude to the staff for their work on the Program of Studies, emphasizing that it is not merely "lip service" but a vital tool to operationalize post-secondary success for every student. He reiterated his core belief that the most important day in a child's life is the day after graduation, noting that the district must ensure families and students clearly understand the specific pathways available to reach their goals. Dr. Gurley honored student representative Solly Schwarzman, stating he was proud to serve alongside him and predicted he was "bound for greatness". He also offered a personal tribute to outgoing member Dom Morse, thanking him for his graceful accountability and for "helping Black men be seen" in a powerful, positive light.

Finally, Dr. Gurley shared a personal reflection on the 119th anniversary of the founding of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., noting the significance of the date, December 4th. He specifically recognized the local Gamma Alpha Lambda chapter for its steady presence and commitment to Charlottesville City Schools through volunteering and mentoring at Lugo-McGinness Academy and Charlottesville High School. He concluded by thanking the fraternity locally and worldwide for their support and for making much of the district's work for learners possible.

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

- SRO Work Group - to review the data are being used to justify the positions; (how many threat assessments; justification for the numbers); creating one-pager for rationale and how we arrived at that number, trends for number of threat assessments;
 - Body cam clarification
 - Mechanism for staff and students to report incidents
 - Current data on how CPD is interacting within our schools; we need to be able to clearly articulate why we need them here"
 - Hallway sweeps at the high school?
- Information on how we support un-housed students? Mental health support?

17.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Dooley read the list of upcoming meetings and shared that starting January 2026 regular school board meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m.

18.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

A video of the December 4, 2025, meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/11dnJWqL9qdkObjViLhT78ix4Giuz-Sye/view?usp=drive_link

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk