



MINUTES
CHARLOTTEVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET WORK SESSION
Walker Upper Elementary School Cafeteria, 1564 Dairy Road
Thursday, January 22, 2026 (5PM)
[Video Link](#)

1.1 Call to Order: Lisa Torres, School Board Chair, called the budget work session to order at 5:00 p.m.

2.1 Roll Call of Board Members:

Board Members Present: Ms. Zyahna Bryant, Ms. Amanda Burns, Ms. Shymora Cooper, Ms. Emily Dooley, Mr. Chris Meyer, Ms. Nicole Richardson, Ms. Lisa Torres

Board Members Absent: None

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Present: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. (Superintendent), Dr. Anna Isley (Chief Academic Officer), Ms. Kim Powell (Chief Operations Officer), Ms. Maria Lewis (Director of Human Resources), Ms. Renee Hoover (Director of Finance), Mr. Pat Cuomo (Director of Technology), Ms. Carolyn Swift (Director of Assessment and Accountability), Dr. T. Denise Johnson (Supervisor of Strategic Initiatives), Ms. Beth Cheuk (Community Relations Supervisor), Ms. Julia Green (Board Deputy Clerk), and Ms. Leslie Thacker (Board Clerk).

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Absent: Ms. Rachel Rasnake (Director of Student Services)

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

Items for Discussion

4.1 New Grant (Targeted School Improvement, Virginia Department of Education): Carolyn Swift, Director of Assessment & Accountability, presented the Targeted School Improvement (TSI) Grants for information and action (without a second read). This federal funding, totaling \$135,450.00, will be distributed equally among Tall Oaks Elementary, Trailblazer Elementary, and Walker Upper Elementary to support evidence-based literacy and mathematics interventions. Based on comprehensive needs assessments, these funds will provide the professional development and instructional resources necessary to implement multi-year school support plans, improve student learning outcomes, and close identified achievement gaps through September 2026.

Ms. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the Targeted School Improvement Grant as presented. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres, voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

4.2 Presentation of the Superintendent's Recommended Changes to the FY 2027 Budget: Dr. Royal Gurley, Jr., Division Superintendent, and Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented the proposed changes to the FY 2026-2027 Budget. The presentation will address the school division's revenues, including City, Federal, and State, and key expenditures. Highlights of the expenditures include salary and benefits increases resulting from Collective Bargaining agreements and other budget requests supporting student needs.

- Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget Development Update
- Introduction and Priorities
 - Budget Priorities: The budget focuses on four pillars: Staffing, Compensation, and Retention; Student Support, Achievement, and Well-Being; Facilities, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements; and Early Childhood Education.
 - Strategic Alignment: Budget goals are aligned with the division's strategic plan to increase academic achievement, provide a culture of safety and wellness, support staff, and ensure effective operations.
- Revenue Trends and Analysis
 - Revenue Sources: Based on the FY 2026 budget, the City Appropriation provides the largest share of funding (63.1%), followed by State (19.9%), Fund Balance (7.3%), Federal (5.6%), and Local (4.2%) sources.
 - Federal and State Trends:
 - Federal revenues have been declining since peaking in 2023.
 - State revenues are projected to continue a gradual decline through 2026.
 - Local Composite Index (LCI):
 - The LCI for the 2026–2028 biennium is .7666, a decrease of .36 percent from the previous biennium.
 - Charlottesville is required to pay 76.66% of minimum educational program costs, which is significantly higher than the state average of 41.18%.
 - Enrollment (ADM) Impact:
 - Statewide Average Daily Membership (ADM) is forecasted to decrease steadily through 2028 due to post-pandemic normalization and declining birth rates.
 - Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) enrollment has stabilized at approximately 4,440 students, but future projections reflect lower birth rates.
 - State Budget Impacts: Lower state revenue collections will reduce CCS's projected state revenue by \$57,722 in FY 2027.
 - City Funding Formula: The City's guideline of 40% of new property tax revenue would provide CCS with \$1.5 million for FY 2027.
- Expenditure Details
 - Resource Allocation: 74% of the FY 2026 budget is dedicated to employee compensation, with 74.7% of personnel resources allocated to instructional staff.
 - FY 2027 Compensation Increases:
 - Licensed Personnel: 5.5% annual increase (\$2,767,329).
 - Support Professionals: 10.5% annual increase (\$1,375,015).
 - Administration: 3% increase (\$290,777).
 - Health Insurance: 2% employer increase (\$184,124).
 - Personnel Savings:
 - Walker Reconfiguration: Generated 10.0 FTE in staffing efficiencies, saving \$1,102,669.
 - Additional Savings: Includes \$1,387,811 in vacancy savings and \$179,000 from the elimination of the Walker retention bonus.
 - Non-Discretionary Contracts: Projected increases for City Maintenance (\$232,212) and Transportation (\$538,346) total \$770,558.
 - New Budget Requests (Student Improvements): A total of 2.6 new FTEs costing \$351,186 are requested, including a Bilingual Instructional Assistant and an expanded Gifted Specialist role.

- Summary and Schedule
 - Budget Change Summary:
 - Total Expenditure Increases: \$3,069,509.
 - Estimated Request from City: \$3,127,231.
 - Key Upcoming Dates:
 - February 5, 2026: Presentation of Superintendent's Budget and Public Hearing.
 - February 9, 2026: Joint Budget Work Session with City Council.
 - February 19, 2026: School Board approves proposed budget.

Questions/Discussion:

- Ms. Dooley asked about projected enrollment impacts after the reconfiguration. Dr. Gurley, Dr. Isley, and Ms. Powell responded that they are closely monitoring potential student losses at the fifth grade, particularly from families with older siblings who chose private schools, while hoping younger families will remain in the system. They confirmed that historic transition trends, including a similar loss in seventh grade, were factored into projections developed with Walpert, a statistical group. They emphasized they are scrutinizing the numbers to adjust staffing recommendations and prevent an "overcorrection" in the model's cohort survival rate, though the full impact of the dynamic shift is not yet known.
- Ms. Dooley pointed out that while a decrease in the Local Composite Index (LCI) is nominally beneficial for state funding, a larger decline in Average Daily Membership (ADM), or enrollment, ultimately resulted in a loss of state revenue. Ms. Hoover agreed, confirming that the minimal LCI drop did not help the division and that the loss of enrollment was the primary factor leading to a decrease in state funding.
- Ms. Burns asked if the new VHSL rules regarding 8th to 9th grade eligibility were factoring into enrollment, specifically for out-of-district students who would now need to attend the feeder school in 8th grade. Dr. Gurley confirmed that the rule change forces families to make choices, as an out-of-district student can no longer simply enroll in 9th grade. He shared that he met with the principal of Charlottesville Catholic School, whose families were seeking a way around the rule. Dr. Gurley stated there is no exception, and out-of-district students would need to join the division in either 6th or 8th grade. He also noted that a recommendation to exempt the rule for Junior Varsity (JV) sports is not expected to be approved.
- Dr. Gurley confirmed to Ms. Burns that the word about the VHSL rule change is successfully getting out to affected families, even those whose children attend private schools. He noted that the principal of Charlottesville Catholic School had reached out to him seeking clarification on the rule's impact on her families, indicating that they are actively informing their constituents about the need to make choices due to the new requirements.
- Mr. Meyer commented that the Board needs to consider programs or spending that could help retain families, as those additional students would bring in more revenue that is worth more than the initial spending. He appreciated Ms. Dooley for raising the issue, acknowledging that the declining Local Composite Index (LCI) and dropping enrollment will impact the overall budget numbers, especially given the relatively expensive elementary school system.
- Ms. Bryant asked if there were any positives in the LCI formula that account for students who are pulled out from middle school but return for high school, and if data is available to track this, which could positively impact the numbers. Ms. Hoover responded no, explaining that the LCI is calculated based on data from two years in arrears, making those enrollment trends irrelevant. She added that the unique aspect of the current LCI calculation is that they used the current September 30th enrollment data.
- Ms. Bryant acknowledged that while the data on students returning from middle school is irrelevant for the LCI calculation, those numbers are tracked for other purposes. She then emphasized that this data should be considered when discussing spending for programs aimed at retaining those families within the school division, a point Ms. Hoover confirmed.
- Ms. Burns commented that the reconfiguration itself is part of the solution to retaining families, who have historically left due to so many steps and reconfigurations. She acknowledged that others who

came before her could speak more intelligently on the subject, but she sees the current process as "the step," "the work." She gave "kudos to Dr. Gurley and his team" for offering many opportunities for the public to visit and "see the good work that's happening" in the building. She expressed hope that the division will continue these efforts and that "faithful families" will serve as a testament to the ongoing work.

- Ms. Dooley offered a final point on the retention discussion, noting that the families making choices to leave are typically not the high-needs students who consume the most resources and dollars from the division. She explained that the Local Composite Index (LCI) is based on the wealthy tax base of the locality—the very families who are leaving—and that the state's amount of funding is not as significant as the local contribution, which creates a dynamic of having a very wealthy tax base and a high population of students with high needs. Dr. Gurley affirmed this, explaining that resource consumption is high for in-district students who require multiple services (which the state only pays for a fraction of), and that the cost of out-of-district tuition "doesn't even equate" to the resources being consumed by these high-needs students.
- Mr. Meyer asked if the state's 2% budget for licensed personnel could be rolled into the proposed 5.5% annual increase, totaling 7.5%, and how the calculation works. Ms. Hoover responded that the state is budgeting 2%, and the division can provide anything over that 2%, with the state's 2% already included in their number. Dr. Gurley clarified that the state only provides money for Standards of Quality (SOQ) funded positions, and the division exceeds that number significantly.
- Ms. Burns requested a follow-up reminder, not at the current meeting but in a subsequent communication, to clarify the number of state Standards of Quality (SOQ) funded positions versus the number of positions the division funds "above and beyond." She suggested this information would be helpful, particularly for newer board members.
- Ms. Dooley asked for the figure for vacancy savings, expressing concern that since it is typically a one-time fund, it could impact future budgeting. Ms. Hoover responded that the vacancy savings are broken out at \$1.4 million.
- Dr. Gurley returned to the topic of vacancy savings to clarify its nature for Ms. Dooley, who was concerned it might be a one-time fund. Ms. Hoover explained that the original budget included a higher percentage for the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), but a subsequent rate decrease led to a surplus, which is being subtracted out and claimed as a savings in the FY27 budget. Ms. Hoover clarified that last year was the first time they claimed a significant amount of vacancy savings, which was due to the decoupling of the VRS hybrid rate, and the current savings are actually a lesser amount. Ms. Dooley confirmed with Ms. Hoover that the VRS reduction is resulting in a larger increase to the vacancy savings than simply the savings from unfilled positions.
- Mr. Meyer inquired about the significant difference between the current proposed budget increase and the higher projections—specifically, \$5.5 million or \$5.7 million for staff increases plus an additional \$800,000—discussed at the joint City Council meeting in December. Ms. Hoover confirmed that the requested amount was being lowered. She explained that the difference resulted from further work conducted after the December meeting, including a thorough review of the Walker reconfiguration and waiting for the Governor's budget release to determine the final Virginia Retirement System (VRS) rate. Ms. Hoover clarified that the new personnel expenses currently total \$1.9 million, indicating the requested amount was reduced by approximately \$3.6 million.
- Ms. Burns noted that the proposed 10.5% collective bargaining increase for support professionals is only a presented number and that the Board has not yet voted on or approved the contract.
- Ms. Burns asked if the budget numbers include the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions for additional full-time drivers. Ms. Hoover responded that they do not believe those positions are included in the numbers.
- Ms. Bryant expressed concern about balancing the priority of student retention—which she believes could be supported by new programs like veterinary and medical science courses—with the urgent need to address the literacy rates for Black students. She questioned whether adding positions such as literacy specialist interventionists should be prioritized, especially given the potential for budget shortfalls.
- Dr. Gurley responded by stating that the division had begun "differentiating our staffing" (which included adding reading and math specialists) the previous school year. He emphasized that the approach is not

always about adding more people, but rather "how do we ensure that the people that are in those positions have capacity and make sure that we're getting the most... out of the people that we have in those positions."

- Dr. Isley echoed this sentiment, detailing ongoing work that focuses on professional development, such as sending teachers through "letters training" (including all early childhood teachers collectively), and analyzing data. She also mentioned efforts to raise instructional rigor, including implementing novel reading for all students starting in the third grade, noting that this involves costs for books but is not solely dependent on adding more personnel.
- Ms. Dooley voiced her support for the staff restructuring, stating that Dr. Isley's sole focus on instruction will allow for greater accountability, rigor, structure, and oversight of the specialists and interventionists added in previous years. She believes this laser focus on instruction will enable the work to happen with "greater fidelity."
- Mr. Meyer asked if the current proposal was repurposing any English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher positions, given the previously observed downward trend in the ESL student population. Ms. Hoover confirmed that they are not maintaining the same staffing levels. Instead, one extra ESL teacher position that had been budgeted (budgeted three, but only needed two) in case numbers went up is being taken back and used as savings toward the vacancy savings, as they do not anticipate the numbers to increase.
- Mr. Meyer asked if further reductions in the ESL staff were expected in the following year, given the anticipated downward trend in the ESL student population. Dr. Gurley responded by confirming that one of the division's primary sources for new students has halted taking families, which is expected to continue and will "definitely impact the ESL number."
- Ms. Bryant followed up on the achievement gap, asking for data to support an upward trend in Black students' literacy and reading scores since gifted education was dispersed across regular instruction. Dr. Gurley responded that it is difficult to isolate the specific impact of the gifted program because students are receiving many different enrichments, remediations, and interventions from various sources. Ms. Cheuk added that the program's implementation year coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, making it difficult to obtain clear data. Ms. Bryant stressed that this data is important for discussing competing interests in the budget, as she would need it to feel comfortable voting for the expansion of gifted positions that are meant to tackle the achievement gap, a strategic goal. Dr. Gurley then clarified that the discussion about the gifted position is twofold: it includes a position supporting high school students and compliance/regular instructional work.
- Ms. Torres addressed the difficulty in measuring the specific literacy benefits of the dispersed gifted education program, noting that the gifted specialists' role encompasses broader enrichment, curriculum, and differentiation across all subjects. She then asked for clarification on whether the CHS counseling director and LEAP elementary teacher positions were repurposed roles being added. Ms. Hoover confirmed that they are repurposing a currently unfilled position to create the LEAP elementary teacher role, which will cost \$10,927 more than the position originally budgeted.
- Ms. Torres expressed interest in seeing a presentation of what currently unfilled or unused positions are being repurposed and rolled into the new positions being discussed in the budget. She then shifted her comment to the English Learner (EL) positions, stating her hesitation to reduce support for EL students and families, even with a decline in student numbers. She mentioned that these families have many needs beyond the classroom setting and asked for a bigger conversation before any decision to pull resources is made. Dr. Gurley clarified that the one position that was taken back was one they "didn't even have to utilize." Ms. Torres acknowledged this but stressed the need for an upfront conversation in the next year or two if declines continue, emphasizing her discomfort with pulling support due to the "lot of need" among children and families. Dr. Gurley further explained that the formula for EL teaching positions had changed last year, based on levels, and the division was already exceeding the new requirements.
- Ms. Dooley stressed the need to be careful that the division is not perceived as "pulling support" from English Language Learner (ELL) students. She emphasized that the directive is for positions to follow the need, and if the ELL student's need is down, unused positions should be repurposed to address other priorities, but she wants to ensure the public does not misconstrue this action. Ms. Torres agreed that the position was one that had not been used. However, she cautioned against a significant reduction in

positions, noting that with current immigration being halted, if it were to resume, the division could be left scrambling to fill positions and facing financial strain.

- Ms. Cooper asked if the school division feels confident they have enough support, especially in elementary schools, to handle the social-emotional issues and "big behaviors" being observed in children, and whether this is an opportunity to add more support. Dr. Gurley responded by stating that the division has exceeded the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for social-emotional support. He mentioned that at the school level, there is a social worker and/or a school mental health professional besides a school counselor. He offered to reshare a document from the previous year with the details, confirming that there is "plenty of support" at each school, with the number of staff increasing as you move up to Walker Upper Elementary.
- Ms. Bryant returned to her concern that without data to support an upward trend in Black student literacy and reading scores directly tied to the dispersed gifted education model, it is difficult to justify funding for the expansion of gifted positions, given that closing the achievement gap is a strategic priority. She questioned what positions should be prioritized for funding if the impact of gifted education cannot be pinpointed.
- Dr. Gurley explained that when the original pull-out gifted model—which was overwhelmingly exclusive to privileged students—was dismantled, no quality indicators or metrics for measuring success were put in place for the new universal model. Therefore, it is challenging to isolate gifted education's impact from the many other enrichments and interventions students receive. He agreed they could provide qualitative data on the rigor and exposure students are getting.
- Dr. Gurley clarified that the request for the division gifted specialist position (an increase of \$59,000) is not adding anything new to the program; it is consolidating lead work, compliance, and instructional support that is currently being done by multiple staff members (including Dr. Isley and other teachers) into one person, who will still maintain teaching responsibilities.
- Dr. Isley added that consolidating the gifted leadership work into a single role, which also fills an existing high school teaching position, would improve focus and compliance. She presented data showing a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in AP classes, those who took AP tests, and those who scored a three or higher (from 2020/2021 to 2024). She also provided examples of positive impacts, such as teacher survey data on collaboration with gifted resource teachers and a teacher using gifted professional learning to infuse "teaching up" strategies and rigor into the Tier 1 novel study for all fourth graders. She acknowledged that these results cannot be solely attributed to the gifted program but have happened alongside the new model's work.
- Mr. Meyer inquired whether the reading and math specialist positions approved last year were included in the current budget's vacancy savings. Dr. Gurley clarified that those positions are not included, stating that the repurposed positions are non-teaching roles, such as coordinators, and do not directly touch children.
- Ms. Bryant returned to the achievement gap discussion, pressing for clarification on budget priorities. She asked if the division should prioritize funding a veterinary/medical science teacher, additional money for gifted education, or more money for literacy specialists, given the ongoing struggle with Black students' reading proficiency and the lack of data to show a direct link between the dispersed gifted education model and an upward trend in Black student achievement.
- Dr. Gurley acknowledged her question and explained that the division's current focus is less on adding new staff and more on ensuring existing personnel, like reading and math specialists, have the necessary capacity and resources.
- Ms. Bryant concluded by emphasizing that, for the purpose of the budget, if new positions aren't needed, additional money should be allocated to instructional tools. She requested that specific data points—such as the number of Black students taking AP tests and receiving college credit, and achievement changes since the universal gifted model was implemented—be provided for future budget discussions.
- Mr. Meyer inquired about where additional funds were allocated in the budget for after-school activities, athletics (coaches, clubs), and more field trips, framing them as "high-profile but low-cost things" necessary to attract and retain middle school students. Dr. Gurley responded that many of those things are already budgeted for, stating that existing funds within the school division are sufficient for many

clubs and intramurals whose costs are minimal. Regarding field trips, Dr. Gurley noted that the division provides a document of standard field trip experiences linked directly to curriculum standards, which every student has access to. He pushed back on requests for more field trips, stressing the need to balance time outside the classroom with ensuring vulnerable, struggling learners receive the essential support they need, as not all proposed trips have a direct correlation with classroom learning. Mr. Meyer acknowledged Dr. Gurley's points, agreeing that field trips should be "linked to some kind of educational result," but reiterated his hope that "adequate resources" are available to provide those activities, including those that could happen outside of the regular school day.

- Ms. Burns emphasized that while the discussion focused on smaller budget numbers like \$60,000 for gifted education and \$351,000 for repurposed positions, the "bulk of this ask" is the significant cost of the collective bargaining increases for support professionals (10.5% annual increase) and licensed personnel (5.5% annual increase). She stressed that these increases are necessary to retain and attract talented staff and represent a substantial investment from which the division needs to see a return. She also reminded the Board that the proposed 10.5% increase for support professionals is a presented number and has not yet been voted on or approved as a contract.
- Ms. Bryant emphasized the need to retain staff and requested data on the demographics of students leaving for middle school, noting an increasingly diversifying trend, with more Black students leaving for private schools like Tandem. She questioned the reasons for this, asking if it's due to standardized testing or a lack of enriching opportunities, especially with federal cuts to programs like TRIO and Project Discovery, which she believes are part of the achievement gap issue. She noted that community partners are often stepping in to provide the wraparound services that are typically found in elementary and middle school but not high school, and that this might be contributing to students seeking private schools. She also connected Mr. Meyer's point about field trips and other opportunities to the achievement gap for Black students, stating, "I don't know how we balance all of these things." She requested more data for a better conversation in the future, particularly to understand why more Black students are leaving to tour private schools during the school day. Dr. Gurley interjected to state that the division does not conduct exit surveys when people leave their jobs.
- Ms. Torres initiated a discussion on the city funding formula, noting that based on the formula, the city appropriation would be \$1.5 million. Mr. Meyer countered that the formula is not something the Board should solely follow, as it only captures a portion of the city's tax increase. Ms. Torres also recalled Mr. Sanders at a joint meeting mentioning \$1 to \$2 million that he felt was "freed up" and was curious if that amount would hold. Dr. Gurley responded that they would have to come back to the table and would likely need to revise the budget if something in the current proposal does not go through.
- Ms. Torres concluded by acknowledging the emphasis on student outcomes and Dr. Gurley's presentation of necessary or realigned positions that impact student outcomes. She questioned if something was still missing, such as other types of things (not curriculum changes) that would make a difference, noting that such ideas often "never make it to this slide," and acknowledged that the Board is in a difficult spot moving forward.
- Dr. Gurley said the current budget presentation will likely change before the joint work session on February 9, 2026, as more information is expected from the City. He noted that the presentation has already changed since the December joint meeting and expressed hope for a more positive outlook, though the current one does not reflect that yet.

4.3 2026 School Board Member Committee Assignments: In alignment with School Board Policies BCE and BCF, Ms. Burns and Ms. Torres conducted a thorough review of committee structures to ensure all recommended groups remain directly connected to school division operations. These proposed assignments were grounded in historical context and local bylaws. Ms. Torres opened the discussion on the 2026 School Board Member Committee Assignments, explaining that with one member stepping down (Mr. Morse), Ms. Bryant's name would typically be added to those spots. She emphasized that the current time is for discussion, allowing board members to address any revisions (such as adding a second person to some committees) or to switch assignments if they are unhappy or cannot attend, noting the importance of representing the division. Ms. Torres also acknowledged Ms. Dooley's request to re-evaluate the committees and their purpose, confirming that she and Ms. Burns had started looking into the historical context and other attendees, such as a board member from Albemarle.

Questions/Discussion:

- Ms. Dooley inquired if the Albemarle County School Board member on a particular group had ever attended a meeting. Ms. Torres responded by encouraging board members to review the updated draft committee assignments and discuss if they want to be on those committees, noting that the assignments are a draft that needs to be finalized and approved, possibly via a consent agenda item, with an option for changes mid-year. Ms. Burns then suggested going through the draft committee assignments one by one for efficiency, starting with the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) committee, and Mr. Meyer and Ms. Torres were confirmed as members. Mr. Meyer confirmed he wished to remain on the CIP committee, which he noted was his "passion."
- Ms. Cooper stated that she had questions regarding the draft committee assignments because she noticed shifts, including being taken off, added back on, and shifted to a new committee. Her main concern was about the process of how these changes were made and whether the Chair or Vice Chair had conversations with the affected board members beforehand to confirm they were "okay with the move or the shift." She explicitly asked about the process and why the changes came about without prior conversations with the actual board members.
- Ms. Torres responded to Ms. Cooper's concern about the process of committee assignment changes by noting that some shifts began before she and Ms. Burns were in their current roles, so she couldn't speak to their initiation. Ms. Dooley explained that many committees were removed because they did not align with the school board policy for committee participation, which was a decision discussed with Ms. Burns and Dr. Gurley. She stated they attempted to reassign members based on what they knew of people's schedules, ability to make meetings, and expressed interest, but admitted there were no "extensive conversations," only a "very casual" reach-out about one new assignment. Ms. Dooley also noted that she is personally fine with her own committee assignments, but she would have a difficult time voting to approve the current draft with two unspecified committees still on the list.
- Mr. Meyer spoke about the Scholarship Program committee, noting that a city councilor is a member because the city provided the original seed money for the endowment, which he does not believe the school division contributed to. He explained that the school board's purpose on the committee is to ensure collaboration in the selection of students, most of whom are from Charlottesville High School (CHS). He mentioned the committee is currently in a transition phase and questioned whether two board members were necessary. He also agreed with Ms. Dooley's view of it being "a kind of a nonprofit" and mentioned his personal involvement on the joint PTO committee, which serves a similar function of providing funding to students.
- Ms. Bryant commented that a school board member should be on the Scholarship Program committee if that has been the historical practice. She noted that division students receive money through the program and that she would like the board to be represented at the table, especially since Albemarle County students are also eligible for the scholarships, suggesting there should be a balance. She concluded by stating her desire to be a part of the committee.
- Ms. Cooper clarified her involvement with the PEF (Public Education Fund) committee, stating that she serves on their board in a personal capacity outside of the School Board and that the assignment therefore doesn't strictly need to be an official committee. However, she was concerned about the process, noting that her name was added, removed, and then added back to the committee in the draft, and asked for the context behind the shift. Ms. Torres inquired about other attendees, and the discussion clarified that a staff person (Jessica Brantley) from City Schools is also at the table.
- Ms. Torres asked if there were any remaining concerns or items that board members would like to discuss regarding the list of committee assignments. Mr. Meyer then directed a comment to Ms. Burns about the VSBA delegate alternate role, complimenting her performance as alternate last year.
- Ms. Torres concluded the committee assignment discussion by encouraging members to reach out to each other to discuss potential swaps if they had concerns. She stressed that if a member cannot make a meeting, they should inform the clerk so a swap can be arranged. Mr. Burns confirmed that she and Mr. Meyer had already swapped an assignment (VSBA Delegate Alternate).

5.1 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Shannon Gillikin, CEA President and Jackson-Via Teacher, began by questioning two points: why the increase in the transportation budget due to collective bargaining was not anticipated, given the ATU contract has been public since 2024, and she voiced concern about splitting the current bilingual Instructional Assistant (IIA) between two schools, citing the intense, community-based nature of the work and the high English Learner (EL) numbers at both schools. She then reframed the budget conversation around the support professionals who "run our schools every day," arguing that the collective bargaining increase is not a reward but a necessary step to pay them a "just and fair wage." She said support professionals are historically underpaid and undervalued, with almost half working an additional 16 to 20 hours a week or having to live 45 minutes away due to the low salary, which hinders them from being a part of the school community. She urged the Board to remember that these are "people, not just numbers," who deserve a living wage.

6.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Torres read the list of upcoming meetings.

7.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk