



MINUTES
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS
Charlottesville High School Media Center, 1400 Melbourne Road
Thursday, February 19, 2026 (5:00 PM)
[Video Link](#)

1.1 Call to Order: Ms. Amanda Burns, School Board Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1.2 Remote Participation by a School Board Member (Lisa Torres): Ms. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dooley, to approve Ms. Torres' remote participation due to personal travel. Ms. Torres attended the meeting via Zoom from a relative's residence in Palm Springs, CA. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. The motion carried.

2.1 Moment of Silence: Before observing the moment of silence, Ms. Burns honored the memory of Marvin Townsend, Sr. She noted that Mr. Townsend was a member of the Charlottesville 12, a group of courageous students who integrated the public schools in 1959. As one of the first Black students to attend previously all-white schools in Charlottesville City Schools, he demonstrated extraordinary strength, dignity, and perseverance, helping to shape a more just and equitable path for generations of students who followed. Ms. Burns concluded by asking the Board to join in honoring his life, legacy, and lasting impact.

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

4.1 Roll Call of Board Members: Roll call was conducted to confirm attendance.

School Board Members Present: Ms. Zyahna Bryant, Ms. Amanda Burns, Ms. Shymora Cooper, Ms. Emily Dooley, Ms. Nicole Richardson, and Ms. Lisa Torres

School Board Members Absent: Mr. Chris Meyer

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. Rachel Rasnake (Director of Student Services), Ms. Carolyn Swift (Director of Assessment and Accountability), Dr. T. Denise Johnson (Supervisor of Strategic Initiatives), Ms. Amanda Korman Simalchik (Community Relations Supervisor), Ms. Julia Green (Board Deputy Clerk), and Ms. Leslie Thacker (Board Clerk).

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Absent: None

5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was carried. Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays.

6.1 Comments from Students: There were none.

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

6.3 Public Comment 2026-2027 Operating Budget: There were none.

7.1 Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) Collective Bargaining (Support Professionals) Contract Update:

Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, announced the successful ratification of the Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Support Professionals Unit following a voting period that concluded on February 18, 2026. This agreement, the result of months of collaboration, features a 10.5% salary increase, supplements for educational credits, and guaranteed paid breaks and duty-free lunches. Having been signed by chief negotiators and ratified by the unit, the tentative agreement was presented to the School Board for review and is scheduled for a formal vote during the March 5, 2026, meeting.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Bryant thanked the team for their work and the Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) for ratifying the contract, expressing her excitement that the support staff will be receiving the necessary support. She acknowledged that it was a long journey to ratification and hoped that the Board could continue to work with the CEA moving forward to meet the needs of all staff.
- Ms. Cooper thanked Ms. Lewis and her team, and Dr. Gurley, for their work in getting the Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) contract ratified. She expressed happiness that the collective body was able to support the support staff. Ms. Cooper acknowledged that the collective bargaining process was new for many and, despite some challenging learning moments, she appreciated that everyone could come together for the common good.
- Ms. Dooley expressed gratitude that the Board would be able to approve a budget that includes a 10.5% raise for each of the next three years for support professionals, resulting in a salary increase of over 31% through the length of the contract. She said ratification of the tentative agreement by the Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) was the "right outcome" and that support staff deserved the raise. Ms. Dooley mentioned her personal stake in the process, noting that she and Ms. Torres helped draft Charlottesville's initial collective bargaining resolution, one of the first in the Commonwealth, because they believe in giving workers a genuine voice. However, Ms. Dooley characterized the path to the outcome as a "betrayal" of that purpose, noting that after a tentative agreement was reached on October 20th, months passed, and in January, the CEA attempted to reopen terms. By February 6th, the Board learned the agreement would not be submitted for ratification in time for the current budget vote. She stressed that collective bargaining only works when both parties honor the process and that the unnecessary delay was painful for support staff and the community. Going forward, Ms. Dooley stated the Board will pursue explicit timelines in the resolution to prevent recurrence and hold itself accountable, hoping all sides will do the same. She concluded by congratulating all parties and stating the Board is eager to secure funding.
- Ms. Torres began by echoing the comments of the Board, specifically thanking Ms. Dooley for her recap of the entire process, including the work they did together to reach the current point. She expressed gratitude that the School Board and school division were able to move forward with the superintendent's recommended budget, and thanked everyone for their work.
- Ms. Burns reaffirmed the Board's commitment to the collective bargaining process, noting that they voted to authorize it and remain dedicated to making it work in Charlottesville. She stressed that supporting collective bargaining also means honoring the full process, upholding fiscal oversight, and fulfilling their responsibility as elected stewards of public funds. Recognizing that the division was one of the first in the Commonwealth to engage in this space, she stated that learning comes with growth, and while they may not get every step right, their decisions are grounded in the shared goal of serving students while maintaining the school division's fiscal health. Now that the contract has been ratified, the Board is prepared to move forward in alignment with both the process and their responsibility, remaining committed to transparency, fairness, and doing the work thoughtfully and responsibly. She concluded by thanking Ms. Lewis and her collective bargaining team, Dr. Gurley, and the Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) for their feedback, consideration, and engagement, and expressed hope that the CEA would remain engaged in advocacy efforts beyond collective bargaining.

8.1 Approval of 2026-2027 Operating Budget: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr., Superintendent, presented the FY 2027 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget at the February 5, 2026 School Board meeting, which included a 5.5% increase for licensed personnel and a 10.5% increase for school support professionals. Since that presentation, the budget had been revised to include four additional Bilingual Instructional Assistant positions serving Tall Oaks Elementary, Jackson-Via Elementary, Charlottesville Middle School, and Charlottesville High School.

The FY 2027 budget included a request of \$2,569,071 from the City to fully fund and balance the budget.

The total FY 2027 Proposed Budget was \$106,759,679 for the General (Operating) Fund and \$22,617,802 for Special Revenue Funds, for an overall budget of \$129,377,481. This represented an increase of \$4,076,114, or 3.15%, over the FY 2026 Adopted Budget.

The FY 2026 - 2027 Proposed Budget included:

- **Budget Priorities**
 - Staffing, Compensation, and Retention
 - Student Support, Achievement, and Well-Being
 - Facilities, Maintenance, and Capital Improvements
 - Early Childhood Education
- **Strategic Alignment:** The budget is designed to increase academic achievement, provide a culture of safety and wellness, support staff (including recruiting teachers of color), and ensure efficient operations.

FY 2027 Compensation Increases		
Collective Bargaining - Licensed Personnel	Annual 5.5% salary & benefits increase (1.5% step + 4% raise)	2,767,329
Collective Bargaining - Support Professionals	Annual 10.5% salary & benefits increase (1.5% step + 9% raise)	**1,058,918
Administration	3% salary & benefits increase (1.5% step + 1.5% raise)	290,777
Health Insurance	2% employer increase	184,124
Savings	Reconfiguration and vacancy savings	(2,669,480)
	Total Increase in Personnel Cost	\$ 1,631,668
<p>** Updated since the February 9, 2026, Joint School Board and City Council presentation. This amount decreased by \$316,096 following reconciliation of data and validation of figures related to the School Support Professionals’ tentative agreement.</p>		

Non Discretionary: City Maintenance & Transportation Contracts		
Maintenance	4.4% increase due to personnel cost	\$ 232,212
Transportation	5.19% Increase due to personnel cost related to collective bargaining	**130,635
	Total Increase in City Contracts	\$ 362,847
<p>** Updated since the February 9, 2026 Joint School Board and City Council presentation. This amount decreased by \$107,711 based on revised figures from the City reflecting reduced fringe benefit rates</p>		

Budget Requests		
Positions	FTE	Cost
CHS Health & Medical Sciences Teacher	.5	\$ 55,644
CHS Agricultural Science Teacher	.5	55,644
CHS/Lead Gifted Teacher (Specialist)	.6	55,017
***Bilingual Instructional Assistants	4.0	226,197
Director of Facilities Operations	**	48,242
Director of Organization Support	**	40,751
CHS School Counseling Director	**	24,412
LEAP Elementary Teacher	**	10,927
Total Budget Requests for Student Improvement	5.6	\$ 516,834
<p>** Updated since the February 5, 2026 School Board presentation. Increases the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) Bilingual Instructional Assistants as directed by the School Board. These positions are currently grant-funded through September 30, 2026; this request transitions them to permanent positions.</p> <p>*** Positions without FTEs reflect repurposed roles aligned to student needs and Safety & Security & Facilities enhancements.</p>		

Summary of FY 27 Budget Changes	
State revenue loss	\$ <u>- 57,722</u>
Expenditures	
Compensation	1,631,668
Non-Discretionary City Contracts	362,847
Students Needs/Improvements	516,834
Total Expenditure Increases	\$ <u>2,511,349</u>
Request from City	\$ 2,569,071

Funds	FY 2025-26 Budget	Proposed FY 2026-27 Budget	Amount Change from 2026 to 2027 Budget	Percentage Change from 2026 to 2027 Budget
General (Operating)	\$ 102,845,637	\$ 106,759,679	\$ 3,914,042	3.03%

Special Revenue	22,455,730	22,617,802	162,072	0.12%
Total Funds	\$ 125,301,367	\$ 129,377,481	\$ 4,076,114	3.15%

- **Budget Calendar**

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley updated the board on the recent Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP) meeting she attended with Dr. Gurley and Ms. Rasnik. PREP provides services not offered by the division, such as adaptive PE and vision services, and manages the Ivy Creek School, where CCS has 12 slots. The program has recently undergone significant changes, including Albemarle County withdrawing from the Ivy Creek portion two years ago, which resulted in the loss of 25 seats and shared costs for the remaining divisions, partly subsidized by PREP's fund balance. Additionally, PREP had to relocate to a new space in Albemarle County with a much higher lease. These factors have contributed to the first read of the PREP budget showing a cost increase of almost \$250,000 to CCS, which Ms. Dooley stated it would lead to further conversations.
- Dr. Gurley said Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) has shared its concerns with the PREP director about the unexpected cost increase, noting that it was not budgeted and has significant implications. While some other localities did not see as large of an increase, he emphasized that even a \$25,000 increase is substantial for smaller school divisions. Dr. Gurley expressed uncertainty about the path forward, affirming CCS's desire to remain a good partner to the PREP and Ivy Creek programs, but stressing that the current cost is too significant. He concluded that the conversation about such a large planned increase should have happened much earlier.

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to approve the FY 2027 Budget as presented, including an increased City appropriation request of \$2,569,071. This request supports the collective bargaining agreements and addresses student needs within the base budget, resulting in a total proposed budget of \$129,377,481. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was carried. Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays.

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

10.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Bryant thanked Dr. Gurley for his work on the budget they were able to approve that evening. She also expressed gratitude for Ms. Burns' earlier recognition of Marvin Townsend, Sr., who is her uncle. Ms. Bryant stated she is grateful for the legacy he left and hopes that students at Trailblazer and all elementary schools learn about that important history, as it is a significant part of the division's story. She concluded by hoping the division continues to move forward as an equitable school division that honors the legacy, history, and full beings of all students and families in the community.
- Ms. Dooley's final comment served as a reminder to the community to read the ParentSquare alert and newsletter. She commended the family services team for expanding support, specifically highlighting the continued evolution of the take-home meal option for students observing Ramadan. She urged people to use the included links to register for the service.
- Ms. Burns reinforced Ms. Bryant's comments regarding history and legacy, specifically recognizing the Trailblazer students who walked to the Rotunda to view the Declaration of Independence. She emphasized that this was a unique, Charlottesville-rich experience that not every student gets to have. Ms. Burns also encouraged the community to stay engaged and continue watching ParentSquare, describing it as the primary source of information for the many wonderful experiences students and staff are having throughout the division.

11.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley thanked the board for passing the budget and expressed his appreciation for all staff, emphasizing that every person and their work in the school division matters. He shared his excitement about being part of the Charlottesville City Schools community, noting its continued evolution and provision of more services for students, families, and staff. He concluded by announcing that "Royal recognition" is coming next week.

12.1 Upcoming Meetings: Ms. Burns read the list of upcoming meetings.

13.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:24 pm.

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk