



MINUTES
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 5, 2026 (6:00 PM)
Booker T. Reaves Media Center, Charlottesville High School
[Video Link](#)

A Closed Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., in the Division Annex Exceptional Education Conference Room, 1400 Melbourne Road, Charlottesville, VA.

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

Board Members Absent: None

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Present: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. (Superintendent) and Maria Lewis (Director of Human Resources)

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Absent: None

Call the Closed Session to Order: Lisa Torres, School Board Chair, called the closed session meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

Remote Participation by School Board Member (Closed Session): at 5:06 p.m., Ms. Torres made a motion to allow Ms. Dooley to join the closed session remotely (via Zoom) due to personal travel from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Remote Participation by School Board Member (Closed Session): At 5:06 p.m., Ms. Torres made a motion to allow Ms. Richardson to join the school board remotely (via Zoom) due to personal illness from a private residence in Charlottesville, VA. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Remote Participation by School Board Member (Closed Session): At 5:06 p.m., Ms. Torres made a motion to allow Ms. Bryant to join the school board remotely (via Zoom) due to personal work travel from a hotel room in New York City, NY. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

1.1 Closed Meeting: At 5:08 p.m., Ms. Burns made 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. Cooper seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

1.2 Closed Meeting Certification: At 5:39 p.m., Ms. Burns made a motion that the board certify by recorded vote that, to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Action: None

The board recessed from 5:39 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

1.3 Call to Order: The School Board Chair called the public meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1.4 Remote Participation by School Board Member: Ms. Burns made a motion to allow Ms. Dooley to join the school board meeting remotely (Zoom) due to personal travel from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

1.5 Remote Participation by School Board Member: Ms. Burns made a motion to allow Ms. Richardson to join the school board meeting remotely (Zoom) due to personal illness from a private residence in Charlottesville, VA. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays

1.6 Remote Participation by School Board Member: Ms. Torres made a motion to allow Ms. Bryant to join the school board meeting remotely (Zoom) due to personal work travel from a hotel room in New York City. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

2.1 Moment of Silence: Ms. Torres, Board Chair, asked all those present to observe a moment of silence.

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

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

Board Members Present: Ms. Zyahna Bryant (Zoom), Ms. Amanda Burns, Ms. Shymora Cooper, Ms. Emily Dooley (Zoom), Mr. Chris Meyer, Ms. Nicole Richardson (Zoom), Ms. Lisa Torres, and Ginger Craghead-Way (Student Representative)

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. Rachel Rasnake (Director of Student Services), 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: None

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

Student and Staff Recognitions

6.1 Virginia High School League (VHSL) Hall of Fame: Andy Jones, Director of Student Activities, recognized Coach Garwin DeBerry, a 2026 inductee into the Virginia High School League Hall of Fame. DeBerry, a Charlottesville native, was prevented from playing football at Lane High School due to his race transferring to Burley High School. He returned to Charlottesville High School in 1973-74 as a teacher and assistant coach, becoming the first African American head football coach in the area in 1980. Over his 35-year career, his teams won six district titles and

reached the state semifinals. He received numerous accolades, including six selections as District Coach of the Year, and the competition field at CHS was named in his honor.

6.2 Social Workers Month: Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, recognized Charlottesville City Schools Social Workers for the exceptional contributions they made to enhance the well-being of our students, families, and community.

7.1 Comments from Students:

- There were none.

7.2 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Laura Goldblatt, prospective parent and former educator, addressed the Board to request a re-vote on School Resource Officers (SROs) and urged a "no" vote. Drawing on her experience teaching in a high-poverty district in Mississippi, she described how policing students for minor infractions created a "school-to-prison pipeline," fractured student-teacher trust, and failed to make schools safer. She advocated for investing in pedagogical resources, mental health, and nutrition rather than outsourcing discipline to the police.
- Ian Mullins, parent and educator, addressed the Board to express solidarity with the teachers' union and oppose the presence of SROs or ICE in schools. He voiced significant concerns regarding immigration enforcement, fearing that police presence makes vulnerable students targets for deportation. He argued for "care over policing," suggesting that resources be shifted toward mental health and maintaining schools as safe havens.
- Laura Amone, parent of a former Jackson-Via student, addressed the Board to share a personal account of her second-grade son being interviewed by police for a verbal outburst related to his disability. She argued that the police presence terrified her child rather than providing safety and urged the Board to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that prioritizes parental notification and alternative solutions over law enforcement intervention.
- Alix Heintzman, parent, addressed the Board to criticize the lack of transparency and community involvement in the SRO decision-making process. He highlighted the disparity between the \$800,000 cost for two officers and the district's inability to fund promised teacher raises. He asserted that the community spoke through the recent election by voting for anti-SRO candidates and urged the Board to reflect that will.
- Jenn Horne, a Charlottesville High School Teacher and parent, addressed the Board to express concern over the marginalization of the teaching profession. She argued that teachers are being micromanaged by administrators who prioritize "data mining" and spreadsheets over classroom experience. She warned that the district is "bleeding great teachers" because their voices are excluded from curriculum and budgetary decisions.
- Peter Davis, urban farming teacher at Charlottesville High School and union representative, addressed the Board to describe the exhaustion and burnout felt by staff who feel they must "plead, argue, and yell" to be heard. He criticized a system that removes the "soul" of teaching by treating educators as data collectors for administrators who have not been in a classroom for years.
- Karen Little, parent, addressed the Board to encourage "curiosity" regarding data that shows restorative practices are already working to reduce law enforcement referrals. She gave an emotional plea for the Board to "try softer," arguing that human relationships and literacy investments are better responses to a troubled world than increased surveillance and guns.
- Lena Seville, community member and task force appointee, addressed the Board to discuss the documented patterns of racial bias in the juvenile justice system. She warned that introducing SROs would inevitably lead to "accidental or unconscious racism" that harms Black and brown students, regardless of intent.
- Mimi Fitzpatrick, parent and former educator, addressed the Board to highlight the contradiction of funding police while teachers and transportation workers struggle financially. She criticized the Board for

holding the original SRO vote without it being on the agenda and urged the new Board members to use their mandates to reverse the decision.

- Michael Salvatierra, Trailblazer Elementary Teacher and CEA Vice President, addressed the Board to demand a public apology for a "harmful" and "misrepresentative" email sent to staff on February 6. He characterized the SRO vote as a breach of trust and urged the administration to admit its mistakes to begin the process of repairing morale.
- Alice Dontanville, parent, addressed the Board to state that she did not find SROs effective when they were previously in elementary schools. She emphasized her concerns regarding equity, student safety, and the lack of protections against ICE enforcement.
- Nick Stiner, parent, addressed the Board to label the administration's recent communications as "petty and spiteful." He argued that the SRO program is an "expensive but easy" way for the Board to avoid the hard work of creative, data-driven safety solutions, ultimately leaving students to pay for adult failures.
- Nikuyah Walker, community member, addressed the Board via remote testimony to compare the "police state" mindset of SROs to broader systemic oppression. She argued that the Board's decision primarily targets Black children and suggested that if police must be involved, they should remain outside the school buildings unless a specific emergency occurs. She further noted that while staff and teachers are fighting for pay increases, the city is simultaneously proposing tax increases and reducing affordable housing, making the high cost of policing an even greater burden on the community.

8.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report: Ginger Craghead-Way, the Student Representative, thanked the teachers, staff, and administrators for their hard work during the third quarter, especially through the snow week, and then raised a major concern regarding grade access. She explained that students can only view their grades on PowerSchool, but the platform is often not correctly updated, making it difficult to know their academic standing. She urged both the Board and Charlottesville High School (CHS) administration to address this issue for next year's policies. Finally, she congratulated all CHS winter sport athletes for a great season, acknowledging their skill, teamwork, and commitment, which help build a strong CHS community.

Ms. Burns brought the student representative's concern about accessing grades to Dr. Gurley and his team, emphasizing the need to understand and address the frequently mentioned issue. Dr. Anna Isley, Chief Academic Officer, acknowledged the importance of timely grade visibility and sought clarification, to which Ms. Craghead-Way confirmed the concern covered both grades not being updated promptly and the final grade being inaccessible at the end of the quarter. Dr. Isley responded by stating the expectation for grades to be updated within a couple of weeks of an assignment being due, advising students to alert administrators for an audit if this doesn't happen. Regarding the end of the quarter, she explained that the final grade feature is intentionally turned off while teachers finalize grades and administrators conduct reviews, but noted that students can still view individual assignment scores. Dr. Isley affirmed that the administration supports maintaining PowerSchool as the single, consistent platform for grades and is actively exploring ways to manage the stress caused by this transition period, inviting students to email her and Dr. Gurley with continued feedback.

9.1-10 Adoption of Consent Agenda: The following items were included in the consent agenda: Personnel Recommendations, [Minutes - December 18, 2025 School Board/City Council Joint Budget Work Session](#), [Minutes - January 8, 2026 School Board Organizational Meeting](#), [Minutes - January 22, 2026 School Board Budget Work Session](#), [Minutes - January 24, 2026 School Board Advance \(Board Development\)](#), [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#), [2026 Virginia School Boards Association Business Honor Roll \(Trend Salon\)](#), [2026 Virginia School Boards Association Business Honor Roll \(Black Bear Composting\)](#), and [2026 Virginia School Boards Association Business Honor Roll \(Flow Automotive\)](#).

Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the adoption of the consent agenda. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

10.0 Items Pulled From Consent Agenda: None

Action Items

11.1 Action - Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) Collective Bargaining (Support Professionals) Contract:

Following the status update provided by Maria Lewis, Director of Human Resources, on February 19, 2026, announcing the successful ratification by the Support Professionals Unit, the final Charlottesville Education Association (CEA) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for Support Professionals was presented to the School Board for formal action and approval.

Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, to approve the school support professionals' collective bargaining agreement negotiated with Charlottesville Education Association as provided by the superintendent and ratified by CEA and authorize the chair to sign it on our behalf. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley and Ms. Bryant expressed appreciation for reaching this point of the process.
- Mr. Meyer stated he was glad the Board had reached the point of approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for School Support Professionals, stressing the importance of compensating staff and thanking the staff and union leadership for their hard work in the difficult negotiation process. He expressed concern that this effort could be nullified if the state centralizes the union decision-making process and confessed that he believed the Board had received "really bad legal advice" regarding an earlier email, leading to a communication he regretted and felt was neither productive nor constructive. He concluded by hoping they could build off the experience, possibly imagining a different, less bureaucratic system for future negotiations, and expressed confidence that everyone acted in good faith and learned from the process, as he looks forward to implementing the CBA to better compensate staff.
- Ms. Burns expressed her pleasure that the Board could move forward and compensate the Support Professionals, whom she considers the "backbones of our school district." She expressed hope for stability at the state level and for collaboratively forging a new path, depending on future state agreements. Ms. Burns committed to continuing to be in the school buildings and meeting with children and teachers, intending to foster relationship-building and restore these relationships to get back to a strong working position.
- Ms. Cooper seconded this sentiment, expressing her excitement that they were finally able to sign the agreement and affirming her long-standing support for the amazing work performed by the support staff in the school system.
- Ms. Torres also expressed her approval, stating that she has long been a proponent of this agreement and looked forward to signing the document, inviting Ms. Gillikin to join her at the podium for the signing.

Items for Discussion

12.1 2026-2027 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Local Plan: Dr. Stacey Heltz, Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center (CATEC) Director, presented the 2026-2027 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Local Plan for Board information. The Board was asked to take action on the CTE Plan on March 31, 2026. The accompanying attachment provided a comprehensive overview of the Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) CTE program for the 2025-2027 cycles. Key highlights included an analysis of historical enrollment data for grades 7-12, which projected a significant increase to over 1,400 students by the 2025-2026 school year. The report detailed industry credentialing success, noting that students earned 382 total credentials, including state licensures and workplace readiness certifications. Budget priorities for the cycle included an estimated allocation of \$109,556.73, which focused on equipment modernization, GO TEC services, and professional development. Furthermore, the plan outlined strategic goals for expanding opportunities in Agriculture, Health and Medical Sciences, and Technology across both CMS and CHS campuses.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Richardson thanked Dr. Heltz for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Local Plan, expressing her appreciation for how the programs give students hands-on skills. She specifically noted that building relationships with local businesses is beneficial as it helps prepare students for the real world.
- Ms. Torres asked Dr. Heltz about the student organizations mentioned in the CTE Local Plan, inquiring what they looked like. Dr. Heltz explained that these included groups such as TSA (aka Best All Around Club of Nerds or "BACON"), HOSA (for health occupations), and SkillsUSA (for skilled trades like cosmetology and building trades). Dr. Heltz noted that while these organizations are required for CTE programs, they are not typically funded, relying heavily on fundraising, though students are sent to competitions like the state fair and regional competitions to showcase their skills and earn awards. Ms. Torres expressed appreciation for CATEC's social media presence and asked Dr. Heltz to inform the Board if there was anything they could do to support these organizations. Dr. Heltz affirmed the need for support, reiterating that the clubs are required but unfunded, and while local competitions can sometimes be covered, funds cannot be used for regionals or states, including most Perkins funds.

12.2 ADA Web Compliance: Pat Cuomo, Director of Technology, and Amanda Simalchik, Supervisor of Community Relations, presented an update on ADA Web Compliance to provide the Board with a comprehensive overview of the division's progress in meeting updated regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which go into effect for CCS in 2027.

The accompanying presentation detailed the new technical standards requiring districts to adopt Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA for all digital content, including websites, mobile apps, and learning management systems. Key requirements included remediating electronic documents to be machine-readable, providing synchronized captions and audio descriptions for media, and ensuring vendor products meet accessibility standards before procurement. The report highlighted that while large districts must comply by April 2026, CCS faces a final compliance deadline of April 24, 2027. Completed work included the 2023 migration of the division website to Smart Sites, which has built-in accessibility guardrails, and the long-term implementation of the Read&Write student Chromebook extension. Ongoing efforts focused on staff education, evaluating outside ADA consultants, and converting existing digital documents to meet the new standards.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Torres followed up on the ADA Web Compliance discussion by asking Ms. Simalchik about the costs and funding for the consultant, to which Ms. Simalchik replied that they anticipate sorting out the funding during the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Ms. Torres then asked how much lead time large school divisions had to start working on the compliance effort. Ms. Simalchik estimated that larger divisions had a couple of years but suggested that the mandate may have come as a surprise to some, with a broader level of awareness only now hitting. Mr. Cuomo added that while some of the bigger school divisions were well-prepared, the first deadline created scrambling for many who were past a budget cycle, making it expensive to onboard programs like "Read&Write." He stated that larger divisions were gracious enough to warn Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) to watch and be ready, giving them 13 or 14 months of lead time, during which CCS became aware and began making updates to the website. Mr. Cuomo concluded that the compliance effort is a very big lift, despite being based on a small statement, given the large volume of digital media that must be made compliant across the board.
- Ms. Cooper asked if the district already had accommodations in place for ADA compliance. Mr. Cuomo confirmed that the student program "Read&Write" is available for all staff and students. He stated that while the program is designed for students with special needs, it is installed on every student and staff Chromebook and is 99.9% functional, with the technology team getting immediate calls if it is ever down.

12.3 Pending School Closure for Students: Polling Site Logistics for April 21 Voting (Redistricting Referendum): Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, presented information regarding the impact of the April 21, 2026, Redistricting Referendum on Charlottesville City Schools (CCS) operations and the school calendar. Eight division schools—CATEC, CHS, CMS, Walker, Trailblazer, Tall Oaks, Summit, and Jackson-Via—were identified to serve as polling locations for the vote on new congressional maps. The update described significant challenges associated with maintaining normal operations on voting days, including limited parking, increased vehicular traffic, and disruptions to school facilities such as gyms and cafeterias. The presentation highlighted critical safety and legal concerns, noting that voter rights laws took precedence over regulations restricting certain individuals from school grounds, resulting in a more open campus environment. Consequently, the Board informed families that it was in the best interest of the division to close schools on April 21st, though CHS athletics and nursing board exams remained scheduled to proceed. It was noted that if schools were no longer required as polling places, the date would revert to a normal instructional day.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Richardson agreed with the decision to close schools for voting, stating that it protects both voters' rights and the safety of the students.
- Ms. Bryant asked a question regarding the possibility of utilizing virtual learning opportunities during the planned school closure day on April 21st. She highlighted that the closure is very close to the end of the school year and inquired how the day could be optimized, especially for students who may be struggling or need to "tie up some loose ends" before the end of the fourth quarter.
- Dr. Gurley responded to the query about a virtual option by stating that it becomes an equity issue, similar to discussions around snow days, because not every student has access to Wi-Fi, and students in the lower grades do not take home personally issued Chromebooks. He explained that making a "hard pivot" to virtual instruction by April 21st would be difficult because the wireless MFI routers and other resources provided during the pandemic through ARP and ESSER funds are no longer available for such a sudden change.
- Ms. Bryant agreed with Ms. Richardson's stance, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing voting alongside learning and students, especially in light of voter suppression across the country and in key districts, asserting that the right to vote must come first.
- Ms. Dooley expressed concern about the lost instructional time and asked if the state offered "forgiveness for seat time" for the school closure day. Dr. Gurley replied that the district is currently meeting its seat time requirements and believes waivers will be approved. He explained that, unlike other localities, the district chose to return to school after the snow event, which minimized missed days and placed them in a better position. Ms. Dooley then urged the board to plan future calendars with more contract days to maximize time with students, anticipating that unexpected closures will continue to occur annually.
- Mr. Meyer asked if it was possible to swap the April 21st school closure day for one of the teacher work days or professional days.
- Dr. Gurley replied that the teacher workday at the end of the month needs to be protected as much as possible because teachers need to reconcile and finalize grades on time.

Board Response to Written Reports

13.1 School Board Member Committee Reports - Written Report: Board members shared updates on recent activities in this written report.

13.2 Chronic Absenteeism - Written Report: Rachel Rasnake provided a written report on Chronic Absenteeism.

Mr. Meyer addressed the absenteeism report, acknowledging that February was a "hard month" with upticks in absences, though he generally liked the division's overall trajectory. He thanked the staff and urged all parents to keep focused on getting their children to school. He stated his goal to see the division drop its chronic absenteeism rate (over 20%) out of the "red," noting it looks like they are going to achieve that goal, but need to "finish strong."

Ms. Burns inquired about the chronic absenteeism data for Charlottesville High School (CHS), noting that it combines CHS with the Lugo-McGinness and Knight School programs. She asked if the Knight school data could be pulled out for a look back at the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, suggesting this isolation would be helpful for an upcoming work session on Black student achievement. Ms. Rasnake affirmed that isolating the data is possible and easy to do, but cautioned that since Knight school enrollment is a small number (about 45 students), changes in their enrollment or the presence of students who were chronically absent before they started could "drastically change" the percentage throughout the school year.

Ms. Cooper also expressed her desire to be able to review and understand "those numbers" (referring to the chronic absenteeism data, particularly the requested isolated night school figures) during the upcoming work session.

13.3 Outcome of Student Disciplinary Matters - Written Report: On Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 4:00 pm, the Charlottesville City School Board met in closed session, as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 (A) (2) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing student disciplinary matters. The outcome of the meeting was shared as a written report.

14.1 Comments from Members of the Community:

- Ms. Otner, a parent and former PTO President, introduced concerns regarding the school's results-based learning and standards-based learning model. She criticized the policy of granting students 50% on assignments regardless of effort, arguing it provides a false sense of success and leads students to perform a "calculus" about whether an assignment is worth completing. She also opposed flexible due dates, stressing that school is a place to learn life skills, such as meeting deadlines, noting that assignments in the workplace have strict due dates. Ms. Otner argued that a specific group of students is disadvantaged by these policies and are not developing the necessary skills to be prepared for college or the workplace. She added that teachers are also disadvantaged because they can "never turn the page on an assignment" due to constant requests for retakes and redos. She asked the Board to consider changing these policies in the future.

15.1 Board Member Comments:

- Ms. Bryant began her comments by highlighting her enjoyment of community engagements in February, specifically the Black History Month cookoff at Luggo and the assemblies at Walker for fifth and sixth graders, which included participation from her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, and Omega Sci Fraternity Incorporated. She then addressed community concerns, advocating for a procedural change to allow board members to respond to public comments earlier in the meeting, arguing that the current practice of waiting until the end damages the morale and trust of community members, parents, and teachers who raise real concerns. Finally, Ms. Bryant reiterated her concerns about School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools, stating that the previous vote was rushed and not on the agenda, and urged the board to seriously discuss the issue further due to ongoing concerns from the community, parents, and teachers.
- Ms. Richardson began by recognizing and celebrating Coach DeBerry for his commitment to the students and community, expressing gratitude for his leadership, dedication, and lasting legacy. She also gave a shout-out to the high-quality career and technical programs that will roll out next school year. Ms. Richardson then addressed the SROs' issue, speaking as a Black woman from personal experience with police encounters, noting that such encounters can be frightening and triggering. She affirmed that she continues to stand by her previous vote against bringing SROs back into schools, believing that student safety should be strengthened through investment in support services and school-based staff. Finally, she expressed appreciation for community members who continue to speak out on the issue, assuring them they are not alone in how they feel.
- Mr. Meyer agreed with Ms. Bryant's request to modify the agenda to allow for a brief response to public comment, believing it would be an efficient way to provide necessary feedback to those who speak. Regarding School Resource Officers (SROs), Mr. Meyer stated he does not support reopening the

discussion, as he believes the program and accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) currently in place, which evolved over two years based on feedback, adequately address community concerns. He concluded that the Board needs to focus its time and effort on important educational matters and student achievement rather than rehashing a past discussion. Mr. Meyer also acknowledged the frustration expressed by Mr. Davis and Ms. Horne about being micromanaged and the bureaucracy, much of which he attributes to the state level, and offered to advocate at the state level to address the issue. Finally, he expressed readiness to discuss policy changes this spring concerning retention and the high school grading policy, as well as addressing the screens and edtech issue, hoping to see changes implemented for the upcoming school year.

- Ms. Burns first celebrated the Charlottesville High School (CHS) theater students who attended the SETC conference in Tennessee. She reported that fundraising significantly lowered the per-student cost, allowing 41 students to attend and perform. She shared that their performance was considered "nothing short of incredible," with one judge calling the ensemble the strongest they had ever seen, also noting the remarkable diversity of the cast. Ms. Burns highlighted a moment from the recent *Westside Story* performance where several immigrant students came out with their respective flags to represent their home countries, applauding their bravery and citing the moment as a testament to the safety and support provided by Charlottesville City Schools. She added that six CHS students participated in college auditions during the trip, and all received callbacks for summer theater programs, which she believes highlights how the school district nurtures and amplifies talent in the arts. She thanked Mr. Becker, Mr. Licor, and Dr. Gurley for supporting the arts. Ms. Burns then shifted to the Early Learning Center, expressing disappointment and concern about how the process for the property came about. She noted that the property, which is located in her neighborhood, has an "uncertain future" since the University of Virginia (UVA) purchased it, taking \$22,000 annually off the city tax roll. Ms. Burns urged the board to "lean in" and use its clear voice in discussions with the city and UVA to determine the future use of the property, ensuring the community's needs are heard. Finally, she thanked all community members and teachers for their continued engagement, noting that all input, including emails and conversations outside of the meeting, is important to her decision-making process.
- Ms. Cooper started by congratulating Mr. DeBerry on his induction into the Hall of Fame, recognizing the pivotal part he has played in the lives of many generations of families within Charlottesville City Schools since she was a student there. She also expressed excitement about the new Early Childhood Learning Center coming to Walker and looked forward to learning more to ensure families can enroll their children in preschool. Ms. Cooper thanked all those who participated in public comment, assuring them, particularly teachers and community members, that the board is listening and does not take their concerns lightly, adding that she would support the board having the opportunity to comment in the future. Finally, regarding SROs, she expressed her own concerns about them being in schools, especially considering the current global climate, and thanked everyone for bringing their comments to the board.
- Ms. Torres began by reiterating her appreciation for community members who take the time to share their hearts and minds at the podium. She then congratulated and acknowledged Coach DeBerry. Ms. Torres expressed gratitude that the collective bargaining contract for the school support professionals had been signed and finalized, recognizing that these professionals do significant good for students and the community every day. Citing her recent readings, Ms. Torres stated that the main reason school divisions exist is to improve student outcomes and achievement, which she believes should be the board's top priority and focus. She noted that the board has spent significant time and resources on important community topics, but feels they now need to pivot and focus on student outcomes. Finally, Ms. Torres expressed excitement for the upcoming work session next week and thanked Ms. Bryant for her specific data requests and Dr. Gurley and his staff for working to compile the necessary information.

16.1 Superintendent's Comments: Dr. Gurley began by congratulating and recognizing the support staff for their hard work, much of which he noted is done quietly behind the scenes, and affirmed that the collective bargaining agreement is a recognition of this daily effort. He then addressed the public comments made by Ms. Horne and Mr. Davis regarding micromanagement and excessive administrative work, stating that he wants to sit down and understand what is "getting in the way" of their work. He asked Ms. Horne to "call it out," and while noting that

some things like data collection for Black student achievement might be non-negotiable for strengthening systems, he offered to move other stressors off their plate. Regarding the feeling of micromanagement, he asked the community and staff to consider if it is micromanagement or if they are holding themselves accountable for specific actions, which may feel uncomfortable but is leading to positive changes, citing increases in MAP data. He concluded that the district is on track for a very successful school year, but he wants to hear more details to ensure that if there are things getting in the way, he can help remove them.

17.1 Work Session Wrap-Up: There was one request from the Board:

- The Lugo-McGinness Academy (LMA) attendance data will be taken out and separated on the attendance report.

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

19.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk