



MINUTES

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION WITH LEGISLATORS

Thursday, October 29, 2026 (5:30 p.m.)

Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center Auditorium

1000 Rio Rd. E, Charlottesville, VA

[Video Link](#)

A Public Meeting of the Charlottesville City School Board was held on Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center Auditorium, 1000 Rio Rd. E, Charlottesville, VA.

1.1 Call to Order (5:30 p.m.): School Board Chair Lisa Torres called the public meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

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

Board Members Present: Amanda Burns (Vice-Chair), Emily Dooley, Shymora Cooper, and Lisa Torres (Chair)

Board Members Absent: Zyahna Bryant, Chris Meyer, and Nicole Richardson

Executive Leadership Team & Staff Present: Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. (Superintendent), Kim Powell (Chief Operations Officer), Maria Lewis (Chief Human Resources Officer), Dr. Lamont Trotter (Director of Organizational Supports), Amanda Simalchik (Director of Community Relations), Pat Cuomo (Director of Technology), Ryan Shifflett (Technical Support Specialist), Julia Green (Board Deputy Clerk), and Leslie Thacker (Board Clerk).

Other Parties Present: Senator Creigh Deeds (Virginia State Senator 25th District), Tracy Eppard (Legislative Aide to Creigh Deeds), and Angel Pilkey-Chevez (representing Delegate Katrina Callsen).

3.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Dooley made a motion to approve the proposed agenda. Ms. Cooper seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 4 ayes, 0 nays.

4.1 2027 Legislative Priorities: Superintendent Dr. Royal A. Gurley, Jr. led a joint legislative work session with Senator Creigh Deeds and Angel Pilkey-Chevez (representing Delegate Katrina Callsen) to present the Charlottesville City School Board's 2027 Legislative Priorities. The discussion focused on three key areas: Expediting School Funding Reform by revising the SOQ formula and co-funding non-SOQ positions such as instructional assistants and work-based learning coordinators; Addressing the Pace of PK-12 Change by stabilizing SOL cut scores, implementing multi-year curriculum pacing, and offering flexible testing windows; and Allocating Restorative Justice Funding through dedicated state appropriations for VDOE suspension intervention mandates.

Discussion/Questions:

- Senator Deeds noted that a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) subcommittee chaired by Senator Lock has been examining school funding reform and is expected to release recommendations soon, while explaining that although over \$400 million has been added to state K-12 funding since 2018, systemic funding issues persist statewide due to budget strains from federal healthcare policy changes and SNAP administration costs, alongside complexities in how local tax revenues from data centers are factored into state funding calculations.

- Ms. Dooley asked how updates are obtained from the subcommittee regarding SOQ funding reform and expressed deep frustration over frequent changes to state standards and SOL cut scores that continually disrupt classroom instruction and negatively impact public perceptions of school performance.
- Ms. Powell advocated strongly for shifting to a student weight-based funding model that directly reflects and accommodates the specific demographic needs, specialized support services, and operational challenges of students within each individual school division.
- Dr. Gurley highlighted the significant logistical and emotional burden created by the mandatory 10-day testing window at the end of the school year, emphasizing how it heightens student anxiety and complicates retesting procedures, while cautioning that unfunded state mandates for restorative justice force local divisions to reallocate critical educational resources.
- Ms. Torres detailed the local staffing requirements essential for implementing restorative justice with fidelity, estimating a specific need for dedicated facilitators across elementary, middle, and high schools, and urged attending legislators to secure dedicated state funding appropriations for these mandates.
- Ms. Burns voiced support for ongoing restorative justice practices and emphasized the urgent need for permanent state funding as existing local grant allocations supporting these programs are expiring.

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

6.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk