



**CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD
LEGISLATIVE MEETING MINUTES
November 12, 2019 (5:30 PM)
Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center Auditorium
1000 Rio Road East, Charlottesville, VA**

The Charlottesville City School Board met with Representative David Toscano to discuss the Board's Proposed Legislative Priorities for the 2020 General Assembly.

1.0 Call to Order: At 5:45 p.m. Ms. Jennifer McKeever, School Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

2.0 Roll Call: The following Board Members were present:

Mr. James Bryant	Dr. Sherry Kraft
Ms. Jennifer McKeever	Mr. Ned Michie
Ms. Lisa Torres	Mr. Juandiego Wade

The following Board Members were absent:

Ms. Leah Puryear

The following Staff Members were present:

Dr. Rosa Atkins	Ms. Beth Cheuk
Ms. Leslie Thacker	Ms. Julia Green

Other parties present:

- Sally Hudson, Newly-Elected to the Virginia House of Delegates 57th District
- Creigh Deeds, Virginia State Senator 25th District

Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Torres made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wade, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote being taken, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Mr. Michie, Ms. Torres, and Mr. Wade voting yes. 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Ms. McKeever asked Senator Deeds what the Board can do to support him in the coming General Assembly session.

Dr. Hudson noted that the appropriation committee will have more influence than the education committee. Senator Deeds added that he will likely be on the Finance Committee

When asked what legislators can do to support education Dr. Atkins responded that a significant increase of funding is needed to support significant salary increases for teachers to keep teachers and to address teacher shortages (starting salary should be around \$60,000 but is currently at \$49,000). She also noted that the Board of Education is looking at the Standards of Quality and flexibility in the funding (such as social work positions having more flexibility to provide mental health services).

Ms. McKeever introduced Beth Cheuk, Charlottesville City Schools Legislative Liaison, who introduced and led discussion related to the following topics. Many of these priorities were identified by the Virginia School Boards Association

Bus Drivers to be identified as a critical shortage area. Bus drivers have a different category of CDL license that gives them a bus drivers license in order to expedite.

School Modernization

A study of rural Virginia high schools demonstrated that student performance and building condition are correlated. Funding must be provided for new construction and renovations of public schools. State funding is essential to the provision of sufficient, safe, and instructionally appropriate school buildings for all students. The Commonwealth of Virginia must recognize the impending crisis in school construction needs and implement a new strategy to assist localities in funding their school capital needs. The State's objective should be to provide revenue to fund at least 55 percent of localities' school construction needs over the next five years without reducing or modifying other sources of State aid to education.

- The VSBA urges the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. Congress to provide substantial and sustained funding to finance local school construction, renovation, and debt service costs with disbursements to local school boards.

Mr. Michie suggested state spending for modernization of schools. Senator Deeds noted that funding is a challenge.

Dr. Hudson noted that one option would be to look at sales tax rates to other states.

There was discussion regarding improving funding for mental health services for students.

Mr. Wade noted that about 90% of a students day includes items mandated by the Commonwealth and asked for increased flexibility.

Funding and Budget

Article VIII of the Virginia Constitution establishes public education as a shared responsibility. School Boards work in partnership with the General Assembly, Virginia Board of Education, and local appropriating bodies to provide education in the Commonwealth. Past changes to state funding for education widened existing gaps between the actual costs of services at the local level and the state's reimbursement for the provision of these services.

- VSBA supports full funding of all mandates and programs passed by the General Assembly. Partial funding or the absence of funding for mandates and programs causes additional burden on local school divisions.
- VSBA supports removing the SOQ Support Position cap.
- VSBA opposes vouchers or tuition tax-credits for non-public schools.

Local Control

- VSBA opposes any legislation which divests local school boards of their constitutional authority to supervise schools and interferes with the day-to-day activities of school boards and superintendents as they perform their constitutional responsibility.
- VSBA supports increased local control of the school calendar, including extended day, extended year and year-round school options without having to request a waiver.

School Safety

Students have a right to and school divisions have a responsibility to ensure a teaching/learning environment that is safe and free of disruption. There are incidents involving weapons, assaults and

threats at schools which require interventions in addition to those school personnel are able and authorized to provide.

- The VSBA supports cooperation between state government, local communities, law enforcement agencies, and local school divisions to provide appropriate prevention and intervention programs that are effective in addressing violence, and the precursors to violence, in schools and their communities.
- The VSBA supports teacher preparation program expansions to include coursework and practical experience in handling school violence and related issues.
- The VSBA also supports empowering leaders at the local level to make decisions with regard to health services for students, including staffing and funding of school nurses.
- The VSBA urges the General Assembly to:
 - Support local school division efforts to achieve strong, fair and consistent disciplinary expectations and applications to all students;
 - Appropriate sufficient funds to the School Resource Officer Grants Program so that each school board may choose whether to employ uniformed officers in their schools, as well as sufficient funds for local school boards to use at their discretion in ensuring safe and respectful school environments through effective programs such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, character education, and other proactive initiatives appropriate for individual school communities
 - Pass legislation that would afford greater protection to students, school employees, and volunteers who are exposed to bodily fluids which put them at risk of dangerous infectious diseases, and
 - Oppose legislation requiring the designation of school personnel to carry concealed weapons in schools.
 - The VSBA Supports the authority of local school boards to prohibit guns at all school-related functions/events regardless of setting.

Dr. Hudson asked for input on SROs. Dr. Atkins responded that one strategy could be that security officers be deputized by local police and not pulled from the police department's officer pool. She also advocated for flexibility to enter into MOUs that meet the needs of schools.

There was discussion related to legislation to decriminalize disorderly conduct for school-based offenses.

Dr. Atkins noted the importance of addressing discipline and mental health services together and highlighted the need of having the resources necessary to provide supports that students need to be successful in the learning environment.

Dr. Atkins stated that Charlottesville City Schools and surrounding school divisions partner in a regional special education programs and that in the last three years there has been discussion related to reimbursement formulas. The proposed changes for this year eliminate some students and those students might also be excluded from ADM and will result in decreased funding which will greatly impact the program. There are currently well over 200 students total in the program.

Dr. Hudson asked if flexibility in licensure is needed. Dr. Atkins responded that in some areas flexibility might be appropriate but in certain positions expertise is needed.

There was discussion related to allowing state funding to be allocated to 3-year-old preschool programs. Dr. Kraft advocated for after-school funding for preschool students and Mr. Michie noted that it would be helpful to have flexibility in the student/teacher/aide ration for preschool classes.

Teacher Shortages

Effective teachers are essential to providing a high-quality education as required in the Constitution of Virginia. The recruitment and retention of teachers in the face of critical teacher shortages across regions and subject areas is essential to maintaining education quality.

- VSBA supports increased funding for teacher compensation.
- VSBA supports increased funding for the Virginia Teacher Scholarship Loan Program to encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession in shortage areas and to remain in Virginia.
- VSBA supports the allowance of alternative entry routes into the teaching profession to provide localities flexibility in hiring qualified persons who have not formally prepared for teaching careers.
- VSBA supports the provision of individual waivers by the Virginia Board of Education from specific licensure requirements that prohibit local school divisions from retaining otherwise qualified personnel who have demonstrated proficiency in the classroom and are teaching a critical shortage area.
- VSBA supports minority recruitment and promotional practices, including college scholarships for minority students entering the teaching profession.

Comments: Senator Deeds noted that legislative bills need to be submitted by December 5 and that the Governor’s budget announcement is scheduled for December 17, 2019.

5.0 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Jennifer McKeever, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk