



**MINUTES**  
**CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 31, 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 31, 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), Kim Powell (Chief Operations Officer)

**Others Present:** Peter Caramanis, Attorney for Royer Caramanis

**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 5:00 p.m.

**1.1 Closed Meeting:** at 5:00 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; discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the School Board; and consultation with legal counsel retained by the School Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel related to an offer to purchase School Board property. Ms. Dooley seconded the motion, and the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Richardson, and Ms. Torres voting aye. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Ms. Cooper was not present for this vote.

**1.2 Closed Meeting Certification:** At 5:50 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. 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.

**Action:** None

The board recessed from 5:50 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

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

**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:** Roll call was conducted to confirm attendance.

**Board Members Present:** Ms. Zyahna Bryant, Ms. Amanda Burns, Ms. Shymora Cooper, Ms. Emily Dooley, Mr. Chris Meyer, Ms. Nicole Richardson, 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), 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), Mr. Ryan Shifflett (Technology Support Specialist) Ms. Julia Green (Board Deputy Clerk), and Ms. Leslie Thacker (Board Clerk).

**Executive Leadership Team & Staff Absent:** Pat Cuomo (Director of Technology)

**5.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda:** Ms. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to amend the Agenda to add a discussion on School Resource Officers (SROs). Upon a roll-call vote, the motion failed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Cooper and Ms. Richardson voting aye. Ms. Burns, Ms. Dooley, Ms. Torres, and Mr. Meyer voting nay. 3 ayes, 4 nays.

Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Bryant expressed gratitude for the community's engagement through phone calls, emails, and a Change.org petition; stated that the decision-making process for School Resource Officers (SROs) lacks transparency and sufficient data; argued that the return of SROs does not align with the district's strategic plan regarding equity and student belonging; and called for qualitative data to justify how police presence impacts student outcomes, specifically for Black and Brown students.
- Ms. Torres acknowledged Ms. Bryant's statement and called upon Mr. Meyer to provide comments regarding the specific motion to amend the current agenda.
- Mr. Meyer suggested that the board should limit the current discussion to the procedural motion of adding an agenda item; noted that the evening's agenda was already full and expressed a preference for discussing the SRO matter during the scheduled work session.
- Ms. Cooper acknowledged the high volume of community emails regarding SROs; explained that board policy dictates the Chair should respond to such correspondence, which may explain why individual members have not replied; stated her personal opposition to SROs; and noted that she was absent for the original vote and looks forward to the April 16th work session.
- Ms. Richardson expressed dissatisfaction with the speed of the previous vote and the fact that it occurred without the full board present; supported the motion to add the SRO discussion to the current agenda; and emphasized that the April 16th work session is a public meeting, encouraging community attendance.
- Ms. Torres explained that her vote against amending the agenda was based on the existence of a dedicated future date and time specifically set aside for a comprehensive and thorough discussion on the SRO program.
- Ms. Richardson reiterated that the April 16th session is a work session open to the community and urged the public to attend to ensure their voices are heard as the board continues its work.
- Ms. Bryant raised concerns regarding the board's internal procedures, specifically noting that while work sessions are typically polled, she was not polled regarding the addition of the "Black Achievement" item to the current meeting; further commented on the lack of timely communication from leadership regarding public statements and board accountability.

- Ms. Torres inquired for clarification on whether Ms. Bryant was referring to the polling process for the upcoming April 16th date or the current meeting.
- Ms. Bryant clarified that she did not receive a poll regarding today's addition of the "Black Achievement" item and expressed frustration that this was added without discussion while the SRO issue remained unaddressed on the agenda.
- Ms. Torres stated that the decision to include Black student achievement data on the agenda was made during a leadership meeting to complete work that had been previously interrupted.
- Ms. Bryant questioned whether the Chair intended to address her concerns regarding the delays in public communication and the specific feedback she had raised.
- Ms. Torres suggested that a private conversation would be appropriate to address those concerns and asserted that multiple email threads had been active, maintaining that information regarding the board's response was being conveyed.
- Ms. Bryant stated for the public record that the response she received to her detailed inquiry was limited to an acknowledgment of receipt and a closing salutation, and indicated she was ready to proceed to a vote.
- Ms. Torres responded that she was willing to share the email correspondence leading up to the meeting to provide further context and proceeded with the final vote to approve the agenda.

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the agenda as originally 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.

## **Student and Staff Recognitions**

**6.1 [Public Education Foundation of Charlottesville-Albemarle Awards Teacher Innovation Grant Winners](#):** Amanda Korman Simalchik (Community Relations Supervisor) asked the Board to join her in recognizing the eight Charlottesville City Schools teachers who won grants from the Public Education Foundation Charlottesville-Albemarle (PEFCA) for Winter 2026. Jennifer Ryan (CHS) for "The Language Lab: Gamified English Learning for Emerging Multilinguals"; Kevin Paquette (CMS) for "Future Cville: A STEM Career Pathway Pilot"; Lucy Spencer (CMS) for "Table Talk with Teens"; Cianna Washburg (CMS) for "SOL Game Ready Day"; Melanie Johnson (Greenbrier ES) for "STEM in the Wild: Building Curiosity through Real-World Exploration"; Jessica Cao (Jackson-Via ES) for "From Pencils to Print: Our Journey to Becoming Published Authors"; Sabra Timmins (Jackson-Via ES) for "Crossing the Line: An After-School Soccer Club for Building Inclusive Communities"; and Amy Wissekerke (Walker UES) for "Classroom Economics for 6th Grade".

**6.2 [State and Local Honors: Athletics](#):** Andy Jones, Director of Student Activities, recognized the outstanding achievements of CHS students and groups who recently earned state or other honors. In athletics, the indoor track team was recognized for their remarkable success, with Sam Palmer and Elaina Pierce both capturing state titles in the 1000M and 1600M. Other all-state track finishers were Gibson Duolo in the 55M, where he placed 8th, and Juliana Pierce in the 500M, where she finished 2nd in the state. CCS staff members that provided support for these athletes as coaches were Erika Pierce and David Koenig. In wrestling, we had the highest state placement in school history, finishing 6th overall in the state. Wrestlers Roman Calvani finished 2nd at 190 pounds, Adriel Pena took 3rd at 113 pounds, Theo Reinhart took 3rd at 157 pounds, and Walter Pilkey took 6th at 150 pounds. Roman Calvani was the school's first state runner-up in school history. Walter Pilkey is the 1st ever four-time All-State wrestler in CHS history. Swim had a strong season and had a large number of swimmers qualify for the state championship. At the swim state championship, we had Garrett Wispelway finish 2nd in the state in the 100 breast. In girls' basketball, the team made the state tournament for the 3rd year in a row. The black knights were led by Avery Stavitski, who was named 1st team All-State, and Elaina Pierce, who was named 2nd team All-State.

## **7.1 [Comments from Students](#):**

- Gianella Arostegui (Student, Charlottesville High School): Raised concerns about the ICE resolution, expressing anxiety among the student body regarding potential ICE activity at school buses or recess. She urged the board to communicate specific safety plans openly with families.

## **7.2 Comments from Members of the Community:**

- Amanda Moxham (Parent and Community Member) opposed the return of School Resource Officers (SROs), stating that police presence in schools is about comfort for some rather than safety for all. She cited data showing that SRO programs disproportionately target Black and Latino students and lead to higher rates of exclusionary discipline and arrests, effectively opening a "school-to-prison pipeline".
- Emily Kingsley (Teacher and Community Member) cautioned against making decisions about SROs based on "vibes"—fears, biases, and assumptions—rather than data. She referenced research suggesting that police presence does not enhance school safety and urged the board to trust families and data instead.
- Shannon Gillikin (President, Charlottesville Education Association) reported that less than 30% of surveyed CEA members support the return of SROs. She criticized the board for not seeking meaningful community or staff input and for failing to present alternatives to police in schools.
- Rosia Parker (Generations to Generations/People’s Coalition) spoke about the negative mental health impacts of SROs, including increased fear and anxiety for Black and brown students. She argued that over-policing fosters a prison-like environment and urged the board to rethink its decision.
- Terry Tyree (President, Charlottesville Community Resilience Center) criticized board members for a lack of unity and for dismissing the community's request to add the SRO discussion to the evening's agenda. She questioned how the board would measure the impact of SROs on marginalized students and urged investment in counselors and restorative practices instead.
- Syleethia Carr (CEO/Founder, Not Me I Believe) emphasized that board members are "servants of the people" and must listen to the voices of children, parents, and staff. She shared her daughter’s personal experiences with severe bullying and mental health crises, noting that smaller school environments often provide better support than larger ones.
- Latricia Giles (Public Housing Association of Residents - PHAR) expressed concern over a breakdown in trust between the board and the community. She called for transparency, fuller public processes, and serious consideration of alternatives to armed presence, such as care workers and counselors.
- Sam Heath (Executive Director, Commonwealth Justice Coalition), a high school teacher, advocated for shifting the focus from punishment to repair and healing. He urged the board to implement robust, community-supported restorative practices instead of police.
- Chelsea Dunn Torrey (Director, Youth Justice Program at Legal Aid Justice Center) highlighted that police presence disproportionately harms students with disabilities and students of color. She asked the board to reconsider its decision and examine the full spectrum of evidence-based restorative responses.
- Mimi Fitzpatrick (Parent and Alumna) encouraged the board to use data-driven conversations and transparency when discussing SROs. She noted that the power imbalance created by armed officers hinders true relationship building with students.
- Natalie Aviles (Parent and Professor of Sociology), representing a coalition of professionals, she requested that the board engage in good faith with the data provided by experts. She called for a public and transparent reconsideration of the SRO policy.
- Ian Mullins (Parent and Resident) expressed a loss of trust in the board’s decision-making process. He requested the voluntary release of all data used by the board to make the SRO decision to ensure accountability and transparency.
- Sandra Ivet Aviles (Charlottesville United for Public Education) stated that the SRO decision-making process was not inclusive. She urged the board to invest in the mental health and emotional well-being of students through holistic models and community partnerships.
- Sol Redd-Martin (Operation Social Equality - OSC) warned the board not to mistake community silence for satisfaction. He encouraged the use of evidence-based research and warned that preemptive decisions made without true community input are performative rather than productive.

- Bret Vollmer (Social Worker) spoke about the responsibility of public institutions to lead with compassionate, evidence-based practices to rebuild trust with marginalized groups. He argued that armed officers exacerbate distrust and alienate young people from public life.
- Hank Bostwick (Legal Aid Justice Center) highlighted the growing community campaign against SROs, including a petition and direct email efforts. He requested a "pause" and more space for community communication and deliberation.

**8.1 Charlottesville High School Student Representative Report:** Ginger Craghead-Way, student representative for Charlottesville High School, encouraged the community to attend the April 16th work session to further discuss the potential return of school resource officers (SROs). She stated that she received overwhelming feedback from her peers who generally do not support bringing police back into schools, citing concerns that their safety would be threatened and that education would no longer be the primary priority.

Additionally, she reported on an informative meeting with the CHS principal regarding student concerns about accessing grades through PowerSchool. She noted positive affirmation and support from fellow students for the resolution protecting students from unlawful immigration enforcement activity, emphasizing that peers believe it is necessary to ensure they can learn without fear. Lastly, she expressed the student body's desire for greener schools through the implementation of solar panels.

**9.1-6 Adoption of Consent Agenda:** The following items were included in the consent agenda: [Personnel Recommendations](#), [Minutes - February 5, 2026 School Board Meeting](#), [Minutes - February 9, 2026 School Board/City Council Joint Budget Work Session](#), [Business, Financial, Routine Reports](#), and [2026 VSBA Showcases for Success & Showcasing Innovation Award](#). Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Meyer, 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 Customs Enforcement (ICE) Resolution:** Lisa Torres, School Board Chair, introduced the proposed ICE Resolution for information: The resolution affirms that Charlottesville City Schools shall remain a safe and welcoming environment for all students and families regardless of immigration status. It states that the school division will not voluntarily assist with federal immigration enforcement activities conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), except as required by law, and will not cooperate with entities entering into Section 287(g) agreements. The document establishes that immigration enforcement agents must present a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge to gain access to non-public areas of any campus. Additionally, the resolution specifies that the school division will not collect immigration status information or disclose student records to enforcement authorities except as required by law and consistent with FERPA. To support these goals, the Superintendent is directed to develop protocols for staff responses to enforcement requests and provide families with information regarding their rights and available community resources.

Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dooley, to approve the Customs Enforcement (ICE) Resolution as presented. 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. Mr. Meyer abstained from voting. The motion carried.

## Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Torres read a formal resolution affirming that Charlottesville City Schools will remain safe and welcoming for all students regardless of immigration status; cited Plyler v. Doe regarding the right to K-12 education and established protocols prohibiting voluntary cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, requiring a judicial warrant for campus access, and protecting student privacy.

- Ms. Cooper supported the resolution while drawing a comparison between protecting students from ICE and protecting Black and Brown communities from School Resource Officers (SROs), questioning if the board is being equitable in its protection of all students.
- Ms. Bryant agreed with Ms. Cooper's sentiments, noting the historical impact of policing on Black and Brown communities and drawing connections between current immigration enforcement and the experiences of Black families during the civil rights era.
- Mr. Meyer requested clarification regarding the \$6.9 million in federal funding that supports Title I, nutrition, and at-risk students; he inquired if the resolution's requirements were already being met by current staff practices.
- Dr. Gurley and Ms. Hoover confirmed that approximately 6% of the budget is federal funding supporting at-risk students and stated that the division has already implemented the communication and privacy protocols outlined in the resolution.
- Mr. Meyer stated that while he finds the actions of ICE "horrible," he would abstain from the vote, expressing concern that the resolution might place a "target" on the district and risk funding for the neediest students for a policy that is already in practice.
- Ms. Craghead-Way (Student Rep) reported overwhelming support for the resolution from the student body, noting that students are currently scared and seeking clarity on the exact practices the district will take if immigration enforcement arrives.
- Ms. Burns expressed appreciation for the comments from Ms. Bryant and Ms. Cooper and suggested further discussion during the SRO work session regarding the removal of ICE-specific language from a previous MOU; acknowledged Mr. Meyer's concerns about the potential loss of \$6.9 million in federal funding but expressed confidence that the local philanthropic community would provide financial support if necessary; shared that students in the WALK program are fearful for the safety of their family members; and requested clarification on the training of all staff, including bus drivers, as well as how the division will use trusted partners to inform families about resources and processes without drawing undue attention to them.

**11.2 Action - Solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for Charlottesville High School:** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, and Kristel Riddervold, Director of the City's Office of Sustainability, briefed the School Board on February 5, 2026, regarding the implementation of solar energy via Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). The first agreement was then brought forward for Board action. Aligned with the City's 2050 carbon neutrality mandate and the Climate Action Plan (CAP), PPAs offered a specialized pathway to accelerate solar deployment on municipal grounds by eliminating the need for initial local capital. Following the recent roof replacement, Charlottesville High School was identified as an optimal site and the next step for solar installation. Under the proposed 25-year terms, in partnership with the City, a third-party developer managed the financing, installation, and ongoing maintenance of the solar arrays. This allowed the school division to secure clean energy at a fixed, predictable rate, projected to yield nearly \$4 million in total avoided costs over the life of the contract, while reducing the City's carbon footprint. Board action was needed to authorize the Superintendent to execute this PPA on behalf of Charlottesville City Schools. Please note that Schedule 4 (the Project Schedule) and Schedule 6 (the Annual Contract Quantity) were presented as part of the initial design, per Section 4.1(d) of the PPA. Schedule 4 reflected the 18-month contractual timeline for the Dominion Energy utility upgrade, which was not initiated until after the letter of authorization was done, which was a step that followed execution of the PPA. A portion of Schedule 6 was completed, and it was amended to reflect the as-built conditions at the commercial operation date of the project.

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the solar power purchase agreement for Charlottesville High School. 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.

**11.3 Action - 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, which provides a comprehensive overview of the division's commitment to college and career readiness.

Enrollment in CTE programs for grades 7-12 has shown significant historical growth, increasing from 938 students in the 2022-2023 school year to 1,429 students in the 2025-2026 school year. The program currently offers courses in nine clusters with over 20 industry credentials available to students. Recent performance data indicate that students earned a total of 382 credentials, including 235 industry certifications and 137 workplace readiness certificates, with 111 students identified as CTE completers.

Looking ahead to the 2026-2027 school year, the plan sets goals to expand opportunities in Agriculture at Charlottesville Middle School (CMS) and Charlottesville High School (CHS), as well as Health and Medical Sciences at CHS and CATEC. The budget priorities for this period, supported by an estimated allocation of \$109,556.73, focus on modernizing equipment to industry standards and enhancing professional learning for teachers, counselors, and administrators. Additionally, the division aims to increase work-based learning and career awareness through expanded business and industry partnerships and the use of a college and career readiness platform. All CTE programs continue to be governed by a strict nondiscrimination clause to ensure equitable access for all students.

Ms. Dooley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burns, to approve the 2026-27 Career and Technical Local Plan. 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.

**10 Minute Recess:** At 7:27 p.m, Ms. Burns made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to move into a recess. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion passed with Ms. Bryant, Ms. Burns, Ms. Cooper, Ms. Dooley, Mr. Meyer, and Ms. Torres voting aye. Ms. Richardson voted nay. 6 ayes, 1 nay. The motion carried.

## Items for Discussion

**12.1 [Safe Routes and School Zones Update](#):** Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, and Kyle Rodland, City of Charlottesville Safe Routes to School Coordinator, presented a comprehensive update on the expansion of school zones and safety infrastructure. Recent city code changes have established new 15 mph school zones at four schools (Trailblazer, CHS, Summit, and Sunrise), including the installation of 12 new flashers. Over the past six years, the program has completed 188 "quick build" projects, supported by an annual \$250,000 budget for sidewalks and crosswalks. A significant portion of the update focused on the unique logistical challenges at Summit Elementary, which lacks off-street drop-off facilities and faces high traffic volume on Monticello Avenue. Rodland also shared early data from a speed enforcement camera pilot, noting that 93% of offenders did not receive a second ticket, suggesting the program is effectively changing driver behavior.

### Discussion/Questions:

- Mr. Meyer questioned the city's decision to move away from the "initial concept" for Summit Elementary School, asking why neighbor parking and traffic inconveniences were prioritized over the safest design for students. He requested the name of the department or individual responsible for project management to ensure student safety is the primary metric for success. He recommended that future speed camera reports show month-to-month trends to track total speeding violations and suggested the board provide a formal letter of support to the City Council to expand the speed camera program.
- Ms. Burns expressed disappointment that the update was provided seven months after concerns were initially raised by constituents, teachers, and students. She stated it is not acceptable for teachers to stand in the roadway to stop traffic for buses and inquired about working with CAT to teach students "writership" skills during school lunches. Additionally, she asked if "MicroCAT" or other on-demand solutions could be used for students at Lugo-McGinness to address absenteeism and questioned why a temporary bus route could not be implemented for specific Summit neighborhoods.
- Mr. Rodland highlighted the logistical issues of the Summit parking lot, noting that its "dead-end" nature and lack of spaces lead to unsafe driving and drop-off patterns. He noted that this causes frustration for families as well as staff.

- Ms. Powell stated that her communications with the police department indicated that their presence in school zones is often limited by city-wide staffing emergencies. She explained that the bus driver vacancy rate is over 50%, which prevents the addition of more routes, though the city is studying staffing models used in Harrisonburg. She also noted that during previous engagement sessions for Summit, there was initially no public attendance, while later sessions were attended by neighbors concerned about the loss of parking.
- Ms. Richardson inquired about the specific financial penalty for speed camera citations, which was confirmed to be \$50. She indicated that her primary interest is in the speed enforcement camera data and the potential for program expansion.
- Ms. Dooley requested that the newly formed inter-departmental working group provide regular, written updates in the board's official reports to maintain consistency in reporting.
- Dr. Gurley emphasized that school staff and principals do not have legal authority over city roadways and should not manage traffic. He stated that there must be a constant, daily presence of two officers at Summit—one on the Belmont side and one on the Monticello side—to manage the roadway.

**12.2 2026-2027 Special Education Annual Plan - Title VI-B:** Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, presented the Special Education Annual Plan for board information. This presentation served as the mandated submission to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to demonstrate the school division's funding eligibility and outline its plan for providing services to children with disabilities. A primary focus of the report was the December 1 Child Count, which tracked student enrollment trends from 2022 to 2025. These figures indicated that while total enrollment fluctuated, it ultimately moved from 600 students in 2022 to 556 students by 2025. This data is critical as the VDOE utilizes these specific counts to inform the Flow Through funds allocated to the district.

The financial portion of the presentation detailed two major federal budget categories for the upcoming period. The Annual Plan: 611 proposed a total budget of \$1,302,195.00, with the largest allocations dedicated to Personnel Services at \$700,000.00 and Employee Benefits at \$287,000.00. This budget also designated \$230,636.93 for Purchased Services, which encompassed funding for CEIS and Proportionate Set-aside. Simultaneously, the Annual Plan: 619 focused on preschool special education, proposing a total budget of \$48,396.00. These preschool funds were primarily split between Personnel Services (\$41,136.60) and CEIS purchased services (\$7,259.40).

Discussion/Questions: There were none.

**12.3 FY 2026 Bonus Payment:** Renee Hoover, Director of Finance, presented information to the School Board regarding a proposed fiscal year 2026 bonus for employees. Under Chapter 7 of the 2026 Acts of Assembly, the state authorized a **\$1,500 bonus** for all instructional and support staff. Ms. Hoover noted that school divisions were required to certify their participation to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) by May 1, 2026, and that funds would be disbursed by June 30, 2026. This initiative supported the division's strategic priority to support staff by recognizing them as valued members of the organization and reinforcing a commitment to their well-being.

The board was informed that the bonus would impact 880.61 FTE instructional and support staff members within Charlottesville City Schools (CCS). The total cost to provide this payment was projected at \$1,421,965, with the state's share covering \$172,840 (12.15%). CCS was required to provide a local match of \$1,249,125, which the administration proposed to fund through year-end resources and/or the fund balance. This funding method was presented as a way to align with the one-time nature of the state initiative while ensuring an equitable distribution of the bonus across all staff.

Ms. Hoover explained that payments would be prorated based on each employee's FTE status. Staff at 1.00 FTE would receive \$1,500, 0.75 FTE would receive \$1,125, 0.50 FTE would receive \$750, and 0.25 FTE (including daily permanent hourly staff like crossing guards) would receive \$375 before taxes. To remain eligible, employees were required to have been hired on or before March 27, 2026, and remain employed through the last day of school on May 29, 2026. Additionally, staff were required to return for the first contract day of the 2026-2027 school year in August 2026 to qualify for the payment.

#### Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley expressed support for providing a bonus to staff members, noting that it represents a reasonable use of one-time funds. She also acknowledged general frustration regarding the state's funding formula, Standards of Quality (SOQs), and their alignment with Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) studies.
- Mr. Meyer clarified that the total cost of the bonus is \$1.4 million, with the state covering \$172,000 of that amount. He noted that covering the remaining balance would require using nearly 10% of the rainy day fund. Citing concerns over the current tight fiscal environment, uncertainty regarding the city government's budget, and the upcoming financial outlook, he stated that using the rainy day fund for an unbudgeted expense is not fiscally responsible, despite a desire to provide staff bonuses. He concluded by inquiring if there were any updates on the state budget.
- Ms. Torres inquired whether there were any updates regarding the state budget. Ms. Hoover reported that the General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene on April 22nd, with the expectation that a budget will be adopted on April 23rd. She added that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is expected to provide counsel within 15 days of that adoption to clarify the financial implications for Charlottesville City Schools.
- Dr. Gurley noted that this item will be placed on the agenda for action during the upcoming work session on April 16, 2026, noting that a vote must take place prior to May 1st.

**12.4 [Black Student Achievement \(Continued from the March 11, 2026 Work Session\)](#):** Dr. Gurley and the Executive Leadership Team provided a comprehensive update on Charlottesville City Schools' progress toward strengthening Black student achievement, continuing the division-wide data review from the March 11, 2026, meeting. The presentation highlighted significant academic milestones, most notably that the on-time graduation rate for Black students reached 89% in 2025, which exceeded the district's overall average of 87%. Data trends further indicated that an increasing number of Black students were moving out of at-risk categories toward academic proficiency. Additionally, leadership noted that Black students enrolled in AP courses were taking an average of three or more courses.

The session detailed performance across key domains, including reading interventions and special education. At the secondary level, the team reviewed data for 85 Black students with reading plans at CMS and 33 Black students in the CHS intervention program. Regarding special education, the division met proficiency standards for students with IEPs in reading across all grade levels, though math goals were only met at the eighth-grade level. Leadership addressed disproportionate representation of Black students in special education, confirming that inappropriate identification was not a contributing factor.

Finally, the presentation discussed the operationalization of the Community Schools model and the implementation of restorative disciplinary practices. The Community Schools model is currently serving as a hub for student resources, establishing literacy hubs at community locations such as the First Baptist Church and the Boys & Girls Club. To foster inclusive excellence and close achievement gaps, the division is focusing on "Leading Forward" initiatives, which include protecting instructional time, ensuring Tier I instruction is culturally relevant, and implementing MTSS with fidelity as an alternative to exclusionary discipline.

#### Discussion/Questions:

- Ms. Dooley asked for a comparison of the percentage of standard or advanced studies diplomas for Black students relative to the overall cohort average. Ms. Swift reported that out of 336 total students in the cohort, 164 received an advanced studies diploma and 121 received a standard diploma.
- Ms. Bryant requested a comparison of advanced and standard studies diplomas for white students. Ms. Swift stated the data showed the white student cohort was 144 (135 graduated), with 104 receiving an advanced studies diploma and 30 receiving a standard diploma. Ms. Bryant then noted the disparity

between these figures and the approximate Black student figures of 27 advanced studies diplomas out of a 90-student cohort.

- Mr. Meyer inquired about the poverty rates of racial cohorts in the schools, to which Ms. Swift responded that 83% of the Black student group is economically disadvantaged, compared to 25% of the white student group.
- Ms. Bryant asked about interventions designed to encourage economically disadvantaged students to pursue advanced studies diplomas. Ms. Swift responded that the division conducts cohort reviews throughout the school year, during which an administrator consistently meets with students who may appear at risk for graduation to ensure they receive the necessary support.
- Dr. Gurley outlined the division's intentional efforts to strengthen Black student achievement by scrutinizing dual enrollment and DE class referrals to ensure no student is overlooked and emphasizing the need for adults to develop a robust "funnel or pipeline" to bring more students into higher-level programs. Notable progress was shared, including the doubling of Black middle school students qualifying for Algebra 1, which addresses a historical disparity and is attributed to setting high expectations and increasing academic rigor, as taking Algebra 1 in middle school serves as a key predictive measure for future high school success. These strategies are supported by efforts to foster student interest in advanced coursework, highlighted by Black students authentically sharing personal experiences during "Impact Time".
- Ms. Cooper raised the question of how parents in middle school are being engaged to discuss the differences between a standard and an advanced diploma trajectory. Ms. Swift outlined plans to address this through the implementation of "school links" next year, a college and career readiness platform with a parent portal. The platform, which will roll out to 11th-grade students this spring and eventually serve grades six through twelve, will allow students to build course plans aligned with their career interests and set goals. Crucially, the parent portal will enable parents to communicate with counselors through the platform and help students maintain an educational portfolio and build resumes. Furthermore, this platform will open the door to these conversations by providing resources not only for counselors, but also for teachers and students to have one-on-one conversations and provide that information. This new platform is intended to fill a critical gap by facilitating data-driven decision-making and better tracking of student progress.
- Dr. Gurley elaborated on the strategic role of the new "school links" platform, noting that it creates an essential accountability measure for staff by establishing a trail of communication for families engaging with the school counseling team. He stated this allows families to be more involved in their students' academic trajectory. Furthermore, he emphasized the platform's role in family and community engagement, allowing the division, including the FACE team, to be "boots on the ground" by holding real-time workshops and meeting people where they are. This outreach will include instruction on how to use the app and engage with the school team.
- Ms. Bryant inquired if the division is specifically tracking Black students who are achieving the highest levels of coursework, such as BC Calculus, to see the correlation between earlier intervention programs like Algebra 1 and ultimate high school success. Ms. Swift confirmed that while that specific information can be pulled, the new "school links" platform will enable the division to track this data even better. She emphasized that the platform, which includes a program of studies, will help facilitate data-driven decision-making and ensure staff is challenging students to their highest potential by seeing clearly defined pathways and opportunities.
- Ms. Bryant raised a concern that students rushing through assessments due to behavioral issues might skew the data from tests like MAPS. Dr. Isley responded that the division uses multiple measures for student assessment, ensuring that an intervention is not solely based on a student falling below a certain percentile on one test, like MAP.
- Ms. Cooper asked whether special education support was being provided to students (promoting self-advocacy) or for students (dependency). Ms. Rasnake acknowledged that there is currently "too much doing for" and that the goal is to shift towards "doing with" students, emphasizing scaffolding for support.

- Ms. Burns inquired about advocacy resources for parents who struggled in school or previously had an IEP, to ensure they understand the documents they are asked to sign. Ms. Rasnake responded that the division is focused on building up a peer mentoring system to provide peer-to-peer support, aiming to create a better balance instead of assistance coming from people in power.
- Ms. Bryant inquired about the frequency of working with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for intervention in IEP meetings, particularly when a parent is advocating for their student and there is a misunderstanding. She also asked how many of these cases involved Black students or Black families. Ms. Rasnake reported that in the three years she has been doing the work, there have been three such interventions, and one out of those three involved a Black family.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about the current work aimed at increasing students' understanding of their own IEPs, and how to address the "embarrassment" teachers may feel when entering a classroom, as it can inadvertently identify students on an IEP. Ms. Rasnake replied that students must be brought into their meetings, and the focus is on figuring out how to make that process less stigmatizing and more accessible so that students are not missing classes.
- Ms. Bryant asked what referral process is followed to connect families with outside resources and community advocates when the school cannot provide the requested services. Ms. Rasnake explained that the next step depends on why the answer is no; the most common reason for a denial is that the service is not within the scope of special education. In those circumstances, the division works to connect the family with resources that are in scope, such as a school social worker or private therapists. Ms. Rasnake affirmed that a denial should never be because a service is unavailable, as the IEP team has the discretion to identify required supports, and if a service is required and supported by data, the goal shifts to figuring out how to provide it. She added that sometimes the answer is no because the student is already accessing the most effective progress through MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports).
- Ms. Burns asked if there was an opportunity to add more restorative justice positions and if that had been discussed. Ms. Bianca Johnson responded that adding more staff is not necessarily the need at this time, but that looking for funding opportunities to sustain the current work and allow staff more time would be helpful.
- Ms. Bryant commented on the discussion regarding School Resource Officers (SROs), noting that community members are calling for the use of restorative justice practices and tools as an alternative. She questioned whether expanding restorative justice opportunities and the time facilitators have in buildings could effectively address peer-to-peer conflicts, thereby removing the rationale for bringing back SROs.
- In response to Ms. Burns' question about how students are identified for alternative programs, Dr. Trotter stated that for the new pathways program, referrals are sent to the school administrator, and eighth-grade students from the new pathways are highly considered for enrollment in LMA the following school year. Dr. Gurley explained that the "walk program" is for students who are credit-deficient or becoming overage, and it has been expanded from 11th and 12th graders to also include overage 9th graders. The program uses a blended model via Edgenuity to help students get on track and recover credits, and referrals come directly from the professional school counseling office.
- Ms. Cooper questioned how students arrive at high school credit-deficient and overage, requiring enrollment in programs like the "WALK program". Dr. Gurley explained that this situation is often the unintended consequence of students being retained or failing courses, which can lead to a loss of intrinsic motivation when they become overage (e.g., a 15-year-old ninth grader). He defended the use of alternative programming, noting that a multidisciplinary team uses these options to help students get caught up. These programs are "vitaly important" because they use semester-based courses, allowing students to take more courses in a year for credit recovery, which is a faster process than waiting an entire year to reattempt a failed traditional high school course.
- Ms. Bryant raised concerns regarding information retention and academic rigor within the district's alternative programs, noting feedback that some students enter these programs academically behind yet manage to graduate early. She questioned how the district tracks genuine knowledge gains, expressing

concern that students using online platforms might simply be clicking through screens without deeply retaining the material or producing tangible work.

- In response, Dr. Trotter clarified that the LMA Day Program relies heavily on direct teacher instruction aligned with Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) standards and the Charlottesville High School pacing guide, alongside the use of the Edgenuity platform. He acknowledged that the semester-based schedule can cause students to move quickly, and noted that administration—including himself, Ms. Phelps, and Dr. Azie—will look into adjusting the momentum at LMA to focus more on long-term retention and higher assessment scores rather than fast-tracked graduation. Dr. Trotter also highlighted several successful project-based and culturally relevant learning opportunities currently taking place within LMA classrooms.
- Ms. Bryant clarified that her primary concern lies specifically with the accountability and academic structure of the WALK program. Because Dr. Trotter does not directly oversee the WALK program, he noted that while he knows students there utilize Edgenuity and participate in hands-on courses like nutrition, he will need to conduct further research and follow up with a detailed response regarding its specific operations.
- Ms. Cooper inquired about the strategies in place to help students successfully transition from alternative settings back into the primary environment at Charlottesville High School (CHS), emphasizing that alternative programs should not become default pipelines unless a student explicitly chooses that path. She stressed the importance of equipping these students with the necessary skills to reintegrate into a much larger high school environment.
- Dr. Trotter agreed that alternative programs should not serve as a permanent pipeline and identified student transition as a key area of growth for the administration. He noted that reconnecting students with their middle school counselors and ensuring they participate in transition visits to CHS are instrumental steps. Furthermore, he highlighted a need to coordinate with the New Pathways program so that rising ninth graders can attend the same summer academy and enrichment learning opportunities offered to all eighth graders. While some students do transition to CHS and ultimately choose to return to LMA, Dr. Trotter emphasized the need for a stronger, more consistent handoff between the middle school, New Pathways, and CHS, alongside better tracking of these students. Ms. Cooper concluded by underscoring that because the intensive support available in smaller alternative spaces is vastly different from the environment at CHS, explicit support systems must be firmly in place during the transition to ensure long-term student success.
- Ms. Bryant raised concerns regarding the school board's expulsion process, specifically when tasked with making disciplinary decisions on cases that are not yet fully adjudicated or lack formal convictions and clear evidence. She expressed concern that this sets a problematic precedent and asked how the division can establish a standardized protocol for the upcoming school year to ensure consistency rather than handling these situations on a case-by-case basis.
- Dr. Gurley acknowledged that navigating these cases will likely remain a systemic pain point due to the limited information the division receives. He noted that while the frequency of these cases has slowed down, many frequently involve individuals who are not actively enrolled as district students, leaving the board with few clear workarounds outside of official updates from the Commonwealth's Attorney.
- Ms. Burns provided community clarity by explaining that state code mandates the Commonwealth's Attorney to forward these specific cases to the school board for expulsion adjudication. She emphasized that these incidents often occur off school grounds, are not witnessed or reported by staff, and remain legally pending when they reach the board. Ms. Burns suggested that board members engage with state delegates and senators to discuss the true impact of this legislative requirement.
- Ms. Bryant reiterated that establishing a consistent, standardized protocol is essential for building community trust and ensuring equity for all families. She highlighted the disparity between families who arrive at closed sessions with external advocates and those who may lack the preparation or language to plead their case effectively. Ms. Bryant advocated for a clear litmus test to protect student learning time during protracted legal proceedings, suggesting that the board refrain from entirely cutting off educational access while a court process is pending. She concluded by stating she would support

revisiting a student's disciplinary status once a formal conviction is reached, rather than forcing students to miss months of classroom instruction during a lengthy trial process.

- Mr. Meyer highlighted data indicating that approximately 83% of Black students within the district are from low-income households, noting that this socioeconomic status often correlates with a heightened need for basic necessities. He inquired about how community partners are helping to meet these fundamental needs so that students can focus on learning when they arrive at school.
- Dr. Johnson outlined the district's holistic approach to supporting students through both school-based and neighborhood-based partnerships. Within the schools, organizations like the Chris Long Foundation support the establishment of "Ed Zone" closets—which are currently operating at the elementary level with plans to expand to the early learning center—to provide essential supplies directly to students. Additionally, outside organizations such as the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club offer critical neighborhood-based resources and supplies tailored to the needs of their specific populations. Dr. Johnson emphasized the importance of continuing to strengthen these relationships, particularly through after-school programming, to ensure that both basic needs and academic enrichment are addressed beyond regular school hours.
- Ms. Bryant inquired about the data and tracking mechanisms used to evaluate the outcomes of community partnerships. She questioned what specific requirements will be included in future Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to ensure these collaborations are mutually beneficial and demonstrably successful for students. Additionally, she asked if the administration has considered integrating basic needs supplies directly into existing community reading hubs to create a more efficient, "one-stop shop" model for families already utilizing those spaces.
- Dr. Johnson emphasized the importance of data and accountability, noting that future MOUs will explicitly require partners to outline SMART goals and expected outcomes to ensure all parties are held accountable to their stated objectives. He explained that the district is also developing an evaluation process that allows school principals to provide feedback on how partnerships are working in practice, which will be used to continually refine and improve these collaborations. Furthermore, Dr. Johnson noted that tracking outcomes will help the district identify and minimize duplicate services among the area's well-resourced organizations, ensuring that all community partners can collaborate effectively and equitably to support student and family success.
- Ms. Bryant asked about the enforcement mechanisms for community partnerships when expected data is not provided or administrative procedures, such as signing necessary documents, are neglected. She questioned how the district will firmly hold its ground to eliminate non-compliant partnerships rather than continually extending timelines, emphasizing the need for strict adherence to established expectations.
- Dr. Johnson agreed with the importance of upholding high expectations and noted that the entire administrative unit must remain aligned on these standards. He stated that the district must be willing to end or pause partnerships when commitments are not met, noting that a rejection does not have to be permanent, but can serve as a "not right now" until the organization addresses its deficiencies. Dr. Johnson explained that the evaluation process will provide partners with clear feedback on required areas of improvement, and he emphasized that ongoing internal communication will ensure the district maintains a unified stance when managing these accountability discussions.
- Ms. Bryant requested clarification on the practical implementation and timeline for ending non-compliant partnerships, asking whether the decision would stem from a specific board discussion or a formal quarterly review process.
- Dr. Johnson and Dr. Gurley emphasized that administrative decisions to end partnerships require unified board support, particularly when navigating long-standing agreements that carry local political sensitivity. Dr. Gurley explained that as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process becomes fully operationalized and backed by data, the administration will actively dissolve underperforming relationships and expects the board to uphold those data-driven decisions. In terms of immediate timelines, Dr. Gurley noted that all current MOUs expire on June 30, and the administration will use the summer period to evaluate existing partnerships and roll out the new accountability frameworks for the

upcoming school year. Addressing Ms. Bryant's earlier question regarding basic needs, Dr. Gurley added that the division will collaborate with community organizations to gauge interest in expanding supply access and will lean further into these initiatives based on the results of the upcoming family needs assessment.

- Ms. Burns acknowledged the inclusion of SMART goals and metrics for tutoring, mathematics, and reading within the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and inquired whether an attendance component had been considered. She suggested that community partners, particularly those with transportation resources like vans, could play a role in helping chronically absent students get to school.
- Dr. Johnson noted that while attendance had not been discussed recently, historically, the district has engaged in conversations with partners whose organizational missions naturally align with improving student attendance, grades, and behavior. He stated that the division can explore what specific attendance support looks like moving forward, whether through direct transportation assistance or other methods, as organizations submit their applications. Ms. Burns concluded by affirming her support for the administration's June 30 deadline for signed MOUs, emphasizing that the board must stand behind the division's decisions during difficult accountability conversations to ensure clear guidelines and community expectations are upheld.
- Dr. Gurley concluded the presentation by highlighting key data points, achievements, and future strategic priorities for the division. He noted that while overall Black student enrollment has experienced a decline, the widespread accountability measures and systems instituted during the current school year are becoming fully operationalized and showing positive results. Specifically, early literacy data reflect significant progress, with a growing number of third-grade Black students moving out of the "at-risk" category and reading closer to proficiency or on grade level, while kindergarten screening tools demonstrate strong student readiness. Furthermore, Dr. Gurley highlighted positive outcomes in targeted programming, including increased graduation rates and higher enrollment numbers for Black students taking multiple Advanced Placement (AP) courses. He also recognized the success of the Community Schools model under Dr. Johnson, which continues to serve as an effective central hub for family and student resources.
- Looking forward, Dr. Gurley outlined the division's core instructional and operational priorities to sustain this momentum. He emphasized the critical need to protect instructional time so students can consistently access robust, high-quality Tier 1 instruction. He stated that this core curriculum must remain culturally relevant through high-interest materials, while the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) must be implemented with fidelity alongside effective alternatives to suspension. Finally, Dr. Gurley reiterated the division's commitment to rigorously collecting and evaluating outcome data from community partners, ensuring that the numerous local non-profit organizations are held mutually accountable with the district for achieving the specific, expected results for students.
- Mr. Meyer inquired whether the administration had considered additional structural changes beyond the operational adjustments already discussed, inviting recommendations from the superintendent before introducing a specific concept of his own.
- Dr. Gurley responded that the administration is continuously evaluating its internal systems by triangulating data to openly identify and address underperforming areas across multiple divisions, including instructional frameworks, the Community Schools model, Social-Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL), and restorative practices. He emphasized that establishing effective systems requires time and stated that the division's primary focus is on implementing these existing frameworks with fidelity to yield higher outcomes, particularly for Black students. Mr. Meyer then introduced the structural concept of an extended school year for future board consideration, noting that increasing total classroom time directly aligns with the administration's stated goal to protect instructional time and could serve as an effective mechanism to provide additional resources and improve learning outcomes for Black students.
- Ms. Dooley shared her perspective on the structure of the work session, expressing support for the comprehensive data presentation delivered by the administration. She emphasized that detailed, professional presentations are essential for establishing an objective baseline to inform future policy

decisions, noting that governance should be grounded in the operational work of education professionals rather than the personal experiences of board members. While acknowledging the high volume of information presented, she suggested that the board prioritize these types of deeply collaborative operational reviews during meetings, while shifting strictly informative updates to written reports.

- Regarding community and staff feedback, Ms. Dooley urged the board to remain mindful of the intense pressure educators face under the division's heightened focus on Black student achievement. She noted that an increased level of oversight and responsibility naturally brings friction and critical feedback, which the board must interpret constructively as the administration carries out its directives. Looking at academic data, she highlighted the positive kindergarten readiness trends as strong evidence supporting continued investment in the early learning center, while recognizing that intensive work must continue for older students who remain behind. Ms. Dooley concluded by encouraging the board to operate at a collaborative inflection point, advocating for a governance model that balances rigorous accountability with professional support and collaboration rather than excessive criticism.

## **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.

**14.1 [Comments from Members of the Community](#):** There were none.

### **15.1 [Board Member Comments](#):**

- Ms. Craghead-Way thanked the staff for all the presentations and the "really important data."
- Mr. Meyer began by thanking the public for their comments regarding School Resource Officers (SROs) and acknowledged the community's concern and the emails the board has received. He noted that the board has been discussing SROs for over two years, since February 1, 2024. He refuted public claims that the board made decisions without full community input, failed to present data, or did not consider restorative alternatives and the impact on vulnerable students. He then outlined the process and timeline of the SRO discussion, stating that the first board meeting discussion was on February 1, 2024, followed by a community survey where results presented on March 7, 2024, showed 60% of 1,256 respondents were interested in learning about a different SRO model. Subsequent meetings included a work session in May 2024, a vote postponement to March 27, 2025, to allow for more staff research and community engagement, a work session where data was presented on October 24, 2024, and a presentation on restorative justice on January 9, 2025. The process culminated in the March 27, 2025 meeting, where a vote to delay the decision failed, leading to a vote to request the administration to form a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Charlottesville Police Department (CPD) to govern how SROs would be utilized, clarifying this was not a vote to invite armed police but to establish a governing MOU. Meyer asserted that the entire process constituted a "very robust community consultation". He concluded by citing a 2014 report from the Charlottesville Task Force on Minority Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System, which recommended developing a joint MOU between the CPD and the school division concerning SROs based on models shown to reduce disproportionality. Ms. Richardson then interrupted Mr. Meyer, expressing frustration that he was discussing SROs after the board had agreed not to, stating it was "ridiculous" for him to point out data and notes after saying no to the discussion. Mr. Meyer responded that he wanted the data and facts over the last two years to be on the record, defending the board's democratic process and rejecting claims of "backroom dealing".
- Ms. Bryant challenged the relevancy of a 2014 report cited by Mr. Meyer, noting that 2014 precedes an unspecified number of killings of unarmed Black people by police and issues with the Charlottesville Police Department, including a destabilized civilian review oversight process. She stated that previous

comments from board members—including that the process "could have been better" and that they "didn't know the vote was going to happen"—contradict the current defense of the process as "robust." She reported hearing allegations that board members engaged in conversations with Chief Kes to orchestrate the SRO decision before she joined the board. Ms. Bryant argued that limiting the SRO discussion to two years minimizes an issue that is layered and deeply affects Black youth and families, including those in affordable and public housing. She urged the board to uphold its strategic plan values, such as equity and belonging, and to maintain the same level of attentiveness for polarizing issues like the ICE resolution and police presence, as these topics impact student outcomes. She concluded by thanking the presenters for their reports and apologized for the abrupt cessation of the last meeting.

- Ms. Cooper first offered congratulations to all student athletes for their "amazing job". She then stated she had received a letter from a Charlottesville High School (CHS) 9th-grade student named Naana Pedwaay. Ms. Cooper requested that the letter be added to the record and escalated to Mr. Malone. The letter advocated for increasing the 30-minute student lunchtime by an additional 10 minutes or more. The student argued that the current time is insufficient to get food, eat, clean up, and get to the next class, leading students to skip lunch or eat in a way that negatively affects their physical health and academic learning, resulting in loss of focus, moodiness, and misbehavior. The student asked Ms. Cooper to help persuade other School Board members to approve the request, ensuring students have enough time for a good lunch, are on time for class, and are ready to learn. Ms. Cooper concluded by sharing the letter with the board.
- Ms. Richardson stated that although board members may have differing outlooks and approaches, they all share the goal of student safety and inclusion. She asked the community to "give the board grace" in order to regain and build trust with the community, and she concluded by thanking the presenters for the evening's presentations. Ms. Torres, the board chair, then followed.
- Ms. Torres reiterated her gratitude to all presenters and acknowledged that the board would be continuing the work discussed.

**16.1 Superintendent's Comments:** Dr. Gurley congratulated staff and teachers as they embark upon a "well-deserved spring break" next week, noting that he will be in the office during that time. He expressed excitement for the upcoming graduation, calling it one of the "favorite times of the year" because it allows the division to see students who have worked hard participate in culminating activities. He encouraged staff and teachers to "finish strong" and hoped everyone would be rejuvenated over the break.

**17.1 Work Session Wrap-Up:** There were two requests from the Board:

- Written report about updates/changes regarding Summit traffic
- Written report about suggestions provided at board meetings

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

**19.1 Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 11:23 pm.

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Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

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Leslie Thacker, School Board Clerk