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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, April 11, 2024

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Place Albemarle County Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia
Length 2h 32m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24u6CxmlDqA>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-13. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:03] call this meeting of the albemarle county school board back to order do we have a closed meeting certification motion yes i move that the board certified 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 unidentified and the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered in the closed meeting second moved by ms osborne

[00:00:31] seconded by Mr. Page. Could we have a roll call vote for that, please? Mr. Chuck Pace? Yes. Dr. Acuff? Yes. Ms. Osborne? Yes. Mr. Graham Page? Yes. Dr. Berlin? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Chair Lee? Yes. So moved. Okay, and we have one motion coming out of closed meeting. Yes, we do, Chair Lee. The school board values the input of the public at its regulars meetings. At the same time, we have often, we often have a very full agenda with a great deal of business to

[00:01:04] discuss and resolve. For this reason, I move that we direct staff to amend policy BDDH in several ways in order to ensure that we balance our desire to hear from the public with our interest in transacting business in an efficient and timely manner. One, we should continue allowing people and groups to sign up public comment in a variety of ways, including online and in person, but we should limit the total number of speakers to 20 per meeting. Two, we should set a total time limit for public comment of 40 minutes unless the board decides due to special circumstances to grant more time to commenters on a particular issue and

[00:01:44] three where there are more than 20 individuals and or groups signed up to speak we should assign each speaker a number and draw numbers from a box to determine excuse me which speakers will have the opportunity to speak at that meeting if there are speakers who can do not get a chance to speak at a particular meeting then they can sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or they may submit written comments to be considered by the school board. I second. Moved by Dr. Acuff and seconded

[00:02:17] by Dr. Berlin. Is there any discussion on the motion? Nope. Okay. Could we have a roll call vote for that please Christine? Dr. Acuff? Yes. Mr. Chuck Pace? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Mr. Graham

[00:02:38] Paige? Yes. Ms. Osborne? Yes. Dr. Berlin? Yes. Chair Lee? Yes. So moved. Thank you. Next we will have the roll call starting with Josiah Black. Start with Matt. Matthew Hawes, Superintendent. Allison Spillman, at-large representative. Ellen Osborne, Scottsville District. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall Representative. Judy Lee, Rybana District. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Graham Page, Miller District. Chuck Pace, Ryan.

[00:03:15] district Fernandez is narrow student rep Claire Kaiser assistant superintendent Josiah Schmidt sorry Josiah black school division counsel Rosalyn Schmidt chief operating officer Christine Thompson clerk of the board Chandra Hayes assistant superintendent Helen Dunn public affairs and strategic communications officer Chip Riley Albano County Police Department thank you very much next we

[00:03:49] will stand for the Pledge of Allegiance next we'll observe a moment of silence

[00:04:14] Thank you. Next we have the approval of the agenda. I move that the agenda be approved for

[00:04:56] tonight. I second. Moved by Mr. Page. Seconded by Dr. Acuff. All those in favor say aye. Aye. None opposed. All right. Agenda is approved. Next we have the approval of the consent agenda. Do we have a motion? I move to accept the consent agenda. Second. Moved by Dr. Berlin. Seconded by Mr. Chuck Pace. All those in favor? Aye. Aye. Aye. Any opposed? Okay. Consent agenda accepted. Next, we will move on to announcements. First, we have our Spotlight on Education

[00:05:35] presented by Fernanda Cisneros. Hello and good evening. I'm delighted to introduce to the board the winners of the 2023 and 2024 Albemarle County Public School Elementary and Middle School spelling champions for tonight's spotlight on education. At the end of January, spellers took the stage right here in Layton Auditorium to show off their spelling skills. Enoch Yu, a student at Hollymead Elementary School, took the championship at the elementary level by correctly spelling the word "supersonic" after nine rounds. Claire Meng, a student at Lakeside Middle School, took the

[00:06:11] middle school level title by correctly spelling "extemporaneous" after four rounds of spelling. Enoch and Clare, along with the winners of each individual school spelling bee, completed in the Scripps Regional Spelling Bee Qualifier in February. Clare, who qualified for Regional Bee in March, won that competition and will be heading to Washington DC in May to compete for the Scripps National Spelling Bee title. At the cusp of its 100th anniversary, what is now known as a Scripps National Spelling Bee was created in 1925 when

[00:06:50] nine newspapers joined together to host a spelling competition. Spelling these according to Scripps serve to help students discover the words they need to shine their light on the world and inspire students to retain lifelong curiosity and enrich their communities through discovery of new words. With that

[00:07:10] please join me in welcoming Enoch and Claire do you have any questions or

[00:07:48] comments I would love to know how you each of you prepared for the spelling bee then were you afraid when you were at the competition you can move the mic it moves towards you if you want to speak into it um for each year Scripps has a list of I believe it's 4,000 words that are sort of eligible to be up in like the spelling bees so all of these words are available in the Word Club app on the App Store which is usually what I used to study. I ended up not having to

[00:08:27] study too much for album models just because for the middle school level at least there weren't really many rounds just because there's not many schools for their new champions from. You do get emailed like a written list of the words but I find that's not super helpful to just read words over and over. So normally when I study I just sort of use the app since it's a good active recall sort of way to study. Did you use apps as well? Yes. Were you nervous during the

[00:09:03] competition? Not that much. Oh I think I would be. I'm trying to spell extemporaneous I was a little nervous but I think it was sort of helpful since the county one wouldn't really have too much of an effect on like the actual progression of the real thing it was mostly just you know to have like a county champion and you know I've done spelling bees before so I think the nerves are a little lessened because of that what were the hardest words that

[00:09:37] you had to spell for me it was probably extemporaneous because it was the championship word I will say the first one I got I think was impetuosity was kind of tricky because I hadn't studied it before so I just sort of guessed on that one and I guess correctly which is good but the whole thing was kind of nerve-wracking uh-huh what about you what was the hardest word do you remember I don't remember any really hard words you were in the zone I guess well we are

[00:10:16] very very proud of you super impressive congratulations I was here watching the County B and I was tense I can tell you just sitting back there I was like oh my god are they gonna pull this out it was very impressive I definitely know I couldn't spell either of those words so I'm in awe yeah would you like to come

[00:10:39] up and shake all of our hands just encourage congratulations all right let's do another round

[00:11:26] of applause for our listeners thank you very much fernanda next we have our school board and superintendent's business. Ms. Lee, I do have a resolution of appreciation to read, and I'm hoping I'll get a motion from the board. Whereas, and this is a resolution of appreciation for our armed services, armed forces, and the children that attend our schools

[00:12:00] that have parents in armed services. Whereas serving in the armed forces in the United States of america is one of our country's highest callings and whereas serving the u.s armed forces requires the demonstration of many positive attributes such as commitment dedication sacrifice and courage and whereas serving in the u.s armed forces enables individuals to learn lifelong tangible and intangible skills and to develop expertise that are beneficial to the business and civic community as well as to the country and whereas the albama county school board strives to provide

[00:12:37] an educational experience for students that prepares them for higher education and for service to country and community and whereas our military families are invested in the well-being and success of the communities in which they live through such roles as mentoring tutoring coaching parent-teacher organization membership and as school-based volunteers and whereas albama county Public Schools has

been a beneficiary of these extraordinary contributions. Now therefore be it resolved the Albemarle County School Board celebrates and salutes those graduating seniors

[00:13:16] who have chosen to enter military service and thanks them for their willingness to serve their country in this manner and be it further resolved that Albemarle County School Board salutes our military families for their valued service to our schools, communities, and to our nation that we pledge our continued support to you. I move that this school board adopt this resolution read by Dr. Haas. Second. Moved by Dr. Acuff, seconded by Ms. Spillman. All those in

[00:13:52] favor say aye. Aye. None opposed. The resolution is adopted. Thanks very much, Dr. Haas. Is there any other school board or superintendent business? I was just going to say I attended the student senate today. I know chair Lee and several of the other ones were there and I was just super impressed with the collaborative nature of our students and all of these different groups that came together to try to make our school division better. I was just super inspired by it and it just really gives me hope for the future of our school division and man these kids are pretty special. It was pretty

[00:14:30] amazing so I just was really honored that I even got to attend today I definitely felt the same way I was telling people today that I'm always really excited to attend those events and then they far exceed my expectations just because of how insightful and thoughtful the kids are so yeah I agree all right next we have public comments mr. Chuck pace will be taking that we invite actively seek the public's input in matters relevant to school board governance and provide time in our business meetings to hear from our

[00:15:06] residents and community members during public comment we expect respectful and on-topic comments disruptive behavior from speakers or from members of the public in attendance will not be tolerated anyone who willfully disrupts this meeting in a manner that prevents or interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting may be ejected by the chair individuals and or organizations wishing to speak during public comment must sign up in advance sign up is

[00:15:39] available online beginning at 9 a.m on monday of the week of the school board meeting and will be available until 2 p.m on the day of the meeting speakers may also call the school school board clerk's office to sign up for public comment until 2 p.m on the day of the members of the public who do not sign up electronically or by telephone in advance of the meeting may sign up in person at the meeting with the school board clerk beginning at 6 p.m in-person sign up will be available until

[00:16:17] the public comment period of the meeting for meetings that are held in person each presenter will be allowed three minutes to speak however the chair with the consent of the board may reduce the time allocated for all individuals to speak to two minutes depending on the number of individuals you sign up public testimony guidelines are as follows speakers should adhere to the following protocol state name and address of the vote or voting district address comments to the school

[00:16:54] board as a whole limit comments to those matters that are relevant to the school board governance or school board division operations limit comments oops i just did that give written statements and other supporting material to the clerk if you are unable to complete the presentation in the time allotted a copy of supporting materials will be provided to school board members three minutes will be allowed for each speaker who has signed up to speak the chair may reduce the time allocated for all individuals to speak to two minutes depending on the number of individuals who sign

[00:17:31] up given there are more than 10 individuals sign up for public comment each speaker will be allowed two minutes to speak and actually i think we have that's right it'll be two minutes tonight because it's a little bit more than 10. the color-coded light system is used for time presentations the yellow light means the speaker is two minutes or in this case tonight one minute in and then

[00:18:04] when you see the red light that means that your time is up in order to maintain respect for all points of view the school board requests no clapping booing or any other audible form of support or non-support be used if members of the public wish to show their support for a speaker they may stand or raise their hands when multiple comments on the same topic have been presented the chair may request additional comments on the topic be limited to those who have new information

[00:18:38] to present debate and dialogue with the school board are not allowed use of the projection system is reserved for staff agenda items presentations only our first speaker tonight will be matthew hepler good evening good evening my name is matt hepler i'm a resident of the samuel moulder

[00:19:13] district i'm an acps teacher and most importantly i'm a parent of an acps student and they're soon to be ACPS student. I'm speaking today in my private capacity to urge the board to adopt the collective bargaining resolution for ACPS employees. Collective bargaining will improve ACPS's ability to meet our mission. Recent academic studies find statistically significant benefits to student learning when teachers are empowered through collective bargaining.

[00:19:45] There are additional benefits to staff retention and teacher morale as well. There are some other benefits. We live in a time that seems to have an unprecedented amount of disrespect towards educators from certain members of the public and by some elected officials. Recognizing employees' right to sit at the negotiation table communicates that we are worthy of the respect we deserve and of the tremendous trust placed in us.

[00:20:09] Moreover, as a teacher, I understand that everything a district does is curriculum. them. By adopting collective bargaining, we will be communicating to our students that they too should have a seat at the negotiation table when they join the workforce. As a parent, that lesson is one that I believe is one of the most important things we can communicate to our youths. Again, I urge you to adopt the resolution for collective bargaining for ACPS employees. Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Patricia Napoleon followed by David Rhodes

[00:20:44] and Tim Klobuchar. Hello, my name is Pat Spicer-Napoleon, and I'm a lifelong resident of the area. I live in Charlottesville, and I taught for 30 years in Albemarle County. I'm here tonight to speak in support of Mr. Ben Hurt. I attended Albemarle High School 8th through 12th grade.

[00:21:20] Unlike today, Albemarle High was a safe, warm, successful, and always free from violence under Mr. Hurt's excellent leadership. He was a man of integrity and loved by all. I wish mentioning a dear friend and fellow AHS classmate, Walter White, an African-American student. He adored Mr. Hurt. He and his brother James had beautiful singing voices and regularly won talent shows in Hurt's school. Walter attended college, had a very successful career with the Kansas City Chiefs,

[00:21:55] and then became a banker. Walter often visited Mr. Hurt's home when he came to Charlottesville. How many of you knew Mr. Hurt well? Did you know him as Walter and I knew him? If you did, please raise your hand. Mr. Hurt, as well as Walter and I, knew him well. Mr. Hurt was a beautiful man, and I'll have to say the entire board sitting here on a pedestal has passed unfair

[00:22:31] judgment on a fine man whom they never intimately knew. How would any of you feel wherein you or your family were investigated with a fine-toothed comb and then trashed publicly as you have done to Mr. Hurt and his family with this sketchy, poorly advertised vote? No one is perfect, including you, before us. Where is your open mind and compassion and forgiveness? As leaders, your swift judgment offers a poor example for the community and the students you were elected to represent

[00:23:03] you're ignorantly promoting division here thank you thank you mr rhodes yes sir david rhodes from keswick um nhs class of 75 uh mr hart students are getting old now but we're not dead

[00:23:37] yet um like i said i'm 66 years old i've seen a lot of changes in those 66 years one of those changes that I saw was when I started first grade in 1963. That was the first year the schools are integrated. And I learned a lot over the years. Learned a lot. And learned a lot from my black friends. There's a sign outside of my elementary school celebrating the first African-American

[00:24:09] students to go there. And some of those people are my friends to this day. Mr. Hurt, Mr. Hurt like students solve their own problem. When he was there, they had their first Black History Month program. Because of the troubled times in the late 60s, early 70s, he had a hard time finding someone to speak. He finally went down to Jagsuit or whatever they call

[00:24:45] it now and asked the principal there if they had somebody that could MC the program. And And a young 13-year-old stepped up, who is now a lawyer now, that lives from my neighborhood. And another young black lady from my neighborhood was called to the office one morning with another young African-American girl, and Mr. Hertz said, "We want to expand the cheerleading squad from 10 girls to 12 girls."

[00:25:15] And so, like I said, he left it up to the kids, and they took up that challenge, knowing they were going to face a lot of adversity. And that's just, he was fair and balanced. That's it. Thank you, Mr. Rooks.

[00:25:33] Mr. Klobuchar, followed by Andrew Shelton and Sarah Harris. Good evening. I'm Tim Klobuchar. I'm an English teacher at Monticello High School and a member of the Albemarle Education Association team that negotiated with ACPS on the collective bargaining resolution you're set to vote on tonight.

[00:25:57] I'm speaking tonight on behalf of the AEA to express our excitement and hopefulness as we begin a new era at ACPS with the passage of tonight's resolution collective bargaining means that employees in every area of our schools classrooms cafeterias buses offices and more will now have a real voice when it comes to our pay benefits and working conditions I can tell you as someone who taught for 17 years in a collective bargaining state before moving to Virginia that having a multi-year contract that provides guarantees for the guarantees that employees help negotiate that will make a huge difference for us both in terms of tangible

[00:26:35] benefits as well as overall morale collective bargaining is the best system this country has figured out in order to get workers in education to feel valued and to reach their highest potential that in turn helps create the best possible conditions for our students learning and growth it's not a coincidence that the strongest performing states in k-12 education also happen to have strong collective bargaining practices in their schools the partnership that aea and acps will forge through the collective bargaining process will make the division a better place for everyone associated with it already other divisions in the commonwealth who've adopted

[00:27:14] collective bargaining have achieved significant victories related to pay leave policies and more it's been a long difficult road to get to this point both for virginia and for acps but we know that the road doesn't end here we still have an authorization card campaign and an election to conduct before we can get to the collective bargaining process and then that's when the real work of negotiating a contract begins however the knowledge of the work ahead is now accompanied by the faith that we have a collaborative relationship with acps and that together we can help make our schools the best they can be thank you thank you next up is andrew shelton

[00:27:54] followed by sarah harris and kathy thalman joseph ah hi there andrew shelton samuel miller district I'm here to speak in support of the collective bargaining agreement that I hope y'all are about to adopt I have no affiliation with the county schools not for a very long time at least I have no children I don't expect that I'll have children in the schools but I'm very fortunate every day that I work with so many people who graduated from Albemarle County Schools and I see a

[00:28:33] great benefit in in supporting our teachers to the greatest possible extent that goes well beyond the folks that are just in there every day doing the work and I think that one of the best possible ways that y'all could do that to could support the teachers and build a really beneficial education system for everyone is to adopt the collective bargaining resolution thank you very much thank you Sarah Harris hi my name is Sarah Harris I live in the Whitehall

[00:29:09] district and I'm here tonight on behalf of Ford Albemarle we are a local public education advocacy organization we strongly support the collective bargaining resolution because we strongly support our teachers thank you to the AEA and to the members of the board for your work to get collective bargaining to where it is this evening thank you in advance for voting to approve it and thank you for the work that remains as we make sure that we continue to fully support and empower our educators most importantly though thank you to the folks behind me and to the thousands of ACPS employees who

[00:29:44] show up for our kids each and every day in a million different ways in classrooms and cafeterias buses and libraries guidance counselors offices and every single corner of the school buildings public schools are literally nothing without you so thank you for all you do every day thank you thank you next up is kathy thalman joseph followed by john glass chris winter okay um so

[00:30:22] John Glass. I was just-- my name is John Glass.

[00:30:38] I'm in the Ryo District. I teach at Almont High School. I teach Spanish. I was here, I believe, last week. Good to see you all again. First, I'd like to echo everything that my colleagues have said in support of the AEA and collective bargaining. But specifically, I'd like to address briefly-- oh, my clock hasn't started.

[00:30:57] Oh, I'm so sorry. That's all right. Thank you. I'm so honest. That's OK. So I would like to speak specifically about cell phone policy in Omaha County schools. I would like to ask to please create a phone away for the day policy across the county.

[00:31:17] Please look into school systems and that have successfully begun that program. Please look into the success that they have had. I feel a little frustrated that the colleagues said, give them research, give them numbers. If you do not understand the grave impact of cell phone use in our school, You are not in our classes, you are not listening to our teachers, and I know that you know this.

[00:31:44] One thought that I had was Saretta Hammond's book, Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Brain, is, we've all read it, it is our scripture for pedagogy. However, it is morally inconsistent to expect

teachers to be trained on this without providing policy and tools to enact it.

[00:32:02] The same tools of dopamine rewards, cortisol for stress management, for our oxytocin for social bonding, those same tools described by Zaretta Hammond are used by businesses to profit on children at school. We cannot have vending machines because they are sugarless, nutritionally empty foods, but we allow businesses to track private information on school property and profit constantly through our organization as a public school system.

[00:32:34] their only incentive is to undermine children's attention they have no incentive to stop Facebook alone had 135 billion dollar profit 23 billion in spending and advertising we do not stand a chance please make a phone away for the day policy that is consistent thank you for your time thank you Chris

[00:33:03] winter evening thank you for what you all do appreciate your service to the community. My name is Chris Winter. I'm in the Rio District. I'm coming up here because I don't appreciate names of schools being changed. I don't think any of the schools should have been changed. I think that when you come to a community you respect the leadership of the community as it has been and as it should be and each one of you leaders right now if you had your name put on a

[00:33:42] school somebody's gonna dig something up from your past because you are not pure perfect you do not work walk on water and they will remove your name from the school as well I find it so much so disrespectful that's all it is to me it's just disrespect you're coming into a community and you're saying that name needs to go well sorry that's not the way it works people from Charlottesville from Albemarle County that see you all as actions they shake their heads as they're looking down at the ground because they see the disrespect they

[00:34:22] know you're disrespecting the community it's unfortunate and i hope you're opening your ears i'm also here because i was a bus driver i saw the call i heard the call over the radio people need bus drivers out mall county i went and got the job upgraded my license i'm a cold war veteran okay i did well at the job i did good at the job i enjoyed it been driving for 30 years okay all of a sudden i bring up the issue that i'm starting to see scantily dressed

[00:34:57] young girls and some of them are getting on my bus i won't tolerate it i don't want scantily dressed girls on my bus it's against the dress code for the school they fired me i want my job

[00:35:16] back thank you mr winner up next is barbara westbrook followed by betty sweats my name is barbara rosenkrans westbrook i was born and raised in croze and i'm very fortunate to have and mallet as my supervisor she's been a big help to those who live in whitehall district

[00:35:54] i would like to speak about mr hurt he knew my family and i knew him well i graduated from admiral high in 1965 and i have a picture of mr westbrook would you pull your mic down just a little bit so we can see this is a picture of mr hurt giving my degree to me in 1965 diploma he encouraged me to go to college i graduated from longwood college with a degree in business education went back to teach at admiral high when mr hurt was still principal mr hurt was the kindest

[00:36:32] most religious man i have ever known he did not have a prejudice prejudice bone in his body i just would like to encourage you please do not remove his name from agner hurt high school be

[00:36:50] very disrespect disrespectful to a wonderful man thank you thank you hi i'm sue craddock from the

[00:37:25] scottsville district and i've taught in albemarle county for 35 years and mr hurt was my wonderful principal good evening my name is betty svets i live in keswick and i taught for albemarle county schools for 43 years i was educated in the county and as well i went to albemarle high school and enjoyed so much the man that led our school and it is very disappointing and sad that his name

[00:37:58] would be taken off from a school after he served this county for 30 years in your mission statement i noticed that you all value relationships he was the epitome of establishing racial relationships with his students his teachers and the community and i just really implore you to reconsider what you have done to desecrate his legacy in this county and of all the students that

[00:38:33] he affected in his leadership in a time that was not easy. We graduated in 1971, so he was there from 54 to 84, I think. So please reconsider your decision in desecrating his memory. Be decent and be respectful and of his commitment to this county. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:39:09] Thanks very much for everyone who came to give public comment. Next we have school division

[00:39:18] business 8.1 resolution providing for collective bargaining Josiah Black. Good evening school

[00:40:14] board members, Dr. Haas, Madam Clerk, fellow members of the cabinet, and ladies and gentlemen. I'm Josiah Black, school division counsel, and it's my pleasure and my privilege to have an opportunity to talk with you about the school board's resolution providing for collective bargaining. Now it feels a little strange to make making a presentation to you on your own resolution, particularly where all of the school board members have been so deeply involved in the architecture of this resolution, but I'm hoping that by briefly recapping a little bit of the history and covering the major points of the resolution, it will sponsor some

[00:40:54] discussion and hopefully also serve as useful information for the teachers and staff and members of the general public who are here tonight and who are participating online. So the agenda is simple, cover a little of the history, the main features, and then I'd love to entertain your questions if any. Let me first start with the definition to make sure that we're all on the same page.

[00:41:14] What is collective bargaining? Collective bargaining very simply is the process by which a group of employees bands together to seek to be represented jointly by an organization, usually a labor union but not always, for the purpose of negotiating their wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

[00:41:34] As you all know, the Virginia Supreme Court in 1977 ruled that collective bargaining is illegal in the public sector in Virginia, and that was the law of the land for 44 years. Then in 2021, the General Assembly changed course and passed legislation that permits collective bargaining in local government bodies that want to enable it. And if you'll allow me, I'll make a comment aside, my personal opinion is that was kind of an unusual move. I haven't seen legislatures do that too often. They said, if you want this, you can have it. But they didn't tell us what it's supposed to look like or what the rules of the road would be. And so what they did is they

[00:42:10] left it to all 132 school divisions across the Commonwealth to decide, A, did they want collective bargaining? And if so, B, how should it operate? What are the rules of engagement? How would a union get elected and so forth so it was a lot of work and a lot of people were involved in this process not going to mention everybody by name but i would like to especially recognize a couple of people first our school board clerk christine thompson kept everything moving smoothly she scheduled all the meetings took the minutes was the keeper of the master draft and we really could not have

[00:42:46] done this this important work without her dr haas served as a facilitator for the first eight or nine meetings and that was hugely helpful. For the school board, Dr. Berlin and Ms. Osborne led the charge. And then I want to recognize three of our very own ACPS teachers, Tim Klobuchar from whom you heard tonight, Vernon Lectie, and Mary McIntyre who are not only teachers in our school division but also representatives of the Albemarle Education Association. Their input was very helpful and much appreciate it as well. Finally I'd like to thank Lauren Hunt who created these

[00:43:21] beautiful slides which I definitely could not have done myself. A little more context on what's been going on around the Commonwealth of Virginia since the legislation was passed in 2021. Over those few years there are 13 county school divisions in Virginia who voted to authorize collective bargaining. Of those eight have already adopted resolutions, most of them fairly similar the one that you're considering tonight and four of those divisions have already signed collective bargaining agreements at last count 32.7 percent of public school districts across the country

[00:44:00] have some employees who are represented by unions now to the meat of our resolution just to recap some of the high points the first thing that everyone should know is that the resolution contemplates the creation of two bargaining units bargaining units are groups of employees who have similar working duties responsibility compensation etc and so it makes sense to group them together so that if a union is elected that union will represent those employees jointly in the case of our rep and of our resolution the two bargaining units are one licensed instructional

[00:44:37] staff and two education support professionals who are also known as classified staff These two groups together represent 91% of the nearly 2,800 employees in our school division. And the final point I want to make is that it is possible for more than one union to seek certification as the collective bargaining representative.

[00:45:01] At the moment, we only know of the Albemarle Education Association, and I don't know, but they've expressed an intent to represent both -- to seek representation status for both bargaining units but it is possible that other unions will emerge and also seek to become certified so I wanted to make that point here's what the process looks like as mr. Klobuchar mentioned the first step after a resolution is passed is that a union that's interested in becoming the certified bargaining representative has to get permission from the employees in the bargaining unit or bargaining units that they want to represent they do that by

[00:45:38] distributing information holding meetings and ultimately asking employees to sign what's known as an authorization card it's usually a one-page document and it says simply i want this union to be my certified bargaining representative if the union gets signatures from 50 or more of the employees in a bargaining unit they can then present a petition to the school board to hold an election the school board has the opportunity at that point to have a neutral third party review the authorization cards, but it doesn't have to. Then a

[00:46:14] secret ballot election is conducted. It's done electronically online. The school division and the board don't see who votes which way. We just have a neutral who tells us whether two things happen. First, the union has to get 33% of the employees in the bargaining unit to participate, to cast a vote either way. If that threshold is met, and the second part, if the union gets a majority of votes from those who voted, then the union wins and the process of certification begins. The resolution says that within nine days following the

[00:46:54] certification of the election results the parties will meet and we have agreed that in the first year in the first collective bargaining agreement for the first year the parties would negotiate on four working conditions topics. They will then negotiate the rest of the bargaining agreement and we've set a deadline in the resolution for of October 1st because we really need to know what the terms and conditions of the contract would be by that time so that we can begin the process of seeking the funding necessary to support that. The other thing that's important to know about the resolution is that it contemplates that the parties may not agree. Where negotiations break down in labor

[00:47:34] relations we call that an impasse. The resolution provides that in the event of an impasse where there's already a contract in place in place the terms and conditions of the contract will remain in effect while the parties continue negotiating but we didn't think that it was fair that employees should have to wait for a wage increase or enhancements to benefits so we have a provision that says that the board can unilaterally implement its last and best wage and benefit proposal there's an opportunity if the parties want to engage in non-binding mediation which is a facilitated negotiation we had that during the negotiation the resolution process and then ultimately hopefully an agreement is reached and

[00:48:13] then the last step in the process is that those members of the bargaining unit who have chosen to join the union and that's optional let me pause here and make sure that that's very very clear there are many opportunities in this process for employees to express their choice they can choose whether to sign an authorization card they can choose whether to vote in favor of a union and even if a union is certified they still have the choice of deciding whether or not they want to join a union which has you know pluses and minus it involves paying dues if they join it means they get represent the opportunity to be represented during a grievance hearing and those types of things so but

[00:48:52] I want to make clear that there are a lot of moments in this process where employees can express their right and our hope as a school division I think we're you know as government officials we're kind of neutral on this but what really matters to me is that we want people to participate to get informed and I'm really pleased to see so many people here tonight who care about this because really it should be an informed decision and so I hope that you know we'll continue collaborating on getting the word out about what this means and and how the process will work a couple of other miscellaneous features that I think are important to know we talked about the appointment of a labor relations neutral link that's really important that person would not only

[00:49:29] preside over the election and the certification of the results but he or she would also be available to help to resolve disagreements between the parties if there are grievances that proceed to an arbitration process the neutral would hear those and be the decision-maker that's a very common feature of collective bargaining agreements and then the final feature is one that you find in almost every collective bargaining agreement I've ever seen which is a no strike no lockout provision both sides agree that you know the most important thing that any of us do is serve the students in our school division. So we're all on the same page that it's important to make sure that schools stay

[00:50:05] open, kids keep going to classes. Whatever our disagreements may be, our focus is on them. So that is the end of my presentation. Do you have any questions? I don't have any questions. I just wanted to say a couple things if I could. First, I want to thank you because we were stuck for a while. And then Josh came on board in December. And thank you to Dr. Berlin and Ms. Osborne.

[00:50:37] We're super grateful for all the work that you did. So thank you. I was having a hard time not getting teary-eyed when all of the teachers stood up during public comment because it really demonstrated to me the passion behind this. A lot of you know I have five kids in our schools.

[00:50:57] So a lot of you have my kids, and they are not easy. And so I think that you guys are heroes. I do. I am grateful every single day for everything that you do for my kids and for the kids in our division. And prior to me being elected to the board, I was a big proponent of collective bargaining because I've seen what you've done every day with my kids.

[00:51:23] So it's an honor for me to be up here and get an opportunity to vote on this, and I'm just really excited that our board and the AEA and the teachers could come to this point and that we're finally here after a really long time.

[00:51:42] So I'm just really excited, and I just wanted to say thank you to all of you for showing up because it really is impressive, this show of support. Thanks. I'd like to give a shout out to our HR department, too, because we peppered them with lots of questions, especially towards the end.

[00:51:59] And none of this really could have happened until we actually had our own HR department. And so I want to thank whoever had that bright idea several years ago, because that made all the difference. But I really appreciate HR's patience with us and all the questions that we asked.

[00:52:17] And I just wanted to say what an honor it was to be part of this process. this, and I truly appreciate both sides of the table. We were able to come together and really truly negotiate for what was needed for the teachers and the kids in this community.

[00:52:33] So I so appreciate that. I know at times we didn't know where it would go and what would happen, but I really appreciate everyone doing their best to try to reach across the aisle and to make this work for the kids, because that's why we're all here. So thank you all so much. All right.

[00:52:52] If there are no more questions that move, we adopt the resolution as presented. I second. I third. Moved by Ms. Osborne, seconded by Dr. Berlin. Is there any other discussion or are we ready for a vote? Nope.

[00:53:08] All right. Can we have a roll call on this, please, Christine? Yes. I couldn't hear. There was some noise out there. I apologize. The first and second, Chair Lee. Ms. Osborne and Dr. Berlin. Thank you. Dr. Berlin?

[00:53:24] Yes. Chuck Pace yes Ms. Osborne yes Ms. Spillman absolutely yes Mr. Graham Page yes we've been on this road for a long time so it's a great pleasure to say vote yes Dr. Acuff yes Chair Lee

[00:53:46] yes so moved all right so moved it is indeed historic next we have FY25 budget updates Maya

[00:54:27] kumazawa afternoon i'm maya kumazawa director of budget and planning and this evening i'm looking

[00:55:01] for guidance to facilitate your action on the budget on april 25th to adopt the fy25 budget a lot of the material is follow-up from what was presented on march 28th two weeks ago so i'll refer back to that our starting point in this discussion is the school board's funding request that's shown here that had revenues of \$259.6 million and expenditures of \$272.9 million, leaving a \$13.3 million gap. This is also a summary slide of what is included as part of

[00:55:38] the revenue and expenditure request. We've discussed our various steps we can take to reduce this gap for the last few weeks. One, to plan for higher revenues by updating local, state and one-time revenues, and also to make reductions by deferring replacement cycles, pausing hiring, and increasing budgeted student-to-teacher ratio.

[00:56:03] All the while, we've been working on a lot of technical updates to make sure the budget is in as accurate shape as we can get in as we move forward. So I'll first review the technical changes again. This list is largely the same from March 28th with a few highlighted items that are updates OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS.

[00:56:24] THE FIRST IS A BASELINE ADJUSTMENT. WE HAVE FOUND SOME TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS AND REFINEMENTS THAT WE'VE MADE IN THE BUDGET RESULTING IN SAVINGS OF ABOUT \$700,000. IN LIEU OF THE STATE NEWS THAT CAME OUT THIS WEEK AND THE GOVERNOR'S ACTIONS AND NOT KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT THE IMPACT WILL BE TO US BY THE TIME THE STATE BUDGET PROCESS this over, we propose putting those savings aside and budgeting them as part of a contingency.

[00:56:54] So not putting any spending behind it, knowing that we will likely need to pull it later. And if we do, we don't have to make further reductions. The other significant update is the compensation proposal. This proposal in the funding request included a 3% salary increase across the board for employees in line with keeping overall compensation competitive with our market we need also need to include the increase to the academic leadership compensation program as presented by our human resources staff several meetings

[00:57:30] ago and also increase our pay scales in some of our other areas including the supplemental pay scale which funds wages for non salaries so for example substitute wages, tutoring wages, those would also need to increase. And then the last piece is overtime. So as we increase salaries, the cost for overtime will go up by that same proportion. So this change refines the proposal a little bit more, knowing that and knowing that we feel certain that the 3% will move forward, we wanted to make sure we were comprehensive with that proposal. And

[00:58:09] then that the academic leadership compensation program adds about \$300,000 to the proposal. The supplemental pay scale about \$140,000 and overtime about \$40,000. So that's the impact. Overall in this list, the net change, you don't see a number, the net change is about zero. So that's the summary list. Did you have a question? I was just going to say it was like 5.7 million and now you've added it's like 6.2 or something like that. I'll review that later on.

[00:58:44] At some point, there was a discussion about monetizing sick time payout. Did that make it into this or not? It is not included. The next category is to plan for higher revenues.

[00:59:00] This remains the same from the March 28th discussion. We're projecting a state revenue increase of about \$4.8 million over the funding request, a local transfer increase based on the county's

proposed budget of raising some of our local taxes, which would add about \$2.9 million to our local revenues.

[00:59:21] And then we also recommend budgeting a one-time transfer from a special revenue fund contingency, which would add to our local revenue pot of about \$1 million. Again, that's a one-time revenue source that we are proposing to use to support our recurring expenditures.

[00:59:38] And then the last one is additional use of fund balance. We will tentatively on April 25th bring forward a third quarter report that includes a projection from fund balance, and I think it will largely line up with what we're putting into the budget in terms of spending for next year.

[00:59:57] The total change is an overall \$9.8 million increase. The next category is making reductions. This category results in savings of about \$3.5 million, the first of which is to defer our replacement cycles to include the replacement of K through two iPads and deferring the transfer to our vehicle replacement fund for one year the k2 ipads result in about seven hundred thousand dollars worth of savings and vehicle replacement is two hundred thousand the second area is to pause hiring of vacant positions to include central office and department-based

[01:00:36] positions savings of about five hundred thousand dollars reducing vacant foreign language and elementary schools positions a savings of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and eliminating the assistant principal intern program the savings of about \$200,000 and then finally we are proposing to increase the student to teacher budgeted ratios for our school-based positions by adding 0.5 to the budgeted ratio which would result in a 16.3 FTE decrease when compared to what was in the funding request so we have some question about questions about well what do all these

[01:01:14] changes mean what does our end budget actually look like so this is a summary table of our school fund revenue change in the first column you can see the revenue categories in our FY24 adopted budget and then to the right of that is the FY25 funding request as you can see there's a significant increase in local revenues mostly because of the transfer from the county a significant decrease in state revenues and that was based on the governor's introduced budget as we move into the proposed budget that we're talking about this evening you can see a pretty significant increase again in local revenues because of the

[01:01:54] county's proposed budget that has increased tax rates that provides two point nine million dollars and then the state revenues based on the general assemblies budget provides an increase of about four point eight million dollars when compared to the request well we are overall though comparing budget to budget so the last columns show the change between what is the proposed budget for 25 versus what was adopted in 24 overall the revenue increase would be a 9.5 million dollar revenue increase or a 3.6 percent increase from budget year

[01:02:31] to budget year on the expenditure side these are the major categories by which you can see in the budget book how we categorize the various expenditure changes so the first column shows what was in the funding request and then the column on the right shows what's in the proposed scenario a lot of these changes are due to the technical changes that were on that technical slide and the two new categories added here are the budget reductions that I mentioned of about three point five million dollars and then adding the state revenue

[01:03:08] contingency of about seven hundred thousand dollars so the decrease from the funding requests to the proposed budget is about 3.5 million you can see the totals. That's the change from 24 when

you compare them side by side. This is a little bit more detail about our five proposals that we've been talking about to maintain our levels of service and what Dr. Acuff referred to. The 3% market compensation increase proposal has now been expanded to include other pay areas so that proposal increases from 5.7 to 6.2 million dollars. The

[01:03:45] English Learner Growth FTE and the Special Education Growth FTE remain the same we've made some updates in the cost of the social emotional supports proposal in terms of shifting staff around and making sure that we were getting the cost more accurate so that goes down slightly from 2.6 to 2.5 million and then finally the intervention services is also the same just save four dollars there the total proposals for these the total amount is 10.3 million dollars in the funding requests and 10.7 in the proposed

[01:04:21] scenario. So this is a summary of the gap that we started with that was 13.3 million dollars. You can see we've increased our revenues from 200 from 259.6 million to 269.4 million. Our expenditures on the other hand have decreased to equal our revenues also at 269.4 million dollars. When compared to the FY24 budget, that's a change of \$9.5 million or 3.6%. So at this point, I'll entertain any

[01:05:00] questions you have or anything else you might need before you take action at the next meeting. Just one question. You actually reduced the social-emotional coaches by one FTE, right?

[01:05:16] yes well the total fte that will be provided for that service remains at 30. originally we had planned on using three current seed ftes to offset that cost there are actually four so we're able to find another fte that could be repurposed for the proposal but the services as presented remain the same at 30 ftes and will be allocated in the way they were originally presented thank you good catch um i'm not sure if it's in this or if it's what we talked about two weeks ago and i just want

[01:05:51] a little more clarification but with the increase in class sizes that equaled to if i remember correctly 16 point something fte and way back we had talked about that cuts if necessary were going to be equally distributed between central office and whatever could i get a little or could we get a little bit more um specificity on cuts from the central office and if that is equal and from what we were originally told yes um i can follow up with the details but the cuts at central office

[01:06:29] are higher in proportion to the budgeted staffing okay in that area when compared to as a proportion the central office staff cut is more than the school-based stuff okay yeah if we could just get like some more detail on that just so i can make sure i got it all before we vote thank you the revenues equal expenditures that's where we wanted to be that's a lot of work thank you so

[01:07:02] much my thank you maria yeah thank you for all your hard work i know it's not easy thank you

[01:07:14] next we have the special ed annual plan for school year 24 25 katie compel good evening i'm katie

[01:08:08] compel director of special education tonight i'm going to share two main items first i'm going to to share a little bit about the current state of special education in Albemarle County Public Schools. And second, I'm going to share a look forward as I break down the 2024-25 Special Education Annual Plan into manageable parts.

[01:08:30] The Albemarle County Public Schools strategic plan, learning for all, is at the center of our work as educators. It is also at the center of our work in special education, as evidenced by the Albemarle

County Public Schools mission statement, which includes working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. As you would imagine, special capacities is at the heart of our work in special education every single day. Tonight's presentation has three main components. As I mentioned before, we'll talk about a current state, we'll look forward into the annual plan,

[01:09:07] and then there'll be time at the end for questions. In order to paint a picture of the current state of special education in Almaro County Public Schools, I'm gonna walk through some data and although all of you were here in for the budget presentation where i walked through most of this data i wanted to highlight the data that directly relates to the annual plan that i'll go through this evening on the screen here is as a reminder is the december 1st count of the total number of students with disabilities who are enrolled in almero county public schools from 2010 to december 1st 2023 the december 1st count is a benchmark

[01:09:45] number that we use to compare year-to-year numbers. It's also what the Virginia Department of Education uses as a common comparison across the state. In 2010, Albemarle County Public Schools was serving 1,508 students with disabilities. You can see that our highest number was right before the pandemic at 1,961. As expected, we did go down as all school divisions did during the pandemic, but this year we are right back up on our way to exceed the pre-pandemic numbers at 1,923.

[01:10:20] On the screen here is data that demonstrates the increase in the intensity which means high level of service that students with disabilities are requiring in order to receive a free and appropriate education. The bottom the top bar shows students who require special education services for more than 50 percent of their day. This current year it's 1,388 students.

[01:10:45] the bottom bar or the lighter blue is students who require services for less than 50 of their day which is currently 535. for next year based on what we know right now it's projected to be 1460 in the above 50 category and 540 in the less than 50 category on this slide is our post high enrollment trend post high serves our students 18 to 22 who require special education services but have not yet earned a standard or advanced diploma.

[01:11:18] It's important to note that this year we currently have 26 students in our post high program, but next year, based on projections of what we know right now, and it's only April, we will have 34 students enrolled in post high, which is a significant increase. On this slide, this is one I shared at the budget presentation, but I think it's just important to look at again.

[01:11:42] On the left is fall membership for students with disabilities, and as you can see this school year on september 30th we had 1797 students with iep's and as of december 1st we had 1923. and on the right just shows the percentage of the student population that students with disabilities make up and at this current year we have 13 000. now that we have a picture of what the current state is let's look forward to the special education annual plan for the next school year. Federal regulations, otherwise known as IDEA,

[01:12:21] require every school division to submit a special education annual plan. The annual plan is also required to be shared with SEAC, the Special Education Advisory Council, and approved by you, the school board, in order for any state or federal funds to be appropriated for the education of students with disabilities.

[01:12:37] At the March SEAC meeting I was able to present, share, and collaborate with SEAC on this annual plan that's before you this evening the annual plan can appear overwhelming when especially if it's your first time reviewing it because it is a lot of pages and it's a lot of state jargon and federal jargon but it really is basic when you break it down into the four components which are our regional jail agreement Part B set-aside funds CCEIS and federal grant funds the first component is the regional jail agreement details about this portion of

[01:13:16] the annual plan are on page 8 in your annual plan document. All school divisions with a local or regional jail inside their jurisdiction are required to establish an interagency agreement. Admiral County Public Schools has such an agreement with the Charlottesville Admiral Regional Jail. This agreement provides an Admiral County Public Schools special education teacher who provides educational services for persons in the regional jail who are 18 to 22 who have IEP services and also supports the regional jail ged program the regional jail portion of the

[01:13:53] annual plan comes to life through the work of miss bj thomas miss thomas is the amara county public school special education teacher who works at the charlottesville albemarle regional jail miss thomas is going to take a few moments to share with you the details of her work good evening um on a daily basis there's a report that we run um for 18 to 22 years and then after i run the report i go and interview each student to find out if they have high school diploma or ged once i receive that information then i send out a verification letter to the various schools

[01:14:32] to find out if they actually do have a high school diploma ged when i receive that back most of the time if they have an iep they will send the iep back and i will revise the iep to their current educational level at the jail we do a tape test in which it looks at the reading the math and the language current scores and so i'm able to get a current level of their reading math and language and from there i write that into the iep as well um we're doing the ged ready test at the jail as well and you have to get a 145 to be able to sit for the actual ged test and once you pass

[01:15:11] the ged ready test you sit for the test um it can be the same day if you take the ged ready test that morning that afternoon you can take the actual ged test and pass so that's what we do at the regional jail any questions do you have english language learners also at the jail yes we do we have a class individual class for them thank you thank you thank you miss thomas the second component of the annual plan is focused on part b set aside funds that can be found on page

[01:15:49] 11 13 and 14 of your annual plan document federal regulations require that each school division spends a portion of the IDEA Part B funds on students with disabilities who are placed in private schools by their parents. This is important to highlight.

[01:16:04] This is different than students that we place in private school for their IEP. These are students who are placed in private schools by their parents. These funds in Albemarle County are used to fund a special education teacher who provides consultative services to the private schools that have our students in them. They can, that person also conducts child find and special education evaluation procedures for students with disabilities of the private schools that are inside ACPS boundaries. It also provides 14 students with a voucher for speech and language service and one student with a voucher for occupational

[01:16:40] therapy. We also, that person facilitates an annual required meeting with the private schools that are in Admiral County boundaries and parents of students with disabilities at those private schools. The Part B set-aside portion of the annual plan comes to life through the work of Mr. Mike Armstrong.

[01:16:56] Mr. Armstrong is the Admiral County Public Schools Special Education Part B Set-Aside Case Manager. He's going to take a few moments this evening to share with you the details of his work. Good evening. Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to address you.

[01:17:15] My name is Michael Armstrong, and I case manage students, special needs students, who are primarily placed in private or home school settings. My services include case management, monitoring, and, pardon me, monitoring and consultative in nature.

[01:17:38] I also provide the child find process and the eligibility process for the parents or schools that reach out suspecting a disability. we're kind of blessed to have 32 private schools within our community all different various types of educational philosophies of those 32 I currently have students at 23 of them and I also case manage nine students who are in

[01:18:17] homeschool settings trying to think of what else in addition you know Katie had already mentioned that we do provide vouchers for some related services \$1,500 vouchers for speech and for occupational therapy I currently have 55 students on my caseload and I have about another six students who are in that

[01:18:49] eligibility process somewhere in there and that's pretty much it unless you have any questions I'm curious as to those 14 PT positions our speech positions and the one OT position is that the same every year or so does that move based on what the students require when we meet with the private schools and the parents we get their feedback on what they would like to see and so originally we offered speech only and based on their feedback we added one

[01:19:28] occupational therapy given their funds so it's kind of it does change it was pretty stationary for a number of years but it does change based on feedback in collaboration with the team thank you okay I have a question how is it determined whether or not the student would remain in the county as compared to going to a private school well the kids that I case manage the parents made that decision they decided to send their kid to a private school and if they're

[01:20:00] a special needs student there are some federal funds that follow them I'm assuming if our students are I say our students are county students but go to a private school we don't provide that transportation there do we no we do not and in fact the way the law reads I have students on my caseload whose parents might live in Charlottesville city or Fluvanna the law who the district that serves that student is based upon where the school is located and not where the family resides thank

[01:20:39] you anyone else thank you the third component of the annual plan is focused on CCEIS and the details of that can be found on pages 11 13 and 14 in your document CCEIS stands for court comprehensive coordinated early intervening services the extra C essentially means that it's mandated that Admiral County public schools participate in CEIS by the Virginia Department of Education what it really means is that we're required to set aside 15 of our part B federal

[01:21:14] funds towards a CCEIS plan as I've talked about right back in the budget the reason that Admiral County is a CCEIS school is based on the videoe race risk ratio in the area of intellectual disability for black students. Essentially, the calculation takes the percentage of persons in Albemarle County population in the different ethnicity categories and compares it to the percentage of people in the 12 disability categories. The goal is to have an equal or less than representation between the overall population and that specific disability population.

[01:21:53] VDOE has set the red line, which is 3.00, as the citation threshold. So if you're 3.00 risk ratio or higher you're cited in your cceis school division they set 2.00 as their warning threshold so you're not cited but they're used between 2.0 and 2.99 as warning you that you're headed towards being cited as disproportionate as you can see on the screen there at least in the last couple years we've been 4.0 or higher except for this school year where we are at 2.61. i think i've highlighted

[01:22:30] it before, but I can't highlight it enough. The first time this data started being collected in 1999, this is the first time that Albemarle County Public Schools has been below three. So we are at 2.61. And while it's in draft numbers right now, because the Virginia Department of Education does not finalize until May, they have indicated that this will be our ratio. And so I'm confident in that number, but this is a number to be celebrated that for the first time since forever, we are below the threshold. I also want to highlight our school psychologist team here. We have an amazing school psychologist team in our county public

[01:23:08] schools and without them there's no way I would have been able to make these gains that you see on the screen that we've been working towards the whole time that I've been here but especially this school year. They are the backbone and the reason that we're able to see that drop and in this case drop is good towards being below that race risk ratio. How does Albemarle use our 15% set aside funds well for next year we're going to have a new plan we're going to have two school psychologists one early childhood special educator one k-12 special educator and one speech and

[01:23:41] language pathologist they will serve on an 11-month special education evaluation and eligibility team that team will lead initial evaluations and eligibilities where intellectual disability is being considered they will facilitate re-evaluations where intellectual disability is being considered And they will also conduct special education evaluations and eligibilities that occur outside of the typical school year calendar, otherwise known as the summer.

[01:24:12] Up until this next school year, we've had the same plan in place since 1999, which was the interventionists. This year, we have a new plan because while we made significant gains, the one piece that was preventing us from being below 2.0 is those outside of the 10-month school year window evaluations and so this 11-month team will be able to address that last remaining piece where my goal is this time next year I'm able to share with you that we're below 2.0 and not even

[01:24:44] in the warning category. The CCEIS portion of the annual plan comes to life through the work of Ms. McElroy. Ms. McElroy is a member of our school psychologist team but during the 2024-25 school year she is going to serve as one of our 11-month CCEIS school psychologists. Ms. McElroy is going to take a few moments to share with you the details of her work. Sorry, Ali, as they relate

[01:25:12] to CCEIS. Well, and thank you all for being able to listen to the presentation, to hear of our own experiences working in the county schools. I know, speaking for myself, I'm so fortunate to be a school psychologist with Elmira County because we have such a comprehensive role from pre-referral interventions to assessment of students with potential disabilities to putting in supports for students with and without IEPs in the school division and as Ms. Gumpel

[01:25:48] highlighted one of the work that we've really tried to highlight as a school psychologist PLC team this school year is really to address the disproportionate rates of students found eligible with intellectual disabilities and we've been really working to do this through a systematic review of all students referred for intellectual disabilities and coming together as a team and making sure that we select the

most appropriate test batteries and reviewing the information to make sure that everyone is on the same page and would make the same decisions for that student in the best interests of that students whether

[01:26:26] they attend school in southern feeder pattern to the western feeder pattern to the northern feeder pattern because that consistency is so important and looking forward into next year and hopefully into following years I'm hopeful that the 11th month position will ensure that same consistency applies for the summer evaluations because evaluations do not do not end and they we make sure that we complete the evaluation process whenever a student is referred of suspecting disability so thank you for your time hearing and open to hearing any

[01:27:02] questions about how we're working to address the disproportionality rates or school psychologists work in Elmira County in general I don't really have a question but I just hope that the next time that you report to us you know I appreciate your plans but I hope that the next time that you speak to us we'll be out of that warning area too that we'll be down below the 2.0 and I was just gonna add I think it's really impressive the way that we're using the data and I I know that that is the direction that we want to be going is really data driven on these decisions so I think that's really encouraging that

[01:27:42] that's how we are making some of these big decisions for the department so well done I'm curious are we reducing that number that we've lived with for a very very long time because we were over identifying or what was the reason why yeah I would say I think the answer may be yes because the rates are disproportionate to what we would expect if students found eligible without that disability classification.

[01:28:15] And that is part of, or a lot of the work that we're working to address is looking at our assessment measures and making sure that they're the most appropriate and evidence-based assessments that we can utilize. - And also, I think there were a significant, just based on our review, our file review, there were a significant number of students who in years past had moved into Amaro County with already being identified as having an intellectual disability.

[01:28:41] And so we needed to take a look how we review those files when they come in because we may not have found them eligible in that category they were here thank you this is almost getting into the weed somewhat but I find it interesting so maybe you guys will too but in terms of primary and secondary disability classifications we want to make sure that primary disability classification is the most descriptive of students learning needs and so if a student has an other health impairment or medical conditions that's contributing to differences and how they're processing information we're making a pivot towards prioritizing that as a primary disability classification versus an intellectual disability it

[01:29:19] sounds like we have a new comprehensive process and it looks like it's working thank you and one thing that you said were we seeing different levels of a representation in different feeder patterns or different schools specifically then that's something that we haven't been able to see okay okay what was it by school no more by level right so a difference between elementary and secondary okay and with the consistency of a you know having a the consult within the school site team we're

[01:29:54] making sure that we're all looking at it across the division not just the psychologists and the teams that work in one area i'm looking at with just their single lens thank you very much okay the fourth and last component of the annual plan is federal grant funds which can be found on page 14 of the document. Almaro County uses the federal grant funds in two ways. One is to fund approximately 38 of

our A-base teachers that provide direct services to students in our A-base programs across Almaro County public schools. The second is to fund, it's a small part that we're

[01:30:32] given, but it only funds about two early childhood special education or preschool teaching assistants that work directly with ECSE students who are eligible for services in Almaro County public schools briefly i just want to highlight what a base is a base is a program that's designed for students with autism that receive their core academic instruction on grade level standards in the general education environment a teacher and a team of teaching assistants specially trained and evident evidence-based practices create a support system for the students in the

[01:31:07] program they also have collaboration with our autism specialists who are board certified behavior analyst i think it's important for me to highlight that this model is not a self-contained program or classroom instead it really operates as an intensive resource support system we have eight based classrooms in almost all of our elementary schools as you can see on the screen if they're in parentheses that means we have more than one at our middle school level we have at least one program at every middle school and some have two and at our high school level we have two at least every middle school at every high school and Albemarle as you would imagine our largest

[01:31:47] has three tonight I thought it was important for you all to see how the federal grant funds towards supporting students with autism works from our autism specialists to our a-base teacher and to the parent level first is Miss Emily Emily Wampler who is one of our autism specialists board certified behavior analysts she's going to take a few moments to share with you the details of her work hi everyone i do have a teacher voice i was a teacher before this job for quite a few

[01:32:25] years so i apologize if i i'll try and speak uh not too closely to the microphone my name is emily wampler i am one of the behavior specialists in the county autism specialists all three of us on our team are board certified behavior analysts that just means that we are certified in applied behavior analysis which is the application of our behavioral science we are also licensed behavior analysts in the state of Virginia in order to practice applied behavior analysis you do have to be licensed in the state here

[01:33:02] so when I thought about explaining our role and talking a little bit about our support to you all today I think it fits into three categories our first is training then consulting and then lastly coaching and so in training we train our special education teachers and teaching assistants in a variety of evidence-based practices including different teaching strategies data collection behavior strategies and even crisis management we also provide our autism teaching assistant training so in the state of Virginia when you're if you're teaching

[01:33:37] assistant working with a student with on the spectrum you do have to be trained to a certain set of standards we receive those standards from the state and we have developed a training to meet those standards we also facilitate our a base and C base PLC's and we maintain a website that has a lot of our tier one behavior resources on it including how-to videos and descriptions of interventions as well as printables for teachers to print and go to make it easily accessible to them whenever they need it. Within consultation we consult

[01:34:16] with IEP teams as well as teachers and IEP development and curriculum. We also support with behavior assessment, writing behavior support plans, and social skills assessment and social skills instruction. We also consult through the eligibility process so when we're looking at identifying students on the spectrum. We consult with teams through that process as well as administering some testing if

needed. And lastly coaching. We do on-site coaching with our teachers and our teaching assistants in all of the evidence-based practices that we consult and train on. And what I really enjoy about this aspect of our

[01:34:56] job is that we get to be in the learning environment with the students and with the teams so that we can really tailor the interventions to each student to meet their needs um okay can I ask a quick question yes so so how many how many schools does your team serve all schools all schools we serve our ECSE program so pre-k all the way through post high and we do serve our post high program as well thank you okay a question - with the testing program for

[01:35:32] students evaluation yes do you collaborate with the CCEIS group I don't know yes the school site absolutely yes we do and act and had a phone consult with Ali a couple weeks ago so yes we do yes thank you yeah second will be miss Thomas who is an amazing a base teacher at journey middle school she's going to take a few moments and talk about what her work looks like at the teacher

[01:36:09] your level good evening thanks for having us I have a script but I'm not gonna stick to it I don't think so I was asked to kind of talk about the typical day in our a base program and when I thought about it I say well I can't because there is no typical day which makes it the most amazing program that I think I'm our county has and I've been teaching in our county special education at the middle school level a journey middle school since 1997 and when the

[01:36:44] programs got started it was just the most amazing thing our autistic students our students on the spectrum were being they were being missed in the in the overall population of special education students and so now with this program they have a special education teacher and teaching assistants trained to work with them for whatever might arise every day I'm getting emotional I love this job it's a passion for me we have a designated break space it's our classroom and that's what they call it when they need that space I need to go to our room

[01:37:19] it's not the a base room it's not the special ed room is our room we work as a team we work with Emily the behavior specialist when we run out of ideas our team at the school we call them and say I have no more tricks so it is a complete process from the parents, the students, the regular ed teachers, our behavior specialists to determine what's best for our kids. We provide the behavior supports, the social skills supports, academic supports, a place to just cry, a place to scream, a place to just get it all out when it when they can't handle

[01:37:53] what's going on in their day. The A-based program, we provide supports for the regular ed teachers because, as Katie said, it's not a self-contained program. our kids are out there in the general classes where they need to be and so we provide supports to the general ed teachers we show them the visuals the plans that our kids use we train them and then we back off and we let them start using it so that they see what our kids can do because we all teach them and are all of our kids so I want to say thank you to Almar County for starting

[01:38:27] these programs because it's the best thing for these kids any questions or me about a base I just have a comment that you know this is really exciting to me because I had a child go through with autism a long time ago and this is such a much more comprehensive and well thought out program than we had back then and back then was I thought was good I'm not saying it wasn't this is

[01:38:54] thank you thank you next is Kate who is a parent of an amazing a base student also at journey middle school with miss Thomas and she's going to talk take a few moments to talk about the details of her

experience and the impact that a base has had on that experience hi guys hello um like um katie said my name is kate garaby my son ben is in

[01:39:30] eighth grade at journey middle school uh he is part of a base um and what miss thomas said was exactly true it's his classroom he is integrated and he's with his friends in each of his classes he's learning just beside them if he needs to take a break he goes to his room he goes to their classroom and he goes and takes a break they talk to him a little bit and then they send him back to the regular class um i cannot say enough about miss thomas and her team they are amazing any questions that i have throughout the day i can easily text her or send her an email

[01:40:07] and i can guarantee that she's going to get back to you within an hour um and she is the first person my my line of defense um with ben and um the whole team just collaborating with all of them has just made his life so much better um i asked him yesterday um if he wanted me to say anything about it and he said that um without miss thomas and her team that he would not be a successful eighth grader whatsoever any questions he's awesome they're awesome yeah he is just a broad

[01:40:45] question yeah he's doing he's thriving at journey are you at all concerned about moving up to high school and how how is that coordination done yeah so um right now we have an iep meeting at the end of the month and um miss thomas and i have collaborated on different goals moving into high school and what support that he needs in high school um when our eighth graders are moving on

[01:41:20] to high school we include the team from the high school in the iep meeting so we can all work together um for what would be the best plan when they get to high school yeah i was going to ask if you don't mind um sharing if your son had an iep in elementary school he did okay and how did that transition go um because i i get a lot of questions um from parents who are very concerned because elementary school is so loving and you know wrap our arms around them and middle school is scary in and of itself and and so i get a lot of questions about what that looks like moving into

[01:41:55] middle school yeah so um ben started with an iep he got it when he was in kindergarten um he was diagnosed right before kindergarten with autism and um so i went in um not really knowing what i was looking for and throughout elementary school he did not have there wasn't an a base at that elementary school i was in constant connection with that sped teacher and with his homeroom teacher and just giving them the support that they need and then when he was transitioning from fifth grade into sixth grade i remember connecting with miss thomas and just asking her

[01:42:33] like what are what are some things that we can do i connected with miss thomas um the summer before he got into sixth grade um to request kind of a tour of the school just so that he could meet his teachers he could learn his schedule be able to open up the locker without a lot of the crowd around him and then we did go to the regular open house with his friends and it was just crazy my My advice to any parent is to ask the question, like find out what's next.

[01:43:07] Come to SEAC. I'm on the SEAC board for journey. Come to SEAC and ask the middle school parents, the high school parents, "Hey, what's next?" I think you really highlight something as a fellow SPED parent that it's a lot of advocacy on our end and a lot of we have to take the initiative.

[01:43:28] And what I would love to see, and I think Katie's definitely moving in the right direction, is the school being more proactive on things like this. Because you and I and a lot of other parents that are involved in SEAC know our rights. We know what our kids' rights are.

[01:43:43] We have been fighting for them. But there's a lot of parents who just don't know what their kids' rights are or what their rights are for their kids and what options are out there. And so that's something I'm really interested in is how, as a division, we can be more proactive in making sure that these kids needs are being met and we're reaching out to the parents and things like that so here's my professional advice i look back at katie for a second um here's my professional advice um so i um i'm also a parent so i'm here representing my son

[01:44:15] and journey and my parenthood but i also work at via so my advice would be connect with the parent resource center connect with your school connect with the sped teacher um ask the questions and then on the other end with the sped teachers sped teachers connect with the parents um there's so many parents that get missed that it's sad and then they end up in adulthood when the yellow bus stops coming yeah and that's when the system has failed them and i think the parent resource center is a really good point that's not even something i mean i'm obviously a very involved parent and i

[01:44:53] I didn't know that that was a resource until recently. And so I think that, again, highlights that we have a lot of resources for our families. And we really should be making our parents and our students aware of those resources and really utilizing them, because it will also maybe take some of the strain off of these teachers and our SPED department if we are making sure we're using all of our resources.

[01:45:19] So thank you for that. Yeah, and also make that information, those resources, in different languages and in different ways in different forms and methods because that's the people that we're missing the ones that are just lower income and non-english speaking those are the people that we're missing and that those are the people that i'm super passionate about as well thank you yep and that is our annual plan i know you asked questions

[01:45:50] along the way but are there any questions that you have that were not answered thanks very much Ms. Compel. Yeah, thank you. Thanks to the two Ms. Thomases, Mr. Armstrong, Ms. McElroy, Ms. Wampler, and Ms. Garropy. Thank you very much.

[01:46:14] All right, we have, it's 816, and we have a break. We're going to go to 826, and I'd like to remind all of us, we're a little late tonight, so make it back to the dais on time.

[01:46:23] Okay, I call this meeting back to order.

[01:55:12] Next, we have bellwether updates. Daphne Kaiser, Megan Wood, and Craig Domer. wait should be mad no Chandra Hayes sorry it's incorrect on this that's good evening chair leave vice chair members of the board I'm here tonight with miss Megan Wood and mr. Craig Domer to provide an update around the topics of instructional coaching as well as an update around the HMH literacy adoption professional development plan miss Wood and mr. Domer have been

[01:55:49] instrumental in the reimagining of the instructional coaching model it's been huge task but they have done an amazing job doing research getting feedback from the community and pulling together a plan that I believe our division can be proud of and while they are not here this evening I also want to highlight the leadership of Miss Michelle Kastner and Miss Karen Hethcock as they were instrumental along with members of our community Mr. Black with getting the HMH adoption process moving forward and so we can help our staff be prepared to use the new materials and resources as they arrive this summer. So at this time I am

[01:56:28] going to turn the presentation over to Ms. Wood to share more information around the next steps in reimagining the coaching model as well as the updated plan for the literacy adoption. Good evening. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to present the updates on where we are with the instructional coaching model. The last time that we came to present on the coaching model we shared a draft of our theory of change for instructional coaching and tonight what we're going to do is we're going to go through and unpack each component of this theory of change to give you an update on where we what we've completed where we are and what we perceive

[01:57:05] as our next steps with each of these components as you all know and we shared with you last time we identified three new coaching roles for our instructional coaches so that we could really emphasize the impact that we want to reach our students and so we focused on switching the roles to classroom support, instructional support, and job-embedded professional learning or learning facilitator. We have revised and updated the job descriptions, and we have started the hiring for instructional coaches. At this point, we have hired our novice teacher instructional coaches, and we're

[01:57:45] in the process of hiring our other instructional coaches. We hope to be finished with that process in the next week or two. One thing that has become clear in in both talking to instructional coaches and the lead coach table as well as doing research and reading is that it's really important that we also invest in the professional learning of our coaches. Coaching is a very complex task that requires two skill sets. One it requires our coaches to be really strong and pedagogy and it also requires our coaches to be strong in coaching practices and so one of the things that we've identified is the need to really develop a strong professional learning plan for our coaches. Currently, they meet in what we call

[01:58:25] instructional coach PLC on a regular basis, and we're looking at how we can utilize that current structure to really invest in both supporting best practice for teachers and then also how we can support enhancing their ability to coach. So we're really trying to attend to both of those skill sets that coaches need in order to be successful. Another component of our theory of change is ensuring that we have coaching conditions that support coaching and in the buildings one of the things that I think is important and you'll see on the next slide is this relationship and the involvement of principals one of the

[01:59:04] things that we're shifting to is more collaboration and alignment with principals and part of that is establishing a culture of learning in a building which contributes to a positive coaching environment for teachers or for to be able to do the things that they need to do.

[01:59:20] Additionally, from some of the feedback from instructional coaches and the lead coaches, we've identified a need to reduce the number of schools that coaches are serving. So while we are not increasing the number of instructional coaches we have, we are looking at the way in which we've structured their assignments to reduce them to two schools as opposed to serving three schools.

[01:59:40] Some of the work that we've read has indicated that when coaches become assigned to a specific school sometimes their role gets compromised because they get other duties as assigned and so one of the things that we're going to continue to do is centrally manage them but keep them school-based so that we can really protect the role of coaches right now we are creating with both the coaching conditions the the next slide which is coaching partnerships and then the last kind of three components of this theory of change we're developing product groups and in our coaching

[02:00:16] team that are going to work on developing some practices and procedures that support these components of the theory of change so as you can see when it says actions actions in progress you're going

to see on those three slides that we're in the process of soliciting feedback and drafting with both our instructional coach team and our admin team but coaching partnerships really speaks to the relationship between coaches teachers and principals i think it's really important that when we look at shifting this model that we really attend to these coaching partnerships because one of the things that we know is is that for coaches to be successful they have to have a trusting relationship with the

[02:00:54] teachers with whom they coach but the other component to that is is that we also need to open these lines of communication with principals and so we really need to protect that trusting relationship while fostering alignment in the school and so one of the things what we're really working on is transparency and what that relationship looks like on all three levels so that the coaches don't find themselves in in positions that might be awkward so we're really trying to be thoughtful about how we establish those relationships um coaches you know it's not the intent that coaches will become performance management that's still going to be the responsibility of the principal and it's

[02:01:30] important that we delineate that coaches are still non-evaluative and then the other component we we want to focus on is one of the things that we know is we want to be able to draw the the line of impact of coaching to student achievement and there's a variety of different structures that can that we could utilize PDSA cycles Jim Knight who has been part of the coaching world for many years has a he calls it an impact cycle which is heavily grounded in improvement science and so what we're trying to do is identify the coaching cycle that articulates our

[02:02:07] goals the best and then really do some strong professional learning and what that would look like when i was an instructional coach we used the plan do study act cycle impact cycle is very comparable i think it just breaks down coaching tasks in a way that is more understandable for both both the teacher and the coach so i think we're leaning more towards looking at his work but really it's about a teacher setting an instructional goal the coach supporting measurement of that goal and then going through the reflective process of like what worked what what didn't work, and then what should we tweak to make it even more effective in the classroom.

[02:02:42] And then the last part of the theory of change is really the impact to the teacher with the transfer to practice to the classroom, the student experience in getting access to high-level grade-level instructional tasks, and also the impact on student impact.

[02:02:58] So right now, what we're doing is we're soliciting feedback on how we measure that, because that's really tricky, right? And so we're in the process of getting feedback. The principals met yesterday and they had a station where they provided us some feedback on what types of data they might like to see to see how coaches are impacting classroom instruction.

[02:03:18] And we're also having that conversation with the current instructional coaches in the lead coach table. And then we're gonna draft some measurement tools to assess the impact. Currently, we have a system called Connect Hub, which we shared data from that last year with you all.

[02:03:34] Right now, it's measuring number of interactions, time spent, topics that coaches are covering. But we haven't really tied it to the impact cycle. And so our goal is to find some measurement tools that allow us to gauge the impact cycle as well. So that's kind of where we are with the theory of change and how we're using that to help kind of shift to instructional coaching 2.0.

[02:03:58] I'm going to pause there because, yep, next up is ELA adoption. So if you guys have any questions about instructional coaching, Craig and I are happy to answer them. This make up come later as you kind of think about that process. And I know it depends on how much support a specific teacher needs.

[02:04:17] But if you guys thought at all about the number of the number of teachers to each coast kind of a ratio that you're trying to stay within or parameters about how you'll kind of make those caseload decisions.

[02:04:34] I'll do my best, but Megan can correct me if I'm wrong. that in general research says that it's about 40 to 1 is what most divisions implement which would be about 35 coaches we have 25 and that's what we're gonna go with so I think that takes our ratio across the division to 50 to 1 I don't know that they can serve that many so what we're really gonna try and do is one of the first open conversations we're gonna have between coaches and principals and us is really what are the priorities in the building and what are different roles that can serve those priorities and where do coaches fit in to that school's

[02:05:13] strategic instructional plan for the coming year just to follow up on that what i mean are we still at about 25 26 coaches is that what we're talking about what's in the budget is 25 we've pulled three to be the novice teacher instructional coaches to try and concentrate and make that process a little bit more efficient to let us get to the veteran teachers a little bit more and do some of the things that the bellwether report kind of indicated but yes overall it's 25.

[02:05:44] that's the number the whole time i've been on the school board i think um do you all do your coaches also work with the lti is the learning technology integrators and how does that how do they fit into this yes one of the things that we started this year which we've gotten really great feedback from that both lti group and the instructional coach group and the equity specialist is we call we created a connected team meeting um and in that meeting there's kind there's really two structures that exist one is learning together so where their roles overlap because all of those roles include coaching we they learn

[02:06:20] together around coaching practices and get some professional learning and then the other part of that meeting is they're all assigned to schools and so where they overlap and support for schools they talk about how they're supporting that school where they can collaborate together and how they can support one another in that work one of the goals of that was so that to increase those conversations so that you know when someone when one of them encountered a situation they could know when to pull another person in for support and that in the feedback we've gotten from them so far is is that they feel like those meetings have been very beneficial I'm also curious how your

[02:06:58] coaches interact and work with the interventionists and the reading specialist because you know we heard at our last meeting about how at Albemarle high school specifically they were using more of a coaching model for the teachers when it came to reading intervention specifically so it seems like there's some overlap and I'm wondering if and how you guys work together and maybe it could be more collaborative to kind of make up for you know you were just saying that you're not even sure you can service 50 students

[02:07:36] so I'm curious how those can all work together especially when you're meeting the principals and kind of mapping this out? Certainly I would say in current state right most of our elementary reading specialists and middle school reading specialists do devote the majority of their time to direct interaction with students so there hasn't previously been overlap there. The creation of the high school reading

specialists and now the Virginia Literacy Act talking about having our reading specialists doing more coaching in classrooms probably creates a little bit of an opportunity for collaboration not necessarily overlap but and when we talk about about an instructional leadership team at an elementary school in particular,

[02:08:16] we're thinking it would include both the coaches and the reading specialists, especially next year with the implementation of HMH and really needing to make sure that we're supporting teachers kind of across the board. So part of that is those kinds of strategic decisions about roles and who can serve which role depending on the needs of teams, PLCs, teachers, the school in any given year.

[02:08:40] - During the process of working with the coaches, Does the teacher ever have a chance to see like a model of how something should be taught by another teacher or either by the coach? I think that does happen, right?

[02:08:57] I think, as was pointed out in the Bellwether Report, that often is impacted by the request that the teacher makes. But that is part of our focus on impact cycles next year is really trying to make that a standard practice in coaching and to really kind of focus on improving instruction to the point of improving student achievement. And whether that be the coach modeling or the teacher trying and the coach providing feedback, you know, how are we practicing our new instructional practice and making sure that we get it right. So one of the things in the past that I think we've maybe neglected, and I'm hoping

[02:09:36] it's not going to happen in the future, is will the teachers get any training on what their role is in the model yeah i think one of the one of the components of that coaching conditions slash partnership piece of that theory of change is um thinking about how we will roll out the model starting at the beginning of the school year next year and so that's one of the questions that will be given to the product groups both the principal product group and the coach product group to see where they feel like that is best where that best fits but ideally it would be

[02:10:15] something that would happen pre-service week so that there's a clear understanding of how all of the people work in the system together to to get better i know that you've looked at the model from every single angle and other models and how they've worked and things like that and i'm just curious i'm sure there's a reason for this why it's still not evaluative yeah a lot of the the research talks about when you start when you turn it into evaluative there's a level of judgment

[02:10:51] that happens and so coaching and protecting that coaching relationship is really it it helps focus on improving and creating an intellectually safe environment for teachers to take risks and feel like they're able to to have a safe space to be like i really messed that up without having someone then say oh yeah you're messing this up and so now we're going to put you on a plan or we're going to do this with you or we're going to score you this way on your final evaluation but so that has if it has been evaluative then you found that that is less likely to have good impacts for the kids or I mean it's less likely to result in in learning because what teachers do is they

[02:11:31] just become compliant with the coach like the coach makes a suggestion and then the teacher does the behavior just to then get the coach off their back and it becomes less about actually learning which then results in true change okay thank you do you have anything to add to that I would totally agree with that, by the way.

[02:11:49] Yeah, that makes total sense. And I would say that when the principals met yesterday around that topic, they also are in support of that model. They want to have more influence on where the coaches go and coach, but they were totally in support just of that, that they would be the evaluators, right?

[02:12:06] And they want their coaches to have good relationships with their teachers in that coaching way. And just to add, one of the things in becoming an administrator is that evaluation piece and going to school to learn how to conduct evaluations and write evaluations and providing, you know, low inference evidence and things of that nature. And all of our coaches don't have administrative licenses or the training to do so. Great. Thank you very much. I think it's also important to make the distinction between evaluation versus feedback because they're still getting feedback, but it's in a way that that allows them to grow and it's constructive and it allows them to, you know,

[02:12:44] take risks. As soon as you add that layer of evaluation, people get very nervous about what that could be and less likely to take risks thank you yeah any other questions about coaching just one I know you have three identified for new teachers or newer yeah novice teachers which since we have about 150 are new that is a big load already but who else gets the coaching I mean

[02:13:22] how are the code I mean I know it used to be that you know if someone wanted to coach they could ask for a coach but it wasn't always the people that might benefit the most from the coach and that's I mean that's what we're still kind of negotiating and that in the in the partnership piece when an administrator sees an area where they'd like to see you know increase today we used classroom discussion right and the idea would be that you know they they could say I'd like to see more increased classroom discussion in Megan's room and then opening up those conversations will ALLOW COACHES TO KIND OF GO IN A LITTLE BIT MORE.

[02:14:02] THE OTHER PIECE IS THAT CRAIG POINTED OUT THAT I HAVEN'T EVEN REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WAS LIKE THE IDEA OF COACHES SAYING, WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT, ACTUALLY THAT MIGHT BE A SCHOOLWIDE THING THAT WE NEED TO WORK ON BECAUSE THEY HAVE OBSERVATIONS OF THAT. SO INCREASING THAT COLLABORATION IS GOING TO BE REALLY IMPORTANT.

[02:14:17] AND I THINK WE'RE STILL TRYING TO NEGOTIATE HOW IF A PRINCIPAL SEES THIS PARTICULAR TEACHER WHERE THEY'D LIKE TO SEE SOMETHING CHANGE IN THE CLASSROOM, LIKE HOW THAT GETS MANEUVERED so that it feels safe, so that it feels non-judgmental, so that it feels supportive, and that goes back to creating that culture of learning, which is so important.

[02:14:35] Thank you very much. Okay, so we're going to switch gears completely, and we're going to talk about K-5 ELA adoption and implementation.

[02:14:50] Obviously, you all know, we've already adopted HMH. The Virginia Literacy Plan kind of has two major components. One is this requirement of an approved adoption of an improved literacy program, and we've adopted HMH into reading and then also they have a requirement of approved literacy professional learning right now there's only two approved programs one that was designed by by VLP which is a online modules and a canvas course and then the other was letters we opted to go with letters it is a well respected evidence-based literacy instruction training it has and so we're going to go

[02:15:28] letters next year um and the idea behind this is is that you you kind of have to attack it in in two ways right implementing the high quality instructional materials is really important but in order to do that you have to have the knowledge to implement them correctly and so we're going to provide both support

on the implementation of hmh and into reading and we're going to provide support in fostering evidence-based instructional decision making by providing the letters training and so So when we are able to combine those two components, then we get high quality instruction in the classroom for teachers.

[02:16:02] And so I'm gonna talk about how we're gonna support both implementation and what the professional learning will look like for teachers with regards to evidence-based literacy instruction. So one of the things that we've created with the principals is the idea of creating a school-based literacy team.

[02:16:19] And in the center of this graphic, you see a CAT team member. And what CAT team stands for is just a content advisory team. And the idea would be that that member of both the school-based literacy team and the district level team really serves as the hub of communication between both the school and the district on the needs of both implementation and professional learning.

[02:16:44] The CAT team member would report to the CAT team, which is all of the elementary schools together, where they would talk about how implementation is going and how letters is going. And then they would also work with the curriculum coordinator to provide feedback as well. And then those two groups would inform me, the Office of Professional Learning, and then we could work with the instructional coaches to help support what's happening in the class, in the buildings.

[02:17:09] So those two teams would work together. You'll also see on the left-hand side where it says CAT team member, we're gonna ask that they also be the HMH champion, which I'll get into in a little bit, but that will also help inform the implementation piece. So the idea is that we would have a feedback mechanism here to support both district-level-led professional learning and both school-based needs.

[02:17:35] So what we've done thus far to support both implementation and professional learning is on March 5th, we had Dr. Conrady come and present, and she did a wonderful presentation on essentially seven myths related to the science of reading and did a little bit of a myth-busting session with our teachers. After that, just to kind of launch and talk about evidence-based literacy instruction because we want to make sure that people understand that this shift is not a program, that it's about good instructional practices.

[02:18:08] Today, I shared this presentation with all of the K-5 teachers, and they got logged into HMH's digital platform. So HMH came via Zoom and helped everybody get logged in because on the 29th, we're going to go use that last DPLC day to do a resource deep dive with our K-5 teachers.

[02:18:31] And then in the afternoon, our principals are going to get specific training on what to look for in a classroom. And then our EL, SPED, reading specialists and instructional coaches, and our TDRTs are going to get sessions on how to help support implementation of HMH on the 29th.

[02:18:48] Because teachers are asking for this before they leave for the year so that they have some idea of what this looks like. So today, everybody was able to get logged in. If they so choose, they can play around before the 29th starts, and then on the 29th, they're going to have those sessions.

[02:19:05] And then pre-service week for New Teacher Academy, our new teachers are going to have HMH scheduled to come back and do that same session so that when pre-service starts, they'll have the same information that our teachers got so that everybody's on the same page.

[02:19:21] So they're not starting off, for lack of better words, behind. have the same information that their their peers have on the on the 9th of August we're gonna have an HMH representative come and

work with the reading specialist the instructional coach and our HMH champions on how to support implementation just as a refresher because they're going to get some of that on the April 29th and then we'll revisit it right before the school year starts and then pre-service week we're gonna have a session that kind of takes it up to the 30,000 foot level that provides a conceptual framework so all teachers can see how these components work together to provide strong literacy instruction

[02:20:00] for our kids so that's kind of the immediate pd plan for now until the start of the school year and then throughout the school year next year we have two kind of mechanisms in place to support implementation hmh offers this great resource called coach lee and what coach lee is is it's a it's on-demand coaching from the from the actual product and and so that's like it's on-demand so you can shoot a message and do a chat or you can say hey I need to have a meeting and within 24

[02:20:38] hours they'll set up a 30-minute meeting with you to say I've got questions about this so we've purchased a license for both of our HMH champions in the building and then we purchased a license for all of our instructional coaches. So we'll have access to that resource. And then in addition to that, HMH representatives are gonna come and do a series of walkthrough to provide feedback on the integrity of the implementation.

[02:21:01] They're coming three times throughout the year. The first session is gonna be in October 'cause we felt like it was really important for teachers to be able to kinda get some opportunities to get into the resource before we had somebody come in and provide feedback. So they'll come at February 6th and then again in April 17th.

[02:21:17] And after they do those walks, they will meet with principals and instructional coaches to kind of share the trends they're seeing. It's not about evaluation of teachers again. It's about observation and giving some feedback so that we can make some decisions on how we support in between those walks.

[02:21:34] And then on the other side with the professional learning, right now we have 30 staff members that are going through Letters Volume 1 training with the intent of them becoming Letters facilitators. They'll get their letters facilitator training actually during New Teacher Academy in August, and then they will provide the required in-person letters training on some of the division level professional learning days.

[02:22:02] In addition to the in-person training that Letters offers, there's also an asynchronous component to Letters, and the principals have agreed that every other Thursday they will provide time for teachers to engage in that asynchronous component of Letters training. Right now, we have shortened the timeline for the people that are in letters facilitator training.

[02:22:23] It is intended to be a year-long process, and they have graciously agreed to go through it in a shortened time period so that we can get in-house letters facilitators. And so they will be the ones that will be running the sessions in October, January, March and April.

[02:22:42] So that's kind of the professional learning plan for evidence-based literacy instruction, And then the professional learning plan for supporting implementations on the left. Questions?

[02:22:59] A lot of moving parts. Lots of moving parts. I mean, I would just say it's just amazing the, I mean, from the beginning of this process kind of through kind of how you're thinking about implementing and all the surrounding professional development that you're providing and supports that you're providing for teachers and administrators is just amazing and really shows the commitment of the team as well as

the um the school district to making sure this is a success because we know how important it is so a huge thank you to everyone who's been involved i would certainly second that thank you very much

[02:23:38] thank you thanks megan thanks greg thank you chandra thanks very much i think we might be ending on the exact minute that it's on the agenda wait just one second there's other business by board members and or superintendent uh i got one thing okay one thing so um we heard a teacher asked for a policy and we already have a policy i thought so too so same question so there's some kind of breakdown if all those teachers out there want a policy that we have a way for a day let's

[02:24:14] figure out where the breakdown is happening yeah it sounds like an implementation piece because i right yeah well what i would i mean i guess what i would share is that um the middle schools went first and i we we've never really heard from the middle school staff at all about it to the extent that they've been able to implement it what i have heard is that um it varies from school to school and from teacher to teacher teacher um and that i have heard that teachers don't feel supported in implementing it that there's not um support from administration or whoever else when

[02:24:53] they try to take a phone or put a phone away or reprimand a student for having a phone out so we probably need to tighten that we really need to i think we need to like relaunch I think there was a lot of support but as I was saying the middle school principal middle school principals initiated it and so but since then you've had some some of those have moved on to other schools so I think that it's time to revisit the whole program because if we're going to do it you know and say we're doing it we have signs outside the schools that say all right yeah when do we still have do we still have they're still there no I think they're still there every time I

[02:25:31] visit we still have a no touch policy you can't touch their phone well the the the students are supposed to put their phones away when they're in class and when i was at albemarle i was telling kids to put their phones away but uh and they were nice about it you know it was fine so i think we need to because i i mean i certainly agree i think everybody knows my opinion of cell phones and they are distraction and they do inhibit learning and we talk about closing achievement gaps and raising test scores i think if there weren't cell phones we'd be in much better shape well i think in addition when we're talking about joining a class action lawsuit because of social

[02:26:10] media we we need to have a firm policy i mean i just was interviewed this week about school and mental health and i thought it was our policy so well and also you know we're adding you know more social emotional support and exactly all of that and all of that plays into you know yeah the root cause of us it's a barrier to yeah one of the reasons we're adding all that support so can we get some kind of plan or some some kind of idea about what implementing that is going to look like at some do we need to draft a specific policy well we have like i said we have a policy i mean

[02:26:46] we've had a policy on the books probably 20 years that talks about the cell phones should be put away they should be they know they must be the issue is what is the plan on implementing the policy yeah but do we need to look at the policy and see if there needs to be any revisions if it's a 20 year old policy well it's pretty straightforward it just simply says put the phones away i'm i'm just going to say that it really comes down to the individual teacher whether you know back when i was a teacher it's hats in school you know kids can't wear hats and

[02:27:21] and you go by personally I don't think hats are an issue but you'd have the principal talk to everybody and say we're not doing hats in our school and you go by one classroom and there's hats

everywhere and you go by another classroom so I think it's really deciding what is a what is our school system's priority around this and whether we're serious about it if we are not serious about it then we can continue the way we go where our teachers individually decide how they're going to enforce things and I even hear people say things like well I enforce it but when my kids are all done with their work they can have their

[02:27:58] phones you know things like that and then it starts to break down and anybody here I'm looking at all the people that have been teachers in classrooms and you know that that's what happens so while I do sympathize with the teachers and I certainly as when I was a principal I supported we did not allow cell phones at Albemarle High School when I was the principal there if you had the phone it was confiscated we called your parents and they had to come in and get it and they had many parents angry about it that's the other piece that we're forgetting about so it no matter what we do it is going to come down to the

[02:28:35] individual staff member that has to have the backbone to to take it on and then it goes to the administrators have got to have the backbone to support their teachers to make sure that we follow the policy in my experience that the senior teachers stand up at the beginning of the year and says we are doing this got everybody's doing this no excuses nobody's backing out then it can it could be successful can we can we get the policy sent to us to review and then maybe we come back and discuss this after we've had a chance to look at what

[02:29:09] it actually says because I'm curious how strict it actually is and if we want to actually move to revise the policy and then how we want to move to implement it going forward yeah I think you know dr. has the point that you made about parents I can't remember now what I read here in the past two weeks or something where it was that was a huge part of it that the you know the partnerships that we have with parents are really important around this issue specifically like I think about you know we sent home this gun safety message but

[02:29:48] what messaging are we doing with our parents around social media safety and I know that we have you know nights and I know that as a parent I've gotten guides I think I follow them I couldn't be sure but but that part of it is also a big part because I think that parents sometimes are the ones who are paying their kids all through the day so i think whatever we're doing it has to be really comprehensive and include all of our partners and and just to point out when we did the surveying with the middle schools it was more than 90 of the parents said they do not want their child to have a cell

[02:30:27] phone during the day but it i'm just it's just so um the phone is such a bone of contention in any family in any classroom and nobody seems to be able to have figured out how to extract the phones on I think the increased in anxiety surrounding school safety and things like that really plays into the parents fear of not being able to get in touch with their kids and vice versa so I get it I get it but we've got a I mean maybe there's a creative solution around this and

[02:31:06] and we need to, not around it, but, you know, how we can deal with that issue while making sure that we are getting these kids the best education and the healthiest possible outcomes. The solution needs to be pretty simple.

[02:31:23] I mean, I think we've heard some stories about bags that lock and things of that nature that cost a lot of money, too. what I what I did was I made them put their phones into a calculator caddy I wouldn't even let them keep them in their backpacks but in our public school situation we may not be able

to do quite that same thing it may be that we do let them keep them in their backpacks that just can't come out now in some classrooms it's hard to see when the kid pulls the phone out and that's another

[02:32:01] problem just teachers constantly dealing with it so I think which is what we're hearing that will want a little bit more information about how yeah it's really being enforced right now yeah and could we get a copy of the policy for us all to review yeah I don't know if that's Josh or dr. Haas or whoever can get that to us or Chandra or somebody yes I dr. McLaughlin and I both serve on the policy committee and if there's any model policies on what other school divisions have done it would be helpful yeah or if there's any classroom or school here it's doing it well all right any other business no all right we're out



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