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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, November 14, 2024

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[00:00:02] I call us back to order. Do we have a motion? - We do, Chair. Are we on? - Yep. - Chair Lee. 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 and identified in the motion, authorized the closed meeting, were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meetings.

[00:00:27] - Second. - Moved by Dr. Acuff, seconded by Mr. Page. we have a roll call vote please chrissy dr berlin yes ms osborne is absent this evening mr pace yes miss spillman yes dr acuff yes mr page yes and chair lee yes so moved okay thanks so much next we'll have our roll call starting with josiah black good evening everyone i'm josiah black school division council rosalind schmidt chief operating officer musa med student representative

[00:01:04] of Monticello High School. Allison Spillman, at-large representative. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall representative. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Graham Page, Miller District. Chuck Pace, Raya District. Matthew Hawes, Superintendent. Patrick McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent. Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board. Christine Dakes, Chief Technology Officer. Thanks so much. Next, we'll

[00:01:34] We will stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:01:54] These are great patterns. Next we'll observe a moment of silence. Thank you. Next we have 3.0, approval of the agenda. Do I have a motion?

[00:02:31] I move we approve tonight's agenda. Second. Moved by Dr. Acuff, seconded by Ms. Berlin. Lynn? All those... Oh, Spillman, I'm so sorry. All those in favor? Aye. Not opposed? All right. Agenda is approved. Next we have approval of consent agenda. Do I have a motion? I would like to pull 4.6 just to get a better explanation of the funding within that document. Okay. So moving to approve and pulling 4.6 for discussion yes I'll move to approve if

[00:03:09] we pull 4.6 okay move back to Berlin any second second seconded by mr. page all those in favor aye opposed all right so could we please have some more information on 4.6 are there specific questions or would you just mind for the board going over um the math and the uh the different categories so um this item is in relation to two of the two new schools the mountain view upper elementary school and high

[00:03:46] school center two we have received bids on both projects um as we alluded to we've had budget challenge throughout this process just with increasing construction costs so both bids came in slightly under or over budget so we've identified some funding sources that will require moving of funds so this is an appropriation uh uh recommendation that once you approve will go to the board of supervisors that's the background the funding sources that we've identified and recommended that you move is first the croze elementary school edition project is complete

[00:04:22] but there was some remaining money in that so that's 450 000. is this the type of detail you need okay um the red hill elementary phase two project again a complete project with with some just small remaining money in it that we're requesting to be moved to these projects the biggest chunk is around cip school maintenance it's 2.3 that may sound like a lot the bulk of it though is a 1.7 million is from a recent federal grant reimbursement we did some HVAC work around that improved indoor air quality and we were able to receive a

[00:04:59] federal grant reimbursement from that so it's not deferring any projects or impacting any any work the remaining six hundred thousand from the money that's coming from the CIP maintenance is related to roof replacements.

[00:05:16] We are, based on assessment of current roof states and future projects, the facilities maintenance staff believe that we can postpone one of those roofs for a year, which is the 600,000. That was helpful.

[00:05:37] I appreciate that. Do you have a motion to approve the 4.6 then? I left one piece off. I'm sorry. and the last piece was it does include an ask for an additional 1.2 million that's not needed in the current fiscal year that would be the following fiscal year and so the ask is that um let me get the right language here um that it would that 1.2 would be prioritized over other projects in the cip request so for instance over high school renovations would go to this project instead of that

[00:06:15] we will be but we will be requested we will be when we approve this we will be de facto making that change in the request yes yes that was my question i just have another i have a question um and the question goes to how we do the calculations on the initial you know cost estimates and then the subsequent cost estimates and how what we build in to avoid all of these i

[00:06:50] I mean, I know we can't completely avoid them, but we can look at the history of the past 10 years of our bids coming in too small and maybe build in a bigger buffer. We typically build in two things with our project budgets. One's just a contingency, knowing that you're early in a project and there's a lot of things to change.

[00:07:08] The other is an inflationary factor, which was built into these projects, but as we all know, inflation has outpaced historic figures as well. I will say, based on these results, we will recommend increasing the budgets for the Northern Feeder Pattern Elementary School and some lessons learned there.

[00:07:30] Thank you. So the floor is open then for a motion on 4.6. I move that we approve as part of the consent agenda, item 4.6.

[00:07:46] Second. Moved by Dr. Acuff and seconded by Ms. Spillman. All those in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Aye. All right, 4.6 is approved. Next we have 6.0, our announcements. We're starting with 6.1, our spotlight on education.

[00:08:08] Good evening, everyone. Chair Lee, school board members, Superintendent Haas, and members of the Albemarle community. I am Dr. Hayes, the assistant superintendent of instruction, and I am honored to introduce our six Albemarle County schools that have been recognized by the Virginia Board of Education as having the highest achievement awards for 2024-2025 academic year.

[00:08:37] this prestigious award is a part of the exemplar school recognition program which honors schools demonstrating high levels of success across all school quality indicators including narrowing achievement gaps to earn this distinction schools must meet the following criteria based on the 23-24 assessment year data the school must be fully accredited it must achieve performing performance level one for reading, mathematics, and science based on the student pass rate for all student groups as well as for each student group. The school must demonstrate a chronic absenteeism

[00:09:15] rate of 15% or lower. For schools with the graduating class, they must achieve a graduation and completion index of 88 points or higher. For schools with graduating classes, they must have a dropout rate of 6% or lower. These rigorous standards ensure that recognized schools are not only excelling academically but also fostering environments where all students can thrive. I also want to add that on the list of schools represented Albemarle County had the highest number outside of schools in Northern Virginia and Virginia Beach and those school divisions are five times our size so it's

[00:09:52] it's an awesome honor to have so many schools on the list. Tonight we celebrate the following Albemarle County schools that have achieved this remarkable honor. And they're already represented so I won't call them up. First up is Broaduswood Elementary School, Community Lab School, Hollymead Elementary School,

[00:10:29] Ivy Elementary School, Tony Point Elementary School, and last but not least, Virginia L. Murray Elementary School. Each of these schools has

[00:11:06] demonstrated an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, equity, and the holistic development of their students. Their achievements are a testament to dedication to the dedication of our educators, the hard work of our students, and the support of our families and community. Please join me again in congratulating these outstanding schools for their exemplary performance and for setting a standard of excellence within our division.

[00:11:38] Congratulations, everyone. Thank you so much. Yeah.

[00:11:53] Oh, they're coming up to shake hands. You've got to stop here. They're trying to skip me. Oh, no, I think they're just going to take a picture. Oh, it's a picture. I think they're going to do a picture. Go take a picture. Yeah, a picture. Yeah, a picture. Amy will still shake hands. Thank you. I don't know where they're going.

[00:12:09] Thanks for practicing. Thank you. Hi Lori. Congratulations. Congratulations. Thank you. Fist bumps. Congratulations. Yes. All right.

[00:12:24] Fist bump. Awesome. Congratulations. Congratulations. Great work. Yes. Congratulations. Paula. Go get them Paula. Congratulations. We do whatever anyone wants to do. Congratulations. I'm going to get a picture too. Congratulations. - Congratulations.

[00:12:40] - I love your shirts. - Congratulations. Oh, thanks, congratulations. - But no one brought a bird. - There you go, Joe. - That was amazing. That's cool though, that's awesome, that's awesome. - Oh my God, I love it. - Congratulations. - I love it, that's amazing.

[00:12:56] - That's a great idea. - That's awesome. - All the girls. - Yeah. Congratulations. - I know, I know. - Congratulations. - Should we sit down so our little heads aren't bobbing? - You too. - Yeah, let's do that.

[00:13:09] I want to see a lot more mascots.

[00:13:55] Yeah, that was amazing. I love that. That's so good. That's the best. i need to go out there and get a picture congratulations thank you very much smart play next we have 6.2 school board and superintendent business do you want to start matt uh let's see so start out with i do uh i need the board to take an action real quick this should be very popular so i did receive word from dan redding our executive director for human resources on november

[00:14:33] 5th that the state issued that wednesday the 27th of november is a half day for the state employees so what that means is our board can approve a half day for all 12 month employees for that day so if there's a board member that would want to make a motion we can carry on with that all right floor is open motion i move that we make um wednesday november 27th 27th a half day for albemarle county school employees moved by mr pace seconded by mr page all of those in favor

[00:15:16] thank you for that thank you and so uh i do want to just also give a shout out to our exemplar schools uh i think as ms lee said we do need to see more mascots next time i think that was awesome but you can just see the excitement of the staff and i mean it takes a coordinate coordinated effort at every school to make a big difference like that and i say that because today i got a photo from seth canard at mountain view they they launched a program today it's uh the after school buyback club and so it's a it's a turn on the way we used to do attendance which was You know, if you're missing too much school, you get punished for it.

[00:15:54] And we've learned over time that that's not an effective way to encourage students to want to come to school. To be creative, what they've done is they have their special teachers, their specials teachers, running clubs after school for the students so they can make up their time.

[00:16:09] And as long as it's tied to a Virginia standard of learning, like a physical education standard or a family life standard or career technical education standard or something such as that, they can do that so they were I have a picture of several students playing floor hockey on a rainy day after school and they're

getting buyback time and they're really growing their appreciation for school I want the board to know that next week is or this week actually was national school psychologist week and these professionals are essential in supporting our students emotional well-being their mental health and their academic success and they help each

[00:16:48] child reach their fullest potential so we want to give a shout out to our school psychologists next week is so we celebrate american education week that pretty much sums up public schools and we want to honor every staff member they contribute to making out mal county public schools a true community-centered school system i want to congratulate scottsville elementary school and of course broadest wood elementary school staff broadest wood was just here on november 6th and the 13th they each achieved 100 staff attendance which is quite an

[00:17:26] accomplishment given the fact that we really do expect our staff members when they when they need to to take time off for themselves or their family so knowing that and still having that everybody coming together 100 is a big deal i want to give a shout out to agner elementary school i had a just a wonderful visit there on monday um i got to spend time with mike irani and um also katrina sims his assistant principal we visited abby crenshaw abby krishan nick onstott

[00:18:05] kristen schlegel bianca devita and those are all first grade teachers and i had a wonderful time Counting peas and carrots and apples and bananas and adding those together and the students were super excited to show me their Their work and how they were thinking about math. That was a lot of fun, and I really appreciate the visit next week as I said is a Family it's American Education week We also have a special day on November 20th, which is education support professionals day

[00:18:39] november 22nd is substitute educators day i think we've learned how super important they are in the last few years and they really come through for us and of course then we're heading into the the holiday season um at this time uh i asked our assistant superintendent for human resources and organizational development to give us an update on november 4th making connections it was quite today, and so I asked Dr. Kaiser to come in and say a few words about it. Good evening, everybody. Claire Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent. On Monday, November 4th, all school division employees participated in Making

[00:19:17] Connections, which is our Albemarle County Schools Conference by ACPS employees and for ACPS employees. We have two different areas of Making Connections. One is the instructional side and one is for our support staff. at the Instructional Making Connections held at Monticello High School, teachers, counselors, instructional coaches, learning technology integrators, equity specialists, teaching assistants, and other instructionally focused staff had the opportunity to choose from a variety of sessions throughout the day on a wide range of topics both by our own educators and experts in various fields.

[00:19:52] Some of the sessions included topics such as the science of reading, increasing rigor to engage learners, differentiation, and an opportunity to connect with teachers of the same grade level and content areas. Furthermore, we had several vendors attend to support the implementation of new programs such as HMH into Reading, CERN, Lexia, and Branching Minds, and additionally sessions around retirement and benefits were available, as well as an opportunity for elementary and middle school teachers to engage in professional learning as required by the Virginia Literacy Act. At Albemarle High School, our support staff chose from a variety of sessions as well. Some of these

[00:20:28] sessions were very role specific such as custodial safety and equipment repair. For our nurses we had a session on supporting special education students for specifically for nurses. Other sessions were broader and supported career development with the focus on customer service, leadership, addressing mental health, payroll, open lab, and sessions to assist employees with understanding their benefits options during open enrollment. We also had a wellness fair available to them that our employees were able to pop in at throughout the day. I do want to especially recognize our Department of Professional Learning of Megan Wood, Tony Borash and Kelly Wirtman, and Sarah Lynn

[00:21:08] who really all had a very key role in making this a success. Other members of the human resources team were also involved in all of that as well. Their planning initiative and energy really was what made everything a success that day, and it was really pretty fun. Additionally, I would like to thank members of the Department of Instruction and other support departments for their help in preparing for making connections.

[00:21:32] And finally, to all of our employees who participated and presented, we especially want to thank them because without them and without their willingness to share their expertise with colleagues, this type of annual event would not be possible. So we look forward to doing it again next year and it was a lot of fun a lot of hard work and a lot of good learning that happened thank you Dr. Cosby thank you I want to say if I wish that had a drone because I started out at Albaugh High School and when I got to Monticello High School I've never in 21 years of working in the county I've never seen so many cars parked at Monticello High School they were parked

[00:22:11] everywhere I probably shouldn't say with Miss Schmidt here that they were parked on the grass you know on the curbs and it was uh just amazing to see because it's it is voluntary if employees want to avoid professional learning they they can take the day off so what they did was they voted with their feet and decided they were going to keep enhancing their work for the kids and it's just an amazing testament and i want to give a you know just uh thank you to kegan squires i attended his session at albemarle high school he's in building services he had a

[00:22:48] great session on project management and i definitely learned some some great pointers from him he did a great job so this week we celebrated veterans day and i'm going to ask dr daphne kaiser to make a veterans day resolution for the board and that's my last announcement Good evening, Chair Lee, School Board members, Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent.

[00:23:16] Veterans Day was initially known as Armistice Day, commemorating the end of World War I in 1918. In 1954, the holiday was renamed Veterans Day to honor all military veterans.

[00:23:33] Veterans Day is about nationally commemorating and appreciating those who served in the armed forces, past and present. Across the U.S., the day is marked with parades, wreath-laying ceremonies, and moments of silence. Veterans Day also highlights qualities such as sacrifice, loyalty, and commitment to the greater good.

[00:23:55] This past Monday, November the 11th, schools and departments across the school division took time to pause and reflect on the important work carried out by our military service members. For example, Principal Underwood and Ivy Elementary School honored and thanked over 120 veterans of students and staff members, families, and friends who served our country.

[00:24:21] You could see and feel the pride on the faces of our students and veterans. Instilling that patriotism and pride in our students is important so they can carry it into the future. We are thankful for our active duty and retired military service members and appreciate the sacrifices they have made to protect us.

[00:24:42] We would like to ask the Albemarle County School Board to issue a proclamation in recognition of Veterans Day. Whereas throughout our nation's history, the United States of America has called on its citizens in uniform to serve and protect our national security, and whereas at home and abroad, generations of American patriots have defended the freedoms and American values of equality, democracy, and justice for all. And whereas November 11, 2024 marks the 86th anniversary of Veterans Day being recognized as a national holiday,

[00:25:21] on this day and every day we remember the millions of patriots who served and sacrificed for the betterment of our nation. And whereas many veterans continue to serve their country in public schools and government as public officials, teachers, police officers, fire rescue, and other professions providing services to all community members. And whereas with profound gratitude, we especially recognize the local veterans in Albemarle County and Albemarle County Public Schools for their

[00:25:53] continued service. Therefore, be it resolved that the Albemarle County School Board does hereby recognize and proclaim November 11, 2024 as Veterans Day and celebrates all who have served our country around the world and continue to serve as veterans in Albemarle County and Albemarle County Public Schools. Signed this 14th day of November 2024. In addition, earlier this week, Albemarle County Public Schools received notification from the Virginia Department of

[00:26:28] Education and the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, or the Council, recognizing 190 Virginia public and private schools as Purple Star Schools.

[00:26:47] This year, Baker Butler Elementary and Lakeside Middle were recognized as Virginia Purple Star Schools. Ivy Elementary School received that recognition in 2023. The Purple Star designation is awarded to military-friendly schools that have demonstrated their commitment to meeting the needs of military-connected students and their families.

[00:27:10] We congratulate Principal Handrick in Baker-Butler Elementary and Principal Craddock in Lakeside Middle School. Both school communities will be recognized for their achievement during the December school board meeting. Thank you.

[00:27:27] So do we have a motion to accept the proclamation as read? I move to accept the Veterans Day resolution as read by Dr. Kaiser. I second.

[00:27:43] Moved by Dr. Berlin and seconded by Dr. Acuff. All those in favor? Aye. Any opposed? No. So moved. Thank you so much. And for school board business, I know we have a couple of statements. I would actually like to read a statement on behalf of the school board.

[00:28:01] To our students, families, and staff, in the wake of the recent election, want to reaffirm our commitment to each of you our students families and staff members who make up the heart of our school community regardless of the outcome we remain dedicated to ensuring that every student feels safe supported and valued in our schools our schools are places of growth and learning where each individual is encouraged to reach their full potential we recognize that elections can bring a range of emotions and

it's natural to feel a variety of ways we are here to support you as we navigate these times together, fostering an environment of

[00:28:37] understanding, respect, and empathy. In keeping with our values, we also want to remind our community that federal laws protect students' rights regardless of their immigration status. Under the law, all children are entitled to a public education and no student should feel unsafe or excluded based on immigration concerns. We are committed to upholding these protections, ensuring that all students can enroll and participate in school without fear. Furthermore, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting LGBTQIA+ youth. Federal protections exist to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity,

[00:29:15] and we are here to ensure that every student, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community, is treated with respect and dignity. Our schools are inclusive spaces where all students can feel accepted and valued for who they are. To our students, you are the future and your education and well-being are our top priorities. We will continue to provide you with the tools and guidance needed to succeed both academically and personally. We encourage you to engage in open dialogue, explore new ideas, and be respectful of the diverse perspectives within our community. To our families, we are deeply grateful for your ongoing

[00:29:51] partnership. Together we will continue to ensure that every child has access to resources and opportunities they need to thrive your support and involvement are essential in creating an environment where our students can learn grow and succeed to our staff thank you for your dedication and hard work in supporting our students and families your commitment and resilience are what make our schools truly exceptional as we move forward we will continue to support you in your efforts to create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all. As a school board, we are steadfast in upholding our values of equity, inclusion and

[00:30:28] respect. We are committed to ensuring that all members of our community feel heard, valued and supported. Together, we will continue to foster a climate of collaboration, empathy and respect, no matter the circumstances. Thank you for your trust and support. And we look forward to working with all of you in the coming months to continue building a strong and unified school community.

[00:30:51] Thanks very much, Allison. Moussa. Perfect, thank you. Good evening, members of the school board. On behalf of the student representatives, I want to share some of the pressing issues and concerns we are hearing from our peers across Albemarle County Public Schools. We appreciate your attention to these matters as they have a significant impact on our student body.

[00:31:08] As many of you know, there's been a noticeable atmosphere of unease in our schools following recent events, including the recent election. Students are expressing heightened fears and anxieties about the political climate and its potential effects on their lives and school communities. For many, there is a fear of the unknown and a worry that tensions might lead to incidents of hate or discrimination.

[00:31:26] We respectfully ask for the board's continued commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment, reaffirming our school's stance against racism, bias, and intolerance. To support students during this time, we have some suggestions for consideration. Establishing a safe and anonymous system for students to report incidents of hate or discrimination, enabling timely intervention while protecting student privacy, creating designated spaces where students can open openly discuss their experiences and concerns with trusted neutral counselors or in facilitated support groups offering emotional relief and a

sense of belonging providing additional mental health support especially for students who feel isolated due

[00:32:01] to their political beliefs family situations or other personal circumstances in addition to these broader concerns I'd like to highlight a specific issue facing Monticello high school a recent incident related to drug use on our campus has underscored the urgent need for increased education and support around substance abuse. The following initiatives to strengthen drug awareness and prevention efforts. Hosting workshops or assemblies that address the dangers of drug use with real-life stories from individuals affected by substance use to make the message more relatable and impactful. Establishing peer support groups where students can talk openly about the pressure they face and provide support to one another. Research shows that students are more receptive

[00:32:38] to advice and guidance from their peers, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Partnering with local health organizations to provide resources and expertise, such as guest speakers or informational materials that can educate both students and parents by the signs of substance abuse in order to seek help.

[00:32:54] These requests reflect our shared desire to foster a school environment where every student feels valued, safe, and supported. By addressing these concerns and reinforcing our commitment to inclusivity and well-being, we believe we can be a strong and resilient community for all students. Thank you for listening to our voices and considering these actions to support our student body.

[00:33:14] Thank you very much, Musa. can you um share those comments with all of us of course we'd love to read them definitely yeah thank you any other business from board or superintendent i do have one um i guess comment in a sense back in the meeting on october the 10th when we received the data on classroom or

[00:33:49] students in the classroom i had a concern over the one about the over 27 students in science classes And I haven't received, I don't think, a response from the staff on that. I might have overlooked it in my emails, but I don't think so. Thank you. I'll check on that.

[00:34:05] We actually debriefed on that in Cabinet the next day, and that was assigned to a staff member, so we'll follow up on that. Okay. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Page. All right. With no other school board superintendent business, next we'll have public comment, and I'm going to pass the gavel over to Ms. Spillman, who is doing...

[00:34:23] Do we have the list? Do we have the list, Christine? We do. We welcome public comment at our school board meetings To sign up to speak during the public comment period, you can do so in several ways. Online, sign up is available from 9 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week until 2 p.m. on the meeting day.

[00:34:44] By phone, call the school board clerk's office at 434-972-4055 to sign up until 2 p.m. on the meeting day. In person, sign up at the meeting is available from 6 p.m. until the public comment period for in-person meetings only.

[00:35:00] Please note that public comment is not received at special board meetings unless specified on the agenda. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak, but the chair with board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be more than 14 or more speakers. The maximum number of people or groups that may speak at a meeting is 20.

[00:35:17] In the event that there are more than 20 people or groups who wish to speak at a particular meeting, each speaker will be assigned a number and numbers will be drawn to determine which people or groups will have the opportunity to speak. Those who do not have the opportunity to speak at a particular meeting may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or may submit written comments for the school board's consideration.

[00:35:37] Speakers should state their name, address, or voting district, address comments to the school board, limit comments to school board governance or school division operations, provide written statements and supporting materials to the clerk. The school board will use a timer to track each features speakers time Speakers are asked to wrap up their comments by the end of the three-minute mark to maintain respect Please refrain from clapping or other audible forms of support You may raise your hand instead debate with the school board is not allowed. The projection system is for staff presentations only Okay, we have three speakers tonight. The first is Jim Dillenbeck

[00:36:13] Good evening chair Lee members of the board. Dr. Haas. My name is Jim Dillenbeck and I live in the Rio district i'd like to publicly congratulate mr pace for his recent election victory and i'd like to thank

[00:36:50] all of you for your service important service to our community over the years over the last year i've had the privilege of talking with hundreds of people in the rio district as well as teachers and administrators in many of our schools i'm here tonight to share with you some of what i've heard from our community members I'm speaking tonight on behalf of my next door neighbors who had to drive their son to Woodbrook Elementary last year because the bus was unreliable and this year the staff who are working early

[00:37:28] because of stacked routes currently and in the bus routes I'm speaking up tonight on behalf of several teachers and support staff who live in the Rio district who left a CPS schools recently and now work in the Charlottesville city schools, where they make more money and they have less stressful jobs, according to them.

[00:37:51] I'm speaking up tonight on behalf of several families in the Belvedere neighborhood who pulled their kids out of Albemarle schools and sent them to Greenbrier Elementary School in the city because, in their words, there was a better environment for their children. I'm speaking up tonight on behalf of the family in Still Meadow who have a dyslexic son and pulled him out of Woodbrook Elementary School because he wasn't learning to read. I'm speaking on behalf of the UVA Ed School professor who pulled her son out of Agner Hurt Elementary School

[00:38:24] last year because of the open classroom chaos. And I'm speaking up tonight on behalf of the 54% of Woodbrook students who failed the reading SOLs last year, the 59% who failed math SOLs, and the 64% who failed science last year. And especially I'm speaking up tonight on behalf of the 75% of students of color who failed reading and math last year at Woodbrook Elementary School. 75% of the

[00:39:00] students of color at Woodbrook. 84% of the students of color who failed the science SOLs last year. I'm speaking up on their behalf. I'm speaking up on behalf of the first and second grade teachers at some of the elementary schools in the district who have more than 20 students in their classroom, many of whom are ELL and/or economically disadvantaged students. And I'm speaking up for the math teacher at Albemarle High School who has nearly 30 years of experience, but is concerned about her students who graduate without being able to understand basic math and pass the SOLs,

[00:39:39] in part because of a failed grading system. I could go on and on, but I'm out of time. So I appreciate your concern and the efforts that you are making, hopefully making, to support these students and teachers. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Next we have Adam Maslany. Sorry, Andrew. Good evening. My name is Andrew Maslany. I live in the Whitehall District. I'm an eighth

[00:40:16] grader at Henley Middle School. I've been a student in Elmore County Public Schools my whole life. I was at Brownsville Elementary for six years and this is my third year attending Henley Middle School. I want to thank you for the opportunity to come speak with you this evening. I love school and I love sports. I'm a better student because I'm an athlete and I'm a better athlete because I am a student. In both, I am able to apply hard work, discipline, and the Albemarle County School values of equity, excellence, family and community, and wellness. I've been playing basketball since I was three years old. I absolutely love basketball. I play every chance I can get.

[00:40:50] I just wrapped up the Albemarle County Basketball Middle School program, and I was excited to try out for my high school junior varsity team as an eighth grader. I've been attending tryouts all week for my high school junior varsity team, and I've been told by the coaching staff that I have the skills and abilities to play on the JV team. However, due to a school board policy, I cannot play on the junior varsity team if they have to make cuts. I came here tonight to respectfully ask you to review and re-evaluate this policy. If I can try out and play for varsity as a ninth grader, why can I not try out and play for JV as an eighth grader? Having friends and teammates

[00:41:27] that play in other counties and school districts, this policy does not exist outside of our school district. There are no other options and opportunities for me to play locally this fall and winter, and as I mentioned before, having an outlet such as basketball helps me be a more better, more focused student. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you very much. And

[00:41:52] last we have Jessica Taylor. Good evening. My name is Jessica and I'm Andrew's mom. We live in the Whitehall District. And I first want to acknowledge how proud I am of Andrew for coming here this evening on something that matters to him. He came home devastated on Monday from tryouts after he heard that he, the coaches told him he had the skills and abilities to not only play JV but play varsity, but he was unable to do so because of the school board policy. So we asked the coaches,

[00:42:31] he asked the athletic director, we researched the school board policy, we've gone through the proper channels and we're here tonight to ask you to reevaluate and reconsider this policy regardless of the outcome this has been a valuable lesson for him in civic engagement and as well as a political advocacy with elected officials so thank you for listening to him this is important to him so it's important to me as his mom so as Andrew shared he loves basketball this is a kid who goes out at 6:00 a.m. every morning shoots 700 baskets does 50 box jumps all before school starts this is a kid that asked us to paint lines on our driveway hoop

[00:43:09] so he could practice during covet this is a kid who talked his grandparents into moving from northern virginia so they could drive him to richmond to play basketball during the off season when it's not offered here in charlottesville this is the kid that does his homework while he drives to richmond um to play basketball so he is a very motivated student athlete however enter is not unique there are many children that are talented athletes and are motivated by sports. We are here advocating not just for Andrew, but all Albemarle County Public School students that fit this mold. Not just for basketball, but for

all sports, across all seasons, across all genders. You're not going to get overrun by eighth graders trying to try out for

[00:43:47] these teams, but it will make a difference to the ones who go above and beyond and show that hard work pays off. I am most proud to be Andrew's mom, but I am also the executive director at the YMCA. When I started the Y 21 years ago, I ran sports programs for nine years.

[00:44:03] As a community, we do a great job with sports programs through elementary school. Then the kids get lost. There are very few middle school-based programs and almost zero high school-based programs outside of costly club teams that require out-of-state travel. Through the lens of equity, kids that can't afford it get lost in the shuffle and are denied opportunities.

[00:44:21] Research shows the direct correlation between playing sports and academic achievement through improved concentration, better time management, improved communication, better sleep, increased self-esteem, reduced stress, better classroom behavior, higher GPA, increased likelihood of attending college, higher earning potential, and lifelong wellness. There were roughly 38 kids trying out for the Western freshman team, 47 for the JV team, and 29 for the varsity team.

[00:44:47] Conservatively, almost 70 children will be cut from Western Albemarle boys basketball alone. Extend that to the girls programs, extend that to other area schools extend up to all varsity sports across all seasons and we anticipate there's a hundred or sorry a thousand over a thousand students that want to play high school sports that will not be able to and those are just the ones that try out so we are advocating for those kids as well I'm sorry that's okay last sentence okay so I feel strongly that you know you don't come with a problem you come with a solution so quickly and a possible solution is to reevaluate the policy yeah you can send us all I can send you can email us all

[00:45:22] that and we'll definitely consider it okay thank you sorry thanks very much thanks to all who uh had comment tonight next we have our state of the division report with dr patrick mclaughlin

[00:45:39] and dr dallas hit all right good evening board members i'm pat mclaughlin assistant superintendent for strategic planning and i'm here tonight with dallas hit to share our state of the division report the state of the division is a look back at the 23-24 school year and provides us with an

[00:46:19] opportunity to celebrate our successes and also to focus on areas of continued need within our school division this report is given annually at the start of our budgeting process and as you review the information in the board packet and hear dr hit's presentation i encourage you to consider how this might influence your thinking about the upcoming excuse me 2526 budget the state of the division has taken on a new look this year as you can see from the copies of the report that have been provided to you and a big thanks to lauren hunt in the communications team she was really instrumental in helping us get this together for each of our goals within the report we highlight

[00:46:58] the key milestones we've achieved in the past year and look at the metrics that we feel are the best indicators of progress toward our goals in addition to the report more detailed and interactive data can be found on the state of the division metrics web page which is linked to the board packet. Also included in your board packet is a link to our instructional audit process, a progress board which details the steps we have taken to implement the recommendations outlined in the bellwether audit. Tonight Dr. Hitt will be giving a high level overview of the work we've done in the past year and following Dr. Hitt's presentation we'll be happy to take questions

[00:47:32] from the board. Good evening members of the board. Before I begin I wanted to introduce myself since this is the first time I've worked with you in person. My name is Dallas Hitt. I'm in my third year of serving the division and i serve as a director in strategic planning prior to joining the team i spent a decade teaching and researching at the university of virginia with a focus on the leadership the systems and the structures needed at the state division and school levels to catalyze improve student learning prior to that i led the turnaround of an urban high school in san antonio

[00:48:11] texas i'm pleased to be with you tonight to share some highlights from acps's 2024 state of the the division report. As Dr. McLaughlin indicated, these slides are designed to lift up selected milestones, reflecting the key organizational accomplishments from last year, while also noting metrics that provide some insight into how well these efforts are working. As we get into the report, I want us to center on the mission, and I want us to center on the mission because it is so closely aligned with learning for all. So let's take a moment to review the mission. 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

[00:48:50] quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds. We will know every student. Through these three goals, thriving students, affirming and empowering communities, equitable and transformative resources, these are the ways that we actualize our mission, our vision, and our values. The thinking is, if we can create the conditions for our students to thrive, for our communities to be empowered. And to use our resources in equitable and transformative ways, we will make

[00:49:25] progress towards our focus of our strategic plan, which is learning for all. When we launched the analysis that leads to the 2024 state of the division, we started with these three documents. Learning for all provides the goals and the strategies we plan to use to attain our mission and our vision. The bellwether audit provides an unbiased look at how well we are doing in pursuit of these goals and provided research-based strategies and recommendations about how we can become more impactful in our pursuit of learning for all.

[00:49:56] The budget initiatives demonstrate how we are allocating resources in pursuit of learning for all. After synthesizing these three documents, we created 18 milestones and about 30 different metrics. The next three slides share some highlights of the milestones and metrics within each goal.

[00:50:14] Thriving students. The essence of thriving students is providing high expectations coupled with high-quality academic and effective supports the children in our schools in the last year milestones included creation of acps common pacing guides that are completely aligned to the virginia standards of learning implementation of quarterly assessments with the focus on reliability and validity in terms of measuring student learning on virginia standards as well as launching of all-in tutoring to support students who need additional time and instruction on these standards last milestone for this goal that i'll lift up is ending the year with the systematic adoption process leading

[00:50:50] to HMH as our literacy program. In terms of metrics, we're taking note of initial increases in math and reading achievement as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning and the higher percentage of our students graduating on time compared to the schools in the rest of Virginia. Additionally, we noticed our high school course failure rates decreased. However, we also took note of some metrics we want to be aware of and that we have worked into our division level priorities moving forward. For instance, while high school course failure rates decreased, those for middle schools

increased and while the percentage of students in the high-risk band for VALS decreased from fall to spring in grades 1 through 3 we did not hit our target of moving the percentage of students in VALS high-risk

[00:51:28] bands to under 20 percent it is important however to note that while we did just adopt HMH at the end of the school year and we are we foresee implementation as supporting continued growth on progress in the decrease of the VALS high-risk bands second goal is affirming and empowering communities the essence of this goal is acknowledging and supporting all students and their families and communities. Last year, milestones for this goal included establishing quarterly community engagement nights with an academic focus in all schools, improving communication with families and the community, and maintaining the socio-emotional learning coaches in all schools. In terms of

[00:52:08] metrics for the school, we are taking note that while we saw an increase in the percentage of staff certified in culturally responsive teaching, that number is sitting at 33% and leaves some room for growth in terms of meeting our benchmark. Given our commitment to the SEL coach budget initiative, we are especially pleased with school climate, school fit, and family engagement, improving on panorama, as well as positive gains and student resilience as shown on DESA.

[00:52:31] That being said, we remain especially attuned to the needs for mental health supports that high school students are expressing and demonstrating both nationally and locally. Finally, we note that the rates of chronically absent students decreased by five percent. The third goal is equitable transformative resources, and the essence of this goal is meeting the needs of our students and our communities.

[00:52:55] Last year, milestones we accomplished for this goal include establishing the accelerated school program, which reconceptualized how we, at the division level, provide support and accountability for our most challenged schools. We improve working conditions for staff, such as compensation and collective bargaining, and we provide field experiences for not just our K-5 students, but also our middle school learners.

[00:53:19] The metrics that we're taking note of for this goal are our progress within state accreditation in which we improved to 20 schools earning full accreditation and we are especially encouraged by the two schools participating in our accelerated program that moved up not only in state ratings but federal ones as well.

[00:53:36] In terms of employee engagement, we see gains in our Gallup survey results. We are also keeping an eye on the capacity levels as we note the increase in 5% in terms of schools that are over or at capacity. these promising accomplishments we know we have work to do around continuing to deeply support our four schools that are credited with conditions but our confidence is growing given that we the way we've restructured our supports and for these schools and that are we are now in turn seeing some initial improvements that we can move forward i hope you'll continue to read and reflect on the larger report and that tonight's overview has served as an entree into the 2024 state of the

[00:54:14] division report dr mclaughlin and i are happy to take your questions at this time would you remind me of the four schools that were accredited with conditions this year i don't have that at the top of my head yes they are uh woodbrook uh mountain view uh journey and i know i can see whatever you asked me before thing and agner hurt uh thank you agner agner thank you oh i'm sorry

[00:54:53] uh scottsville journey is not accredited with conditions they are uh they're using a three-year waiver uh even though they have one level three indicator there we're all sitting here in silence I very much like the way you've restructured the state of the division report and explicitly acknowledging the strategic plan, the budget process, as well as the bellwether report.

[00:55:29] I mean, it sounds like we're making some progress, which is obviously the goal. I mean, where do you see, I have not read the full report, I apologize. how do you see this impacting what we do in the budget process which is facing us right around the corner so the the suggestion I would have is to is to look to areas that you see either are working well within the budget and you say hey I can see a connection between the work that's happening there and some successes that we're having and we want to continue to fund those areas or to see

[00:56:08] things that you think aren't working you know what could we do if you see a metric that says this really is is worrisome to me that this metric uh is not moving what could we do uh through the budgeting process to help support that uh so this is really kind of a current state analysis from the 23-24 school year for you to start thinking about budgeting priorities uh in terms of what's working and should continue or what might not be uh and might need to be added into the budget i was pleased to hear that the panorama scores are going up a little bit um yes that was on our um on our panorama family survey and so that was family perceptions of uh of the

[00:56:46] school climate school fit uh those um those areas um i have a few things i um noticed in the um i wrote it down the um equity table for the division about um students with disabilities and the high proportion of discipline for those students and for students of color I just want to draw attention to that I know that that is a trend that we see

[00:57:25] other places but it's highly concerning to me and I would really like some more information on what we intend to do about that because yeah it's concerning and then the other thing I just wanted to bring up was you know I do see improvements but for early reading these high-risk kids seem to be highly concentrated in our higher poverty poverty schools and so from a budgeting standpoint that seems important to me that we are catching these kids and

[00:58:02] trying to get them on the right track and so I would like some more information on that as well and then the middle schools seem to have declining math and and reading scores not henley but the other three post-pandemic um and i would i'm not expecting answers now but why we think those three schools may be struggling more and why we're seeing scores

[00:58:26] go down instead of up with an increased focus on that thank you kind of to the the woodwork mountain view agner and scottsville i know some of those are one of them i think is included in the accelerated school program is that right or so yes and no uh we we put our uh when we pick schools for the accelerated school program this year it's actually renamed to the transformation school program got a

[00:59:02] little bit of a different model uh this year uh and the schools that are participating in that are woodbrook agner red hill greer and journey uh this year and that was based um on a federal support designation that those schools had last year well most of them everyone except journey called targeted support and improvement since then two of those schools have moved out Greer and Redhill are no longer there but some other schools have moved in Burley Mountain View Scottsville have got that designation so we're in the process right now of figuring out how to work

[00:59:38] them into the model to provide some of that continued support we met last Friday with those schools to work on on their 90-day improvement plans and talk with them about how we could start putting a similar support model in place with them for the rest of the year great and to miss Philman's comment it would be great to think about what we learned from Greer and Redhill that was where I know I know this is part of your conversation what was working how we are how we are implementing that if it's culturally relevant or community relevant in those other places and is there additional funds that the school board needs to

[01:00:18] approve to increase that program if needed and for those schools that didn't move out of that designation were they close to moving out or were we you know hitting the mark on that and why yes so it's probably more time than we have tonight to explain the target and support improvement federal they call it the waterfall or the cascade for how you get into identified for the program But I'd be happy to give the board more information on that and I think it's just important to note in general that we you know We spent a whole work session talking about the studios and a really long time

[01:00:53] Which was great, but it concerns me that we are getting state of the division in a 20-minute presentation To me, I feel like next year that should be a much longer Presentation and you know, this is the crux of what we do um and so i would really like to spend more time focused on this um in a meeting next year if possible i mean i see that one of the i'm sorry were you going um that our investment in mental

[01:01:27] health supports i mean it's the more we it just illustrates how big the need is and continues to be and how that is really being utilized um across the division so i mean i'm very pleased that we were able to fund you know the SEL coaches um that's you know I I would love to see some utilization data by schools at some point on that there's increased need or increased

[01:02:05] utilization at some of our more challenged schools although certainly mental health stressors are everywhere so on one of the slides um you mentioned I think DECA and I'm not familiar with that acronym i should be i guess but so that is a that's called the uh the devereau student supports uh forgive me if i mess up the acronym but devereau student supports uh assessment it's a tool we've used for the past couple of years that uh that gauges a student's uh either strength in

[01:02:42] socio-emotional learning whether they are kind of have that as an average uh ability or whether they have a need for support in that area and so our goal with DESA is to have our students who the percentage of students in the division who need support in that area lower than the national average and the percentage of students who have that as an area of strength higher than the national average and we meet the and we hit those targets this year one thing though that really stands out to me about the DESA is when you look at the national average for the students who need support at the elementary level and at the middle school level that's about 16

[01:03:20] percent when you go up to the high school level nationally that's about 45 percent of students show that as in as an area of need of needing support there and so that more so than our than even our results that just shows the I think confirms some of the reports that you've heard before about the need for this particularly for our older students uh in the division okay and that was uh being mentioned

[01:03:49] what in goal two or in goal three because i believe in two two oh two yes okay i just wanted to jump in on that i mean if you think about that especially you know all assessments under report right and so you know that's you know but you're about one and two a little less than that in acps but probably more

than that if you kind of kids don't and adults don't necessarily self-report they do it's a good assessment but it's probably higher right which is really scary um and i was actually thinking dr haas about what you said at the beginning of your budget presentation last

[01:04:29] year right where you you talked about you know this is what the schools did 100 years ago 50 years ago and these are all the things that the schools are being asked to do um and so i mean this school board has been very much behind continued social emotional support and i we will continue to it but i mean as we go into the budget we you know we can't do all of that so i would love for the school system to continue to think about what are we doing with our community partners making sure they are comfortable how can we bring them in because we can't solve that

[01:05:04] problem alone and i know we've done some great things but i mean with that number um you know we can't put 10 more coaches in high school which we would love to do so how do we you know rally the community to support um uh us in helping these kids thrive and learn and that brings me to my question it's a nice segue thank you um communities and schools we've got it at lambs road we've got it at red hill um and how do you see that expanding over time because that will get our community

[01:05:40] partners hopefully stoked and involved and will help us to help the most the students that are struggling the most I think that's a question we can bring back to dr. Daphne Kaiser and get a response for you okay you know we did have a great public information session last night that was online for communities and schools through and the AFE and it is recorded so we can provide that to the board but that is the that is the the one thing we talked about is a there's a triangle

[01:06:16] where one one side of it is governance one side of it is the pedagogy the other is community at the base and so um the community moving that base closer and closer and the school's welcoming community into the schools is is going to be the key in a coordinated effort but at some point we know by bringing in that program which is second in size only to the Boys and Girls Club we just don't hear as much about them because they actually work in the schools with the school staff I think that's going to be a game-changer

[01:06:49] for us as we start to work ourselves out of a job with our emotional support specialists in the school and begin to bring in the community resources that are needed I appreciate all this information and I have not I'm taking all of it in and I also appreciate the way that you've highlighted things that are working and then things that we need to work on I think that that's something that in my tenure on the school board I've seen a lot more of and I

[01:07:27] really appreciate it because it's a lot more transparent you know I know you're working on it everyone is working on it but you know the community now knows that we're working on it too and we see it so I really appreciate those points so So thank you on that. And I'm certain that I'll have lots of thoughts, more clear, and more questions in the future about this.

[01:07:47] So thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Hidd. All right. Thank you. So we actually have a break scheduled right now, but I'm energized.

[01:08:02] If the board-- we only have two other things coming. Let's charge ahead. All right. Next, we have the proposed school calendar. - Dr. Irizarry. - Thank you.

[01:08:21] Christine, you have to help me again. Can you pull it back?

[01:08:51] - Good evening, Chair Lee, School Board, and Dr. Haas. We're going to do our second presentation here on the school calendar for the 25-26 school year. So last time we did talk about how this calendar, the revised calendar, will align with our mission and our vision and our values as a school division.

[01:09:15] We also reviewed the guiding principles, most importantly, ensuring that our calendar meets the at least 176 minimum days, the two-week winter break, and most importantly, trying to align our calendar with Charlottesville City Schools as much as possible.

[01:09:36] We reviewed the first draft, and then this was the calendar that we presented, and this calendar includes some adjustments we made based on our community and stakeholder feedback it includes 177 instructional days with the start date on August 13th and ending on May 29th we did want to just review some of our potential benefits again closer alignment with our surrounding counties the child care and after

[01:10:10] school programming and our summer programming. The dual calendars has put a stressor on our community. The semester would end at winter break and it will be a consistent calendar with Charlottesville City Schools and KTEC and this calendar also adds one additional instructional day to our calendar.

[01:10:30] This specific calendar moves spring break back to the first week in April. It couples more professional learning and teacher work days together eliminating multiple four-day weeks and it also maintains the two-week winter break and we also on this calendar shifted our voting day to a work day since our buildings are being used this calendar does have a few challenges I know information was shared about building services and operations timelines for the semester-based classes would need to be adjusted staff and families would need would have a shorter

[01:11:04] break and HR one of the one of the implications would be a one-time double paycheck for our 10 and 11 month exempt employees that includes mostly teachers they would receive a double check because they're getting they would get their 24/25 last check and their 25/26 first check in that same window so that is something to be aware of and also with HR we would need to adjust this the adjusting the start of the school year will impact more importantly the paychecks for a 10-month non-exempt classified

[01:11:41] staff due to the bi-weekly payroll cycle deductions such as health insurance premiums currently they're taking out of they will be taking out of 18 checks as opposed to the current 20 checks the overall amounts would remain the same but obviously the number of checks and the And the amount per check would change as long as if we switch to the calendar.

[01:12:04] This increase is 11.11% per pay period, and that would be approximately \$10 to \$45 increase in deduction per pay period, depending on the benefit plan that the employees are enrolled in.

[01:12:20] So the calendar committee made the recommendation to either adopt a revised draft calendar or delay the implementation of the revised draft calendar by one year and considering looking at a two-year calendar cycle.

[01:12:36] So if there are any questions, we'd want to know if you'd want to make a motion to approve the proposed calendar with the early start date and early end date for the 25-26 school year. I have a couple of questions. I have one quick question. So the 18 pay periods, is there still 20 periods, but we're just taking the benefits out of 18?

[01:12:58] Yes. I noticed what I think may just be an error, but on the calendar you have what has previously been the two days off surrounding Election Day. Right now it has Monday as a non-work day and Tuesday election day as making connections. Is that correct? Monday would still be making connections. It's a professional

[01:13:34] learning day and the fourth the Tuesday would be the election day which we would be a work would be a work day and I think on the on a slide something else that we had Allison what I think you're looking at is the we use that as a work calendar and I think that was an earlier version of it okay a payroll analysis but nothing the changes don't okay so it's okay so that it's going to be the way that it was this year making connections and then correct it's orange right now because the public it was getting confusing with it is a professional learning

[01:14:11] day it is a unique professional professional learning day um but that will remain the same on the third and the fourth and the other thing i had is i think when added up it's 176.5 instructional days and not 177 is that it is we round it up even 177.5 it's a it's a it's an instructional day just making sure yep the half day it's the last half day gotcha okay all right those are my only questions. Thanks. I'll also note that I did get some feedback. I got very little feedback from the community, but I did get a message from some folks about some issues with

[01:14:50] so many four-day weeks in the current calendar. And I'm glad that this, they didn't even know that this calendar was coming up. So I'm glad that this solves that. Yeah, that's come up in multiple surveys that the, you know, those, you know, every other week being a four-day week puts a strain on our families right so thank you very much I guess one more question is will there be plenty of education for our 10-month employees with regards to this change I know that they're not going to be getting paid less but it's still not going to go over super well and I just want to make sure that they're not surprised by this and we help with whatever planning needs to take place

[01:15:30] yeah I'll just jump in there that is something that we are very cognizant of whether it's this year or down the road we very much want to make sure that we have a really good communications campaign going on to help people HR is continuing to look at all the different options right now this seems to be the best one on the table but we recognize that you know we will look at all sorts of things we definitely want to have as minimal impact to our employees as possible but we will definitely communicate out yeah I had emailed Ms.

[01:15:59] earlier today about if it was possible to do end of August, August 29th, and then it would be 20 through June, but she said that she didn't think that that was an option because I think that the VRS implication is what is most impacted there and and is the biggest driver in that time frame.

[01:16:19] All right. Thank you. Thank you. Any other questions or comments? We're open for a motion. I move to approve the proposed calendar with early start and early end date for the 25-26 school year.

[01:16:38] Second. Moved by Ms. Spillman, seconded by Mr. Pace. Is there any further discussion? The only discussion I have is there was a recommendation about proposing it for two years. So could we amend that motion?

[01:16:57] Would you agree to amend it to say for the 2025 and 26 and 26 and 27? Sure. So I would like to amend my motion to also include the 2026-2027 school year as well. Second. All right. Amended by Ms.

Spillman, seconded by Mr. Pace. Is there any other discussion? All right. Christine, can we have a roll call vote on that, please? Certainly. Dr.

[01:17:26] Berlin? Yes. Ms. Osborne is absent. Mr. Pace? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Dr. Acuff? Yes. Mr. Page? Yes. Chair Lee. Yes, so moved. All right, and again, I want to thank you for all that excellent work. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you, Dr.

[01:17:46] Irizarry. Thanks. Next we have cell phone free learning policy and responsible use policy with Dara Bonham and Jamie Forman.

[01:17:54] All right, Dr. McLaughlin, make sure I know how to navigate this. Yeah, my first run through. Sir. Good evening, Chair Lee, members of the school board, Dr.

[01:18:46] Haas and staff. I'm Dara Bonham. I am program coordinator for the Office of Safety and Security. Joining me this evening, our Jamie Foreman Office of Technology as well as Josh Walton principal Walton Middle School. I am here to present our first round of the policy on our personal communication device-free policy as part of Albemarle County. I just want to frame a little bit before we get into the presentation obviously our tackling this is not new. Our policy and our procedures have been in place for a while in regards to what we would deem cell phone use originally. As you recall coming out

[01:19:25] of the pandemic we all battled a lot within our schools of getting devices out of the hands of our children and what that looked like within our classrooms. I know as a principal at the time met with my fellow colleagues at the secondary level talking about this procedures to get through what it would look like to have a strong engagement and instructional practices that also could be more cell phone free we put forth a big communication drive that had a lot of signage and some communication to families the soon the other year after that talked about the importance of being cell phone free and even this

[01:20:01] past summer dr. Haas put communication out about reinforcing the notion about the dangers of cell phone and how we want to continue to have an environment where it's conducive to not have the technology the personal technology devices as readily available with our students so we continue to look at our practices within our schools this I guess end of the summer beginning of the fall we also started a committee a task force that was comprised of parents staff teachers administrators and students that were a part of the committee looking towards seeing what the current practices were within our

[01:20:41] we call it cell phone policy at the time and how that's evolved over time but it looks like this year looking at some of the data and we continue to meet with that group and we'll continue throughout this process because it's an ongoing issue we want to tackle. Along with what we're here today is to look at essentially our start off obviously how this fits in with our strategic plan. I think the key part here is looking at our thriving students goal and we talk about to ensure the academic and social development and emotional development for

[01:21:18] all students I think we see that our personal technology devices oftentimes do get in the way of that potential progress that we have and I think that fits really well into that particular goal moving forward I'll read to you well let me just start by saying that the goal here today is really for two fold one is to continue what our practice is within the division to pursue the support for our students and staff for engagement and the learning that we have within our classrooms and also to really look at school safety and also the focus on our schools and our students mental

[01:21:55] health support in relation to what that looks like with technology devices and how that can be compromised along with that however is also the idea that we are complying with the executive order 33 and so we've developed a policy that helps surround some of those standards and expectations from executive order in a practical way hopefully that supports our schools and our students so i'll just kind of read the policy to you initially studies indicate that students who use cell phones or other personal communication devices in class learn less and earn lower grades

[01:22:33] the issue extends beyond temporary distraction substantial personal communication device and social media use can be detrimental cumulative and lasting effects on adolescence levels of focus and concentration accordingly establishing a personal communication device free environment in almar county public schools is necessary to ensure that all students are free to learn in a healthy and focused educational setting and the objective is starting january 1st which does tie in with the executive order that Albemarle County Schools will implement a personal communication

[01:23:08] device-free education to create a focus distraction-free learning environment and as you can see it doesn't say cell phone free it says personal communication device because what is a cell phone is also a smart watch could be smart glasses and who knows what that technology will evolve into in the future so the important part here as we move forward is also within the governor's order the executive order of 33 there are some areas that it does require within our policy within our procedures to make sure we're looking at as far as how we're implementing and being clear to what that looks like in our day-to-day practice so the first one we'll look at is device storage

[01:23:48] and so what i'll do with these five is i'll just give a quick overview and some of us looking at current state and some of us looking at desired state as we move forward device storage the guidance does require designated storage during the school hours to minimize distractions middle schools have done a phenomenal job as you know a way for the day has been in place for several years that's been a highly effective process and program for our middle schools to keep cell phones out of the hands of students while they're in school and they use lockers backpacks mr walton can allude to and have conversations about the yonder experiment we've

[01:24:25] done with sixth grade students as well at his school at the high school storage options really a little bit limited because typically it becomes backpacks or lockers i think we all realize that the one-to-one ratio at lockers within high schools is not comparable because of blockers being taken out or enrollment and so forth but backpacks being the kind of the primary means for how storage looks within our high school students and our transition within this particular procedure is really to look at the storage options as we continue moving forward there's a lot of study going on with the yonder pouches that Josh is doing well along

[01:25:03] with across other middle schools potentially but also looking at what does that look like beyond just backpack storage in relation to our high school kids because that will be an ongoing piece to discover our second one to address does focus in on looking at device access for students with medical conditions per their IEP or 504. So we address it like we would in other situations. Families can certainly go through their normal protocols, whether that's through case managers or administration to ensure that those needs are being met and evaluated to determine whether or not any

[01:25:40] particular cell phone would be a part of a reason why perhaps through a 504 that a student may happen to have that. So that procedure really doesn't change. It just becomes something continue to be

highlighted our emergency communication protocols the state wants to ensure that we're establishing that our protocols for parents student communication during emergencies does not have part of that in our crisis plans to include student cell phone use which you can imagine as part of looking at our shelter in place secure the building our you know lockdown evacuations things of that nature is to not have one of those guiding factors to be the use of

[01:26:20] cell phones as part of how we're communicating. We have many other ways in which we communicate as a division, so that's us working with our schools and their crisis plans to ensure that that's not a component and it is something that's looked at within each individual plan. The fourth one is probably the one that has the heaviest meat to it, so to speak, in regards to the implementation of Bell to Bell. So if you know of the Executive Order 33, it does focus on Bell to Bell. Bell to Bell is described as the start of the school day and the end of the school day our current state as i mentioned before at the middle school level has been i think

[01:26:57] really going well and josh or others the middle school level can attest to what it looks like for a way for the day when you get to high school it's a little bit different there's been certainly a real keen focus this year on the academic i would just refer to it as block to block because the bell starts for first period it ends the first period and the concentrated effort to ensure that cell phone use is not permitted what will have to be extended beyond that now is the idea behind bell to bell which starts at the start of the school day and at the end and so the challenge as we talk to our high school principals especially is that you have three comprehensive

[01:27:33] schools that have different ways in which they operate for transition time as well as for their lunches their lunches if you look at monticello they have two lunches in the cafeteria if you look at Western, they have one lunch for 1200 students. If you look at Albemarle, they've got two lunches for roughly a thousand students in different locations. So the idea of getting to the point where bell to bell is covered within the transition and when the lunches is going to continue to be an effort at our local level with our principals because some of that is communication, some of it staffing. There's a lot of things that we need to get towards where that transition will

[01:28:07] continue. I know all the principals have said they have a reinforcement effort to ensure that the block-to-block will continue to get stronger with in terms of the support of no cell phones and then looking at ways in which we can work towards having the bell-to-bell be implemented, especially since it's a mid-year transition piece and there's going to be a lot of work in order to get to that point, but confident in the fact that we can push towards that initiative. And then the very last one is just really certain special circumstances that the state does discuss that

[01:28:44] need to address as a division and ours was really focusing on off-campus events during the school day aka field trips that you take place as well as schools having their own practice involving transportation so the governor the executive order does not talk about transportation per se so that's really left up to us our current practices is for transportation is that students may possess a cellular phone or smartphone tablet etc on school devices provided that the use of the device does not distract or create an unsafe environment while the students are on the bus

[01:29:23] bus drivers do have the autonomy to direct the student to put those devices away if they feel like they're becoming a distraction and in current state is off-campus events would adhere to whatever we're doing already in schools as far as our general cell phone practice so looking at our transition as we

hit um january 1st is that schools and staff will still adhere to the same guidelines uh in regards to the transportation we don't see a need for change there has been some discussion about elementary use of cell phones and and talking with the elementary principals about that specifically if that would be more restrictive down the line

[01:30:02] but still having that same practice with our school bus drivers being able to determine safety and directing students to put things away. And then as far as looking at off-campus events, so if you think about going to Smithsonian or somewhere, right, we could see that there would be some potential needs for students to use phones for nothing else, capturing moments, right? You wouldn't want a kid not to be able to take a picture in front of a museum or a particular, you know, a monument or whatever the case, right, to be able to recognize things as part of that so that language would give some policy or some procedural components of

[01:30:39] discretion to the teachers when they're away or school staff when they're away from the particular event so our moving forward our next steps really we are continuing this the monthly cell phone meetings that task force looking at getting input from them on current state and where we're moving we also know we need to get continued feedback right that's from students from our staff from our parents because there's a lot of components here we want to make sure that they're comfortable with where we're moving forward but also understanding kind of what current state looks like and then the professional development was an interesting piece that was

[01:31:18] brought up by a lot of including some of our students on the task force because they talked about the need for really teaching bell to bell which sounds like a kind of a normal thing you would think about right as an instruction from instructional practice but i think we sometimes get away from what that differentiation looks like towards the end of the class period what that last 10 minutes looks like when you're trying to do a number of different things and really providing purposeful pd for our staff and our teaching staff so that also gets away from that need sometimes if students feel like they have to have down time then to find something to have in their hands in this case a phone there was also conversation within our task force they mentioned

[01:31:57] that there are translation and interpretive devices that a lot of times students will use just innately on their own phone and making sure that we're having the resources within our school technology which we do for those purposes but also making sure we're communicating that and training our staff as well as communicate with our students what that would look like in terms of having access to those devices that we would provide as part of the county i think always as part of we move forward with these things is communication to the why why why do we feel like this is important we may have an executive order but i think the most important part is we understand that it's just not healthy for some of the current cell phone use

[01:32:36] that we have and it gets away from where we need to be with engagement and learning in our classrooms and then the last one would be continuing to work with our high school principals especially on those transition times and on those lunch times to adhere to the bell-to-bell Procedures that we have to put in place to make that transition as smooth as we possibly can. So that's my portion of the personal communication device. I'll turn it over to Mr. Foreman

[01:33:09] For the technology use piece and then we can all entertain questions afterwards. Good evening My name is Jamie Foreman deputy chief technology officer with the Department of Technology. Good to

see everybody. Thanks for the opportunity this evening I'm gonna jump right into just talking about our revisions to IVE and GDA our responsible use policies for both instructional slash students and staff so the gda and iibe policy revisions were advanced ahead of the usual five-year schedule to better align with rapidly evolving technology landscape addressing the evolving needs of students and teachers and incorporate updated

[01:33:46] updated guidelines from virginia department of education and cosen which is our consortium of school networking these revisions reflect a proactive approach to ensuring that policies remain relevant and effective in supporting a dynamic educational environment responsive to both technological advancements and the latest standards and educational best practices the revised gda and ibe policies were updated with several key goals in mind enhancing readability creating a user-friendly document that integrates into that more county public schools digital citizenship curriculum and prioritizing information relevant to students and staff

[01:34:25] additionally the policies were restructured to better reflect current technology systems and accommodate the division's new cell phone policy key highlights of the revisions including renaming of the policy to emphasize student and staff responsibility a refreshed approach to guidelines around students bringing personal devices to school and updated regulations for students these regulations are now crafted as active statements promoting clear expectations and are differentiated by grade levels to address the distinct needs of elementary and secondary

[01:34:54] students and next we're going to open up to questions on both all the sets of policies um i have a few things that i think you might need to consider students with disabilities i i know you talked about medical needs but a lot of students use adaptive learning technology so we'll probably need to make sure that that's included in the exceptions and with designations in their 504s

[01:35:28] or iep's i think that's in the video recommendations and the other one is english language learners I would imagine that some of them use technology for translation services and we would want to make sure that that I don't do we use limited English proficiency plans do they have specific plans for the ELL students do we know I mean do they have like I mean I don't know if they have like 504s or IEPs or if there's like a specific English learning plan but I would imagine we could put it in that the teachers develop plans for the students and they do

[01:36:08] you have access to that. OK, so I would imagine that we could create exceptions for those students as well. Thanks. I would just say, yeah, I love that you brought up the fact that sometimes students, either in formal tutoring programs within Western or Albemarle or just informally-- Allison's a peer and I'm trying to translate.

[01:36:30] And so whatever ways we can make sure that there is either another type of technology or computer-based technology so that we don't inhibit that, like we want to encourage students to translate for each other. Because this tool may be intuitive for them.

[01:36:47] It's intuitive for them, so what can they, I mean, and I think that's where it is. It's like once you make an exception, it's hard, however, this is the tool they'll have for the rest of their lives. So I think really thinking, and thinking with them, right, rather than us making the decision, what would make sense both from the student who is the tutoree or the students who are kind of in those tutoring programs because those have been really successful programs so that that would be the other one just to think about i think

um i just will make an observation i think what you're you're pointing out in general is that it's it's kind of easy to make a proclamation or an

[01:37:25] executive order to say that you know you're going to have the entire day for all students the absence of these devices which while they are highly problematic and and are an issue of concern in many ways they've been adaptive and they've allowed students access to educational programming access to socialization act really opening up a whole world of communication for students that wasn't there before so as as mr. Bonham and their committee and I've had the pleasure of attending and

[01:38:01] working with them you start to go from this very clear you know cell phone free education proclamation and you start to realize that there's a lot of benefits to it we just have to figure out how to maximize the benefits and really cut down on the rest of it so I think if you if you do have more feedback and you're thinking about it we're gonna keep gathering more information from our community and the committee is wrestling with all these things they're next one

[01:38:37] of their next tasks is we're ordering the anxious generation for all of them to read and really engage with the why behind cutting back on cell phone use for teenagers. I mean I will say that I've noticed a huge improvement this year like walking the halls of the middle schools you don't see a phone out at all and even with my high school kids you know they're not texting me all during the day you can tell that their phones are away and they're actually learning so I do think we are definitely headed in the right direction so thank you for that is there a plan i think there

[01:39:11] is on the teacher side is that still being figured out and because that's where i also go to is so many assessments have gone to phones or tablets to collect data so is that another piece that you guys are going to yeah well i think part of this looking at the technology i mean kahoot right i mean how many times do you see a class high school classroom and says oh we're doing kahoot right yeah intuitive take their phones right yeah thinking of ways that we can support that through our own devices right that would not allow the cell phone pieces to be a necessity but there's probably more that we're not thinking of how can we on the school board be useful or helpful like

[01:39:51] what what do you need from us yeah i think um the two pieces are just really um i mean some of the pieces are also driven by just our culture and our families so families communicating texting their kids throughout the course of the day right that's just it's something that we've gotten used to doing we're all probably guilty of that when we shouldn't have um and even now if it's during lunches or doing transitions it's a matter of like that communication to know that there's other means and i think our schools will continue to look at ways in which they open up channels of communication like in the old days how you get in touch with your child in school um but also just reinforcing

[01:40:27] that notion that we're not necessarily just a toggle switch right january 1st isn't going to happen you're going to have this dramatic change because we have to be practical i think in our implementation of this and supportive of it with the idea that we are moving to more restrictive environments so i think some of that's just trying to work through families knowing that it is a process right but we have a goal in mind that ultimately hopefully becomes less distracting to our kids two things um and one might not be on point but with respect to the digital citizenship

[01:41:05] curriculum, how much is in there of informing students about the impact, the adverse impacts of too much cell phone use? I mean, how much of that is built into it? I see someone coming up.

[01:41:21] Thank you, Dr. Acuff. Hi, everyone. Clay Todd. I oversee our learning technology programs and our digital citizenship curriculum. The curriculum is a couple years old and currently in revision, and so we are considering this policy as part of that but the ethos of that curriculum is essentially that we should be helping students to think metacognitively about their technology use so reflecting on when is a good time to put away my screen when is an appropriate time to be on technology when it's not so we're actively talking with kids about that I do think we have some

[01:41:58] continued improvement to do as we revise that curriculum and I'm sure you'll hear more about that soon to tie it more specifically to this policy and cell phones in particular but that curriculum does speak to more balanced media and technology use and do you pull in data I mean like this anxious generation I mean do you talk to students about more than this is bad I'm sure you do yes yeah I couldn't pull up a specific lesson for you at this moment but yes it's very much infused into the into the curriculum. We partner with

[01:42:35] Common Sense Media who has done most of that curriculum writing, awesome organization as a parent or as an educator. We also are working looking more closely at ISTE, International Society for Technology and Education, has recently released some new curriculum materials that address it as well. So we're pulling from all of those organizations that are very research centered in there in there just remind me when when this do we start right at day one in kindergarten i mean when does the curriculum day one how is it built okay yep before devices go home

[01:43:12] our curriculum does have integrates a lesson around actually the responsible use policy that we've adapted to make even more easy to integrate into that curriculum so students are or we're talking about responsible use from from the get-go dr acuff i'll just add to that that we'd be happy to send you the link to the curriculum to review that would be great thank you we'll do that dr diggs did i notice a shift in the title of that particular policy yes the policies have been renamed from acceptable use to responsible use really to go along with this theme

[01:43:49] and that's really a big decision that we made and the the regulations have been adapted to be student-centered in their language as well so we are we will directly pull from the policy in those lessons rather than having to sort of adapt it um thank you i do have another question from oh oh you go ahead for mr walton um since you've been here i think a couple times and we talked about the yonder pouches how are they working in practice does it make a difference to kids if everyone is stashing their phones at the same time and they walk in how does this work Yeah. Thank you for the question, Dr.

[01:44:26] Acuff. Josh Walton, principal of Walton Middle School. We did a survey recently with our sixth graders and then our seventh and eighth graders because the seventh and eighth graders are away for the day. So they are responsible putting them in their backpacks or their lockers. So there's more temptation.

[01:44:42] And the seventh and eighth graders did report some more temptation around that. Sixth graders did report in their comment section that they did feel like they were less likely to want to pull their phone out because they know if they pull their phone out, they won't be able to get to it it's in a it's in a locked pouch um but that said compliance wise we're seeing similar compliance across grade levels though sixth grade compliance is better so you're creating a culture of a way for the day yes and and i will say just as middle schools go when we started away for the day um it was it was kind of a softer um policy um because we were still

[01:45:20] moving away from cell phones just being sort of like the wild west at schools um and so what we did was you know put your phone away that kind of thing this year with the governor's order we had much more reason to say your phone is off and away and if it's not then we collect it and we keep a lock box up in the main office so and we keep track of how many and there's increasing consequences if there's you know recidivism with that it's the rack after what three times how would parents responded I would say 98% have been positive we had some pushback at the

[01:45:57] beginning around safety and concerns around getting in touch with their children but after talking with parents about really that the best thing is to let if should you know we have an emergency situation we need to let first responders and those kinds of folks have access to lines and that we will communicate as a school that that is a safer thing to do we've gotten more buy in from even the resisters on the outlet outside I just want to thank you josh because um you you and your staff i mean really made some changes to your procedures this

[01:46:32] year to try this out um i i really appreciate the level of seriousness that you brought to it and developing as a team at the school you and mr lewis uh working together with your leadership team at the school and we've learned a lot from this experience and we're going to learn some more and we're we're just trying to figure out where do we go from here as i was kind of just saying earlier that there's i don't think there's any one simple solution to it a lot of it is as mr bonham was saying was just constantly talking about why and helping students be the solution

[01:47:08] like be the be the key to the solution because as they as they learn the impact of cell phone use on their mental health and their ability to learn they will they start to self-select that they're going to put that phone aside and we also see that with the with the adults in the building as well I want to take advantage of the fact that we have Jamie and Clay here as well, because of earlier in Moosa made a very powerful statement and message to the community.

[01:47:40] And one of the one of the tools that we do have for making reports is called Help Me. It was a transition from anonymous alerts. And I was wondering if Jamie or Clay, if you could just take a minute to explain to board how it's different and you know to the best of what you know and then also where where students find that app when they need to use it so um i know help me is a new um reporting tool for students in the community that uh was adopted coming into this school year um there's a couple different

[01:48:15] ways you can get to it but the best way to get to is through class link which is are you familiar with class link by chance um you should really get to it right from that page and what's good about help me right now is it collects some information from students as they make that announcement report that allows us on the other side to really ask targeted questions and provide targeted support to that school in that location as we receive that information thank you so much and so the power of the class link you while you're here you could also talk about that because that was another big shift the technology department made to make a lot of the key apps that students use much more

[01:48:50] accessible to them and as well to staff yeah it's a big equity thing i think for students to be able They'll just get to that class link page that they can get to with a couple of clicks and everything that they need to support their learning is right there, including things like Help Me. It's a single sign-on.

[01:49:06] Yeah, single sign-on, so you don't have to know all these different account information and stuff like that. Just get right in there and get to learning. So if a student needs to make an anonymous report about really anything or to ask for help, they go through their class link just like they go to the other

apps, they jump right in and it goes straight to a page that asks you where you are and what your issue is absolutely and we're seeing use of it so i know it's helping so thank you you're welcome i'm assuming help me is in multiple languages as well it's a good question yeah i'd want to circle back and confirm okay i'm pretty sure it just uses the google interface to

[01:49:46] translate and i would just kind of add into this because our department actually does in safety security along with student support helps oversee the helpmes that come in so they will go directly to an administration but the best part about the help me is twofold one is there's a list of resources that you can get right away and some of us cater specifically to the school so you may have a Monticello I need to go in click Monticello Monticello may have specific resources that help support students outside of maybe school hours that they could have but the actual reporting goes to different offices including hours and then we ensure that the schools have seen them but it also allows us to get additional support for students if that

[01:50:25] alert obviously rises to the occasion where it needs that support so there are people attending to that 24/7 it also when the first call comes in it's monitored by a third party if they deem it to be critical even if it's after school hours we get phone calls all 24 hours of the night or the other day that will tell us to then to try to address that situation so they are constantly being monitored I think it's our mission to continue to get that communicated out and whatever we can do to help with your student group and others to get the word out would be awesome thank you I have a question of

[01:51:00] going back to the devices a couple actually so let's suppose that the teacher wants to do a Kahoot are we saying that they're going to be able to do that on their school-based device and that phones can be out of that equation from now absolutely so anything that a student would need to access that's approved by the county that makes total sense to me now the other thing i am curious about is suppose we have uh and josh maybe you could help with this a phone in a pouch and a kid's got a glucose monitoring system on how do we how do we deal

[01:51:40] with that because um they have to have access to their phone to read the readings yeah so um in most cases we can we can issue a device in fact jamie did that for me a couple years ago when those were becoming new and we were dealing with pumps and things like that and we had our nurse had access to a small iPad that she was able to monitor regularly.

[01:52:02] So we were able to provide devices in many cases, and if we're not, then we can make an accommodation to make sure that the student has that device. Okay. Thanks. Thank you all so much for your work on this. Thank you. Thank you.

[01:52:18] All right. That brings us to other business. And Musa, I did want to again just mention that I was really appreciative of your comments. I think they're really important, and as you found out, we do have that one app, but you know the safe spaces and other places for conversation I think are important so thanks for bringing that up thank of course thank you any other business no hearing none we're adjourned



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