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Albemarle County School Board Organizational Meeting, Thursday, January 9, 2025

Date Thursday, January 9, 2025
Place Albemarle County Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia
Length 2h 39m (video)

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

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

[00:00:00] to order the January 9th, 2025 meeting of the Albemarle County Public Schools School Board. This meeting is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia state law due to the governor's declaration of a state of emergency and potentially hazardous road conditions resulting from severe weather and refreezing. The meeting is being streamed live on the Albemarle county public school website and in accordance with school board's protocol public comment may

[00:00:36] be offered through the zoom waiting room feature at this time we'll move on to item 2.2 the closed meeting certification dr acuff do you have a motion coming out of the closed meeting i do dr haas i move that the board certified by recorded vote that to the best of each board members knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard discussed or considered in the closed meeting thank you is there a second

[00:01:17] I recognize Ms. Lee for the second and since we're on zoom we'll do a roll call

[00:01:23] Ms. Fillman. Yes. Dr. Berlin. Yes. Ms. Osborne. Yes. Dr. Acuff. Yes. Mr. Page. Yes. And Ms. Lee. Yes. So moved. Thank you, Ms. Thompson. And so at this time, we'll move to item 2.3, which is the roll call. To check your audio and to identify ourselves, let's please do a roll call to introduce ourselves.

[00:02:06] We will have school board members do so, as well as our staff that are present on Zoom. So, Ms. Thompson, if you would please call out so that we can be efficient. Certainly. Mr. Page. Yes, I'm Graham Page, Samuel Miller, District Representative. Good evening.

[00:02:26] Ms. Osborne. Ellen Osborne, Scottsville District Representative. Dr. Berlin. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall District Representative. Dr. Acuff. Kate Acuff, representing the Jack Jewett District.

[00:02:43] Ms. Spillman. Allison Spillman, the at-large representative. Ms. Lee. Judy Lee, Rybana District Representative. And further with staff, Dr. Haas introduced himself earlier.

[00:02:59] Mr. Black. Good evening, Josiah Black, School Division Counsel. Dr. McLaughlin. Good evening, everyone. Pat McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning. Ms. Schmidt. Rosalind Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer.

[00:03:16] Dr. Kizer, Claire Kizer. Claire Kizer, Assistant Superintendent. Oh, I forgot. Cam Roper, I apologize. Cam, you're way on the bottom down there. Cam Roper, Student Representative. Thank you, Cam.

[00:03:32] Dr. Daphne Kizer. Good evening. Daphne Kizer, Assistant Superintendent for School Community Engagement. Dr. Hayes. Good evening. Chandra Hayes, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. Erin Stone.

[00:03:49] Good evening, Aaron Stone, Assistant School Division Council Title IX Coordinator. And I'm Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board. Thank you, everyone, and thank you, Ms. Thompson, for helping us with that. In a few minutes, we're going to move on to item 2.4, the moment of silence.

[00:04:10] And in a few minutes, I will turn things over to Dr. Kate Acuff for special recognition of school board member Chuck Pace during our moment of silence. Before I do so, I ask that along with our recognition of Chuck, that we please keep two of our cherished staff members on our minds in their recent passing.

[00:04:34] On December 25th, Western Albemarle High School's beloved French teacher, Candace Cohn, passed away after battling cancer. On December 28th, Albemarle High School's beloved theater and social studies teacher, Sal Giordano, passed away after battling cancer.

[00:05:00] We remember these special teachers who profoundly and positively impacted their students, colleagues, and school communities. Their passion, dedication, and care, especially for young people, inspired all who knew them.

[00:05:18] Let us honor their legacies by supporting one another in peace and continuing the meaningful work they so beautifully championed in their lives. And now I turn things over to Dr. Acuff to conduct our moment of silence.

[00:05:37] - Thank you, Dr. Haas. In addition to the two ACPS teachers we lost, last month we lost a colleague on our school board, Chuck Pace. Chuck spent all of his adult life in service, in the military, but for most of it, focused on the education of our children. Most of those years were with Albemarle County Public Schools as a teacher, a coach, administrator and last year as a member of this school board where he was appointed to fill the vacancy in January. Chuck won the Rio seat outright in a special

[00:06:10] election in November. Unfortunately, Chuck died a week after he was sworn into office. Chuck was an insightful serious and hard-working member of the school board and will be sorely missed each of

the school board members wrote a remembrance of chuck that i would ask ms thompson to include in the minutes of this meeting and with that let's take a moment to remember the people we've lost

[00:06:38] dr haas thank you very much dr edka we will now move on to item 2.5 the organizational meeting

[00:08:09] and the election of officers. We will begin our 2025 calendar year for ACPS school board with the election of officers. Now I promise everyone I will work our way through this as efficiently as possible. My procedure has passed muster with our legal counsel and this is my sixth time conducting this process so I have a little practice. Please bear with me if you will. We will

[00:08:40] begin with the election of the chair for the ACPS school board. Would any board member like to nominate a board member to be the chair? I would, Dr. Haas. I'm pleased to nominate Dr. Kate Acuff to be the chair of the Albemarle County School Board. Dr. Acuff has represented the Jack Jewett District on our board for 11 years, and in particular, in the past year and a half, I've worked with her closely in her role as vice chair. In all that time, she has been a stalwart and tireless advocate for our schools, putting priority on our school division's vast capital

[00:09:17] improvement needs on environmental sustainability and on student and staff mental health. She also serves as president of the board for Partner for Mental Health, and I know does other duties for that organization as well, and on the board for the Albemarle Foundation for Education. She holds a JD from Georgetown University and a PhD and Master's of Public Health and Public Policy from Johns Hopkins. Before last year, Dr. Acuff has served as the vice chair and chair for the board numerous times. I move she become the chair of the ACPS school board. Thank you very much,

[00:09:52] Ms. Lee. Would any board member like to nominate another candidate for chair? All right, going once, twice, three times. All right, so we have our candidate for chair of the Albemarle County school board for the 2025 calendar year and so now i will ask for a motion for dr acuff to be the chair for the 2025 school year i move dr acuff be the chair for the 2025 school year

[00:10:30] thank you very much ms lee do we have a second second thank you very much ms osborne discussion any discussion among board members there being no discussion we will now have a roll call vote miss thompson mr page yes miss osborne yes dr berlin yes dr acuff i love state

[00:11:12] miss bellman no and miss lee yes with a vote for one the motion carries and one four one one okay thank you very much miss thompson and congratulations to dr acuff our school board chair for 2025. And I'm now quite relieved to vacate the office of temporary chair to someone

[00:11:45] much more experienced than me. Thank you. Thank you, Matt. The next order of business would be is to nominate and elect a vice chair. Do we have any nominations? I do. I would like to nominate Dr. Rebecca Berlin for the position of Vice Chair. She has dedicated her career to education and has served as the Whitehall representative for the last two years.

[00:12:18] I have been nothing but impressed with her dedication to our school system and I think that she would be a phenomenal Vice Chair to Dr. Eco. I would agree with that. Does anybody have, is anybody else uh nominating a candidate so do we have a motion for rebecca berlin to become vice chair of the school board um i move that dr rebecca berlin become vice chair of the albemarle

[00:12:53] county school board second motion we have a motion and a second uh all those christine do you want to do roll call miss osborne yes miss spillman yes mr page yes dr berlin i will abstain miss lee yes chair acuff yes some of i look forward to working with you rebecca um the next

[00:13:31] item of business is uh appointment of the school board clerk mr page do we have a motion uh yes chair acuff we do i move that christine thompson be appointed as clerk of the school board for the organizational year beginning on january the 9th 2025. do we have a second i second we have a motion and a second uh christine do you want to do a roll call vote certainly miss osborne yes

[00:14:10] mr page yes miss spilman yes dr berlin yes miss lee yes chair a cup yes so moved um with that uh we have all the appointments that we need uh the next order of business is school board is committee assignments uh i think most of the public is aware that we have

[00:14:45] more than just two meetings a month there are many other activities that school board members engage in um so for this year i'll just go down the list in the order that it's on the grid that miss thompson prepared first is the accountability committee um that's not the name of the committee but it is the advisory committee for environmental sustainability known as aces and this is a relatively new committee about three years old and on it this past year has been have been judy lee

[00:15:21] and chuck pace um miss lee are you interested in remaining uh or who else would this is a very good substantive committee i have to say you've learned a lot about the operations of the school the committee was established under to work with the county's climate action plan since we have 24 schools 200 buses three almost three thousand uh staff driving and about a thousand students

[00:15:56] driving we do have a significant environmental footprint um so you learn a lot and i would it's a great committee to be on it meets about once a month once a month is that right yeah i would love to uh stay on but i know kate you and katrina started it and if you wanted to um go back on i would defer i will yield i will yield i'll be your substitute like this year thank you um it's

[00:16:27] uh i think 4 30 on wednesdays so if that meets anyone else's schedule it should be noted that we will have another school board member and we can plug into some of the open slots if we need to no other takers okay miss lee is on the aces uh committee is redundant but on aces

[00:16:56] uh the uh albemarle education again foundation for education um currently uh for the past two years i have been on on that board as has rebecca berlin um i would like to stay on it but i will yield if there's someone interested dr berlin and cherry cough i was going to say the

[00:17:30] same thing but there's two of us that are required um because of the that board um but i will also yield if there is someone else who wants to take that on looks like we're it again okay um the audit committee do we have any any interest in staffing the audit committee do i have any challengers for this i'm i mean i would be interested in it just because i think it's a an interesting thing to know about um well we're not limited to having a single representative on

[00:18:09] that are we ellen no i don't think so if in the past we've just had the one and ellen you want to hold on to that position i want to hold on to that power i do yeah okay but i but uh if judy wants to join me that's great or you know if if judy you really want to do it i can step off um i'll uh i'll hold i'll hold on that thanks though k-tech we no longer are board members at k-tech

[00:18:41] um cip advisory committee this was a committee that we should perhaps relaunch uh historically we had a joint committee with the board of supervisor representatives and community members to talk about all things capital um they the county disbanded it unilaterally and uh Jono and I met monthly with Matt and Rosalind Carter Carter I watched the funeral today

[00:19:19] um Schmidt sorry I used to work at the Carter Center so my brain is fried um we met periodically just to talk about our capital needs a little more in depth than we do in usual school board meetings so if anybody would like to be on that i continue to be interested in that but it's been sort of suspended this past year broadly i think in terms of policy policy is where we spend our money or where we persuade the community and the county to spend

[00:19:59] money on behalf of schools so i think it's a good effort but is anyone interested i am i think that's a good decision um dr acuff um point of order was that miss billman that said she was interested yes okay i just wanted to make sure i got the right i would i would join in that as well and maybe we can have at least periodic meetings um collective bargaining risk resolution committee

[00:20:37] i think that's sunsetted isn't it yeah communications committee we have tried over the years to get a viable community communications committee to coordinate uh the messaging we want from the school board which may or may not be the same as what's coming out of the school division and in our recent uh retreat that was a high priority for the school board um i see let's see

[00:21:12] didn't you talk were you interested in that or i see that uh judy who is interested in that well i think that that the um the previous years was incorrect i believe that rebecca and chuck were the last two on that correct that is correct and i'm definitely interested but i don't wanna i mean if somebody else is i can yield as well and i'm interested in continuing because i think we had just begun to kick off that work so allison do you want to be on that too sure okay so that is

[00:21:52] miss philman and dr berlin correct okay discipline committee we need what three two members and alternates three three members three members and an alternate up to two alternates up to two alternates okay um i would really i would really like to be on this committee um given the our high number of sped students um i think it would be an interesting um to have that perspective well

[00:22:29] i would like to continue to serve on that committee okay i've been on it i would like to as well i would like to as well as judy was that you yeah okay we need at least one more uh so graham allison we have Graham Allison and Judy Lee for the primaries and we don't have it we have on last year Rebecca Berlin was an alternate an alternate yeah I'm happy to be another a first

[00:23:02] or second alternate okay I can be an alternate too okay so we have we have Allison Spillman Graham Page and Judy Lee as the members of that discipline committee with Rebecca Berlin and ellen osborne as alternates is that correct outstanding um diversity and equity committee

[00:23:35] is that an ongoing committee i don't know ms lee were you on that at one point i was but i think last year allison was i don't think we ever technically i mean we've had meetings but i don't know technically as a committee maybe once it is a committee it is um and with with staff

[00:24:09] yes dr kaiser okay yeah i think we met with dr kaiser and dr azari um the one time we did meet yes the committee meets monthly um and it is open to school board members to attend so we would love to have you yeah okay so i worked in spillman and judy lee does that did you say you wanted on that as well um i think i'll yield on that i think that was just one person

[00:24:41] the last time okay i'm fine we're staying on it if someone else wants to be on it i'm fine to yield as well i think it's yours okay employee voice action advisory committee dr haas is that ongoing that uh is no longer a committee okay legislative committee perhaps helen dunn if you're on you

[00:25:17] could talk about that committee a bit? Sure. Can you all hear me? Yes. Yeah, good. Thank you. Ideally, folks on the school board members who are on the legislative committee would simply kind of throughout the year keep an eye on during sessions at like VSBA, wherever there are conversations about importance, sort of emerging issues in the state regarding legislation and education, that person would keep an eye toward those things and work with me as General Assembly

[00:25:51] bill filing season, which generally is in the fall as that begins, just to get our, prior to that time, just to get our legislative packet looking good, make sure we've got everything we think is meaningful in there, and then go to legislature with me and do some lobbying as well. So that's kind of a very vague description. But you would be busy this month. Busy. The folks in Richmond are busy for a lot of reasons right now, not the least of which is legislature. But yes, I think generally December, it really kicks off in terms of bill tracking and advocating. And then in

[00:26:30] January, the second Wednesday of January is when they convene for the first time for General assembly. So going there means starting around mid January. Volunteers. Graham, you've been on that committee before, haven't you? No, I haven't. I am happy to do that. Oh, Rebecca. I'm sorry, it's Rebecca. Helen, have there been one or two members on that committee? We've generally had

[00:27:09] two. It's a fun committee. I may not have sold it well enough, which is ironic given that I'm supposed to be doing advocacy. I could be on that committee unless someone else wanted it. I just want to say you sold it great. But my day work schedule is ramping up. So I'm not absolutely yeah. Yeah, it is a little busy if you if you really want to get into the the lobbying. It's yeah, but it is super fun. Well, as it is, we have Rebecca and me on that committee for now.

[00:27:47] Next is new member orientation. We will have a new member in about a month. How did we, I know Jono had worked through that a few years ago, but Josh Black, did you do the orientation for new members last?

[00:28:10] I participated along with Ross Holden, who really was the lead. Okay. And I'm obviously happy to be involved again. Okay. I do not believe we had anyone in that last year, but I could be wrong.

[00:28:27] I was not oriented when I came. I don't think Ellen was either. You both got thrown in right in your first meeting was COVID. Essentially. So I don't know that that's been a strong. Yeah, I mean, Chuck and I had that one meeting with Ross and that was it.

[00:28:45] So I don't know what sort of other orientation it would be other than meeting with Mr. Black for that quick meeting. I don't know that it needs a whole committee. Okay. Okay. It looks like it's you, Josh. Piedmont Regional Education Program.

[00:29:05] looks like rebecca berlin was on that committee this past year is that correct correct i have been serving on that committee for the past two years i am um would love if someone would be interested to take it on but also can continue if needed there is a one meeting during the school year um wednesdays from 9 to 11. did you say one meeting a month apologies one meeting a month

[00:29:42] wednesdays from 9 to 11 a.m i think you're doing a fine job dr berlin i think it might be yours okay um public education foundation of charlottesville albemarle this we haven't really participated in in some time unless you are still going dr haas i was on this committee this is this is a committee that predated our establishment of the albemarle foundation for education and i was

[00:30:21] on that board for four years and i think graham was on for several as well and we've really tried to focus our intention in uh attention to building up the albemarle foundation for education so i don't know what kind of participation i don't think we've had any in a few years is that correct dr acuff if i may speak to that um okay have yeah um when uh tessa was the executive director of the AFE she served so I was serving as a liaison for years to the PEF and then Tessa

[00:31:00] kind of took over given that she was heading up the AFE and I think we have continued to you know have sort of a liaison in that capacity they do continue to want input from us with regard to things like you know grants or how they can most benefit us they do have every now and again different events etc so i think you know there is still certainly a meaningful connection there for what it's worth and it's also the case that the focus of pef is more teacher and classroom and

[00:31:37] the focus of albemarle foundation for education is more systemic changes um so there is we we can do both do we have anyone and that meets maybe monthly or every other month they continue as far as i know to hold a monthly meeting of the board yes and so the liaison either from the school division or a school board member on the committee would theoretically be you know joining that

[00:32:06] monthly does anyone want to volunteer well let's hold that for now uh thomas jefferson adult and career education regional board i'd like to continue with that okay unless judy wants to contest me for that one as well uh just so we could fill out the chart a little with a little

[00:32:41] more detail that meets monthly uh more like early as needed okay we we meet on the 28th as a matter of fact well with that i think we have all the assignments that we can have dr acoff can i ask a question real quick what about um seac or um like talent advisory aren't those both committees

[00:33:13] i don't know about the second one but i do know the seac is a committee um we have dr haas maybe you have the history of this a little uh longer than i do um i don't know that we've had a consistent um member of that group we certainly could no there's no uh per policy there's no board member appointees to those advisories to the school board board members are certainly

[00:33:47] welcome to attend but there's not an appointee and those are school board policies dr haas those are yeah those are school board uh advisories so that's why they come and make recommendations to the board and present their reports to the board okay so they're like like the long-range planning advisory committee and such things okay right there's no uh school board member that's appointed to lrpac either and we we have discussed in the past um uh making that a potential committee um

[00:34:26] and we just have not um uh done it um and so uh because i do know in some districts in virginia it is and that that could be something um mr black could you help um us look into uh because i do think making sure um the school board is staying close to that committee um and the work that they're doing is important um so if you could look to see if there are there's precedent um

[00:35:01] from some of the northern virginia um counties just to make a closer connection um so that they feel the the the support of the board i know miss spielman um regularly attends those meetings and i have one possible but i do think it's important for us to show our support and consider that as a as a

potential committee if uh if that is you know uh appropriate across according to policy i'm happy to do some research and i'll also put out some feelers to uh my counterparts in other school divisions in northern virginia appreciate it thank you very much all right chair acuff

[00:35:38] um i would like to volunteer for the aces committee i've had um second thoughts so outstanding miss thompson i'm sure you're getting all of this if not we can compare notes i think

[00:35:59] So I think then we have the committee assignments. We have a few holes for our new member. Should we have a new member? We have Mr. Black investigating SEAC. I mean, we also have a school health advisory committee by code, but we don't have a school. I've attended a few of those meetings over the years, but there's not a school board member of those committees.

[00:36:28] we're always welcomed, but I think anyway, but, and you'll get back with us, Mr. Black, on SEAC. Okay, with that, I think our assignments are completed. Thanks, everybody. Mary Cuff, the only one I have, everyone assigned, the only one I do not have, I just want to be clear, is the Albemarle Education Foundation. Is that correct? That's correct. Okay. That's,

[00:37:02] Yes, that's correct. Yes. Well, with that, we move on to approving of the approval of tonight's agenda. Do I have a motion chair? Lee, our chair, a quarter.

[00:37:22] We need. We do need a motion to confirm we approve these assignments. Yes, ma'am. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for catching that. Do we have a motion to affirm these committee assignments?

[00:37:38] we affirm the committee assignments as discussed a second the motion all those in favor aye opposed motion passes thank you now we move on to approval of tonight's agenda do we have a motion i move we approve tonight's agenda second moved by miss lee uh seconded by miss spillman all those in favor

[00:38:12] i opposed tonight's agenda passes the next item on is a spotlight on education consent agenda approval of consent agenda we uh the the agenda has that later oh okay all right my mistake sorry no um no it's moved around a bit i guess um next we have if you recall mr page we moved

[00:38:47] the public move the public comment before the approval of the consent agenda is that correct um announcements the next one 4.1 is spotlight on education who has that um dr acuff i noted on your script um for tonight our spotlight on education we had to pull that because the participants were unable to make the meeting this evening okay yes ma'am thank you so now

[00:39:22] we are we're at announcements or i apologize school board superintendent business okay okay uh dr haas do you have any superintendents business i'm certain that you've heard enough from me this evening in my role as temporary chair so uh i will not have any extra business for you thank you um i would like i have uh some school board uh business um the school board has been advised by its legal counsel that under virginia code we may appoint an interim school

[00:39:58] board member to the now vacant rio district seat in addition the virginia code provides that if such an appointment is made it must be done within a 45-day period of the vacancy which is by february 3rd this school board has solicited applications for the rio seat and has received seven by the january 7th deadline to meet this deadline school board will hold a special meeting to interview candidates on january 16th at 6 30 and a public hearing on january 23rd

[00:40:36] during its regularly scheduled working meeting to receive community input on the candidates after the public hearing the school board will convene a closed session to discuss the candidates and returned from closed session to announce their choice.

[00:40:52] The selected candidates first meeting will be the regularly scheduled February 13th school board meeting. Information about the applicants and about the meetings will be posted online.

[00:41:10] Is there any are there any other announcements? With that, we move to item 5.0 public comment. And I believe Ms. Osborne is managing that tonight.

[00:41:27] yes we welcome public input 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 am on the monday of the meeting week until 2 p.m on the meeting day by phone call the school board clerk's office 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 please note that public comment is not received at special board meetings unless specified on the agenda each speaker will have

[00:42:07] three minutes to speak but the chair with board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be 14 or more speakers the maximum number of people or groups that may speak at a meeting is 20. 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

[00:42:41] comments for the school board's consideration speakers should do the following state your name address or voting district address comments to the school board limit comments to school board governance or school division operations and for this evening's meeting you may email your written statements and supporting material to the clerk the school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time once the time is up speakers are asked to wrap up their comments and tonight we

[00:43:14] have two speakers uh we have katie george and brendan burn katie george will go first um is she on um yes are you there katie i am can you hear me yes we can hi i might have missed some of that sorry it was muted as I was getting out of the live stream. I'm Katie George. I have twin boys in the first grade in the county school system. We live in North Garden and I just wanted to provide

[00:43:50] some feedback and thoughts about the school closures with the weather. I'm sure you've had a lot of feedback. I feel that the plan, this is the way it feels that we are just waiting for the weather to get warmer and that the snow will keep melting during the day and keep freezing at night and the roads will continue to be icy as long as it's perceivably cold um and it feels like there's not been a great plan to deal with that um we are from up north so i know we come with a different perspective but i've talked to several people that are from here and they also agree that that there is more that we could be doing certainly at this point we all understand

[00:44:28] in the beginning of the week it was a different story um but the main roads are salted and cleared if the back roads are still slippery then can we put more salt down can we sand them can we put chains on buses can we do things to enhance the safety of the students and still allow them to go to school safely i feel there is more we could be doing in a reasonable way that other areas are able to do can we

provide training for school bus drivers on how to drive in the snow um you know the rest of the society is still going on safely children are still being

[00:45:01] driven around other schools in the area are back um you know today and tomorrow um so it seems um a bit unsettling with the forecast still being cold and icy and snowy that it feels like there's not a really great plan in place okay thank you george thank you uh next up will be um brendan burn thank you hey ladies and gentlemen school board i appreciate you taking the time to take

[00:45:33] to uh listen i really want to echo mrs george's comments my fear is that in the pursuit of equity in allowing all children to get to school we've adjusted our risk profile far too far to the let's be safe side of it as though we can't imagine any harm happening to children ever and that's frankly not compatible with reality unfortunately kids are going to get hurt if they get in a car accident and that is going to happen and that's going to happen regardless of whether

[00:46:08] the roads are icy or not icy accidents happen all the time um i would encourage you please to readjust this profile that you've got about it's going to be cold it may be icy the roads may refreeze that's very much a virginia thing people drive in the snow all throughout the northern hemisphere. This is a thing. Again, I'm going to leave my comments here. I appreciate the work you do. I really think that we need to not be overly cautious in the interest of safety, such that we

[00:46:45] harm our children by losing the opportunity to educate them. This was a different story on Monday, maybe even Tuesday. When you take the rest of the week off, that's not safety. We've gone past safety on this one. Thank you. I'll end my time here and cede back to the floor. Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

[00:47:03] And that concludes public comment for tonight. Thank you, Ms. Osborn. The next item on our agenda is approval of the consent agenda. Do we have a motion? If I want to pull something, do I do that after the motion? Sorry. Or do I do that now? You can do that now.

[00:47:29] Okay. Well, I just wanted to pull for a separate vote item 6.5 athletic coaches, just so that I can abstain from that specific vote. My husband is an athletic coach at Western and is listed on that for a vote. So I just wanted to pull that separately from the rest of the consent agenda.

[00:47:57] And I have a question. I don't know if it needs to be pulled or not, but there was a question on policy IA and I wondered if that had been addressed. Do you know, Mr. Black, if that's been addressed? There were like references and things that did not.

[00:48:16] It's, Ms. Osborne, it's been pulled. So do we have a motion to approve the consent agenda minus item 6.5, which we'll vote on separately?

[00:48:36] i move we approve the consent agenda minus item 6.5 which we will vote on separately second the motion made by ms osborne seconded by miss lee all those in favor of approval of the consent agenda minus 6.5 i opposed motion passes uh now ms spillman you wanted to talk about item 6.5 uh yes my husband is listed on there and i think in the interest of conflict of interest i need to abstain

[00:49:13] from voting on that specific part of the consent agenda okay um do we have a motion to approve item 6.5 dealing with athletic coaches i move that we approve item 6.5 personnel action athletic coaches second it was moved by miss osborne seconded by miss lee all those in favor do we miss miss spillman would you like a um a roll call vote so you can abstain sure thank you miss osborne yes

[00:49:49] miss spillman abstain mr page yes dr berlin yes miss lee yes share a cup yes motion passes next item of business is the quarter uh fourth quarter financial report uh and mr zimmerman i

[00:50:13] think is on the agenda there he is mr zimmerman are you prepared to go he's coming in that was my fault i was oh i was a little behind sorry about that good evening school board members i'm uh

[00:50:49] jackson zimmerman i'm your school finance officer welcome 2025 want to present for the board's consideration uh the fourth quarter financial report i will share let me share my screen we have the fourth quarter financial report representing april may and june of 2024 it is the fiscal year end report to the best of our knowledge in terms of data that's being presented as part of the audit

[00:51:28] that has recently been completed. In terms of revenues, revenues were largely expected, slight decline in state revenues. We had originally adopted a budget in 2024 based upon early estimation of state revenues before the state had actually passed a budget. And due to that, plus some changes in enrollment, there was a very slight decline less than originally budgeted received uh for state revenues however we had revised these estimates uh later on in the year

[00:52:06] so you would see that we did collect everything that we anticipated to collect for state revenues in terms of use of fund balance this is one of the we had budgeted about 4.1 million dollars use of fund balance here um we used uh the vast majority of the budgeted fund balance This is a relatively new trend for this cycle when we have been budgeting closer and closer and we

[00:52:36] have had a change in expenditure behaviors during this time period. In terms of expenses, the vast majority of our expenses where we're showing a summary of our expenses on page one of this report, expenditures by type, savings were achieved in our expenses from our salary and benefits side that was anticipated usually our expenses that is represents more than 85 percent of our total budget

[00:53:12] but the overall level of savings achieved by that is lower than we have seen in many many years and i have been in this role for a number of years this is a significant change in behavior particularly seen from the last several years where we've had difficulties in hiring staff so we are getting very, very close to the high 99% level of expenditures made in our salaries and compensation

[00:53:45] area. Operations did exceed overall budget. That was also anticipated in this process, particularly due to some of the hiring challenges that we faced and the additional expenditures in other areas that were there like adoption of textbooks and stuff during that year overall our budget was very very close to um to the original adopted appropriation or the the final

[00:54:24] adopted appropriation during this time period you can see uh expenditures in area in all the departments and schools special revenue funds are shown on pages three and four staff monitors the these special revenue funds, particularly at year end, very, very closely. Expenditures for many of

[00:54:57] our special revenue funds are reimbursable and not all of those reimbursements are made on a timely fashion by DOE. So if you're seeing significant, any changes, any negative balances that are shown in there are receivables that have yet to be received from the state, although we are fully anticipating receiving them. The last section is regarding school fund balance reporting. There is

[00:55:32] a correction associated with the beginning school fund balance. Shared information between school division and local government contained some incorrect titling of fiscal year data, which had led to an overstatement of beginning fund balance on prior year's reports.

[00:55:55] The balance shown is the correct balance agreed to by both entities in this process. We started the balance, started the year with almost \$10.5 million.

[00:56:11] During this year, we made a health care infusion of significance. We also infused additional monies into a health clinic to hopefully cost contain our health care costs in the future. And then we budgeted significant use of fund balance and utilized significant use of fund balance in the fiscal year 24 budget.

[00:56:37] We have an estimated ending balance of nearing \$3.5 million. And I'd be happy to entertain questions for the fourth quarter financial report.

[00:56:54] Ministers, do any of my colleagues have questions? I have one. In terms of the one-time health clinic costs, was that to outfit the clinic, the cost of outfitting the clinics that are going to be what? One on Pantops and one on 29?

[00:57:17] Yes, that's our share of those costs. Okay. And the healthcare fund infusion was to boost the reserves? Yes, the health care fund has experienced a wide range of demands upon it. Primarily, we have a statistically significantly larger number of very high-cost claimants that have drawn down the reserves.

[00:57:52] Usually, on a fund of our size, we have single-digit numbers of high-cost claimants. We have reached double-digit numbers of high-cost claimants, and it has drawn down the reserves fairly significantly, and the fund typically would be looking at having anywhere between a 16% to 20% reserve would be what is reasonable, and this is an infusion to get closer to that desirable level.

[00:58:22] What is when does our stop gap or stop loss policy kick in in terms of high health care costs? So stop loss, the the insurance that's taken out on that is done on not on a plan basis, but on an individual basis.

[00:58:44] So when you have a high number of high cost claimants, it hits that hits in the quarter million dollar plus range beyond that. so you you have to incur that first quarter million dollars or more for um so if we have a whole bunch of 200 two and a half million dollar claims we have to do each one separately okay yes ma'am ouch are there any other questions then do we need a motion to accept this financial report

[00:59:23] i move we accept mr zimmons financial report for the for this quarter quarter june 30th second all those in favor aye aye aye thank you mr zimmerman thank you um do we want to take a break or do we want to move ahead let's move ahead okay um the next item is then 8.3 the math

[00:59:56] curriculum adoption update we have miss castner i know is already here mr domer and miss green i think they're all here good evening just waiting for one second here okay good evening chair acoff and members of the school board my name is michelle kastner executive director of

[01:00:30] elementary and tonight we basically want to review the math adoption process and timeline that we have in place and then just to see if you have any questions for us um it is my great pleasure tonight though to introduce to all of you miss naoka green she is our new elementary math coordinator and miss green brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the area of mathematics miss green has served as a high school teacher an adjunct professor a k-5 math specialist

[01:01:08] and also as a district coach in another school division so it's my pleasure to introduce miss screen good evening greetings to chair and board members all of us who are here this evening again i am

naoka green your elementary math curriculum coordinator i am okay here we go so what we are

[01:01:42] going to kind of do like a run through on here this evening is the overarching purpose of this process video e updates as scarce as they may be in current state and goals current challenges committee structure and timeline and initial resources so speaking briefly to because i'm i'm sure you're all familiar with the values vision and mission mission of our district

[01:02:17] but i'm the new kid on the block and i just do want to make sure i make mention before i go past this slide. That very last sentence, we will know every student is such an important declaration to make. It screams we are intentional about humanizing all of the scholars we serve here.

[01:02:42] So kudos to you all on having that in place. And I'm so looking forward to continuing working alongside you all towards that purpose. So the purpose of our process here or protocol is to make sure we have a process in order that is transparent to all of our stakeholders, essentially. We want to make sure they're given some voice because all of the different stakeholders who are taking part in this process have some invaluable insight into

[01:03:21] what the needs of our scholars are. We want to be inclusive of all voices, thoughtful of all current and future scholars, and make sure we are paying close attention to the feedback we receive from going through this protocol as is. As I understand it, because obviously I was not here last school year. This is a similar or very much the same protocol as was used for your ELA

[01:03:54] adoption for K-5. So this overall process is going to be familiar to some. So our steering committee, we have Mrs. Michelle Kastner, myself, Mr. Craig Domer, Mr. Chris Gilman, Mr. Clay Todd, Dr. Melissa Hairston, Mr. Stephen Turner, and Mrs. Megan Wood, who are all meeting together over time with the meeting of the minds to make sure we are basically hitting all the targets to

[01:04:28] serve our committees well so that they're clear on what needs to be done as they're meeting throughout this adoption process. So as of the fall of 2023, Virginia adopted a new set of SOL standards with an overarching goal to increase expectations as per rigor for what we want to see

[01:04:59] from our scholars we had implementation as of um this school year and we did not receive what we would we would normally just call a crosswalk year in between the passing of the standards and the implementation of the standards and for the sake of those who may not be familiar with that specific term that just means we would normally be given at least a year in between passing and implementation to kind of sit with the standards, dive deep into what's different,

[01:05:35] what's the same, what resources do we have, what resources do we need to effectively teach these standards and so forth. We have investigations currently from SAVAS and that is being phased out as of the end of this school year. So we are looking at updating materials so that we can ensure that there's alignment with what the expectations of the state have become as far as

[01:06:13] making sure we've got that increased rigor there for our scholars to kind of dive in a little bit deeper, get their hands a little bit dirtier, and hopefully come out understanding the mathematics um better having that firm foundation matriculating from one grade level to the next um because for those who don't realize when you're learning math is very much a big old snowball so in response to what our um commonwealth of virginia has decided is necessary in instruction

[01:06:51] we're looking at making sure we have resources that are streamlined well. And unlike the change that happened as of last year with ELA, we do not have a law in place that is requiring that we make a specific shift a specific way.

[01:07:13] This is very much ACPS, I would just say, for my leaders having the foresight and I would say the expertise in what they've seen happening here in the district again I cannot speak to what has happened prior to this school year but I'm trusting that we're looking at moving towards something that is very well aligned with our new 2023 SOL standards for our scholars with

[01:07:46] whatever we would adopt. So current state already mentioned, yes, that we have investigations as of right now. We have not undergone an extensive K-5 adoption in over 15 years, to my understanding.

[01:08:06] And we have teachers who are having to supplement a lot of things depending on the grade level their teaching to make sure scholars are supported for all of the standards the teachers are responsible for providing instruction for throughout the school year. So, Salvas did submit a product for K-5 mathematics, but it was not investigations. They have submitted a different product, which we will get to in a few more slides. So the outcome, what we're looking

[01:08:45] to achieve here, again, is making sure we have resources that are well aligned with the new SOLs. Our teachers are accountable for teaching, making sure that we have a program that is supportive of essentially every scholar. We want diverse cultures and all of that represented and supported. No matter where you're coming in from, your background and all of those things should not be a barrier to your learning experiences, what we essentially believe.

[01:09:22] Preparing scholars for secondary and post-secondary math study, we again see math as a snowball. So if I'm starting off in kindergarten and I have that firm foundation I need, it makes it a whole lot smoother to move through your second, your sixth and so forth grade level content because you have that foundational understanding you need that you can expand upon to more complex ideas.

[01:09:57] We are looking to implement for the 25-26 school year with whatever we do choose to adopt via our committee. Accounting for challenges.

[01:10:14] The state of, excuse me, the Commonwealth of Virginia has given messaging that they were intending to have a finalized list of resources as of December. I believe it was a December 3rd meeting that was scheduled and they ended up taking that conversation off of the schedule and there were some other things that have transpired in between so essentially that deadline has moved it's been pushed back and so we're looking at trying to

[01:10:47] make sure we're not too far behind schedule because ideally we would have something ready and waiting for teachers as they're coming back this school year at the very least we would hope we can get some things before then actually and so with that in mind we're looking to go ahead and start this work as soon as reasonably possible the programs to be reviewed by the state

[01:11:19] um we're looking at we're looking at programs that are what we're looking for programs that are going to ensure that that rigor um virgin the videoe has emphasized is absolutely present in the instruction we're providing for our scholars and the the scaffolding supports around that instruction as well so preference will be given to programs that are on the state approved list

[01:11:50] because albeit there's no law that's kind of chaining us to the idea, if you will, we still would like to find some happy medium in alignment between what our scholars need and what the state has kind of given their okay to. The committee will have the opportunity to review any resources that are approved by the state as of February.

[01:12:19] So our adoption committee currently consists of seven campus administrators, about 28 K-5 teachers, about 13 of our EL and or FEDUCATORS, as I like to call them.

[01:12:38] We have about seven instructional coaches. We have one LTI coach as well now, and about nine community partners. So that's given us a nice spread of our stakeholders. So our current adoption timeline, we're looking at beginning at February 5th with having our committee come together, making sure they get that explicit instruction as far as what

[01:13:14] the expectations are as they're walking away with products and what their work with rubrics and so forth is going to look like throughout this process and how they're coming back together as a committee to discuss what their findings are. We're looking at February 26th, where that's one of the dates that we're going to be able to have the groups share feedback and narrow down to two programs. We want it to be top two programs as per the committee's votes. So materials are then

[01:13:51] going to be sent to schools from those top two programs so that all of the schools will be able to take a look at everything. And we are hoping to have all of that taken care of by March 7. March 12, we're looking to review feedback from schools, have publishers present to a committee and answer any questions there may be April 24th and I know this is probably stretching out just a

[01:14:24] little bit but we are where we are ensure we have reviewed all feedback because again that is a major emphasis here want to make sure voices are valued and heard complete textbook adoption forms for each program forward both to Dr. Hayes with committee's final recommendation and at some point during the month of May you'll probably notice that the exact day date is missing um we would hope to be able to send an information item for you all saying which program we are endorsing as

[01:15:04] a district and have the program available for a 30-day public review so the four programs we are currently looking to review are KITM, Reveal Math, Envision, and Into Math via HMH. So KITM is a program that has been state approved thus far for grade levels, both elementary and secondary general band. It is based on the illustrative mathematics curriculum, and it has been streamlined

[01:15:43] to show where there is alignment with our specific Virginia SOLs. This program also has been used by VDOE for professional learning for math specialists and in the interest of making sure there was some support given for the new 2023 standards of learning. Envision Math is approved by

[01:16:17] the video e for secondary and what we would hope to do with considering that for K5 is to allow for vertical alignment within our district when it comes to instruction they have uh resubmitted for review um they have received all green ratings on air reports.org reveal math is state approved for secondary as well. And kind of like what I was just saying for

[01:16:52] Envision, we're looking at having that, it's ideal for me. And I believe many of us who know the mathematics to have that alignment between K5 and our secondary grade level bands. So this is also one where we have all green from edreports.org. Into math via HMH, for those who find HMH

[01:17:25] familiar, that is where our K-5 reading program is sourced. And what that would do would be to maybe give our teachers a little bit of ease when it comes to the question of implementation, Since they will be using the exact same platform they're already using for reading.

[01:17:44] So going in and finding things would not be such a daunting task for them. So this is another program that received all greens on edreport.org. So just a quick look at who is using other programs.

[01:18:05] Envision, we know Alexandria City Schools is currently using them. for the remainder of our programs i did not identify any districts who are using those programs as they have been presented at this time however we do know that they are being used in some other states across our country and some surrounding us so i know there are some districts in north carolina south carolina jersey and so forth who are using hmh into math there are

[01:18:39] There are districts in North Carolina also who are using Reveal Math, McGraw-Hill, and we have KITM in Tennessee and some other states across the country. Do you have any questions for me?

[01:18:54] I have two questions. Thank you so much for that presentation. My first question is, how are you picking the parents to be on this committee or how did you pick the parents to be on the committee?

[01:19:13] Okay. So not going out of my way to be difficult, but I want it to be clear that the U was actually, we had our principals to kind of reach out and give some input where that was concerned.

[01:19:30] I did not handpick the parents. Michelle Kastner did not. So I just want to, I do want to make sure that it's clear. michelle would you like to speak to that sure um it was very very similar to how we led the language arts adoption principles i think just put out that who's interested in being a part of the math adoption process um it was very open okay yeah thank you sure and then my next question

[01:20:02] is on um budget implications for next year um i didn't see anything on that that will be because we don't have those definitive answers. We would have to look a whole lot deeper because there's the question of what the companies are offering versus the question of what we would actually need, what packaging do they offer or provide, and all of that gets a little grayed out when you're so far out from making that definitive decision on which company we're going to go with.

[01:20:41] And Ms. Spillman, while we don't have an exact idea of what curriculum we will land on, the team has worked with the finance department, Ms. Schmidt, Mr. Zimmerman, to make sure that there are funds allotted for this purchase.

[01:20:57] Okay. All right. Oh, and then one other question I jotted down was on, sorry, I'm tired. I'm jet lagged, so I'm a little slow. What sort of reporting and follow-up is there going to be on the back end to make, because right now a lot of the things that I hear is that we don't have a lot of really great reporting on how our math, how our students are doing in math.

[01:21:25] And I think that that would be really important in our new curriculum to have really good data showing not just how well the program is working, but how well our students are doing in math. I mean, I know we have SOLs, but it's not always a great indication.

[01:21:41] Mr. Domer, do you want to speak to that? Certainly. I think the rubric that's been developed for the teams to review all the programs, assessment and data management is a key component to how we'll be evaluating the programs.

[01:21:58] think something that came out of the bellwether report was to make sure that we had kind of a better system for formative assessment especially in the elementary schools and math so um and in the report they said whenever possible uh directly aligned to your core resource so we're going to it's going to be an important part of how we evaluate those programs is what kind of data and assessment can we get longitudinally for students um as they go through k5 awesome thank Thank you. All right. Ms. Green, you mentioned something about products had not been received

[01:22:33] from SEVAS or SAVAS. How does that affect them being adopted or the adoption process with that company? I think you may be speaking to when I said they did not submit investigations for approval. Okay. I thought you said products, but that could be it. Yeah. I wasn't speaking to delivery of products this evening all right mr page salvis has multiple math curricular resources

[01:23:09] they as a company chose envision as their most aligned so they submitted that one rather than investigations okay i have a question as well uh you were talking a lot about how like math skills snowball and i totally agree with that so like are there any like ways to make sure that students don't get left behind because the tendency i've seen in math is that the successful people move on and then those who don't quite get the idea like kind of get left behind what you are speaking to

[01:23:48] may actually lend itself more so to what classroom practices are and so part of what i am hoping to continue working with teachers on is what their classroom practices are so we're looking at programs and one of the best practices that has honestly never gone away since i've been an educator speaks to the idea of reflection and so one of the things i really want to highlight for teachers the remainder of the school year and firmly going into the next

[01:24:22] one is what their reflection processes look like how are they even um i know one of the things that i've mentioned a lot this school year and the few times that i've been blessed to have some space with the elementary teachers because it's been all things ela um is looking at ways to even bring scholars into that conversation about what is working for your learning. And so as we get a little braver with some of the discomfort and what may be unfamiliar to some and what others

[01:24:59] might actually be able to kind of help coach their colleagues through, hopefully there will be more of those conversations to where there's less space for anyone to feel left behind because it's a normal practice now in the classroom to make sure you're voicing what your needs are in some way.

[01:25:19] Does that make sense? Yes. Thank you. Oh, I have a question. No, Ms. Osprey, you go. Ms. Green, do you have a sense of, is there excitement on the ground with teachers for adopting a new math curriculum? We just put them through the whole literacy adoption. What's the sense on the ground there? So two things are true at this time, as far as what I've sensed, and anyone else can join in and let me know if you agree, disagree, or whatnot. But I've heard of some of the concerns

[01:25:58] about having implementation, you know, right behind implementation. And in even some of those same voices i've heard absolute excitement about what's what's new here and what opportunities we might find in this newness uh ms green uh welcome to acps um the um the timeline seems pretty crunched in terms of hoping to launch in the 25 26 when we may not even have a product

[01:26:37] selected until may um and i know all of us heard from constituent well teachers about the challenges of implementing the literacy program um and you in one of your own slides you talk about the

usual you know the crosswalk of being a year from adoption to implementation um just speak to that okay so the crosswalk comment was made with regards to the standards specifically the teachers

[01:27:10] are teaching and i can also see that connection with a new program for instruction what we are considering uh via the great mrs megan wood is what these programs are offering in the way of actual training and professional learning when it comes to us implementing a specific program so that is very much something on our radar how are we going to be able to support teachers

[01:27:45] sustainably moving forward with saying hey here's this other new thing to do i think that will be a challenge agreed but we're up to it i'm glad to hear that do we have any other questions for this panel um and i would just make a comment one of the comments i was going to make a questions was chair acoff was about that just being observed uh no uh being cognizant i guess of that potential

[01:28:19] fatigue um on the uh the k those k-5 teachers um coming after an intensive year um of both professional development and support and just i mean i think this board understands how much the teachers are the backbone of everything that we do and so you know as we go into budgeting around this. Is there anything we can do to make sure we're supporting them in this adoption?

[01:28:44] And then the question I have is, I know you mentioned that there will be special education teachers on the committee. Is there anything else you're doing as you, the committee will be doing to ensure, you know, as you commented that this, this curriculum needs the needs of all students, including those children with special needs.

[01:29:08] We know one curriculum can't meet everyone's needs, but making sure we find a curriculum that supports the needs of the majority of our children. Well, that is the first step and intention towards that.

[01:29:24] We do, well, I'll say I have been having some conversations on campuses and I do know that some of the concerns at that level are honestly just above my head in terms of what I can, you know, control what's in my wheelhouse. I do advocate as much as I can for there to be more of a first resort rather than last resort collaboration when it comes to our EL colleagues and SPA educators because

[01:30:04] they have so much invaluable insight that it may not even just be about those students who have 504s or IEPs who you know need that help you have scholars who are not at all labeled with you know any kind of disability to speak of who still could use some of the supports these people would know to suggest. So I'm looking forward to that being another thing that we kind of move towards,

[01:30:37] where it's more of an idea that all of them are all of ours when it comes to how we're viewing the scholars. Because again, I think this is something that kind of speaks more so to practice than program, if you will. And hopefully with a decently aligned program, you're looking at an easier path to be able to kind of open up those conversations if you're looking at some of the maybe scripted lessons if that's a part of what they offer or the different tasks provided maybe

[01:31:13] that can be some of the the things that kind of spark those conversations more to say okay how how might we um how might we tweak or modify this particular task so that it best serves who we're serving thank you so much miss green i i so appreciate your both the presentation as well as your observations um you know as a new set of eyes in our county so um i i welcome you as well thank you so much thank you all thank you so much and dr berlin i just want to add um prior to the

[01:31:51] break i met with miss katie compel our director for special education and one of the things we're we're going to begin looking at is going beyond the adoption and how we can better prepare our special education staff to support students after an adoption of a new curriculum. And so we didn't want to overwhelm our staff with ELA and math. So after the math adoption, we're going to pull together a team to begin looking at a protocol of some sort that we can work with our staff, either with this division level, building level, our coordinators for special education to better prepare all of our teachers, not just our special educators,

[01:32:30] with how to move beyond implementation of just the basic curriculum and how to make sure it reaches all of our learners, no matter where they arrive. Thank you so much, Dr. Hayes. And on that, I would say in that for all, but particularly in special education, we know that so much instruction is done by our instructional assistants. So, you know, I think, again, And in budgeting, figuring out how we can make sure that we're compensating or providing additional days for those, particularly those instructional assistants, because they are giving a lot of instruction for our children with delays and disabilities.

[01:33:07] Are there any more questions? Well, thank you, Ms. Green, Ms. Kastner, Mr. Dahmer, Dr. Hayes, and thank you. We will stay tuned for the next steps you all are taking.

[01:33:25] The next item on our agenda is item 8.4, the Help Me Anonymous Reporting System update. And we have Myles Nelson here to talk to us. Thank you, Dr. Acuff. Thank you, Boyd, for having me here.

[01:33:41] I am really excited about this opportunity to talk about Help Me. And tonight I have here with me Mr. Curse and Mr. Walton, who are going to be joining in at various points. And so let me go ahead and share my screen. So tonight's an opportunity to talk about Help Me.

[01:34:00] and one of the things that I really wanted to start off with is how it incorporates into our strategic plan so first it's like thriving students this is an opportunity for students to reach out for support that aren't thriving we want all students to thrive and so this is just another opportunity for students to receive those resources that they need and then empowering our communities because it's not all just about students this is also how do we empower our communities our parents to have another avenue of being able to reach out to schools and find the resources they need and part of the help me program also highlights the resources not just the communication with administrators but it also houses some of our resources for

[01:34:40] community access for like food insecurity the homelessness information line and other different resources throughout there so with that i'm gonna jump into our genius so we have four different pieces that i'm going to address today one is the why because we've had a anonymous reporting line for about for quite some time now for about six years and we just recently shifted to help me in july so we're going to talk about why the shift and then we're going to talk about our implementation timeline because there were some questions about um what's happening with uh help

[01:35:17] me and then we're going to jump into the training and resources that provided been provided around help me and then lastly i'm going to go over a really quick video example and that really is just to highlight a few of key points and so the why so help me was rooted in the decision to move from anonymous alerts to help me was intentional um the purpose behind it is quite frankly i i received feedback quite often that anonymous alerts was a snitch line or it was the tattletale

[01:35:54] line or the report line and it was always um i need you to take care of this i need you to do this this individual needs a consequence and so it never fostered any skills or contributed to building community and so when we were in the solicitation process for help me it really stood out because it fundamentally shifted the focus from what can you do for me to how can we support one another and so i think that shift really aligns with our commitment to building a stronger

[01:36:28] community and more collaborative community and so whether through academic content or social emotional learning help me supports our efforts to teach and reinforce skills for a supportive environment so since adopting help me the quality of the information that we receive has vastly changed it is presented to staff how it has been presented to staff has improved and unlike our previous system where there was an option for one-way communication help me has permanently enabled two-way communication so there is not an option to only send in information so

[01:37:05] every time that we have a alert come through it's always responded to and i think that's very significant because it ensures that administrators and counselors can effectively address concerns so help me also uh is always generally first reviewed by our administrators so they're the initial point of contact and then based on what the alert is that system is designed to categorize it to route them to the appropriate individual so whether it is something around bullying and maybe it stays with the administrator or maybe it's something that they have currently know that they are currently working on with their mental health support specialist or the school counselor

[01:37:44] and then it's routed to that appropriate individual so a few of the examples i wrote out were just there's two. And then to address specifically the concerns that I've heard around that it's just a third party responding. So that is only in after hours. From 7 a.m. in the morning to 4 p.m. in the afternoon, it is all school staff responding. And with that, after 4 p.m., they do have a third party response that does respond immediately. And they gather information and they assess that current situation. And they will take all that information and then they hold it and give it to

[01:38:21] administrator to respond appropriately at 7 a.m. the next morning so that might be something that they have to check into first thing in the morning to help support students or families however if there is an imminent concern for safety that's when they escalate it and we do receive a call and there's three individuals that support that it's myself darabana and craig zelotta so it's a partnership between student services and the office of school safety and security um and so some examples of that sometimes when it's self-harm it'll be

[01:38:55] escalated to us and generally even with self-harm concerns we try to reach out to the family first and then if we can't reach the family going through emergency contacts and reaching out to guardians and caregivers then we'll partner with acpd to do a wellness check just to make sure everyone's safe if it's a concern for school safety that's when we partner really closely with the office of safety and security and partnering with acbd to make sure of concerns for example of like when there's a post of school threats through snapchat and so really quickly i talked a lot

[01:39:32] about our part of the get help but you also see there's two other buttons here on the screen you have get resources in the crisis text line so one the one in the center of the crisis text line is the national crisis text line which is uh seven uh oh i'm blanking on that number it's the three numbers right in a row three four seven three four seven i think that's it i'll have to double check that one i apologize and then the top one is the get resources and then that's where we really partnered with all of our community partners

and the very first resource you will see in there is the street sheets which is a wonderful partnership within the albemarle and charlottesville greater

[01:40:12] community of all the local community resources and really making sure that we educate all of our individuals within the community about all the different resources available so how is the system being used so this is our current data where an overview of help me for this year we've received around 434 alerts so far this year of those you can see where we have 331 verified alerts and so when i say verified alerts those are ones that we have been able to appropriately respond to haven't been a test alert haven't been a uh other another prompt or have had enough information to act upon

[01:40:50] and so i think that again highlights more of the training opportunities that we have for students and families about how we use the system and again those alerts are going directly to the administrators who are thoroughly reviewing each one and it's crucial to emphasize the importance of providing complete and detailed information so sometimes we get alerts like i need someone to respond to me and so this is where we are we don't know who to respond to because it is a confidential reporting system and so again we're working on what that training looks like and I'm

[01:41:25] very excited to have Mr. Walton with me here tonight he's going to talk a little bit later about what that training looks like for students at his school but I really would encourage everyone students staff community members to be as detailed as possible when submitting help me alerts so just like in your English classes when they teach you the who, what, when, where, how, all those pieces, it's just as important when we're submitting alerts because all that information is really crucial to being able to support students. So if you provide us a situation that has happened but

[01:41:59] we're not able to identify any individual, it's hard to follow up on. And then to highlight, most of the alerts that come through are classified as bullying and harassment. So we have about 60 those alerts knows the majority of the alerts that come through and administrators are responding to those and then we have about 49 in the other category so those are ones where students haven't identified the category or they haven't been able to recategorize them as they close them out

[01:42:33] with that if there's ever cases specifically to school violence having detailed information is critical it's important that you can provide such things as like screenshots usernames you can submit uh any type of media with your alert um the better equipped we are to work with the school safety and security to assess situations take appropriate action it's essential to ensuring the safety of our entire school community i also like to important that i don't want to discourage anyone from knots me because they don't have enough information

[01:43:08] even if it's just a rumor i would just encourage that when you do submit those pieces that you make that statement of this is the information i have and you'll usually get a response such as like thank you for submitting that information and next i'm going to jump into our implementation implementation timeline so we only have about six slides and then we'll i'm going to jump back to this one later because i know there's always questions about our data so for implementation

[01:43:41] since this is a new system i wanted to really highlight our timeline of the implementation for help me so every few years we're required to review current contracts um in 2024 was a review year for anonymous alerts and in january 2024 we initiated a solicitation process to explore what services could be offered for systems like anonymous alerts so we had a very long timeline and we collaborated with

multiple departments between the office of school safety principals and counselors and the department of technology to all have to have a well-rounded

[01:44:20] committee on selecting our next system so all of this led to finalizing the contract around July and then this is where I really want to highlight where we started reaching out to individuals to prep them for the incoming system we worked really closely with the department of technology to do the back-end implementation so everything was connected with our single sign-on for our staff so that it was an easy implementation for them to get in and use the system. During pre-service week, we provided comprehensive training for all staff involved with Help Me.

[01:44:58] This included school administrators, counselors, school counselors, mental health support specialists, safety coaches. The training covered system access, key features, and the alert response process to ensure everyone was prepared to utilize help me effectively moving to the next slide I'm going to highlight how we've made sure to help how we made sure help me was well integrated and recognized within our community so the department of student services has provided over 23 hours of training to staff and you can see the breakdown of these trainings under staff trainings I'd also

[01:45:37] like to highlight the integral resource site we developed specifically for our staff this site includes materials and training videos that were accessible and recognizing the time constraints educators face and their day-to-day responsibilities so they could go back and review any of those pieces that they needed at any time additionally I'd like to acknowledge the effort that has gone into promoting help me in September the school week when the school year began Dr. Health dot Dr. Haas helped introduce help me to the school community through the September Connect September Connections newsletter. Okay, tongue-tied here. And then the communication department for sharing

[01:46:16] multiple messages about Help Me with families and students. I partnered with Dr. Eric Irizarry in the Department of Community Engagement, which allowed me to discuss Help Me in greater depth through platforms like Engage ACPS podcast. I've also had the privilege of speaking about Help Me during the back-to-school community session, which was highlighted as a key resource for our community.

[01:46:39] and beyond that we've utilized social media to spread awareness and engage directly with students to help me um one of the parts with help me is we have heard and to be completely transparent I went and presented to student senate and about 25 of students said they had heard of it and to me that was a great opportunity to continue and I think that this is the same way it's like another opportunity how we continue to push and advocate for how we're doing our trainings and how we're connecting with students and one of the things that I'm really working closely with the office of communication community engagement in is how we are pulling more students into these trainings

[01:47:16] that's what I was offering through student senate is trying to get student feedback to help me with um no pun intended uh get word out about help me and some of the trainings um working with Amber Roberts and partnering with the senior projects of the community action program planning had another opportunity to talk to a bunch of students who were doing community action planning and we talked a lot about how we messaged the students and so just continuing that process of

[01:47:53] how and taking every opportunity I can to engage with students and community about help me um so for a more concrete example I have Mr. Josh Walton here who receives many many of those alerts and he's going to talk a little about how he introduced it to his students and how his school has trained

students with the help me system thank you miles and good evening board thank you for having me here tonight so as miles said we did training first and i want to thank miles and his team for

[01:48:29] the training they offered in pre-service week because that was very comprehensive and it brought us all of the administrators safety coaches together in one place so we could learn together so it was a little bit of a change from when we implemented anonymous alerts and then of course we started training with students so at Walton we did that in our town halls that we host with students at the beginning of the year and then throughout the year and so one of the things that we had seen at our particular school with anonymous alerts was as Miles said it sort of became a tattler box and was not always being used appropriately and so students were

[01:49:07] relying on it to help them solve problems that they could probably solve themselves so we had to do some realignment around that and let them know we want to help them but we also want them to be able to help themselves and help me has some built-in features as miles said that provides resources that they can go to for that so in our town halls we talked about using it appropriately to help themselves and others one of the things we we talk a lot about is that reporting is safety not snitching we talk about what that means with the students and we also talk about being an

[01:49:43] upstander so looking out for others that's part of being in our community so if you see something you need to say something and then we will look into it from there to investigate to determine what we need to do and so we did emphasize that it's for serious concerns and there's always other ways for them to report things to counselors and administrators and of course teachers are often and our teaching assistants are often our first line of defense in terms of getting those reports but so far this year it has been um well received and we've seen a more appropriate use of it with

[01:50:20] our students um when you look at those numbers that miles shared i think it was a 443 total walton middle schools had 96 of those um so um that's a that's a huge percentage um now uh 63 of those were ones that we found had something that was substantiated and some of those were double reports and those kinds of things but so far we've seen a good use of it an appropriate use of it and the other thing i'm not sure miles quite emphasized is the light speed integration so So lightspeed alerts are what we receive if students type in something related to harming

[01:50:59] somebody else or harming themselves into their computer. So our filter captures that using a mix of AI and then human interface as well to screen those. And those do get put in to help me as documentation.

[01:51:18] So the Office of Safety and Security has been putting those in. alert the administrators ahead of time so that we know that it's coming and then we take appropriate steps from there whether that's getting a student in touch with a counselor reaching out to home if it's on a weekend or outside of school hours for example during snow days we do get those things and so it's been really helpful in terms of helping our students one feel heard but also

[01:51:47] feel safe so i appreciate um that this system is in place it has been um very positive and miles you're muted back to zoom i'm good so the next part i have a quick video and it's really just minutes background noise and it's really just a highlight so you'll see two separate screens here one is the student side and one is the staff side and so right now it's just a video that i created

[01:52:26] going through both of those um but i really just wanted it as an opportunity to review at a later time. What I really want to convey is three takeaways from this video. One, it's accessing and seeing responses from administrators. Two, every alert is addressed. And three, administrators are responsible for assigning what action was taken for each alert to close it out.

[01:52:49] And so what you're seeing right now is just me quickly typing through an alert. And this is the ID and passcode. So this is what needs to be written down. This is where I love this opportunity to provide education, because if you close out your window right there after you submitted, you would need that code to see the response from the administrator.

[01:53:05] But if you have the window open, you can see I already have a response. And I accidentally forgot as I was doing this run through to let them know that it was a test. And so you have to see me quickly type here that it was a run through for the school board. And they quickly responded because it was an out of office hours piece.

[01:53:22] And that was the big thing is that these all get collected for out of office hours. That information gets collected and then put back to an administrator when school is back in session.

[01:53:38] So, again, you need that code to access the response if you close the window. Two, every alert is addressed. And then three, administrators have to, and there's my error again, you have to go back and assign an action. And so that's where I really wanted to go back again to this data, that this is all of our closed reports.

[01:53:58] So, again, these are all the verified closed reports, and that's what all of this data is based off of. So from there, well I lost my slide number, yep. But again, this is just a wonderful opportunity to emphasize that the system is a collaborative effort.

[01:54:18] We value the voices of our students and we're committed to continuously improving Help Me. And to meet that need, student feedback is vital. I would love, again, at any point, we're pushing into how we can get more students from Student Senate and other schools to jump into this training process of how we can put this out there more.

[01:54:36] We have posters all across schools for apps, and one of the things that I think is really neat about one of the statistics that I didn't put on here is when we had anonymous alerts, we had 99.8% of all alerts be web-based. And so we have, help me again, on every single website landing page, so on the main page when you go to K-12 Albemarle, you can select whatever school you want.

[01:54:59] So if you have kids across multiple schools, you go to the main K-12 page, and you can select which school. So you know of a student's friend that's at another school that's struggling, you can submit an alert to a different school. However, if you go to your main school website, it submits directly to that school. And again, really push it into how we're getting students to build in and make their voice heard.

[01:55:25] And again, with the anonymous alerts, it was 99.8% all web-based. We actually see about a 15% submission from phones, which we did not see with anonymous alerts. people are seeing the posters they're starting to download that and so we're trying to increase again that awareness of the system and how to use it and how we get people to respond so from there i wanted to open it up to what questions y'all have about help me and anything i can do to answer those questions for y'all we have a couple minutes for questions

[01:56:00] miles are all students i mean k with k-12 you mentioned k-12 i mean who is getting the training do so for students and third graders use this or how does this work so for student training it is six through twelve it is open to k through five and it is on k through five websites and it is for that community piece we've we have about 15 parents that have submitted responses for help me but we don't train students yet and that's one of the conversations that we're starting to have

[01:56:38] with um elementary principals is do we start to introduce this in fifth grade do we start to introduce in fourth grade so that's part of the iterative process of where we're evaluating the system but we started with our secondary schools because that's where we were with anonymous alerts and then we're gonna continue for that feedback piece any other questions i guess i have a question for our student representative in terms of your level of awareness of of this going on or

[01:57:14] if you have it i'm not trying to put you on the spot if you have any comments about this i'd love to hear them uh i hadn't heard about anything like this before this year uh there's not a lot about it i'm not sure that before tonight i would have known how to access it um i do have a question though uh are microaggressions is that sort of thing able to be reported on help me or is that the sort of thing someone would go to a counselor for so it could be both so that's the beauty of help me is that it's a starting point so if you are in a situation where

[01:57:53] you need support and structures the help me could be the one that gets you in contact with your counselor if you haven't made that connection with your counselor yet um that could be your starting point or if you already have that bridge with your counselor you could go straight to your counselor so i i think it's a yes and so it's both and uh just to piggyback on that miles when we get the reports we can then assign them to other people in the system so our counselors do have help me accounts and so we can assign knowing which student has which counselor to the appropriate counselor of course i always give them a heads up as well so it's not just coming from the email

[01:58:33] from help me just like one more comment uh i think i should note that i know barely any students that actually like read the newsletters that might include the information on help me so yeah yeah and so that's where we're working on how do we expand that so that was part of my discussion in back in october with the student senate is like how do we get this out more to students and so we did have an advisory lesson but advisory was so packed it was one slide with an advisory so i i totally get how that could get glossed over um so again i i would love feedback

[01:59:11] about how we can make this better and how we can get into more people's hands so that they know it's there and how we can support students thank you for those questions cam are there any more questions well thank you thank you for the presentation um it was great i look forward to seeing the data down the line see how how well you're pushing it out into the student body thank you thank you for the opportunity the next item on our agenda uh is school safety and security overview by mr bradley well good evening um chair aka good evening uh vice chair berlin and members

[01:59:50] of the Elmore County School Board. My name is Ralph Bradley and I am the Director of the Office of School Safety and Security and I come to you today to speak about an overview related to our office and provide you with some information about our program activities that are ongoing and that we're going to continue to be pursuing throughout the years and just give you an idea of what our office has been up to since its inception. So we're going to go ahead and cover a few items. We're

[02:00:26] going to talk about our staffing and personnel matters. Also some policy program procedures, practices that we've undertaken and installed. Also address some physical infrastructure matters. As Miles said, we have a deep partnership with student services, so we'll touch that as well.

[02:00:45] Some items looking ahead and also just updates to a strategic plan that I think are going to be important for us to address since we are a new department. So as all of our directorships, we follow closely with our strategic plan and address our vision and mission and values throughout all that we do. Specifically within safety and security, we cover a little bit of each of our values in various ways. Although we are not an academic or instructional component, Safety and security crosses all lines.

[02:01:22] As far as equity is concerned, we make sure that all of our programs and activities are consistent throughout the district to make sure that they're applied in a manner that is able to be received and employed with everyone within our district. As it relates to excellence, mitigating barriers, and that's one of our primary concerns is to make sure that we have an open line of communication with everyone, whether it's students, staff, or community members.

[02:01:49] We, as security professionals, have ideas and insights on what we think are extremely important, but it's also important to hear the messaging and the concerns from our community. That also addresses one of the other attributes is our family and community is that engagement portion.

[02:02:05] We want to make sure that where we can, we're engaging our community both to provide information and receive information to make sure that what we're doing is consistent with the expectations both of the board and also within line of what our community considers to be concerns within our safety and security within our schools.

[02:02:23] And then lastly, wellness. That's just critically important. We'll speak to it when we get to our mission, but if you have a culture, a positive culture of safety and security, then our students are able to function in their learning environment and be most productive.

[02:02:40] So we find that our office touches every one of these in somewhat of a different nature, but definitely we are tied into the goals of a strategic plan. And I will discuss it a little bit later in the presentation that since we are a relatively new office, we will be having some updates with industry strategic plan to make sure that our office activities are being addressed properly as we move forward.

[02:03:06] And this is our mission. Without bringing the whole thing, providing a culture of safety and security is paramount within Office of Safety and Security. And that addresses both our programs and our people. So we're going to make sure we spend a lot of our time addressing that.

[02:03:22] We also want to make sure our programs and activities are compliant with all regulations codes, and we also want to address that all of our programs are designed so that we can promote success, and that's both, as I said, within quality and equity within our activities.

[02:03:41] Just to touch on our security, our staffing, and personnel, to give you an overview. As you're aware, my position was created October of 23, and we were grateful enough to install two safety and security coordinators.

[02:03:59] One is Darabontem, the other is Craig Zatola. They come with a wealth of experience, both from our long-term education as well as long-term law enforcement and tactical experience. So, I think we have a very good team that is in place to address our policies, programs, and the implementation of those.

[02:04:17] Also, in our school resources, our school-based positions, formerly we had school security assistants, or TAs, back in October of last year. We did do a reclassification to meet VDOE and DCJS certification standards, and we now have those staff members identified as school security officers.

[02:04:37] And each of those are assigned to all of our secondary schools in various ways. We have 15 allotted throughout our three high schools. We have one each at our middle schools, and we have one school security officer that's assigned to our community lab school.

[02:04:56] In addition to our security resources, we have SRO also assigned. We currently have one that's specifically assigned as FTE at Albemarle High School. The Admiral County Police Department has provided us one on loan. Officer Kaczynski is located at Albemarle High School.

[02:05:14] And Officer Ray Lilly is on loan, and he is a SRO certified and trained staff member, but he's been available to respond to our other schools to assist in getting an individual who is attuned to our needs within the schools to addressing the issues where we need a police response.

[02:05:38] So we're grateful to have those two resources available to us from our police department. And also within our school staff, you're also aware we have our school safety coaches. There are currently nine that are assigned, also all located at our secondary schools, and they provide an important role as well, both of a security role as well as a mental health safety role.

[02:06:02] So we're glad we have those individuals in place. And also a lot of people don't think about it, but our staff as a whole is that collective responsibility of safety and security. We do have a people in place, but that culture is very much the responsibility of all of the people, students, staff, and district personnel within our schools.

[02:06:27] We provide that environment. So those are the current staffing levels that we have associated with supporting safety and security within our schools. And moving forward, just to address a few of our policies, programs, procedures, and practices.

[02:06:47] At the beginning of this school year, we had a brand new template that was revised and put into place within our schools for crisis management. That document, as you're aware, has all of the process and procedures to address any of our response postures to address emergent situations.

[02:07:08] Each one is defined by every one of our schools, and it's reviewed by our staff as well. And that is also a living document where we see we need to update those crisis management plans with new information or information that we find is not useful.

[02:07:24] then we'll go ahead and make those amendments, but those plans are updated as needed to make sure that they're current and accurate when there's a need. Let me touch a little bit on tabletop exercises. What we didn't install this year is our staff is going out to every school and we're going through tabletop exercises. Our initial round was to discuss that crisis management plan with our administrators and staff at the schools, explain roles, responsibilities in the event we have an emergency or a critical incident,

[02:07:56] who's responsible for what, do you have the resources that you need, and to have that mental gymnastics take place to make sure we understand, if something happens, what's the proper way to respond. Our goal is to go through an initial block with each one of our schools and then throughout the

remainder of the year, have each one of the schools, again, two times before the end of the school year, to go through tabletops and actually go through scenarios and help cultivate that positive response.

[02:08:25] We understand educators are not security professionals, but they have a role, and if you understand and have gone through the process, then you can apply it more if you've never been exposed to it. So I think the tabletops have been a great addition to this year's activities. We also want to just give you an update on the ALICE training.

[02:08:45] School-based staff have all received training. We took care of all of our new employees when they first came on within the first two months of the school year. Training with district staff is also ongoing throughout the year, and the training is offered monthly by our Office of Safety and Security staff.

[02:09:02] So whenever we have staff come on, substitutes, if they come on, we have a reoccurring monthly training that's made available to make sure that they're in compliance and receive that ALICE training. We have created a working group that's been formed that was around November of last year.

[02:09:19] We brought this together just to determine how we would want to implement this and engage our students. It's been a big topic of conversation, although we have this ALICE process, how do we engage our students? So we've engaged a few different groups to get their insight, and that is a process that we're currently working on.

[02:09:39] We plan to have a full layout and rollout for that training before the beginning of the school year. that it's prepared for our students when they come in in the fall. And then lastly, as far as our policies and programs, we do have our CRG mapping. And what that is, it's a critical incident mapping application that allows emergency police responders, if we have an incident at our schools or our facilities, that they have a consistent map that identifies the ability to communicate.

[02:10:10] Our elementary schools, you know, our administrators may know, hey, it's the frog hallway or the green hallway you know at the high schools it's purple it's something else but when emergency responders arrive they need a consistent view vision and resource to address how to respond so this crg mapping is integrated it's provided to each one of our administrators for their schools it's also provided to emergency responders both our police department emergency response with our

[02:10:41] fire and our fire and police sorry our fire and emergency response medical staff but that's also directed out of our emergency operation center so those are a few of the practices that we've had employed that I think have been very important and just critical to getting us in the right posture to be prepared for any concerns or ultimately any violent incidents that we want to make sure we're prepared for uh just a few of our physical infrastructure updates um of course access

[02:11:19] control was our major priority especially throughout this year for the office of safety and security and in order to manage that we have access with card readers to make sure we have access and accountability when accessing our buildings um controlled instance entrances we make sure that only entrances that we have required for the need to get into our schools are being used and we have both staff and personnel as well as some of our IT resources to help manage if people have unauthorized access. We're trying to get our students, our staff and everybody away from propping a door, opening those doors on the side and then

[02:11:57] leaving them engaged if they're moving something into the building. That's part of the training and communication that's going to take place. And we're also looking into a new visitor management

system. Our current system has been suitable, I'll say, but we've had some difficulty with maintaining it. So we're currently in the process of reviewing potential vendors for a new visitor management system. So we will definitely keep you informed as that process takes place.

[02:12:25] We expect to have a vendor identified by spring and again have this provided and prepared for roll out before the beginning of the coming school year we also have all of our heists all of our schools are now suited and up to date with our security cameras I think that is a fantastic resource we've got great feedback from our administrators and staff about that security film is still employed within all of our schools we're having discussions independently if we had to add more less that's a part of our assessment process that is continually ongoing with our

[02:12:59] schools, administrators in our community. Vape centers, that is a priority. We don't have enough. So as funds are available through means that we're able to gather that, we want to make sure that we're providing more vape centers within our, especially our secondary schools to make sure we counter some of those challenges that we deal with within our schools. And also SEPTED. We're not due this year for that review, but we are constantly moving forward on getting our SEPTED reviews in place so that we can get that assessment and have the proper information available so that

[02:13:36] we can continue to move forward with our providing a safe environment for our schools as miles mentioned we are partnered closely with with our student services as a matter of fact i don't know whether it was on purpose or just it were wisdom but we're co-located in the cob with our student services staff it allows us to engage in constant candid conversation about the matters engaging our students and our staff as it relates to concerns for safety and we we find where both

[02:14:10] security and safety and and student services we we come together and find out what lane the information we get through any of these resources and since miles went over especially the Help Me app more directly, I won't go deep into that, but we do have resources where we're identifying the needs that students arise that they need some assistance.

[02:14:33] And if it's a result of a service that's needed or some counseling, we make sure that student services provides that. If it's an emergent threat, if there's an emergent challenge that we need to address that comes over to our safety and security, and we address it, but we still work it collectively.

[02:14:53] because ultimately student services are gonna have a significant role in both how things start and how things end no matter what the circumstance. So we wanna make sure we keep that relationship extremely positive. I'm not sure, just to touch briefly on Lightspeed Alerts.

[02:15:11] Lightspeed Alerts is a backend internet filtering process that monitors through our IT side of the house. And it just monitors circumstances When students who are engaged and signed on to our school devices, if they communicate in a manner that's involving threats, concerns, ideation for self-harm, those things are alerted, provided to both student services and Office of Safety and Security.

[02:15:42] We vet those very similar to how we do with Help Me, and we address it with our schools, students, and their parents, depending on where that lead needs to take us to make sure that we're taking care of our students and keeping them safe. And I know you're aware of the threat assessment process.

[02:15:58] We're part of that as well. So these are just a few of the areas where Office of Safety and Security is working closely with student services. Looking ahead, we have a few things that I'm excited about and looking forward to engaging.

[02:16:15] We had our very first community engagement seminar session series over at Monticello, and it was as a result of that, the incident which involved some of our students being exposed to a vape that caused a need for medical response.

[02:16:32] So as a result, we put some professional resources together, both on the medical side, law enforcement services, to come together and talk to the community about the impacts of these vapes. If they're involved in THC and other substances, we spend a significant amount of time providing that information.

[02:16:54] We're going to continue to engage in community engagement series. We hope to speak coming soon on gun safety. We may touch on fentanyl crisis, and as usual, we always want to make sure we touch on anti-bullying. That's always a concept that's of critical interest to our students.

[02:17:13] Coming this fall, we're working with the regional emergency operations process to get involved in a collaborative active shooter exercise. As we get more information with that, we'll provide that as well. But this is something that's going to engage not just our school, but EMS, the police department, UVA, all of our resources that if something happened in and around our area, how would we collectively respond to it in a positive way?

[02:17:41] So we'll keep you posted as that develops. We are looking towards the putting in place a weapon screening system and process at our schools. We currently have them in use for our major athletic events, and it has come to our attention through our communication with community, those external entities that have influence on our schools that a weapon screening process may be necessary for use in our schools.

[02:18:11] So that is a process that we're currently engaged. I'll touch on that subject more directly in another slide. We're also going to stand up our Office of Safety and Security website. We're going to set that up by 1st of February is the plan. And that's going to be a place where we can have those things that are required for public use and review to be publicized and have resources that are available that can help our community and our students understand safety and security and provide resources through that site and also just information about our office and activities.

[02:18:43] And again, strategic plan updates, that's going to be something we address a little more detail in just a moment. So let's touch on the weapons detection systems. So October of 24, we deployed what's considered the brand is the Chia Open Gate Portable Screening Units at our high schools for major athletic events.

[02:19:04] Primarily, we're using those for football games, boys and girls basketball games, and for the spring, potential use for those large events, especially those involving external guests to our venues, which would be like graduations and maybe some large concerts.

[02:19:26] Following some more information that we got about concerns that may be impacting our schools from the outside in our community, November 24, we established a working group. So we developed some procedures for implementing these weapons screening systems for daily use within our high schools.

[02:19:42] initially. We gained input from our administrative staff. We also reached out to families, both through the family council, through the parent-teacher associations, PTSAs, and we're also planning to engage our student senate to get the student input about what this would look like or what impact this would have on the quality of life and also addressing security concerns. And we've also engaged our law

enforcement partners to understand their perspective. So we want to make sure we gather all that information and insight to make sure that what we implement

[02:20:21] is going to be something that's consistent and both valuable to our student staff and our community. We did also do site visits to other localities in Rico County, Prince William, Loudoun County. We've visited some other schools as well just to see how they're being used and what that reception is, and that's going to also be employed within our decision-making process about the potential use of these weapons detection systems. There is a proposed amendment to our policy. We have worked with our in-school policy folks to come up with verbiage, and we'll have

[02:21:00] this presented to the board for their review and discussion as well to make sure that that is consistent with the implementation of the weapons detection systems. We're looking to possibly address these as early as March, or potentially at least by the fall, to make sure that we're providing the best opportunity to make sure that our schools, especially at the high school level, are safe and secure. And we also spoke briefly about the strategic plan. There are two goals, and again, ACPS is going to prioritize safety and safety of our students, staff and family,

[02:21:37] community, and that's going to be through prevention, preparedness, and response strategies. again our whole purpose is to create that culture of safety and security in that environment that's supportive for our learning process and those proposed strategies that are listed here as enhanced school security measures which we've kind of discussed developing comprehensive emergency response plans which is that ongoing process promote mental health and threat assessment teams that's part of our collaboration with student services foster a positive school climate

[02:22:11] that's the that's the one that we're going to continue to identify how we're going to make our folks staff and kids feel good and safe within our schools and then constant training the the more training you're able to do the more prepared you are if something happens and this involves both emergency response it also means training staff to understand that all of our students are not the same they're not cookie cutter everyone's different everyone has their own ways about going about things we want to make sure our staff are diverse with their information that they're

[02:22:46] knowledgeable and that they're prepared to deal with any of the concerns that get presented to them as a safety and security staff member throughout the district so i've covered a lot just want to make sure we're we're um we're respectful of everyone's time but i just wanted to run through these areas please if you have any questions or points of discussion i'll be glad to hear those and provide whatever input i can but thank you thank you mr bradley i think that's the most comprehensive security overview i've we've had here on the school board do are there any

[02:23:23] questions for mr bradley coach acoff i would um reiterate that was an amazing um presentation i so appreciate the comprehensive nature of it i think is you could show how much this this group is doing and the question I could have particularly as we're going into budget planning season is what is you know are there any things that are top of mind I heard you say funding for vape sensors but anything else that is in top of mind regarding needs in upcoming budget the upcoming budget

[02:23:59] well we do have a few areas that I think are of interest where if if the funding was available I know the weapon screening systems is a one of the areas that's going to require some budgeting.

[02:24:16] I know we have some grant monies that we've identified for potential use. We're trying to find ways to offset the money that impacts directly on our budget, but of course our weapon screening systems, our vape centers. This is a plug for our transportation folks on our security side. Our transportation buses need to be updated with their security technology, whether it's cameras, screening their ability to communicate back and forth. There's also a resource that

[02:24:48] is beneficial on our transportation side of the house, which is helpful. Also, vape centers, as you identified, definitely, we want to make sure that those are throughout all of our secondary schools at least. We're not quite there yet. We are constantly looking at ways to help with access control. You know, a school may need a gate. You know, we may need to put up fencing. And that stuff is not currently identified, but as we do our assessments, some general repairs that might need to come up through our building services folks to address access points that are vulnerable. So

[02:25:27] I've talked to Matt Wertman, and we're working closely with him and his department as well. As we go do these assessments, we're working to come up with an understanding about what's important, what's necessary. So I think those are the primary areas where our focus can lie, but there's always going to be something coming up from a safety and security standpoint that hopefully we'll just be able to address and communicate as best possible what's needed. Thank you so much. And I think your comments about what is needed in other areas like transportation and building services kind of shows how both important but as well as how comprehensive our view needs to be as we're thinking about these

[02:26:06] issues so thank you so much definitely thank you yeah mr bradley i have a question yes has your assessment or when you're going through the tabletop exercises yes do you discuss with principals the needs for uh other school resource officers especially there are two high schools that don't have school resource officers? You know, we have. I think thus far we've had a very positive experience with our current school resource officers. I think Officer Kaczynski has been, I think, a positive influence that we can tell thus far. We're still waiting on

[02:26:45] more information to come back on surveys and things of that nature, but our initial review seems to be encouraging it seems like our communities are would find that to be a positive resource for our schools especially at our high schools and as when i engage our families and our staff members it's critical on acps's side of the house though if we move forward with additional resources for those sros that we need to make sure we're picking the right ones i think it's a fantastic program if you have the right people if you if you don't get the right

[02:27:21] people it can be a horrible program so i think that's where acps and our side would be instrumental in making sure that we get the right people then that i think that school resource officer would be a very valuable resource to our schools so there there is a feeling uh mr page about um building that program it's encouraged but of course our parents always want to make sure that whatever resources are in place that impact their students and their children are being mindful of how to deal with them in a proper way and that comes with hiring the right people making sure

[02:28:01] they have the right training and i think will be a very valuable resource okay and then one other quick question yes you mentioned the light speed yes how how fast is the time between something being detected and being reported and then some type of response being received back well since it's an i.t driven function the if if i if i'm a student and i'm on my school laptop and i'm at home working on on

something i just say i'm sick and tired of this i want to kill myself okay that that statement will be captured on the i.t side because of this light speed system

[02:28:38] and as a result depending on the time of day whether it's during the day or in the evening that light speed alert is going to be populated onto the staff members within the district who are on a call system and those are both my staff members me dara craig as well as miles um the staff within student services and and kevin we're on that list so it's almost immediate and also our i.t folks um uh jamie um goodness why am i dropping that jamie's on this as well and uh but we're all alerted immediately once the alert comes in then the communication starts it

[02:29:18] it gets to a program person who looks at it, identifies what it is, does some research to figure out is this actionable or not. That process takes a little more time, but we're talking a matter of 10 to 15 minutes that they're going to do that initial review. And then our staff members are immediately contacting our staff at the schools and say, hey, we got this in about students so-and-so. We want to let you know about it. Can you have someone engage on this?

[02:29:47] if it's after hours, if it's concerning enough, we immediately will contact the principals at night, the administrators, and if need, law enforcement. And there are many times we've been up dealing with welfare checks because of the items that come through on this Lightspeed system.

[02:30:06] So we take these very seriously and we address them in an incredibly timely manner to make sure that the needs of our students are, especially in times where they might feel overwhelmed or concern for self-harm or threats to schools. We wanna make sure we address them as quickly as possible.

[02:30:22] - Okay, thanks so much. - Thank you very much. - Any further questions? - I just did, I wanted to note that SEPTED, I didn't know what that was. So I just Googled it, crime prevention through environmental design.

[02:30:38] - Yes, it's environmental design process. - Same, I was gonna say the same thing. I wasn't sure what that was. - Sorry about that. We should have covered that. We're not throwing it out at you like that. But yeah, that's the, it's environmental design for addressing security. And that could be simple things like hardware, but also if you have concerns about access to particular areas by vehicular traffic.

[02:31:02] A CEPTED concept may be that instead of putting up something that is unsightly like bollards or big fences, you know, you might be able to correct that by putting a decorative boulder out in front of the school. It looks neat. It impacts the the the aesthetics of the school, but at the same time, it's a barrier.

[02:31:23] So that septet process has many concepts that address ways to provide a safe and secure environment and and make it receptive to aesthetics and function.

[02:31:39] Thank you. Yes, ma'am. Are there any further questions? Thank you, Mr. Bradley, very much. Thank you very much for your time. business by members of the school board or otherwise i do just have i'm sorry no i just wanted to thank all of our staff uh for excellent presentations tonight and i really appreciate all the hard work that went into it and i really appreciate support from the school board thank you

[02:32:13] i just wanted to say one thing in in doing the committee assignments i probably was uh a little blunt with the Public Education Foundation of Alamo Charlottesville. It has been around for a dozen or more years and the years I was on it, it was going through some pretty thin times in terms of its funding

and it has really begun to flourish and it aligns its activities or the projects that it supports along ACPS strategic plan and our goals and missions and they do great

[02:32:50] work and when we have had a liaison when we had an executive director for the album wall foundation for education that made sure that we were not colliding with them that we were coordinating with them and not doing the same sort of work so i was clumsy in my remarks and i apologize to everyone who's on pef board because they do do excellent work and i just want to make that clear um if there's one of the really great things that pef does is that science workshop every summer

[02:33:24] up at uva that involves students from the city and the county so that's one of their really great projects right i would echo that graham thank you um if there is no further business i have a i have a question related to the weather um as it has affected all of us in our closings so how can we we get these back roads cleared faster? As someone who lives on one and has been trapped for several days, how can we get this done quicker so that we can all get back to school? So barring Rosalyn

[02:34:01] jumping in front of me, Virginia Department of Transportation is solely responsible and has the authority for clearing all roads. Albemarle County does not clear roads. The Albemarle County school system is cannot and does not do anything to clear roads, treat roads, plow roads. So there's absolutely nothing we can do other than the communication that we do. We have snow patrol staff that go out in vehicles that have assigned routes that sample all of the various rural roads.

[02:34:42] we actually have a slide deck that we can send the board later that has photos from rural roads and urban ring roads many of which during this snowstorm look like our rural roads that demonstrates the impassibility even today of of the roads so when they do that they stay in communication with the outlaw county police department they stay in communication with the Department of Transportation, and we push, and also the county helps us push through the ECC

[02:35:19] and through local government. We really push them, make requests, try to get in front of everybody else to get our roads cleared. I would say that this particular storm, part of the issue is that it had widespread coverage all across the region, all across the state, and VDOT, just like everyone else has limited resources under normal circumstances they could pull resources from other places uh to attack uh one particular locale in this case they were spread all across virginia really trying to deal with uh the transportation issues so this was unique i would

[02:35:57] say and uh rosalyn i see you've jumped on did you have anything you wanted to add no i think you said that well i just i do want to emphasize again this the storm did feel unique right it wasn't just our back roads um the neighborhoods right around woodbrook elementary are a sheet of ice other subdivisions so this was not a back roads versus main roads uh decision this week i would just say i mean i i think our communication online could explain this a little bit more and that might

[02:36:36] maybe maybe reduce the number of comments we get from families and i know i agree we've got kids at home it's awful to figure out what to do yeah i agree uh one of the things that rosalyn and i talked about this afternoon when we were reviewing the um the photo reports is that we really need to put those photos out there because i think that once people see that uh it's pretty clear to them and oftentimes um one part of the county as the usual case is that one part of the county such as the urban ring will be pretty clear and they often don't understand why we're still closed

[02:37:13] and i think putting those photos out there i think would really help people understand but just and including the responsibility of the roads as v dollars and this is a unique storm it was a statewide you know declaration of emergency so it clearly is not our usual weekend snowstorm no and it's not the school board's purview or you you will notice if you go around all of our school lots sidewalks around the schools all that is cleared it's salted you can walk up you can get out of

[02:37:47] your car walk up to the school very safely uh and that's because that is our responsibility and it is the county's responsibility and it's all cleared and handled but um the roads are the purview of vdot and we don't have the purview to go out and start plowing them i suddenly mentioned communication helen popped on yeah well i just thought i'd quickly mention that we have increased the amount of sort of explanation rationale that we do and include in those communications and

[02:38:21] i think it would be a great conversation to have with um the the new communications committee about maybe how we could improve those further i also am soon convening a communications advisory committee which is made up of employees while some students families etc um and i think the idea with that is to um ask them for advice about these things so i'd love to make that excuse me to make that an item of business with them to just see how we could improve those communications to make people feel like they truly understand what's behind these messages so um hopefully we can we can keep

[02:38:57] tweaking that until people really feel that they understand is there any other business thank you helen uh is there any other business well with that this first meeting of 2025 is adjourned good night everybody get some sleep allison good night good night



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