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Albemarle County School Board Special Work Session (2025-26 Budget), Thursday, March 6, 2025

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[00:01:24] are we turned on good evening everyone welcome to this march 6 special meeting of the albemarle county school board first order of business is to have roll call can we start with you miss schmidt rosalynd schmidt chief operating officer cam roper student representative judy lee rivana district allison spillman at large representative bram page miller district kate acuff jack jewett district Rebecca Berlin whitehall district Ellen Osborne Scottsville district good evening Leslie prior rio district Matthew Hawes superintendent

[00:02:02] Josiah black school division counsel Aaron stone assistant school division counsel Christine Thompson clerk of the board Claire Kaiser assistant superintendent Daphne Kaiser assistant superintendent Helen Dunn strategic communications officer. Thank you everyone Next order of business is stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:02:38] We'll now pause for a moment of silence.

[00:03:09] Next, we need a motion to approve tonight's agenda. I move to approve tonight's agenda. Second. Motion made by Dr. Berlin, seconded by Ms. Lee. All in favor? Aye. Opposed?

[00:03:24] Motion passes. This is one of, this is our second budget working session, And I think Dr. Haas will start us off tonight. All right. Thank you, Maya.

[00:03:44] This will be brief, I promise. I just want to say good evening, Chair Acuff. Sorry. Thank you. Good evening, Chair Acuff, Vice Chair, Berlin, School Board members, and staff.

[00:04:00] As we begin tonight's budget conversation, I want to step back and focus on the big picture, or rather, a big window, like the windows in this auditorium. You can't see the windows. I don't think I've ever been in here to see them because of the blinds, but I did take a picture outside today, and those windows are really pretty magnificent when you take a good look at them.

[00:04:25] I imagine a long time ago when they would have assemblies in here, they would use the windows for lighting and really let in some daylight. Each is a large frame with several, in this case, 60 window panes.

[00:04:42] I want us to think about a window. Albemarle County Public Schools is that window. Our strategic plan is that window. Learning for all is that window. Our children are the window through which we view our work.

[00:05:02] Members of our community view the window through, usually through the window pane that often best represents their experience and perspective. Focusing on the priority that matters most to them. And this is entirely understandable because we all have different needs, wants, fears and expectations as we relate to the school system and the school.

[00:05:31] Parents, caregivers and families focused on student learning, safety and their children's well-being. That's their windowpane. Teachers and staff, dedication to instruction, resources and professional support.

[00:05:46] Students engaged in learning, growth, opportunities for the future. Our community members have a windowpane of interest in the school's role and partnership with and in the broader community.

[00:06:03] Our taxpayers are focused on responsible stewardship of resources and investment in education and a return on investment. School board and leadership. Our windowpane often is with commitment to strategic planning, policy, and long-term and sustainable success.

[00:06:23] It is critical that we listen to our community members to understand and give voice to their ideas, worries, and concerns. And as we work through this challenging planning process, we aim to keep the whole window intact.

[00:06:39] We want to keep the child intact and whole. We want to keep our mission intact. No matter the choices ahead, we must remain focused on our mission. The role of staff in this process is to provide you with clear, transparent information and to answer your questions so that you have what you need to have thoughtful conversations and make informed decisions.

[00:07:04] And I'm really proud of their work. Transparency is essential. We strive to give you a clear picture of ACPS's needs, opportunities, and constraints to chart the best operational path forward together.

[00:07:20] We will soon have a spending plan. It's inevitable, we will, for the 25-26 school year. And regardless of the available resources, our mission remains the same. We will take what we have to work with and do the very best we can with it for our children, families, and staff.

[00:07:41] And this will be okay. It'll be more than okay. And we'll get through it. We always do. Thank you. - Thank you, Dr. Haas. - Good evening, I'm Maya Kumazawa, Director of Budget and Planning.

[00:07:59] And this evening I'll facilitate our special budget work session number two. As Dr. Haas talked about our mission, Here's a review of our strategic plan that includes the language about our mission. And as usual, our goal when we talk about the budget is focused on equitable and transformative resources.

[00:08:19] This is a summary, a recap from what we discussed last week. These are the increases that we're projecting for the FY26 budget. We talked a lot about the technical aspects of the budget last week, including the baseline adjustment and non-discretionary changes.

[00:08:35] This week, our goal is to focus on those areas that there is more discretion over. That includes service reductions and learning for all proposals. Together, this represents a expenditure increase year-over-year of \$19.5 million.

[00:08:52] Our current funding gap is \$5 million. This is an update from what was previously shared in the draft funding request as revenues have been updated to include an additional \$2.8 million in local revenues. this is the updated gap figure if you wanted to update your books as well as the percentage gap which is 1.7 percent. There's a lot of staff here with me tonight to help with our agenda this evening. We'll first go over our largest proposal which is the market compensation increase and next we will

[00:09:28] provide a brief overview of each of the four proposals. Next I will review the service reductions that are proposed and then if there's if there's a wish for a break I might recommend one there and then at the end we are presenting a proposed balancing scenario to help prepare for a balanced budget that will be required on May 8th and there'll be time for discussion and next steps. These are the learning for all proposals that we'll start off the work session with.

[00:10:01] And these are an increase in the budget from the adopted FY25 budget to the draft funding request of 8.3 million dollars. We'll talk about each of these in more detail. But before I do that, I just wanted to review the fact that while these proposals are here before you, this is not a comprehensive list of the proposals.

[00:10:23] You might remember this slide from last year, but we have a list of requested proposals that are all priorities for the division. A lot of these are carryovers from last year, as when we continue to not fund something, it continues to be a need for the school division. So you'll start seeing this list multiple times.

[00:10:41] The ones in green are the ones we'll discuss, and those are the ones that we are considering as fully funding in the funding request. The ones in yellow means that we're proposing a partial funding of those proposals, but there's more investment needed in future years.

[00:11:01] With that, I'll turn it over for our first section. Good evening. I'm Brody Downs, the Director of Employee Services and Human Resources.

[00:11:18] It's good to be with you all. As we move towards discussions regarding compensation recommendations as part of the proposed budget, It might be helpful to discuss the impact of collective bargaining. As we're all aware, the AEA has requested to enter into bargaining negotiations.

[00:11:35] But as a reminder, the agreements made in the subsequent ratified contract will impact the fiscal year 2027 budget and not the fiscal year 2026 budget being discussed this evening.

[00:11:51] Transitioning to compensation, it's always helpful to start by discussing why it is important maintain a purposeful and robust compensation program and to provide an overview of what aspects of a compensation program are most critical. We usually spend some time reviewing this information

whenever we discuss compensation with you all because these pillars provide the foundation for the division's compensation program. The sound compensation program addresses two basic components: market competitiveness and internal equity. Tonight we'll address the former more so than the latter.

[00:12:24] an organization should be monitoring its competitive market and compensating for roles at a competitive rate and an organization should also maintain systems to ensure that roles and people are being compensated equitably the school division has an adopted market comprised of 15 school divisions strategically selected based on a number of factors this allows us to benchmark our compensation levels against a consistent set of school divisions each year and also throughout the year. The adopted target is the 60th percentile of the

[00:12:59] market or in other words we strive to beat the adopted market by 10 percent. HR's annual market analysis has historically leaned heavily on its summer survey work and reflects data based on actual increases beginning each July implemented by school divisions throughout our adopted market just like we do. However given what we've observed throughout the market over the past few years in terms of proposed general wage increases, mid-year increases and bonuses and more frequent

[00:13:35] analysis has become the norm. What you're seeing here is the school division's position in comparison to the adopted market and in comparison to Charlottesville city schools. I want to reiterate that the information reflected reflecting our adopted market reflects the 60th percentile and not necessarily what it means to be at market. So we beat the market again by 10 percent. This graph in the graph on the next slide show comparisons regarding the master's degree scale, as that's where a majority of our teachers and new hires land and occupy.

[00:14:10] This graph assumes that the market and the ACPS move 3% as the state is recommending. On the left, you'll see how the ACPS fares a bit more numerically. This is consistent with prior comparisons where the ACPS is very competitive until we get to those latter steps and the step scale.

[00:14:31] slide reflects what has been reported to have been proposed by many divisions in our adopted market. The entire adopted markets information is not available but we were able to find information on much of the market based on local news outlets that are local to each identified school division in the adopted market as those school divisions are having the very same conversations that we're having here. You'll see here that while the ACPS still performs very well in comparison to the market and its market target, the market closes the gap a bit throughout much

[00:15:06] of the scale, and the market separates further towards the end of the scale. A bit more concerning is that the City of Charlottesville's proposed increases also allow them to leap the ACPS for the entirety of the scale. This scale does not project their proposed step differentiation of 1.5%, which could magnify the difference even further. Overall, the market's proposed increases do have an impact on the ACPS's place amongst the market. The gap at the top of the scale remains an

[00:15:42] opportunity for improvement. Charlottesville City Schools beats the ACPS at every interval of the scale by no less than 2 percent and by as much as 4 percent. Only one locality was projecting less than three less than a three percent general wage increase and many were projecting much more than three percent including localities that are already more competitive than the ACPS. Additionally the Bureau of Labor Statistics quarterly reporting indicates that elementary and secondary organizations are providing four percent over the prior year. So in

[00:16:21] summary salary adjustments three percent for salary increases for all employees beginning July 1 of 2025 is the recommendation in the proposed budget. Additional 4.5 percent salary increases for special education teaching assistance as well as transportation assistance. Pay grade adjustments for SPED or special education TAs and transportation assistance will also allow us to align with the market a bit more as we've seen in some of the studies.

[00:16:52] There's a net cost of 5.4 million which encompasses the 3% general salary increase and the state funded portion of the 3% salary increase is It is also updated at 1.1 million.

[00:17:12] Any questions? Was Charlottesville in line with us and then jumped ahead, or had they been ahead of us in the past years regarding salary?

[00:17:28] So the difference between Charlottesville and the ACPS has been pretty negligible in the years past. A couple hundred dollars a year, right? However, with their proposed increase, they do take a leap.

[00:17:44] are some areas of the master's degree scale that they did um uh you know they did beat the acps by four or five hundred dollars again we're looking in five-year increments over the duration of the scale uh consistently charlottesville city schools uh has outperformed um our school division in those last five years that's been an area of opportunity was it it was so it was a more than a three percent what was their what is in their proposed i believe their proposal is 5.5 percent and they are also proposing some work to their step scale um to have 1.5 differentiations from

[00:18:22] one step uh to another and that's based on what the uh news outlets have reported and they they have not approved their budget yet have they is that in their proposal i don't think it was just to represent inside that and i'll also add that while the master's degree scale is a place of focus for us because it's where most of our folks are and where most of our new hires uh land as well um the bachelor's degree gap between um the acps and the city is even larger um so we're

[00:18:57] outperformed even more so on the bachelor's degree scale just this is just a comment i'm just excited to see the increase for special education teaching assistance and transportation assistance but i definitely know siak has been asking for that for a number of years so i'm it's important um especially i mean we have an amazing retention rate um for our tas um but every ta that's lost you know challenges a family um and students and teachers so i think it's

[00:19:36] important you know to continue to try to address that retention rate yes ma'am do we look globally at how our classified staff is doing with respect to market yeah so overall when we look at how we position in terms of classified employees one of the ways that we address market competitiveness is to look at how each school division is compensating for a given role so we address that more so through our pay grade system when we look at our overall at a broader level in

[00:20:11] terms of the general wage increase we do look more so at what is each locality providing in terms of an increase and there's some localities that we've again what's being proposed they're looking at a seven percent increase at a locality up north however that four percent is for teachers only and not for classified staff so it seems overall that the market is moving largely roughly at three percent for classified staff and what's occurring for teachers in some places is a

[00:20:43] bit extra. Thank you. Are there more questions? Thank you. Yes, ma'am. And I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Domer. I'm going to lower the mic. Good evening, School Board. My name is Craig Domer.

[00:21:11] I am the Executive Director of Curriculum Assessment and Instruction. The next several proposals come from the Office of Instruction. I think they all have some things in common. We believe that they're all mission critical as far as eliminating achievement gaps. They provide rigorous and rich learning experiences to all students and they make sure that students who need support are able to receive it. I'm going to start with the Bellwether implementation of instructional priorities proposal. When reviewing the Bellwether report and our progress and implementing their recommendations, we really decided to focus on two big areas. One is the

[00:21:48] codifying of intervention supports across all schools and the other is to make sure that we have rigorous learning tasks in every classroom and implement high quality instructional materials. You can see from the proposed funding that we are prioritizing those two big targets.

[00:22:08] We have broken out the year one investments to expenditures that will be recurring in each year going forward, and one-time investments as far as purchasing some resources. As Ms. Kumazawa indicated, this proposal is partially funded.

[00:22:25] You can see some of our further future one-time investments down in year two and beyond, but we really try to prioritize what we think is most critical for next year, math eight learning resources, algebra one in high school, and intervention resources for both reading and math, both digital and physical resources.

[00:22:49] These bullets on the next slide just kind of summarize some of our thoughts. One that I'll highlight is that whenever we're implementing high-quality instructional materials, We want to make sure that we're supporting both of our students and our teachers by making sure that they have the professional learning necessary from publishers, as well as making sure that they have job-embedded professional learning from building leaders, building champions and instructional coaches.

[00:23:12] We've tried to do that this year with HMH, and as we have passed the mid-year and have been visiting schools, we're hearing a lot of positive feedback from teachers about how they're getting more comfortable and they understand the resources and they've been supported and in the future as we adopt more instructional materials we will look to continue that level of support i'll pause now for questions about the bellwether proposal could you just remind me how long hmh is going to be available to support our teachers we have a

[00:23:50] seven-year contract there is some professional learning i think in each year of the contract we're also letters is an additional professional learning opportunity this year mandated by the vla and we will systematize that as new teachers also come to the division to make sure that they don't get that opportunity right we want to make sure that they also get that professional learning as they enter our county and serve our students any other questions all right i'm going

[00:24:26] to pass it off to megan maynard and katina dudley to talk about scholar studios thank you thank you good evening school board chair vice chair school board members dr haas and the cabinet my name is katina dudley i am the science coordinator for albemore county and i'm here alongside my colleague megan maynard who is the cte coordinator for albemore county and together we've partnered to

[00:25:03] manage the scholar studio programming the scholar studio sustainability prioritizes needs that have been identified by our scholar steering committee this proposal ensures equitable access to scholar studios for all of our students in year one the funding requests supports dedicated assistance for studio

leads instructional and student support and operational funding and in year two we'd like to expand to additional staffing support for advanced learning opportunities to strengthen pathways in

[00:25:37] high-demand careers this proposal honors our commitment to students their families and the economic vitality of our community at large it is both an investment for a redesigned high school experience next year as well as an investment to support future expansion as we look toward the opening of Albemarle Career Exploration Academy at Lambs Lane over the past year we have worked to strengthen communication with students and their families across the school division as a result new student requests for the 2526 school year have

[00:26:16] reached 389 so this number represents our rising 9th and 10th graders this brings our total enrollment in studios to 601 students that will be in grades 9 through 12 next year notably 236 of these requests come from our rising ninth graders that represents about 22% of that cohort when we were offering high school STEM academies our enrollment maximum was 233 so with 236

[00:26:56] students from that eighth grade cohort were kind of matching what we had when we were offering academies additionally we have seen an increase in each studio as students have enrolled this upcoming year and we've seen a double enrollment in the link studio which is at Center one and we've seen enrollment at the pulse studio which is the health and medical sciences double as well for the first time since establishing these learning communities student requests reflect our demographics of the school division and we're working to show that here in this lower graph so this represents our rising eighth and ninth

[00:27:35] rising ninth and tenth graders to ensure equitable access we must expand el and sped support in 2526 ensuring that students receive the accommodations that they need to thrive in these studios the funding request supports dedicated assistance for el and sped students and it also supports operational resources to sustain and enhance the programming the graphic to the right illustrates the representation of students across our school division as we move forward continue investment in targeted support and resources will be critical to

[00:28:12] sustaining this momentum and fostering student success in these programs are there any questions I was trying to quickly do the math but could you say could you have the number of total population of either eighth or ninth graders or what percentage of total compared to total high schoolers the studios are including so clarify your question so so I'm just trying to compare

[00:28:49] what percentage of ninth graders are choosing to be part of a studio or what or the whole number of okay so our current ninth graders this would it be their first opportunity to participate in that particular class we have a 123 students that are registered for next year and our eighth grade class we have 236 students registered for studio participation I wanted to highlight that tonight because when we were offering academies we offered these as opportunities for our eighth grade students going into ninth grade and we

[00:29:25] saw an increased request student requests for these programs this is our first year opening this back up to eighth graders and so I think we're seeing a match with student interest from the eighth to ninth grade year one thing we heard from students when we went around to meet with students over the past 18 months was that once you get into ninth grade you've kind of started your trajectory for what you're planning for high school and so it was really hard to kind of think about how that looks different starting in 10th grade

[00:29:56] the projected enrollment for ninth grade next year is 1,126 and the projected About 10%. Yeah. It's typically around 1,000 students per grade.

[00:30:14] Yeah. So about 20% of 8th graders, 10% of 9th graders. When we had the work session on the studios earlier this year, or like last year, I think one problem was that some of the kids were saying they didn't really know about the program.

[00:30:32] So are we doing a better job to try to advertise what's going on with this? We have worked really hard this year to meet with all of our stakeholders. spent a lot of time with our school counselors we spent a lot of time with our school leaders we've had several community meetings with our families we've been to middle and high school curriculum fairs and events and we've really tried hard to get this out and then at the end of January we hosted to community to community virtual meetings and with that particular meeting we communicated and sent out an invite to all of our current eighth and ninth

[00:31:10] grade families since those were the most impacted by the programming um I have two questions um the picture graph or whatever of student participation um I don't see numbers what percentage of these students are of those that are enrolled are from the western feeder pattern um I could pull that number for you because we have it um I'd be really curious um percentage from the western feeder pattern okay um and then also you said 600 and something total enrollment what is the capacity of the studios i'm assuming they're not all going to be there at the same time

[00:31:50] so how full are the studios at this point are you mainly talking about the capacity of the centers the um the uh academies yeah the buildings um so ace academy at lambs lane can support 800 students that being 400 students could be there each day 400 each day 400 each day and then at center one ace academy at seminal trail that can hold 120 students per day so 240 total okay so so trying

[00:32:27] to do the math so i'm just trying to figure out what what capacity looks like so we've been what we've been following the capacity by cohort and when i say cohort i'm thinking about a ninth grade class a 10th grade class 11th grade 12th right so think about those as cohorts so to fill ace academy at seminole trail we're really looking at 60 students from each grade from each cohort and with our student interest from our eighth graders this year we actually hit 60. we didn't hit 60 with our rising 10th graders but we did hit 60 with our rising ninth graders okay

[00:33:04] so if we follow that trajectory we'll be able to fill that particular site with the programming there for ace academy at lambs lane we've been looking at 200 students per cohort to fill that space and so we haven't made final decisions about what we're going to do with with pulse studio that's now housed at monticello high school but we are looking at enrollment numbers to fill that and so that might be a determining factor for whether or not pulse moves to center

[00:33:37] to ace academy at lambs lane or not okay thank you and and the tara academy will still be at western that's correct i didn't mean academy i mean studio studio the tears do i'm really excited that you use tara thank you i'm retooling my brain on these but thank you any further questions thank you okay thank you all i'm going to turn this over to katie compel the director of student services

[00:34:13] good evening i'm katie compel the director of special education and tonight i'm going to talk about the intensive support center proposal the intensive support center otherwise known as isc provides intensive behavioral supports in a low teacher to student ratio setting for k-12 students with disabilities who might otherwise be placed outside of our county public schools

[00:34:50] i started the isc in january of 2023 for students with autism in response to a number of students with autism who required a higher level of service than the base school could provide but at that time post pandemic the wait list for private day schools was 18 to 24 months at minimum so in the meantime while students were waiting for their private day placement the students were either being served on home-based instruction which means they're at home and they don't come to the public school or the base school staff were attempting to serve the student that required more significant services than they could provide which often resulted in staff injury student suspension

[00:35:29] and stress for all beginning in the 2025-26 school year the isc will expand its services beyond students with autism to include intensive behavioral supports for k-12 students with emotional disabilities as well as instruction for post high students which are our students 18 to 22 who have not yet earned a standard diploma.

[00:35:50] To support this expansion, our fiscal year 26 funding request includes a \$649,000 proposal to establish ISC as a fully ACPS-run center, strengthening stability and continuity of care for students who require this level of service.

[00:36:07] This investment reduces long-term costs associated with external placements while ensuring that students receive consistent high-quality support within ACPS. with this funding the current post high program now located both in the basement of burley middle school we call it the burley annex and in a house behind burley middle school will relocate to the isc on the lambs lane campus allowing the two centers to operate as one post high will still have access to the house site because it's a valuable place for students to learn their

[00:36:42] independent living and daily living skills additionally this transition with the intensive Support Center will also allow the Center for Learning and Growth to operate during the day, during normal school hours, instead of being limited to after-school or evening hours. This move enhances our ability to provide specialized instruction and support services, ensuring that students with complex needs have the space, resources, and staff necessary to thrive. In summary, the expansion of the Intent Support Center allows ACPS to put its mission

[00:37:17] into action. I know we're all aware of our mission, but the part that stands out to me is we will know every student. I firmly believe that we cannot know every student to the best of our ability if they don't remain inside of ACPS. While there will always be, in the special education world, a need for students to attend a private day or residential IEP placement, I know that I can serve more students with disabilities inside of ACPS if we have the structures in place to do so, like the expansion of the ISC. The ISC expansion also allows ACPS to meet the federally mandated

[00:37:54] requirement to provide a full continuum of special education placements. We're required to have as one of those continuum a separate public day option which the ISC will fulfill. This expansion prioritizes students with disabilities by ensuring the students remain a valued member of the ACPS student and family community. As someone who has lived this experience as a sibling to a sister with significant special needs, this is the driving force behind my passion for ensuring that Albemarle County Public Schools serves as many students with disabilities inside the school division as possible. My sister and I never got to go to school together. She was always in a

[00:38:33] separate school and so I know firsthand how isolating of an experience that can be both as a family member, as a student, and as a larger community. I want all students with disabilities, as much as

possible, to be an integral, meaning, and valuable member of our school community. This proposal also addresses feedback and concerns from ACPS base schools, families, and community members to expand our service continuum. In addition to the students, this proposal also prioritizes the specialists who serve our students with disabilities. Currently, our special education staff specialists have been spread out across the division in

[00:39:13] trailers, in small closet-like offices, and in rented storefronts. This move will allow ACPS to demonstrate that we value and respect these professionals who work with all schools to ensure students with disabilities are successful by having one central location in which their offices and resources can be housed.

[00:39:32] Finally, this proposal provides financial sustainability in the long run. This program would allow more students to be placed at the ISC rather than private day programs and if we are able to serve as little as three students that would previously have been placed in a private day program this program would be cost-neutral. I'll pause there for questions before I hand it off to Mr. Bradley. I have a couple of questions on the cost-neutral could I see and I've asked for this before the numbers of what it costs to send a student out and

[00:40:10] how that compares i mean that's helpful to say that's cost neutral but i would love to see where the actual breakeven point is because when we got some information um on the spending per student for isc it came in at 48 000 per student i can't imagine that that is an ongoing cost per year for those students and if it is where does that break even where are we going to not be losing so a private day so in in this area right um the average private day special education

[00:40:45] placement is 144 000 a year just for tuition that doesn't include transportation or related service costs the related the average related service billing is 175 an hour so and most of our students in private day have at least two related services right but if we just look at tuition it's 144 000 a year a residential on average in this area is um two hundred and fifty four thousand dollars a year and that's just for the room and board and tuition is that what you're looking for those numbers yeah so what i want to know is how many students are we traditionally in

[00:41:20] the past sending to private day how much are we paying out to that okay that we're not going to to be paying out if we are sending them to ISC and will students still need to go to a private day if this is not an option to and what does that scenario look like my other concern is you know that my son attends ISC and something that I've heard is when he talks there's kindergarteners he's a very large fifth should be in sixth grade and now we're talking about bringing in a lot of other kids a lot of adults what does that look like as far as safety within the school

[00:42:00] you talk about them wanting to all be in the same school but that doesn't you know I can't imagine Lee playing with you know the adults in the program even though they're all going to be in the same place so what does that look like well right now right the ISC is one classroom right at K to 12 right so yes that's all we have eight students K to 12 and so yes that is limiting and we recognize that but by expanding we'll be able to have an elementary on the autism side and elementary and a secondary class and on the emotional

[00:42:35] disability side and elementary middle and high program as well as then our post-high program so while they'll be served in the same school building they will not have to be as they are now in one classroom all trying to the teacher trying to teach k-12 grade levels is that answer you kind of get and could

I also then see what the cost per student right now is for those eight students at ISC? Sure, I can get that for you. Great. The other question I had, sorry one more, is I got some feedback from post-high teachers and faculty who felt that they

[00:43:14] weren't consulted on this decision and what was best for their students and I was wondering if you had any insight on that. You're talking about still having them at the house but also at ISC. Could you provide some insight on that and also what does that look like if you're talking about two different facilities that they're going to be at and yeah yeah so for I've been here 12 years but for 12 years the significant feedback from students and family members who attend to post high is that it doesn't feel like a school setting like a student who would go to community college right which those students are

[00:43:51] that age they're post-secondary 18 to 22 it doesn't feel like they have that opportunity it really felt like it's only about daily living skills and so this expansion allows us to serve because our students with post hire changing they're not just our students who need independent living or daily living skills they also need job embedded skills they need to go out into the community with job coaches they need to you know expand their ability to be contributing members of society and so this will allow us to do that in a central location of lambs lane while still having the house for a place for

[00:44:29] them to go to learn like cooking skills or laundry washing skills or even cleaning skills for some of our students but right now that is where they spend a majority of their day and so they don't it doesn't they're not practicing taking the bus to that location like they would for a job they're not practicing you know clocking in you know for a job or clocking out or being responsible for those things and those are all things over the years that been consistent both from SEAC and from our families at post high of wanting to expand and see a higher level of service for our students is the house owned by

[00:45:05] ACPS okay could I then also see what the additional cost is for post high specifically of having services at ISC because I'm assuming the costs are going to maintain the same for the house and then is there going to be additional instructors at isc nothing else is changing they're just using one of the classrooms basically uh three of the classrooms three of the classrooms but not none of the other costs are associated correct the staff are just yeah same all right thank you that's it any other questions thank

[00:45:39] you thank you now i'll pass it off to mr bradley good evening chair acuff vice chair berlin and members of the albemore county school board my name is ralph bradley i'm the director of safety and security here for albemore county public schools and today i'm going to be speaking with you about our request for funding to increase our security staffing by adding additional school resource officers to our current staff. This program has been running for a year since we've

[00:46:17] had one officer assigned to Almore County Public School, High School, and it seems thus far that has been a worthwhile venture and seems to be supported. So we'd like to request an additional SRO for both to be housed at Monticello High School as well as one at Western Albemarle as well and that pretty much would allow for a more comprehensive placement of our resources at all three high schools and that would allow dedicated coverage to those venues and the primary role here that we're dealing with with the SROs is I think that the value to the SRO is that there are a

[00:46:54] directed resource to our schools and they're they're dedicated towards two purposes one of which is a preservation kind of a concept and the other one is for a presence and one is also for response so the roles they would serve is that there will be a dedicated law enforcement presence that would enhance our school safety and provide a visible deterrent to our schools they also would provide

protection to our student staff into the property itself and that also would include building positive relationships with the people that are contained in the building which primarily were focuses on our students

[00:47:33] and also the this role would also work year-round and would coordinate with and work with our school leadership our safety teams also their law enforcement partners of which they're employed by as well and they would also respond to incidents and support crisis management and any conflict resolution resolution that needs to be addressed. So the SROs, I think would, we always strive to meet the visions and goals within the school district. And I think this resource and the staffing would apply directly to the vision and the roles within our rural county school district. We do want to continue, every

[00:48:10] time we've had an opportunity to speak, we always speak to creating a climate of safety and security. And this is one of the additional roles that's very unique and that I think contributes to that climate safety and security. We're looking for that consistent safety presence, which they'll provide. Also on those law enforcement partnerships, it's a proactive effort. And also that the supporting those students, staff and families, as I previously discussed. Just want to touch briefly on what the school resource office or SRO actually will help provide value to us. So of

[00:48:46] course, we need resources that in the times where we have emergent situations that are going to be able to act decisively accurately and completely I also have come from law enforcement background and they're people that we don't criticize but we have people that go to an issue when it needs to be addressed and they have some people that are better for coordinating and doing other purposes our law enforcement partners as a SRO would be that individual who would be that active response for any emergent situations we hope that we never have to deal with these situations but we have active shooter and violent incidences that are rise within our schools not our specifically but within schools around

[00:49:22] the United States and this SRO position when we choose the right people and I do want to make sure that you all understand that the role is not just for everybody so when we get to a point if this is approved to go through a selection process we're gonna make sure we spend the time and effort to make sure we get the right people into the position because that's one of the key elements to the success of an SRO program so these individuals are trained to respond quickly and effectively. And their primary role in that emergency is to support life-saving efforts. And that's the role that they are only really able to take place until

[00:49:57] other competent law enforcement arrives at those events. They also prevent and respond to crimes. Their presence is just an opportunity to deter any potential behavior or activities that might be of concern within our schools. They provide, they address criminal activity that may take place within our schools and around our schools and they approach the situation in a very unique way and they have an understanding about how to function within a school environment we have competent law enforcement without a community who we call when we need help if we have an SRO in our school buildings we have a competent law enforcement person that's able to

[00:50:36] address school needs because they're familiar with it they're familiar with the staff they're familiar with the students they're familiar with the school culture so I think these resources are going to have the best interest in mind for our students and staff if indeed we have to employ them for use in our buildings and also building relationships throughout the day most of what they do is engage kids build that relationship get to know who they are when they have an opportunity to engage families they also engage

them as well that relationship which is built over time is extremely important and that's where the value of this position comes into place when we have SROs that understand it and understand the environment and the culture they're

[00:51:15] working and they're going to be most effective. They collaborate with the administrators. They collaborate with the Office of Safety and Security. We spend a lot of time talking about crisis management, emergency response, security assessments, threat assessments, how to deal with all these elements that arise throughout the potential school day. And they're involved in that communication and that conversation so they understand how we do our business here in the school district.

[00:51:39] They have specialized training. In addition to the law enforcement training, they have emergency medical training, which is assisting in case we run into those situations, but they also go through training about de-escalation, how to deal with special needs, how to deal with the communities that are diverse in which they need to function. And then also they provide safety education.

[00:52:00] They're a resource to us as well. They let us know what's going on in case there's a concern, and but they also are available within the school to talk about bullying programs. We talk about, we had a presentation over at Monticello back in November where we were addressing the drug culture and some of the experiences we're having they were a major partner and they were there to provide their concepts as well so they help provide us with the education and which ties into our culture of safety and security just want to present this element here just to give you an idea that in a culture of safety and security we have really primarily three areas of which the SRO

[00:52:39] is um participating we have safety coaches we also have school security officers but that school resource officer provides a very unique part of this culture of safety and security so I think it's extremely valuable to us to consider adding these positions into our school so that we can make sure we have an equitable disbursement of these resources through our high schools and we can meet the needs that we're finding out in our communities are consistently ongoing so I find my task is to make sure that whatever's going on out in the community doesn't make it into our schools. And this is one of the key resources that I think would help with that. Just wanted to

[00:53:18] provide a couple elements here for data purposes. We have a couple of surveys and the best way again to monitor these SROs, it's a unique place that they're in, it's climate. So we had two surveys that were conducted, one for students, the next one is going to be for staff. We're taking the upper agree to the question of does the SRO make me feel safe in this school and also the second question is does the SRO make a positive contribution to our school and we have relatively high marks in those areas as it relates to the student survey and also for the classroom

[00:53:54] instructor surveys which are also just slightly higher so I believe that SROs are seen as a positive resource time always tells with the selections that we have if they're going to be the most and beneficial to our schools but I think this would be a very um good decision if you decide to um provide an opportunity for us to increase this program by those two officers as requested and that's the conclusion of my presentation um if you have any questions I'll be glad to take them um Ralph in the past we've gotten this survey data racially disaggregated yes ma'am um could we have that racially disaggregated please I will do our best to

[00:54:31] track that down for you so you have it okay thank you thank you um on the training piece of this I see that SROs complete the above training, plus additional training on adolescent psychology, de-

escalation, those sorts of things.

[00:54:47] About how much training is that? Do you have an idea of how many hours that is? They complete about 40 hours worth of training to maintain their certification as an SRO. It's taken place throughout a two-year period. So as a result, they had that time to take advantage of these opportunities and courses.

[00:55:05] So roughly 40 hours over two years? Yes. - Is that, I'm sorry Ralph, is that every two years? - Yes. - Okay, so it's not just a one and done. - Not a one and done, their certification lasts after you go through your initial certification.

[00:55:23] It's good, but there's a requirement for continuing education, ongoing training just to keep you current on current efforts. - I do want to know, we do have two special guests here. - Yes. - Dr. Costa and Ms. Sublette, in case board or anyone has any questions for them.

[00:55:39] - Yes, they're available and- - I'm glad you asked that i was going to ask them a question and just making sure i was allowed and mr barfield is traveling on some training this uh today so he was unable to be here but um we can definitely make his voice heard if you need thank you i wanted to make your trip worth your while before that mr bradley could you i i know that there's been some concern about getting rid of the safety coaches and you know in and in putting SROs in place. My sense is I can accept the SROs, but I prefer not to get rid of

[00:56:14] the safety coaches. How have, what has been the experience of them working together at Albemarle High School? I think those roles have all been very supportive. In addition to the school resource officers, the safety coaches, and our school security officers, they work as a team with administration to make sure that they're monitoring that building and addressing the student matters as best possible. So I think they're all tied together. The point about the SRO is it's a very unique role. No one else can perform that role. Our safety coaches, I think, are fantastic folks, and they're very effective. But I also know that their roles may be also covered in other areas,

[00:56:53] but I think they all participate as part of the same team for safety and security. Just a point of clarification. I just want to make sure I understand their proposal. So right now, we have one SRO at Albemarle that's correct and one safety coach at Albemarle correct yes there's one safety coach at every secondary school so then there's those one at each of your schools yes and so we would get rid of those three and then the other thing is I was thinking during the summer are these 9 10 month employees or are they covering summer school or is that when their training happens just they are they are available to the school throughout the

[00:57:31] summers is when our district staff start tasking them to participate in security assessments they also you're correct they do that's an opportunity time to take care of training and and get those needs where the students are not in session and doesn't pull them away from the school not to butt in but the other the other things that the sros will do is they do the septad studies that gives them time when you don't have the student population in the school they can really make an assessment of the exterior interior all the all the exodus egress everything that they usually can't accomplish very well while the students are there we we had a pretty robust

[00:58:11] several years ago we had a robust septed um study and there's a pile of notebooks that we need to go back through again and that's one of the things that ralph has talked about if we had more staffing to

do it the expertise then then we could get back to that again Yes.

[00:58:28] I wanted to share that. Yes, that's correct. Thank you. Okay. I have a lot of questions. I'm sure you're not surprised. I think that the feedback is great, but I think it's also misleading because it says that -- I think I took notes -- it was 24% of the respondents didn't even know they had an SRO, but 85% said that they felt safe having an SRO.

[00:58:52] doesn't quite add up and in the Panorama survey you can see that all the almost all the students said they feel safe in the schools regardless of whether or not there was an SRO there and I would love to see data with questions similar about the SRO on the safety coaches and the safety officers do we get the same results on with those it's hard to break out how if the safety feeling and that sense of protection is just because of the SRO because you also

[00:59:26] have safety coaches and safety officers there like dr. Acuff I'm not necessarily opposed to it but I don't know that we have necessarily enough research to yet say that we need it at these other schools and I definitely don't support getting rid of the safety coaches in place of it I said last week I felt like it was a little misleading to say we're making cuts service cuts by our safety coaches but then we're adding in more SROs I mean it basically balances each other out and the feedback that we have gotten as a school board is a strong opposition to bringing in the SROs I know as a parent in the Western

[01:00:04] feeder pattern I don't feel like we have been surveyed enough to see if it's something we want in our schools and I am curious to hear from our principals I know them both well if it's something that they even feel like is a need in our schools you know we're talking about equity but if we're talking about moving resources and taking them from some schools because other schools need stuff then why are we putting these equally in all of our schools if the need is not there so I have a lot of concerns about that so I would love to hear from the principals on what your perspective is because I don't feel like there's been

[01:00:43] enough um community feedback and community involvement on this issue good evening um we have at Monticello and Western excuse me just introduce yourself people for people who are listening or watching sorry I'm Beth Costa the principal Monticello high school Jennifer Sublet principal Western Alvaro thank you and so this year for the first time we've shared a an officer who has been trained in many of the school resource techniques so he's not not an SRO per se, but he does work in four of the schools primarily.

[01:01:19] He has an office at Monticello and then he can be deployed to any of the schools for a multitude of reasons. And I liked what Dr. Acuff said. I think it's hard to say which one because they serve so different of roles.

[01:01:35] And so I know when the school resource officers were pulled from schools and we started to hear that maybe there was an increased need in the national landscape to put them back in my feeling was and uh was if possible I think um you know our our safety coaches we've had a couple uh over the past couple of years and they have been you know remarkable in their role but it's just it's distinct and it's different than a school resource resource officer and then I think of the work our school research or our officer has done this year and that also has served a need at the school and then our school safety officers have

[01:02:14] just been spectacular and fantastic and responsive in their role so it is as Mr Bradley said very much of a team approach with administrators counselors mental health practitioners so that's what I

would offer i would echo that um i'm in a unique position in that i was an assistant principal in my building when we had just the sro and not a school safety coach and then i've come back as principal without an SOI and having a school safety coach.

[01:02:40] They are distinctly different roles. My school safety coach is a long-standing member of my community. So his ability to make connections and to have ties and to really be a partner not just during school but throughout our community has been invaluable and it is a very different role in terms of the proactive and preventative measures.

[01:03:05] The utility and relationship that we have with SROs though, and it's not just an efficiency, but there is an effective agency in that relationship. And it sounds maybe minor, but just the logistics, it's not always hair on fire things that come up, but you have to call the non-emergency number.

[01:03:27] We don't have that seamless relationship that we had when we had an SRO. And so just the communication and the, "Hey, we need to let someone know and we need to make a report all of that becomes much more awkward and less supportive and less integrated without that ongoing natural relationship our students have responded very well to officer Lilly who's the SRO that we share he comes around he's visible he has relationships with some students that my school safety coach doesn't so it really is sort of a do we need an apple or do we need an orange can we have fruit salad I know that's really hard right now

[01:04:02] because resources are limited does officer lily serve any of those roles that you were saying as far as like the communication and things like that can you rely on him for those things right now when he's available it is much easier it's just challenging because he's split across so many buildings that when something comes up he's often like love to help but you're going to need to call the non-emergency number and then i'm thrown into a whole different system right of trying to explain the context of my school and what's going on yeah that was really helpful thank you both and I just want to add that there was one incident last year that required law

[01:04:37] enforcement and it was a non-violent drug sales so I am the first one to say I want my kids to feel safe the shooting in Crozet rocked me to my core but I don't I just feel like this is something we need to push a year get some more research and make sure that we have the funding if we're going to do both i have a really big issue with cutting our safety coaches and replacing them with armed police officers and i'll stop there thank you if we could find the money to do both i'm just i don't want to put you on the spot so you can say abstain i'm just curious to do both and to do say a safety

[01:05:16] coach and a sro the fruit salad the fruit salad that you talk the fruit salad that you talked about i just want to make sure i heard like is that and again having been an administrator with a dedicated sro um while i know that there were a lot of debates about what the presence of police within the schools did our sro worked very hard to build relationships to be non-confrontational he was a go-to for a lot of our students that training really did pay off and i saw it even when i came back and he still works on of our sporting events and so for the first few years

[01:05:49] kids who still oh my god ronnie you're back how are you so it really is not um there are a lot of of work that we can do to make that a really productive supportive relationship it just is distinctly different from the school safety coach and so I would say we will always take more resources when it comes to security and safety and just the what we can do to prevent and then what we can do to respond effectively to anything that comes up I think this dr. Acuff and I had a conversation today I think this is the perfect

example of I get that we have to present our budget to the board of supervisors but this feels like one of those situations where

[01:06:29] maybe we don't present a completely balanced budget and we go to the board of supervisors and say hey this is what we need and it doesn't come completely back on us because it's a tough decision I see the emotions on both sides and I would argue that our board of supervisors also want our students to be safe so just something to throw out there to my colleagues one additional question of sorry okay but just for mr bradley um because i just heard um about someone coming from the community right and it is like we're all every police teachers were all you kind of

[01:07:08] you know you know the fighting a dip more difficult to find people but i guess is that something we could put into the mou or put into the preferred that like that there would be a preference to have someone from the community an officer from the community be at those schools I don't know is that tying someone's hands as we're trying to do hiring well I believe that I believe that there are good people out there currently officer Kaczynski who's over at Albemarle came to us from Harrisonburg police mm-hm he happened to be a long-serving SRO in the school system there so he came with

[01:07:46] those skills that yeah that were all he really had to do was get to know the current community okay so i i think we can find good people and and i completely understand i've i'm a father of three girls and through all they're going through school through five different states and i don't have any different school districts i got to know every one of their sros just because i've been in law enforcement my life so that's just my point i go talk to and i'd say over these years i ran into two that were horrible and it's because they didn't have an understanding about the engagement and their role in dealing with kids.

[01:08:22] The other ones were all on point. So I think one of the significant things is to have some idea of who and how. So we don't necessarily need to grab the first one. If indeed we do this, we're not just going to grab the first one because they're there, but we've got to find one that fits with each of the programs.

[01:08:38] So I think we can still cast a wider net, but we will welcome anybody in the local community who wants to do it because you need to know your community. It's important. That was helpful. Thank you. - First of all, thank all three of you for your service. Mr. Bradley, you really have a tough job.

[01:08:55] And so I wanna ask you about the SRO at AHS. - Yes. - How often is that individual spread throughout, sent to other schools? - He is primarily there at Almar High School. - He's primarily there. - Yes, he does respond to, as of this year, he does respond to calls of assistance within the Lambs Lane complex.

[01:09:14] So he has responded to Journey and Greer when something arose. He also will take a moment periodically, his primary role is in the high school, but just because we want him to be a president, because that community there is a lot closer than some of our others in proximity and with our student base.

[01:09:33] So he primarily is in the school, but will respond as needed. And so if there's a way to make one available for Western and Monticello High School, would there be some plan in place so that if they're needed at some of the others they would strategically know in advance that four or five other schools are also up under their umbrella yes that's something we're looking into is what's effective because currently um officer lilly although he's currently covering four schools now he covers um western monticello and henley as well as walton

[01:10:12] Primarily so just to make sure he has a presence Last year he responded to any school that needed assistance and that was a little overwhelming for one officer to cover so we do understand that there is a need for a NSRO to be able to know their feeder pattern, but we'd have to go ahead and discuss Logistics as to how we would do that, but I think they will definitely have a presence and at least a relationship with the other schools. Thank you Okay, both the safety coaches and the Resource offices would be very very important. So staff already might have looked at this

[01:10:48] But could they look at a possibility of cutting something else in order to maintain the Safety coaches and if not, I agree with Ms. Spillman that we sort of not let the budget be balanced and present both of these So the last part of this work session will be a balanced scenario with a menu of options for reductions And so that's one thing you can toggle is further reductions in any of those areas and not this.

[01:11:13] This is all many choices you have to make. And I would treat the decision around the SROs and the decision around the safety coaches differently, separately. Okay, thanks. I guess one more question since it's budget. So we're paying the SROs, but we don't manage them.

[01:11:30] The police department manages them. Is that correct? We're not in charge of them, basically? We're not. It's a partnership. So we do not directly manage, but my counterpart at the police department, which is the special operations unit, which governs their activity, I also have direct communication with, and I speak to them daily on multitude of issues.

[01:11:54] So we manage their activities through that partnership. To be honest, I don't know if our administrators would be able to understand the complete and deal with the complete requirement of everything that they do, because they also have a broad amount of authority that only comes into use when it's necessary within the schools, and it's kind of difficult to manage that. Yeah, I would imagine. So we trust the partnership.

[01:12:19] Yeah. Yes. I have a question. Have we looked into, is there any data on the students who do not feel comfortable with the resource officers? Because that seems like really important information to decide this sort of thing. Okay, it is. It is important. And just to clarify, I know you had a question earlier. This data that was pulled for these two slides is addressing those individuals that said yes, they know that we have an SRO and that's where the data was pulled from. If they didn't know, there wasn't an assessment to address whether they feel safe or not because of that

[01:12:55] resource. So that was not included in the data. And also if they were a no, then they weren't included as well. So we can explore finding out that part of the data and see if we can find out information about it. I will say the last time we got that data, which was pre-pandemic, black students were very heavily represented in the strongly disagree disagree. I would imagine it's probably similar. And I think the the number of students who said they didn't even know that there was an SRO is significant as well. If we're talking about the number that said they felt safe, there's a lot that said they didn't even know the SRO was there. So something to think about too.

[01:13:33] Does anyone have further questions? It sounds like the principals are in favor of having an SRO. Is that what I hear? You can see the utility.

[01:13:49] I am in favor of SROs and I also am in favor of safety coaches and our school safety or school security officers as the team fruit salad as Jen said. Could you, I'm sorry, could you say what would be your preference? You said you're in favor of both.

[01:14:06] What would be your preference? I think it depends on what our priority is and what we're looking for. because our safety coaches serve a very different role with mental health and supporting our students and then the school resource officer it's hard to say which one I prefer because they're so distinct yeah I really wish we hadn't linked these together in the budget book because they're different things yeah I would also like to advocate that I feel like we learned a lot from the controversy national and local around school resource officers I know just as somebody who spends my Friday night standing next to the police who come to

[01:14:44] cover games we've done a lot to just talk through what that sort of breakup entailed but I feel like we could proactively work to do a much better job of integrating building relationships and not and helping to build a partnership between the school resource officer and all of our student community and I think that that would be beneficial both our schools and our larger community. I don't want a challenge that we had in the past to keep us from seeking a better way to build relationships moving forward. I'm glad you said that Ms. Shifflett because I know some of the opponents have picked

[01:15:21] the national worst-case scenarios and I absolutely would agree that there are schools that have misused SROs and use them in discipline and there have been incidents that none of us would support at all but that making policy based on the worst case scenario is probably not very good policy you need to protect about protect against those abuses of authority but we have you know with

[01:15:56] training with thoughtful selection of who we you know who we asked to join our team and you know training requirements we could probably overcome a lot of that stigma and do a better proactive job like you said miss shifflet in terms of introducing them to the community introducing to the students so the students don't say i have no idea what an sro is and well that's enough i do though want to say that i think there is quite a disparity

[01:16:33] in community feeling and what i'm talking about is when there was a lot of support for sros a year ago and two years ago i think there's a big disparity between when the community wants an sro and what an sro actually does and i think so when people were seeing fights at schools or people or when there are shootings at schools people want more sros but sros are not there to stop fights they have nothing to do with that and also largely do not stop school shootings like

[01:17:08] 98% of them so I just I think it's important to realize that when we have pressure on that side of things it's not well informed which argues for maybe holding off a year and getting better information and better community involvement I would like to add one more piece I know the the presence of a law enforcement person in the office in schools I understand is a potential concern for community members in our society okay I'm a black male

[01:17:47] raised in Baltimore Maryland I've been on both sides of what law enforcement can how it can impact community I think the majority of the people that are doing this work are reasonable responsible respectful of the community they deal with we've got bad seeds everywhere it doesn't matter where you work. I've been tasked to make the schools as safe as possible, and they are a team. Our safety coaches, our security staff, and our SROs have different roles. I think they're all important.

[01:18:22] We are lacking the role of the SRO currently, which is why I think the proposal is being made now, is because that is one of the roles that we do not have currently in place within the schools. And if we do have an issue that arises of an emergent nature, they're the first ones to be there.

[01:18:41] And if they can't stop it, they can mitigate further damage or violence that takes place. And I think that's one of their primary roles, is to mitigate. Not everyone's going to be safe right off the bat if something happens, but they can prevent subsequent injuries and harm to come to other people if that is allowed to continue on.

[01:19:01] So I think that's one of the reasons why the SROs are very important, they do provide that part of the role that I think is important to our schools um I worked in law enforcement role even though I was on the federal side even in my school district when the alarm goes off there's something's going on they need emergency response everybody's coming but somebody there at the building is going to be the first phase to start taking action getting people organized getting a plan put in place if they're there and they've got one work they're going to go into the building and start looking knowing that there's an onslaught of resources coming behind them so I think the benefit is although you can't measure their day-to-day activity in a very easy

[01:19:39] finite way if something happens they're the first ones to be there they're the ones going to go in until the building when everyone else is coming out so I think all three resources are incredibly important for safety and security in our schools but I think SROs are that mitigation factor that if something ever happens hopefully it never does they're going to be the ones that are going to be most effective at the beginning of a crisis I think generally um we hire people for their expertise and uh we've heard the expertise of our director of safety and school safety and security and

[01:20:16] two of our principals who are in charge of managing what 2400 students between the two of you um so I thank you all thank you very much I have one other question yes sir Miss Lee may have already said it but um could the survey results be broken down by race yes he did inquire about that we'll work on um getting that data to you in the best form that we can okay yes thank you just to know we we do need the data you know we will be voting on this adopting a

[01:20:50] funding request in a week so the sooner the better yes ma'am thank you all right thank you very much do you need a break or should we keep going break break right yeah we have 10 minutes one minute

[01:21:12] after eight we're back why don't we reconvene folks she's here she might have something to do

[01:31:37] here you scared thank you all and Miss Kumazawa the floor is yours thank you um I'm going to go over service reductions that are part of the draft funding request next before I start though I do want to mention that these are not reductions we're recommending on their own these are recommendations for reductions due to the financial constraint we're in so I just wanted to make that clear that without the funding gap we wouldn't have this section. I also want

[01:32:16] to remind you that as part of the FY25 budget development process in order to balance the budget we made 3.5 million dollars in reductions. We did that by deferring replacement cycles, we paused the hiring of vacant positions, and we increased the student to teacher budgeted ratios for our school-based positions.

[01:32:35] All of these reductions are carried forward and served as a baseline starting point for developing the FY26 budget. So what I'm going to talk about next is in addition to the reductions we've made at this point last year. This is the list of the reductions that are included in the funding request that total a savings of 2.7 million dollars. This evening we'll review some of these that we've had questions

about or the most interested in. And then just to recap the previous conversation, the one for fewer student safety coach positions, you can consider

[01:33:13] that separate from the SRR proposal, it is a reduction on this list on its own. So we don't have to keep coming back to that as a response to your feedback. So the first one I would like to go over is the central office and department reductions. It may be a little bit confusing, so hopefully this graphic provides a little bit more clarity about how we're budgeting for this.

[01:33:34] So in the FY25 budget, we budgeted a negative amount of \$500,000 in our lapse budget. So that meant that in addition to our typical lapse budget, we budgeted an additional \$500,000 on top.

[01:33:51] So that means we had to find \$500,000 in vacant positions that we were not filling. And so these FTE were not defined position by position. It was whatever was vacant, we don't fill it to meet the \$500,000 requirement. So what's changing moving forward in FY26 is we have determined what FTE positions to reduce in the budget of the \$500,000 amounts. As I mentioned, this carries forward and serves as a new baseline for FY26. In addition to that,

[01:34:24] we are proposing \$476,000 in additional FTE reductions. So the total almost \$1 million reduction is reflected in the budget book as FTE position reductions. those impact certain departments there are two in division support one in school board one in human resources to an instruction one in technology and one in building services now if you look at the department budgets in your budget book you will see there are some other FTE changes that are unrelated to this proposal and that includes seven FTEs that we've added to transportation and

[01:35:03] one FTE that's reduced in community engagement so I hope that clarifies some of the questions about it we purposely don't identify positions for personnel reasons so the next reduction we'll go over will be presented by Lauren McClain oh sorry were there questions before I move forward on this is this where the position for the Education Foundation is that part of this or is it where is that found so that was a position that was frozen in FY25 but as of July

[01:35:42] 1st it is not reduced it is not included in the list of reductions so that position can be filled July 1st and that is for a total of 176,000 including benefits is that right that sounds right yeah anything else just one question I'm assuming that the minus one on the school board is for the unfilled assistant to

[01:36:14] the clerk okay good evening everybody my name is Lauren McLean I am the assistant director of english learners and world languages and i'm talking to you about foreign language in elementary school so for i think every time i've come before the school board previously i've been speaking about the english learner side of my role this time is about world languages just

[01:36:48] be clear so first just a little bit of information about our foreign language elementary school program it currently exists at four schools this year broadest wood crozet ivy and murray and that That means it's serving a little over 1,400 students.

[01:37:05] Last year, the program also existed at Mountain View and Woodbrook. They did not continue this year, and those are for two different reasons. So Mountain View chose to pause their FLESS programming so that they could become a full dual language school.

[01:37:21] This is a decision that they made that I know they spoke with you about, but also was in response to a lot of community engagement and looking at their data. Woodbrook chose to not fill their

FLESS positions with FLESS teachers after a teacher retirement and a resignation.

[01:37:40] The FLESS programs, our baseline requirement for schools is that students should receive 30 minutes of instruction in the target language, a minimum of twice a week. And so that is how they are staffed. So that's about 60 minutes a week. In terms of the budget overview, as you can see, this proposal of cutting the FLESS programs saves more money than adding it back in wood.

[01:38:03] And that is due to the fact that the Woodbrook positions that are not being used for FLES would still not continue. And that there is an additional cost if FLES were to be implemented in all of our schools of about 1.3 million, making full implementation 1.8 million.

[01:38:23] The next thing I wanna talk about is the benefits of FLES, as I think you all heard from a lot of our community members. I'm also a proud graduate of FLES programming myself. So I'm not going to tell you that it is not something meaningful. I think it's just worth us looking at kind of what the benefits are and whether or not it's the appropriate choice to make in this budget year.

[01:38:44] So the first is that there is research around improved academic achievement across all subjects. This data largely comes from some studies that are pretty old and that's because a lot of the current research is focused on dual language immersion programming just because It's been found to be more effective, and therefore we've seen a lot of states moving towards it, as well as some pretty big legislative changes in California and Massachusetts that shifted that practice.

[01:39:16] The studies also really depend on how students are assessed. The academic achievement gains are shown in their state programming and assessments, not in necessarily nationwide norm tests. There's also a lot of talk, as I think you all heard, about how students in FLESC can better achieve bilingualism.

[01:39:38] This is called the critical period hypothesis. It's technically a hypothesis, but I think most of us believe it. And it was exciting to hear somebody bring it up in our last meeting. And this is the idea that it is easier to acquire a language before puberty.

[01:39:54] This is pretty, again, widely held, and we do see research on it. That being said, I just want to say also as the head of English learners, we don't give up on language learning after puberty. It is certainly still possible. It's just a little more challenging. And it doesn't mean that it's harder as you get older or younger. It's just that critical period.

[01:40:14] There were also questions about whether or not students who engage in FWEST programming typically take more advanced courses in that world language. the only study that i have been able to find around this shows that this is specifically true only for heritage speakers so students who are taking a fless program in say mandarin who are heritage speakers of mandarin right we don't have that data as a division because our students who are heritage speakers of spanish took the dual language program at mountain view and they're the only ones who are old enough to have gone through the full trajectory

[01:40:50] of language learning i can tell you we have lots of data about how they are taking advanced coursework in spanish as they move through that trajectory at monticello high school but we just don't have that data for other students they're just a little too young still and so i want to go ahead and say right we really see benefits to fless the question is whether or not this is the right time for it and how we can do it in a way that really focuses on what our goals and vision are as a division. The four schools that have FLEZ are in the bottom half

[01:41:25] of our linguistic diversity as a division and so what that means is that while we are really excited about those students learning languages, we're not necessarily promoting linguistic equity. We're not reaching our students who are those heritage speakers that could put them in that advanced coursework. And the other thing I have to acknowledge is that world language instruction in elementary school as you heard from many people is very effective and research shows that the most effective form of this is dual language instruction and so at this time that's why we are considering kind of what makes the most sense for elementary school programming in terms of moving

[01:42:04] forward with less and i'll pause for questions just a quick question um can you go back to the slide about mountain view and woodbrook i'd just like a little more clarification so can someone explain to me again what happened was it last year I think it may have been right when I joined the board with them choosing an FTE over maintaining FLESS is that right I can speak to the Mountain View side of this conversation I've been deeply involved in that process I transparently don't think I could speak to Woodbrook and but so Mountain View had been looking at their

[01:42:44] data and specifically about how their FLESS and their discovery or their discovery program which is what they call FLESS and then their immersion program had very disparate data and also demographics and so they really wanted to focus on what that meant for them as a school and so they chose to use that programming to still invest in Spanish language instruction but doing so through the immersion model instead of the FLUS model so now instead of having one cohort of students who receive 30 minutes of Spanish instruction twice a week and another who receive between 50 to 80 percent of their day in Spanish they've been moving towards having all of their students receive Spanish

[01:43:21] literacy instruction every day and i can address the um the woodbrook one i believe thank you sure so woodwork was in an interesting situation last year where both of the flash teachers were not returning had they been returning they would have stayed uh with the program moving forward into this year but since neither were returning for different reasons the um the principal at the time requested to be able to utilize that that FTE that became available to provide additional supports and intervention specifically around literacy and math and so that was based on student academic achievement data at

[01:44:00] the time and that seemed to make sense she felt that that added greater value to the school overall again not disparaging in any way the FLESS program it was just that the availability the FTE was there I mean I would like to acknowledge that 1,400 plus students is more than 10% of our student population it's not you know we've heard a lot of like oh it's only two schools it's only three schools that's a significant amount of our population that we're removing programming from which I think needs to be considered thank you in in my review of the literature on you know broader cognitive in positive impacts

[01:44:40] those studies were not great studies they were on pretty homogeneous populations they had more intensive language instruction and if you look at the academic or achievement data at our most intensive and long-standing language program which is at Mountain View you don't see that you don't see a boost in you know if we look demographically at all its students and compare them with the performance say at Greer or wherever you don't see that

[01:45:14] broader cognitive benefit that some of the I'm not saying you cherry-picked it but some of the literature that has been brought forward in support I don't see it in our own data I mean the Woodbrook that Woodbrook Mountain View has had an immersion program for a decade or more and you don't see that benefit I don't see it so I think we can look at kind of the different benefits and I think you're correct

that right now there's really this is a hard field to study and And a lot of that has to do with some of the legislation that has existed in particularly

[01:45:52] in some of the largest states around bilingual education. And so I think we are all also waiting to see additional literature on that, particularly I will name for myself in California as we look at some pretty diverse populations and what it means for that state as they move forward after Prop 227.

[01:46:12] I mean I do believe that our language offerings in middle school and high school are quite robust and that you know starting kids at age 5 versus age 11 might not be catastrophic I I also I want to acknowledge also that you know obviously foreign language is very beneficial for young children I grew up bilingual so I'm all for it also you know some of the points that people made

[01:46:50] last week, diversity is important, especially now, when so many groups are being attacked. And so those facts are very true and meaningful to me. To me, a superseding fact is that we live in a commonwealth that does not adequately fund public education. So that's why we're making these decisions now. So to me, I believe that the equitable thing is to not renew this program for next year for these schools, even though I believe, you know, in all these things that are important,

[01:47:21] but to also remember that to remember why we're in this situation are there schools that have Well-rounded and well-designed world languages programs that we could look at for future implementation At the elementary school level. Yeah, I just I'm not sure that the the way we did the FLESS program Gave us significant results But I also believe that world languages and learning another language is important

[01:47:55] And so I'm wondering if we wanted to revisit this in a couple years, if we could have a design or a program guide of how to do it well and how to do it across the division more equitably, would that be possible? I believe so, because I know that's a focus of the Virginia Organization of World Language Supervisors, and so I'll certainly bring it up at the meeting tomorrow.

[01:48:21] Are there any other questions? Thank you. Thank you, and I'll turn it over to Ms. Dudley. Hello again.

[01:48:41] My name is Katina Dudley. I am the coordinator for science, and I am speaking on the reduced budget for the guaranteed field experiences. Just from last week, I know there was a question about the alignment of our guaranteed field experiences to the state standards, and I just wanted to note that these experiences are aligned to the Virginia state standards and the content areas that are covered through the experience.

[01:49:08] The reduction in funding for guaranteed field experiences prevents further expansion of program into the high school when this initiative began our goal was to guarantee two field experiences at each grade level for the past three years we have successfully provided two guaranteed experiences for students in grades k through five and two years ago we expanded this program to the middle school ensuring continued access to these experiences while we have been collaborating with teachers to develop high school learning experiences expansion has not yet occurred

[01:49:43] it is important to note that the budget reduction will not affect current field experiences you'll note that we will be using some other line items to meet the two guaranteed field experiences at the middle school level however it will limit the division's ability to extend these opportunities to our high school students sustaining and ultimately expanding these experiences remains a priority as they provide

a valuable real-world learning experience that enhances student engagement and achievement. Do you guys have any questions about this proposal?

[01:50:20] I think I'm just going to use this opportunity to reiterate what Ms. Lee said, because I think it is so important for the public to understand that each of us, and then us collectively on the board, are making decisions that none of us would like to make.

[01:50:39] We all ran and support public education, have had our children in public education, and believe is something that is valuable beyond extreme to this community and the decisions we're having to make are literally tearing us apart I think it's you know for each of these things you're putting before us so I could speak to this one I think you know I still to this day remember my field trip experiences and while I'm very proud that we are able to maintain that you know we would all love to continue to expand that to be able to get students out into more places in our community and expanded community so that they can

[01:51:18] you couldn't see the world around them because many of our students aren't able to see that so I just think it is important for the public to remember the difficult position we're in and we want to do the best but we also need to make sure we're doing within our means in the situation that the state is what is Thank you.

[01:51:40] Just to add on to what Dr. Berlin said in terms of what the state has put us in. We are in this situation because of the constantly changing state formula for reimbursing public education.

[01:51:55] And if it was leveled to what it was two years ago, we would not have this gap at all. We're down about \$10 million. And with that commercial, Ms. Dudley, continue.

[01:52:11] you oh i was just going to add to that i even with that i think the pool is too small so we're fighting other divisions for a too small pool but okay well i will turn this back over to maia kumazawa so in the next section um i'm going to review a proposed balancing scenario um just to put where we are into context we did not propose a balancing scenario until april of the budget

[01:52:45] process last year. We're proposing a balancing scenario now in March to provide as much time as possible for discussion and to make sure that what we're thinking about is transparent to the community and we're talking about it in a public manner. So last year, this was our funding gap.

[01:53:03] A lot of our gap was closed last year by planning for higher revenues. That included an increase in state revenues. It included an increase in the local transfer from Albemarle County, and it included one-time uses of money so some of it was use of our fund balance some of it was by transferring one-time monies from our special revenue funds those were one-time revenues that we can't count on in FY 26 we've already incorporated the local transfer increase and we've already incorporated any state revenue increases so we're a little bit of a head which is why you see that

[01:53:40] bigger arrow going up for revenues right there me all right one moment please I think that was a

[01:55:01] sign that this is not something we want to talk about so this is our gap that we're facing right now so that those kind of wider that wider gap is that seven point eight million dollars that's represented in your budget book. Since then, we've increased, been able to increase our local revenue by \$2.8 million, thereby closing our gap to \$5 million. As of today, actually, the state released the General Assembly's

conference budget. I took a quick look. It looks pretty much the way we anticipated, so there's no significant changes. There's some technical line item shifts here and

[01:55:40] there, but not enough to warrant a change in our state revenue projection. So that leaves us with having to make reductions of \$5 million. Some alternatives for making reductions. So as you all are aware and that we talk about repeatedly, our budget is mostly made up of FTE budgets. 83% to be exact, which equals \$240.5 million. As an example, a 2% reduction in FTE budgets is about

[01:56:12] \$4.8 million. There's two major ways in which you could find \$4.8 million. One is to reduce 46 positions as one FTE is an average of \$105,000 including salaries and benefits. And then another way to reach that is by not providing a compensation increase. As an example, a 1% compensation increase costs approximately \$1.6 million. The other area to look for, so the remaining 16% of

[01:56:45] the budget is our operations. This is a chart that shows our highest operating expenses. So at the very highest over five million dollars is what we have budgeted in school facilities that is our utilities our electrical heating water sewer and refuse that's a non-discretionary cost that we can't reduce similarly the children's services act transfer and other contracted services so one example if you wanted to find a two percent reduction in operating budgets that's about one million dollars in order to find anything in the operating budgets the only areas that you might

[01:57:25] consider discretionary again that's a subjective term is the technology equipment replacement transfer that we have budgeted 2.6 million dollars for next year and then going further down the list furniture that currently has 1.2 million dollars in the budget so this is the scenario for consideration knowing that as part of our guiding principles for making reductions that we discussed at length with the school board last year where can we find savings and operations before we even begin to look at FTEs. So we looked at that first, reducing operating

[01:58:03] budgets. So the first one is something that we have been working on over the last few months. While it's not final, if we are able to secure the Head Start Preschool Grant and budget for that as part of our budget next year, we can move some of the children we serve in the Bright Stars VPI program into the head start program the reimbursable amount per child is more in the head start program and that would save us some money and we estimate \$300,000 again that's not final but it is something we thought we could start building into given our situation if it doesn't come to fruition we'd have some

[01:58:42] contingencies we're thinking about the second area is a further reduction of the furniture replacement program. So this is a division-wide for a classroom furniture replacement program that was approved by you all a few years ago at 1.2 million dollars. The current funding request has already halved that amount and this additional six hundred thousand dollars would fully eliminate the amount for next year. And then as I mentioned in the previous slide, four hundred thousand dollar reduction in the technology replacement program. This

[01:59:16] would be a partial deferral for next year. The \$1.3 million is higher than the representative amount that we currently have budgeted in our operations. So then what's remaining that we must find reductions in, those are FTE budgets.

[01:59:32] These total \$3.7 million. Together the 1.3 and the 3.7 in this scenario equal the \$5 million gap. The first item on here is a continued reduction of department-based and central office FTE. \$0.6 million is our estimate of what could be achieved using a combination of position reductions and further frozen

vacancies. The second item is to reduce the instructional coach FTE from the current 25 that we have to 15. The next is to reduce our

[02:00:08] mental health support slash sel coach program from 30 fte to 24 fte other school-based fte by re-engineering our current staffing standards could provide savings of about eight hundred thousand dollars we propose eliminating two fte that are budgeted to serve k-tech as those positions can be provided by k-tech and not by acps you might remember as part of the growth proposal, since we're planning on opening Center 2 or the Ace Academy at Lambs Lane in FY27, typically we have staff in place to plan for that opening

[02:00:47] of the new school. As of reduction, we could consider reducing the requested two FTEs and putting those responsibilities together with the Center 1 or Ace Academy at Seminole Place leadership. And then finally, every year we budget a \$300,000 recurring amount for reclassification we have a cycle where we review groups of employees each year we could defer that program by one year and save \$300,000 so a little bit more information about some of the larger proposals this is our an overview of our instructional coaching model currently

[02:01:25] we have 25 FTE 22 of which are budgeted in our school operating fund and three which are budgeted in our title to special revenue fund so we currently have a generalist model where we provide support and instructional content and pedagogy across all content areas and grade levels most coaches currently are split between two schools and the purpose of their job is to provide job embedded professional learning working side-by-side with our teachers to put learning into practice and to provide feedback so in the proposed model where

[02:02:01] you would reduce by 10 FTE it's about a 1 million dollar reduction we would redesign the program to continue to ensure alignment with our instructional priorities as well as the bellwether recommendations as you might see some schools would not receive coaching support fewer instructional coaches would limit the number of teachers they will be able to support and support for teachers or schools outside the identified priorities will be limited and so there's some other examples of what the impact of this change would be on the bottom of the slide the second area that's included in the scenario is

[02:02:40] is reducing the number of mental health support specialists, formerly called SEL coaches. We currently have 30 in the FY25 budget. And this proposal would reduce by 6 to 24 FTE.

[02:02:55] These positions support student self-regulation by establishing a relationship in order to teach the skills to help empower students to return to class to access academic content. And so right now, the way the staffing standard works is there is a minimum of one MHSS at each school, and then the additional six are allocated based on the individual needs of a school.

[02:03:19] They are also currently supervised and hired by each school principal. In the proposed model where six FTE are reduced, the staff to student ratios and those services would be reduced. For example, there'd be fewer sessions with students and slower response times to crises.

[02:03:37] Supervision would also shift to central office in order to provide standardized objectives, norms, practices, support, and expectations. And we could also explore Medicaid billing. So seeing if we can get reimbursed for these services moving forward.

[02:03:54] Other school-based FTE. This is a proposal to revise underutilized staffing standards to streamline towards what we're actually planning to staff. And in total, it equals about eight FTE or

\$800,000.

[02:04:09] This is an alternative approach to budgeting class size increase, which we've already done last year. So the breakdown of the eight FTE is listed here. This would impact the staffing standard for elementary PE, the short-term education program or STEP, one intervention teacher, 0.33 middle school media specialists, and two other FTE. And the way this was developed is after we've met with a team of staff with school principals met to plan for what each school staffing would look like next year based on our current staffing standards.

[02:04:48] These areas were reviewed and we determined that on average there is an opportunity for reduction based on the current plans that were submitted. And these reductions maintain an equitable methodology for allocating resources across all of our schools.

[02:05:05] So there would be a staffing standard shift to accommodate these and that same staffing standard would still apply. It would impact schools differently because, depending on the school's enrollment and demographics, they all have a different plan, but you can still apply a consistent methodology to make sure that the way the resources distributed are equal.

[02:05:27] So I know that's a little bit confusing. So one example is the elementary PE FTE. We have certain steps of when you reach a certain number of enrollment, you get an additional decimal point of a PE. additional decimal point is not always practical to fill so for example if you have an allocation of three p.e teachers you could hire three p.e teachers if you have an allocation of 3.3 p.e teachers a lot of schools choose not to hire the 0.3 it's just not practical to have a 0.3 of a p.e teacher so they might request a waiver to say oh can i use that 0.3 for something else so that's

[02:06:05] an example when we're talking about streamlining trying to make the standard fit what's actually being used for that would be that 0.3 that we'd be taking away from the school and equally so across all the schools so um this is a summary of what is actually already included in the funding request what are the proposed reductions to continue closing the gap of five million dollars and then what would the total be if you were to approve the scenario what does it look like so that's the

[02:06:40] column on the right so the total reductions in both i guess versions of the budget are 7.75 million dollars and you can see we've talked about a lot of these this evening but it does make sense i think to talk about it as a larger list rather than the two separate chunks this is just meant to understand where we are in the budget process so knowing that and hearing your feedback we know that you may not necessarily agree with the draft funding request it is a draft and you may not agree with the balancing scenario so the goal is that we've given you the

[02:07:18] information needed to make the best decision as you're aware and I've you as you've mentioned already there are other options you have if you wanted to reverse all of the proposed reductions that's an additional 7.75 million dollars that you're adding to the budget so some things we've heard are adding back student safety coaches that would add 0.25 million to the budget if you wanted to maintain our current FLUSS programs, that would add 0.53 to our budget. 0.53 million, excuse me.

[02:07:51] If you wanted to expand FLUSS to all elementary schools, as Lauren mentioned, it would cost 1.8 million dollars. So if you're proposing to increase budgets or add back to what we've proposed, these are some of the items we've heard. Again, this isn't limited. These are examples based on feedback. So in

order to not increase the funding gap, you would have to decrease budgets. So some alternatives there include decreasing the market compensation

[02:08:24] proposal. That has a net cost. The 3% has a net cost right now \$5.4 million. If you change the market comp increase to 2%, that would save you \$1.65 million. If you change the market comp increase to 1.5% that would save 2.5 million dollars and the reason why I put 1.5% on there is because the state does provide a prorated reimbursement as long as you provide a 1.5% increase so that would be the recommend I wouldn't recommend 1% versus one and then you could defer the special education TA and

[02:09:01] transportation assistant reclassification you might remember that was about half a million dollars as part of that compensation proposal other proposals that we've talked about this evening total 1.81 million dollars and then the last alternative i have on the slide is what you're used to seeing we've talked about in other budget processes is to increase the budgeted student to teacher ratio by 0.5 across the board that would save that would reduce a 16 fte and would be a savings of about 1.7 million dollars i mean this

[02:09:36] This one is a little bit more complex and not necessarily applied in the same way. It's because if you take off a decimal point of a teacher across all the schools, the way the schools will manage that will be different. So it's hard to communicate effectively exactly what impact that would have.

[02:09:54] It might be increasing the average class size. And then if you had other ideas, a number that we use for average TA for these types of estimates are \$105,000 per FTE. So with that, I really turn it back over to Chair Acuff for a discussion.

[02:10:14] I'm also happy to answer any questions about these scenarios. All right. Not an appealing menu, Ms. Kumasawa.

[02:10:33] Not your fault, but thank you for doing all that. That's a lot of difficult work. So first of all, thank you. I mean, I think the silence you're hearing is-- I mean, even though we knew this would come to this, Like, again, it's devastating, and I feel for the children and the teachers and the leaders of the school who are going to have to live with whatever decisions we make.

[02:11:08] So should we discuss these questions in order? Do you want to start us out? I'll start us out. So for number one, I think with the additional money from the Board of Supervisors, it's not likely we're going to get any more.

[02:11:26] and so even though we have a duty to create a needs-based funding request it feels a bit futile so I feel like a balanced funding request makes more sense at this time. I have a question on that and I don't know if I mean some of my our board colleagues in Fairfax and Arlington places that are more affected by federal workers right so there's a tax pull through there are worried about diminishing revenue as they go through the next year. Has anything like that been mentioned on the side of the county yet?

[02:12:04] I mean, I don't know the, I don't think we have a lot of federal type employees. I mean, we have NJIC, but that might be called harmless. I just wondered if that, I mean, I don't want it to get worse, but I'm also trying to cognitively hold like, you know, could there be a further reduction or is it just way too early to know?

[02:12:24] I think it's way too early. We have not been a part of any conversations today. Okay. Yeah, this is bad. I respectfully disagree with Miss Lee I think that even if we're not likely to get more money from the

Board of Supervisors putting it all on our shoulders and on central office's shoulders to bear that I think at a certain point we have to go and say we've made all the cuts we've can't

[02:13:00] we've we could we have done what you asked us and we still we need a little bit more um that's kind of where i'm falling i will say that given the heaviness of this presentation it is frustrating that we've already had public hearing and we can't hear from the public on these proposed cuts um i think that this affects a lot of different people and it would be helpful to hear that feedback um i know i personally that weighs heavily on me um i would like the safety coach sro thing is still

[02:13:38] weighing on me as well and i can't help but come back to the salary for the education foundation and i know that um several of my fellow board members feel very differently than i do but you're talking about nearly \$200,000 in salary and benefit for an organization versus a very strong need and desire in our community to keep our safety coaches, I would suggest that we

[02:14:10] consider punting that salary for a year and putting our safety coaches back. So that would be my answer to number two. Ms. Spillman, do you realize that we're kind of putting the raised the money for the community and schools onto that department and without an executive director there that's going to be difficult well i don't think that we should have put that on the organization in the first place without making sure that we were in a position to be able to do that um i already expressed my frustration on how that went about um so yes while i understand

[02:14:49] that i don't um you know because that decision was made behind the scenes and and things went on without what I feel like was proper knowledge given to other board members you know that's something we'll have to figure out next year I just wanted to respond to your comment about getting public comment mm-hmm the reason why we're having the conversation now earlier rather than later when we have to have it is to provide enough time for discussion and so I wasn't going to share this till the end but there are your schedule to approve of funding

[02:15:28] request next week and then there's two school board meetings in which there will be regular public comment before budget adoption on May 8th so I just wanted to clarify that we're we're we agree with you that there should be public comment there should be a lot of discussion so this was our way of doing that is to propose this that's super helpful thank you I'm not sure how much for question Number one, I'm not sure how much when supervisors approved the amount of money that they were giving to us, whether or not they knew all of the ramifications that we were facing at that time.

[02:16:06] So I'd rather go with a needs-based funding request to them instead of a balanced budget being presented. Let them know exactly what's going on and to what extent we have already made cuts. I do think there are some suggestions that we learned about tonight that are reasonable as far as any of this is reasonable such as um you know the k-tech supplying their own sped person and a few other things on that list there so we could get a little bit closer

[02:16:39] if not cover the whole gap and i i agree mr page i do think we should do a needs-based um budget um as ms spillman said as well i mean again i so appreciate our board of super supervisors for coming to the table but i think we need to continue just to show um and with the state that we are in and that every time we would say bend and say okay we can balance our budget we're doing it on the backs of our teachers and our leaders and our kids and our families and so i think we need to continue to show like we will do it we have to by law have a balanced budget but we don't

[02:17:18] have to do it this early that will also allow us to have more public comment to talk through kind of where we make all of make the the devastating cuts ms prior ms osborne i'd like to get closer you know but because that way we we know what what the real gap is yeah i was just going to agree

[02:17:47] with the needs-based funding request as well that that's i mean we have a list of cuts in the funding request and then the additional 5.5 cuts that miss kumazawa presented tonight so i guess my my question for my colleagues is what is a needs based with i mean i certainly am in favor of

[02:18:19] presenting the pain that 7.7 million dollars worth of cuts inflicts directly on our school division and that we're talking about serious cuts throughout. And the only other way that we can get \$7.7 million is A, reduce the compensation for our teachers, and then add more students to their classrooms.

[02:18:48] And that is completely unpalatable to me, and I assume it would be for our teachers as well. And with Charlottesville having a 5.5% increase, we can't. But I think at some point, we're going to need to know what our priorities are.

[02:19:09] At some point, when they tell us that we've already given you an extra \$2 million, and we are thankful for that \$2 million, anyone who's listening, \$2.8 million, we're going to need to know what our priorities are.

[02:19:24] So to me, it feels like we can present them the pain, but we need to know for ourselves. And kicking that can down the road or whatever, I don't think that's that useful. but respectfully too like if they're whoever's listening then we're already giving in and saying we're coming to you expecting you to say no i think we need to go to them and say i expect you to say yes because like us you are elected officials who are serving our community and our students and our staff and our teachers and our families are suffering because of this and so

[02:20:01] meet us a little bit more and they all mention the schools when they campaign exactly i mean 100% they want to use how great our schools are to draw in these developers for their million-dollar houses you know I guess my question since dr. Berlin and I have to put together the presentation for the 17th is do we say here's what the superintendent recommended and of the additional 5.5

[02:20:38] million which ones are we gonna fall on our sword about I mean we can't just simply right we could just mail what what dr. Haas already presented us and say we don't know but that's our that's what our job is is to know and make those awful decisions so I'm gonna skip to the bottom what else would I like to know I would like to know well I guess you just told me told us you know if we kept the

[02:21:11] safety coaches I would like a some more information about the you know the focus groups on the on the SROs but beyond that I'm struggling a bit with what what we can do there's no there's no way to get to 5.5 million dollars unless we reduce salaries and we're already falling behind our neighbors in Charlottesville with the graph that Mr. Brody presented? I mean I agree with Ms.

[02:21:49] Osborne that there are several things in here that make a lot of sense. Let the city pay for KTEC. The instructional coaching model, while some people agree it's great, there's a large contention of people that consider it unpopular and not great. So you know the center to make sense for a hold off for a year. There are a lot of things I think that makes sense. Again like Dr. Berlin said, would we choose to make those cuts absolutely not but some of them make sense given the climate that we're in so I do think that we can get to a point where it is a much smaller gap are we going to get

[02:22:25] to 5.5 I see us having a hard time all agreeing on that total amount well between now and next Thursday we will have to vote and adopt a funding request that dr. Berlin and I present to the board supervisors so we may want to take this home with us and but we need to be prepared to make some decisions if not tonight by next Thursday I mean my sense

[02:23:02] is I'm pessimistic that we will get more money from the supervisors and especially after the 2.8 plus 6 million for the health fund yes I agree but also when we're looking at what the percentage of our total budget is you know you're talking about one or two percent total so like it seems like a lot and then on the flip side it doesn't seem like that much when you're going and asking for that much out of a total percentage um mr black how

[02:23:40] would you suggest we do this do we have to meet again do we i mean we're not going to come to a consensus tonight and getting into a conversation over email turns into a meeting so how do we do this i think given that it seems there are a pretty wide range of views among the school board and given the timeline within which you need to make decisions the best option would be to hold some two by two meetings next week and then you know have the the chair and vice chair tabulate those results so that hopefully we can move quickly to a consensus at our next meeting

[02:24:19] okay anybody else have anything that a better suggestion what is the agenda for the next meeting pardon what's the agenda for the next meeting uh we have some substantive things on there in addition to um uh in in in addition to deciding there's two primary business items one was the adoption of the funding request but the bulk of the meeting was planned for mid-year data right right we had some achievement data and some other things going so it was not a it was not a

[02:24:55] dedicated or special meeting to discuss the budget to the hope was that we would come very close tonight I mean I mean I agree that we need more money we need more money from the state we need more money from the supervisors whether I'm pessimistic that we're going to get it I think there's going in there and say we need 5.5 million which would be at all the cuts that we don't want to make today shows sort of a lack of effort and going in there and say another 250 is

[02:25:29] is sounds pathetic but um but there's there's easily 3.5 on that list that she gave us there's i just right i laid up things that that i could stomach and that was 3.5 right there your coaches your k-tech your your school-based ftes your center tube planner your bright storage your furniture and your tech right so we're talking about another two million so so i would be more comfortable going to the board of supervisors with a two million gap rather than a five yeah Agreed.

[02:25:59] Can I make a point of clarification on the \$5 million funding gap? That assumes everything in the \$2.75 million column is also reduced. I want to make sure you're not trying to pick this to get to \$5 million.

[02:26:21] So one way you could do this is step-by-step focus on the first column. Can you come to an agreement of what should be in the first column? And then we can talk about the second column and then we can see what a gap might be.

[02:26:37] - I can agree to the first column with the exception of fewer student safety coach positions. - Agreed. - Agreed. - I can do that, but I haven't done the math on the rest of it yet, so. - Say what?

[02:26:53] - I didn't do the last part you said. - I can agree to that, but I haven't done the math on the rest of it yet, and I'm one of these people who thinks that we should not go with a big gap, so in theory, I agree

to that, yeah. - So that means that our gap is \$5.25 million.

[02:27:08] So if you wanted, so that's our new starting point, if you all agree that 5.25 is the starting point. - So I think we need a motion at this point, unless there's further discussion on the items in the first column.

[02:27:24] - So the motion would be to accept the cuts that are in the first column with the exception of the cutting of student safety coaches. - Second. - Just a question of clarification.

[02:27:39] - Was that a motion? I'm sorry, I thought that was a motion. - No, no, you're right. - No, you're right. - Emotion, second, discussion. - Yeah, sure, yeah. So I would just say that is not saying we're insisting on student safety coaches, but that is something held out for further discussion.

[02:27:54] Correct. I apologize, Chair, point of order. Can you please repeat what you just said into the microphone? I did not pick that up. I just made the point that removing item four for fewer safety coach positions would be for further discussion, not a determination that that was something we would necessarily end up supporting okay accurate i think and our second was miss billman miss billman got it thank

[02:28:28] you all those so we have a motion and a second okay one question we're removing item four and what else that's it that's it okay all right all right for further discussion i believe we need to do a roll call on this okay miss lee yes miss billman yes mr page yes dr berlin yes miss osborne Yes.

[02:28:59] Ms. Pryor? Yes. Chair Acuff? Yes. So moved. All right, so you've increased the gap. So now the second piece is there are additional proposed reductions.

[02:29:18] Again, this is one option that's in the second column. The other option now to consider is what's on this slide. And then I would also like to clarify that while we did a formal roll call, a budget is not adopted until May 8th.

[02:29:35] - Yes, correct. - Yes, correct. - So now we're discussing, starting with a \$5.25 million gap, what additional proposed reductions would you like to approve or not approve, or what changes would you make according to this, or something else?

[02:29:50] - I would like to take time to think about these ones, because we've been thinking for weeks on these other ones. - Yeah, I would also like to add, in discussions with community members and specifically with Board of Supervisors, something that they have reiterated is our spending on our small schools and more spending in those smaller schools.

[02:30:19] And so what if we looked at the FTE positions of like sharing like an SEL or something like that across schools where it may make further reductions, And even though it may not be a lot of money, it may be a good thing to bring to the board.

[02:30:37] It may be a good olive branch, I guess, that shows that we're taking into account some of the things that they worry about may help with our bigger funding asks. So in this scenario, we did propose a reduction of six FTEs of the SEL coaches, and this might require the sharing of SELs.

[02:30:58] Are there other positions for the smaller schools that we might be able to consider for that? We will take that back and talk amongst ourselves. Great. Thank you. I know we're on a tight timeline.

[02:31:24] Is there any way that we could get that information before the board meeting? Just because if we get it in the moment, like by Tuesday maybe? Close of business Tuesday? I know it's like we're asking. Yep, absolutely. Probably we'll do a debrief on this tomorrow.

[02:31:42] I would just say there are other options, which is what this slide attempts to illustrate. Yeah. So in order -- I mean, if we find a handful of FTEs that could be shared, it's similar to this kind of exercise.

[02:31:58] And this is a strategy that you could adopt and tweak it throughout the process. It doesn't have to be the way it's written now. And this was not included in that chart before. This is included. It is. It is. These are included. Number nine.

[02:32:13] So those are just examples of number nine. I got you. Okay. Thank you.

[02:32:31] understanding that reducing the instructional coaches to five was at one point considered versus reducing it to 10 and having the instructional coaches for new teachers none of these are so that would be another million dollars is that correct are we having fun yet pardon asked if we

[02:33:09] were having fun yet no no no definitely not um well I would put an asterisk on number six uh I hate to reduce the mental health SEL coaches, but that seems reasonable. Number eight, special ed to KTAC, other school-based FTE, center two planning, review of the classification

[02:33:38] review cycle. I'd like to advocate for the furniture replacement to defer that. That's 0.6 million right there. I feel like I complain about that every year. I'm finally getting my wish. And it seems like the bright stars thing is already in the works. Is it true?

[02:34:10] On the technology replacement, it says partial deferral. What does that mean? And what would be a full deferral? I believe the full deferral would be \$2.6 million. This funds all devices for students and staff. That's the primary driver. So it's on a regular replacement and upgrade cycle.

[02:34:38] but not necessary, maybe. Well, the deferral, what, would be for one year not adding new devices or upgrades? Dr. Diggs is here if you want to correct me. I see, I just saw her.

[02:34:55] I would believe the department would take some time to determine exactly how the reduction would take place. So this is a goal that they think they can be through. OK, Dr. Diggs.

[02:35:11] Christine Diggs, chief technology officer. have a planned replacement cycle for all kinds of devices that are in our schools laptops desktops and specialty labs ipads for students the ipads are on a four-year replacement cycle we deferred them last year in the budget in our budget conversations with the feedback from our staff this summer or this school year teachers were starting to feel the effects of those not having been replaced we made the decision to defer it because our school-based techs were not having

[02:35:50] a lot of repairs however mid-year this year they started to feel the effect that results in frustration in the classroom we buy not we buy average laptops so you can't really add ram to them make them faster so if you defer laptops to the five-year because they're on a four-year rotation that will impact the experience of using the device um desktops we have desktops in our specialty labs

[02:36:25] you can add ram to those they're more beefy machines so in the 400 000 reduction that is one of our strategies to minimize the impact for the user experience so i'm happy to take any more specific questions about it i think the other point on this is it would be a true deferral like it's almost at one time you can't not replace the laptop furniture is a little bit different yeah it just kicks it down the road which is actually um we had to find a strategy to

[02:37:00] be able to buy the ipads for next year so it just kicks it down the road yeah that's fun that's a like it's not really a cut how do you bet yeah and the frustration time on teachers and kids is yes and there's a heavy reliance on digital resources yeah any other questions for christine thanks thank you miss kumuzano can you put the list of where the acts must fall

[02:37:38] and maya could you please send us this as a spreadsheet yes refresh my memory we have school safety coaches at all the middle and high schools correct and so what we're proposing is reducing

[02:38:18] those at the high schools where to reducing all three high schools yeah and adding two sros okay in what you the current scenario you're maintaining all student safety coaches so you're maintaining the three at the high schools in the scenario that was approved yeah it was i was just it wasn't

[02:38:53] exactly it was moved out to consider yes yeah you're right not immediate like that yeah it was not immediately it may have to be but um is there any other data or information that anyone on the school board needs to have to make the decision so the current situation still includes paying for sros right so that's another right right you haven't talked about any of the additions yet

[02:39:30] right i didn't hear what you said miss lee we haven't talked about any of the additions yet any of the additions i mean we're only talking about what we're cutting but not what we're adding and i think some of those could be swapped out those two by twos are sounding a lot more attractive now when you when you send us that spreadsheet would you do the reductions and then additions like through that in that excel so it can dr acuff would you like the two by two

[02:40:06] scheduled for next week yes i i didn't hear you miss thompson do you want the two-by-two schedule yes for thursday yeah and i think they have to be before thursday oh absolutely yeah for the two I do thank you for all this really hard work thank you everybody none of us want to be doing

[02:40:41] this none of us want to be doing this and I for one am quite concerned about continued LCI creep we could be facing this again next year and pardon this is year two they're going to give us a new number two years yeah we could be facing it again reach out to your reps yes um dr haas do you have anything to add well as i said at the beginning of the meeting first of all i really appreciate

[02:41:19] everything that all the staff have done and you're here extra late on on a work night and i just want to thank all of you i know for the for the time that they've been here in front of the board probably for every half an hour they've been here tonight they've put in half a day i don't think i'm exaggerating uh getting ready and preparing all this information so i know i speak on behalf of the board and just how much we appreciate that the other thing i want to say is that uh i've kind of been on the edge of my seat just listening to the comments from board members

[02:41:53] and because of the thoughtfulness and knowing kind of feeling your um the anxiety that you have about the situation we're in and it's and i think it's bringing out the best in all of you and you know of course we always know it's there but rather than um lowering the level of our discourse around scarce resources i think it's heightening all the bringing to bear all the knowledge that you have the experience and your experience uh as community members before being on the board we will get

[02:42:33] there it is inevitable to have a funding request and having been in these scenarios before it's as I said you're gonna have challenges you'll make decisions on the resources that we're gonna have for the coming school year once the decision is made then the next step for us is to start making it work and make

it happen and our assurance to you is that wherever you land in the decision-making process that you have, we're going to maintain that mission. We're going to keep the

[02:43:08] mission in the forefront. We're going to make it happen. We are succeeding in the work that we're doing, and we're going to continue that success for our kids. And there will always be brighter days ahead. Even if the LCI sits flat or increases a little, the tough calls that you're making right now around making cuts are going to give us a new baseline. So we keep getting closer to accurate.

[02:43:33] it's like watching the enrollment every time your projections are a little better you get closer to it it doesn't it means less scenarios like this where you're presented with a big gap last year we took a 13 million dollar gap to the board of supervisors 13 million compared to where we are right now it's because of a lot of the cuts that we made last year the baseline came down so it's it's bringing it down again you're taking measured steps you're not crippling you're not going to to cripple the school system and as long as we really emphasize that core the teachers

[02:44:11] and the work at the school level then then we'll be okay moving forward so thank you for asking me for to share but um i really respect and appreciate your support thank you dr haas is there any other school board or division business are we good i mean we're not good. I mean, I thank everybody for the input on this because this is complicated and I think often the public doesn't believe that we take this job as

[02:44:50] seriously as we do. I'm hopeful that our final budget will protect what is already too small a salary increase for our staff, but which is all we can afford and also protect our students I mean that's our job is how can we create a learning environment that all of our kids can thrive in so with that see you soon this meeting is adjourned



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