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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, March 13, 2025

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[00:00:03] Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the March 13th, 2025 school board meeting, which is now in session. Before we get going, let us do a roll call of people up on the dais.

[00:00:20] Good evening, everyone. Patrick McLaughlin, assistant superintendent. Margaret Lee, Western Albemarle High School. Judy Lee, Ravana District. Allison Spillman, at-large representative. Graham Page, Miller District. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District.

[00:00:35] Rebecca Berlin Whitehall District. Ellen Osborne Scottsville District. Leslie Pryorio District. Matthew Hawes Superintendent. Josiah Black School Division Counsel. Erin Stone Assistant School Division Counsel. Christine Thompson Clerk of the Board. With that, do we have a motion coming out of closed meeting? Yes. I believe we have three, Chair. We have three. We have to certify that. Certify the closed meeting. I don't have the certified one.

[00:01:11] I move that we certify by recorded vote that we only discussed issues that were named before the closed meeting, in closed meeting.

[00:01:27] Second. Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Graham. Ms. Thompson, can you call the roll? Ms. Osborne? Yes. Ms. Pryor? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Ms. Lee?

[00:01:43] Yes. Dr. Berlin? Yes. Mr. Page? Yes. Sherry Coe? Yes. Yes. Motion passes. Do we have any additional motions coming out of the closed meeting? Yes. I move that we approve the recommended

personnel action. Do we have a second?

[00:02:00] Second. Moved by Ms. Osborne, seconded by Ms. Lee. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Motion passes. Do we have another motion? I do, Chair. I move that the school board appoint Lindsey Snoddy to the -- as the at-large representative to the Long Range Planning Committee.

[00:02:20] Do we have a second? Second. Moved by Ms. Spillman, seconded by Ms. Lee. All those in favor of appointing Lindsay Snoddy to the Long Range Planning Advisory Committee? Say yes. Aye. Opposed? Appointments made. Do we have yet another? And we have yet one more. I move that we appoint Christy Isaiah as principal for Woodbrook Elementary. Second. Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Page. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Congratulations, Ms. Isaiah.

[00:02:58] Next item is standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Now we'll pause for a moment of silence with special thoughts to the Jack Jewett community and the loss of a student there.

[00:03:32] I apologize. I called it the school by the old name of Jack Jewett. It's Journey Middle School, but the sentiment is the same. Do we have a motion to approve tonight's agenda?

[00:04:12] I move we approve the agenda. Second. Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Allison. Ms. Spillman, not Ms. Allison. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Motion passes. Next item is spotlight on education. And who is introducing that? Good evening, Board and leadership. Thanks for having us here tonight. I'm Josh Walton,

[00:04:51] principal at Walton Middle School and I am very privileged tonight to present two groups tonight for spotlight on education and I just want to say that when as a leader really my goal is to just implement good ideas and so we have wonderful ideas coming from our teachers and several years ago so the first one I'm talking about is National History Day several years ago Alex Groff here behind me our social studies department chair said i'm going to do national history day with all of our seventh graders and i said that sounds great what is that and he explained the national

[00:05:29] competition where we spotlight history students do research and then they go to competition and present their ideas and there's a number of different competitions which you'll hear about that they can enter so we implemented that and then alex being ambitious came back and said let's do it school wide so we were able to do that last year and we had great success with it and lots of great excitement and the coolest thing is just cross-curricular and cross-grade level projects that come out of it and this year we were able to do that again and again had great success and just went to uh regionals and i believe we have 16 going to state so 16 students

[00:06:05] who are going to the state competition so i'm going to let alex talk more about it because he is the brains behind this operation. Good evening and thank you for having us out this evening. National History Day is a countrywide organization that helps promote students and their discoveries in history. The most wonderful thing about this program is that it only prescribes a theme. So it's been turning points in history, new frontiers in history, and this year it's been rights and responsibilities in history. And students start this process early on the

[00:06:42] a year with the Virginia Museum of History and Culture coming out to our school and teaching students about the theme and how to select a topic. And then kids get to choose. And these themes can range from histories that are related to their family to the histories they learn and hit in our classrooms. And they take those and they dive deep into secondary sources and primary sources. And this year we also

got to work with our language arts department to enhance those skills even more. All 340-ish students at Walt Middle School completed a project, and then we

[00:07:16] hosted a night of history where students were selected by judges from the University of Virginia, Montpelier, Monticello, and other community members to be the top students in our school. We took 39 of those students to our district competition, where they competed with probably five or six counties around us. And 16 of those 39 children will move on to the state competition here in April in Richmond. And I look forward to seeing them compete. We have many students, a couple students with us tonight. Some of them did wonderful topics that were very personal to

[00:07:54] them. And they also, some of them placed at our competition. But I think I will hand that over to them. And I hope that you guys get to ask them a couple of questions. So come on up, guys. Just come up and just remember that you can move the mic to suit your height.

[00:08:13] Jack, will you come up first? Take one for the team. It's the tallest one. Start tall and go down. Yeah. We'd love to hear what you, what was your topic and what did you do? Introduce yourself and Yeah, my topic was the Cuban Missile Crisis.

[00:08:32] My name is Jack Kroll, and I did the Cuban Missile Crisis with my partner, Cameron Mills. How did you land on that topic? My grandpa, who is David Kroll, he was a Naval officer during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

[00:08:54] So I wanted to interview him for that. So that's why I chose the Cuban Missile Crisis. What was the most interesting thing you learned? Definitely sorry that he told me was that the Navy went into Cuba just kind of just to see if humans would shoot them and they apparently they placed a missile underneath the ship that my grandpa was on so it's a little little scary but yeah that was probably the

[00:09:33] most interesting I'm glad he survived so it's personal history plus history history yes definitely thank you hi I'm Lila Thede and I chose to do the topic of Roe v Wade very timely what was the most interesting thing you learned in that um I I didn't have to get time to include this in my project but I did learn that the like person who was like the face of Roe V Wade she actually was

[00:10:11] married to a woman which I just found really empowering yeah you know so is this the first year that you competed in the history competition no I also competed last year in seventh grade with a partner who's up next hi I'm Keegan McElroy and I'm Cora Theed our topic was waves women accepted volunteer emergency service it was a program for women during World War two

[00:10:50] for the Navy and what did they do so um the Navy is running out of men to serve during this time period so and women wanted to be able to have the opportunity to serve their country so the leaders of the Navy got together and created a program for one to like do all the same jobs that men would do along with more clerical positions in the military what was the best piece of of advice you got from either your family or your friends or your teachers or counselors as you guys

[00:11:22] got ready for this competition honestly we got a lot of really good advice but sorry this is hard I'd say probably honestly we were thinking of doing a different topic we were really going to do just Mildred McAfee who is the first waves lieutenant but I think we got encouragement from some of our teachers and decided ourselves that we were actually gonna do waves in general and I think that was honestly the best piece of advice we

[00:11:58] could have got because it led to us making all that we did were you able to interview any waves in this area that it served unfortunately no because the program was a long time ago it started back in 1942 so we were not able to find anybody for that aspect of our project? Sounds like a great project. One more student wants to, do you want to share? So we have another recognition tonight as well. So behind me

[00:12:34] is Lily Kenny and her teacher Jennifer Peart. And so Lily is recently was the state winner of the Patriots pen essay contest sponsored by the VFW and she has gone on to compete at the national level and scored 17th out of 53 entries. So wonderful job by Lily. And I'm going to let Ms. Peart talk a little bit about the Patriots pen because that's another tradition that started at Walton about seven years ago. So I'm going to let her talk.

[00:13:06] All right, great. Thank you so much. So thank you so much for having us here tonight. And again, my name is Jennifer Peart, and I am representing the eighth grade team at Walton Middle School. So I'm also speaking on behalf of my colleague Jen Graham and we have participated in the Patriots pen essay contest for seven years. I'm proud to say that we even participated during online learning through there and the Patriots pen essay contest is sponsored by the VFW which is the Veterans Foreign Affairs and they hold this contest at the high school level and also at the

[00:13:42] middle school level. So as I said, we've participated for seven years and each of those seven years we've had a winner come from Walton Middle School at the district level and then we've had several winners at the region at the regional level and we've had two winners at the state level to go on to represent Walton Middle School but Albemarle County Public Schools as a whole at the national level and we are so proud of Lily Kenny this year and to reiterate again, she placed 17th at the national level. There is quite a hefty cash prize that goes with the essay, which I'm really encouraging this very talented writer to save and hopefully

[00:14:22] help be a nest egg for some further education for her down the road. But we're so proud of her, and without further ado, Lily Kenny. We're not scary. Hi, I'm Lily Kenny. What was your essay about it was about like my voice and like the democracy process oh wait could y'all hear me or no how long was the essay how many words did you have to have to write those are kind of topics

[00:15:01] that are hard to write about yeah it was 400 nice what was it like going to the national competition it was like very exciting and like i was like nervous too but i was like really excited though really good experience yeah but sounds like you're getting good support at Bolton congratulations yeah Josh and everybody else I think you're doing something right out there at Walton Middle but we'd left there are a lot of things that are not that much fun about being on the school board and one of them is a budget that we're doing but it's always the high point when we have

[00:15:40] students come and teachers come and principals come and talk about the work that they do sort of makes it real for us rather than coming through a budget but we'd love to shake your hand if you are willing before you do quite often we don't hear about some of the really good things that's happening at Walton so I would really appreciate maybe that being publicized more you know that you've had all of that good success over the years and looking forward to more

[00:16:55] Thank you so much. Next item after this inspirational presentation, the next item is school board superintendent business.

[00:17:15] We're okay there, anybody? Next item then is public comment and Dr. Berlin will be managing public comment tonight. Just give us a second while we triple check that we don't have more than 14 people signed

[00:17:33] up we welcome public input at our school board meetings to sign up to speak during the public comment period you can do so in several ways online sign up is available from 9 a.m on the monday of the meeting week until 2 p.m on the meeting day by phone call the school board clerk's office to sign up until 2 p.m on the meeting day or in person sign up at the meet sign up at the

[00:18:13] meeting is available from 6 p.m until the public comment period for in-person meetings only please Please note that the public comment is not received at special board meetings unless specified on the agenda. Because we have less than 14 people today, each speaker will have three minutes to speak.

[00:18:31] I'm just gonna skip through. Speakers should state their name, address, or voting district, address comments to the school board, limit comments to the school board governance or school division operations, and provide written statements and supporting materials to the clerk.

[00:18:48] The school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time. Speakers are asked to wrap up their comments by the end of the three minute mark. To maintain respect, please refrain from clapping or other audible signs of support. You may raise your hand instead. Debate with the school board is not allowed.

[00:19:04] The projection system is for staff presentations only. The first three speakers we have today are Laura Harrison, Michelle Benedict, and Amanda Moxham.

[00:19:23] Just when you start, please state your name and the magisterial district that you're from. - Laura Harrison, Ryo District. I urge you not to approve the budget items that expand the SRO program, increase student surveillance, and would eliminate safety coach positions.

[00:19:43] One of your stated budget development goals is data-driven decisions. You have no data on the impact of the SRO program. Therefore, you cannot make a data-driven decision. Dr. Haas has refused to provide any data or information on how the data would be collected despite repeated requests by parents, community members, and organizations.

[00:20:06] The old survey from last year cited in the budget proposal says 14.7% of students feel unsafe with SROs in the building. Since your surveys are historically over-representative of white respondents, we can reasonably hypothesize that this number is actually higher.

[00:20:24] Regardless, a choice to continue the SRO program is a choice to ignore the needs of the 14.7% of students who do not feel safe. Funny, because another budget goal, you state, is affirming and empowering communities, a welcoming, inclusive environment where all voices are valued, well-being is supported, and everyone feels safe and engaged.

[00:20:51] Everyone except that 14.7%, huh? Since it is well-documented that students of color disproportionately targeted by law enforcement in schools, your SRO program is also directly in conflict with your anti-racism policy. The superintendent's statement in response to immigration enforcement states, "We will do everything we can to ensure that public schools and associated spaces remain safe and secure for students and families." But Governor Yunkin issued an executive order that directs local law enforcement agencies to collaborate with

[00:21:30] ICE. SRO presence at our schools is directly in conflict with the superintendent's statement and will put many immigrant students at risk. The fascism that is rising at an alarming rate in this nation relies on armed agents of the state to enforce and carry out its will. You all have a chance here to be someone who put a roadblock in the way of fascism at a time we need it most keep the student safety coaches put a halt to the sro program include your community in these extremely important decisions and be a force against the rising

[00:22:10] fascism that will come for all of us if we don't resist in every way we can thank you very much michelle benedict good evening i live in the samuel miller district and i'll be talking about the mental health support specialists. Good evening, Chair Acuff, Superintendent Haas,

[00:22:49] members of the school board. My name is Michelle Benedict, and I'm here tonight as a parent of an ACPS graduate, a current Western Albemarle 12th grader, and as a science teacher and step coordinator at Albemarle High School. I deeply value our school system and support it provides, which is why I'm compelled to share my concerns about the proposed reduction in mental health support specialist positions specifically at AHS from three just to one next year. As a parent I take comfort in knowing that if my child needs emotional support during the school day she has

[00:23:26] access to her counselor or a mental health support specialist if her counselor is unavailable. Her her ability to thrive in the classroom depends on having that support system in place. As a teacher firsthand see how essential these specialists are. I rely on our counseling and mental health support staff to ensure my students have a safe space to go when they need help, which directly impacts my classroom environment and my ability to teach effectively. Counselors are already stretched thin and mental health support specialists provide a critical safety net for students who are

[00:24:05] struggling. Before I continue, I invite you to take a couple deep breaths and feel your feet on the floor. The mental health support specialists in our school are like the breaths we just took. Though we may not always see their work, it is vital. They provide the foundation for students to process emotions, navigate crisis, and develop coping skills. From anger management to suicidal ideation, from anxiety to depression, these specialists address challenges that if

[00:24:43] unsupported, sorry, if left unsupported can significantly impact the students ability to learn and succeed. In closing, I want to thank you for your dedication to ACPS and your commitment to public education. I urge you to maintain all three mental health support specialist positions at Albemarle High School to serve our diverse student body. As you make your decision, I encourage you to think about the students you're supporting. Just as each breath sustains life, these specialists sustain the well-being of our students. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[00:25:19] Amanda Moxham. Good evening. My name is Amanda Moxham. I'm with the Rio District. I also have two children who have graduated from the Albemarle County school system as well as one in middle school right now. And my daughter would like for me to share a little shout out, really in alignment with this tonight, which is that at Lakeside Middle School, Mr. Logan is the school safety officer there and a really fabulous human who she is just really found to have a great relationship with. And then also Mr. Guy, who is her guidance counselor and the way that they do it at Lakeside is she's

[00:25:57] had the same guidance counselor since sixth grade so she's able to build that relationship and it has actually helped us hugely over the last couple of years so with that I want to share that with regard to SROs I fully understand that there's a lot of people that feel that having SROs in our school system will

somehow protect us and the bottom line is that there is zero data to prove that if you look at national data it is absolutely not something that is supported the presence of SROs in schools it's actually a direct contributor to the school to prison pipeline and also disproportionately harms students of color as well as disabled students and then when we look

[00:26:34] at the intersectionality of the data for disabled students that are also students of color the numbers are horrifying with that SROs criminalize minor misbehavior they turn school discipline into legal consequences so when a child is in trouble for something at school it should stay at school right we shouldn't have children I noticed in the report that was shared in the budget information that was added I think within the last couple of days some of the main issues that the SROs are seeing are things like vaping right things like misbehavior but those are not things that I want my child to be having

[00:27:12] interactions with the police over in addition to that black students are at 3.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students and the Schools with SROs actually see higher rates of student arrests, even for non-violent infractions.

[00:27:28] For students with disabilities, the impact is actually even worse. 80% of students restrained in schools have disabilities, despite being only 12% of the student population. These students are also twice as likely to be arrested for behaviors related to their disabilities.

[00:27:45] And if they're suspended, their chances of dropping out actually doubles. And we know that students who drop out are actually 63% more likely to end up incarcerated. I think that's a terrible statistic to be able to be aligning ourselves to. So this is not safety.

[00:28:00] It is not at all. It is systemic harm that we're continuing to perpetuate by having armed police in our school systems. There are proven alternatives. I think you're going to hear, as you already have from many of the teachers, that are actually on the front lines doing this work. And I want to trust their intuition.

[00:28:18] You know, having school counselors, having mental health support is literally the only way we're going to help this next generation be able to handle the social and emotional challenges that they're facing. So with that, I just hope that we will not continue to expand policing as other speakers have said.

[00:28:33] We're literally just participating in continuing fascism, and it's not okay, and we need to take a stand. Thank you. Thank you very much. The next three speakers we have are Larissa Golenev. And if I ever misspeak your name, please correct me when you used to come up.

[00:28:52] Jennifer Middlesworth and Susan Tracy. Hello, it's Golovinev, but that's okay. Most people get it wrong. I'm Larissa Golovinev. I live in the Jewett District, and I am a school counselor at Albemarle High School.

[00:29:10] And I'm speaking on behalf of the school counseling department. The school counseling department at Albemarle High School is asking you to reconsider cutting two of our mental health support specialists from our building. Albemarle High School comprises 1,980 students, representing 45% of the total number of high school students in the county. Of those 1,980 students, 1 in 45 are experiencing homelessness.

[00:29:35] We also have the most diverse student body. In the 23-24 school year, there were over 90 suicide assessments conducted, and the 24-25 school year has over 60 assessments performed so far. There are at

least 228 students who have been identified as needing Tier 3 mental health support. The role of a school counselor is to provide tier one and tier two supports while making referrals for tier three supports. The greatest resource that we have at our disposal to make tier three support referrals for support is our mental health support specialist. As school counselors' duties increase while

[00:30:11] our contractual time remains the same, we are unable to meet the increasing tier three mental health needs of our student population and it is unethical to ask us to do so. The mental health support specialist team supports us in our endeavors to provide direct services equitably to all students and prevent student issues from failing to be addressed. Dr. Haas said in his most recent weekly check-in on March 12th, we are in the midst of a national mental health crisis, and for our teens, navigating their mental health can be a challenge.

[00:30:41] According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, untreated or inadequately treated mental illness can lead to high rates of school dropout, unemployment, substance use, arrest, incarceration, and early death. In fact, suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 through 34. School-based and schooling mental health services reduce barriers to youth and families from getting, sorry, reduce barriers to youth and families getting needed treatments and supports, especially for communities of color and other underserved communities. We believe that removing 67% of the support from our building will be detrimental to students' well-being and safety.

[00:31:21] Thank you for taking the time to consider how this decision will impact Albemarle High School, and we are available to discuss it further as we work together to support the needs of our students. Thank you. Thank you very much. Jennifer Middlesworth. Hi, I'm Jennifer Middlesworth.

[00:31:51] I'm the ISAEP teacher for Albemarle County, and we also serve Charlottesville City students. Current ISAEP plans give students the opportunity to participate in their school's graduation ceremony. Despite this, just yesterday, the division decided to hold a separate ceremony in this building a week later on June 4th.

[00:32:12] This isolated ceremony dishonors current signed educational plans and erodes trust between staff, student, families, and community partners. In the past two years, ISAEP students could walk at graduation with a notation of diploma type in the program.

[00:32:29] Having received communication from Monticello that ISAEP students do not merit inclusion at their graduation, I trusted leadership on all levels to honor the signed documents for this year and to solicit input from stakeholders for future plans.

[00:32:45] They did not. Moreover, there was no prior indication that Albemarle or Western wanted to exclude ISAEP students and their counselors have been discussing graduation plans with families. Fortunately, Western has received an exception their students to walk at graduation this year but what about the other students what about the future years who will be harmed by including isaep students at graduation no one who will be harmed by excluding them the students who receive a demoralizing message of inadequacy how is a

[00:33:23] diploma accepted by the military colleges and employers deemed unmeritorious the county's 18 isaep students currently include nine students with iep's one student with a 504 and three students with medical homebound dishonoring these students plans may or may not be legal but is legality the only

issue the extraordinarily last-minute efforts to concoct a new ceremony for the purpose of excluding isaep students from walking at graduation is the antithesis of a school division that

[00:34:00] respects and champions the diversity of life experiences. I don't know if this is legal but it is certainly unjust. Thank you very much. Susan Tracy. I'm here today to address an unfair and

[00:34:37] disappointing decision made to not allow students in ISAEP program to graduate with their high school class. Instead the school is proposing a separate smaller ceremony claiming these students have not earned the right to walk in the official graduation.

[00:34:54] Here is a signed agreement approved by the school administrator, the school counselor, and the ISAEP program coordinator confirming that these students were told they would be included in the main ceremony. This agreement was made in good faith and now two months before graduation it is being disregarded.

[00:35:15] My daughter June Tracy is in the ISAEP program and is completing her GED while on homebound through Albemarle High School. This program provided her the flexibility she needed to recover from significant health challenges, including POTS and autonomic nervous system dysfunction, which caused chronic migraines, severe anxiety, depression, extreme exhaustion, and even loss of consciousness upon standing.

[00:35:42] June did not choose to be sick. She did not choose to need an alternative path to education. Her medical condition made it impossible for her to attend school in a traditional way, she remained determined to complete her education despite these obstacles like any student she worked hard persevered and met the expectations set for her she and every other student in this program deserves the recognition they were promised denying them the right to walk with their class is not just unfair it

[00:36:18] is disheartening what message does this send that students who face adversity illness or personal challenges don't deserve to be celebrated the same way as their peers that their achievements are somehow less valuable this decision is not only unjust but also hurtful plans have already been made to celebrate this accomplishment June has been looking forward to this moment and family members including her great-aunt in Texas have made travel arrangements to fly to be here for her graduation on May 28th I asked the administration to reconsider and honor the commitment that was made these students have worked hard They have met the standards.

[00:36:56] They have earned their place on the stage. Let's stand by them, not separate them. Let's celebrate their achievements, not diminish them. Thank you. Thank you very much. The next three speakers are Jim Dillenbach, Renee Branson, and Emily Mathon.

[00:37:16] Good evening, Chair Acuff, other members of the board, Dr. Haas.

[00:37:34] My name is Jim Dillenbach. I'm a resident of the Rio district. I want to share some of the thoughts that I've gleaned from my conversations with a number of teachers at schools in the rio area over the last several months number one an interesting observation that katrina caulson former rio member of this board has pulled her son out of acps and has sent him to stab what kind of statement does the does that send to the other residents of our county i'd be interested to know why the former board chair felt the need for this decision number

[00:38:13] Number two, the quarterly or mid-year assessments are not accurately measuring the right data and there appears to be no significant follow-up. As you'll see in a matter of minutes, 97% of 8th graders need assistance or are at risk in math.

[00:38:34] Number three, bad behavior at the middle school and high school level is a huge problem. By and large, there are no standards or meaningful consequences. Many teachers don't feel supported or empowered to correct behavior.

[00:38:51] Number four, grading policies, especially at the high school level, are failing the students, no pun intended, and creating extra work for the teachers. Number five, teachers are expected to do more work outside of contract hours. One middle school teacher told me recently that he had 27 hours of unpaid reading training to complete.

[00:39:17] number six good experienced teachers are leaving at acps for higher paying jobs in the city which has proposed a five and a half percent pay raise compared to the three percent pay raise here in the county or in the private sector where they're compensated fairly i'm an example of such a person finally on a positive note i hear that mr barfield in the new cell phone policy at albemarle high school where i used to teach and coach has been great and i'm excited to hear that that Ms. Isaiah will be back as principal

[00:39:56] at Woodbrook Elementary School next year. I think she's done a fantastic job. I hope that there are enough teachers who love their profession and given the right resources and support will help educate all kids. Please take the time to listen to them and empower them to help our 14,000 students learn and succeed.

[00:40:17] Thank you. - Thank you very much. Renee Branson.

[00:40:32] - Good evening. My name is Renee Branson. I'm a mother of three sons who have gone through the public schools here in the Ryot district. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of students in the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan program.

[00:40:49] Students who, after completing their program and earning a graduate equivalent diploma, will no longer be allowed to walk at graduation. This decision was made by school officials without the consultation or consideration of the ISAEP parents or professionals who dedicate their lives to students who otherwise fall through the cracks.

[00:41:09] This decision, going into effect this year, impacts students who have already made plans, invited family, and have planned on ordering caps and gowns. These are students who turn to ISAEP because life through them challenges a serious illness, family hardship, or personal circumstances that make the traditional school setting unworkable.

[00:41:32] My son is one of those. After a life-altering mental health diagnosis, regular school became a frustrating and ultimately failing endeavor. this program gives him a path forward one that allows him to complete his education with dignity and sets him on his career path but dignity is at risk when we start drawing lines between who gets to be seen and celebrated and who does not there are two words in these acronyms that i have mentioned that matter the a in i a i s a e p stands for alternative not less than but another way

[00:42:13] and the e in the ged stands for equivalency meaning equal in value worth and function so let me ask if these students are equal in value and in worth who and why deny them of that same recognition in response to recent federal threats to cut funding because of our school's commitment to diversity equity and inclusion superintendent haas reaffirmed our values of equity working together to end predictive value of race class gender and special capabilities

[00:42:50] at a time when policies nationwide marginalized students and limit equity this decision contradicts the superintendent's message and needlessly dictates who belongs and who doesn't I urge you to reconsider, let these students walk, they have earned it.

[00:43:11] Thank you. Thank you so much. Emily Mathon. Hi there.

[00:43:27] My name is Emily Mathon and I am in the Rio district and I have a child at Albemarle High School and at Burleigh Middle School. I echo the concerns that many fellow parents and community members have brought up either here or through email regarding the SROs to two additional high schools.

[00:43:46] I stand in support of the anti-racism policy created by you all and by the staff of Albemarle County Public Schools, and your decision about the budget offers the opportunity to take action in alignment with this policy.

[00:44:03] One word that has been used to describe SROs is that it's a unique role. Yes, the role is unique in that these law enforcement officers have a power that no other school staff member has to arrest a child and begin that young person's journey in the juvenile justice system on the other hand the sro is also expected to quote build relationships with students and provide quote mental health support offering that type of support while holding the power of law enforcement is incredibly dangerous for our kids please leave the relationship building and mental health support to the educators and counselors that we trust not law enforcement

[00:44:40] officers. Our students need mental health and social support now more than ever. I'm also concerned about the recent Governor Youngkin's support for a wider range of law enforcement to assist in deportation of Virginians who are immigrants. I do not want to invite that kind of harm into our schools by having additional SROs in schools. Overall, I see and feel that there's a lot of pushback and concern within the community about the idea of adding more SROs.

[00:45:09] One SRO was added to Albemarle High School, was added to the budget without enough public awareness or discussion. I urge you as a school board to reject adding SROs to the budget and invest in safety coaches and mental health support who provide the eyes, ears, and hearts for students and safety without the risk of harm.

[00:45:29] Thank you. Thank you very much. We have three additional speakers tonight. Jan Ortuno, Aubrey Israel Hampton, and Hilary Kertner.

[00:45:51] Good evening. My name is Jen Artunio and I'm a voting member of the Rio District with two daughters that attend Albemarle High School. I disagree with the decision to add into the budget two additional SROs and to remove three valuable safety coach positions, one of whom spoke so eloquently at the last public comment, describing the impact that they have that's so important on the lives of our students.

[00:46:21] There's a misconception in this community that students at Albemarle are afraid to walk the hall to use the bathroom, are at risk of getting jumped on a regular basis or worse, and that the addition of SROs would prevent all of this. It's simply not true and there's no data to back it up.

[00:46:38] I have been told several times by staff that SROs are not in place to prevent school conflict or to intervene in school fights. I'm extremely concerned that this misconception has led to fear mongering and the over sensationalization of the role of the SRO at our schools.

[00:46:57] I understand that you have or plan to purchase weapons detection systems to put in place at high schools and that it is not coming out of the budget because they are or will be purchased with grant money. However, where in the budget is the money to pay the staff to train and to run these detection systems?

[00:47:17] What role does the SSO, or security assistant, play in the school? Does this position replace safety coaches? And where is more information on this? Will SSOs be carrying weapons in the school and have the authority to use them? Did the board approve the purchase of the weapons detection systems?

[00:47:36] I'm concerned these decisions are being made behind closed doors and not explained to the public in a better manner. I urge you to not approve the budget as is and to consider the effect that increasing SROs will have on our students of color as well as the impact these decisions have on sense of community and belonging for the student. I urge you to find a way to keep the safety coaches and consider expanding that program in ways that help the students with conflict resolution and mindfulness. I urge you to apply for more grants as a way to keep important programs that are facing

[00:48:10] budget cuts. A quote from Police Free Schools says, "Safety does not exist when And black and brown young people are forced to interact with a system of policing that views them as a threat and not as students.

[00:48:25] That includes armed and uniformed officers and weapons detection systems. I cannot happily send my children, who do not look like me, to a militarized building for school every day. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[00:48:44] Aubrey Israel Hampton. Good evening. My name is Aubrey Israel Hampton. I live in the Rio district. I'm going to read a statement to you tonight from a former ACPS alumni who could not be here tonight.

[00:49:07] I would like to express my deep concern about the proposed shift from trained school safety coaches to more school resource officers. This decision has serious implications for students' well-being, school culture, and racial equity.

[00:49:25] While we may not have local data from ACPS on the impact of SROs, national research is clear. The U.S. Government Accountability Office report released in September confirms that black students, particularly black girls, are disciplined more often and more harshly than their peers for the same behaviors. This isn't new information. It's part of a long documented trend in school discipline that has fueled the school to prison pipeline.

[00:49:55] Studies consistently show that when police are present in schools, arrests increase for adolescent behavior things that could and should be handled by trained school staff let's also be clear acps has an anti-racism policy expanding sros despite all the evidence of harm they cause to students of color

contradicts that policy we must prioritize mental health supports trained counselors and restorative justice programs over policing and make no mistake sros report to law

[00:50:32] enforcement agencies not acps as stated by the virginia department of criminal justice services quote an sro is a certified law enforcement officer employed by a local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to public elementary or secondary schools end quote with governor youngkin's recent executive order directing police to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement there is a real risk that sros will collaborate with ICE. This creates an environment of fear for immigrant students and their families, not one of

[00:51:08] safety. ACPS says it is committed to an inclusive and supportive environment, but increasing the number of SROs directly contradicts that commitment. This budget is a choice. It's a choice about how we define safety and who we believe deserves support. I urge you to say no to SROs and instead invest in solutions that uplift and protect all students. Thanks. Thank you very much. Our last

[00:51:39] speaker today is Hilary Kerner. Is Hilary Kerner here? One more time. Hilary Kerner, seeing that she's not in the audience, I'm going to conclude public comment for today. Thank you so much.

[00:52:13] And before we move on, Chair, I'd like to ask Dr. Haas a question. Dr. Haas, I am very concerned about the isaep decision both for this year as well as for future years and can you work with the cabinet to look into that decision and i'm going to resolve it right now okay because i already i apologize to the parents the families that came here to speak tonight and i'm sorry for

[00:52:46] the trauma and stress that this has caused you i was made aware of these decisions yesterday it's one school that was deciding not to have students March and graduation and I informed dr. Hayes this afternoon to let that school know that the students will be walking in graduation the student I couldn't agree more as a high school principal I always had all the students completing a program even the students who weren't finishing until summer where I wanted them to March and graduation

[00:53:21] because they only get one chance to do it the isaep program is designed for kids to complete secondary school and that's exactly what they're doing and it's the same thing with the ged it's the same thing with our iep diplomas those students deserve the opportunity to be recognized in their community for finishing and again i am very sorry i thought i had more time because graduation is not until june but i do want those of you who came tonight to leave knowing that it has been resolved and that all the students who are involved in that will be able to walk I'm sorry it ever came up thank you thank you very much dr. Haas

[00:53:59] and I also want to apologize thank you very much for for speaking about that for bringing it forward to us and again I apologize as we say school is for all children graduations for all children and all means all just thank you for thank you for raising it and I'm glad that we were able to resolve it tonight well with that public comment is over and we need to have a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda I move we approve tonight's consent agenda second

[00:54:33] motion move to accept tonight's consent agenda made by Miss Osborne seconded by Miss Spillman all those in favor aye opposed motion passes next item of business is Ms. Kumazawa and board approval of a funding request for FY26.

[00:54:55] Good evening. I'm Maya Kumazawa, Director of Budget and Planning. And this evening I will facilitate the school board's funding request approval. This is a calendar of where we are in the process.

On February 20th, Dr. Haas

[00:55:30] presented a draft funding request. Subsequently, we had two budget work sessions on February 27th and March 6th where we discuss the details of the draft funding request. Today you're scheduled to approve a school board funding request in preparation for a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Monday, March 17th so that they can have the information on the request so that they can make appropriate decisions. On March 19th they will set a maximum tax rate for advertisement and then throughout the month of April there will be continued discussions around

[00:56:07] the final budget that will be adopted in May that final budget does need to be balanced so there's a star on there and we've got a few weeks leading up to that as a review these are our projected school fund revenues that total 284.284 million dollars our local revenues reflect the proposed county executives budget that includes a tax rate increase a portion of that which is dedicated to acps so local revenues are increasing by 5.9 percent state revenues increasing by 4.2 percent

[00:56:46] federal revenues decreasing by 158 000 to reflect historical receipts and i just want to mention again that this school fund does not include most of our federal revenues which are received in and special revenue funds. So that's not included on this slide.

[00:57:06] This evening, I'll discuss a modified scenario of school fund expenditures that equal \$285 million. That \$285 million expenditure is broken out in these expense types. Overall, this scenario reflects a 5.7% increase over the FY25 adopted budget, or an increase of about \$15 million.

[00:57:32] This is the modified scenario that we've developed based on your feedback. This is a list of service reductions proposed in the modified scenario when you compare them against the FY25 adopted budget.

[00:57:48] So each column on here indicates the change between the modified scenario and the FY25 current year budget. The first column is the FY26 draft funding request. So these are a total of reductions of \$2.7 million that were presented as part of the draft funding request on February 20th.

[00:58:10] The second column shows the changes that will get you to the modified scenario that's being presented. So the changes include completely eliminating the furniture replacement program, which is a total of \$1.2 million.

[00:58:25] It also includes a deferral of the classification review cycle by one year, so that is a one-time savings only. Partial deferral of technology replacement of \$400,000, also a one-time savings that will need come back in future years. The reduction or freezing of central office and department-based positions. So in addition to what was already proposed, another amount is added to that for a total of about a one million dollar reduction budget to budget. Elimination of the foreign language and elementary school program. Elimination of the NDCC program. The restructuring of freshman

[00:59:04] seminar to freshman advisory. And then in this modified scenario, we would maintain the student safety coach positions at our secondary schools. The eight FTE were budgeted in the current year's budget, and this scenario would maintain the eight FTE in next year's budget. Reducing the instructional coach positions by 10 FTE. Yield savings of about \$1 million. And the reduction of other school-based positions is added and then finally the deferral of center to administrative positions by one year so that is also a one-time savings that will come back in

[00:59:40] future years so the total changes when compared to the draft funding request is an addition of 3.7 million dollars in reductions the total reductions when comparing the modified scenario to the 25 adopted budget is a reduction of 6.4 million dollars and there's a note here at the bottom that this scenario maintains the SEL / MHSS positions we have 30 budgeted in the current year and there will be no change to that in this scenario there are a few other technical changes in this scenario that are proposed a decrease in the transfer to

[01:00:20] bright stars this would be a savings in the school fund expenditures as the plan is the tentative plan is to move some services over to a new Head Start program that we're currently planning on that we are working on and then the second item is to eliminate special education K tech positions as those services would be provided by K tech so this is a savings of about \$500,000 that are proposed as technical changes and then in when we change transfers that go from the school fund to special revenue funds, we do have to change the budgets and the special

[01:00:58] revenue funds. So the items at the bottom are a reflection of the changes discussed in either service reductions and the technical changes. These are the learning for all proposals as presented in the draft funding request. These remain as is. This is new investment of 8.3 million dollars and there are no changes to this in the scenario. So this modified scenario results in a funding

[01:01:30] gap of about \$747,000. You can see, you've seen the same visual in several iterations. This is the most recent one, and it's just a 0.3% funding gap. So at this time, I will turn it back over to the school board. As a starting point, we have put three scenarios on here for you to discuss. The first one is the draft funding request as presented on February 20th. The second scenario is a balancing scenario where the proposed expenditures equal the proposed

[01:02:05] revenues and then the modified scenario includes those reductions that I had in detail on the previous slide okay so per Roberts rules I'm gonna make a motion so that we can just open up discussion for this so I move that the we approve a school board funding request of 284 thousand million six hundred ninety nine thousand one hundred forty in operating funds and twenty eight million four hundred thirty nine thousand eighty two in special revenue funds for fiscal year

[01:02:36] twenty six do we have a second second we have a motion we have a second do we have a discussion um I'm really happy that we were able in our two by twos to all agree on keeping our mental health supports I think that that is really important um i have a question though and i don't know why i didn't think of this before but how do

[01:03:09] eight positions equal 250 000 because i feel like each position is probably 60 70 000. um the reduction originally proposed was a reduction of three ftes so the 250 000 represented three of the eight not the full staff okay all right um so it would we are basically maintaining what we have now I got you okay thank you so I'm really happy that we came up with that in our sheet that I don't know is made public where we each talked about what

[01:03:47] we are willing to add and not add it's my opinion still stands as it does from last week's meeting I am strongly against our SROs I do not think we've had enough information in the Western feeder pattern I do not think that there has been enough community feedback I haven't been asked as a parent I asked my kids in high school they haven't been asked about it um i have read the data and i don't think it's convincing um and i think that it is something that we i don't feel comfortable making a decision to add to our budget when we're already over on something that is and i would urge

[01:04:23] my fellow board members to listen to all of the comments tonight and last week the hundreds of emails that we have gotten this week um i think it is not the right time to make this decision and i need that to um i need to say that but i i am not happy about that one part of it i have um two questions regarding the sros as well and i see mr bradley's here maybe he can help that but uh would the school division be willing to if we did this would the school division be willing to give us

[01:04:56] regular updates um i saw a report that we had that was embedded in the budget responses somewhere but if we could get regular updates on the activities of sros i think we would all feel better about it um so i want to know if that's possible i mean i i i don't know that that would make me feel better maybe for everyone else but if you saw a report of what they were doing and how many encounters they had because i have also read all the national reports about the school to prison pipeline and that's a thing i know that's a thing but i don't see a school to prison pipeline

[01:05:36] coming from acps excuse me i don't i don't i i'm sorry but i we already have a disciplinary issue with our um special education students um we are highly um leaning in the direction of the majority of our disciplinary committee meetings are with kids with IEPs I don't know that having a officer in the school is going to help them in any way and then looking at what the incidents were that is something that an SSO could handle we don't need an armed police officer in the building to handle

[01:06:13] those kind of instances and if we are disproportionately disciplining sped students and students of color, then we are doing a disservice to our students. The M. Oh, go ahead, Miss Lee.

[01:06:30] So I've done we've all since we've been on this for a long time. We've done the research three times, right? First time in 2020, then 2023 and then now. And there hasn't been any reason to believe that ACPS or Albemarle County is any different from nationwide in terms of our disproportionate disproportionate police touch on students of color.

[01:06:54] um and there was a report that I had in 2020 I'm sure I could dig it up for you at that time um I have been like obviously um this is a very important issue for me one thing that I've been struggling with is because we already currently have an SRO in our most diverse school and then we it didn't seem right to me to then decide to not put them in our less diverse but then nothing that anyone said tonight is incorrect I agree with every single thing that was said tonight it matches with the data that I've seen it matches with all the studies that

[01:07:33] I've seen and I mean and there are more studies there's a lot more data about school shootings actually being more lethal if an armed officer is in the building that was like a 2023 I think Johns Hopkins so so initially I've been thinking that it makes sense to expand it because I didn't want only our students of color to be over-policed which to me sounds crazy to say out loud now but

[01:08:07] I just I also want to affirm everything that was said here tonight it all matches with all the studies that I've read all the data everything that I've seen I would also like to know more information on the effect on our students about the governor's order related to deputizing state and local law enforcement officials to engage in immigration enforcement that is also very concerning to me does anyone know more about that Josh are you are you familiar with any more anything about

[01:08:44] that I can speak to that so members of the school board you're probably aware that as early as 2017 our Albemarle County Police Department took a stance publicly that they would not get involved in immigration enforcement activities they would not ask people about their immigration status they would

not assist with deportation proceedings the only exception to that has been where there is a warrant for criminal arrest they if they're called upon to effect an arrest warrant they will do that that has been their policy

[01:09:19] since 2017 that policy was reaffirmed this fall and Ralph Bradley was here in the audience tonight contacted leadership of ACPD this afternoon to confirm that is still their stance under our MOU with the ACPD concerning SROs SROs would not be called upon to get involved in immigration enforcement activities in our schools or on in our facilities that's not part of their role and that's not something that the Police Department of Albemarle County wants to be involved in

[01:09:52] either that doesn't mean it's not intimidating that I take your point yeah so first of all I want to thank everyone who has both spoken this evening two weeks ago four weeks ago as well as the the amount of feedback we have gotten through letters and calls to the school board I've only been sitting on the school board well this is my third budget but it is by far the most interaction we've had with the public and I appreciate that this is one of the

[01:10:32] most important things we do as a school board is approve this budget and I appreciate from constituents from parents from students from teachers and from principals on the outreach and so based on that feedback and my own review of the research the two things that I am looking at is I along with miss billman will like to pull the school resource officers from the budget there are many reasons but I was especially I would just say moved by the letter from the SIAC committee and being a previous special education teacher myself working

[01:11:12] with students who have had to be restrained due to communication behaviors that are really communications um and having seen students restrained by officers in that situation um i think it's important um that and not for me that i remove those from our budget the other thing in addition to the mental health which we are keeping and the school safety coaches that we are keeping this focus on instruction we've heard a lot from

[01:11:45] teachers this year particularly elementary student elementary school teachers about the work that they have had to do to integrate the letters training the time they've taken for the letters training and the the work that it has taken for the hmh and i know that is moving us in the right place and that was the right decision but i also know that we are in addition to doing that we will be doing a math curriculum for the elementary school next year and we know that to be able to truly take new information in and act on it it takes up

[01:12:22] to two years if not longer and so my recommendation would be that we don't remove ten instructional coaches that we only remove five so that we can give teachers the support that they need both new teachers new special education teachers and other teachers in those areas of the bellwether report math and arts that are so necessary for foundational skills you always described

[01:12:59] like the training and the criteria that's used to hire SROs yes could you refresh my memories again on that yes from their hiring the police officers that are selected for the SRO program can you raise the podium there so um the the the officers are they apply for the position as an SRO and that position can be filled either within the

[01:13:39] department with interested participants or it can be filled by individuals who apply from outside So, for instance, our current SRO at Almero High School was actually an outside hire. He came

from Harrisonburg area where he had previously served in a role as an SRO, so he was well-suited to perform the duties, and he was selected, hired on by the police department to go ahead and fulfill the role as an SRO within the school district.

[01:14:05] Once they get selected, they have to go through a SRO training course, which is offered by DCJS with the state of Virginia, and that course is good for two years, and during that two years, there's a requirement to maintain 16 hours of required training, certifications, other training that can be included into the further development with them working in our schools.

[01:14:32] That could be de-escalation training. It can be understanding the student population. It can be some medical training. Various trainings that are made available through dca.js to support their development throughout the program then after two years they go back through a recertification to make sure that it's updated so that's the process that takes place to bring an sro on and then go ahead and get them certified through training and also with their recertification process as well included in that in addition to their training they also have a requirement for some legal training that's

[01:15:05] supposed to be incorporated within that two-year certification period thanks yes while you're still there mr bradley can you um i mean i have also read the data and i think it is important to guard against the risk that many of our speakers and my colleagues have raised um i think however it is but it is challenging for policymakers to look at the worst case scenarios.

[01:15:39] And so can you talk about, I mean, one of the issues that was raised was about inappropriate use of SROs in discipline. It's my understanding that our MOU removes SROs entirely from the issue of discipline. Yes, ma'am. The SROs are not in the building to deal with daily discipline-related activities. It's usually a decision of the administrator and their staff, the principal and their assistant principals, that if there is an incident involving student

[01:16:15] involvement that doesn't rise to the involvement of a police officer to get involved, which is usually a criminal nature. We're talking of possession of a weapon. We're talking position of controlled substances. We're talking about severe circumstances where the mutual combat may result into true assault and battery when we get into those kinds of violations leading into those if it's just regular student discipline the sro is not involved in any of those it's strictly up to the administrators to deal with the students discipline process once it's identified what the problem is and it gets addressed it goes through the student services

[01:16:51] process which is the discipline process to address the students determinations and what their outcomes might be to address that in a more consistent manner so the role of the sro is not to deal with daily discipline is to deal with emergency circumstances that arise it's to deal with those criminal issues that do arise and i am completely an understanding of our community members that have addressed concerns about miss misdirected treatment completely understand that and i think it should not go without being noted that that's something we pay attention to but at the same time we do have incidences that take place in our schools which are criminal and i don't think

[01:17:29] it's un um i don't think it's isolated into a particular group of people we deal with behavior if the behavior justifies a response or reaction then you deal with the behavior you don't see the person as we've trained our sros we've trained our sso's my me and my staff have trained our our school security officers personally and we tell them whatever the issue is you address the behavior it doesn't matter who the student is what their ethnic background is it doesn't matter if they have a disability it does not matter if

they have a language ability that we're not familiar with it doesn't matter if the behavior is the same deal with the behavior that's the training

[01:18:09] that our staff are getting in order to deal with our students in the building and i think that's the part that we don't understand sometimes is that it's the training our sros can be just good or just as horrible it all depends on how we train them and what behavior we expect from them and and we make sure that they're going to be performing their duties properly so they function in almore county public schools in the correct way so far i think officer kazinski has been a very good resource for our high school and if we're able to get sros on board for these other

[01:18:44] two schools if we get quality members like those uh like the ones we have assigned i think we're going to have a consistent application of how law enforcement can function successfully in our schools and there's a way to manage it and I know there was a question about updates on on their activities and training and how they're behaving throughout the year pretty much yes sir the report that was was from actually from ACPD there's a lot of acronyms and things like that so plenty of I wondered if we could get something more user-friendly even even if we don't add

[01:19:20] on but still on a regular basis like maybe twice a year or something that let know about their interactions sure thing I believe that would that should not be a problem that we can provide that information and also but I'd like to include some of the things we don't hear which is when our SROs are sitting at lunch with elementary school kids and they're having a great expectation when our kids are encountering them at athletic events and you see them standing off to the side of athletics and they are a point of attraction to certain students as well they're engaging our students in an area where they need to engaged and that's in their day-to-day activities which is in the schools so I

[01:19:59] think there is a bonus I know the phone I can speak to it's just a reiteration the SROs if we get them here in the district we're going to be part of the interview panel we're going to be part of the selection process they're going to receive their training they're going to be in our schools we have program staff that monitor their activities just like we do our school security officers within schools and if they're not performing up to the standards it's up to my responsibility in my section to go ahead and make sure that they're compliant. If they're not, I have no problem in removing people who are not performing their job in the proper fashion. So I think we have

[01:20:34] to remember it's people that do the job every day. Statistics, even though national statistics may indicate something's going on, we should look specifically at what we have going on here in Albemarle County and see if our resources are being performed within our family and communities. And if they are, I say keep them and add to them. If they're not, then we can definitely take steps too.

[01:20:56] deal with that as well thank you miss prior did you have any questions first of all i too agree and and thank you all for your comments this afternoon um and and it's a truly tough decision um coming from a public safety background um you know i know i've shared with a few this week that i don't speak for the school board but speaking on behalf of myself that i am in favor of the sros um additionally i wanted to ask a question because someone presented um Percentage this evening, I think she said 14.7% feel unsafe with SROs.

[01:21:34] Have you been approached or others in reference to? I had that same issue too. I'm sorry. That bike, I had the same issue with the mic too. Okay, yes, thank you. So in reference to the 14.7% of

individuals who feel unsafe, have you directly had any conversations or interactions with individuals who have shared that they do feel unsafe with the SROs?

[01:21:59] Not directly that we've acquired from the students within the buildings. I have had the opportunity to have the conversations with the parents, and I appreciate and respect that input, but I haven't received it directly or have we got feedback that it's being directed to staff within the school building, and I'm sure we can take some steps to find ways to promote that feedback and make sure we're getting that.

[01:22:23] In addition to that, I think last week, and I don't recall the exact stat, But it was presented that I think like 30-some percent is not aware of SRO, which is pretty high. How would you explain that? Yeah, I don't. Well, again, in a way, that also lets you know that they're visible in the hallways, they're visible outside, they're walking through the building and getting students.

[01:22:48] But at the same time, they're not involved in every phase and every facet of the school day. So there's potentially a population of students that may not encounter the SRO, either for personal reasons they don't feel the need to or interest to if they're not engaged in the activity that leads them into involving that resource and then they're not going to come into contact as well but we are we are going to continue to encourage the SROs that we have on staff to make themselves known so that we can bring that value back up and get a better assessment of their

[01:23:21] activities thank you thank you there's two pieces of information that have been impactful to me one is that we had the super the principles of both Western Albemarle and Monticello last school board meeting and they both spoke in favor of having SROs at their schools they like very much as I do to the school safety coaches but they have different but coordinated spheres of activity and

[01:23:59] I think having both would work the best. The other piece of information is earlier this week I spoke with the president of the Albemarle Parent Teachers Student Organization, PTSO I think it is, and she spoke strongly in favor of well in praise of the SRO at West at Albemarle High School and that found that her her student who attends Albemarle High School had a good relationship with the sro and she thought it was working out very well i mean she also liked that the school

[01:24:35] safety coaches but um but i think key is what you've said is hiring the right person delineating the scope of authority or a responsibility and having frequent training and review of that how the performance review which is what miss osborne was talking about just in terms of broad statistics. Chair, I would like to move that we remove the SROs from the 25-26 funding request.

[01:25:12] I second. There's already a motion on the floor. Oh, thank you. So I don't think we'd have to do something in relationship. Yeah, Chair, point of order. There is a motion pending that's been seconded. So that motion either needs to be withdrawn or modified or called to a vote. And if it fails, then a new motion can be made. I'd like to withdraw that motion. I would like to now make a motion to remove the SROs from the 25-26 funding request. I second. We have a motion

[01:25:48] by Ms. Spillman, a second by Dr. Berlin. Ms. Thompson, oh, is there time for any more discussion? Then I'll call the vote. Ms. Thompson, can you call the roll call? Well, I need to clarify because The original motion was made by Ms. Lee and seconded by Ms. Osborne.

[01:26:13] And then it was amended by Ms. Osborne. It was rescinded by Ms. Lee. Ms. Lee withdrew her motion and a new motion was made. Sorry, I didn't hear that. Okay, I apologize. So now we have a new

motion. We have a new motion by Ms. Spillman and seconded by Dr. Berlin.

[01:26:29] Dr. Berlin. To remove the SRO from the draft. Thank you. Thank you. Funding request. Got it. Ms. Pryor. no dr. Berlin yes ms. Osborne no mr. Paige no miss Spillman yes miss Lee yes

[01:26:56] chair Acuff no the motion fails so I will move once again to approve the school board funding request of 284 million six hundred ninety nine thousand one hundred forty dollars in operating funds and 28 million four hundred thirty nine thousand eighty two dollars in special revenue funds for fiscal year 26. so this is the

[01:27:24] modified scenario do we have a second second moved by miss lee seconded by um mr page any further discussion did dr berlin want to add back in the five instructional coaches did we want to go down

[01:27:51] that rabbit hole yes we have a excuse me excuse me i wouldn't dream of it miss or leave this motion as is we have a motion for the modified scenario which would add back the social emotional coaches

[01:28:25] and it would add back the school safety coaches uh is that correct do we have a motion we have a second did we have a second yes okay mr page um if there's no further discussion

[01:28:42] miss thompson miss philman no dr berlin no miss lee yes miss osborne yes mr page yes miss prior yes chair acuff yes the motion passes so we have passed a modified uh funding request

[01:29:18] that keeps a point seven million dollar gap in revenue that was dr berlin and i will present on monday to the board of supervisors um and we will see what they do with it and i just want to thank um the staff um for all of their work on this budget i know it's always a very very difficult budget season um but i know you had to go back to the table many times so again a huge appreciation

[01:29:53] for all the late nights and all of the hard work that you've done i know it's not over um but i appreciate the support thank you dr berlin i think we all we all share that view um dr acuff yes first of all i want to thank the board for your support i know this isn't easy a lot i also would ask uh for the sake of dr mclaughlin who's coming up next to present could we have a 10-minute break? I think all of us would heartily agree to that. So it is one minute after 8:00 on this clock,

[01:30:29] so let's come back at 11:00 after. Good evening. We're back in session. Next item on the agenda

[01:40:19] is division mid-year data led by Craig Dahmer and Dr. Dallas Hitt. Good evening, everyone. Just as a sort of a reminder, we're here in response to your curiosity about learning more about the mid-year data review that's underway.

[01:40:38] And the presentation we've put together is in response to that. We do have some time at the end for questions, as you'll see in the agenda. So good evening. I'm Dallas Hitt, Director of School Improvement Policy and Planning. I'm also a mom to three students in the division, and I've lived both in the Albemarle and the Western Theater Patterns.

[01:40:55] This is Craig Domer. He's joining me tonight as Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. And we're excited to be here and share a little bit more about our data review processes that we lead at the division level. So after our introductory comments, we'll share the three types of academic data we rely on, and then we will share our ongoing strategic planning approach in schools with our schools called 90-day plans.

[01:41:20] We will also share some student plans, and then we will have time for questions. As for the introductory comments, we always begin our presentations with centering on our vision and mission. I'd like to highlight that our data review process moves us even closer to understanding the academic needs of every student.

[01:41:39] In effort to orient us on the purpose for our presentation, we want to share two focus questions for tonight's session. First, how do we monitor student learning over the course of the school year across all schools? And second, how do we support principals in using data to advance teaching and learning?

[01:41:56] As I said, we're excited to share information to convey the work we're undertaking to become more intentional about data collection, data use, implicated instructional leadership adjustments at the principal level and the classroom instructional adjustments at the teacher level. While we certainly have room to continue to grow and develop, we are proud of the framework we've established over the past two years and look forward to deepening its impact. Let's dive in. The way that we are monitoring student learning has evolved considerably over the past year and a half. In 2022 and years prior, we had two main data sources. This left us in a very reactionary, if not paralyzed position. Division leaders, principals and teachers waited until winter each year to have insight into the state of the teaching

[01:42:35] and learning in effort to improve that we've committed to a division administered quarterly assessment program while it sounds simple it was a massive undertaking we're excited to be in year two of that program this year the state has also added in the vowels and we have those data for elementary students as well taken together this means that we have tripled the number of division data-wide sources we can reference and we have these fresh data coming to us at strategic intervals throughout the academic year. None of these sources are perfect though and they don't tell us exactly how students will perform on the SOL, but taken together they can give us insight along the way throughout the year about what students are learning and what challenges

[01:43:13] remain so that we can make decisions about reteaching and other instructional adjustments. We believe that it's what we do with these interim data that are more important than what they tell us at the moment. The second question is about 90 day plans and what exactly are those. We'll talk more in depth about those later in the presentation, but I just want to highlight and hint a little bit about what we mean by that because it sounds a little jargony. But 90-day plans are short-cycle planning that is tactical in nature. It allows us to respond to the present challenges that are presented by the fresh data. It's a lot different than maybe a year-long school strategic plan or a school improvement plan that you've

[01:43:52] heard of in the past. Those set the tone and the vision for the overall goals for the entire school year but a 90-day plan allows principals as well as the division to really think about what is the data telling us in this moment in this quarter what do we want to do about it what are we going to commit to accomplishing in the next 90 calendar days and in order to conduct that that high-level thinking we set aside half-day workshops at strategic times throughout the year for our transformation schools they get together in a required manner every 90 days and work collaboratively with each other as other transformation principals as well as supportive division staff and

[01:44:30] they really use these plans to guide our focus for the ongoing transformation meetings that we have with them. So when we meet with principals in these transformation schools on a by-weekly basis we go back to their plans and say what's getting your way, what's not, how can we help, what's been advancing, why hasn't it advanced, and it really centers our work with them in a very nice and structured

way. For all other schools we just ask that they come and require that come at the mid-year or quarter two but we certainly invite them to quarter one and quarter three as well and we do have some some takers on our invitations and we're always glad to include as many principals who can can make that again these are collaborative in nature sessions central

[01:45:09] staff are there and we're present to co-create solutions with principals and leadership teams and using our expertise and our ideas alongside principals and their leadership teams to really make a set of action steps that helps in advance teaching and learning in their buildings so let's take a deeper dive into what each of these three assessments are and what they tell us so we have the acps quarterly interim assessments we have the video winter growth and we have virginia language and literacy screener i'm going to talk a little bit about the first one and then mr dimmer will be coming up to to talk about the the latter two so what are the acps quarterly interim assessments

[01:45:48] and what we call those quarterlies around here they're given three times per year at the end of each of the three quarters. This is, as I said earlier, our second year of administering them. And the beauty of these is that they produce standards-level data. You'll see a slide about that a little bit later in this section, but that essentially gives us the level of granularity that teachers need to make instructional adjustments.

[01:46:12] These tests are developed by curriculum coordinators in conjunction with our content advisory teams at each school. And so one other point I would make is that these are not secret tests. These are developed by and large before the school year starts, if not before the quarter starts, but they are shared with teachers so they know exactly what their targets are for student learning, and they're also created by teachers.

[01:46:35] It helps answer the question, "How well is what we are teaching transferring to student learning as demonstrated by success on an SOL-style assessment?" So it really gets us an opportunity to say, "We think we're putting this out there, and we think they know it, and we hear that they're able to articulate this or show learning in some ways, but is it actually translating to an SOL style assessment, which we're ultimately held accountable for?"

[01:46:59] So we want to know that. Finally, this may seem very simple, but it's very difficult. These quarterly assessments are aligned to the ACPS pacing guides, which are also aligned to the VDOE standards of learning. I shared a little bit about this process with you last time I came to present, but this was a big undertaking where we went through all ACPS pacing guides and made sure that every single standard was was represented and that the pacing guide did that in a manner that was um uh available to teachers and was also um a possible that made it possible to get to

[01:47:35] everything in a semi-paced way um the blueprints are certainly part of that as well so the bottom line is these these um quarterlies are not perfect measures but they're supposed to be a representation of what students would have thought we hope they've learned by the end of each quarter as needed by the good product good performance on the SOL at the end of the year so a couple other points quarter two is cumulative and we do build in some retesting questions from quarter one so if we see standards across the division that made that didn't fare as well as we'd like them to we put them the

[01:48:14] curriculum coordinators in conjunction with their CAT teams can put those back on the test we leave some items open for that to happen but it also is cumulative in that it even if it wasn't a troublesome standard we still um q2 will still measure can just pull some standards from q1 to make sure that that

learning is actually sinking in q3 will be a released sol or other similar type tests that will cover all content in q1 and 2 and three so that is the most like an sol that we administer and that's mid-spring right before the

[01:48:53] test coming up soon we will continue to refine these quarterlies based on the shifts in videoe content which are ever coming as you'll say at the in the next bullet or the bullet to come we had to redo all of our quarterly assessments for math and for english-lingual charge this year because the state changed the standards.

[01:49:14] So I really want to acknowledge the work of our curriculum coordinators who were last year did this for the first time, and then we got the standards change and then did them again for all grade levels implicated by the test. And that was three different tests times however many grade levels was a lot of work.

[01:49:33] But it's something that we wanted to do. We certainly wanted to have tests that were aligned to the standards, and that was what needed to be done. our team was able to do that. We're hoping that the standards don't change anytime soon again, though, because we would not only not like to have that workload, we would also like to be able to start conducting some correlation of validity analysis, which we can't do until we have like tests to compare and to see how well those predict students who end up doing well on the tests at the end.

[01:50:03] So that will be the ultimate measure that gets us to see more about is this quarterly actually letting us know with any validity that students will actually do well on the test, or are they just completely unrelated? As you can tell, we've done our best shot.

[01:50:19] We've used expert analysis and expert content review, but still, until we start being able to conduct those, I won't stand up here and tell you that the quarterlies mirror the SOL, particularly when we are in the new standard. So I would classify them as action research at this time.

[01:50:38] It's a way for teachers to understand, like I said, what is being taught, is it sticking through an SOL-style test? If it's not, then it's a cause for a pause, and we consider reteaching.

[01:50:54] But that's sort of the beauty of these quarterlies. So one important clarifying point that I wanted to state, see here these are um the bulleted list is all of the quarterlies um that are um counted towards accreditation but because of our team is so committed to this work they develop our curriculum coordinators um decided to develop a quarterly for every test for every subject um above third grade

[01:51:28] so for instance um we have a quarterly for english nine even though that's not an an sol tested subject. And we're doing this because we believe in the importance of vertical alignment and analyzing data in courses that build towards the state-tested course, which is, in this case, English 11.

[01:51:47] So again, to clarify, the courses listed here are those that impact accreditation only, but we have far more quarterlies than are shown here. All right. So this slide provides the percent passing for quarter one and quarter two, and as I've noted earlier, while it's really irresistible to wonder about the pass rates, the point quarterlies lies beyond this basic metric as you can imagine these data don't move us down the road in terms of instructional adjustment these alone or shrinking the change these data basically just tell us we have work to do they don't give us information about how to tackle that work how to

[01:52:23] plan for that work and what steps we will need to undertake to move more red into green so this slide conveys the essence of what makes quarterlies so helpful as you can see the precise standard is listed across the top standards level data are the key relate to moving instruction and this is the type of output that we ask teachers and principals to look at when they're making those 90-day plans that i mentioned earlier so standards level data are the key to moving instruction because standards level data help us shrink the change and pinpoint the highest leverage work to

[01:53:02] tackle you can see how this level of granularity is much more meaningful than the previous slide that just showed us a blunt pass-fail rate these standards level data help level data help us think about what we need to undertake moving forward and there's a lot of rich analysis that could be done with these numbers in terms of teachers sharing strategies that worked with each other as well as decisions about what to reteach similar output is provided for principals and teachers at the student level that provides student names by standard looking at this level data helps us to make plans about how to move from green to red on the last side but also keeps us

[01:53:40] from staying stuck and worrying about red without any insight into how to get to green so to wrap up the overview of quarterlies before i turn it over to craig let me highlight that prior to 2022 we really didn't have much way of providing teachers and principals with the right size of data so shifting to a standards level approach lends itself more readily to real-time instructional adjustments the point of quarterlies is not as much to look at the pass rates but more so to understand how well students are learning the specific standards and which ones they need additional support for reteaching you can also see how teachers as i mentioned could look at this

[01:54:19] slide did it go this one and begin to have conversations about what did you do that's different than what i did and how can practices be shared to help me get from my 30 to your 80.

[01:54:35] right so it makes it really clear what works well and and where the expertise lies and how we can we can come together as a learning community so um i would say there has been little shift overall in the data from quarter one to quarter two as you saw on that overview overview slide but i would keep in mind that these are cumulative so it means that we're holding solid on content from quarter one while also adding in new content from quarter two and since we don't have a comparison from last year we can't really say much more thanks to sanders change we can't really give you any update on how that looks compared to last year but Craig has some information that might give

[01:55:15] us a little bit more triangulation into the state of language arts and math which i know we're all interested in thank you i am Craig domer i'm the executive director of curriculum assessment and instruction part of looking at quarterly assessment right we all want to know what's the predictive value of them and i think dr hit did a nice job talking about how different data has different purposes. And the quarterlies for us so far really are about standards kind of assessment and helping teachers figure out what standards need to be revisited. But we do have the state winter growth

[01:55:54] assessments. This is our fourth year of giving these assessments. They're given in December each year. There are about 20 to 30 questions in length. Students take them and parents all get reports from the state about how they are doing. We weren't really sure what to make of them. I think when they first started four years ago, we're still not able to really look at the standards level analysis that we can with quarterlies. But we are starting to see through some analysis that the scores are relatively stable over time,

that as we've watched students from four years ago get a score on how they have succeeded later on in their schoolwork, and then we look at subsequent

[01:56:33] years of scores, and we are seeing that they're holding relatively stable. And so then if we look get a large sample size, say 1,000 third graders who take the test, we can start to see some trends and put a little bit of faith in that. And so it helped us this year think about our quarterlies that have always changed the last two years and how the winter growth assessments can help us analyze some of that data and what kind of progress we're making.

[01:57:02] I'm not going to go over every slide and every piece of data to you, but I'm going to hit some highlights kind of throughout. So the first thing we did is we looked at the last three years. the student performance in each category. The state has four reporting categories on spring SOLs, but they have three on the winter growth assessments.

[01:57:22] And these are their three reporting categories, needs support, at risk, and generally okay. That's not an Elmar County term, it's a VDOE term. So for reading, you can see that over the last three years, we've had fewer students in need support and more students in generally okay.

[01:57:41] and that there was a larger shift from last year to this year than there was in the previous year. In math, you'll see kind of an even larger shift down from students that need support in generally okay.

[01:57:59] And the shift was probably a little bit larger between 23 and 24 than from 24 to 25. And I think that probably reflects two years ago, we did a large push, especially in elementary, around trying to beef up math instruction. And we all know how the last 18 months has been around reading.

[01:58:18] Again, we included the grade level data for you to see. Some highlights that we saw is that we generally saw kind of a larger shift in elementary school around reading across all three grade levels. In 6, 7, and 8 in reading, we definitely had shifts upwards.

[01:58:39] And then there seemed to be a little bit of a cohort thing going on between grade 7 and grade 8, where grade seven went up substantially this year, but grade eight kind of went down. And so perhaps there's something around the current eighth graders, we're gonna kind of dig into that with each of the middle schools who performed seven points lower in seventh grade, and now six points lower now that they're in eighth grade in the generally okay category.

[01:59:08] In math, you'll see similar trends, pretty steady growth from 24 to 25 in elementary school, and a little bit flatter, but definitely growth in middle school, the most growth in seventh grade math.

[01:59:27] In response to public comment earlier, which I think is important because data means different things to different people, I probably have embedded in my brain that 1,000 sixth graders take the grade six test, all of our math advanced and math honors students.

[01:59:43] In seventh grade, the algebra students don't take that grade seven test, so it's only about 700 students who are taking it, which is why you see a shift down. And then in eighth grade, only the eighth grade math students take it. It's about 400 test takers, which I think does highlight exactly what we saw with the Bellwether report and exactly what we're trying to work on with our budget initiative around the Bellwether supports is that we need a lot of work for those math eight students and when they go to algebra one in the high school. We also just wanted to highlight some

[02:00:22] of the schools, who all of the schools are growing, they're all heading in positive direction. But these are the schools who have shown growth above and beyond kind of the growth that the whole county has shown. And so we're really also investigating the protocols and procedures that they have in place at their schools and what may have led to that advanced level of growth.

[02:00:48] And you'll see that it holds for most of them across both reading and math. takeaways are just that the assessments are still developing give us a good way to judge our quarterly assessments results are generally trending upward with larger growth and reading this year and math last and we do have some gaps closing I realize we didn't have that slide and I'll send it to you after in general the gaps are not widening they're all staying the same black students and reading are up about 6% of a shift compared to about 3% for the

[02:01:22] division, so that's a positive trend as well for us. The other assessment that's new that we wanted to talk about and get out in front of you all is the VAL screener. It is the new screener with the Virginia Literacy Act. If you remember, we piloted it last year to try and shrink the change for our teachers. However, it did change substantially in how they calculated the data from last year to this year. We give it three times per year, but we've only given it in the fall and the mid-year so far and this year it's only k-3 data it is going to expand four to eight in 25 26. students

[02:02:02] in the high risk category need literacy plans according to the virginia literacy act and we don't have year-over-year data for this assessment but the data we do have is pretty positive we say in the first year of implementation in the fall you can see that 37 percent of our students were low risk and now at the mid-year it's 54 percent and 33 percent were high risk and now 27 are high risk we don't have state level data yet we're supposed to get that within the next couple of weeks we did meet with our virginia literacy partnership coaches on friday and i showed them

[02:02:39] this data and i told them where i would be tonight and who would be asking me if this was good bad or indifferent they said they weren't going to tell me the state data but they felt like we should feel good about this data was their comment so I'm going to trust them on that specifically the number of students requiring literacy plans in kindergarten through third grade reduced by 17 percent from the fall to the mid-year we had 1209 students high risk in the fall and now we have a thousand eleven so about 200 students through intervention and the hard work of teachers are no

[02:03:14] longer in the high risk category and I also just highlighted some of the schools again all the schools made progress. These schools all made more than 17% progress in getting students out of the high-risk category. And you see it's schools across the county and various kind of demographic groups and sizes. So again, we're digging in and figuring out what those schools are doing well and how we can replicate it as quickly as possible. I'm going to turn it back over to Dr. Hitt, who's going to talk about 90-day plans, and I'll see you in a little bit for individual student

[02:03:51] planning okay so 90-day plans this is um as i mentioned earlier at the start of the presentation this is an effort to give principals time in a very intentional way to think through the leadership moves that they want to make knowing where their data stand and that sounds like something that's very simple but if you've lived in schools before you and you're around um you know thousands of of children, hundreds of children, that's difficult to do.

[02:04:23] So we are very proud of the work that we do in pulling them and giving them time to, with fresh eyes, look at their data and think through in a very intentional way what it is that they want to do in

the next 90 days, what they want to accomplish, not next year, not in six months, and it can't be some sort of lofty, high-level goal that doesn't have any sort of measurement capacity to it.

[02:04:47] We really get them to think clearly about what they want to do based on their quarterly data and/or their vows and winter growth, if that's applicable to that quarter. So the purpose of 90-day planning-- and this is something that came out of the business sector originally, and it's something that's become more popular in some schools.

[02:05:07] And I'm really excited that we are implementing it in our work in Albemarle. As I said, these are short-cycle plans that allow the principals and leadership teams to make quick adjustments on challenges that are illuminated by the quarterly data or whatever fresh data is in front of them.

[02:05:23] We have three-hour sessions, and principals can choose to bring leadership teams with them. Oftentimes, it's a team of teachers. They're AP. It could be a counselor. It could just be them. It really-- we empower the principal to make that decision, and we accommodate whatever size team they want to bring.

[02:05:42] During that time, as I said, the division staff are available. We have a lot of expertise, former principals, former people who have turned around schools in the past, people with different specialties and expertise that can sit with principals and just bring fresh perspectives and support them in thinking through their work if they want it.

[02:06:02] So we really think that this process allows us to co-create plans together and make some accountability metrics clear about what it is that we expect for student learning to be doing by the end of the 90 days and/or the adult behavior we wanna see changed.

[02:06:20] And it makes the change, again, bite-sized rather than just something that's really big and lofty without clear steps needed. I'll show you some examples of that in just a second. But one of the things we're really working on and pushing principals to think about is not just saying, "I wanna close the achievement gap."

[02:06:37] Of course you do, we all do. That is our number one priority. But what does that mean for your work as an instructional leader? What is the antecedent to that change? what needs to happen before the achievement gap closes. So that really engenders a large amount of high-level cognitive reflection and thinking about what are the systems and structures that are in place that are impeding progress on that issue.

[02:07:02] And you really can't do that unless you set aside time. And that's why we have these 90-day planning sessions. So the outcome of these quarterly 90-day planning sessions are that each principal leaves with what we call a three to four, and we always say no more than four because it's not a priority after four, three to four principal priorities for the upcoming quarter based on the current state academic data.

[02:07:28] Again, a priority is what the principal needs to focus on so that they can unlock progress on teaching and learning. And one of the assumptions that we continue to remind, and this goes to what I just said about closing achievement gaps, is that as leaders, principals indirectly impact students but can only directly impact the quality of teaching through adjusting systems and structures for the adults in the building they don't go in and teach algebra they don't go in and teach fifth grade ela they have to think

about what are the antecedents what are the how can i in how can i indirectly but succinctly impact instruction teachers and plc's obviously

[02:08:05] directly impact student outcomes through adjusting the systems and structures in their classrooms and the work of leaders is figuring out what do I need to do to help that change along at the classroom level. So we spend about an hour in these 90 day sessions giving them the data, sort of we call it sandbox, where they can use this amazing tool called Power BI, where they can slice and dice the data and look at different student groups.

[02:08:29] They can look at different PLCs, they can look at different combinations of the data. And they also can look and illuminate and see the reports that I showed you earlier on that slide that shows you how teachers are doing it by standard. And based on that overall sandbox experience for an hour, we're asking them to be thinking about what is speaking to me in terms of my three to four goals for the upcoming 90 days.

[02:08:52] What do I need to address? And how will I choose? So you can't do all of them. You can't do six things, because you won't get six things done in 90 days. But which ones are most important? What are your priorities? And so we ask that two of those be PLC or grade level specific.

[02:09:10] And one or two can be broader or whole faculty. So PLC grade level specific, they may decide I'm going to really focus on eighth grade math, for example, that's often one at the middle school level. And there may be something like attendance or a school culture oriented one for the other one or two.

[02:09:30] And then the second part of the session is about really getting clear through a template that we use, what is the goal that you have for students? That's an example there. By the end of Q3, the number of students at Proficient will increase by 20% compared to Q2.

[02:09:49] What is my priority as principal? My priority is supporting Math 8 teachers and getting back on pace and using data to monitor and adjust instruction. And what are my action steps? Again, these are leader-level action steps. Figure out a common formative assessment.

[02:10:04] Conduct learning walks. initiate weekly instructional coaching support and review biweekly student data so you can see how that is different than saying i want to close the achievement gap that is outlining very clear concrete steps as a leader that they wish to take to support teachers in doing the work of closing achievement gaps here's an example that we really like from mountain view that seth canard developed there's a lot of good work we could have pulled from but this one just seemed to be a nice one to share this is what you would see in a 90-day plan so he had a student learning goal of by the end of

[02:10:41] q3 students will show an overall improvement of 20 percent in lagging skills and third through fifth math and fifth science as measured by q2 assessments he's got his principal priority which is creating unit supporting the creation of unit tests so he's doing his own little mini interim assessments there at mountain view so that he can monitor and participate in plc's train and participate in data analysis again high level leadership moves that he's prioritizing and then he sets out his seven sets and you see number seven is begin the cycle again which i love so that that that's 90-day planning now you know you know if you've heard that buzzword what we're

[02:11:20] talking about it's something that we're excited to continue to work with on principles this is we're in year two of doing 90-day plans um and there i think they're really starting to we're we're really starting to get our sea legs with it, I would say at this point.

[02:11:43] - And I just wanted to briefly kind of go over some steps that we take around student planning. At the student level, quarterly results are typically analyzed by teachers and standards that need more time and/or instruction are planned for upcoming units. Students who aren't on track to pass based on a combination of data, either those quarterly assessments or maybe the winter growth or classroom assessments are offered additional learning opportunities at each school, usually that takes the form of either tutoring within the school day or tutoring after the school day.

[02:12:14] Val's data, and to comply with Virginia Literacy Act, we create and update literacy plans based on student level instructional indicators. We might change the plans for the students, and even though we are overall down over 200 students, we definitely have some students who were moderate risk in the fall and now are high risk, And so we create those plans at the mid-year with the teachers and parents.

[02:12:38] Other students may also receive intervention based on other data points in math or students who don't have vowels, so our fourth through 12th grade students. Something I did want to highlight for you just is we're using a new intervention support management system called Branching Minds.

[02:12:55] It took the place of Insight. We talked about it a little bit last year, but it has really -- we had three goals really to start this year for our first year with it is one was to do all the reading plans that are required by the virginia literacy act second was to get a bunch of student data into the system so that schools could look at individual students and see all their data in one place and third was to let teachers experiment with creating other intervention plans it is helping us kind of standardize the system of supports across schools and in particular i did include just one sample

[02:13:33] literacy plan so you can see it branching minds took the state template and use their software to create it so as we bring student data in and reading specialists go in and put in what the interventions will be for that student it creates the reading plan template in a form that we can share with parents and then helping keep monitor and so if you hear from parents or teachers about branching minds or about student reading plans this is how we're doing it and how we're able to kind of keep it manageable for teachers while also increasing communication for parents and really being able to track

[02:14:13] data. The other thing that's built into Branching Minds that's been helpful at the mid-year is that it has really increased our ability to do progress monitoring and managing that data so this is the same student from that literacy plan and so she is getting progress monitored every two weeks using a decoding measure from DIBELS and you can see that on those points they take her score and the program creates both her trend line and the necessary growth

[02:14:50] to meet the end-of-year goal. So you can see the students definitely making progress a little bit below the trend line, mostly brought down by two declining scores in the last two progress monitoring assessments. So this team might talk about this student and see if we can't get turned around quickly what changes to her reading plan might be necessary. We had our mid-year implementation review with Branching Minds and just some things that they they highlighted for us that I thought you would enjoy.

[02:15:21] We have 2,267 reading plans and 448 math plans. That's largely driven by the fact that the reading plans are required this year and where we started. 23.91% of our students are identified as needing additional support based on the screeners that we're putting into the program.

[02:15:38] 20% would kind of be our MTSS baseline. So we'll see as we get better with our implementation year two, if we can get that down a little bit better with our instruction and so far in the program we've

logged two million minutes of intervention services and I just think it's as you know even from just two years ago the amount of data we're able to now start to track around these kinds of things has also shown a lot of growth over the last two years so and that's all we have to share tonight but we avail ourselves for questions and

[02:16:11] discussion our teachers receiving the quarterly reports mixed bag I think in I THINK IN YEAR TWO, MORE TEACHERS ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THEM.

[02:16:34] I THINK IN YEAR ONE, IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE IT WAS NEW, AND THE PURPOSE WASN'T AS CLEAR UNTIL THEY HAD THE DATA AND THEY WERE ABLE TO SEE HOW IT COULD IMPROVE INSTRUCTION AND BRING A DIFFERENT SLANT TO THEIR CONVERSATIONS IN PLC.

[02:16:55] I THINK IT'S LIKE ANYTHING. It needed to prove itself before it was fully embraced. And I think, obviously, there's the concern about too many tests, and we certainly have those coming down from the state as well.

[02:17:10] But I hear a lot more discussion of quarterlies in a positive tone now because they see the benefit that it's not a supervision tool. IT IS REALLY A DATA-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL ADJUSTMENT OPPORTUNITY.

[02:17:28] AND WE DON'T, AT THE DIVISION LEVEL, LOOK AT IT AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN THAT. AND I THINK THAT BEING CLEAR THAT THAT'S REALLY WHAT IT'S INTENDED TO BE, IS AN OPPORTUNITY. AND PROVIDING THE DATA IN A WAY THAT IS REALLY ACCESSIBLE FOR TEACHERS AND PROVIDING THAT TIME FOR THE PRINCIPALS IN THE 90-DAY PLANNING MADE THAT -- PUT OUR MONEY WHERE THE -- PUT our money where our mouths were, where it wasn't just like, we're giving you one more test with no purpose.

[02:17:57] So I think they're not perfect. We'll probably never have 100% approval rating on them, but I think it's increasing, and I do hear good things about them. Well, conceptually, I very much like assessments along the way so you have some time to make adjustments rather than just the end of the year, but it's a lot of data.

[02:18:21] What methods are you using to ask the opinion of the teachers? Is that just like word of mouth or like from like giving your opinion or do you have like actual feedback mechanisms from the teachers on what they think about these. I think the main one that I'm aware of is the content advisory teams that the curriculum coordinators work with and they get when they because they provide feedback on the actual instrument.

[02:18:45] They review them before they're published and they get feedback on whether or not they think it's going to help support their instruction, whether they're they have face validity. can have as much input as they have time to give so that's our main mechanism i don't we haven't done a formal survey on on them or anything that's that level of feedback it would be interesting i think to you know if we're talking about what do the teachers actually think do they you know is it just one more thing they have to do do they find the information valuable do they have suggestions on what information they're getting and could it be different um so that it's actually you know

[02:19:25] more impactful in the classroom i'm concerned by the scores and the reading and math and um it bothers me that we are getting this information after our budget funding request because even though there was a an item for the bellwether um initiative it wasn't specific if i had known that our math

scores were going in the opposite direction we may have discussed differently um our funding requests so um you know if these were done in in december i think it would have been helpful as a board to have had this information prior to our funding requests so

[02:20:02] maybe for next year that's something we can consider to have all that information um and also i'm wondering why um the demographics the charts that you gave were all the grade levels combined. That's not super insightful as to what it actually looks like. So I would be really interested if we could get that actually broken out and not just summarized. Dr. Hayd, could you

[02:20:34] go back about three or four slides? The one that showed test plans or something like that. Wait, go back. I think that was it. Yeah. Okay, the reading plans and the math plans. Does a teacher to decide which one of those to use based on the test results that would be given to the students when they analyze the test results?

[02:21:07] We provide intervention based on test results and throughout the year. And some students start the year in intervention based on past test results. I think likely more students than 448 math students are receiving intervention, but those are all the plans that we're able to track this year.

[02:21:26] really rolled out the program to track the reading plans to begin with. So, okay, so those are the number of students that have received plans? Those are the number of students that we have an active plan that teachers or math interventions have created that we're doing progress monitoring data and those are our plans for this year with our goal to increase and implement math plans to the same level that we do reading plans next year. Were these plans implemented because of the mid-year assessment or were these already in place these were already in place do

[02:22:05] you have data that would compare students that you know like breaking it down who have plans versus who do not we can break that down for math plans because it's uh and we're starting at the schools that might have math interventions it's really by school those 448 students are really in pockets I noticed on another slide that it said for the reading plans that I think the test itself indicated which work was needed, but is that true also for the math test?

[02:22:41] It's not. We don't have the same level of math screener that we do for reading screener. We're trying to fix that, but the state has made a reading screener for us. There is no state math screener as far as how we would then build a similar structure, but it is our goal to do so for math similar to how we are building it for reading and so those 440 plans are kind of our pioneer teachers who are out there trying to do that work so that we can then replicate it so i'll see two million minutes of intervention services do we have enough interventionists i

[02:23:19] mean i remember last year this time during budget season we were clamoring for more interventionists on the reading side the implementation of lexia has kind of helped both the increase in the number of students who need plans from VALS and our limited number of interventionists.

[02:23:38] We're working kind of on, so students who are identified on VALS need a reading plan. We are supposed to use state approved resources. We do use Lexia and so the classroom teachers also sometimes implement the intervention for students who don't need to see a reading specialist.

[02:24:01] do we need more? And we always have students in need. I feel like there's not that we are kind of closing the clamoring for that. We increased interventions two years ago. I think we added eight to 10. We were able to keep that stable last year, even though we lost some of that federal funding or the price of

teachers was going up outpacing the federal funding. And so I think we're at a good baseline to try and make future judgments about that in future years.

[02:24:32] - So is it our goal to keep hiring more interventionists or to have students perform better in tier one? - It's always our goal to have more students perform better in tier one and to improve tier one instruction.

[02:24:51] I think that's what the Virginia Literacy Act was really targeting. It's what the state has said in all of their trainings and really why we've implemented our letters PD and our HMH. It has been a huge lift for classroom teachers really for the whole division to try and change instruction in such a big way but i think it is also providing a model for how we can start to change instruction and provide supports in other subjects and other areas that we are currently struggling with yeah i think that's the the culture now mall county schools for forever what has been i'm your teacher until

[02:25:28] you're not doing well oh and i'm not going to find that out until this year toward the end of year and then next year you're going to be an intervention so it's an autopsy instead of a checkup so the the numbers that i see are very promising i want to i want to commend you i want to commend our instructional staff because and i want to when i say instructional staff i mean our teachers at the schools because they're embracing a different way of doing business which is i've got a child in class and including special education children that's that's been one of

[02:26:04] the most promising aspects of this is that rather than saying well you're not doing well in class you have an iep so go see the special education teacher you're not staying in here with everybody else while we do grade level instruction what we're saying is everyone when we're reading when we're learning reading if you're not doing well you get a plan that's just like everybody else's plan and it's standards based it's not on a different plane with an iep goal that may or may may not be addressing grade level standards.

[02:26:38] I'm very pleased to see those numbers of kids that need intervention coming down. I don't know if I'll be around long enough, but it'd be great to someday bring a budget to the board where we're reducing the numbers of interventionists that we need. And that's only gonna come about as teachers will buy in.

[02:26:57] This system builds buy in. This system builds buy in. If everybody was happy about it when we started it, I would think there was something wrong, given the results that we were getting. So what's going to happen is, over time, as the teachers see the utility of the results, and they start to script out their next steps of how I'm actually going to work with this child so that they can be successful, and then they see the child succeed in Tier 1, we won't need to get buy-in.

[02:27:29] And there'll be very few teachers that still won't buy-in, and that's just always the case with everything we try to do. But overall, the results that I saw, the same slides, and I haven't seen either that kind of model or that kind of progress that I can put my finger on in the school system at mid-year ever before.

[02:27:50] And we're a continuous improvement organization, so if we ever had something at mid-year where you all came in and said, it's perfect, we don't need to fool with it, no problems, I would really question that. That would be my big question. The last thing I want to do is the comments about at-risk, those are categories that the state developed, and there was some politicization around that, a little bit of weaponizing of kids.

[02:28:16] When they came out with mid-year assessment, the growth assessments, either you're doing really well or all of a sudden you're at risk. So it'd be like I'm getting an A or a B in a class, and then if I shift away from the B, suddenly I'm at risk. Now, I don't know what at risk of what, but I'm assuming it's not being able to learn to read on grade level, but I just want to be clear about that.

[02:28:41] And school systems all over the state have had to wrestle with that because it was a sudden thing, a sudden change, and parents were getting letters from the school system that were form letters telling them your children are at risk. That was, I would say, what was that, two years ago when that started?

[02:29:01] and you have to look at the timing of that with the the current um administration and what the goals were around public schools it wasn't to send things home to say your child needs this specific help it was now before you thought they were doing well now they're at risk and i think um that's one point thank you for making it dr house i skipped over it on this slide but just you know if we take third grade reading for an example last year our pass rate was about 70 percent yeah and at the mid-year 50 percent were at needs assistance and 39.2 at risk so by the end of the year all of

[02:29:39] these students passed all of these students passed and about 40 of these students passed and and we we have great teachers no doubt about it but it would take a lot more than that if if at risk was really really expressed what the state was trying to get parents to feel about schools based on that communication and i think if i could uh just add one more uh piece on that i think that's a great point mr dommer that you that you bring up there the point of all of these assessments

[02:30:14] um isn't to be a predictor that we're going to have 10 of our kids pass a third grade math test or 27% pass a fifth grade test but to tell us where we are and where our needs are and I think the the point that Craig just made really illustrates that well you look at our eighth grade math we had I think 70 plus percent of kids last year who were in the the needs assistance category but we ended up with about a 50% pass rate before eighth grade now that's obviously we want to better than that but these aren't designed to you shouldn't look at any of

[02:30:51] these charts and say this is where we're going to end the year these are all designed to help our teachers and our principals understand where we need to place our focus so that we have the strongest results come the end of the year I also wanted to thank you because this is the first time where I feel like I've understood a little bit what people mean when they say principals as as instructional leaders.

[02:31:18] So I just appreciate that clarity. And I think that keeping them as instructional leaders and making sure that they're not getting too far down in the weeds and not too high up, I appreciate that work. So thank you very much.

[02:31:35] I would just like to say, given the growth data and the individualized planning for the students, my colleagues and I disagree on some things. But I think we all agreed this year keeping the class sizes small was really critical to the work that all of our teachers and principals and other staff do so I look forward to next year's data are there any further questions thank you for your time and reporting and if

[02:32:14] there's any other business from the board or can I have one item of business good okay we'll see okay on march the 18th the central regional um conference of the vsba will be held in buckingham county and when i looked at the registration there were only three attendees from outmile county and

being the chair of that division and seeing that there are only three people coming from the largest division in central region i was disappointed to say the least

[02:32:52] so i'm not going to say anything else about that i wasn't even sure whether to announce that at all but i decided it was best to announce it so thank you competing board i have a competing board meeting okay all right all right is there any further business with that we're only four minutes late of adjournment thank you no i'm not sure



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