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

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[00:00:02] Good evening. Good evening, everybody. This meeting of the Elmira County School Board is now in session. I want to remind everybody that Dr. Rebecca Berlin, our vice chair, is participating by phone. She is on a work-related business trip. Coming out of closed meeting, do we have a motion?

[00:00:25] We do, Chair Ackerman. I move that the board is certified by a recorded vote that, to the best of each board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorized to close meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

[00:00:46] Second. Motion made by Mr. Page, seconded by Ms. Lee. Ms. Thompson, can you call the vote? Ms. Osborne? Yes. Mr. Page?

[00:01:01] Yes. Ms. Pryor? Yes. Ms. Spillman? Yes. Ms. Lee? Yes. Yes. Motion passes. Do we have a motion coming out of closed meeting? We do, Chair Acuff. I move that the board approve the employment contract of the chief legal officer. Second. Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Spillman. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Motion passes. Congratulations.

[00:01:36] Next item is a roll call. Let's identify who we are for the community who are listening at home. Mr. Redding? Why don't we go that way? Yes. I'm Dan Redding, Chief HR Officer.

[00:01:53] Western Albemarle, Student Representative. Oh, Claire Curry. Thank you, Ms. Curry. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Allison Spelman, At-Large Representative. Graham Page, Miller District. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Ellen Osborn, Scottsville District. Leslie Pryorio District. Chandra Hayes, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. Matthew Hawes, Superintendent. Josiah Black, Chief legal officer. Pat McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Planning.

[00:02:24] Dr. Berlin, you want to go ahead and go? Yes, I'm getting ready. She's HR Officer. Western Albemarle's student representative, Karen Curry. Oh she's watching the Zoom. Erin Stone Assistant Division Council. Dr. Berlin is the Vice Chair for Whitehall and she is on the phone right now. We're having a little delay with her being on the- Apologies, this is Rebecca

[00:02:57] berlin from whitehall and thank you for letting me join remotely christine thompson for the board now over here aaron stone assistant division council an officer officer bonnie at morrow county pd thank you so much now those who are able let's stand for the pledge of allegiance

[00:03:38] now we'll just have a moment of silence before we get started the next item is to approve

[00:04:12] tonight's agenda do i have a motion i move we approve tonight's agenda second motion made by miss lee seconded by miss osborne all those in favor aye opposed motion passes next item is a

[00:04:28] spotlight on education and we have miss butler good evening chair acuff members of the school board members of the superintendent's cabinet i'm jennifer butler deputy chief communications officer and I am delighted to join you this evening for our Spotlight on Education. Tonight we have the privilege of highlighting ACPS educators whose

[00:05:07] creativity, initiative, and innovation have led to new opportunities for students across our division. These teachers have earned competitive grants, developed community partnerships, and launched hands-on learning experiences that inspire curiosity, inclusion, and joy in the classroom. Several of our honorees are with us this evening and others were unable to join us, but they have shared statements, photos, or videos for us to celebrate their work. We are proud to honor each of them and the impact they are having on their

[00:05:42] students, their schools, and our community. Tonight we begin by recognizing two outstanding educators from Scottsville Elementary School, Kelly Christ and Tina Piniella. Third grade teacher Kelly Christ received the American Chemical Society's Distinguished Elementary School Science Teacher Award and an accompanying grant to enhance her science instruction. Kindergarten teacher Tina Piniella received the ACS Elementary Science Grant for her project, Kindergarten Science Through Art, which builds early science understanding

[00:06:17] through creative, hands-on activities. Principal Cindy Wells shared the following. In order to foster active engagement to build knowledge and passion for science through the arts, Two Scottsville teachers received awards from the American Chemical Society, Virginia Section.

[00:06:35] Kelly received an \$800 grant to enhance her science instruction, including plans for an indoor greenhouse. And Tina received \$452 to support her project integrating clay, insect models, and tie-dye kits to bring science concepts to life.

[00:06:52] Next, we recognize Karen Ackerman, who received a Teacher Innovation Grant from the Public Education Foundation of Charlottesville Albemarle. or PEFCA, to support the first LEGO League Robotics

Club at Henley Middle School. Her program has doubled in size this year and provides students with meaningful opportunities to learn coding, engineering, and teamwork.

[00:07:17] Karen writes, I am very grateful for PEFCA for the \$1,000 grant to support the Henley First LEGO League Robotics Club. The funding has allowed us to expand participation, increase access to materials, and bring in mentors from Western Albemarle High School who support the students in their work. We also want to acknowledge Michelle Banaszak of Albemarle High School who received a PEFCA teacher innovation grant for her project Pocket Talk: Enhancing Classroom Communication and Accessibility. Thanks to her grant Michelle explained Albemarle High School was able to purchase 10 Pocket

[00:07:54] Talk portable voice translator units that support more than 90 languages and provide seamless two-way translation. These devices now allow peer tutors and staff to converse instantly with students and families in their native languages during tutoring sessions, school tours, and study groups. This capability has strengthened communication and improved rapport between tutors and students, creating more inclusive and approachable academic support across the school community. Although Michelle could not join us this evening, we are grateful for the powerful impact her work is having on

[00:08:30] on students and teachers at AHS. Our next honoree is art teacher Jeanette Stott, who received a PEFCA grant to lead a block printing workshop for all Art I students at Monticello High School.

[00:08:46] Jeanette said this was a wonderful opportunity for students to learn a skill used in many cultures throughout history to distribute information and record history. This cross-curricular project was a fun, hands-on class activity that kept students engaged and learning something new.

[00:09:04] Jeanette shared these photos of her student work. We also recognize Angie Foreman from Stone Robinson Elementary, who was awarded an impressive four grants this year, three from PEFCA and one from the Shannon Foundation.

[00:09:21] Her project supports student well-being, bilingual literacy, neurodivergent representation, and research-based analysis of the school's ethnography collection. Although Angie is leading Stone Robinson's Literacy Night this evening, She shared a video demonstrating the impact of her work.

[00:09:39] A link to Angie's video is included in tonight's slide deck and I encourage you to view it when time allows. Now I'd like to transition to hearing from our honorees who were able to attend this evening. Our first presenters are Bernice Brythorn and Erica Goff who are co-leading an immersive, authentic field research experience for AP Environmental Science students at Monticello High School, supported by PEFCA and Shannon Foundation Grants.

[00:10:17] - Good evening. Bernice and I wanted to give students the opportunity to engage in authentic and self-directed field research experience. So we applied for funding through the Shannon Foundation and Public Education Foundation. With this funding, we were able to build field kits to support outdoor explorations and teach science to our AP Environmental Science students throughout the year.

[00:10:41] And also take 18 students on a weekend field trip to Mountain Lake Biological Research Station, which is a UVA field research station in Southwest Virginia. Students were mentored by biology graduate students and professors from UVA, Mary Baldwin, and Virginia Tech while we were at the station to develop and design an open inquiry research project and then present their findings to a wider school community.

[00:11:04] Today's students are taking less time outdoors than their predecessors, and we wanted to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement with the outdoors and to explore research questions while they were at the station. I spent three summers at Mountain Lake as a grad student at UVA, and I wanted to take students there because of its biodiversity and abundant opportunities for ecology and evolution studies for a wide variety of plants and animals.

[00:11:30] My career goals were heavily influenced by similar experiences and field trips that I had as a high schooler, and it inspired me to study science in graduate school and also become an educator. So I'm really grateful that this trip inspired students and that we were able to provide this opportunity to our students.

[00:11:48] all can see a photo of the field kit in front of you here but what students were able to do with both the funding from PEFCA of allowing us to go to Mountain Lake and then these field kits were to break into groups with their research mentors develop their own questions based on observations and curiosity that they had as we looked at this place and then have a day and a half to explore and analyze data some of the consequences were intended we saw improvements and understanding of the content students were engaged on surveys they all said that either they agreed or strongly agreed that their

[00:12:27] understanding of the natural environment improved their ability to ask questions their understanding of the scientific method we also had some unintended consequences as well a lot of the students commented about how meaningful it was to have time in nature with people and away from phones even though the facility has Wi-Fi and we had free time or evenings I don't think I saw a phone out the entire weekend students were making s'mores they were playing games and many of them commented it was really important to get to interact with students they normally wouldn't outside of a classroom context so we were able

[00:13:05] to share this opportunity with our students, which like Ms. Goff, my own education opportunities and career trajectory were influenced by being able to spend time outside exploring. So it was really meaningful to be able to share this with students and in their surveys, as you all can see in these quotes, that they are now wanting to make their own choices about their future influenced by this experience.

[00:13:29] Some of you might have seen an invitation. We had a poster session recently where students were able to engage in something that I didn't do until I was in graduate school, but to work with research mentors, develop a poster sharing their research, and then present it to community members, families, students from our environmental science class who weren't able to attend, and community members as well.

[00:13:54] And it was really incredible to walk around and see students sharing what they knew, and also for students who weren't able to go on the trip to learn from their peers. As far as what we would like to do next, We have the field kits. We've already used them in other labs. They're evergreen, so we're gonna be using these throughout the year.

[00:14:11] And we're hoping to be able to recreate this trip next year, working with the organization to kind of be creative with ways to cut budget now that we've done it once. And we're really looking forward to ways to continue to expose students to field research, both here on our campus and hopefully in other environments in Virginia as well.

[00:14:31] - Thank you. - Thank you. - Sounds like an incredible experience for you all, as well as the students. - I don't know, I think they had more fun, but it was fun.

[00:14:46] - My dad was a middle school science teacher, so I did a lot of this stuff outside the classroom. But great, thank you. - Thank you.

[00:15:05] - Next, we welcome Equity Coordinator Megan Washburn, who secured the USA Pickleball Serves Grow the Game grant on behalf of ACPS. This grant is helping bring adaptive and inclusive pickleball opportunities to students, including partnerships with the trailhead learning community.

[00:15:23] We'll begin with a recent video of students unpacking and exploring their new equipment, followed by remarks from Megan.

[00:15:39] - Pickleball in particular is great because it's a space where able-bodied kids are able to play with kids who are in wheelchairs and be side by side. And I don't know a lot of sports that are like that. And it's a great way to build community.

[00:15:56] And as you can hear the joy and the laughter that's happening right now, The kids just love it, being together like that. Oh, yeah. That's a nice hit. So Emily Tomko came to me about in July sometime to ask about playing pickleball with her post-high kids.

[00:16:14] And her question was around equipment and resources for her kids. And I was able to find some paddles to donate for my personal stash. But I found this grant from USA Pickleball called Grow the Game. And I was like, let's just apply for it. And we applied for it.

[00:16:29] And we earned the grant. now the kids have all the pickleball equipment. We got several packages from USA Pickleball, including 75 paddles, 100 balls, two nets, and a banner, and the kids all opened them and helped put together the nets, opened all the paddles, and now they're playing and having a great time. How fun was it to open the packages to get all the stuff out of them? It was really fun. Having the equipment here provides an opportunity for our students to be able to socialize on a different level a lot of our students have occupational and physical therapy needs

[00:17:04] and this is just another way to improve their mobility and their physical skill sets we also have students other than post high here that this that really really need the skill of team building and this is just a fun and easy way to incorporate even social emotional learning and team player skills are a lot of our students they just don't they don't do well in groups and if the more fun we can make it the better they do. Do you like playing team sports? Yeah I do.

[00:17:39] What's your favorite part about playing team sports? I've never played team sports before but I've never played it before. But now you get to maybe every day. Yeah. So that's gonna be fun? Yeah. Do you enjoy playing sports? Yep, sure do.

[00:17:58] - Why do you enjoy playing sports? - Well, since I was like 17 or 18, I've played pickleball since the first time I did, and it made me realize I feel joy in myself playing pickleball. - 'Cause it's so exciting, 'cause it's a lot of fun.

[00:18:15] - Historically, equity in our county has been about race and gender, and sometimes our students with special capacities are often overlooked, and so this is an opportunity our work together to consider the intersectionality of student identities and ensure that all our students are receiving equitable

experiences. So grateful at the Trailhead Learning Community that Megan advocated for our students and really saw a need and worked really hard to fulfill that and we

[00:18:49] appreciate her and the whole equity team very much. Everyone thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to share the work that we're doing at Trailhead learning community as you know my name is Megan Washburn and I'm an equity coordinator and many of you know I am obsessed I'm sorry I think the word I wrote was passionate about pickleball as a lifelong athlete I've been a part of many teams across many different sports and when I played division one softball

[00:19:26] I was removed from the team for a part of my identity there are many reasons that I love pickleball it gives me a space to continue to be athletic and compete. It gives me a space to meet people I would have never met in my life. So many people that are important to me. And my pickleball community also offers me opportunities for authentic connection and authentic belonging so that I can be that person I couldn't be on that softball team. As I travel across the nation to play pickleball, I always wear my equity coordinator hat. So I'm watching and looking and I see players who are diverse

[00:20:04] by race and gender and age. I see people using wheelchairs alongside able-bodied players. I see folks wearing prosthetics, playing, and being successful in the court. Pickleball crosses into my work as an equity coordinator because I see the power of how it brings people together.

[00:20:23] One thing that's missing from our broader Charlottesville pickleball community is that adaptive pickleball. And it's not about the sport itself. It's about our infrastructure. pickleball is one of those few places that, like I said, able-bodied players can come together with people who are in wheelchairs. And because of the weight of the paddle, the size of the court, and the rules that USA Pickleball puts into place for us. Last year, Heather Russell and I started teaching our students how to play pickleball. We started with the Intensive Support Center and some students at Stone Robinson Elementary. And then, as you saw in the video, Emily Tomko

[00:21:02] approached me in July and wanted to get this going for post high and now all the students at trailhead learning community you're going to receive a one pager that talks a little bit more about the grant but it came from usa pickleball and their mission is to spread pickleball throughout the world and the nation and and support inclusive programs like the ones that we're trying to do equity begins with access and this grant helps us to remove some of those barriers for our students who have historically been excluded from full participation in physical education and sports adaptive pickleball creates a pathway for every student to experience the

[00:21:42] benefits of physical activity teamwork and belonging and just those who and not just those who fit into those traditional athletic participation as you can see the students in the video were laughing they were connected they were moving you could feel the joy emanating from the video. This initiative directly addresses the special capacities element of our mission, challenging the systems and assumptions that too often limit access to opportunities for students with disabilities. It's a powerful example of equity in action. We're not giving everyone the same thing. We're giving every learner what they need to thrive. I want to uplift Emily

[00:22:20] Tomko, whose passion and ideas sparked this. Karen Fink, whose love of pickleball and dedication to her students to help them find success and affirmation have helped to maintain the momentum for this project and Megan Marshall who's here supporting without her leadership that inspires others to step out and take ownership of how they support students to be successful and live their

wholly authentic lives through this grant we're not just teaching pickleball we're teaching belonging confidence and lifelong wellness we're showing that when we design with equity in mind

[00:22:58] every student gets to play every student gets to grow and every student gets to thrive that's what our mission looks like in motion thank you so much for letting me share tonight thank you so much meg thank you um you know my no you're good um you know i'm a little nervous and no you're good um my son attends tlc and i'm personally grateful for this um there are not a lot of adaptive sport options for our kids um in the community and especially in our schools and as miss marshall said those kids lack teamwork and team building and so to give these opportunity

[00:23:35] i think is priceless so personally from my family thank you very much for this opportunity for my son thank you thank you for sharing that he was one of the first that i got to teach thank you thanks everybody thank you also with us this evening is fourth grade teacher megan sullivan of brownsville elementary school megan received the community climate collaboratives outstanding educator award for her leadership in helping make the organization's climate active climate action activity kits classroom ready and for the engaging sustainability lessons she brings to her students

[00:24:15] each year good evening um so these are just some pictures of my kids using the kits um so since 2021 the community climate collaborative which is also called c3 in charlottesville has worked with ACPS to provide fourth grade students with free hands-on science kits each spring. These climate action kits align with our fourth grade science curriculum and they provide authentic connections to the units to our units of study. Not

[00:24:53] only do the kits include terrific classroom projects and teacher guides, but they also include activities to bring home, such as word searches, math challenges, scavenger hunts. There's information for families that help them consider ways to conserve energy and contact information for community resources. Katina Dudley and I have worked with C3 over the years to improve the activities and information to best match student and family needs.

[00:25:22] Last year students grew edamame seedlings, they made solar night lights and they created desktop paper windmills. C3 works really hard to ensure that every fourth grader across the county has access to the same great kits for zero cost. Last year they provided us with 1,020 science kits.

[00:25:44] These kits are highly engaging and educational and I'm grateful to be able to partner with such a wonderful local organization to improve the science experiments for our students. Thank you. And finally closing tonight's spotlight is Albemarle High School's Chris Buunin, whose leadership in Geographic Information Systems or GIS education has earned national recognition including a recent ESRI case study highlighting his innovative approach.

[00:26:20] Through grant support, drones, field research, and advanced mapping tools, Chris has created a platform that inspires students to connect social studies with real-world problem-solving and pursue future academic and career pathways with confidence.

[00:26:42] Good evening. It's hard to believe that it was around 20 years ago, standing up here getting recognized by the school board because you all were about to approve me for a leave of absence to go work with a Teaching American History grant at UVA and the focus was going to be on bringing emerging technologies into the history classroom and one of those technologies was geographic information systems. Six years later the grant ended and I had the GIS and geography bug and so Jen Sublette who was

the lead social studies coordinator at the time said you need to talk to Jay Thomas he likes shiny things and so I talked to Jay and he said so what

[00:27:18] you want to do here when if I hire you I was like I want to build you the best geography program you could have in this division and get our kids employed and highly paid because i like it and so in front of you today are eight folks who've gone through the geography or gis program due to time i won't share with you all of the comments but the program has been invited to share with the council for social studies coordinators conference in dc to share what we're doing with modern geography and so about two weeks ago i reached out to some alumni and said hey i've got to do this presentation i'd like some of your thoughts on the impact the program had and then

[00:27:54] lo and behold jennifer reached out and i was like well i'm all about double or triple dipping when i can and so i'm going to use some of their comments to share with you the why we do this whenever you write a grant it's not about what you're going to do it's about why do we do it and why should you pay for it so i want to start with chelsea chavers kelsey chavers kelsey graduated from ahs in 2016 she is currently a u.s marine corps cartographer and in 2024 she served as the Marine Corps' interim GIS manager.

[00:28:23] Here's what she had to share. I use geography and modern geography tools every single day. I love that geography can be considered a social science because it really does impact so many people. As a cartographer, I use geography and modern tools within my professional career.

[00:28:38] I solve problems every day with maps. It's crucial that I know my audience and what they care about based on where they are and what they do. Without the influence of geography, my job would be 100 times harder. In my personal life, I use maps every single day. The other alumnus I want to highlight is Mark Reborden.

[00:28:57] Mark did not go down the geography path. He went down the political science path, and he is currently the Deputy District Director for Congressman Eugene Vidman and former District Coordinator for former Congresswoman and Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger. Here's what he shares about the influence of geography.

[00:29:16] Working in politics, using mapping tools to predict or follow political voting and trend evaluations has been the most direct way I interact with mapping tools. More generally, geography and my experience in AP Human Geography continues to influence how I approach a number of different policy projects by always considering how geographic and demographic differences may create differing effects on our populations.

[00:29:40] In the top right is Cecilia Smith. She is a Class of 2023 graduate who's preparing to get her Bachelor of Arts degree in smart and sustainable cities and her master's degree in urban and regional planning from what i like to call the university of virginia tech she wrote my high school ap geography class allowed me to think both creatively and analytically in a way that none of my other classes did this challenge and excited me ultimately leading me to pursue an urban planning degree in college

[00:30:15] let's see here she also shared that many of my peers entered my major without a foundation of GIS, but my early exposure helped me find my passion and direction much sooner. I am deeply grateful for the experiences. I strongly believe that offering geography and GIS within social studies curricula gives students valuable tools to understand and shape the world around them.

[00:30:37] Bottom right to the left, Heba Awan. Heba Awan is a second year student at the College of William and Mary, majoring in data science, and became a teaching assistant for the William and Mary GIS program as a freshman. She said, high school geography stands out to me because it was the first time I saw how spatial patterns influence social, political, and economic circumstances.

[00:30:59] It helped me connect global events to the spaces in which they occur and understand how geography shapes decision making. Looking back, it was such an amazing opportunity to expose this kind of thinking in high school rather than having to wait till college. Most students don't get the chance to work with geographic data or develop a deep understanding of spatial relationships until much later. Having this early exposure allowed me to enter college ready and confident in my GIS abilities, which ultimately shaped my decision to major in data science. And then one, it literally just came off my email at 3.30 this afternoon. Got an email from a freshman at James Madison

[00:31:37] University. She wrote, I will never be able to express my gratitude for Albemarle offering the GIS courses. I distinctly remember you coming into my class sophomore year to advertise AP human geography and GIS. I knew nothing about GIS, but I did that I wanted to be pushed outside of my comfort zone. So I signed up for both of your classes, and I'm so glad I did. I never really knew what I wanted to go to college for or what I wanted to do in life, and I figured that out in your class. While GIS made me feel so crappy sometimes, I felt so proud that I saw my work come together finally, and that made it all worth it. I remember there being times that I wanted

[00:32:16] your help so bad and you wouldn't help me and I would feel so discouraged but now I'm so happy that that you didn't hold my hand the whole way through and I was forced to figure it out myself also GIS just introduced me to so many cool things open my eyes to a lot of possibilities and gave me overall great opportunities because of GIS I know what I want to do in life and already have background knowledge on a lot of things people are just now beginning to learn in addition we've been able to use so that's just those are our spokes that's why we're doing this. In addition, we've been able to use GIS and social studies to receive a

[00:32:55] \$50,000 grant from National Geographic we received in 2020. We've been able to use that experience money to teach students out to be cultural geographers, to experience through the lens of geography. So we've been able to use it to invite in leading scholars to talk about how they are using work for environmental and social justice. That's in the bottom right. That's professor johnny finn from christopher newport university we've gone out with drones to capture public service videos to make uh cool videos of albumen on the fall and so forth we've been able

[00:33:30] to visit the memorial to the enslaved labor and understand all the thought that goes into memorial don't think about it but you don't just put a memorial anywhere you have to put it somewhere with meaning and so when you think about that there's a reason why the vietnam memorial is not right here on the court steps. When they put it up, it was controversial. So you put controversial things not in the center, but off where people have an opportunity to reflect, but not right where other people will see it. And when they got on these field experiences, they're asked to think like a geographer and to realize that what you see in experience is in the eye of the beholder.

[00:34:05] There's a professor named D.W. Meinig who says that everybody experiences space differently. And he submits, there are 10 different versions of experiences. Some people experience nature, habitat, ideology, wealth, and so forth. And so just last week, we took a field trip to Mount Peelor. And even then,

space is, you don't generalize it. It's very specific. So one part of the area can have one sense, then you move to another part and another sense. And so this just shows you the type of data we're collecting. And so people that visited the historic train station outside of Mount Peelor, you can see the variety in ways in which students experience that

[00:34:44] place personally then we also have a chance to see how we understand it collectively so i want to thank the school board the school division and the school for helping support this dynamic program thank you great work i mean i we've heard from some extraordinary educators tonight that have translated their passion to getting the funding to get things done and it's really inspiring i wish I had been a student in every one of your classes. Does anyone else have anything to say? I know three of us on the school board are executive directors and have to write

[00:35:24] grants and it's not always the most fun thing, so I admire the initiative that went into that and I think the proof is in the excitement that your students have shown, so bravo. Sort of hard to move to the next step on that, but thank you all for being here. We do have The next item of business, though, is school board and superintendent business.

[00:35:58] And I know that our student representative, now I think this is our fourth year with student school board representatives, and they've all been extraordinarily impressive. And tonight is the first meeting that Ms. Curry is attending, and she has a brief introduction of herself and some of the issues that she is presenting for our consideration.

[00:36:22] Yes. Thank you, Dr. Acuff. And good evening, school board. My name is Clara Curry, and I am serving as this year's school board student representative for Western Albemarle High School. I am a junior this year, and as I have learned how to navigate the ins and outs of Western, I have discovered the magic that the school thrives on.

[00:36:44] Western Albemarle is an incredibly strong community, yet there are a few concerns that have been brought up that I am going to address now. Currently, Western is facing a turbulent time when it comes to the political views that remain prominent in our schools. In recent weeks, the tensions on both sides of the political spectrum have began to boil over with emotions of uncertainty, defeat, and powerlessness.

[00:37:09] Both sides can see the growing divide that is breaking the bonds that many students hold so dearly. One's political stance should not be the factor that destroys friendships, relationships, or just interactions.

[00:37:25] The state of the world currently has taught us that the best way to exist is to be separated, closed off, and constantly bring politics into the equation. But that is the exact opposite of how the United States came to be. Opinions cannot be controlled, and politics will always be prominent in the world and in our schools.

[00:37:45] That I cannot change. Yet altogether, we can do a better job at rekindling that connection and using our school's strengths to keep a united western community. Let us all make sure that, regardless of beliefs, our schools remain a place where students can disagree without division and engage without fear.

[00:38:04] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Curry. Is there any other school board or superintendent business? - Yes. Do you have anything, Matt? - No, ma'am. - Okay. I am going to make a motion, but I wanted to read a short statement first.

[00:38:21] Over the past several weeks, I've talked with parents, teachers, and students including some from Turning Point, to really understand how our policies affect the people they're meant to serve. What I've heard has made me realize that while we all care deeply about our students' experiences, there's room to strengthen our policies to make sure they reflect both our values and our responsibilities.

[00:38:42] Over time, our policies governing extracurricular clubs and outside speakers have served us well, but they deserve a fresh review. The legal landscape and our community expectations have continued to evolve, and we owe it to our students and staff to ensure those policies are clear, fair, and up-to-date.

[00:38:57] We carefully screen the curriculums taught in our classroom. We review the books in our libraries and the websites students can access at school. Even parent volunteers have to go through background checks before helping in their children's classrooms. But right now, we don't have a clear, consistent policy for vetting and approving third-party speakers to come into our schools or speak to student groups.

[00:39:19] That gap creates uncertainty for administrators, staff, and families, and that's not fair to anyone. but I want to be very clear. I fully support all student clubs and their right to meet. Our extracurricular groups provide incredible opportunities for leadership, friendship, and civic engagement.

[00:39:37] This motion is not about any single club or event. It's about reaffirming our district's commitment to both the First Amendment and the safety and dignity of every student. By asking the superintendent's office to review and update our procedures, we're ensuring that every student group, regardless of viewpoint, is treated equitably that our schools remain welcoming respectful spaces for learning and dialogue. I believe we can and must do both. I move that the board direct the superintendent's office to review and update all policies and administrative regulations governing student extracurricular clubs and outside speakers to ensure both robust protections for freedom of speech and

[00:40:17] safe and inclusive learning environments. The review shall establish Viewpoint neutral criteria for club recognition, facility use, and speaker approval align with applicable federal and state law. Include clear safety protocols that do not discriminate based on viewpoint.

[00:40:36] Provide transparent procedures for event approval, cancellation, and appeal. Include staff and student training and include stakeholder consultation. Draft revisions with red lines and an implementation plan shall be presented to the board as soon as possible with implementation no later than the start of next school year do we have a second second motion made by miss spillman seconded by miss osborne uh is there any discussion all those in

[00:41:08] favor aye opposed motion passes thank you miss spillman um hard to follow that but uh just in Just in terms of news, Mr. Page and I went to the Topping Out Ceremony at Albemarle Career Exploration Academy.

[00:41:33] I'm trying to get used to not calling it center too. That building is going great. I mean, it was a great experience being there and they're already putting the siding on it. we're on. According to Mr. Workman, it looks like they will be wrapping up so we can open it for the next school year. Anything else? Well, I know we have a lot of end of the year reports tonight, so why don't we, oh, first we have public comment. Do we have anyone

[00:42:07] signed up? Three people? Ms. Osborne is going to manage this. Okay, 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. You can do it online. That sign up is available from 9 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week until 2 p.m. on the meeting day. You can do it by phone. Call the school board clerk's office at 434-972-4055 to sign up until 2 p.m. on the meeting day. Or you can do it in person. Sign up at the meeting is available until 6 p.m. from 6 p.m. until the public

[00:42:46] comment period. Please note that public comment is not received at special board meetings unless specified on the agenda. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak, but the chair with the board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be more than 14 speakers. The maximum number of people or groups that may speak in a meeting is 20. In the event that there are more than 20 people or groups who wish to speak at a particular meeting, each speaker will be assigned a number and numbers will be drawn to determine which people or groups will have the opportunity to speak. Those who do not have the opportunity to speak at a particular

[00:43:23] meeting may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or may submit written comments for the school board's consideration. So speakers should state your name in either your address or your voting district. Address comments to the whole school board and not individuals.

[00:43:42] Limit your comments to school board governance or school division operations. And you can provide written statements and supporting material to the clerk. The school board will use the timer to track each speaker's time. Once the time is up, you're asked to wrap up your comments. Actually, you should wrap them up before the time is up. To maintain respect, please refrain from clapping or other audible forms of support. You may raise your hand instead and debate with the school board is not allowed and the projection system is for staff presentations only. So tonight we have three speakers. We have Mr. Chris Dilbeck

[00:44:21] and then Nancy Koenig and Ashley Martin and we'll go in that order. Hello school board my name is Chris Delbeck I'm a resident of the Rybana district. I'd like to present today a potential alternative funding option for the new school that you all are thinking about. As you all some of you all here may know Almaro is currently considering to relax the data center regulations in the county

[00:44:55] to allow a large data center to be built here. Large data centers can have thousands of employees They may have families, too, which would increase demand on the school system accordingly. In order to help mitigate this impact, I have an idea for how the school board could work with the county ahead of time to make approval for this new data center contingent on their collaboration with you all.

[00:45:23] I would propose that it be Camelot High School working together with the data center, having them pay a significant percentage of the initial expense, and then they would commit to yearly funding of the school. In return you could offer them access to the schools across the county to run direct-to-work training programs for exceptional technical talent that come out of those high schools. They could even have volunteers come in, help with classes, participate in computer science programs at the schools, and I think that would be an effective enticing for those data center owners to work with

[00:46:03] and expend the funding on an initiative like this. Additionally, there's opportunities outside of technical talent. Data centers require large quantities of support staff, facilities, HVAC, plumbers, electricians, network and cabling kind of roles.

[00:46:21] So there's opportunities there to work with them to run support staff training programs direct to trades out of the high schools. They could have potentially two pipelines of exceptional talent in two different zones the technical and non-technical coming direct into their data center might encourage one of them to sign up for something like that. So I ask that you all consider that proposal at some point. I yield

[00:46:45] back. Thanks. Thank you. Ms. Cody. Good evening. I'm Nancy Koerning from Scottsville. I'm a parent of a 2002 Monticello High School graduate, retired from Red Hill Elementary in 2014 after teaching for more than 30 years in three elementary schools. I am very impressed by the high quality of the projects presented earlier this evening and by the teachers who took the time to write the grants. However,

[00:47:24] I am very concerned by the lack of focus on academic skills, commendations on adopting a strong reading program for K-5. However, the county budget provides \$20,000 per student and yet the SOL scores are at 75% proficiency. I am one of the many retired teachers who remember when people would move to the county because of its excellence in education. In fact, some parents in neighboring jurisdictions would pay for their children to attend. What has happened? I suggest that the

[00:48:03] county has lost its focus. The document "What Drives Our Division" exemplifies the lack of focus on academic excellence. In the superintendent's overview, the four sentences in the second paragraph list resilience, innovation, real-world experiences, instructional practices audit, equity, and wellness before mentioning, at the very end of the paragraph, academic excellence.

[00:48:30] not until page six of the document do we see mention of Thomas Jefferson's vision of ensuring that citizens were educated through public schools that being essential for a functioning democracy I quote those phrases from that document which I commend meet the needs of all students while preparing them with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and lifelong learners and make positive contributions to society those phrases while good in themselves again

[00:49:06] lack the focus of academic excellence learning for all the current strategic plan is indeed important but academic excellence for all the plan of the 80s and 90s for albemarle county public schools should be our focus thank you for your time and miss ashley martin all right i'm I'm Ashley Martin.

[00:49:39] I'm probably gonna piggy pack off of what Nancy said. I noticed a few years back when we were having a school bus issue, everyone was upset and they got up to talk. And then after they all left and spoke, you guys were talking about capital improvements and solar panels and wind turbines and all that stuff.

[00:49:58] I see that after everyone speaks tonight, you're gonna talk about the same type of stuff. You're focused on capital improvements rather than academic excellence. The student achievement subpar in Albemarle County, and yet over and over, we're talking about new high school, new elementary school, when we just shut down an elementary school in Scottsville.

[00:50:20] So you could potentially use those older buildings and focus on student achievement. And then once you get the student achievement, then maybe spend millions of our tax dollars on capital improvements. Thank you.

[00:50:35] Thank you. That concludes public comment. Thank you, Ms. Osborne. - The next item on our agenda is to approve our consent agenda. - I move we approve our consent agenda. - Do we have a second? - Second.

[00:50:50] - Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Page. All those in favor? - Aye. - Opposed? - Aye. - Motion passes. Next item of business is the Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability, or ACES, their annual report.

[00:51:11] And I don't know if it's a team presentation or not. We will soon find out. This is a committee that was established maybe four years ago and consists of school board appointees, staff and liaison to the county, Ms. McKeel.

[00:51:36] - Good evening and thank you for having us. This is a group presentation that sadly we're down one member who is supposed to be here tonight because she got the flu. And so Katina Dudley and I will be speaking. Our committee member who is going to speak as well will, like I said, not be available. We're also joined, like you said, Dr. Acuff by Diane McKeel and committee member Betsy Salsby.

[00:51:59] So thank you again for having us. I'm John Coles. I'm the environmental program manager here at Albemarle County Public Schools. I'm joined by Katina Dudley. Katina, I don't want to get your title wrong, so if you would please tell us. We're here to present the annual report from the advisory committee for environmental sustainability.

[00:52:18] that's a bit of a mouthful so we just go by aces we'll begin with a overview of our purpose and our focus areas we'll transition to talking about some ongoing programs and then wrap up with the recommendations to the school board from the committee generally when we think of how aces work kind of aligns with the strategic plan we think of these equitable transformative resources but more and more of the focus on sustainability is about our student health and well-being and making sure that our buildings are safe and healthy places to learn as well as places that

[00:52:55] are beneficial to the environment and so i think that really aligns with many of these goals like our thriving students a recent study showed that the school's learning environment has up to 25 of an impact on the students performance while they're here with our schools and that's some things like indoor air quality making sure we're not burning fossil fuels in the buildings and things like that our purpose and we start every meeting by going over the purpose aces is exists to advise the school board and the superintendent on ways to help acps develop

[00:53:32] and reach sustainability goals aces fosters an integrated series of tools and knowledge for the growth of environmental awareness and coordinates the implementation of the county's climate action plan as it relates to schools we have five focus areas the first four are aligned with the climate action plan that is transportation land use buildings and renewable energy sustainable materials management landscape and natural research and curriculum integration of climate action was a focus area that was added by the committee um sorry i'm gonna go ahead and make us full

[00:54:10] screen here curriculum integration of climate action was a focus area that was added by the committee early on because we identified the need to really tie all of this work to the curriculum Like I said, these sustainability updates that we're going to provide are ongoing programs.

[00:54:27] These are not new programs. First, I wanted to highlight a few things on the energy efficiency front. The first is that in 2024, we saw record low building energy consumption despite added square footage. Our building energy sector greenhouse gas emissions have remained below the Climate Action Plan 2030 target for 45% reductions.

[00:54:49] And that's been ongoing and steady since 2019. And it's less applicable now because the ENERGY STAR program has kind of been shuttered. But at the time, a few months ago, all ACPS school buildings qualified for ENERGY STAR certification with an average score of 99 out of 100.

[00:55:06] Meaning that our school buildings are performing in the top 99% of all similar school buildings nationwide. I want to provide an update on solar energy at ACPS. I think this is a really critical piece of our achieving our climate action plan goals.

[00:55:25] ACPS has 4.8 megawatts of rooftop solar projects underway. The first are scheduled to be installed this fall and spring. These were procured via a combination of self-owned projects and power purchase agreement ownership models. These projects alone are expected to generate 33% of ACPS's total electricity usage.

[00:55:46] Combined with the existing solar we have, that will be close to 50%. I mean, these projects are expected to save somewhere around 10 years over their total life. I put a little caveat there because we're going to talk about it at the end, but there are some political things that are happening that threaten our solar projects.

[00:56:08] And so we'll talk about that kind of when we get to the recommendation section of the proposal. And I'm going to turn it over to Katina. Good evening, Chair Acuff and school board members. Again, my name is Katina Dudley. I am the curriculum coordinator for science in the county and I've joined this team in that role to support the work that ACES is doing in partnerships with what's happening in our classrooms. So John mentioned the solar projects that we have going on. We also partner with Madison Energy Infrastructure to allow our students to have hands-on learning experiences

[00:56:47] in our classroom. They have a former Albemarle County teacher that works for them now and she comes in and leads some of the projects and she's also created um kits so that i can also go around and use these solar panel kits with our students and just this morning they delivered um solar art kits so now we can use the solar panels so that the students can create art at the same time our kids get really excited about these opportunities and they get to see exactly what's happening on our roofs and how that powers our buildings to actually powering whatever they can put in their

[00:57:24] hands during those learning experiences again these lessons are also aligned to our Virginia SOLs and they strengthen our stem learning and our real-world career connections with our students John has also worked really hard to ensure that each of our buildings has an environmental sustainability liaison the teachers in these roles or the staff members in these roles extend sustainability work happening across the division and they bring this work into classrooms engaging students and managing actions in each school we're highlighting some of the same

[00:58:02] people this evening that you've seen highlighted earlier today for some similar but also different work the mhs the montella high school environmental club under the leadership of erica goff has been collecting waste paper towels from bathrooms and diverting that waste to the school's composting stream the student leaders are now working to expand this program because they want to educate their their peers during their advisory periods to just learn more about composting the albemore high school change club under the leadership of diana weber has turned grocery bags into plastic

[00:58:38] yarn and repurposed this waste by knitting sleeping mats and then they donate those mats to a homeless shelter the haven here in charlottesville this group has also collected over 950 pounds of plastic

films and they've donated those to treks decking to be reused as a result of their work this group was awarded UVA sustainability leadership award at the end of last year we also have sustainability liaisons Mary Morales and Chelsea Lundgren who collaborate together to educate students and fellow staff on sustainability and issues that has led Mountain View to

[00:59:17] receiving the National Wildlife Federation's Eco Schools Award. We also wanted to highlight a partnership between a collaboration between teachers at Walton Middle School, Heather Keppel and Jennifer Peart. They run a recycling club and last year they recycled over 1,000 pounds of paper.

[00:59:42] Annually, Albemarle County partners with Community Climate Collaborative, also known as C3. As you heard earlier from Megan Sullivan, they provide educational climate kits for every single fourth grader in the division. We also partner with local businesses to provide guaranteed meaningful watershed, educational learning experiences for all of our fourth graders, all of our sixth graders, and this year we're expanding those partnerships so that we can offer those experiences to

[01:00:13] our students in biology at the high school level. In 2024, the amount of compostable material collected exceeded all previous years combined we wanted to highlight this mid 2025 data shows that acps is on track to set another record this school year so you can see on this graph that these are actually annual ears and not academic school years another notable example includes walton middle school where the lead custodian melvin bradley collected and repurposed

[01:00:51] cardboard boxes throughout the year he stored them at the school eliminating the need to purchased new boxes for end-of-year packing for teachers as they needed to clean out and move to different rooms so this is also a very exciting night to be here i really appreciate all of the teacher recognitions that occurred earlier thank you so this part is is the recommendations from the committee again i was hoping hopeful that one of our committee members will be able to provide this information to you i'm sorry because i think it would be more meaningful to hear it from the committee but unfortunately like i said she was sick so i'll do my best i'm going a little off

[01:01:31] book here so the first recommendation from the committee is the adoption of an anti-idling reduction policy in our light duty fleet vehicles this this policy uh would be uh kind of incorporated into school board policy eba numerous benefits to idling reduction um obviously the health benefits all the things that come out of the tailpipe are not good for our health um nitrous oxides particles like pm 2.5 and pm 1 and pm 10 all of these things are known to cause asthma and other respiratory conditions especially in young people like our students and what's good for the person

[01:02:08] is typically good for the planet and so these these correlate to good benefits for the environment as well and there's a financial benefit there because you see less running of engines so you see less wear on engines less fuel usage so we see that financial benefit too so like i said this we're proposing this as a amendment to policy eba i know that the policy team is working on this right now so hopefully this will come before you shortly the policy some highlights of this policy it applies to all light duty fleet so it does not apply to our school bus fleet i know they already have a policy for how they handle idling it sets the maximum idling time at five minutes

[01:02:48] and it requires the operators stay with the vehicle while idling it allows exceptions for occupancy safety during times of high heat or high cold or you know extreme cold any time a vehicle needs to operate for continue to run to operate specialty equipment for maintenance and during warm times during cold weather and the language is intentionally brought broad and that allows each

department to develop sops within that department to meet their specific needs the second recommendation is for the the adoption of a light duty fleet as we transition vehicles

[01:03:27] over time this was a smart goal that was developed by the committee and one of the things i wanted to highlight is a and smart goals as we talk about them in our committee meetings we talk about the a being the achievable portion and we really look to our school board liaisons and then now today to your to our whole school board to determine whether this is achievable or not because we we identify achievable as is the division willing to do the work to make it happen and that's really for you all to tell us but we're recommending that it happens and so so this the highlights of this policy or this uh this goal will be beginning in fiscal year 2027 as vehicles come up for

[01:04:06] replacement we evaluate whether or not an ev that is comparable so still serving the division in the same way is available and if so replace it with an ev each vehicle will be evaluated and then we acknowledge that there may be a slight budget difference and we don't want to interrupt the the vehicle replacement cycle because we know it's already far behind and so we would be putting it would be working with us in the transportation department to create a budget proposal to cover any cost Delta between EVs and regular engine vehicles recommendation three this is one that was specifically from

[01:04:44] the committee to reduce single-use plastics in our schools and there's less of a specific action that the committee is asking for here and more of a general push to reduce single-use plastics. I think this is being seen a lot in our lunchrooms, but really across our programs. I pulled together some statistics this afternoon. I put these together every year to the Planning Commission, and we request this data. But the school division, by my estimates, generates somewhere near 2,900 tons of waste each year, and only 650 of those

[01:05:23] get diverted to recycling or compost and so that's a lot of waste that goes into the trash a lot of it's paper it's certainly heavy waste but i think a lot of it's also plastic coming out of our lunchrooms and so the committee has really asked that we really evaluate ways in which we can reduce our our single-use plastics there's a number of benefits associated with it and there's a lot of unnecessary waste generation i think in the lunchrooms especially where we have composting programs going on it becomes very hard for the students to pull that out and it kind of contaminates our compostable waste that's the picture that's here is a picture i receive pictures every time

[01:06:00] our compost company comes to collect it and they send me a picture of all the plastic they pulled out and so this is one of those pictures and so here are some suggestions that the committee put together on ways to do that again this is you know done through a budget initiative to bring more compostable materials and get some of these plastic items but we would welcome input from the board on on how they sell their best to deal with that the final recommendation um is for the board support and i know we we missed the salt the spores legislative agenda but for board uh support

[01:06:37] for any state level actions to enable on-site renewable energy at our schools um right now There are several barriers at the state level to implementing solar, and I'll show an example of this here in a moment.

[01:06:54] These include interconnection request delays, excessive grid upgrade costs, where the utility is actually requiring the schools to pay to upgrade their grid in order to interconnect solar. And then I know that also several of the larger utilities in the state are petitioning the State Corporation Commission to reduce the net metering credits.

[01:07:15] that means that that they would buy the solar back from us at a lower rate than we would buy electricity from them and that's that threatens the viability of these projects solar is one of the cheapest forms of energy generation available and so solar projects often offer long-term operational savings as well as the ability to meet our environmental and sustainability goals so it's a really critical um it's really critical for our for our ability to meet these climate action goals that have been set by the county and by the committee um and an example of this um this is walton middle school where one of the schools that's being worked on is this part part of this

[01:07:54] ppa project the the image on the left was the original design for the school um it was a 556 kilowatt project and it was estimated to generate 1.2 million dollars of savings over the 25 year life of this project dominion energy as part of our interconnection application indicated that we would need to install over a million dollars of equipment to update upgrade their grid before they would allow us to move forward with this project and so the option is either to pay this which would negate any savings from the project or we could reduce the project down below the

[01:08:28] threshold where they care but this dramatically reduces the amount of solar energy we can generate the amount of environmental benefit we receive and the amount of savings and so so the board respectfully asked that the or i'm sorry the committee respectfully asked that the school board support any sort of state action whether it be through the state corporation commission or legislation that would help with solar energy on our school buildings there are supposed to be a questions or feedback but that's all i have one the the board i'm sorry again the committee

[01:09:06] specifically requested two pieces of feedback number one is uh like like dr acaf said this is our fourth year um and and so we were wondering this this the end of our fourth year and so we were wondering a is the is the committee achieving the goals that it was set out to achieve um and b are there any topics that you all would like us to consider and discuss as we meet in this next year thank you very much i would i would like to invite our two school board representatives

[01:09:38] on that committee if they to start to start us out if you have any well the um one of the things that i mean we've been discussing the electric fleet replacement and um you know the plastics and certainly we have all discussed that here on the board several times but um i don't know that we've gotten any broad movement on it so i thought that the recommendation of you know directing staff to at least evaluate what our usage is um and see if there are places where we can reduce and ways that

[01:10:17] we can reduce would be i think that would be a positive step forward for us since we seem to discuss it it seems like we have agreement some agreement on the board that you know it's something that we should be looking at so that's where i would start with that mr page and uh with number three i think um aces had already started on some ideas of how to do that in schools and what even i think had a pilot program at one school so that would be one thing that i think we could really focus on quite a bit number three yes sir i agree um and and you're correct murray elementary school

[01:10:57] there were a few hiccups getting that off the ground first the dishwasher was broken and then they were down with staff member for a little while but at the beginning of november the pilot reusable flatware the reasonable flatware pilot did start at murray elementary school i have not heard anything as of yet as to how it's going but i know it's going yeah i was going to ask about that because they presented on it last year but i'd be curious to know what the if there's cost savings associated with the investment i think

that they had said that they had had some in storage that they were able to use if we were to implement this across the division what is the

[01:11:33] the cost of those single-use plastics versus the investment in washable silverware to use I think as we go into budget that would be an interesting comparison to have I think the main driving cost that made it seem like it may be unfeasible at a larger scale was actually the cost of labor to do the dishwashing and I don't think the cost of the utensils was the was the factor and I think one of the data points that we're really looking to get from the pilot at Murray is to determine and how many utensils are lost.

[01:12:07] I think one of the arguments against it was that the students are still gonna throw it, whether by accident or intentional. - Especially in elementary school. - Right, in the trash. And so one of the reasons we chose Murray, which I think is a good thing, but also a challenge is that they have such a robust program and they were so excited to do it.

[01:12:23] But I think they'll be also more likely to really see it through. We would hope we could do the pilot at two schools so we could kind of get better, more holistic data. - Yeah, I'd be interested in what the whole cost that shift would be I very much and maybe I was asleep last year but I very much like having concrete recommendations and so I really like to see that I have questions though about the vehicle replacement I don't really I have to confess I don't see I don't recall where in the budget that is I know it's not in the capital budget it's in the operating budget for small

[01:12:59] vehicles is that correct I'm not an expert here either there is a small fund called the vehicle replacement fund I think it has something like two hundred thousand dollars and I see Roslyn coming get the COO in here to in and what do we use those light vehicles for I would also be interested it is part of our operating fund is one of our special revenue funds because we transfer on a recurring basis it is grossly underfunded it was a it's something that

[01:13:32] anytime we have some one-time money we push to it so foreshadowing that potential request in the budget it is all of our non-school buses so think of all the trucks our electricians drive technology has some vehicles to move equipment it's all of your non-bright yellow is it used for student transportation as well so we do operate a fleet of vans for pupil transportation we have recently formed a committee to evaluate which ones need to be replaced first and people...

[01:14:07] And that would be included? ...obviously takes priority. Yeah, I just had a question about the language of comparable vehicles. I mean, that might need to be wordsmithed a bit.

[01:14:22] I mean, is it comparable in performance? I mean, they're not going to be right now, particularly when all the funding for subsidies has seemingly vanished. Right. think the the full report did provide a more comprehensive list of the ways that they should be evaluated against each other um so it was as you said daily mileage um performance the job that basically something that can do the same job for the division so obviously you wouldn't replace an electrician's van with a prius right i i was i was really looking at the dollar signs but yeah so that was the one thing that we weren't looking uh apples to apples on because we knew that there may

[01:15:01] be some cost differences some vehicles think are are comparable in price and some are not and so that's where that uh budget request would come come in and and i was talking with the transportation department today on that and i think we're going to do it perhaps as a separate request

from the vehicle replacement fund so they can kind of be evaluated each on their own speaking of vehicles with respect to the idling policy have we ever done a study like how many cars are lined up at agner every morning and how much time is spent on that how do we get our hands around the volume of

[01:15:40] emissions you know because of the drop-off lanes yeah that's been a big area of discussion with the committee and it's i think it's a harder thing for the committee to recommend on i think what we talked about doing was using this liaison program to maybe see if we get some students to go out there and collect some of that data but we haven't done anything concrete with that yet but even just the numbers I mean of course some of that some of the cues for for that are some on the streets not on public not on school property so you I know that they go for maybe not blocks and blocks but for

[01:16:17] quite a while it'd be nice to have some data about that like how many I know in my neighborhood it's Greer and Agner whenever I drive by there's big queue I'm sure it's the case all over the county but I think it is um I think my question about whether um the committee is meeting goals is I wonder what it was like before we had the committee it was only like five years ago I don't remember like how was the division handling you know our

[01:16:52] footprint and our sustainability efforts is that you know fully staff or I mean is it different miss colson and i were the ones who who advocated for this committee i mean there was a lot of activity within the division doing really good work on solar panels or various energy sustainability activities this had the effect of putting it all under one umbrella perhaps the information is all centralized and it coordinated with the county's climate action plan and we also have brought it

[01:17:31] more system systematically into the classrooms so i mean i do think it has so i mean can it be tweaked or improved i'm sure we all every committee can be but i have been extraordinarily impressed with the seriousness of the work and and now the recommendations it's always a follow through that's hard and that's on us i agree i think if i can add one thing to that you can add many thank you one thing that i feel like i saw was that acps really was a leader in this area but we were leading with little projects we were we were leading by doing little things and and

[01:18:10] that's part of this committee we're starting to make more systemic change and i think that's really interesting to see from my point of view yeah i really what i really appreciate from the meetings is that um i think there's a real sense of responsibility of our magnitude you know in the community and how important it is that we are leaders in that way and that we take responsibility for you know what we're putting out so to me it's very important i think it's doing very important work miss curry do you have anything to add about focus on environmental

[01:18:46] sustainability you don't have to but one little thing that i just took from that is um about the idling um idling program that you mentioned i know for western and specific um the first thing I thought of is in the mornings when you're coming into school and when you're coming out of school. Western only has one road going in and out. And I know there will be long lines of traffic for cars coming into the school and buses coming into the school. And

[01:19:21] that just made me think that I know that those admissions essentially just sitting there waiting to come into the school, waiting to leave out of the school, that would definitely be prominent for western also um and there are solutions that to be made there are solutions that um will be made and can be made but that's just what i was i noticed that that it's definitely prominent for western also thank you any other comments thank you so much thank you i appreciate

[01:19:50] that and ms dudley and ms soulsby and ms mcgill thank you all for being here um next on our agenda as we're moving through all of these end of year reports comprehensive system of professional

[01:20:08] learning by dr megan wood and tony borash good evening i am megan wood and i'm the director of professional learning and i have with me tonight mr tony borash the assistant director for professional learning and we're going to share some updates on the work that we've been doing

[01:20:44] to support our staff our work really lies in goal three of the strategic plan around equitable and transformative resources specifically around the retention and development of high quality staff so tonight's presentation will focus on those two actions and programs that we're developing and supporting to to retain and develop high quality staff and then we'll look at the steps and the priorities that we're going to take moving forward we're going to highlight two programs we are doing more than just these two programs but we wanted to bring attention

[01:21:20] to two programs that we're offering to support our teachers around retention the first program is our novice teacher induction program this is a three-year program and the goal of this program is to not only orient novice teachers which are teachers new to the profession and that's regardless of their licensure route it's not only to orient them but it's to integrate them into the admiral county public school community currently we are serving 80 teachers these are teachers that are in their first or second year of teaching next year we will expand the program to include teachers in their first second and third year of the program right now we have a specific

[01:21:59] cohort of instructional coaches that just focus on supporting novice teachers and their caseloads are indicated on the slide right now we their their caseload is one coach per 20 novice teachers and then next year we anticipate that their caseload will go up to one coach per 30 teachers i think it's important at this time to highlight the changing demographics of our novice teacher cohort you will see in 2023 we hired more teachers that had that went through a traditional pathway which means a four-year program or a master's program to become a teacher this year we have reached the tipping point and right now we have hired more teachers that have gone through a

[01:22:38] non-traditional pathway to receive their licensure meaning these teachers are career switchers or or have gone through a different pathway to get their licensure so they have provisional licensing so that changing demographic is something that we certainly will be keeping an eye on as we discuss our programming and what that looks like the programming that we offer these teachers is like i said already it's a three-year program it's progressive in support the first year is intense terms of providing coaching support weekly that coaching support could look like a meeting with a teacher one-on-one or it could look like the coach going

[01:23:18] into the classroom and providing co-teaching support or modeling lessons or doing observations and providing feedback we also offer up throughout the year of four targeted workshops and then you can see on the right side of this slide the curricular concepts that are covered in year one and two these topics and concepts are based on the needs and the feedback that we've received from our novice teachers and what they feel like is most relevant to their to their experience one development of this program that we've shifted in the last year I think as we have incorporated the culturally responsive micro

[01:23:56] credentialing process into this programming so at the end of three years they will have met the board's requirement to receive their micro credential so that we are enculturating that into the process. We gather data from our novice teachers and over 94% of the respondents when asked did they feel like

they were supported on a scale of one to five with five being completely supported, 94% of the respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with regard to the support that they have received in this

[01:24:31] program additionally we collect qualitative data these are four powerful quotes from teachers that have been enrolled in this program these quotes speak to the confidence that the novice teacher network has helped them develop it also speaks to the community that we're building through this cohort model additionally it speaks to developing the reflective practice around intentional instructional decision making and then on and then the last one speaks to the retention the value of this program on the retention at least for that participant at this point i'm going to

[01:25:07] turn it over to mr borash and he's going to talk about the new teacher induction program that started this year thank you dr wood thank you board for having the opportunity to speak with you as we as we referenced at the outset this focus on retention targets both our new to the profession and are new to the division teachers and this induction part of our process focuses on those who are coming into our division while having veteran experiences so significant level of background experience and skill sets that are maybe extension beyond those that are new to the profession they are new to our division which means there's a significant transition period that

[01:25:43] they would be experiencing as they come to join us and so the supports that we offer for those folks this past year we had 78 teachers for whom that applied over the course of this as a first year new to a CPS teacher they're all specifically receiving support from our instructional coaching team to help support their induction into the school division and the orientation with that we anticipate that in the next year given that hiring processes generally follow a year-to-year trend that's that's pretty aligned that that number would double in size next year so that would impact the ratio that would support

[01:26:19] as we look at the progressive support similarly to that which is provided to the novice teacher induction supports. This one is for new to ACPS teachers that have that veteran experience, is less about building the core skill sets of the foundational practices and much more about their orientation to the division.

[01:26:38] So the first semester of their experiences here, the weekly and then later approximately biweekly supports that they receive from the instructional coach is really around orientation to the resources they have available and knowing how to access those resources to support themselves, to support their students and support their school.

[01:26:55] As they move into the second semester of their first year and moving beyond to their second year of year two, we then begin units of study that, as Dr. Wood referenced, it enculturate the elements of the framework quality learning, as well as the micro-credentialing through CRE into specific units of study that coaches partner with these new to ACPS teachers to support the transfer of the learning into practice.

[01:27:22] not only meets the micro-credentialing needs, but also helps to ensure that folks are building that shared culture as they join us in the work. To briefly review, just because we have reference and there was a question to be able to speak to this a bit, to focus on that continual embedding of the culturally responsive education programmatic supports.

[01:27:43] We are seeking to ensure that those are new to the division, that that support is built into their induction, such that it's not something separate, but something aligned. and we've worked closely together with the equity team to be able to help align that work throughout.

[01:27:59] As far as satisfaction data so far, as Dr. Wood referenced, we are almost just past a quarter in to this implementation. So what we've been able to learn so far from those participants who have responded, they're seeing to be helpful in their transition to the role, as well as explicitly on the partnership with curriculum assessment and instruction, being able to have the resources that they need to support.

[01:28:21] We anticipate that as we're moving forward, we are actively collecting data on that implementation to ensure that we're seeing the participation in and completion of the program requirements over time and tracking their effective data of really their satisfaction of that support through their participant satisfaction survey.

[01:28:38] Because we track this work throughout our coaching partnerships, we can also be able to see the impact on the transfer into practice through this partnership as well. That wraps our focus on retention And now I think we move into the opportunities for development.

[01:28:56] - So we really believe that learning happens on a continuum. And so we like to make sure that we're attending to the needs of learners. And so we really try to offer opportunities that increase teachers' knowledge around their building their capacity.

[01:29:12] Additionally, we wanna provide opportunities that build readiness to transfer their learning to the classroom. And then we also wanna provide opportunities for them to transfer their learning to practice. So we're gonna highlight an example of each of these types of opportunities. The first being Making Connections.

[01:29:28] I was practicing this earlier in my office and realized that that just happened last week, which feels like it was a year ago. Many of you know Making Connections is an annual conference that we run at Monticello High School. We provided 271 different sessions throughout the day for teachers to attend.

[01:29:47] The trends in those sessions focused around instructional design and effective teaching, technology integration, supporting multilingual learners. The purpose of this is to expose staff members to best practice related to areas of personal interest and choice. So it is set up like a conference.

[01:30:02] If you were to go to a conference, teachers self enroll in sessions. We had a mix of presenters from external. Some of our vendors like HMH came and presented and some other vendors came to present. But also we have several staff members that like to highlight the practices that they're implementing in their classroom and to share with their colleagues.

[01:30:23] So it's a mix of external and internal presenters. So we just hosted that in November. I mean, yeah, November 3rd, and our feedback on that event from the respondents so far is promising. You can see that the majority of respondents indicated that they were on a scale of one to five of engagement, that the majority of them, 94%, were engaged at least a three or higher.

[01:30:46] Satisfaction data, many of the respondents indicated over 72% were somewhat satisfied or completely satisfied with the options that were offered for them to attend the sessions. And when we analyzed the qualitative data, the trends that emerged were that they found the presenters engaged and knowledgeable, and they modeled practical research-based strategies in the sessions so that teachers could see what that looks like in actuality, that the sessions were hands-on and interactive, benefited from the collaborative and networking with colleagues and experts to share ideas

[01:31:22] and problem solve, that the choice and the relevance of the sessions aligned to their individual interests and professional goals, and that they were able to take actionable steps after attending these sessions. We also asked for data on impact, and obviously this is perception data from the participants.

[01:31:41] People reported that they felt like their knowledge prior to and after increased by about 18 percent around the sessions that they attended and we saw a 21 percent increase in their confidence in applying the the information that they had learned and so now we want to shift to an example of how we build readiness you all know about the virginia literacy act last year i thought it would be interesting to bring letters volume one and letters volume two back into the conversation because i feel like there is some room for celebration we selected letters volume

[01:32:18] one as a way as a pathway to meet the virginia literacy requirements last year as you all know um and the reason why we did that is because it felt like it aligned to the high quality characteristics of professional development and i'm happy to share with you that at the school year last year we had a 99.3 completion rate of letters volume one and the vla requirements when we solicited feedback on the experience people reported that the asynchronous learning of letters deepened their understanding of how reading develops in students it strengthened their ability to make intentional evidence-based instructional decisions it increased reflection on

[01:32:52] their practice and it created shared language for reading instruction additionally we supported the development of district-led facilitators and we received really positive feedback about that colleagues like learning from other people in their building and that's a model continued to move forward and we're looking at ways that we can expand our facilitators around other types of professional learning so that people are learning from people that they know.

[01:33:22] Because of the feedback that we received, we offered, this is the most exciting piece of data for me, we offered teachers the opportunity to self-enroll in Letters Volume 2. And out of the people that participated, 88 elementary staff self-enrolled in Letters Volume 2, which is 20% of the teachers that participated last year.

[01:33:42] We currently have a wait list for the cohort. We're looking to see if we can increase the number of people that we can support in that starting in January. A lot of that will depend on budget and the number of people that are interested. But we definitely still have a demand for people to continue that learning that they started last year.

[01:34:01] In addition to that, we opened the opportunity for secondary teachers to enroll in Letters Volume 1. We have a small cohort of secondary teachers that self-selected to enroll in Letters Volume 1. And then of course, we're still using Letters Volume 1 to meet the requirements of the VLA.

[01:34:17] So we currently have 53 elementary staff members that are enrolled in that, and that's three cohorts of that. We have not collected data just yet on letters volume one and volume two because we're just starting the in-person training sessions.

[01:34:35] But when we do collect data, it'll be similar to the data that we're collecting on the new to ACPS induction program. We'll look at implementation data, we'll look at effective data, and we'll look at impact on transfer of practice. And at this point, I'm gonna turn the mic back over to Mr. Borash and he's gonna talk to you about our job embedded professional learning.

[01:34:54] And for this, we have selected to highlight instructional coaching. - So as Dr. Wood referenced, those three categories of professional learning opportunities, this one specific to instructional coaching is meant to be a job embedded professional learning means to help support the knowledge that teachers have into the practices to help support their students.

[01:35:16] Some of the core elements we'd like to lift up that coaching partnerships really are focused on a goal-oriented approach that's ongoing and sustained over time that's a mix of reflection and action such that by reflecting on practice they can make more effective action as they move forward into the future how it happens is really through a myriad of different paths but the easiest way to describe it is actually through a story that I'm about to share it with you there's two different areas of focus one is at the outset of a coaching partnership through the analysis of data to identify a core goal that you want to be able to use to move forward and the second piece would be focused on the implementation of that coaching

[01:35:53] work through a number of different partnership pathways the story that we'll share with you here today is a story from one of our teachers here at our school division partnered with a coach to transfer the newly adopted math curriculum into practice after their orientation session and building knowledge through that way they sought out the coaches support to help help them transfer that into the practice with their students through that partnership they started by backward designing their work together, which really just means reviewing the standards, reviewing the associated assessments and the new curriculum, and starting to think about what possible misconceptions might their students walk in with, as well as what needs

[01:36:31] that might the teacher have to build their own knowledge around the content that they're going to help to work through. And through that partnership and goal setting, they're able to identify the coaching partnership that will help them transfer that work alongside each other into their students.

[01:36:47] every other week and i say approximately meaning it follows the schedule of the units and and the lessons themselves but approximately every other week this teacher and the coach work together to be able to implement individual lessons at the classroom level to co-teach model and refine that practice together and to move into using the student data from each of those lessons as well as the end of week assessments to determine the impact and adjust their instructional practice as a result when we look at the outcomes of that coaching process we've seen two key impacts on that one is around the teachers impact of their practice they specifically reference they increase

[01:37:24] knowledge and skill as well as their confidence in the ability to apply that practice now they feel like the curriculum is theirs and it's something that they can use as they move forward but not only that just for our teachers it's also for our students through the quarter one assessment data that's come through the students have demonstrated significant success on the outcomes associated with that assessment and the principal at that school has reported a supreme really supreme confidence in what's happening in the school and what they're seeing the students do on a day-to-day basis so it's not solely with the data it's also with the story throughout that's one of the 100 stories that's happening across our school division over the course of this first quarter

[01:38:00] we've worked with just under 500 educators across our pk-12 spectrum you might notice a discrepancy between the elementary and secondary the largely largely that difference is based on the staffing allocation and how we've staffed schools there are eight coaches supporting our 15 elementary schools while there are three coaches supporting all of our secondary schools so that limits their

bandwidth to be able to spread that support across the way though that targeted support is supporting those is helping to advance those that receive it what we've seen as far as satisfaction data when

[01:38:34] people are asked about coaching 9.3 out of 10 i know 0.3 people isn't really a person but you get sense of significant recommendation of partnering with a coach to a colleague that they would feel comfortable and excited to be able to do that when looking in and disaggregating the reasons why or the benefits that they see they focus on collaborative reflection that they experience in their partnership with a coach use of data to inform goal-setting the instructional design and delivery outcomes that come from it and the confidence that they feel just being able to see this the words of our teachers through their partnership has been really powerful to us it's not just

[01:39:10] their words, though, it's also in the data that they report and that they were able to see in terms of the impact on their learning. We can see here that through that partnership in teaching, they report a 33% increase in knowledge and 37% increase in application across the board for those that are engaging with coaches and work through that, as well as 88% indicating that there's either a desired or more than expected impact on the learning that they're seeing with their students as a result of their partnership. So in short, those that are working with coaches are seeing that transfer into practice successfully help them and help their students. We're really

[01:39:46] excited to be able to name that. So we're just going to take a brief moment to look at the work moving forward and then open it up for questions. Our priority is to develop a systematic approach to adult learning that focuses on both the development and retention of staff. Our current areas of focus are aligning professional learning structures to increase professional capacity around job-related skills and support transfer of knowledge into practice, establish a professional learning curriculum that balances guaranteed experiences with differentiated approaches for staff engagement, and increase collaboration between the Department of Professional Learning

[01:40:23] and stakeholders to support division priorities, and then continue to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement by supporting reflective practices through job-embedded professional learning. priorities and current areas of focus have uh were first grounded in the bellwether report and then we've modified and adjusted and adapted them based on the feedback that we're getting from the programming that we're offering and again we just wanted to highlight some ways that we're doing this work there are other ways one area that we chose not to focus on tonight but we are expanding the support that we're providing we offered a classified making connections that was essentially

[01:41:01] the same size. There were, I think, 171 sessions at that one. That was on October 13th, and we offered that opportunity for all of our employees, classified employees as well. So we are continuing to work with other departments outside of instruction as well to support the development of high-quality staff. So at this time, we're done, and if you guys have questions we're open to them I have a question about the coaching for my I know

[01:41:39] that last year because of budget cuts we actually cut the number of instructional coaches with the idea of focusing on new teachers new hires and it from if I understand what you're doing new curricula I mean is that is the coaching for those three categories I'm the new math curriculum and is that all being done by that core group of instructional coaches? That's correct. And remind me we had 21, we're maybe 18. We have 25 and we have 15 now. We have what? We had 25 and

[01:42:16] we're down to 15. Yeah I knew I didn't know we ever had 20 I knew that that was allocate that was we had the FTEs we didn't always have the funding for 25 but now we're down to 15 doing a lot of doing a lot of coaching. Yeah so those are specific to novice teacher support right and then the remaining 11 are eight are at elementary schools and three are at secondary and those 11 support new to the division but veteran teachers so they support the school's priorities they support individual coaching and then they also

[01:42:52] are supporting new to the division coaching and are they supporting the new curriculum like the the new math? Yes. Okay. Yeah. So the eight elementary coaches are supporting the curriculum, the school priorities, and individual needs. They've got a lot on their plates. Yes. Could you go back to the slide on the student learning impact, please? Yeah. There we go. This one? Yes.

[01:43:22] Yes. Do you have, this seems objective from the coaches or I mean teachers perspective, right? Do Do we have any concrete data on effects on student learning for grades or SOLs or anything like that?

[01:43:38] Yeah, I think that so what we're doing now is we are if teachers, I'm going to try to be as succinct as possible. If teachers engage in a coaching cycle, they are setting a goal can be around student learning or professional growth.

[01:43:56] And then we're measuring was that goal attained. It's really hard to say I worked with an instructional coach around this one thing for six weeks and then try to tie that to SOL data, so that's a really hard thing to do, so we have to be very intentional about that.

[01:44:16] The story that we told, there is assessment data that indicates that that coaching cycle was impactful based on those student results, so we can do that because it was around a a specific unit of study and a specific assessment, but to take SOLs and say, oh, you worked with a coach, why are your SOL scores like this?

[01:44:36] That would be really hard to draw that connection. - So for a teacher whose students historically do not perform well on SOLs or on testing, can a principal or an administrator with that teacher to try to agree with that? - Yeah, so one of the things a couple of years ago, the model, we've shifted the model to be a little bit more responsive to needs.

[01:45:01] And so we have two different categories and ways that administrators can recommend coaching. One is, hey, I noticed that you're really interested in this and you might want to reach out to an instructional coach, or the other can be a little bit more directive. And then there's a process in which we engage in enrolling a teacher in that coaching because it needs to be handled respectfully, it needs to be handled delicately, and it needs to be very clear about the outcomes the coaching we don't want principals to say I need you to go work with an instructional coach because we want your scores to come up that leaves too much ambiguity around the type of work that the coach and teacher need to engage in

[01:45:40] and so we're really trying to help when we have principals that want to assign for a lack of a better word a coach to a teacher we Tony or I meet with that principal then we meet with the coach we meet with the teacher to make sure that whatever they're going after is very clear so that the outcome that is intended can actualize okay thank you all right with the novice program how much emphasis is given on the culturally responsive teaching component so what we've done is we have the four novice teacher instructional coaches and then we have megan washburn who was here tonight presented

[01:46:20] she's part of that team and so anytime that they're developing the curriculum she's working with them to make sure that there's explicit ties to the culturally responsive curriculum that has already been developed to ensure that the teachers are getting the same quality and the same learning so that we all have a common understanding of what it means to be a culturally responsive educator so there's a really tight alignment to the current program to the new program any other comments questions i was really impressed with how many of the student of the

[01:46:57] teachers signed up for letters too yeah that was exciting to see because i know that there was a different narrative last year we got a lot of letters last year that is that is true so it sounds like they've made it through yes good yep which is good and the same thing i i know we had a little snag at the very beginning of the year with respect to the new math curriculum is that has that been that's probably not in your bailiwick yeah i'm gonna look at dr hayes for that one okay so some of the things we can work on in-house other things are things we have to work on with

[01:47:35] so as a part of that work our team is meeting with our vendors weekly to get updates on corrections to the material when we'll get new materials and additional resources that they can provide for the district at no cost so that our staff has what they need we also are working with our building level staff to help provide them with support such as writing assessments figuring out which materials that we already had in-house that we can continue to use like

[01:48:09] different manipulatives and then reporting out updates to the buildings and as timely as we can with what we're getting back from the vendors okay it sounds like the qualitatively different issues i mean there was learning letters and then with with the math curriculum there were some mistakes in the materials that the vendor issues okay we're making progress yeah we're making progress not as as fast as we would like but the vendor is very responsive and we're working as fast as we can in-house to get the materials out the tangible you know items out and then

[01:48:44] working on assessments and questions that the staff can use in their classrooms and i will say that the coaches we have some coaches that are part of the team as well so that they're apprised of what's happening so that they can support teachers any more comments or questions just a quick comment that in one difference between the implementation of the hmh curriculum and the new math curriculum is the significant reductions we made to central services staff so it does have an impact when we make those reductions thank you dr wood mr borash thank you

[01:49:24] well the school board started at 5 15 so let's take a 10 minute break so come back at 8 30.

[02:00:12] well it's evening yes good late afternoon evening um we're back in session now and the first presentation uh on the agenda after the um break is approval of the capital improvement plan and we have mr workman here or okay or miss schmidt either one good evening uh my name is matt workman director of building services um maya kumazawa sorry she can't be here this evening she had a prior commitment uh this evening and so normally she'd be here presenting this to you all

[02:00:49] but um rosalynd and i will do our best to fill in her shoes um so we're back here this evening uh following up from our the previous board meeting in october around the capital improvement plan request to the board of supervisors just a quick reminder of where we are in the process and tonight's purpose the purpose of this evening's meeting is for the school board to discuss the recommendations and propose any changes if needed and then ultimately to take action to adopt a cip request that will go to the board of supervisors where we are in the process you can see the

[02:01:25] schedule there on the right where the november 13th business meeting to approve the cip request the next meeting will be the december 3rd joint meeting with the board of supervisors leading up to the county executive's recommended budget which will include the cip on or around february 25th just a quick overview uh what we talked about last meeting of where we of what the request includes this first slide includes the ongoing programs in the cip including the project management program school bus replacement funds school maintenance and replacement of our facilities

[02:02:03] as well as network and audio visual equipment for a five-year total of 119.4 million dollars this next slide is the remainder of the cip program request there are some changes from what we presented to you in october and those changes are all highlighted in yellow hopefully that's coming through on your screens i will just quickly go through those changes um we we took the took your your leadership and said that the northern feeder pattern has already included in the cip

[02:02:37] and started our numbering with the comprehensive high school we also rolled in a land acquisition into that project as a placeholder there's no there's no amount to it just because land acquisition costs are very variable depending on where exactly we were to look in the county other changes since the previous meeting we did update some project estimates for both the albemarle and western albemarle high school improvements as we look back at those projects over the last since the previous meeting we think a couple costs on a couple of those projects have

[02:03:13] gone up we also realized that since that study was first done there's a couple other needs that have in some of those schools and so accordingly we increased those costs to readjusted them as well as provided necessary requested funds for the additional scope based on your feedback we moved the western albemarle high school improvements up to the number four ranking as well as moved the preschool center up to the number five ranking we also based on your request put together a preliminary estimate for the preschool center at 53.7 million dollars and

[02:03:52] then lastly we did retain the land acquisition for future projects there are other needs such as for example the middle school master plan study recommends a new middle school at some point in the future and so we did retain a land acquisition placeholder amount for those other needs outside grants of high school i will quickly go through the top really seven projects just to quickly remind you of what they are so the first was the comprehensive high school

[02:04:28] this project scope would include the construction of a comprehensive high school in the northern feeder pattern to alleviate overcrowding in all of our high schools as well as to address long-term growth in the county projected capacity would be the 14 to 1600 student range there as as we talked about the previous meeting uh there is a current site um the burkmar proper or now called the schroeder's branch proper that's available and technically possible could work with some

[02:05:00] significant challenges or an alternative to obviously purchase new land the request is for this to open into the 31 32 school year the next number two on the list was stony point in numbers six and seven respectively where murray and broadest would um would be elementary school improvements to these three schools the one thing i really want to highlight on this slide because we really didn't talk about it last time there's a link if the public wants to go to it on this slide but we did publish a new report this year with the long-range planning study which really

[02:05:39] did a deep dive into these three schools where we we had a consultant dlr group out of northern Virginia came in, did a really thorough facility condition assessment of all three, and then

proposed some specific recommendations and changes to these facilities. There's some schematic floor plans for all three. All three include additions as well, which seek to alleviate some minor capacity challenges, as well as ensuring that we're providing parity at these schools in comparison with our other elementary schools across the division. Example, Stony

[02:06:16] Point has four trailers. So there'd be a small addition to be able to accommodate the programs that are in those trailers and to get them off the site. Murray, for example, has their office space is significantly smaller in comparison to other schools in our division. And so there's an office addition proposed to that school to make sure that they have the same resources and spaces that other schools have. Next is comprehensive improvements to Albemarle and Western Albemarle again there's a link there to the master plan study that was

[02:06:51] completed really about two and a half years ago now but these are just major renovations to these two high schools everything from bathroom renovations corridor improvements increased daylighting projects of that nature and then lastly is the preschool center again we have recently put an estimate this at 53.7 million dollars the idea would be to construct a new facility to combine preschool programs in the urban area our preliminary kind of program if you will has 20 classrooms in this

[02:07:30] facility this would open up that does offer opportunities for growth but it would under current capacity or enrollment numbers would free up 14 classrooms in five of our existing elementary schools including Greer, Agner, Woodbrook, Hollymead and Broadest Wood so there would be some capacity relief in those existing schools as well with the completion of this project and so with that we have a couple recommended actions here for you I'm happy to answer any

[02:08:06] questions additional remaining questions you may have otherwise I turn it over to you anyone have any comments I have a question whatever we can get it in so I don't interrupt someone thank you my question is around just I kind of agree with that order the question I between Murray and Broaduswood when you look at the facility ratings Broaduswood is considered inadequate and Murray is considered poor neither of those are good ratings but I feel like we should

[02:08:46] be moving our inadequate schools before our poor rating schools for renovation so I didn't know I was just interested in the why for that is it just that we're trying to provide support in the different areas of the county um but I did not that was one of the one of the pieces I didn't understand why because for a while Broad has been above Murray and kind of the need for updates yeah thank you Dr. Burland for the question um I don't have the numbers in front of me I apologize but I believe Murray has some more pressing capacity challenges as compared to Broadus Wood.

[02:09:25] So I think that was the thinking around Murray over Broadus Wood was really more of a capacity perspective as opposed to facility. - These are three of our oldest schools. I can't remember when Murray was built, but I know Stony Point was 1935 and Broadus Wood was 1936.

[02:09:45] And there's both physical plant, both the building and the sites need significant work. I don't know, Ms. Schmidt, do you know what the pressing issues are at Murray?

[02:10:00] I sort of agree with Dr. Berlin that the two were, Murray and Broadus Wood were, not Murray, Stony Point and Broadus Wood were listed in the greatest need at one point. - Yeah, so when you look at existing facilities, you're right on the facility, what do we call it, The facility condition index, Broadus Wood

is lower, but as far as capacity needs, Murray's at capacity, it's lacking any small spaces, so the additions would provide some relief there.

[02:10:32] We had to recently move a pre-K program because they didn't have space, et cetera. But I think we are splitting hairs a little bit. I think both are needed. Murray was built in 1960. I just remember Stoney Point and Roddus Wood have always been sort of at the bottom.

[02:10:48] get kicked down every time i mean with more pressing issues but is that the same then why is why did western move below albemarle when it comes to school improvements and then also i guess in conjunction with that we have the western edition down at 19 but being funded in 27. could you elaborate on that a little bit yes there are two questions um i'll tackle the high school improvements

[02:11:21] questions first um we actually did a couple things there was you may recall and we've used it in a couple of slide decks over the last couple of years there was a facility condition assessment done as part of the 2016 study where it looked at the whole facility but it was 2016 that's nine years ago now and so we actually this past fall did an internal facility condition assessment of all three high schools and a lot of the things that scored low at Western in that 2016 study which was really a comprehensive look at the building or

[02:11:57] systems such as MEP the elevator that sort of thing and over the last nine years through our CIP maintenance program we've actually already upgraded a lot of those systems at Western so just offhand in the last five to eight years we've replaced all the roof at Western all the electrical panels have been replaced the elevator has been upgraded most of the hvac has been upgraded at that school and so when we looked at these two schools and the remaining work that's to be to be taken needs to be done our internal facility condition assessment which was just completed this last spring and fall or it's gonna be

[02:12:35] spring and summer showed the album are was actually scoring lower at this point in time which is why it's ranked higher um for your second question that's where long-range planning ranked it but based on the board's direction to pursue and this is going back two or three meetings to pursue the comprehensive high school and then to also consider additions to Western that's why it's in fiscal year 27 okay all right thank you for that clarification I had a couple more

[02:13:09] questions if that's okay I'm on the preschool center you have 53.7 million but on the slide you talked about it being a combined program with in with the urban ring is that a shared cost with I mean we looked at you know like combining it with Charlottesville or United Way or things like that and is this the total cost of that program if Albemarle were to fund it alone or are we looking at it being if we're combining programs it being a shared cost So the \$53.7 million is what it would cost if we were to design and build it ourselves.

[02:13:48] Okay. I think that's something we should consider if we're combining programs, we're talking about, you know, like we said, it's a ring, right? And like... Well, just to clarify, when we say combining, it's ACPS's existing programs that we're combining.

[02:14:05] Right. That being said, there's a lot of opportunity in this project vision, and it's really in its infancy which is why it was to be determined last meeting this is just depends there's a lot of opportunity yes both with community partners we've talked about does it is employee like a benefit that yeah kids there's so this is just the structure so this would be the max price yes that it would cost if we were to just

fund the whole thing but if we did not go in on co-funding and okay yeah thank you for that yeah and then I just had a few questions on the

[02:14:39] northern high school so this total includes potential land purchase is that correct or am I misreading that yeah we didn't the short answer is no we did not put a dollar value to land acquisition which is why it's to be determined okay I know that's really confusing because it's in fiscal year 27 but the reality is there's a lot of variability on land costs in Albemarle County particularly in the area where in the area where we're looking right okay and then i think the first decision

[02:15:15] point is whether to whether or not to utilize the proper that we have so that study is still ongoing i think we'll bring that back to the goal if this project gets prioritized and keeps moving forward and that's the property we discussed this week that we has significant challenges but is as we not as bad as we originally thought yes okay um that will factor whether you need to purchase land or not another variable i got you okay um and then i guess my question is where does like a ppea come in and when do we start talking about that i we have two board of supervisors here tonight and

[02:15:49] miss mckee and i have had this discussion before as a possible way to lower the cost of funding this high school and community members have reminded me that we have a significant amount a property at um baker butler that could potentially be used in a ppea that may be desirable for developers um at what point does that come into play here as we're looking at costs and you know we have to take this to the board of supervisors and wanting to be mindful of what we're asking for

[02:16:23] and um being respectful of the fact that this is a lot of money and um how are we Finding the best use of our funds, I guess In terms of if we were assuming this schedule, let's just say the schedule were to be followed You really wouldn't need to make that vision Doing some quick schedule in my head real quick. I'm sorry. You really wouldn't need to make that decision till mid-2028 Okay, don't hold me to that My point is you don't have to make that decision now

[02:17:03] - Okay, but that could significantly reduce the total cost of the school. - Yeah, potentially. I mean, I think obviously the biggest barrier in all of this is the affordability of it, right? - Right. - And so I think that the joint board meeting is the next conversation around, I mean, we need their partnership in doing that, right?

[02:17:20] And so to me, that's the next step to start talking about how do we tackle this? This is a huge need, but it's a huge cost. And to me, that's the next step. but you're right it's going to be a long-term conversation now okay all right thank you for that clarification that's all i mean i think our job is to to look at what we need to educate our kids and and what what options we have both for addressing capacity and uh renovating the existing structures and looking i have to say as you know i was not an early person in favor of the new high

[02:17:59] school but in looking at the range of options we've been focusing for the past several years on our elementary schools and and building capacity with West you know with the Crozet expansion with Mountain View Upper North Point is coming but our high schools are bursting at the seams I know Miss Spillman is constantly reminding us that Western Albemarle is not the only high school that's bursting and where all of our high schools are.

[02:18:28] This is a solution, if we're bold enough to take it, that would create four similarly-sized schools across the county and would solve our high school capacity challenges for a generation at least.

[02:18:46] It's expensive. We will have to redraw the district lines, which will cause some consternation. And, but we'll end up with four similarly sized high schools and that we won't have to work, we'll still have to worry about renovating the existing ones.

[02:19:10] But, you know, we won't be dealing with capacity as a main driving force of all of our decisions, which is what it's been. I mean, capacity issues have delayed, even putting elevators in some of the schools that we've had.

[02:19:27] We've had to make capacity number one, which is why Stony Point hasn't been renovated even though it's on our list every single year. So, well, I just said what my top priority is.

[02:19:44] The others, I mean, I highly value the recommendations of the Long Range Planning Committee, but I guess if there's some more discussion, let's have it.

[02:20:01] Otherwise, perhaps. Top five were good for me. Ms. Osborne is always succinct. Can you put the motion back up, Mr. Wirtman?

[02:20:17] I move to adopt the school board capital improvement program request for FY2627 to FY203031 as presented. Second. Motion made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Page. All those in favor?

[02:20:34] Aye. Aye. Opposed? Unanimous. Thank you so much. Thank you. i did want to acknowledge too david storm who's from the lrp pac was here this evening so yeah i saw him over there thank you um next item of business moving right along in our many reports

[02:20:55] tonight is dr dallas hit talking about the state of the division good evening everyone um as dr acup said i'm dallas hit i'm one of the directors and strategic i'm pleased to be with you again for for the second time to share our 2024-25 state of the division report.

[02:21:27] And yes, it is the second year. You may not recognize me this year. I have to wear glasses. So I just want to make sure you remember I was here last year, a year later. The state of the division report is our opportunity to consider the vast body of effort and the work that the division undertook in the previous school year and identify progress challenges based on a set of predetermined metrics that give us insight into the extent to which we are meeting our strategic plan's three goals.

[02:21:57] As a refresher, the State of the Division tracks the same metrics year over year that were established during the development of the strategic plan. The metrics are high-level data points on a spectrum of key measures that the division and community identified as ones to watch. With any presentation based on data, we expect that what you see tonight will peak your interest perhaps spark interest in learning more deeply about a particular milestone or metric. Some of these questions might have been addressed in previous or upcoming presentations. For example, Dr. McLaughlin provided two presentations in the last few months in August and September that looked more granularly at the preliminary student achievement data and included analyses by student groups

[02:22:36] in each subject area as well as school level data and preliminary designations. And those presentations are still really the best source of that information. Mr. Redding and Dr. Wood present tonight on information related to some of the milestones and metrics in this report as well, so their presentations, along with the array of other topics you have heard, will also be useful in providing deeper dives into what the work looks like as well as the why behind these data or the story or relevant context.

[02:23:03] At the end of the presentation, we look forward to receiving your questions and taking them back to the various departments for further insight as deemed needed by the Board. Last note before we begin, you do have a report in front of you. I'll say more about it at towards the end, but this you can't feel free to look at this as I speak. I do have the slides that are ready that are aligned as well for the general flow, but I'll tell you more about this version for now. As I've sort of referenced, we still are in preliminary data mode with the with the state, so we have not finalized the report. All right, as we get into the report, I encourage us to center on the mission because it is so closely aligned

[02:23:42] with learning for all so let's take a minute to review that working to game we will end the predictive value of race class gender and special capacities for our children's success through high quality teaching and learning for all we seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds we will know every student three goals thriving students affirming and empowering communities and equitable and transformative resources are the ways we actualize our mission vision and

[02:24:18] values. If we can create the conditions for our students to thrive, our community to be empowered, and use our resources in equitable and transformative ways, we will make progress towards the focus of our strategic plan, which again is learning for all. When we launched the analysis that leads to this 24-25 State of the Division, we started with these three documents just as we did last year.

[02:24:41] Learning for all provides the goals and the strategies we plan to use to attain our mission and vision. The Beloit there audit provides an unbiased look at how well we are doing in the pursuit of these goals and provided research-based recommendations about how we can become more impactful in our pursuit of learning for all. The budget initiatives obviously demonstrate how we are allocating resources in pursuit of learning for all. The next six slides share some key highlights of our milestones and our metrics within each goal. So the essence of thriving students is providing high expectations coupled with high quality academic and affective supports for the

[02:25:19] children in our schools. You can see the full complement of the 24-25 milestones on this slide as they include considerable accomplishments in literacy, special education, and a few other areas that help students thrive. Specifically, a full implementation of our structured literacy program, HMH, into reading, which is accompanied by high-quality professional learning for teachers on structured literacy to ensure that teachers feel prepared to enact structured literacy in their classrooms. Additionally, for the first time in 25 years, our special education program no longer disproportionately identified black students for intellectual disability, and our special education department also exceeded the state

[02:25:59] average for test scores in reading, math, and science. In terms of metrics, we're taking note of continued increases in math and science achievement and holding steady in our reading pass rate. While science continued to increase, it did miss beating the state average by a point, as the rest of the state also improved in this subject. While we do not have a 24/25 on-time graduation rate yet from the state to compare us to, we can say that our graduation rate did increase compared to our rate last year, which was also higher than the state average for 23-24. In terms of literacy

[02:26:36] progress as measured by Val's risk bands, we're very pleased to share that kindergartners met the goal of being under 20% for identification and decreased that rate by 8% compared to last year, 23-24. While first and second grade have not yet met the threshold of being under 20%, the way way kindergarten has, we do see considerable improvement in these two grades compared to last year with six

and five point drops in identification in first and second grades respectively. Additionally, ACPS decreased identification rates across cohorts. When looking at 23-24 kindergartners who

[02:27:13] were 24-25 first graders and the 23-24 first graders who were 24-25 second graders, we see decreased rates in identification. While we see promising growth towards meeting goal one and thriving students, we also took note of metrics we want to be aware of and have worked into our division level priorities moving forward for instance while middle school course rate course failure rates decreased those for high school increased resulting in essentially the inverse from last year and while the percentage of students in the high risk band for vowels decreased from fall to spring in grades 1k through 2 we did not hit our target of moving the percentage of vowels in high risk bands to

[02:27:53] under 20 percent even with the promising growth i just mentioned we remain diligent in monitoring leading indicators on the quality of implementation in the classroom as well as incremental measures student learning to ensure not only we continue to decrease that band identification but meet the full goal of being under 20 percent in grades k through two not just k if you'd like to know more about acps's efforts dedicated to meeting goal one i'd like to highlight that we have several vignettes in the full report that detail structured literacy as a concept as well as the HMH as a mechanism for our system-level delivery of structured

[02:28:29] literacy. Goal two, affirming and empowering communities. The essence of this goal is acknowledging and supporting all students and their families and communities. Milestones for this goal this past year included launching a partnership with communities and schools so that schools can better meet the holistic needs of students and their families. Establishing a device-free education policy and meeting benchmarks for initial implementation of that policy to ensure students and teachers have higher quality learning environments, training on training staff on teen mental health, first aid, and increasing the number of school-based

[02:29:08] vaccine clinics, which not only keep our students healthy, but also prevent them from missing school if families need support in coordinating vaccinations that are required by law for continued enrollment. In terms of the metrics for goal two, we're taking note that while we saw our biggest increase to date in culturally responsive teaching percent certified, which is up a net of 12% from last year. That number of 45% still leaves some room for growth in terms of meeting our goal of 100%. Chronic absenteeism dropped again by a percentage point, which means

[02:29:43] a net decrease of 6% in the past two years. I note that absenteeism is a very thorny issue with many explanatory variables that must be addressed concurrently rather than there being a single recipe for success. So we are proud of our work on this complex challenge. Panorama values moved very little from last year in either direction. School climate went down a percentage point, school fit remained exactly the same, and family engagement increased by a percentage point. Even with holding constant, climate and fit each improved about 12 percent and family engagement by

[02:30:19] four percent since 22-23. If you'd like to know more about this goal two in our efforts so far this past year, I want to mention that the full report has further information on device-free education specifically school safety mental health supports and i hope you'll take time to check those out all right equitable and transformative resources goal three the essence of this goal is meeting the needs of our students and communities last year the milestones we for this will include breaking ground on two new schools in a data center completing collective bargaining opening

[02:30:59] employee health clinics and beginning the year with a full complement of drivers i think that's most people's favorite p metrics for this goal include we are still eagerly i would like to note as i've said a couple times we're still eagerly waiting the final designation for schools from bdoe so this means that the preliminary data that we have and we've included in this report indicate that we are yes one less than uh what that we are one less than 2324 in terms of the group of schools that are designated in the upper tier i say upper tier as a general non-technical

[02:31:37] term to denote the schools that VDOE typically identifies as performing at or above standard. But the name of this group, as well as the criteria for being in this group, is changed by VDOE from year to year, which makes comparisons tricky, if not impossible.

[02:31:53] We will be updating and analyzing this metric more once VDOE finalizes their data and their designations as well as criteria and the scores that compromise their designations. We're hearing now that maybe after the first of the new year.

[02:32:09] In other news on preliminary data, teacher retention is also looking to hold constant, but ACPS HR will not have their final value for a few more weeks when their data are fully analyzed. One metric we are sure of in this goal is that employee engagement continues to increase.

[02:32:25] It improved almost a tenth of a point on a five-point scale, which converts to about a 2% gain from 23-24 and an estimated 3% total increase since 22-23. Even with these promising accomplishments, we know we have work to do around continuing to deeply support the predicted five schools that may be labeled off-track.

[02:32:46] If you'd like to know more about ACPS's efforts dedicated to Goal 3, which is transformative resources, I will mention that the full report has some in-depth updates on the instructional practice audit, as well as the professional learning that Dr. Woods referred to earlier this evening, so please check those out.

[02:33:06] This concludes the formal part of the presentation. Please note, as I said earlier, we will not be finalizing the PDF with you until we get final certified data from the state so that we can make accurate comparisons to on-time graduation as well as report on appropriate designations of schools so whenever we have that we will finalize this report and send it and have the glossy one that we've had in the past and and be ready to share that with you I hope you'll continue to read and reflect on the larger report and that tonight's overview has provided a high-level look ACPS's progress and

[02:33:44] challenges in regards to goals one two and three and while I have been your guide tonight in the overview it's a team effort and this list of people is not exhaustive but these are the major contributors and supporters to putting it together and I certainly want to recognize them and stay my appreciation and we're very happy to take questions at this time and I will take them but I will also facilitate their answering with others in the room and/or take them and back to the to the crew and get answers for you I don't say the thing that annoys me when everyone else says it not so much a question but a comment

[02:34:22] yes I really appreciate how transparent we are with all of our successes great and then all the things that you know we are still working hard on so I just wanted to name that thank you very much I have a few questions I didn't see the equity table in here that had been shared in previous years and I'm wondering why that is and if we can get that if that's going to be shared specifically you know it detailed like student discipline and things like that

[02:34:58] I'd be really interested in seeing that and when you think that might be available that's available and it's in the look it's online and there's a website dedicated to state of the division and there are a lot more metrics that you can review the ones that are in the presentation today are ones that were identified as what we continue to report on in this overview but there's a lot more that you can certainly okay yeah it had been presented before in the state of the division so that's why i was curious but not last year they changed it okay gotcha thank you yeah um and then um i'm curious you know on the schools that are off track those five what are i would

[02:35:36] love to know and i don't know if you have all the answers right now or if you're the right person but what are our plans for getting them off from the off track back on track and also you know we rank very low in our reading when it comes to our black and brown students our economically disadvantaged students um we're 86 out of 90 in virginia districts for black students 98 of districts outperformed us for economically disadvantaged and yet we are in the top five in

[02:36:11] the in the state on spending per student or top 12 I guess but we rank in the bottom five for performance so we're spending a lot of money and I would like to know you know what our plan is as we go into budget to rectify these situations that have been kind of long-standing in the division again I know you probably don't have all those answers but I would love to get them at some point as we go into budget I think it's really important and dr. Hayes I would also you know as we're talking about the math curriculum not going

[02:36:49] smoothly what do we need to support our students and our staff is that going to play into the budget as we are looking at interventionists and things like that I think that's all things to be considered and all plays into the state of how we're doing there are definitely a lot of things to be really proud of and I agree with Miss Lee but I think there's a lot of things that we need to focus on too and that will come into our budget discussion so I would love that

[02:37:15] information as well any other comments thank you dr dallas for an excellent presentation and i look forward to when the state finally gets their numbers out that have been promised since what september yes you and you and the principals as well everyone's very eager to know thank you yes

[02:37:42] we have yet another presentation tonight on human resources uh annual report and hiring update and and how do you all feel about being the closing act?

[02:38:02] - Awesome, this Thompson walked me through what to, what am I hitting next? I'm the worst millennial ever, there it is.

[02:38:31] Mr. Redding, did you want to open up or do you want me to go for it? All right, thank you. Good evening, Chair Acuff and members of the school board. I'm Brody Downs with the human resources department, also with a head cold.

[02:38:50] So if I start just losing it, you'll know why. I'm excited to spend a few minutes with you all on behalf of the HR team to present a few highlights included in HR's 2025 annual report. We do have a pretty simple agenda this evening.

[02:39:09] I'll open with a quick overview of the annual report to include a few highlights of the HR team's work from this past year. Following, I'll turn it over to Director of Talent, Dr. Jason Sears, who will take the lion's share of the presentation. Dr. Sears will provide the current school year staffing information and hiring report, reflecting the work done to prepare for the 2025-2026 school year.

[02:39:36] Of course, our efforts are intentionally aligned with the strategic plan. In particular, many, if not all, the topics reviewed in the annual report and discussed tonight are tied to goals to focus on supporting the physical and mental health of our staff and supporting their engagement in our school communities, as well as Goal 3's focus on attracting, developing, and retaining the highest quality staff.

[02:40:04] So getting things started, the first highlight to mention is that the school division started the current school year with less than a 1% vacancy rate for teachers. And I'll certainly let Dr. Sears unpack this further in his portion of the presentation, but I did want to highlight that fact and open with it as an achievement.

[02:40:23] Second, many of our teams spent a good portion of last year procuring, selecting, and implementing and supporting the Albemarle County Employee Clinic. A wonderful resource for staff and their families, the clinic provides a comprehensive primary care, urgent care, physical therapy, dietician, occupational health, and counseling services program to our staff and their families.

[02:40:49] With two locations, the clinics provide these services to support staff while also helping to help manage our health care costs. In February, the first clinic will have been open for one year, And since its opening, we're seeing about a two and a half times the overall utilization from that first month.

[02:41:09] And we're far, far exceeding certain services such as physical therapy. Another achievement is the good work of our compensation total rewards team. They completed a realignment of the pay grades and some of the lower pay grades in our pay grade system that were greatly compressed.

[02:41:26] Several years ago, as some of you may recall, we did collapse the, I think it was the bottom seven pay grades occupied by a high number of employees in roles such as teacher assistants, custodial staff, and child nutrition. But we did so to accommodate the need to have our minimum pay compete with UVA's \$15 an hour.

[02:41:47] However, this compressed many of those pay grades not allowing for meaningful differentiation. And last year was really spent planning, implementing, and communicating this realignment effort and how it advantages employees when promoting. This past year also saw another increase, Dallas mentioned this a minute ago, but this past year also saw another increase in staff engagement.

[02:42:12] HR staff get a part of the principals and managers and staff on engagement strategies, and this year we're happy to report that our engagement ratio is now 3.92 to 1, for every disengaged employee there are 3.92 engaged employees that's up from our original 1.9 two to one ratio four years ago and very close to eclipsing the Gallup standard of four to one lastly as you might be aware HR will be implementing a few new systems supporting more efficient processes this current school year UKG ready will improve our time and attendance

[02:42:47] reporting processes and will launch in late December however implementing this system is certainly a heavy lift on its own but the preparation has been ongoing for months, which is the 24-25 school year. We're very excited to see this in other projects come to fruition as well. I encourage you to review more about this project and many of the other initiatives from this past year in the annual report, and if it's okay, I will take questions related to these topics following Dr. Sears, because I want to make sure he has enough time to get through his information as well. So with that, I'll turn it over to Dr. Jason Sears.

[02:43:27] Thank you, Brody. Chair Acuff, members of the board, Dr. Haas, thank you for giving me some time today. First, we're going to be reviewing the vacancy rates and comparisons to school divisions across the, some school divisions across the state.

[02:43:47] Then we're going to look at some hiring demographics and some overall diversity of the classroom teaching staff. And then we'll finish up with educational support staff and leadership positions. And then I'll finish with a look at some of our focus areas in the future.

[02:44:05] I'm going to go to this slide first. And as my kid said, I know this seems like I'm yelling based on the text of this. But I do want to yell this from the mountaintops. We're extremely proud of the division for this achievement.

[02:44:23] And it's been a whole team effort based on the hard work of our principals, assistant principals, our amazing talent acquisition team, onboarding ESC. For the second year in a row, we were able to begin our school year with a vacancy rate under 1%.

[02:44:38] And that's against the average vacancy rate in Virginia of 3.4% and 3.4% vacancy. So I think that's something we should all be proud of. This slide is a comparison of some specifics, and you can see that in the Commonwealth we're still not quite seeing vacancy rates of pre-pandemic levels, but they are beginning to plateau.

[02:45:11] toe and you can see some of our targeted recruitment areas have yielded zero vacancies in some instructional areas and overall we're pleased to share that albemarle county public schools is performing favorably compared to our peers the commonwealth the trend in filling positions is also promising and demonstrates the commitment of acps to give high quality instructors to all of our students as we stated before our teacher vacancy rate has remained

[02:45:46] opening this year at 0.9%. I would also like to highlight that we've made significant progress addressing educational support professionals hiring needs. Our teaching assistant vacancies have dropped substantially from 10% to about 3.7% over the last four years. For the 25-26 school year, we hired 186 new teachers. Of these new hires, 21%, about 39 individuals identified as

[02:46:22] teachers of color, which is an increase from 17% last year. We're beginning to see an increase in our first-year teachers. Megan Wood noted that, and I'll talk a little bit about that later. But we also, in that increase of first-year teachers, we're of course seeing an increase of our first-year teachers of color that rising from two percent last year to five percent in this newest teaching cohort this next slide just just demonstrates the positive trend toward increasing diversity

[02:47:02] in our new hires over over the years so this chart demonstrates albemarle county's commitment to recruiting and retaining our entire teaching instructional staff our total percentage of teachers of color stands at 13.55 percent this represents a steady cumulative growth over 3.5 percent since the 2017-2018 school year now while we celebrate this progress we remain committed to sustained effort increasing the diversity of our all of our staff as we improve the retention of

[02:47:42] our teachers of color and we hire at the same rate or higher or better excuse me we will continue to see our teaching staff reflect or begin to reflect the diversity of our student population. Here we see data on our educational support professionals. These are essential non-instructional roles and continue to be our most diverse teams. As demonstrated here, you can see in transportation, child nutrition, and EDEP, which is extended day enrichment program, having 19%, 30%, and 61%

[02:48:19] percent new hires of color respectively this section also highlights i think positively our technology department which remains one of our most stable departments and and this means that sometimes the fact that the best recruitment is a strong retention sometimes that's good finally we summarize the hiring activity with our leadership and central services teams this year we saw several leadership changes notably of the four external hires we made across

[02:48:57] the leadership and central services three of those individuals were leaders of color and we remain focused on both cultivating internal talent from within and attracting diverse high caliber leaders to the division and to demonstrate that 30 percent of our internal transfers and promotions were leaders of color as well just want to take a few moments to talk about some of the things that are on the horizon for our department provisional licensed teachers as noted earlier

[02:49:33] we are seeing an increase in our first year and provisionally licensed teachers to prevent to proactively address this trend and ensure continuous support michael thomas and dr sarah lynn have collaborated to develop new procedures and systems that will support our educators in their journey to achieving full licensure and at the same time we're partnering partnering with professional learning to the professional learning department to establish new instructional procedures and new provisionally licensed teachers I think this collaborative effort is is

[02:50:06] essential to maintaining our high standards for instruction human resources department is continuing department to part to continuing to partner closely with transportation and child nutrition there are two departments that we're constantly working with to identify innovative ways to recruit and retain essential staff members our current recruitment efforts includes a mix of platforms to maximize our reach and includes radio and television campaigns social media campaigns strategic strategic use of professional job boards

[02:50:43] partnership with employment agencies in several geographic geographic areas as as well. We're constantly working to refine these efforts to more clearly define and recruit high quality candidates for all departments. Our talent acquisition team, and they've been rebranded as the TAC team, TAQ. They did that just because it sounds cool. So Jason Crutchfield, John McQuokin, and Brandon Edwards have made some concerted efforts to develop new and effective recruitment strategies. One of those is hosting targeted job fairs. We've begun to see

[02:51:21] significant benefits in hosting our own smaller focused job fairs we're beginning to now experience positive results in targeting specific job job categories we've already hosted a successful job fair this year and that resulted in bringing in some qualified transportation candidates future initiatives will continue to refine this practice as we'll focus on targeting on campus recruitment and strategic student relationship the relationship developments to build a pipeline for future talent. Our retention strategies are focused on enhancing engagement and developing strong leadership. As Brody

[02:52:00] mentioned earlier, we've focused our commitment to staff engagement. We work in the Gallup engagement and Gallup is more than just an annual survey. It's a framework used to identify the level of engagement across multiple areas of the organization, drive intentional decisions and deliberate practices to foster high staffing staff engagement additionally we've begun to implement clifton strengths to continue our leadership and team development our initial phase involves working with department and school leaders we'll then expand to training school and department teams to identify and develop

[02:52:38] individual strengths by identifying all of our staff's unique talents and empowering our staff to do what they do best uh every day will lead to well hopefully hopefully will lead to a higher engagement and a more committed workforce our goal is to become a highly engaged strength-based strengths-based organization we believe this work coupled with our gallup engagement will significantly significantly enhance staff retention in both the short and the long term finally we are proud of our tops program our teacher opportunity and provisional supports program that continues to grow. This program plays a critical role in supporting our current

[02:53:17] staff who are seeking to become certified teachers within the district and effectively building our internal talent pipeline. And that's all I have. Thank you so much. It sounds like you're doing a good job keeping teachers. I know we occasionally get people saying, you know, what are we doing?

[02:53:42] Or thinking that we are also having the same sorts of issues other communities are. I think it's great. How many applications are we getting for teacher positions? I mean, my sense a couple years ago that we were not getting the numbers, but we were still keeping our hiring and still keeping our positions filled and doing a good job in retention, notwithstanding the smaller numbers of applicants right I I don't have that information yeah but just in general by

[02:54:22] the work of our our principals and assistant principals by the by the work of early contracts what we're able to do is through the recruitment efforts and the applications that we are receiving we're trying to get those get through those quicker in an effort to find that best talent while they're still available but that is something that I can begin to get to look at and get back to I mean it's not critical I mean as I recall maybe 10 years ago maybe maybe Graham can help me it's like we would something like 1500 applications for but

[02:55:01] then it was down to maybe 800 a couple years ago yeah I'm only I've only been here for about we're still we're still and I was getting worried it sounds like we're doing a pretty good job hiring them and keeping them absolutely but we are noticing the national trend of fewer applicants yeah and that that is all the way from our teacher our teacher colleges so graduating less so there are fewer out there but we we still remain a place that teachers want to come and i think that's one of the most important we have to make sure we stay

[02:55:39] back absolutely anything else thank you for staying and making this final presentation and Mr. Downs I hope you feel better. Is there any other business tonight? I want to thank everyone for being here. It's been a long night. I think we got quite a bit done. Thank you. We're adjourned.



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