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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, March 26, 2026

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYfsqfjg1ko>

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[00:00:00] huge thank you to our our albermar high school spring string quartet who we will hearing be hearing a little bit more about in a few minutes so with that i would like to bring our march 26 work session back to order and we will um begin with our um our closed meeting motion i move that the board certify 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 authorizing the closed meeting were heard discussed

[00:00:36] or considered in the closed meeting do i second to that second moved by miss spillman seconded by miss lee all those in favor aye aye any opposed thank you so much we will open our meeting today um with our roll call and that is when we go around the dais uh to both introduce ourselves as well as to do a mic and a voice check for those in the auditorium as well as those online so they can match a name with a face i'm going to start with miss aaron stone today aaron stone

[00:01:15] assistant division council sitting in for school board council today matthew hall superintendent bob beard samuel miller district jim dylan back rio district allison spillman at large representative rebecca berlin whitehall district ellen osborn scottsville district judy lee rivana district kate acoff jack jewett district patrick mclaughlin assistant superintendent dan redding chief hr officer christine thompson clerk of the board thank you so much we will now stand

[00:01:53] for the pledge of allegiance flag united states of america to the republic which it stands one nation undergrad indivisible with liberty and justice for all before we move to our moment of assignment silence um could we just make sure we pull down the school board is currently in closed meeting

[00:02:23] sign thank you we will now pause for a moment of silence before we begin our meeting thank you so much the next piece of our agenda is the approval of our agenda do i have a motion for the approval of tonight's agenda i move we approve the agenda thank you ms lee do i have a second second

[00:03:00] moved by Ms. Lee seconded by Ms. Spillman all those in favor of tonight's agenda aye any opposed we will move forward with tonight's agenda the next piece on our agenda tonight is announcements and we are going to start with a spotlight on education I'm going to ask Ms. Dama Schneider the Curriculum Coordinator of Four Fine Arts to come forward good evening board Dama Schneider

[00:03:41] never know i'll just project i'll use my teacher voice yeah um tonight you all were able to hear um some of the albemarle high school um orchestra quartet um we had on violin alex chen and joanna kim um on viola alissa lee and on cello amy wong they were should i put this down oh no okay um they got half of them got stuck in traffic on the way here so there was a little bit of

[00:04:17] some nerves going on there but they did a beautiful job and actually are now already packed up so thank you for letting them come and represent music in our schools month just a little bit of some of the things that are going on with with music and other performing arts events coming up first of all we'll just because he's here honor alex chen he made it to all state virginia orchestra along with another student from monticello um two band student from monticello a

[00:04:53] band student from western two band students from albemarle four chorus students from monticello three core students from western and two core students from albemarle high school also made their all-state ensembles so definitely something to celebrate that event will be happening in richmond april 16th through the 18th is the workshop and rehearsal time for the students and the performances happen on the 18th at the richmond convention center if you're interested in more information let me know i'm happy to share that with you also big um fun things going on tomorrow night is arts fest in the west at western albemarle high school it'll be from six to nine

[00:05:33] the music mosaic at monticello high school will be at seven o'clock that's a fundraiser for their uh trium group which is uh the student association and then on sunday is the albemarle high school swing into spring event at the paramount and this year it's going to be at 3 30 in the afternoon instead of in the evening and should be a really fun show and that is also a fundraiser and i can't remember which um organization they're fundraising for this year but it's always a fantastic event what you're seeing in front of you here is a beautiful piece

[00:06:12] of artwork done by a middle school student, Isabel Wong, who is going to come up and say hello in just a second. This went into a contest, the Virginia School Board Association Regional Art Contest that happens every year.

[00:06:30] There are nine School Board Association Regents in the state of Virginia. Last week was the networking forum at Louisa High School, where Isabel, her piece of art for the middle school, thank you, for the middle school entry for the region, the central region.

[00:06:58] After all of the forums are done, May 12th is the last one. All first place winners will go into, this is only the second annual statewide contest that will happen or that has happened. All of those first place winners for each of the levels, elementary, middle and high school, will go into their own contest statewide.

[00:07:18] And in early June, there will be a press release And the winners of each of those will be recognized on July 16th at the Virginia School Board Conference on Education. The winners will receive a commemorative trophy and a \$1,000 award.

[00:07:35] So fingers crossed that Isabel's amazing piece of art is the winner. Isabel, would you like to come say hi? I mentioned at the beginning that it is Music in Our Schools Month.

[00:07:51] It is also Youth Art Month. And so this is, thank you for letting me highlight just a little bit of all of the wonderful things that happen in our schools. Oh, and I hope you all were able to make it to the art shows that we just took down on Monday. They were at Crozet Library and Northside Library for this month.

[00:08:11] I don't know. What do you want to say? Do you want to say anything about your piece? Talk to us about your piece of art. I just saw this piece on Pinterest, and I was like, ooh, this will be fun to draw. so oh my god i feel loud now so i just saw this piece on pinterest and i was like oh this would be fun to draw so like i drew it that's beautiful i don't know how else to explain it it just it looked cool how long did it take you to draw that um probably like two hours wow my mom kept

[00:08:46] distracting me during it though your art teacher yes back there and also here is miss anita nixon the art teacher at lakeside middle school welcome how long have you been drawing i don't know i did i started an art class outside of school when i was like eight nine i don't know something around that but like i really like drawing when i was

[00:09:21] a lot younger it's a beautiful piece it is a beautiful yes good luck good luck and congratulations thank you so much thank you so much and I know this board is it is important for this board to continue to support the arts so thank you so much for everyone and I also know that there are a number of musicals coming up

[00:09:57] so make sure you are checking out the calendars on our website and supporting your local theater and music productions. The next piece on our agenda is our school board superintendent and committee updates.

[00:10:13] Do we have any school board, superintendent, or committee updates? Sorry about that. I just had a quick presentation. Okay. Our mouse... It's gonna take like 10, 5, 8 minutes. That's good. Our mouse died. The perfect time.

[00:10:29] Is that it? Oh, yes. Thanks, Christine. You're awesome. Alright. Also, did we introduce Carrie Finnegan? orchestra teacher built she built the orchestra program I've worked with Carrie now for 24 years I think she she built it she's the originator of orchestra really as a solid rock solid program in Albemarle County Schools when I was new at Albemarle she was starting out with me and I'm

[00:11:03] pretty close but one class at uh what was uh southernland at that time and one at jack to it and so she started out not not full time and started building that program like one class at a time then we shared staffing with the middle schools to get to start it at albemarle and it's a thriving program i mean the

kids are doing amazing work and she i've always thought of her just as a genius to be able to pull that off and one of my children was in her program for a couple of years and just an amazing teacher and it just shows you what what teachers can do i mean they

[00:11:43] just make they make magic really with that work and i've always loved working with carrie she's so passionate about the kids learning and really having high expectations for them uh just real quick i so actually earlier in the week i did make a visit to journey middle school and this was just a shot from their sixth grade science class the students are doing very hands-on work and it's all about protecting the watershed and it's hands-on materials where they're building their own barriers to rain rain storm water runoff and trying to keep chemicals

[00:12:19] from getting into streams which eventually would go there and um you could tell a little bit from the kids that their hands are in there and the expression on one student's face that's at the table but they were the noise level in the room and the excitement was just tangible and i love to go in there to make that visit they're doing amazing work um i also want to just highlight yesterday something that really impressed me and it's part of our scholar studio program that we're working through the teacher you see all the way to the right that's brooke hartsell

[00:12:53] she teaches issues of the modern world at albama high school social studies class but it's it's the entry class for the impact studio which is all about social justice leadership community leadership and these are ninth graders and i asked christine to like circulate their projects around if you want to just kind of leaf through them um the level of work that they're doing they're looking at iran and u.s conflict which they were doing they started their project the one group

[00:13:29] that we looked at was starting their project as the conflict was starting. U.S.-China trade relations, Israel-Palestine conflict, the climate crisis, U.S. immigration policy. These kids were amazing, the work that they were doing. I would say that the work was highly relevant. It couldn't be more relevant. I love history. I love reading about history, but I'm really excited the kids are doing a social studies class in ninth grade that's not world history they're they're studying the present day so they can start to make attachments to what

[00:14:08] all that history they've already had through the school years they deeply researched their work we grilled them with all kinds of questions and if it was just a matter of going into chat gpt and spitting out reports the the level of poise that they had and the their ability to turn on a dime to respond to something was just amazing they were passionate about it too it wasn't just presentations from students it was really a learning experience and it was aligned to clear

[00:14:46] standards i asked the students what we what's your grade going to be they said we're not going to be graded on this we're going to be told we're going to get feedback from you dr hawes and feedback from you and you and you and then guess what we'll get to do it over it's not just a one and done we're going to work on this until we get it right and as soon as you know as you know as soon as you put a grade on something the oftentimes the learning stops the student just moves on but they're going to get feedback on the specific standards of their work their presentation

[00:15:22] and they were they were after it they wanted to have a great presentation these students presented on the climate crisis they had to work together they had to engage in complex thinking produce high level work and there's no level for this class it's just issues of the modern world it's It's not basic issues of the modern world.

[00:15:48] It's not average or academic or honors. These kids come in from middle school. They want to take the class. They want to get engaged in this topic, which is amazing in and of itself. And they're all in class together.

[00:16:05] Maybe they're broken up during the rest of the day. I hope not. But there's no leveling in this class. They come in and they do the work, and they work to the standard. Immigration policy, amazing work.

[00:16:22] And I talk about this because I had a super exciting conversation about leveling yesterday. Because when I first came to Albemarle, leveling was a hot topic. It was, can we remove leveling? Can we do it?

[00:16:38] It's so hard to remove leveling. It's part of our culture. You know, five levels of English in a high school. I'm not kidding. And so, but where do those levels start? They don't start in high school. That's not where they start.

[00:16:54] as a high school person I thought that's where they started I don't know about you but they started in elementary school or I should say they start Ted in elementary school past tense I ran into Karen Heathcock and Andrea Blunt Andrea Blunt this morning in the stairwell because I I had been looking at the read the most recent reading results for the third quarter from Woodbrook and it's just blowing my mind how much progress the earlier grades are making fifth grade still you know because I think it's more on the old model of actually of leveling so

[00:17:33] a lot of it was leveling and I was talking to them and I said you know what occurs to me is we don't talk about leveling anymore and they said that's because in elementary school there's no more leveling of reading groups I don't know about you but when my children started school at Agner they they were in they would either be in the sunflower group the bluebird group the you know the cardinal group whatever but the issue with that was it was called leveled reading students took an assessment right from the beginning you got labeled at a level and you pretty much stayed

[00:18:08] there and for most for a lot of people that was fine because they were labeled even if it took five or six bluebird groups especially when parents would push in to accommodate all the bluebirds and they would get the grade level reading or they would get the above grade level reading and they kept making progress well when you teach with the science of reading you you don't abide by levels because the expectation is all the students will meet the same standard so you can't level them anymore and be and it wasn't successful to level because you would always have your level

[00:18:42] of reading or worse lower just so you could read something and then it stayed that way followed them all the way through middle school and on into high school where we wonder why we don't see diversity and representation in our college level classes so looking at this student he's a first grader now my experience with first grade for most of my life is that students are not writing complete sentences to begin with not only that but he told his teacher he wanted a challenge

[00:19:19] he was going to use dialogue he used that term as a first grader he said i'm going to write dialogue and you can see he's trying to write dialogue which is a meta skill when it comes to writing because you're not just writing about what you're writing about, you're writing about what someone said and what you're writing about. And his effort in using punctuation to try to tackle that is admirable. Again,

he's not going to get graded on it though. I want to point that out. He's going to keep working on it because that's what we do in elementary school. We start giving grades in

[00:19:54] middle school and high school. But in elementary school, he won't be graded on it. He'll be measured on his proficiency and he'll get feedback until he gets it right. That student in first grade is going to have dramatically different opportunities because of where he is in first grade. Learning to read, learning to write. Soon he will be reading to learn, getting interested in topics like issues of the modern world, or maybe he'll be interested in math and science or medicine because of the reading and the access to the curriculum that he's going to have.

[00:20:30] That's the changes that you're looking for as a school board. It's leveling the playing field, but it's unleveling. It's because it's unleveling. He's learning according to standards, not getting stuck in a static group based on where he started as a kindergartner.

[00:20:49] Just coming back to this group, we talked about the Model UN. I couldn't get a picture of the whole room, but the diversity represented at Albemarle High School in this issues of the model, that is the Model UN. That is the diversity. There are students from all over the world in that class again not leveled all working on the same standards and again this leadership that we see of the present day and and moving forward and of course i just snuck a quick

[00:21:21] picture of our orchestra kids because that's not leveled either all right thanks sometimes thanks for my mom thank you so much dr haas thank you are there other school board superintendent or committee updates just today both rebecca berlin and i were at albemarle high school where they were having the capstone project presentations from the soul studio i did not there were like

[00:21:57] 12 or 14 of them i did three but saw a problem solving about teaching young people to swim with the ben hair foundation a 3d printed device to improve your goal your tennis tossing up and serving and then an ergonomically designed cart for um trash cans and garden tools for a lot of

[00:22:30] rural the students rural uh elderly uh neighbors that she was going to she she did incredible engineering work on it but i know dr berlun had some other yeah went to some other ones i also had the opportunity to do one that was my absolute favorite because even after having two two students in ahs and being a board member for a few years i still get lost every time i walk into the building and so her presentation was about what can we do to solve that problem and is there a better way to

[00:23:06] create signage for the school so that it's easier for anyone be it if they speak english or not they have a disability or not they're new to the school they're a parent to the school how can we make it just a friendlier easier place to be and so again sol studio is our engineering and so it was you know from this example the example of these four projects these students are able to take it in so many ways and one of the things we hear from our business partners is it is the content they want them to have right but if you ask our business partners when when we did the

[00:23:42] original work um for ace academy at lambsley lane they kept talking about the and i always hate this term but the soft skills right those things about presentation skills about problem solving skills about you know answering different difficult question skills and we saw that and I think one of the things you are you will see as we continue to to go deep into this kind of enrollment employment enlistment particularly employment side of our studios is how and I think Dr. Haas just talked about this is like students are motivated in so many different ways right and this project-based

[00:24:19] learning that they're doing as a part of our studios really is touching on some of those things and was i was super proud and so if you ever have the ability to my peers or to those in the audience if you're a parents or grandparents or just community members as we have open houses from our studios they're absolutely amazing what these students are doing and what they're learning and i'm so proud to have this as part of our curriculum within albemarle county other comments um i was just going to say dr berlin and i presented the school board budget to

[00:24:56] the board of supervisors on the 16th and there are still two town halls we'd encourage the public to go to make your voice heard about what's important to you there's well there's one tonight during the school board meeting that we can't make that's at yancey community center but then there's one on the 30th at lakeside and i believe jim and judy will be attending that one and then there's one on april 2nd at albemarle high school that i'm planning to attend so if you guys can make it we encourage the public to go to those and let the board of supervisors

[00:25:31] know to fully fund our budget that's all any other committee school board updates i uh visited red hill elementary today i want to thank the wonderful paula gately for showing me around she's a rock star is what is one of the best things of a new brand new school board member to go and visit our schools and talk to the students and meet everybody.

[00:26:00] They have something called a tree hall outside the school where they're doing sustainability work when the weather is good. They also have one fifth grade class at Red Hill, which is next year. It's going to be two fifth grade classes.

[00:26:15] So they're trying to put a wall in a large classroom to make room for two fifth grade classes rather than having a trailer. and also went to ivy elementary uh last week or the week before that and all the there was a low hum of wonderful things going on in that school as we all know it's great scores coming out of ivy and i've had a couple of kids in the the library the media center who do the news for uh the the bluebird news for the kids at ivy and as a former news person i gave him some tips how to get some

[00:26:49] good bloopers so thank you to jennifer underwood for a wonderful tour of my kids alma mater ivy elementary thank you oh i think i think all of the media centers are going to sign you up for their uh media center training for their news and and radio broadcasts bob i'm going to do it okay okay oh did you all hear that for free um our next um uh topic on our budget on our budget obviously budget is on my mind tonight um is our public comment but i am going to read a statement before

[00:27:24] we do public comment with ms osborne um as many of you know uh we sent a letter to families to encourage them to engage with the board of supervisors and the school board around the process of budgeting in that letter we noted that the board of supervisors trajectory of reducing the level of tax revenues dedicated to schools is particularly troubling we mentioned that program cuts would likely become necessary should that trend continue. One of the ongoing costs we mentioned is the necessity to fund the collective bargaining agreement. Fair and reasonable agreements that the AEA negotiated in good faith based on our current revenue shares the schools expected to receive.

[00:28:02] We heard from many ACPS staff who rightly pointed out that the language used in the letter can be interpreted as the school board positioning the CBA as a constraint against our ability to meet the needs of our students. We want to emphasize that we do not hold any such view as a board please let us be clear and know in certain terms that the cba is integral to establishing a quality public education system our teachers and staff are the backbone of the division the cba gives them the voice they deserve so that

they can provide the compensation and working condition so that we can provide the compensation and working

[00:28:39] conditions needed to make acps a desired place of employment that is why we sought the right to to engage with the AEA and entered into a collective bargaining agreement for the next three years. The collective bargaining agreements are not a detriment to achieving our goals as a school division. Rather, they are essential to those ends. We are committed to funding the CBA as a top priority because we understand that attracting and retaining quality teachers and staff is not a sunk cost, but is instead a strategic investment, an investment we support and remain committed to as a board.

[00:29:13] To all the ACPS teachers and staff and to all AEA members, thank you for your service to the students and families of Albemarle County Public Schools. And now, Ms. Osborne. Yes, we have time for public comment. We welcome public input at our school board meetings.

[00:29:33] To sign up to speak during the public comment period, you can do so in several ways. You can do so online by that sign-up is available from 9 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week until 2 p.m. on meeting day. You can call us, school board clerk's office, 434-972-4055, to sign up until 2 p.m. on meeting day or in person. You can sign up. That is available from 6 p.m. until the public comment period right now. Please note that public comment is not received

[00:30:06] 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 it to two minutes if there are a lot of people the maximal number of people or groups that may speak at a meeting is 20 in the event that there are more than 20 people or groups who wish to speak each speaker will be assigned a number and numbers will be drawn to determine which people or groups will have the opportunity to speak those who do not have the opportunity to speak at a particular meeting may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or may submit written comments for the school board's consideration

[00:30:42] so speakers should state your name in either your address or your voting district you need to address the comments the school board as a whole and limit comments to the school board governance or school division operations and you can provide written statements and supporting materials to the clerk school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time once the time is up speakers are asked to wrap up their comments to maintain respect please refrain from clapping or the audible forms of support you may raise your hand instead and debate with the school board is not

[00:31:19] allowed and the projection system is for staff presentations only so we have seven people on our list tonight um i will tell you that some folks are listed that they want to talk about grading policy i don't know if you've seen that but that's already been pulled off of the consent agenda you still tell us what you think but that's obviously um not happening um on the consent agenda tonight. The first three speakers will be Jimmy Ballou, Alicia Salinas, and Holly Odom.

[00:32:01] In that order, but I don't see Mr. Ballou here, so how about Alicia Salinas? Good evening. I'm Alicia Salinas, a Spanish teacher at Western Albemarle High School in my eighth year in the county. I've implemented the grading policy at both the middle and high school levels.

[00:32:26] Tonight, I request that the board only approve an amended grading policy informed by teacher feedback. While many teachers fully subscribe to the philosophies behind the grading policy, we have grave concerns that the guidelines in practice are not meeting the policy's intended goals. I want to

reaffirm that we all want a student-centered learning environment. Teacher voices and concerns are not obstacles to student-centered education. Rather, we are partners who support our students each day. To me, student-centered means that we support students to lead successful lives beyond high school. In my building, I hear the frustration that we are not

[00:33:01] preparing students for real-world deadlines and performance expectations. Our policy fails students if it does not help them build the executive functioning skills vital to success in both academic and workplace environments. The policy actually undermines the development of these skills.

[00:33:17] Students actually actively learn bad habits from the retake policy, guideline five. With retakes, many students try for a good grade without studying first, then use the retake as a fail-safe if necessary. The constant options of retakes sets up false expectations for college-level academic work.

[00:33:35] In the seven years I taught undergraduate Spanish at UVA, our course syllabi stated no late work and never mentioned retakes. Students were expected to take responsibility for studying and seeking help before their assessments. I fear our students would have no idea how to approach cumulative midterms or final exams in college.

[00:33:54] In the workplace, no one hopes for a colleague who consistently requires two tries to finally get the work right. Students already have time to make mistakes, ask questions, and get feedback during the formative part of the learning cycle. It's excessive to provide multiple opportunities during assessment as well.

[00:34:10] Additionally, the retake guidelines lack nuance, like subject-specific considerations. For example, speaking and writing assessments in world language classrooms are naturally competency-based. Student performance reflects their cumulative daily practice with the language. Allowing retakes on these assignments misleads students about the nature of language learning as they will not be able to make meaningful gains by the time of the retake.

[00:34:33] There are other issues. Although the policy seeks to communicate accurate grades, retakes inflate grades with second-time advantage. I've also observed more instances of cheating during retakes than during regular classroom instruction or assessments. High-quality instruction is one of the best indicators of successful student outcomes. Sadly, the current policy cuts into time for high-quality instruction.

[00:34:54] Additionally, teachers and students as well have unmanageable workloads as we simultaneously juggle past, present, and future assessments. The workload is not simply disagreeable. It makes it impossible to do all that we are expected to do well. I live outside of the county in a division where my own children attend school. There is no retake policy. As a parent, I'm glad for that. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Holly Odom. You got this. Yeah. I'm going to say like we're friendly. Long time listener

[00:35:31] first time caller. Okay. Hi. Thank you for taking your time to listen to me today. My name is Holly Odom and I've been at Greer Elementary since 2019. I actually just drove from Greer for my daughter's student-led conference just a months ago a friend told me to this week that vulnerability begets vulnerability so i'm holding out hope that you will remember greer elementary is a unique school and in the middle of critical progress that cannot be interrupted greer has to be protected just 48 hours ago our

principal steve saunders was asked by superintendent matthew hoss to leave his position leading greer a title one school in albemarle's urban ring in order to replace the retiring principal

[00:36:11] at Crozet Elementary, not Title I. You as our elected school board need to know we are not okay at Greer about this, and we will not stand by by the short-sighted and disrespectful ask by Superintendent Haas to disrupt our gains. As our school board, I know you oversee the superintendent's hiring and tenure, and your actions of continually renewing Superintendent Haas shows you value stability for leadership and retention. However, this decision by Superintendent Haas is not in line with your value of stability in retaining compassionate educators. Point me to the data point me to the recommendations for ending achievement gaps that are impacting students

[00:36:46] of color from the bellwether report it's not there to support this decision superintendent haas's propensity for shuffling principal leadership around every five to six years is not data driven and is not nurturing the school community of accountability transparency and a culture of belonging you and i know time is precious that's why i only have three minutes instead of five if we can agree on that why would you choose to move a gifted leader trained in managing the complexity of the title one school to crozet and then give us Greer the task and the burden of the search and the transition with one phone call superintendent haas essentially said i'm putting

[00:37:22] the burden on greer elementary they will take the loss it is as if you traded at all all the hard work by our teachers and staff under principal saunders for your immediate gratification to be clear i would like to talk more about that kindness that radiates from principal saunders but and how he lives his job like a calling but i fear that anything i say more about his amazing leadership will be thrown back in my face saying well that's why the superintendent made this lateral move i employ you as members of the school board to not be fooled by that logic choose to be curious and brave do not settle for these decisions are never easy in this situation

[00:37:58] the most generous interpretation is superintendent haas has forgotten about greer if you truly seek to know who we are and what principal saunders is building you would not have thrown it all away to fix crozet i implore the school board to come together and encourage superintendent haas to reconsider this decision and at the very minimum i ask you to recognize this trust has been broken and it is not easily fixed it has been lost at greer you put us in an impossible situation but as greer geckos we will go to school because that is what we do and we will work hard because

[00:38:31] as they say in Star Wars, rebellions are built on hope. Thank you. Next we have Bo Odom, Melinda Smith, and Megan Durkee in that order. Hi, I'm Bo Odom. I'm her spouse. She said way better than I can.

[00:39:00] I am the Assistant Dean for Curricular Initiatives and Student Success at the University of Virginia's College of Arts and Sciences and I'm a proud parent of a third grader and a kindergartner at Greer. I'm here tonight to ask the board to reconsider the superintendent's decision to reassign principal steve saunders away from greer i'm going to echo some of holly's thoughts greer is a title one school that designation is isn't just a budgetary category it's a recognition that families it serves face significant economic hardship and that the children in that building day to day often carry

[00:39:34] instability with them when they walk through the door what a title one school needs above almost anything else is a steady trusted committed leader mr saunders has been that under his leadership Greer's made meaningful progress in student outcomes, in school culture, and in the trust that families

like mine have placed in that building. That progress didn't happen by accident. It happened because of sustained intentional work by a principal who knew his community, earned its trust, and built something real over time. There's a real need at Crozet Elementary, and I understand why the superintendent feels pressure to act, but moving a proven leader out of a Title I school to solve a

[00:40:13] problem somewhere else is not a solution. It is a transfer of harm. It takes from the students who are most vulnerable and least equipped to absorb the disruption. Leadership transitions in Title I schools don't just slow momentum, they can erase it. Addressing Crozet's challenges cannot and should not come at the expense of Greer's children, especially when Greer serves children who have the least margin for disruption in their lives. Crozet Elementary is a desirable school and a

[00:40:51] desirable community. It should be able to attract strong leadership through a proper search. If the district lacks confidence in that process, that is a question about district leadership, not a reason to sacrifice Greer. I have to ask this board directly, why isn't the district finding a different solution for Crozet? I'm asking this board with the authority you hold over district leadership decisions to reverse this reassignment and keep Principal Saunders at Greer Elementary.

[00:41:21] The children at Greer are Title I students, children facing real economic hardship, children for whom school may be the most stable place in their lives. They deserve no less investment, no less continuity, and no less committed leadership than any other child in this district.

[00:41:38] Do not make them pay the price for a decision that didn't have to be made this way. Thank you. Thank you. Melinda Smith. Good evening.

[00:42:02] My name is Melinda Smith, and I've been teaching high school science in Albemarle County Schools since 2015. In that time, I've taught students with widely varied levels of skills, goals, and past academic success, ranging from 9th grade earth science to chemistry to AP environmental science.

[00:42:18] I'm speaking today with regards to the proposal put forth at the last school board meeting by division leadership to approve the use of grading policy, IKBA, and its associated guidelines for another five years without changes. I understand it has been pulled from this week's consent agenda, but I'd like to speak on it anyway.

[00:42:36] I'm deeply troubled that there was no communication with stakeholders regarding this proposal, and no data gathered or presented to the board regarding student outcomes or policy and guideline implementation. Personally, I think that while the policy itself is well-intentioned, the guidelines set forth in the grading handbook actually contradict the policy and lead to significant issues with regards to student outcomes.

[00:42:59] However, as a science teacher, I value data and evidence over anecdotal stories and personal feelings, therefore created a survey for the high school faculty to find out whether the majority of teachers are supportive of or opposed to the current policy rather than simply speaking on my own experiences and concerns tonight a copy of the same survey was shared with middle school teachers and in the past week 211 high school teachers and 93 middle school teachers have responded representing teachers across all content areas and their responses prove I'm not alone 100% of those high school teachers and 96.7% of the middle school

[00:43:35] teachers answered no to the question, do you believe the current grading policy should be adopted for another five years without changes? Only three out of 304 teachers who responded said yes.

The survey did not attempt to gather information regarding any recommended changes to the policy or guidelines, but I did ask teachers to provide feedback on why they felt the policy needed updating.

[00:43:57] I've shared the full data and responses with you all via email, but I want to say now that the majority of responses express concern that the policy and guidelines leave our students lacking key workplace readiness skills necessary for life post-high school, not just college, but life in general, and result in grades that misrepresent student understanding.

[00:44:18] I urge you to both reject this proposal, not just move it to another meeting, but outright reject it, and address the failure by central leadership to gather and present data supporting the continued use of the policy. Thank you. and next is Megan Durkee hello my name is Megan Durkee I'm here as a parent I

[00:44:56] have a six-year-old daughter who is in kindergarten at Mountain View Elementary and a two-year-old son who will be following in her footsteps as well and I'm here in response to the email that was mentioned earlier about budget decisions and community input I just wanted to share my input and response to that so first of all thank you for sending that and giving the opportunity to provide such input I wanted to first share you know I share the concerns about the nine million dollar budget cut and in direct response of the email I wanted to talk about the services and priorities that are most important to me and my family generally the most important thing to us is

[00:45:35] supporting teachers in the classroom and specifically to do that what's important us is class sizes, foreign language programs, and intervention services for students who need them. The email we received also raised some questions for me about the budget, and so in particular the language that stuck out was over recent years the county has shifted its funding priorities by reducing the school division's historical share of tax dollars to fund other government programs and reserves.

[00:46:06] So that language stuck out to me, and so I'm here to find out a bit more about that. And to say that for my family, the most important thing for us to spend our tax dollars on is education. So thank you very much for the opportunity, and that's all I have to say.

[00:46:22] Thank you. And the last one is Heidi Gilman Bennett. Hi, Heidi Gilman Bennett, Samuel Miller District.

[00:46:40] I'm speaking first in my role as an Officer of Family Counsel. On the grading policy that appears on the consent agenda for action, or did appear for action with no edits, Family Counsel urges you to say no to approving the policy in a rush.

[00:46:56] Since the policy was approved during the pandemic with few questions and little input, Family Counsel has requested information to understand the rationale and data on whether it is working. We have not taken a for or against stance because what we want is for central office leaders to get feedback from all secondary teachers on what is working and what is not. From a family perspective, our kids grades are not communicating whether they are mastering the content. We would like to see data on student outcomes, both academic and motivation. Has the policy achieved those outcomes? And only after those steps are taken should ACPS consider policy changes

[00:47:35] and official implementation procedures. Now let me speak personally about the process which I believe has been a failure. At your last meeting this policy was brought up very briefly at 9:30 p.m. Leaders first acknowledged that grading practices are a major concern to stakeholders and then proceeded to place the exact same policy with no revisions on this week's consent agenda asking you to

approve it without further discussion. I personally published a very popular sub stack post on grading for equity. I urged families who were concerned to contact the school board, and also received 55 responses

[00:48:14] to a survey, which I have sent to you as a sample of our community's strongly held beliefs, which are varied. Grading for equity has raised massive firestorms of controversy across the US. Shoving this policy through here via consent agenda is just wrong.

[00:48:32] It's even your former grading champions didn't know this was happening. It's a surefire way to gut confidence in district leadership. Our teachers are the frontline workers, and they have in-depth input that will improve grading and student outcomes.

[00:48:49] Not asking for engagement is insulting. It will also lead to failure in implementation. I am deeply frustrated with ACPS division leaders not doing the work that both policy and practices, to see if they're good for our kids, for our teachers, for our community.

[00:49:06] Personally, I actually believe grading for equity has many positive elements. But this policy is far too vague, and it's not going to succeed simply because of the failed process. I strongly encourage the school board to hold division leaders accountable for engaging with both families and educators as genuine partners.

[00:49:25] That's how our kids will succeed. Thank you. Thank you. That concludes our public comment. Thank you so much. If I may, Dr. Berlin, I just want to correct some facts. At the last meeting, we did address the board during the policy item.

[00:49:46] The board asked us to include a red line in the policy that would state that as a part of the policy, we would establish an ongoing committee made up of school staff. That is part of the policy that is now not on the consent agenda.

[00:50:02] So I think there were some misunderstandings around what is actually happening. but the items that people called for tonight are already underway. I've seen several emails go out from Dr. Hayes in response to emails from constituents telling them that we are establishing an ongoing committee that will meet forever more to work on the grading policy, the guidelines, and it will include teachers from all the secondary schools to get input on how things are going

[00:50:40] and to keep making adjustments. Again, I assume 100% responsibility that when we implement a change like that in the midst of a pandemic, trying to help our students, particularly the ones most marginalized in non-pandemic times during the pandemic, it was my responsibility to continue the process of getting feedback from teachers.

[00:51:05] I didn't do that. However, the calls for doing that tonight, it is already underway. I want to assure you of that. Thank you so much, Dr. Hess. So the next piece of our agenda is the approval of the consent agenda.

[00:51:25] Do I have a motion for the approval of the consent agenda? I move we approve the consent agenda. Can I just ask, this is already without the... Yes, so yeah, I can...

[00:51:40] I just want to make sure that that's what we're approving. Yes, yeah, okay. Then I'll second. Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Spillman. All those in favor? Aye. Any opposed? That motion clearly passes.

[00:51:55] So yes, just to clarify, Ms. Spillman, that has been pulled by the consent, that policy was pulled from the consent agenda, and we will be, we have, the board has asked for a presentation that describes, to provide more information about the policy, particularly around the implementation, and that is already in the works.

[00:52:20] We will now move into our school division work session, and the first piece on that is our multi-year school support plans and Dr. Dallas Hitt, Director of School Improvement in Quality, Policy and Strategic Planning will be presenting these plans.

[00:52:55] Good evening, everyone. I'm Dallas Hambrick-Hitt. I have been with you before when we've looked at different initiatives and plans within strategic planning and it's nice to be with you again this evening. I'm here tonight to present the multi-year school support plans OF OUR FEDERALLY IDENTIFIED SCHOOLS, AND WE HAVE SIX OF THEM.

[00:53:21] LET ME START, THOUGH, BY RECENTERING US ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN, WHICH IS LEARNING FOR ALL. I'M NOT SURE IF THIS HAPPENED IN CLOSED SESSION, BUT I KNOW IT HASN'T YET TONIGHT, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NICE TO MAKE SURE WE DO THAT. OUR VISION IS THAT OUR LEARNERS ARE ENGAGED IN AUTHENTIC, CHALLENGING, AND RELEVANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES, BECOMING LIFELONG CONTRIBUTORS AND LEADERS IN OUR DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE SOCIETY.

[00:53:42] OUR MISSION IS TO WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM. we will end the productive 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.

[00:54:00] We will know every student. Our values are equity, excellence, family and community, wellness, our goals are thriving students, affirming and empowering communities, and equitable transformative resources.

[00:54:17] Okay, so for tonight's purposes in this presentation, I'm really here just to update you all on the new requirements that VDOE has for the multi-year school support plans, which is a new set of letters. And that's a requirement for federally identified schools that just came about this year.

[00:54:36] And by this year, I mean 26, 2026, for the 25-26 school year. So we have been scurrying a bit in the division to enact the requirements that were required of us we just learned about that are supposed to span the entire 25-26 school year but we learned about in January so that because they are a little bit more intense in a good way we wanted to take some time tonight to bring you all up to speed on what those are so I'm going to take some time to do that and then also in the agenda item the six plans have been attached for you to

[00:55:11] hopefully have had some time to review and you'll see some pretty similar commonalities across the six of them for a reason I'll get to in the presentation. So as I said in January we learned that we had these six federally identified schools in ACPS. Five are designated as targeted school improvement and those are Agner, Crozet, Greer, Mountain View, and Stone Robinson.

[00:55:36] Woodbrook is designated as a comprehensive support and improvement school which has a longer designation and duration and a higher level of oversight. I just want to remind you that Dr. McLaughlin has worked on a presentation and shared that with you earlier that dove more deeply into

the new accountability system as we're as it's rolling out and if he discussed the different metrics and the reasons specifically the student groups and subject areas that these six schools are federally identified for so we won't go into that tonight too far other than just letting you that they have these are the designations we have five TSI and we have one comprehensive support and

[00:56:14] improvement this is a good way for hopefully for you to be able to see the the differences in CSI and TSI and how that comes across in the requirements from VDOE in terms of what we have to do we had to do with the plans so in answering the question which student needs are addressed in the plan and CSI it's really the whole school and in TSI it's a specific group and in answering question who develops the multi-year school support plan and needs assessment for the TSI schools the school is responsible and that includes teachers

[00:56:52] and community as well as school leadership and then CSI the division is a ECPS was responsible for overseeing it and making sure that it included teachers and community as well as school leadership in terms of the duration of the plan for TSI schools it's one year it ends in September so we learned about about it in January, but it ends in September.

[00:57:16] So it really ends up being less than a year, but it's supposed to have been for the 25-26 school year. The duration of the plan for CSI can last up to three years with some different exit points along the way, but it's typically two to three years. In terms of evidence-based interventions, or EBIs, those are a list of state-approved programs.

[00:57:40] Actually, they are mostly from the What Works Clearinghouse. Database that video we will accept as part of our plan Tsi schools must have to CSI must have four we have had two all along for the past three years at these schools So that's nothing really new other than at the CSI school there We're going to have to find two more and add to to bring it to a total of four EBI's In terms of which entities monitor and approve this new plan the Tsi school is monitored and approved by here locally.

[00:58:16] So you all and the division will approve the plans, but we as the division are responsible for monitoring it. We also have to ensure that it's posted on the school and division website after it's approved. In terms of the CSI school, you're only required to review it, and VDOE ultimately has to approve it.

[00:58:37] So you've seen it, but it is not something that you have to sign off on. we will have to submit it after you've seen it to VDOE and wait for their approval. So in those school support plans, again, this is a new template.

[00:58:55] In the past, we have not had this level of direction in terms of what the plans entail. We've had some, but this was the first year that there was a required needs assessment, which was also predicated on a requirement for stakeholder engagement.

[00:59:10] It was very clear who had to be involved in that needs assessment. And you'll see those people and roles with contact information listed in the plans. The principals held these meetings on a dime. During snow days, they planned them and then held them as soon as we could. Because again, we learned about this in January.

[00:59:27] We had snow early February. So I'm very proud of the work our principals were able to do in getting the community to come together and still analyze data and come up with an effective and impactful needs assessment. Once that was accomplished, that needs assessment identified a root cause, as well as some other insights.

[00:59:47] And that was the basis for developing the actual school support plan, which has sort of the usual suspects in terms of elements, and it has some aligned action steps. And then finally, there's the assurances and approval section.

[01:00:03] So we'll look at each of those a little more closely. In terms of the stakeholder engagement process, as I mentioned earlier, VDOE required that there were these stakeholders present and participative in the needs assessment.

[01:00:19] And it was principals, teachers, specialists, and at least a family and community member. In terms of the plan, you may have seen that all six schools intend to strengthen their systems and structures in order to meet the needs of all students.

[01:00:36] And this is their three-year goal statement. I wanted to lift that part up because it is a unique element. It's not a one-year plan that VDOE asked for. It was actually, where do you want to be at the end of three years? And ensuring that your focus was not overly specific, but was long enough to have impact.

[01:00:57] Some other features that I wanted to mention about the plan that the schools, the six schools have cited upon, was that they came to the conclusion that while they may have different reasons for being federally identified, the ones that Dr. McLaughlin shared earlier this year, they don't believe that they need to buy more programs.

[01:01:16] They believe in their students and the capacities and capabilities of their faculties. What they want to focus on is leadership, as well as the systems and structures to better align and unleash the impact of existing programs that we already have, like HMH, professional learning communities, quarterly assessments for data-driven instruction, and 90-day planning, as well as the EBIs that we've been required to use by BDOE for the past two years, which are Lexia and a systematic approach to teaching numeracy.

[01:01:50] So due to the systems and structures focus, you have probably seen that the UVA Partnership for Leaders in Education is heavily focused in these plans. And this was a unanimous decision amongst principals based on their needs assessments with their stakeholder groups that they really wanted to focus on leadership systems and structures to bring together all of the existing programs and efforts that we have around teaching and learning.

[01:02:17] Some of you may be familiar with UVA-PLE, which brings both Darden and the School of Education at UVA both together alongside results proven practitioners that partner with divisions who are committed to transformation. We're fortunate that this evidence-based program is a neighbor.

[01:02:35] And for about 20 years, UVA-PLE has been working with divisions in schools to increase student achievement in our nation's lowest performing school. So you can imagine if they have impact, and they've been doing it for 20 years, It's a great source of partnership.

[01:02:50] As you see here, UVA-PLE is the only evidence-based provider in this field, as documented by an independent impact study conducted by RAND Corporation. So now on to our ask of you as a board.

[01:03:07] VDOE, as I've mentioned, has completely revamped the planning process. It's much lengthier, has more templates, and then more approvals built into the process. And while it has been quite the undertaking in these past month or two, we're excited to bring forward these plans. and we do think that they probably are more thoughtful and better devised as we bring more heads around them in the process.

[01:03:28] When we submit the plans, we not only include the names of the stakeholders and the school-based committees that I showed you earlier, but we have to have these roles involved as well. And these roles will sign the assurance. So it's the principal, the division lead, which is either myself or Dr. McLaughlin, the superintendent, Dr. Haas, as well as board acknowledgment.

[01:03:50] And in that board acknowledgment section, we have to have evidence that you all reviewed them in the minutes of tonight's meeting. We are asking that you review and approve the five TSI school plans and review the single CSI school plan. As a reminder, VDOE ultimately approves that one.

[01:04:12] So beyond tonight, well, starting tonight, the steps are that we ask that you approve the school board through a motion for the five TSI schools. We will then submit these plans to VDOE. We are applying for the optional school improvement grant funding to fund the operationalizing of the plans.

[01:04:33] We are doing that. That was an option. We had to do the plans. Every division has to do the plans, but you can choose whether or not you want the money. So we chose the money. We thought that would be-- may as well. And then finally, you have to post the plans on the school and division websites once they are approved by the various entities that I have shared with you.

[01:04:54] That brings us to this slide. At this time, I'd like the board to consider a motion of approval for these plans. The schools and the stakeholder groups have spent a lot of time and effort working diligently on. And I'll leave it at that. I think Dr. McLaughlin suggested I give you a script to read from.

[01:05:10] And here it is, if you'd like it. And I don't know if there's-- And also, if there's any questions or comments, we'd be happy to take those. Of course. Before we make a motion, are there any questions or discussion items? I would just have a question about the SIG grant that we're applying for, or will apply for, will that be across the TSI and the CSI schools both, or depending on how much we get?

[01:05:35] Yes, they both get different amounts depending on. So CSI is eligible for \$165,000, and TSI for \$45,000. And that will be-- Per school? Per school. OK.

[01:05:51] Do we have any knowledge of if that's automatic? If, like, what the-- Whether it will be approved. So I guess I have overseen the grant since I've been here, and we always get what we ask for. We have a pretty good relationship with our contacts.

[01:06:09] We have a new person at VDOE this year that I'm working with, but they can't wait for us to finalize this process and give us the money to help our schools. And you said it's \$45? Around \$45, \$44,9 something, and then right under \$165.

[01:06:25] TSI, and then say that one more time for the-- CSI is 165. And is that a year or for the three years? Great question. So the 45 must be spent by September 30, 2026 for the TSI because there was a designation for the school year that we just learned about in, as I said, January.

[01:06:44] And the CSI will span September of 2027. So they have what's called a planning year built in, which is this current time period, until September of 26.

[01:07:01] And then that we enter into the actual implementation year. So that's why it's a bit more money. And the recommendation is that these six schools will participate in the UVA's PLE program? Correct.

[01:07:18] We have done many things with this money in the past. This is the first time that it's had this level of lifting it up to multiple stakeholders. In the past, we have done different things with the money

that have had different levels of effectiveness.

[01:07:36] A lot of it was around curriculum development and helping teachers to do the work that they need to do in our Title I schools. We've used it in a multitude of ways that are research-based, but at this point, many of the principals who continue to be federally designated wanted to look at something for leadership in systems and structures, because they feel like while we are tinkering with school improvement, we're not at the point where we really are digging deeply into a research-based partnership to unleash the potential that we know our kids and our teachers have.

[01:08:09] So yes, that's the intent is to use it to fund that. And there are some schools may continue to do some of their own versions of curriculum writing and some professional learning. And we're making that happen with the generosity of some local funds.

[01:08:25] so we can not take that off the list if there are things that they want to do regarding working with integrating special educators some are wanting to focus on some of the more granular reasons why they're in the in this designation thank you so much what is the plan for telling us about the results what would you like it to be we don't have so I appreciate that this is um we do share that out through our through our yearly update with that I've been with you on before at the state of the division I have worked with you

[01:09:04] and presented before on 90-day plans and how we are monitoring school schools and students achievement every quarter so those are things that we can continue to do I think it will come out obviously in different ways but if there's an idea about something we might want to consider adding on as we continue to understand this new set of accountability requirements given to us by the state um we that i think that would be very worthwhile and i would if i could um jump in with that one of the things i'd i'd say is one of the the key metrics we have there clearly is our

[01:09:40] end of year sol results uh and we will continue to as soon as we have those in uh bring those to the board uh was as dr has alluded to earlier we just wrapped up our third quarter testing uh we should have the final uh results uh available monday or tuesday of next week and so i'm gonna do a written update to the board uh on where we are uh and just anecdotally uh we were invited um last january uh to january uh 2025 um to participate in an activity with the ple around data-driven instruction you may remember that dr. canard and his team from

[01:10:16] Mountain View came in and spoke about that and in two of the schools that are really going full bore with data-driven instruction are Greer and Mountain View and looking at their third quarter results right now it's it's really having a pretty significant impact on the work that they're doing so we'll have a third quarter update for you all and then hopefully sometime and you know We always have kind of unofficial results in June and then as soon as the state comes out.

[01:10:45] Typically, at the end of the summer. Last year, it took until December, but we're hoping that we get a little bit quicker for you then. Great. I'm mostly interested in knowing whether or not this UVA-PLE thing is worth their time and if they're getting something out of it. Absolutely.

[01:11:01] We can certainly, I think the principals would be happy to come and talk about that down the road. that, just jumping on what Dr. McLaughlin shared, these principals have, because UVAPLEA is in our backyard, have been able to attend various sessions over the past two or three years from data-driven instruction to an IGNITE session. So they were familiar with the work and the way that this leader learning

is enacted and we didn't, this was something that really came up from the principals as unanimous like we want we feel like this is what we need

[01:11:38] and that's not just because of what they saw or experience it's I think the evidence base is very compelling we've been working really hard locally to use some of the elements of PLE from the 90 day plans the quarterly assessments the aligned pacing guides we're getting a lot of we're sort of entering you know a little bit further ahead than some some divisions are so that's exciting but I I think the principals were like that's all good but it's like there's we want to want the full-blown thing and so let's look at doing that if we if we have this funding from the state and it won't cost you know local dollars. I'll also just

[01:12:14] mention anecdotally what other divisions that have worked with UVA PLE have gotten great results from them very practical and useful results and move them forward on whatever problem of practice they had so I'm really excited I would definitely encourage you to look at the RAND study as I said it's the one of the few providers that's ESSA approved because of their evidence base and their link to yes impacting systems and structures and leadership that does show up in student learning in our most underserved schools and as I said I think that's one of that that's what's fascinating to the principals is

[01:12:49] it's working we want it we want to be part of it. Any other questions before we ask for a motion someone would like to make the motion in front of us I move to approve the multi-year support plans for ACPS schools that are federally identified for targeted support and improvement moved by dr. Akoth do I have a second second second by mr. Dylan back all those in favor any opposed thank you thank you so let us know if you get the funding yes oh we will we're getting this this is

[01:13:27] probably one of the last last hoops to jump through so thank you for seeing it tonight thank you so much next we have a budget update before we do our budget update um uh just a couple of things we are in this section talking about i would i want to say potential cuts to the budget um just a reminder to everyone the budget has not been finalized by either the board of supervisors and voted on or nor by us so so that we are fiscally responsible we are looking at potential cuts and we'll be looking at that during this board meeting and that

[01:14:06] our next board meeting but what I would encourage everyone to do is to continue to advocate for schools I know that our Board of Supervisors has to make difficult decisions around funding and there are so many needs in our community but if you feel that schools are something that we need to continue funding at the current level please make sure that you attend a Board of supervisors meeting or attend one of the town halls. So again, these are we're discussing potential cuts in case we are not able to have the current level of

[01:14:43] request. Thank you for framing that up and for the introduction. Maya Kumazawa, Director of Budget and Planning, and this evening we'll talk about three different items. One is a balancing scenario for the school fund and as Dr.

[01:15:01] Rillan mentioned this would be in case that there are no changes to the proposed Board of Supervisors budget so this assumes that the Board of Supervisors budget would move forward and be adopted in April on the second item is the some information about the state bonus that has recently just been released and then the third would be the balancing scenario for the capital improvement program or CIP. First, some technical adjustments to the good to recommend. We're proposing a

[01:15:36] decrease in expenditures by about \$300,000. At the time we produced the draft budget, we were still waiting on one letter from VRS with an updated non-professional retirement group rate. And so we now have it. And this technical adjustment reflects the difference from what we had budgeted the funding request to what it is actually projected to be. Second, we received an updated tuition rate for our students to attend KTEC next year from the City of Charlottesville, and this decreased amount reflects the updated tuition rate. So together this decreases our

[01:16:13] revenues by about \$300,000. So our starting point for developing a balancing scenario is shown here. The Board of Supervisors has proposed a budget last week that reduces our revenues by \$6.4 million dollars to three hundred four point nine million dollars in addition as I showed on the previous slide we're recommending technical changes of point three million dollars which decreases our expenditures to three hundred eleven point zero million dollars that leaves a budget deficit of six point one million dollars which we must close by the time we have to balance

[01:16:51] the budget at the end of April since we cannot make decisions about revenues these are the expenditure reductions in this balancing scenario. First, eliminate the budgeted new transfer to the CIP of \$4.1 million. Second, decrease the proposed math and data specialist positions from six to two positions. Third, reduce division services FTE positions by \$400,000. And lastly, utilize one-time

[01:17:28] revenues for technology expenses. These reductions total to the 6.1 million dollars in the deficit. These are the recommended uses of fund balance as they were presented earlier this month. This is not tied to the FY27 anticipated recurring revenues but rather these are projected savings that we would carry from FY26 into FY27 for one-time uses. These total 3.15 million dollars and the

[01:18:06] only change from when this was last presented earlier this month is to split the technology expenses between one time and recurrent cost so the total transfer to technology replacement was and is recommended to be 2.25 million dollars that would now be split approximately half and half half going to display equipment which is a one-time need and half to put towards a technology replacement cycle. That 1.1 number to put towards a technology replacement cycle

[01:18:41] is the same number that was on the previous slide that showed the reduction to get to the balance scenario. So this is a summary of changes of all three sections. One, which was the technical update of \$300,000. The second, which was the use of one-time fund balance. And the third, which are the service reductions. The service reductions include reducing the CIP transfer, decreasing the

[01:19:14] math and data specialist proposal, and reducing division services FTE. And as a reminder, this is a summary of the permanent reductions that would be carried into FY27 in this scenario. We've now included the reduction of division services FTE by \$400,000, and this is the third year of permanent reductions that now total \$9.5 million. I'll pause here for any questions and discussion.

[01:19:49] You would like to know about the reduction in math specialists. Considering that was one of the top priorities and seemed like that was finally making a decision that was moving us in the right direction and closing some of these learning gaps, it concerns me that that's one of the first things to go um so for that one that is a new proposal so it wouldn't be impacting current the current programming that we have and so I know that was one consideration putting it in this balancing scenario

[01:20:23] however this is a starting point for you all and hoping that either today or at our next meeting on April 16th you can propose revisions to the scenario in in preparation for adopting a scenario if we

need to make these reductions well I would I would say then that I would love to see trying to find somewhere else to cut four hundred thousand dollars and not removing our math and data specialists from the classrooms yeah I would agree with that sentiment as well I know that this was one of the top priorities that Dr. Haas

[01:21:00] mentioned in the original proposal and given the fact that our test scores in math and elementary school or near the bottom of the commonwealth i'd say we need to find somewhere else to cut i think if we took a straw poll vote my gut is that board would be and again i know we're in a situation you know having already cut 9.1 million dollars in past years but i know that's a piece that kind of this board had made a commitment to continue to first uh doing reading

[01:21:38] specialists continuing reading specialists and that it had been on the our list to then begin to do math specialists so but i'm sorry dr host i know there's something you wanted to just to add to that i agree with with miss spillman um because we have been wanting this for the past several years um but i guess i would ask staff if they could come back and say how would two math specialists be deployed versus six and you know maybe this is something we can build on i mean i just I don't fully understand how they would you know to specialists across you

[01:22:15] know however many elementary schools doesn't sound like very much in this scenario there would be a pilot at one elementary school and a pilot at one middle school and they were okay sign there and that would be kind of a phase in okay okay I mean I also know yes on the face of it I don't like what this looks like but I also remember that the margin for new proposals was so small right so I don't like off the top of my head I don't have other thoughts obviously I don't like this but it might be that that might be the thing that we

[01:22:49] don't like least so I am open to that but yeah that does not feel just I do like the idea of having a pilot but a more robust pilot would be good too yeah I agree I would say that this is targeted for enrollment groups I don't want to quibble we are elementary math scores are far from the bottom they're among the top in the Commonwealth they're actually in the top among the top it's with our enrollment groups where we have particularly those scores

[01:23:25] so I just want to get the record straight on that but this is targeted to work in what we call our transformation schools and that would be the schools in ple we this is great feedback i i i was pretty excited about it i felt like it was a from the ground up because it had come up through mountain view using their staffing creatively to accomplish this so i think we'll certainly this feedback is really great and we'll we'll take that back to the drawing board to see what we can do and i would just encourage that um the first cut doesn't have

[01:24:03] to be from a new proposal I think our new a new program I think that there may be other programs that maybe aren't as successful that this would be more fruitful for us so I would just encourage the staff that unfortunately if we have to look at cutting programs what is going to be the least harmful to our students and our staff and hopefully we won't have to do that so recently the state

[01:24:42] put out some guidance about SOQ instructional and support position bonuses that we wanted to bring forward for awareness. We will look for a direction from the board on how to move forward in mid to late April. So the state has approved in the FY26 caboose bill so that they approve a final bill for the current budget year that we're in and in that bill there is a one-time bonus for SOQ positions. To receive

the state funding of 0.7 million dollars we must provide a minimum total bonus amount of \$2.3 million. And that amount is based on a \$1,500

[01:25:22] bonus for full-time SOQ-funded positions. There are some provisions in there that allow for flexibility in how we implement this. And so on this slide is a range of options between the lowest cost to the highest cost. Well, let me restate that. The lowest cost would be to not take any action at all. This is not required. This is optional. If you did want to take some action to pull down the \$0.7 million from the state to get to the \$2.3 million payment of bonuses, this would

[01:25:56] be equivalent to about \$900 per full-time regular employee. The highest cost interpretation would be to provide a \$1,500 bonus per full-time regular employee. And the \$1,500 is there because that's what the original bonus intent was.

[01:26:16] As you know, we have about twice as many SOQ positions that the state funds. And so any time the state provides any kind of wage or compensation increase, they only cover a portion of it, the SOQ-funded portions.

[01:26:34] And then within that, we cover our LCI portion, and they cover the other. Our LCI is about 0.64, which means the state covering 35% of the SOQ position. So that's why the ACPS share is so high when these proposals come forward. So the options for the board to consider is to take no action which is reflected in the current balancing scenario. The second is to provide a bonus in the current year or there's an option to carry that forward into the next year. And then third to provide an equivalent action

[01:27:10] compensation increase in FY27. Before I get into this slide, the dates on here are a bit off, but the dates should be reflective of the school board meetings, which are April 16th and 23rd, not the 19th and 26th. As I mentioned, this bonus is not included in the balancing scenario, so we'll need to take further action if you desire to implement it. We will also need to coordinate with the AEA, as this would be an impact in wages, which is a collective bargaining

[01:27:44] topic. So first, we would want to adjust the budget. At the next meeting, you all could decrease expenditures if desired to pay for this. We'd also be monitoring and adjusting FY27 projected state revenues. Again, typically, we might have an approved state budget, but this year we don't, and so I don't anticipate having that until early May, but we might get a sense of which way it's headed by the end of April we'll also analyze and adjust our third quarter school fund fund balance projection to see if there's anything additional we

[01:28:20] could put towards this as this is a one-time expense and then after that the school board and the division would need to certify intent on receiving the state match of the seven hundred thousand and so on April 23rd the school board will adopt FY 27 budget during that same meeting I'm looking for your intent to receive or decline the bonus payment because on May 1st we have to certify to the video of our actions and then because the budget would be adopted by then in the next fiscal year we can appropriate additional state revenues if

[01:28:57] they are available and or appropriate additional use of fund balance if available and then pay the bonus or the equivalent action if funding is available any questions on this is 900 though as low as you can go on the bonus is that the only way or is that just an example that is so we're required to pay 2.3 million dollars in total and so if you take the 2.3 and divide it among full-time regular employees it would be 900 but this would not necessarily be

[01:29:33] the recommendation because that this doesn't include part-time employees so if we wanted to pay a bonus for part-time employees which we typically do at a prorated rate that would have to be a 100% local funding for that and And that's estimated to be about \$400,000 in addition.

[01:29:50] - In addition, okay. - So the ACPS share would be \$2 million. If that was the route you wanted to take, we'd probably recommend that we include part-time employees at \$2 million.

[01:30:06] - And this was fully approved and signed? - Yes, the FY26. - Maya, back on slide, page number six, had a question about a couple of items. Can you explain the bridge funding for unfunded instructional resources.

[01:30:26] Yes. So the \$600,000 here would pay for the second part of the payment we need for KITM, which is the K-5 math curriculum. And this would be in addition to the recurring funding that you all approved in your funding request that includes a whole list of textbook needs, such as secondary math, English language arts, grades six through eight, and the algebra bridge program.

[01:30:57] So this would be provided as a one-time increase in the textbook fund. That recurring amount that's in your budget remains also. So it's two sources of funding. Was that earlier amount mentioned?

[01:31:13] \$800,000? Yep, \$800,000 is the recurring increase that's in your current funding request. so this is in addition to that correct have we settled the issue with kitum at this point yes i believe so okay okay i've heard from a number of folks that their concerns about spending large sums of money on technology and computers especially in the elementary level

[01:31:52] so i don't have a specific proposal in mind but i'm just wondering out loud about the essentially 2.2 million dollars of funds designated for technology is is this for new technology or improvements and upgrades to existing technology it is not new technology the display equipment is up for replacement and the first 1.1 million dollars would go towards

[01:32:31] replacing classroom display technology that was originally funded from one-time funds maybe five years ago as a board initiative to provide that technology and so because that was spent from one-time funds previously there wasn't any recurring funding associated with it so this proposes a replacement of those that technology that is now becoming outdated the second piece the 1.1 that would fill in the gap for the recurring annual replacement cycle for personal

[01:33:07] computers iPads the everyday equipment that students and teachers use and the way this is structured is that 1.1 million dollars would be funded out of one-time money so next year we will have to look at this again and say okay we need to find 1.1 million dollars in recurring money or find ways to reduce So in this structure, we're keeping the program whole for one year and then next year we'll be having the discussion again

[01:33:39] Most likely I'd be interested to know how much money we could save as a division if we scale back on the level of Technology that we're giving to students in the elementary grades. I don't know if there's been a study of that I'd be curious yeah thank you thank you for raising that mr dylan bick i mean i think we're seeing a lot of research coming out just in the last year um but definitely in the last six months um looking

[01:34:17] at the use of technology and in um in elementary schools um you know i talk about levers right like we went we were paper and then everyone went one-to-one computing and i think you're seeing

people potentially coming back and i think we're starting to see letters um to the school board and in one-on-one conversations and research.

[01:34:38] So there's a piece of me that-- one, like Mr. Dillenbick, are we going to continue hearing that potentially, particularly in our K-1 and 2 classrooms, but potentially all the way through fifth grade, that we be asked to limit, which would mean that we need more books.

[01:35:01] So there will always be a cost. But I do think, as we're looking at this, particularly if we're looking at replacement, looking across, where are we replacing? And do we hold on some replacements in those younger grades? I know that's something late to come.

[01:35:17] But as we're looking at every dollar, if we can also support some of those potential initiatives that I think we're going to see coming from both researchers and parent requests. I would encourage decisions like that be made more at a higher instructional level.

[01:35:34] if there's a different path you'd want to move forward with. With regards to the budget, this is a one-year funding for the program. And so I would say those kind of larger decisions should be made outside of the budget process. But because it's funded for the next year, at least that will be whole, and then we can move forward from there.

[01:35:54] Yeah, and I would certainly-- there's a lot of research out there also supporting these kinds of initiatives. It's just interesting. For many years, we were doing professional development to introduce technology. I do think it's important to be real thoughtful and as we do, and I think it's almost inevitable that we will start to pull back, particularly at the earlier levels.

[01:36:20] We'll also need to build professional development for our educators because of the reliance on it as an instructional tool. I have noticed, and you probably noticed in my slide I showed earlier tonight a young man was using a pencil and writing and I with the materials that we're using now with HMH there's more hands-on writing and I'm also noticing the students with KITM and when I'm out there I see the workbooks it's kind of weird to see that because I haven't seen them in so long but the students open them up they're doing their writing they're they're

[01:36:59] they're able to in many ways work together more effectively than they were with the screen kind of locking you in looking at it so um i'm glad you brought that up as well i think it's a good discussion and something we really need to look hard at for the earlier levels but again i just want to add that we'll have to it'll be like a strategic plan to back off um if that's where the board decides to to go miss kumizawa um in terms of camera equipment in the buildings are these for our two new schools are these replacement or additions to existing buildings I believe they

[01:37:38] are for our current buildings thank you I have a question about the bonuses I would love to give everybody an ACPS a bonus can you talk about when that would occur and this is over and above the collective bargaining agreement beginning July 1 right um there is an option to pay the bonus after June 1st that's when the when we would get the payment from the state so that can occur in this school year or this fiscal year or we have the option to do it next fiscal

[01:38:16] year I would recommend that because we still have some unknowns with the state budget and we might have potential revenues coming in next year or use the fund balance at the end of the year that it be distributed in the next year we have discretion on when during the year that would happen there's

coordination with HR and payroll and the AEA as this would be above and beyond the contract that we have with them.

[01:38:49] - And just as you have more information about it, particularly what that total ask would be once we added part-time employees, just so we would know what that full impact would be. - I would use the range of 2 million if you'd like to include part-time to 3.9 million, depending on the size of the bonus.

[01:39:10] - And the 3.9 would include part-time or should we also include? - That one does include part-time. I was trying to get the highest number. - Perfect. questions or comments on this portion. So the last topic is the capital improvement program. Typically, the school board does not present a balanced CIP request because the Board of Supervisors develops that based on the school board request in December and then projecting using their available revenues. However, this proposed CIP does not address the school board's

[01:39:46] request for new projects. It does fully fund ongoing programs as requested. They They include project management services, school bus replacement, school maintenance and replacement program, and school network infrastructure. In addition, costs for the Northern Feeder Pattern Elementary School are increased as requested.

[01:40:06] \$8 million from renovations funding in the current CIP was moved to the Northern Feeder Pattern Elementary School project to fund the increased request. And another \$8 million from the current renovations funding was moved to a placeholder in year five that leaves zero dollars for renovations for the next five years when previously there was 16 million and then as you know there is a CIP priorities placeholder in year five for the Board of Supervisors to determine how to spend that funding comes six point four million dollars and our FY 27 local

[01:40:43] transfer by formula and another six point four million in our local transfer by formula in FY28. It's important to note that Virginia Code and our local process requires the school board to provide a request for school capital needs. We begin this process by identifying all capital needs across the division. To prioritize those needs, we engage the long-range planning advisory committee to discuss which projects may have the greatest impact on advancing school priorities. For capital projects, we place the highest level of priority

[01:41:18] on projects that will reduce overcrowding in our schools, modernize our aging infrastructure and increase student access to educational opportunities. Because we are not provided a budget, we do not factor cost or project schedules into our list of priorities.

[01:41:34] Rather, we focus solely on potential impact and school need. The Board of Supervisors has the sole authority to determine whether to fund specific projects and for establishing a budget and timeline for when funding may be provided. year the Board of Supervisors has approved a CIP that has several placeholders, so we are recommending a capital improvement plan for schools that is balanced. These are the guidelines that govern this proposal. One, stay within the available revenues as proposed in the Board of Supervisors budget. Two, align the recommendation with the capital priorities as presented

[01:42:11] in December. Three, focus on school renovations that are urgently needed rather than budgeting future placeholders. Four, preserve contingencies for future operating budgets by committing \$6.4 million to one-time capital needs for two years. This would include addressing changes in the LCI in

year three. Five, continue discussions with the Board of Supervisors regarding a new high school. These are the top five projects as requested in December.

[01:42:43] The first is the construction of a comprehensive high school. This remains the school board's highest priority. However, the project is not included in the five-year CIP, and no earmarks have been approved by the Board of Supervisors for this project in the future. As part of a balanced scenario, this project is placed in years 5 through 10. It is important to note that this cost estimate will need to be increased for every year the project is delayed. This cost represents construction costs in years 3 through 5. The balanced scenario also requests renovation funding

[01:43:18] for Stony Point Elementary School for \$8 million. The \$8 million is currently in a year 5 placeholder for schools projects, and this could fund part of the original scope that was requested. The next project is renovations at Albemarle High School for \$6.4 million in year one. This is part of the \$12.8 million that was placed in year five of the Board of Supervisors Priorities Placeholder.

[01:43:47] fourth renovations at Western Albemarle High School again a partial scope would be for six point four million dollars in FY 28 this reflects the timing of when the amount was reduced from our local transfer in place into the year five placeholder and then finally the preschool center remains a priority and this project would be funded as revenues become available so I'll pause here for questions the purpose of this is to gain a direction from you all so that the chair could take appropriate actions in moving this request forward to the Board of Supervisors.

[01:44:26] Can I ask a question about the one-time transfer? Wasn't it previously five million dollars and included like trailers for Western and art and things like that? Is that just taken off now or sorry I should have asked it before. It's a good question and I have the information.

[01:44:52] So previously, when you saw the one-time list, it was both for FY26 and FY27. This list only includes the FY27 proposed budgeted amounts. The FY26 included trailer relocation and improvements on outfitting the trailer.

[01:45:16] It included art materials and art equipment funding. And it included vehicle replacement that was related to new schools and just general, that fund is underfunded. And so that will happen, occur in FY26, outside of the FY27 budget process.

[01:45:34] So that's not included on the slide, but we will continue to move forward with that in this current school year. - Okay. - Yes. - Thank you. - Forgive me, because I wasn't part of the board prior to January.

[01:45:53] So I don't know all of the discussion that took place with the long range planning advisory committee and so on. But if we push out the comprehensive fourth high school, do we then sort of reshuffle these priorities?

[01:46:13] And when do we have another discussion with the committee and amongst ourselves about how best to reshuffle these priorities?

[01:46:28] I think that the ranking order really is unrelated to timing. As I mentioned, we can't direct the funding or the timing. And so if you want to move forward with projects, there's a certain amount of money available, and that's how this would be.

[01:46:44] If it's your priority to keep the high school in the number one spot, I think it could remain that way, and it doesn't necessarily need to be reshuffled unless you feel that your priorities have changed. If that's the case, I would recommend that we discuss that during the next CIP process in the fall, this coming fall.

[01:47:03] Okay, that was my question. When does that happen? Would there be enough money, I don't know how much we have in LAPS right now, but would there be enough money in that to fund the bonus, the \$2 million for the bonus?

[01:47:31] That is what we are looking at that. So I mentioned we would analyze our projected fund balance amount at the end of this year, and that's where that would come into play. And so if we're able to increase our projection for what's remaining, yes, that is a potential source.

[01:47:49] Is this something that-- is this like a random thing? Or does this happen every year with these bonuses, and I'm just not aware of it? Or is it just an extra challenge that we're being thrown because we made somebody mad? - It's random and it's generally positive, but it comes back to that same theme where the state will say, we're giving you, we're giving out, you know, a 1% or 2% bonus, but for all school divisions, because all school divisions fund above the SOQs, they have to put their own money in.

[01:48:22] And yeah, so to just answer your question, it is random. - We did do this last spring, I believe, yeah. - We had some good size ones during the pandemic. - And again, I want everyone to know that it's not that, like the school board believes in teachers and staff and, you know, we are, Virginia is 24th.

[01:48:46] Matthew, Dr. Haas corrected me. We've moved up one stage in where our teachers sit. And so we believe our teachers should be paid more. Unfortunately, the way the state puts these bonuses for it, only covering a third or less than a third and it puts school divisions in difficult spots and it doesn't it's not vrs creditable it doesn't build on the person's pay so they go from you know build on percentages from one year to the next it's kind of a you know when the state builds all these surpluses the reason they build the surplus is because they're underfunding education which

[01:49:23] would be recurring dollars yeah and then they take the surplus back and then they throw out the bonuses so which are not recurring but we've generally been able to figure out a way to get something to everybody so i'm hoping the cards will all kind of play out and in our favor and we'll be able to pull it off pull something off something meaningful good we used to uh this one doesn't allow us to do the average across everyone like like the ones we've been able to do in the past in the same way right yes last year we were able to take the state contribution and split that

[01:50:02] among employees. This year, we have to match it at a certain amount, but we can spread that out between everyone. So the rules of it are always very complex. So we've been spending the last few days just trying to figure it out. Well, you figured it out. I mean, I don't know who...

[01:50:20] Lots of help. You definitely figured it out. Dr. Berlin, do you need any more direction on this to move forward? It's not hard to just see, is there any other comments by my colleagues on this um balancing scenario because we will need to move forward and share it with the board of supervisors so you don't need us to you don't need a vote or a motion or anything on this i don't think so yeah um so the next steps would be that at the next board meeting

[01:50:59] on april 16th i would bring back a revised balancing scenario based on your feedback and at that time we can go through and make any changes i would hope by the end of that meeting we would

have an agreement on what the balancing scenario is again assuming that there aren't any changes in the proposed county budget on april 22nd the board of supervisors will approve their budget and then the following day we will adopt the budget with the changes that are discussed the week prior and then in may as i mentioned with the bonus when we have updates regarding

[01:51:37] the state budget we can make additional appropriations or changes as needed would you like i don't like our favorite email address would you like us if we kind of spend time in the budget book um and and think of potential areas that we'd like you to look at would you like us to kind of reach out to you at this uh email before the meeting or would you like to us to bring those to that meeting if you have questions about it because you're unsure about exactly what it's funding questions ahead of time would be great. Otherwise I would say during the

[01:52:15] meeting or between now and then what will happen is if there's consensus or if there's four votes in favor of what you're proposing then we would move forward with the change. Just keep in mind that any you know increase needs to be offset by a decrease or you know the other way around so it would be helpful if you could remain within the revenues as proposed and then I do think you heard I mean I see the reason for the pilot if we have to make a cut however I

[01:52:49] think if there are other places to cut that would allow us to keep those six math interventionists I think we have the will of the board there and so I think I know I know it it is difficult to find additional places but if there places we are able to find I think there is and we have also been hearing that from the public so

[01:53:13] thank you thank you questions so we are going to be moving into a close unless there's anything else cut from the board that they wanted to bring forward on budget we are going to be moving into a closed meeting and I do have Miss Spillman has a closed meeting motion I moved the school board of of Albemarle County, Virginia, go into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom

[01:53:50] of Information Act, Section 2.2-3711A of the Code of Virginia, under subsection 19 for the discussion of plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity or specific cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities and briefings by staff members, legal counsel or law enforcement or emergency service officials.

[01:54:11] The purpose of this item is for staff and law enforcement officials to advise regarding safety protocols at school board meetings and techniques for avoiding and de-escalating conflicts with constituents and other community members second moved by ms spillman second by ms lee all those in favor aye any opposed we will now move into closed meeting um we will reconvene but just for a uh closed meeting certification we do not anticipate any other um meeting after that

[01:54:48] this is one of those closed meetings that you don't want to have to do something around but this is needed so thank you very much uh thank you to everyone who spoke during public comment and to everyone who participated in tonight's meeting we will be back um for the closed meeting

[01:55:06] certification but we do not expect you to stay just for that no no the agenda is we appreciate

[03:30:43] you all it's comforting i would wouldn't mind taking a little walk after i don't know about you guys we're good okay i move that the board certified by recorded vote 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 authorizing the closed meeting were

heard discussed or considered in the closed meeting second moved by Ms. Spillin seconded by Ms. Lee all those in favor aye aye any opposed we are now adjourned



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