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Albemarle County School Board Regular Meeting, Thursday, April 16, 2026

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[00:00:01] Good evening everyone, it is my pleasure to call this April 16, 2026 business meeting for the Albemarle County School Board to order. We will start our evening with our roll call to introduce ourselves to the public who is here in the auditorium and to those people listening online.

[00:00:24] Ms. Schmidt, would you start? Roslyn Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer. Daphne Kaiser, Assistant Superintendent. Kate Acuff, Jack Jewett District. Judy Lee, Rivanna District. Ellen Osborne, Scottsville District. Rebecca Berlin, Whitehall District.

[00:00:40] Allison Spillman, At-Large Representative. Jim Dillenbeck, Ryo District. Bob Beard, Samuel Miller District. Matthew Hawes, Superintendent. Josiah Black, Chief Legal Officer. Dan Redding, Chief HR Officer. Christine Thompson, Clerk of the Board.

[00:00:58] Patrick McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent. And thank you to our officers who are here to serve us today and protect us today and every day. will now stand for the pledge of allegiance we will begin our meeting with a moment of silence

[00:01:33] thank you so much agenda point 2.0 is the approval of our agenda do i have a motion from the board for the approval of tonight's agenda i move we approve tonight's agenda moved by ms lee do i have a second second seconded by dr acoff all those in favor of approving tonight's agenda

[00:02:12] any opposed we will move forward with tonight's agenda agenda 3.0 is announcements our first announcement is to recognize the month of the military child i would like jamie gellner director of transportation and a veteran to introduce tonight's agenda item hi my name is jamie gellner i am the director of transportation and tonight the albemarle county school board is honored to recognize april 2026 as the month of the military child when i was growing up i was a military brat

[00:02:49] that's what they called it and attended seven different schools over my k-12 education my own father was deployed for the duration of my seventh grade year and we were living at fort leavenworth so i went to a department of defense school and school was definitely a happy place for me while he was gone military connected children serve alongside their families in ways that are not always visible but are deeply felt. They navigate frequent transitions, endure separations during deployment, and meet the challenges of change with strength, adaptability, and grace. Albemarle County Public Schools is proud to serve 448

[00:03:25] military-connected students across the division and proud to recognize Ivy Elementary School, Baker Butler Elementary School, and Lakeside Middle School for earning the Virginia Department of Education's Purple Star designation in recognition of their commitment to military-connected students and families many of our schools show support for military families by wearing purple on purple up day which was yesterday on april 15th i'm wearing my shirt just for fun take it out and i was really happy to see mr kiner and brownsville celebrating it that's where my children attend this color symbolizes the combined colors of all military branches

[00:04:04] the contributions of our military connected children to our schools and communities include unique and valuable perspectives on learning friendship and growing up and the ways in which our school staff show up to support military connected children are invaluable to their continued growth this resolution is offered in gratitude and recognition of the resilient sacrifice and contributions of military children and their families and as a statement of this board's continued support for their success and well-being thank you so much mr dillenbeck will

[00:04:38] now read a resolution regarding military month of the child month of the military child apologies thank you whereas military connected children serve our country in their own way through sacrifice strength and perseverance and whereas virginia is home to some of the nation's most significant military installations and educates more military connected students than any other state in the nation with more than 78 000 enrolled in public schools across the commonwealth as of November 2025, and whereas Albemarle County Public Schools proudly serves 448

[00:05:17] military-connected students across the division, and whereas military-connected students often navigate frequent moves, family separations during deployment, and the challenges of reintegration while continuing to learn, grow, and contribute meaningfully to their schools and communities, and whereas these students bring resilience, adaptability, and courage to the classroom, and enrich our schools with their experiences, perspectives, and strength of character. And whereas Albemarle County Public Schools is proud to recognize Ivy Elementary, Baker Butler Elementary, Lakeside

[00:05:52] Middle Schools for earning the Virginia Department of Education's Purple Star designation in recognition of their strong support for military-connected students and families. And whereas schools across the division have joined in observing Purple Up Day and other efforts throughout the year to honor and support military children and their families. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Albemarle County

School Board hereby recognizes April 2026 as the month of the military child in Albemarle County Public Schools, and be it further resolved that the school board expresses its deep appreciation for the strength, sacrifice, and service of military

[00:06:30] connected students and their families, and reaffirms its commitment to supporting their success and well-being in every Albemarle County school, adopted this 16th day of April 2026 by the Albemarle County School Board. Thank you so much, Mr. Dillenbeck. The next item on our agenda is 3.2, School Board, Superintendent, and Committee Updates. Just have a quick update from Dr. Kaiser regarding tomorrow's Student Senate. Good evening, Chair Berlin and Vice Chair Spillman and School

[00:07:07] Board members. I wanted to provide a brief update on tomorrow's Albemarle County Public Schools Student Senate Conference. We will be convening student representatives from across our high schools from 10 a.m. until 1 30 p.m. for a culminating session focused on reflection, student voice, and civic engagement. This spring's conference is intentionally designed to both celebrate student leadership and create meaningful opportunities for students to engage directly with policymakers and community partners. We will begin the day with a panel discussion

[00:07:45] featuring Senator Cree Deeds, who represents Virginia's 11th Senate District, Delegate Katrina Cawson, who represents the 54th House District, and Delegate Amy Laufer, who represents the 55th House District.

[00:08:01] We have moved our panel to the very beginning of the day to ensure that our legislators can participate and also attend the Dogwood Vietnam Memorial Rededication Ceremony that is scheduled for later in the morning.

[00:08:23] This panel will allow students to engage in direct dialogue around education priorities, safety, and how young people can effectively participate in civic and policy processes. Following the panel, students will participate in a student Senate showcase where they will present projects they have engaged in throughout the year that align with and reflect the legislative priorities jointly developed by the school board and student senate.

[00:08:55] These presentations will highlight both successes and ongoing challenges as well as student generated recommendations for next year. The remainder of the day includes a small group rotation and discussions focused on key topics such as the new student club policy and a community listening session on gun violence and school climate as well as time for cross-school collaboration and reflection and overall the event reflects our continued commitment to elevating student voice ensuring that students

[00:09:32] are not only engaged in their school communities but also understand how their perspectives can inform decision making at the local and state levels and we look forward to sharing reflections and key takeaways with the board following the event the event thank you thank you so much other school board or superintendent or committee information you'd like to share well i attended my first uh aces committee uh meeting this week that's the advisory committee on environmental

[00:10:05] sustainability we discussed the environmental literacy plan that is currently being devised for elementary schools to talk about recycling watershed and energy use and get our elementary students a lot more environmentally aware i also found interesting in an update on solar use in in all of our schools right now there are nine schools that are hooked up with solar panels on top for solar energy and within the next couple of years we're going to have 17 solar schools which

[00:10:40] is about 50 50 of the schools in the county so that is great news as we try to implement the county's environmental plan thank you um i wanted to mention that uh dr haas and i toured baker butler this week and it was um rescheduled from all the snow or ice whatever was happening at that time rain could be so it was really good to see we got to see HMH in action and see just how

[00:11:18] clear the curriculum is and how the teacher was really using it with fidelity we also got to see some students learning to read a clock one of these ones with just the numbers and the hands which I think is really good because I remember knowing kids in college who couldn't read time And so I'm glad I'm glad we're back to that.

[00:11:38] So and it's also one of the purple star schools that we discussed. And I saw those on the placards on the walls. And that's fantastic also. So we were with Ms. Cook Carter, and that was just a great visit. Bob, have we talked about our Scottsville visit?

[00:11:55] We had a spring break in there. But Bob and I enjoyed a nice visit to Scottsville. It was great. Yeah. That was like two weeks ago now. Feels forever. I just wanted to bring up something, promote an event that's near and dear to me, but also affects Albemarle County students.

[00:12:13] This weekend is Hope Fest, which is a family-friendly musical festival that's being held at Ravana River Company on Saturday from four to eight. But we're raising money for Camp Hope, which is a summer camp for kids that are navigating foster care, adoption, disabilities, or trauma backgrounds.

[00:12:30] And many, many Albemarle County students attend Camp Hope, and they can't usually attend community-based summer camps. So if you're looking for something fun to do, we're going to have a kid zone and sensory friendly area, lots of bands and food trucks and local vineyards and breweries.

[00:12:50] If you're looking for something fun this weekend that goes to a really good cause and will help Albemarle County students, I would love for you to join us. Any other updates? Mr. Dillenbach. Dr. Haas and I had a chance to visit with Community Lab on Monday, first day back from spring break and Mr. Ratliff and his staff were ready to go and the kids were coming in and it was really awesome to see what they're doing they're excited you know there's just great energy there uh we sat in for a little while on lizzie stalling's

[00:13:27] english class and then went to another um eighth grade class and just had a great time there with the staff thank you so much anything else um i had the pleasure of talking to ms mary mcintyre today she is at she and her team are at the vea um conference in uh and they were really excited to let me know that they won the the award for the local membership um uh vea group that has had the

[00:14:02] largest percentage uh growth in membership so very excited for them to receive that award and I think it shows both the amazing work that that team has done in recruitment as well as how important that issue is to our teachers and professional staff and she said to me she was funny she said so everyone's coming up and asking us how we did it because they're trying to figure out how to do that themselves and I said she's like I don't know what to answer I said and I said Mary you know it is the long work right the the day we signed that we saw the the number of

[00:14:39] former presidents who supported this work over the years and then the work that the team has done in the last few years so it's a you know it's about relationships it's about trust and it's about what you're being bringing to the table so they were excited to share the news of the award but also to share some of the work that they have done in the ideas with others and the conference so seeing no other

updates before me we are going to move to public comment and I have asked Vice Chair Spillman to manage that this evening. Thank you. We welcome public input at our school board meetings. To sign up to speak during the

[00:15:19] public comment period, you can do so in several ways. Online, sign up is available from 9:00 a.m. on the Monday of the meeting week until 2:00 p.m. on the meeting day. In person, sorry, by phone call the school board clerk's office at 434-972-4055 to sign up until 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, or in person sign up at the meeting is available from 6:00 p.m. until the public comment period for in-person meetings only. Please note that public comment is not received at special board meetings unless specified on the agenda. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak but the chair with board consent may reduce this to two minutes should there be 14 or more speakers. The maximum number

[00:15:56] of people or groups that may speak at a meeting is 20. In the event that there are more than 20 people or groups who wish to speak at a particular meeting, each speaker will be assigned a number and numbers will be drawn to determine which people or groups will have the opportunity to speak. Those who do not have the opportunity to speak at a particular meeting may sign up to speak at a subsequent meeting and or may submit written comments to the school board's consideration.

[00:16:19] Speakers should state their name, address, or voting district. Address comments to the whole school board. You may not address individual board members or division leadership individually. Limit comments to school board governance or school division operations and provide written statements supporting materials to the clerk the school board will use a timer to track each speaker's time once this time is up speakers are asked to wrap up their comments to maintain respect please refrain from clapping or other audible forms of support you may raise your hand instead debate with the school board is not allowed and the projection system is for staff presentations only okay this

[00:16:55] evening we have nine speakers the first is jimmy baloo hello i'm jimmy baloo the scottsville district i'm here tonight because i have a few questions um let's first start off um you know dr hall says his office is built with transparency and the guiding principle of his leadership is

[00:17:32] transparency well i've submitted several emails over the last few weeks one to include 25 budgetary questions which none of you all took the time to respond unfortunately sir we can't address specifically dr haas just to the board in general we move past that specifically 25 questions about budgetary issues as i was saying supervisor galloway did have enough respect to respond the majority of his questions the answers were i'll refer you back to the school board i've emailed multiple people um the second concern i raised is um i raised this with um

[00:18:10] dr berlin with some of the stuff at monticello high school i also sent a follow-up email to her email she was gracious enough to email me back the first time i do appreciate that and thank you but there was no silence after that and it was kind of an email that was pretty important you know it raised some valid concerns after i spoke with about a dozen students at the school level there and i spoke with several staff members but finally i'm here as we all know there were some events that took place at stone robinson elementary school in december of last year which has caused some substantial damage and trauma to my children as we still deal with that just a prime example

[00:18:48] i spent 30 minutes in the pickup line the other morning coaching my child out of the car with no success and i will give it to miss leslie wills tail with the principal at stone robinson elementary she actually got into my vehicle and stood up and said you know what i will make this work she went above

and beyond and i thank you all for having her in that position there she's been wonderful but what brings me here tonight specifically is there's a gentleman there as a counselor i won't name any names he has more than 30 years experience his answer when mrs wheels taylor was not there wednesday because she was at a professional development meeting

[00:19:22] was my child mid panic attack and either lay down or go home after 30 years of counseling experience is that an acceptable answer and if you all sitting here believe that is acceptable you should just leave tonight thank you thank you i would like to remind everyone to not address uh school board members or division leadership individually um number two uh sky sorry kyle Smoot. My name is Kyle Smoot and I reside in the Ravana district. I'm here tonight because I believe

[00:20:01] our school division can and must do better when it comes to inclusion of the people most affected by its decisions. The grading policy episode and situation at Greer are telling. Last meeting the central office brought a policy before this board for re-approval unchanged without meaningfully consulting teachers, parents, or perhaps most importantly students. The people who live inside that policy every day, were simply not asked.

[00:20:29] I applaud this board for sending it back, however, the revision process still seems murky to many. The point is, we shouldn't need to plead to the board to remedy what the administration shouldn't be omitting in the first place. We're tired of being dictated to instead of being engaged with.

[00:20:47] So I have two recommendations: first, every item the administration brings to this board should include a verification statement, a clear, documented answer to the question, who was consulted? If either teachers, parents, or students were not consulted on a given item, the administration should explain why their input wasn't necessary instead of it being assumed.

[00:21:07] It's a simple step that would create accountability and begin to rebuild trust between the central office, the board, and the community it serves. My second recommendation regards access. Even when the division invites public participation, the barriers are high.

[00:21:24] Too often, it's reduced to providing public comment at a meeting. Attending a school board or a Board of Supervisors meeting often means leaving your children at home on a weeknight, missing a game, missing dinner, missing the vanishingly few hours families can spend together.

[00:21:41] And then you get three minutes at a microphone after the initiative or policy has largely been shaped. This is not meaningful involvement, it's the appearance of it. I'm asking the administration and this board to invest in genuine, accessible engagement.

[00:21:57] Examples could be more surveys distributed through the schools, town halls during the school day and on weekends, and student advisory input that's actually built into the development timeline. Involvement should occur throughout the process, not be avoided as it was during the grading policy renewal.

[00:22:18] The teachers in our classrooms, the parents in our communities, and the students in our seats are not obstacles to good work. They are the reason for it. When we treat them that way, When we build their voices into our work from the start, we make better decisions for every child.

[00:22:35] Thank you. Thank you. Next, we have Holly Odom.

[00:22:47] Good evening, school board. My name is Holly Odom. I'm the mother of three daughters, two at Mary Carr Greer Elementary, and our eldest just graduated from Greer last year, all in the Jack Jewett District.

[00:23:07] I'm here to follow up on your decision to transfer Greer Elementary's principal, Dr. Steve Saunders, to Crozet Elementary. in the subsequent appointment process for a new principal to Greer. Last night on a Virginia Department of Education listening tour, Superintendent of Public Education Jenna Conway said to me and other parents, there is no greater act of trust than sending your child to a Virginia public school. No greater act of trust. Since March 26, we have emailed you. We have reached out to our county supervisor. We have researched. We have organized. I've rewritten this public

[00:23:43] comment many times. I've prayed, I've racked my brain trying to think what could move each of you to curiosity, introspection, and action. And I'm left with, I don't know. I don't know because you don't know me and I don't know you. Standing up here is a really odd way to dialogue. I fully recognize that. I would much rather sit across from you at Kindness Cafe or volunteer next to you at Greer's Culture Night next week. I don't know your story, so all I can do is invite you to ours. Picture it. It's 3.15 this past Monday, the first day after spring break. It's hot and

[00:24:18] we have 15 girls ranging from third to fifth grade on our girls on the run team. If you're unfamiliar with GOTHER, that is, it's not primarily a running club. It's a connection team where we move our bodies and back each other up. I am in awe of these girls. This one Monday, one of our teammates was having a tough time and she spent the majority of practice speaking to one of our coaches, one of our group teachers here tonight. But as we were doing laps around this playground, another girl noticed this classmate sitting down. She kept checking in with me, just wanting to make sure her friend would be okay. This teammate exuded such high character and arguably one of the most

[00:24:55] important qualities in a leader, empathy, putting yourself in someone else's shoes. Lesson 14 and Carl's only one. And she has such empathy on her teammate, for her teammate, that tears were running down her cheeks while she was speaking to me. But her empathy did not end there. It gave way to action. She came alongside. She supported her teammate with her actions. Because what is empathy?

[00:25:20] What is acknowledging someone else's lived experience if not by following up with tangible action items? I am pleading with y'all tonight to lead us with empathy, to tune your ears to what our Greer teachers and our Greer parents have all been emailing you, leaving voicemails, and speaking tonight so i want to end with just one question how can you lean into your courage for greer thank you for your time sincerely and i look forward to continue dialogue around this consequential matter thank you thank you very much um next i have claire laplante sorry if i didn't say that

[00:25:57] correctly good evening my name is claire laplante and i'm from the rio district i'm a reading specialist reading specialist at Greer Elementary. My children attended Greer and my husband completed his school counseling internship at Greer. I have worked at Greer for 10 years. This is more than a school to me. It's a community I deeply value. I've been an educator for 28 years. I have worked in

[00:26:31] many incredible schools and Greer is no different. It's an amazing place that thrives on diversity, strong family connections, and a shared commitment to giving students our very best every day. I have chosen to continue working at Greer because I believe deeply in the importance of our work.

[00:26:47] I am here tonight not to be disrespectful of the decision to move Dr. Saunders, but to express my concerns and advocate for the Greer community. Over the past few weeks, I have tried to understand this decision, yet have struggled to make sense of it. That is what brings me here tonight. While I speak from my own perspective, I know there are Greer teachers and staff standing here with me tonight who share the same concerns. Albemarle County Schools prioritizes culturally responsive teaching. In 2020, I completed my micro-credential before it

[00:27:22] was required because I believe it is of more importance. Through that learning and through the work of Zaretta Hammond, I came to understand that strong schools are built on relationships and a deep understanding of the community they serve. That is especially true at Greer. Our students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and many are learning English. This requires trust, consistency, and strong leadership. Over the past decade I've worked under three principals and I've seen how leadership can either strengthen or challenge a school community. For the past seven years under Dr. Steve Saunders we have experienced steady growth and rebuilding. Dr. Saunders is a

[00:27:59] community leader. He has supported staff, built capacity, and created a culture where people feel committed to students and to one another. Our progress is not accidental. It reflects years of intentional leadership and collective effort research supports this John Hattie identifies collective teacher efficacy as one of the strongest influences on student achievement that that belief is built over time through trust stability and strong leadership when a principal like Dr. Saunders is moved that stability is disrupted it impacts morale and risk losing the strong team that has been built at Greer at Greer we say we are crew because it takes all of

[00:28:35] us working together to meet the needs of our students. Dr. Saunders is the leader of our crew. I ask why disrupt a school that is steadily making progress but hasn't reached its full potential yet. This decision sends a clear message, intentional or not, that Greer is less important and I can tell you that is how many of us feel. Our work is already incredibly challenged and we need that stability, support, and strong leadership to continue serving our students well. Greer is not a school that needs to be reset. It's a school that needs continued support to keep building on the progress we are making I urge you to reconsider this decision and stand with the

[00:29:10] Greer community as we continue this work together thanks thank you um next I have Lauren Salmon sorry if I mispronounced that good evening my name is Lauren Salmon and I am an EL teacher at Greer Elementary Greer has the largest population of English learners in the county I'm here tonight to ask for transparency about the decision to move our principal Dr. Steve Saunders to Crozet Elementary this decision was unexpected and deeply destabilizing for our school community

[00:29:49] Dr. Saunders has had a profound impact at Greer under his leadership our school has grown and strengthened the sudden change has left many of us trying to understand why we understand that leadership decisions are confidential. However, when a decision significantly impacts a school community, there is still a responsibility for transparency from the school board about how that decision serves our students. Research consistently shows that strong, stable school

[00:30:23] leadership is critical to the success of English learners. Principals shape the systems these students rely on, and those systems require stability over time. Greer is a Title I school, and our students, especially English learners, depend on that stability. Crozet Elementary is not a Title I school. It was already facing a leadership transition due to their principal's retirement.

[00:30:50] In this situation, it would have been typical for Crozet to undergo the principal search process. Instead, that burden has been placed on Greer without an explanation. This is difficult to reconcile, and it raises concerns about equity.

[00:31:09] It leads us to question whether one school is being prioritized over another, and whether a Title I school is bearing the impact. To quote Dr. Haas, our strategic plan makes clear our responsibility. To work together as a team to end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities, so that every student succeeds this statement from Dr. Haas reflects Albemarle's responsibility and commitment to equity and the importance of ensuring that equity is clearly reflected

[00:31:42] in district decision making in order to clarify confusion and misunderstanding I ask that the school board respond to the following two questions first how does moving Dr. Saunders from Greer to Crozet align with the division's core value of equity? Second, how does this decision benefit Greer Elementary and our English learners? Also, my students wanted to share. No es justo, nosotros nos sentimos triste porque Mr. Sanders se va a ir. Thank

[00:32:16] you for your time. Thank you. Next, I have Stephanie McNerney. Good evening. My name is Stephanie McNerney. I live on Rookie Road in the Jewett Division. I am a parent of three Greer students I'm also a Greer that I wasn't prepared for that um I'm also a Greer and Jewett alumni and I'm a pediatric nurse practitioner at UVA working with children with disabilities

[00:32:54] including those in foster care and immigrant communities I share that to name my perspective and to say this process has not been designed to hear many others I'm here with my friends here to to continue to disagree with the decision to move Steve from Greer and the process used to select his replacement I sent a letter and I appreciate the warm tone that I received in response but warmth without a plan to reconsider and make this process equitable is not enough the process still does not meaningfully include the full diversity of career families rescheduling the single parent

[00:33:33] interview day for a candidate reinforces the perception that a decision has already been made if this is for show it disregards family's time and voice we have not heard how this change serves the whole division instead it feels like one school is being served at the expense of another schools are not interchangeable they are ecosystems of trust history shows us that when we accept this is just how it's done we often perpetuate harm especially for those most vulnerable just because moving principles has been common practice does not mean it should continue without reflection

[00:34:08] unexamined systems do not become more equitable over time they deepen existing gaps Dr. Saunders exemplifies servant leadership. He has helped to build a school where students feel known, staff morale is strong, and in the current climate that is amazing.

[00:34:24] Look. So this is your leadership moment. You have heard the impact of the siloed opaque decision. Be transformative leaders. Show our students the impact matters more than the intent and that values like equity and inclusion are only meaningful when they are enacted with transparency, humility, and accountability you chose to move very quickly and you can also choose to pause widen the circle and make this right thank you thank you next I have Julia

[00:35:01] Bruno hi my name is Julia Bruno I live on Magnolia Drive in the Jack Jewett district and I'm a parent of a kindergartner at Greer elementary school and of two more children who are proud graduates

of Greer I have been a Greer parent for the past 10 years with three different principals I might add and plan to be at Greer as a parent for the next five. I'm here tonight to speak

[00:35:38] regarding the decision to reassign Greer principal Steve Saunders to Crozet Elementary School and will come as no surprise that after writing emails to everyone on the board and Superintendent Haas that I do not agree with this decision and ask for it to be reviewed and overturned. However, what I'd actually like to spend my time talking about tonight is the broader themes the decision has brought up for me regarding the how and why of our county's hiring procedures and whether or not we have the courage to re-examine them. Ultimately trust is built on transparency, engagement, and accountability. I believe

[00:36:13] the county is aligned with these goals. Dr. Haas has highlighted that we are "committed to engaging students, staff, and families meaningfully. To that end an explanation is required in this instance and in the future. Families, students, and staff deserve some kind of rationale if a decision is made for them regarding leadership. How is it decided that a principal is reassigned versus having an open hire process? What factors lead to this decision? How are we measuring the benefits and cons of reassignment? How is feedback from families and staff regarding this instability of reassignment and forming future hiring

[00:36:50] practices? I have received one clarifying point from an email board member regarding hiring and reassignment is, quote, when the superintendent determines that a leadership change or reassignment is necessary to accelerate progress, whether at Greer, Crozet, or elsewhere, it is his responsibility to make that decision in service of the division as a whole. I can understand that we at Greer are a community within a wider community at ACPS. Given there are four other elementary schools rated distinguished, why was their leadership not asked to help a recently designated

[00:37:26] off-track crozet? Why did it fall to your most vulnerable Title I school? You are asking us to trust the process, but to quote a recent New York Times article citing a Yale report on higher education, "It is hard to trust the process when rationale seems inexplicable and has the appearance of benefiting the already advantaged." The truth is, without any explanation, there is an uncertainty of the fundamental purpose and mission which erodes our trust these are not rhetorical questions i am actually asking for answers even if i won't always agree with them this is how we build trust thank

[00:38:02] you thank you very much um next i have jennifer mcdonald not here okay um last i have tanya i'm I'm sorry, Wan-check, Wan-check.

[00:38:28] - Hi, I'm Tanya Wan-check. I'm in the Samuel Miller district. And I am here to talk about the high school test retake policy that allows students to retake all their exams. So I have a child in Monticello High School now and two others that are younger and will be going there.

[00:38:49] And so I want to give just a perspective on that policy my child and their parent and i also teach at uva and public health sciences so from that perspective so for my child i have found that it really has just taught her how to game the system and i have other parents that have said the same thing about their child that they no longer have to pay attention to deadlines and they don't study for that first test because they can always retake it as a parent at first i thought parent scare parent square was great i online i could see her grades

[00:39:29] and how she's doing but as i started to look at her grades she would have missing assignments or low grades and i'd ask her about it and be like oh it's fine i could take it later and she's right she was fine

she took it up took it later but it meant i couldn't follow how she was doing to the point where i almost just gave up on parent square because it didn't tell me any information on how she was actually doing um and then the final point is um teaching college i just don't feel like this policy of not having students take that exam seriously the first time around

[00:40:06] is really the message we want to teach students going on into college um so i don't know what the solution is i haven't studied this issue in depth i appreciate that the idea of meeting students where they are second chances but i don't think this policy of blanket always retake your test is really helping students it's i think it's really giving them the wrong message and teaching the wrong the wrong thing about deadlines and working hard to get from that first test thank

[00:40:42] you thank you very much um i just want to make sure one more time jennifer mcdonald is not here okay then that concludes public comment thank you thank you so much vice chair spilman and thank you for everyone who brought public comments forward tonight the next item on our agenda is the approval of our consent agenda do i have a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda i move to approve tonight's consent agenda moved by ms spillman do i have a second second second by

[00:41:18] ms lee all those in favor of approving tonight's consent agenda aye aye any opposed tonight's consent agenda is passed. The next point on our agenda is 7.0 school division business.

[00:41:39] The first point, 7.1, is our special education annual plan for the 26-27 school year. And I think for the first time I am going to invite Ashley Struzczyk, thank you, Ms. Spillman, the director of special education, to present that plan. And we promise we'll give you more than three minutes so just give us a second while we get everything together good evening

[00:42:18] chair berlin vice chair spielman school board members dr has and cabinet members tonight i am here to share the special education annual plan for albemarle county public schools for the 2026 2027 school year my name is ashley strusick and i am the director of special education i'd like to also recognize and thank the special education administrative team who is also here with me tonight for the work that they do every day and in support of our annual plan so here's

[00:42:56] the agenda for tonight's overview of the plan we'll start with a kind of a current state of special education we'll look forward into next year we'll discuss what the annual plan is the components of the annual plan and then at the end if there's any questions so the alvaro county public school strategic plan learning for all is at the center of our work as educators and continues to be the center of our work on special education. Our current state for a little bit of

[00:43:31] data for our special education looks at numbers of the increase of special education students over the years. So this shows the current state of special ed in ACPS as of December 1st. The December 1st count is the benchmark number that we use to compare year-to-year numbers.

[00:43:49] It is used by the Virginia Department of Education as a common check across the state. you can see the increase of students from the 2020-2021 school year up until this current December 1 count which was at 2030 students this next slide shows this next slide indicates how the budget request for additional staff is needed to help meet the increasing needs of the students so currently we have one behavior specialist and one learning disability specialist who support all special education teachers and schools with academic and behavioral interventions

[00:44:27] best practices for specially designed instruction crisis management and legal compliance in addition you may be aware that we have been partnering with uva through a grant for our adapted physical education interns to support schools the program with uva is ending next year so adding an additional ap teacher would allow for collaboration with the current ap teacher and to provide required services throughout the division so with the student needs are increasing in severity and intensity across schools, increased staffing will ensure we maintain high safety standards, full compliance, and a consistent learning environment for

[00:45:07] our students. It also supports inclusive practices and least restrictive environments. These are the positions that will continue to support the division's mission for high quality instruction and also supports the work we do through the following components of our annual plan. As we look forward to what the annual plan is, federal regulations IDEA 2004 requires every school division to submit a special education annual plan. It is required to be shared with SEAC and approved by the school board in order for any state or federal funds to be appropriated

[00:45:43] for the education of students with disabilities. I previously shared this annual plan with the special education advisory committee SEAC during our march meeting and we'll now review it with you all. So there are four components to the annual plan. They are the regional jail agreement, Part B set aside funds, CCEIS and federal funds.

[00:46:09] On page eight of the annual plan document, you will see the details of this section. School divisions with a local or regional jail inside their jurisdiction are required to establish an interagency agreement. So ACPS has an agreement with the Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Jail. This agreement provides an ACPS special education teacher who provides special education services for persons in the regional jail between the ages of 18 to 22. So this staff member also supports the regional GED program as

[00:46:44] well. Part B set-aside funds, the second component of the annual plan is focused on Part B set-aside funds. Details about this portion that can be found on page 11 in the document. IDEA requires that each school division spend a portion of their IDEA Part B allocations on special education instruction and related services to students with disabilities who are placed in private schools by their parents. This position is our special education teacher Mike Armstrong

[00:47:20] who provides case management and consultative services to private schools with special education students. It also supports in the child fine and special education evaluation procedures for students with disabilities placed in private schools that are in ACPS boundaries. In addition the set-aside funds provide up to 14 students with vouchers for speech and language services, one student with a voucher for occupational therapy, and with this an annual required meeting with private schools and parents of students with disabilities at those private schools is held

[00:47:56] and that was held this past February. CCEIS stands for Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services.

[00:48:11] So previously we were mandated by the Virginia Department of Education where we had to set aside 15% of federal funds towards these services, due to being disproportionate. Since we are not identified as a CCEIS division anymore, we do not have to set aside those funds.

[00:48:29] So you may recall last year was the first year we did not have to do this, and we continue to be a non-CCEIS division for this year as well.

[00:48:45] The fourth component of the annual plan is federal grant funds, which can be found on pages 13 and 14 of the document. ACPS utilizes the federal grant funds in two ways: funding of our A-BASE teachers, which is approximately 36 teachers, and then funding approximately two early childhood special education or ECSE teacher assistant positions. So for our A-BASE teachers, they provide direct services to students in A-BASE programs in their least restrictive environment.

[00:49:18] And for those of you who may not be familiar with A-BASE, BASE stands for building appropriate supports with evidence-based practices. So what is a basis design for students with autism? They access grade-level core academic instruction in general education environment intensive resource support model. Teachers and teaching assistants are trained in evidence-based practices and these programs are supported by board-certified behavior analysts or our BCBAs. For the funding of our two early childhood special education teaching assistant positions, these positions work directly with ECSE students eligible

[00:49:57] for IDEA 619 services serving ages three to five. These positions are under the direction of an ECSE special education teacher and also provide services in ACPS school. ACPS currently has nine ECSE classrooms and three AECSE classrooms. So that is an overview of the IDEA annual plan for the 26-27 school year. As you know for next steps for the special education department, many of you know that we are you know partnering with the Berkeley group for an independent review of our special

[00:50:35] education in the division and once that review is concluded we definitely will be sharing the report with you and can provide and can provide a more comprehensive view of special education and where we're going with an acps many questions any questions or comments from my colleagues just would like to ask you when when do you anticipate that review would be done um we're anticipating it to be complete by the end of this school year so we would have the review for next school year be able to begin that work i'd love to i'd love you to come and report on it when

[00:51:12] that's finished i'm glad to hear that we've maintained our progress on the cceis yes thank you and i and i know there is a formula on um for cceis and i guess my question is how is that that monitored? Like, obviously, there is a piece of data that we look at. And then is that then also looked at by Dr. Hayes or Dr. Haas to kind of make sure I just always think about like one set of eyes and then we have a conversation to check and say yes, we're

[00:51:49] in agreement. I'm just curious about how that product that works for CCEIS. Correct. And whether or not we are not that we are so I know we're compliant, but just how that process works because my understanding my you know my belief is that we have to maintain a certain level correct and so how are we self-monitoring both ourselves looking at the data and then I would say someone outside of special education looking at that data to say yes so how do we acknowledge that does that make sense yes I think a lot of the work that we do with our indicator work

[00:52:25] and with the reporting to VDOE and that partnership helps kind of us monitor to make sure that we're staying in compliance does that answer yeah I think the thing I would add and this is something just that I've learned through experience is that when we when we make reports to video we the because the state essentially has a statewide student database now it's not like it's one huge database with the thousands of students in it but many years ago the stayed shifted to every student having their own unique ID and when we transmit

[00:53:01] data it's it's in some respects like doing your taxes where they have the same data that we have so when you submit it it's it's not really just like you turn it in and then you kind of hear back from them later they scrub through it they look to see if there's any issues if there are they push it back we have to go back through it again so it's a recursive process until it gets to the point where everybody agrees that the the data is is right and it's pretty much the same thing with what you name it like our discipline crime and violence

[00:53:34] reports our SOL testing everything goes through a pretty collaborative process I would say but at the same time there they have the same data so they can say wait a minute so there we're not self-reporting there they're using their data because they ultimately have to okay they ultimately the Virginia is held accountable ultimately by the federal government so if they are submitting bogus data or data that hasn't been accurately subject to scrutiny then they could lose funding for Virginia so it's a it's a it's

[00:54:12] interesting to watch it play out over time because I always thought you turn something in and it wasn't and if it wasn't right it was like to equate it to our grading policy in the past you would just get a zero and then you don't get a chance anymore you messed it up it's too late but it's really more like our policy which is let's get it right so we're gonna push it back to you make the corrections need to make because we're we know that you have data and lots of times it's it's in the favor of the school systems because the state wants the data to accurately reflect its progress for Virginia thank you for

[00:54:50] sharing that that's helpful I just didn't know understand how if we were kind of self-monitoring or but there's a larger process that that goes into and that we are then reported back so thank you appreciate that any other questions or comments thank you so much for your work on this report um yes you have three more minutes um and uh and thank you for noting that this has always been through SEAC has been reviewed by SEAC um um so this will be on our consent agenda um next week for action um and then and again we are absolutely interested in that Berkeley data and I know you are working you know to give

[00:55:29] people enough time but also so that we can have that information by the end of the year so it can be actionable as we're working on processes and policies and information for the next year so we will definitely make sure we can bring that as soon as it's available to the board for discussion yes thank you so much thank you thank you Mr. Ruzick our next point is 7.2 this is our last - Yeah, this is our second to last fiscal '27 budget update.

[00:56:05] We have two points on the agenda tonight that Maya Kumazawa will be discussing. First the teacher bonus and then the budget as a whole.

[00:56:23] - Good evening, I'm Maya Kumazawa, Director of Budget and Planning. And this evening, as Dr. Berlin stated, I will cover some information about the FY26 state bonus and then cover an updated school fund balancing scenario for FY27.

[00:56:41] Just a quick note, these two slides have been updated as of about 4:30 this afternoon, based on VDOE guidance that was shared with school divisions just this afternoon that was a little bit inconsistent from what we had heard previously.

[00:57:01] So we updated as fast as we could what the most recent information was and updated some numbers on this slide and the next slide. So if you pulled this presentation earlier, it's going to look just a

little bit different. So just a quick overview, the state has approved the FY26 caboose bill, which includes a one-time bonus for SOQ positions.

[00:57:23] To receive state funding of about \$725,000, ACPS must provide a minimum of total bonus That equals at least \$2.3 million to all employees. ACPS has the flexibility and the bonus amount paid per employee, or ACPS can provide an equivalent compensation increase in FY27 to pull down the state funding.

[00:57:48] So two examples. The example interpretation for a bonus is that the cost for ACPS would be \$1.6 million, And that's combined with the state match that would be equivalent to \$600 to \$800 per employee.

[00:58:05] The interpretation for an equivalent action salary increase would, if we wanted to go that route, would cost ACPS about \$2.4 million. And that would require an additional approximate 1% salary increase in addition to what's already in the proposed FY27 budget.

[00:58:27] So this proposal is updated, and this is one example of how a bonus could be distributed. And the design of this is based on how we typically distribute these state bonuses. That is to provide a certain amount to full-time employees, including part-time employees 0.7 and above.

[00:58:48] So 0.7 to 1.0 FTEs would receive \$800 in their June 18 paycheck, and then regular employees below a 0.7 FTE would receive a \$600 in the June 18th paycheck. And typically what we do is provide a 75% of the full-time amount for employees that are less than 0.7. This proposal is subject to negotiations with the Albemarle Education Association, and so we would bring back more details around exactly what the distribution would look like. So the total estimated funding in this

[00:59:22] proposal is \$2.3 million, \$1.6 paid by ACPS, and \$725,000 paid by the state. The estimated impact in implementing this proposal is listed on the right side of the slide. Our projected fund balance at the end of the current year, based on our current financial practices, we would, we're projected to end at about \$6.2 million. With the recommended bonus, that would decrease that amount to \$4.6 million at the end of this year. That does leave us with the amount that we had proposed

[01:00:00] previously on how to use one-time funding in next year's budget, which I will cover in the next section. And so if you were to approve the recommended uses, that would be \$3.3 million that's taken out of fund balance. And then at the end of next year, we would be left with \$1.3 million dollars in our fund balance again that's very far out these are fairly conservative projections but that is the impact that it would have to our fund balance if we were able to provide the proposal as stated here so I'll

[01:00:35] pause here for questions not looking for any action just questions and discussion and we would hope to come back with a recommendation next week for action questions from the board I know everyone needs to sit in the with the numbers for a second. I think you mentioned that this is something that we've done in the past.

[01:01:05] Is that recent past and in a similar fashion has the money to pay for this come from a fund balance? I believe the last bonus was last year and in that scenario we were able to just distribute the state portion and we didn't have to provide a local match. In this instance it is required that you pay the local match in order to pull down state funding so they are structured differently but we have paid bonuses at a fairly regular cadence

[01:01:40] whenever the state proposes it other comments and questions just the comment I always make when the state says they're going to get a bonus we end up paying two-thirds of it out of our either fund balance or operating budget so they get the glory and rewrite the check this is this is approximately the

[01:02:15] size of the bonus we had last year isn't it I can't quite remember but I think it was a little less because we didn't have a local match yeah was that because you could we you can spread it across the employees that was the other different rule right we just use state funding we just took the state funding and what we did was we everybody got the same instead of supplementing it to match the original amount that the state was saying and I believe during I don't believe I know during the pandemic, there was some whopping, there was some bonus money

[01:02:52] that was going on from the state. And we were able to use things like mid-year savings to be able to afford to do that too. So it's not quite the same as fund balance, but it's money that would eventually become a fund balance. And what I would say too, is we know what happens to our fund balance. If we start to accrue a lot of fund balance, it becomes When you exceed 2% of the operating budget, it becomes CIP money at that point for the local government.

[01:03:21] I'm glad you brought that up because part of the reason why we're projecting a higher fund balance is because of savings in salaries as well as health care. Because of the change in the school year calendar, we're seeing a one-time health care savings compared to what we budgeted.

[01:03:38] Yeah, it's not due to an over-projection of the operating budget. It's due to changes that came about after our budget was developed that have resulted in health care savings, and so Ms. Kumisawa, Ms. Schmidt, and Mr. Zimmerman have been really monitoring very closely revenue and expenditures so they're able to see that savings.

[01:04:02] As I said, rather than rolling this into fund balance, which when it grows and reaches beyond that 2% cap, local government can then take that funding and put it into the CIP, and it's not earmarked for the schools at that point. That's just another part of this strategy.

[01:04:23] Other comments? Just a question. I mean, if this is coming back next week, are we saying, or no? If it's significantly different, I would say we would come back and present, but if it's this scenario, it would be on consent for action. There's a deadline of May 1st that we have to say whether we're going to take the state money or not so that's the deadline we're working I guess the question is the subject to negotiations with AEA between now and on the consent agenda next week what does that what

[01:04:59] would that even so what we would ask sorry what we would ask the board to do is approve the use of an amount of funding pending the outcome of negotiations with the AEA over how that funding will be dispersed.

[01:05:17] Okay. So it would be, in this scenario, approving the use of \$1.6 million in the current year to provide a one-time bonus. Right. So there could be some negotiations on 800 and 600 and how that is distributed. Okay. Thank you. And then that final decision stays with AEA and the negotiating, and we don't have to come back and make a final termination on that.

[01:05:48] We're not, in essence, opening our agreement with AEA. So we don't need to re-sign an agreement. And I'll defer to Mr. Black, but both the resolution and the collective bargaining agreements provide an opportunity for the negotiating teams to come together and make interim decisions without

having to ratify with the entire employee group or have the board vote on the contents of those changes in between new contracts.

[01:06:22] Right. And without dispensing any legal advice in a public setting, typically this type of thing, once an agreement is reached, it's codified in a side letter or an addendum to the collective bargaining agreement, and it's quite common.

[01:06:37] Thank you. Thank you. The other... Again, I didn't mean to ask for legal advice, I apologize. The other question I have is that we will designate that this happens, we would designate that this happens for all employees, even though there is a portion of our employees that are not covered by collective bargaining, but that would be part of the, we would need to say that yes, those people that are not part of collective bargaining because of their special circumstances are covered by this.

[01:07:09] The intent of the state bonus is that it is for all employees. So I don't know if, because we have to meet the collective bargaining rules and the state's rules. So I don't know if we'd necessarily separate it. But we'll confirm. Okay.

[01:07:29] Any other? I mean, again, I think everyone, I guess I shouldn't speak for everyone. I think this board has spoken a lot about the fact that our teachers and our professional staff are paid at the 24th, out of 51 states, 24th in the country.

[01:07:48] And so anything we can do to continue to support them and the work that they do, I think is important to us. I think the timing of this and the fact that it's coming from our fund balance as we're thinking about difficult decisions, I think is hard.

[01:08:03] But again, the most important people to be supporting are those people in our front line. So anything that we can do to support them, I think, is important. Anything else? Not on that. I feel like Ms. Osborne's thinking.

[01:08:22] do we need to be clear about whether or not to do the bonus or the salary increase in the following year yes that needs to be decided by may 1st okay so you don't need that information now i mean if that is uh a direction you would want to recommend uh we would need to know that this evening i like

[01:08:47] like the bonus idea the one-time bonus yes okay I think thank you so much dr.

[01:09:04] Berlin yep before we talk about our our budget funding requests so tonight we will have our last discussion about our budget and then next week we will vote on it but I've connected with my fellow board members and we just wanted to make a statement together. We won't be reading this in unison though. Last night the Board of Supervisors should decided to take a 6.4, decided to take 6.4 million from the ACPS portion of shared county revenues in fiscal 27 and again in fiscal 28 to place a total of 12.8 million in an undesignated capital

[01:09:42] improvement program CIP reserve. This creates a shortfall in the school board's balanced funding request which we must address in order to adopt the ACPS fiscal 27 budget next week. It also creates uncertainty with regard to our growing CIP needs. Although we provided a comprehensive list of capital and priorities and followed up with a balanced CIP proposal to fund improvements to Stony Point Elementary, Albemarle High School, and Western Albemarle High School based on available revenues and the board's five-year CIP, both proposals were rejected. The chair acknowledged that we provided requests

[01:10:20] in compliance with their CIP process and admitted the system is not working. However, they decided not to fund any new construction projects in their five-year CIP plan. I am happy to report that there is strong interest in fixing this broken CIP process on both sides, and I look forward to working with Chair Galloway and my fellow members of the school board, along with the Board of Supervisors, to work together on a learning and planning process to find a solution so that we would finally modernize our aging school infrastructure.

[01:10:55] While this is all disheartening, we must acknowledge the reality that the Board of Supervisors tax policy over the past 10 years has reduced the share of taxpayer funding of public schools in favor of other government programs and services. This shift in priorities must shape our decision making going forward.

[01:11:13] The Board of Supervisors made clear that they fully support funding the collective bargaining agreement and increased costs for maintaining current programs and services. They explicitly noted that the \$2.4 million reduction to our proposed operating budget was targeted at proposals for new programs and services, which we brought forward as a well-thought-out initiative and were initiatives to reduce student achievement gaps.

[01:11:38] And so, as we consider how to best improve student learning and eliminate achievement gaps, we have to accept the reality that any new program or service recommended will likely require elimination of existing programs services or staff. We had a number of key new positions and services that the board believe will help make us make us make considerable gains in our achievement gap. So rather than eliminating those positions and services, we asked the superintendent and staff to review our budget and identify any area that we may need to cut in order to provide funding to these new priorities. That's what we will hear tonight and

[01:12:17] and that is the mindset we will likely have to approach our budget process going forward. - So, Ms. Kumisawa, if you will share our updated budget recommendations for us to discuss. - Before we get into the service reductions, I wanted to provide an update on the technical changes that are being recommended.

[01:12:38] The first two that you see here were presented at the last meeting. That's a decrease in VRS rates and a decrease in the payment for KTEC. Two new ones have arisen, which are increases that swing the budget the other way, and that always happens when something goes up.

[01:12:55] There's always offsetting things. But licensing costs, we're anticipating needing an additional \$170,000 due to the restructure of our licensing costs, including time and attendance system and our financial systems. In addition, we're looking at fuel in more detail.

[01:13:15] while we know that two hundred thousand dollars probably will not cover the projected increase for next year knowing that we don't have a finalized state budget which means we can't truly finalize our budget we didn't want to recommend service more service reductions in order to pay for fuel until we knew what the entire revenue picture looks like so in this scenario we're proposing part one of the projected fuel increase of two hundred thousand dollars with the expectation that we will come back to you later on to provide a better estimate for what next year might look

[01:13:52] like and as we move more through time we will have better information so the longer we wait we'll be able to have a better estimate for that so in total these four technical adjustments would add sixty

thousand dollars in our expenditures as a starting point and then as dr berlin alluded to these are the school fund expenditure reductions in this balancing scenario it is updated from the last version the first service reduction is to reduce school renovation and construction projects

[01:14:25] by eliminating the proposed transfer to the cip which was about four million dollars next is the Scenario to eliminate the step program on the short-term education program or step is designed to reduce out-of-school suspensions address Disproportionality and support students in developing self-regulation behaviors through our regular logic Model review process step has remained consistently in the yellow status and while staffing is allocated for this each year The program has not been implemented with fidelity to its original intent

[01:15:02] So in this scenario, the program is discontinued as a division-wide initiative beginning in the 26-27 school year and that would provide a savings of about \$450,000. The third item on here is to reduce division services FTE at a target of \$500,000. This amount has been increased from \$400,000 in the last iteration to address some of the technical changes and these other changes.

[01:15:31] And then finally, the largest change in the budget would be a decrease in the transfer to technology replacement of \$1.4 million. However, we are proposing to use one-time revenues in order to offset this decrease. So there would be no change to the replacement cycle next year.

[01:15:49] It would just be a change in the source of funding. So it's kind of like a one-year Band-Aid to move into next year. So these total reductions equal \$6.4 million. dollars as I mentioned earlier we also have recommendations for the use of the budgeted use of one-time fund balance and so I'll actually start on the bottom on this slide that's the the 1.4 million dollars at the bottom is the proposed use of one-time money in order to replace the recurring money that's going away so that's the update on this slide other technology equipment replacement

[01:16:29] includes \$800,000 for display equipment and then moving up the slide these remain unchanged from the last version providing \$600,000 in additional transfer to the textbook fund for instructional resources \$90,000 for security equipment on buses and \$210,000 for security camera equipment and buildings. These total to \$3.15 million, and this would be part of the FY27 budget that would be included, but it does not impact the gap because we have revenues that equal these expenditures.

[01:17:11] So in summary, we have technical updates that add \$60,450 in expenditures. We're recommending one-time security, textbook, and technology purchases of \$1.7 million, and that's fully paid for by fund balance. And then our service reductions equal \$5.0 million. The total expenditure change is a decrease of \$3.25 million. And when you add a decrease in expenditures plus an increase in revenues, which is the use of fund balance, that equals the \$6.4 million

[01:17:50] dollar gap that we started off with so that gap will be closed in this scenario um I know I went through that really fast there are a lot of numbers I'm happy to repeat anything more slowly if you have questions questions and comments from the board so this puts us at a balanced budget scenario yes correct okay I appreciate the logic model use for identifying cuts I think you know

[01:18:27] obviously you know we want that step program be working it looks like it's maybe not going the way that we wanted it to go and um it's it's i think this is good can you clarify with me the cost it sounds

like we're postponing the cost of technology computer i guess it's the hardware we're putting that off by a year is that no the replacement cycle would continue as

[01:19:07] originally proposed the difference is that we are not proposing to dedicate recurring revenues to fund that we'd be or partially partially it would be funded by one-time money that after you spend it it's not there the following year so in order to continue it in year two we'd have to come back with you know new revenues to support that so we'll continue as in the original schedule for basically for one more year and then after that we'd have to look at how to

[01:19:42] fund that other comments and questions just given how fuel prices have been all over the place how do we even project I mean the \$200,000 increases I confess I don't know what our monthly expenditure for fuel has been this past year but I'm assuming and maybe miss miss gilmer's here so i'm sure she knows if i'm not putting you on the spot

[01:20:19] i don't have all of the answers but i can answer that one we spend about 150 000 every month and last month it was 250 000 so adding a 200 000 cushion is not a robust cushion we're going to keep talking about it which is why we said phase one um we i think it's a situation that's continuing to evolve um we know we know there needs to be more we're gonna wait to see how the state goes and like any budget we're gonna have to manage and plan to it but we at this point where we know now

[01:20:53] that's not enough it's my understanding that we we don't just go to the gas station every month i I mean, we have contracts with providers for the whole school year with some sort of inflation factor. I mean, I'm sorry to put you on the spot, Ms. Gellner.

[01:21:11] We do, and we have a much lower market rate. So, you know, you see at the fuel pump, it's 580 for diesel right now and like 409 for gas, the gas that we use. And most of our fuel is the diesel price.

[01:21:27] But we still pay-- we're paying a higher price now than we've ever paid it in our highest years. So there's something in the contract said, here's a contract price plus is kind of-- And we have a market rate that we get. But it has also increased as the inflation has come.

[01:21:47] Make it expensive enough, it may justify electric buses. Yes. Eventually. We can do that. Find the money for that, too.

[01:22:04] I've been told several times I need to stay out of the operational weeds and stay in my lane. So I'm going to limit my comments mostly to a general kind of 30,000 foot perspective. And I want to say thanks for answering my many, many questions. I'm responsible for probably 40% of the questions you got, in my opinion, based on lots of conversations with community members, we're spending an excessive amount of money on division services, positions and programs, some of which have little or no impact on actual student learning test scores in recent years among several groups of students have

[01:22:40] actually declined although the budget has increased significantly in the investment world that I'm a part of for the last 24 years we call that poor return on investment we can't keep doing the same thing and expect different results I'm glad that there is an effort underway to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the 144 division services positions I would recommend however that teachers and principals be included in the opportunity to participate in those evaluations i believe if done properly we will be able to save perhaps two to four million dollars going forward i think this adjustment that's a part of the

[01:23:21] new budget is a start but i believe we can we can do more i have two specific suggestions for us to consider for fy27 the first is to eliminate the one-to-one computer program for students in k-5 study after study points to the detrimental impact of screen time for students especially in the elementary grades i'm not certain but i believe this could save us close to a million dollars second i'd like to challenge each of the 144 division services staff and the

[01:23:55] seven of us on this board to spend a few days a year in the classroom as tas or subs this would save ACPS between 20 and \$40,000 per day and give us a little taste of what it's like to be a teacher so I offer up that as a consideration for the new school year I can tell you I spent half an hour at Woodbrook reading to students this morning and it was a highlight of my day so again thank you for all the work you

[01:24:32] you and your team have put in you've seen this slide before it speaks to the reductions that are kind of a summary of what will be included in this scenario for FY27. So we're adding a decrease of half a million dollars in secondary teaching assistant FTE related to the STEP program and then half a million for division services FTE. But if you look back at the previous two years significant reductions have been made as well. So when we look at the upcoming budget it's not like we you know fill these reductions back up they're maintained

[01:25:10] from year to year they're carried forward. So with these reductions we would be up to \$10 million since FY25, and we just don't want to lose sight of that as we move forward in the budget process. So regarding using \$600,000 for textbooks from the one-time funds, it's concerning to me because we made a commitment to follow through on the Bellwether report, and a lot of that was in curriculum, things like that.

[01:25:40] So I want to make sure that just because we're sliding over \$600,000 from one-time source, we know that we are committed to funding the recommendations that the bellwether report made correct we're not abandoning that are we no the six hundred thousand dollars is in addition to the ongoing proposal to increase it by eight hundred thousand okay yeah so that stays so this is a one-time bump but it's not we don't it's not replacing no it's not okay i thought you're supplanting no anything that is not on these slides are maintained in the draft funding request

[01:26:16] The only one that's supplanting is the technology. It's on the same screen as well. It was like, wait, wait. Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up, because that could be interpreted differently. Where are we on the math instructional assistance?

[01:26:35] Didn't we have as one of the new programs up to six? That would be maintained in this scenario. OK. We had discussed cutting that to only two, so we're back to the original proposal. - So these changes are changes to the funding request.

[01:26:52] Sorry, I should have started out with that. They are not changes to the last version. - Okay, thank you. - So anything on here is the only change you will see in terms of service levels from your budget book. - That's what I thought, but I wanted to hear it coming from you. - I know, and I did compare this to the last version a few times.

[01:27:10] I can see why there might be confusion. Does that make sense for everyone? - It does, thank you for that clarification. That was gonna be one of my questions. Other questions, because before I ask a couple. this was very clear. I'm going to piggyback on Mr. Dillenbeck's comment around technology. I think I'm not ready to make that call. However, I do believe, I think we brought this up last time, is we are

seeing more research coming out about the effects of technology, particularly on our youngest children. We have been receiving an increased number of requests from parents or

[01:27:48] concerns from parents asking about it particularly if you look at our last set of questions that we received were very specifically about K I'm sorry the question was around pre-k3 we don't provide technology for pre-k but k3 and then four and five on our list of work sessions I don't think it's been scheduled but that we have just we have kind of put forward I think is one getting some researchers here to talk about that but I think also getting some in some parents and teachers to talk about those effects I I would be hesitant to make a rash

[01:28:25] change right now just knowing how much of our infrastructure is and what we have been working with teachers on for the past five years is using technology because that is what the the world was doing I think we are seeing that effect so you know my my suggestion and I actually like that it's just a one time now so that we can this board can take some time in the next six months as we begin to prepare believe it or not for the next budget to think about that to see the effects that it would have on teaching right because

[01:29:02] so many of our services are coming through technology and apps right now and how would we now need to think differently but I do want to say I think is something that we should be we should be looking at and thinking about the effects of technology and all children i know i'm just particularly talking about younger children um i know the um technology committee met today and they were there was a two-day airplane mode test that happened and so i just think it's something that this board should look at but also knowing that the cost of eliminating that technology will come with a cost of

[01:29:39] increasing which is why we did increase textbooks this year so so I just wanted to acknowledge that and just and just and lift it up so I didn't want to go back to the the new cost that you mentioned on slide sorry I'm looking at this on slide 6 the licensing cost for human resources I assume that's software licensing not licensing like because we don't pay for licensing of teachers and so do we have an idea is that a one-time cost or do we believe that's going to be an incremental cost to technology kind of going forward? It's an

[01:30:14] ongoing new cost. Okay and so that's a cost that comes because we made the decision which I think is the right decision to move from the combined county human resources to our own because of our own unique needs. But again just something for us to continue to keep an eye on. And then I just wanted to also note I think one of the comments we all made at the beginning of you know if we are going to be doing these evaluations of our programs and we see something that is in yellow for two more than two top two years how are we we

[01:30:53] need to as a board if we're going to be fiscally responsible and we're gonna have these logic models we need to to to live by that and not say we're gonna keep we're gonna keep trying even though it's yellow and so I appreciate the staff kind of listening to that acknowledging that and moving forward with that and so because I think it's something very important for this board to do to for the for the staff to do to consider to continue to evaluate those programs to bring that information forward I would ask you know one of the things I noted in my comments is we're going to be looking kind of across the

[01:31:28] board of supervisors enough how do we do some more kind of planning and learning together and i want this board to be moved to be looking at some of those things earlier about around those evaluations so that we can we can begin to better so we can understand um and make earlier

recommendations about those programs potentially um that we feel should be eliminated and then i just wanted to remind everyone that I believe this is the first time that in the math proposal that we have a we have a data that is a requirement and if we

[01:32:06] are not meeting those requirements of changes for the students that we will then reduce and then eliminate those programs because it's just it's something that we need to do to be fiscally responsible so I think that are those are all of my comments and questions I have just one note on what you were talking about with technology and I'm very much on board with studying and learning more about the effects of technology on children because I think there are also I mean it's weighing the positives versus the negatives it's not like everything is solely negative I think it does help with certain things

[01:32:46] but I just I would just urge us to really consider how we think about those things and maybe remove it initially from budgetary considerations because like with anything else instructional we have to think about it instructionally first and then make the entire analysis before we look at then what expenditures would be um to just sort of separate it from those two things i would agree and in our analysis i mean clearly excessive screen time for

[01:33:22] anybody K through 100 is is bad idea so I would like to know more how how how technology is used in the classrooms particularly earlier years how much screen time are we actually talking about because national studies saying you know some 14 year old glued to their screen is you know having mental health issues is really not a very good basis to make decisions about the importance or how it's used and maybe maybe the answer will be and when we do an analysis modifying how we use

[01:33:54] them and not because I think all of our kids need to have they need to be tech savvy and so how do you balance those different variables a lot of real-world example Ellen and I went to Scottsville a couple weeks ago in the end the kids were using iPads to learn how to spell I believe and learn right so that's part of the that's part of what they're doing i want to thank you as well for if we got to make cuts let's cut something that's not working the step program i'm amazed that it

[01:34:32] it's it's stayed on for so long and let's keep as many as much cuts as we can away from the classroom so thank you and jim i'd love to uh i worked as a sub before and i'd love to do it again thank you so yeah i just want to i think since we're now talking about substitutes for the second time i just want you to be aware that division services staff are out subbing in the buildings every day um they periodically we actually get an all call for the whole third floor to go out because a school has um had many staff out or it's almost going to cripple the school for the

[01:35:08] day because of an influenza outbreak and i i just want to be careful it some comments that i hear i think i need to speak up and say that i do get concerned about an us and them mentality that the people that work here on the third floor or at um seminal place or in our building services staff that that somehow the work that we're doing is not important to the school system i would say that 144 people is such a tiny fraction of our budget the lion's share of our

[01:35:42] budget is salaries and benefits that's 85 of the budget that's for all of our employees i would question the use of one data point at one time each year to talk about return on investment for our students um i know that i'm not a great investor if i was i'd probably be retired a long time ago but i've always been told to look at the long haul and that you should be looking at data points over years and years and how is how is the the fund or the stock performing and I think that there are a lot more variables that go into play

[01:36:21] around how you make an assessment of whether you have a quality organization a company a business and it's usually not just looking at one day when so many things could be impacting this and in this case it's students and I really don't think it's fair to hold our teachers to that standard because ultimately it's our classroom teachers that make the biggest difference so I would really I just want to say that I would question that narrative that public education is not a good return on investment we are out mall County

[01:36:56] schools is a microcosm of school systems in Virginia we represent all demographic groups we represent all economic strata we outperform the state and on the averages it is true that we have gaps in performance and if it was a company we'd go in and analyze those gaps and figure out what we could do to make a difference and day by day we make a tremendous difference for those kids I will say that we do we have a survey that we have started this year with our leadership team to get a feedback on division services departments when I

[01:37:36] presented the staffing reduction program to our principals yesterday one of the questions was well how will we have input as to you know providing feedback on the different departments and that's how we're i'm doing that based on the feedback survey that that we provide to them so that they can let us know how we're doing that is a nascent project we just piloted it this year so over time you know i think that the data will become more critical or more important to that to that part but um again we're out i mean i've i try to substitute two or three times a year

[01:38:13] i go out you know drive buses when i can things like that all of us our heart is in the classroom i think there's this idea that you aspire to head off to the third floor and that's like some nirvana and it's hard work. And we're here to support teachers. We're here to support kids. And I think we should work together as one. I think that we do. It's not going to be perfect. We're going to have bumps in the road. We're going to disagree over decisions. But it's all one team.

[01:38:48] There just happens to be some of us that don't spend every day. Although if you come up here any given day and walk through the hallway, you don't see too many people in any of any of the offices because they're out in the schools doing work supporting supporting our educators and kids so i just wanted to share that i feel like that substitute current conversation we're we're substituting that's good we're there to help it's good to hear thank you dr haas

[01:39:24] before we conclude i'd ask this is it possible to bring for to just to bring it just like it's not in this deck it's in another deck just the the what those new programs are just as a reminder or we could just say them out loud i just think it's important um as we move into the you know we're all clearly aware of them but as we move into you know uh moving to a balanced budget um you know during a difficult time you know acknowledging what we did have to cut but acknowledging what we were able to do um i think it's so important and i think it says a lot about

[01:40:02] what we as a school division and board together value I can try to do it off the top of my head but if you have a slide that would help you know we you know it's the the collective bargaining agreement which one of the first in the safe I you do it could be a test the collective a bargaining agreement you know one of them for one of the earliest in the States in which we were able to to not only provide additional financial support for our teachers and our licensed staff and for professional staff, but we were also able to provide them a number of supports

[01:40:42] that they had asked for around leave and planning time, which is so important for teachers every day, both for their wellness as well as for them to be able to come to work and be happy in a very stressful environment and then we were able to include and I appreciate this board and I'm so thankful for this board for for standing by the math specialists because a number of years ago we talked about this deed it's not just literacy it's also math those go together and that we were able to keep those in the budget by making additional

[01:41:21] cuts and then lastly the special education you know we've had many conversations with our CEAC team and our and our families with children with delays and disabilities and they have asked for us to continue to support the increase in both numbers of children as well as of intensity but while also by having some of those children included or as many of those children as possible and so what we were able to do and include in this budget both looked at achievement and also looked at inclusion and looked at wellness and support of our teachers and staff so i just wanted to to

[01:41:58] end by saying how much i appreciate um this board by standing together to make those things um important as well as working hand in hand um with the with the school staff to make that happen thank you and so will you remind us where we are yeah um and what our next steps are yep i appreciate um those words because what i can do is provide a summary before budget adoption next week to show all the things that are in the budget that we haven't been able to focus on these last few

[01:42:37] weeks um but that is scheduled for next thursday it sounds like this current balancing scenario has a consensus approval from this board so um i we would bring forward the budget numbers that support those changes for you to take action and you're for you to appropriate a request appropriation for those funds and I can provide a summary along with that next week but you did a great job thank you so much and then you can get some sleep

[01:43:09] thank you miss kumisawa the last item in our school division business today is our discussion of our achievement gap advisory committee charter and dr. Haas is going to introduce this item thank you so when the new board members came on I was really excited when mr. Dylan Beck proposed the idea of having a gap committee advisory to the school board the primary reason I would say so is because it's a it's a long-standing issue in our mall County schools but

[01:43:48] also nationally all across the state it's something that is a problem I I believe still that can be solved and we're not going to fail at it unless we quit. But as long as we keep working on it and keep it front and center, that's how we're going to work on it and get it resolved.

[01:44:07] And so the genius or the beauty of that proposal and what I would propose is that it become an actual advisory committee to the board. There are board committees that are made up of a couple of board members and a staff member and they work together.

[01:44:23] are also advisory committees to the board. An example would be the SEAC committee, the school health advisory board, ACES, those types of programs where the the important part of it is it's a forever committee that doesn't just it's not episodic. Like all of a sudden we see we've got a problem happening. We throw some some efforts at it and then we move on to the next issue. This would be a consistent program. So what I want to do is turn things back over to Chair Berlin

[01:44:56] and Mr. Dillenbeck. I took the liberty of drafting a charter for the committee and shared that with them to get feedback on it, came back with another draft. And so we're at a point where now where it

is a draft and it's an opportunity for the rest of the board to take a look at it, weigh in, And really, it truly is a board committee, an advisory committee.

[01:45:21] So I want to put it where it belongs. Thank you. Thank you so much, Dr. Hassan. Thank you for working with us on this. Mr. Dillenbecht, I wanted to just turn it over to you again. Thank you. This was, I think, in your first board meeting, actually, when we were talking about those committees and you asked that question.

[01:45:39] And so I so appreciate that. And I wanted you to just talk a little bit about that why, again, particularly for you as a new board member who has been and former teacher who has really been watching from outside yeah as as dr. Haas mentioned this has been an issue for quite a while and one of his top priorities is addressing the achievement gap between white students and students of color so my thought would be to involve various members of the community teachers principals

[01:46:16] parents students other board members and staff to come together to say what what have we done in the past that seems to be working that maybe just needs more time and what what do we need to try to do differently if we're not getting the results that that we we want to see and I think it's going to be important to talk to other school divisions around Virginia and elsewhere to find out how did they what what did they do to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap in

[01:46:55] their districts so we don't need to reinvent the wheel so we're going to be inviting various members of the community to be a part of this and I think the intention is to have people serve for a two-year period with the possibility of renewing or upping for a second term and again it's not to make any policy decisions but instead to bring information and suggestions recommended suggestions

[01:47:31] to the rest of the board for us all to discuss and vote on so give it a try the last i'm sorry oh no i was just going to add that in the timing of that too would be similar to what we've done with seac and uh and shab and the other ones where they report like in early in the budget season or during the budget season so that if there's funding implications for something that the board wants to try then we can address it in the budget when we did the analysis katrina colson

[01:48:07] and i put together the aces uh committee and we had uh jamie gillner who was here just here when she was doing program evaluations come up with a couple of models i mean it's a very different model with sea act versus aces aces is very strongly modeled on long-range planning where each the thing that i was thought was missing from the proposed charter was uh who does the appointments i mean for for both the um aces and long-range planning there is an appointee by each school

[01:48:42] board member and then there are specific appointees by uh the superintendent and there are um staff supports in in that work as well i particularly i'm obviously biased because that's a model we chose for aces but i think it makes it more formal uh and it gives all of us uh an attachment to the work of that group by our appointee so i would highly recommend looking at that i appreciate that that is a good that is a very good idea i'm just going to read a little summary

[01:49:20] and then there are some discussion questions i can put forward um for the board um so the proposed achievement committee is designed to support the school board in maintaining a sustained focused effort on improving outcomes for all students particularly those with long-standing gaps in and achievement access and opportunity.

[01:49:39] I think it's important that we're not just talking about an achievement gap, right? We're talking about access as well as opportunity gaps. We'll serve in an advisory role, helping the board stay grounded in both data and lived experience. Its work will include review being disaggregated student outcomes, identifying systemic barriers, and offering recommendations aligned with the strategic plan.

[01:50:02] Membership is intentionally broad and representative. And I think everyone noticed, but I think it was important for Jim and I and for Dr. Haas that there will be students on this committee and they will be full voting members and not just observers as well as family staff and community members with an emphasis on ensuring that those most impacted by the achievement gaps have a voice in this work the goal is not to create something new for its own sake but to strengthen the board's ability to consistently monitor progress elevate community perspectives and ensure that closing gaps remains essential and ongoing

[01:50:37] governance priority so I think though you know some of the speakers today we're talking about how are we making sure that we're getting the voices of the community particularly teachers and parents and children and students and that's that's something important for this board and that's something that we're doing is as part of this community and then I think the other pieces to me is I think I've mentioned this before I'm a calendar person and I don't want to have a committee reporting to us when we can't take action on it and so we are intentionally kind of the executive committee would start would do some planning in July so that we can start right at the beginning of the school year so that we could do something to have some data some

[01:51:15] information available so that this will help with our budget planning next year so it will just be one piece of that that puzzle that we are trying to do making sure is again as I said when we summarized what we are doing this year those budget decisions that we're making I think made the best chance to have us have impact on students and student achievement and opportunity and I want us to continue doing that so are you guys open for a little discussion I'm looking I'm looking to my left into my road I guess I

[01:51:51] you know I'm going to put three questions forward right this is this is important work right and so how can this committee best support the board in keeping the attention on achievement gaps in a way that is consistent, actionable, and aligned with our strategic plan? I'm just going to do these all three at once. Does the proposed membership structure ensure that we are hearing from the right voices, especially students and families, most impact? And is there anything else we should adjust to strengthen that? And then how should the committee's recommendation and updates be structured so they're meaningfully informed board discussions priority

[01:52:27] and decision-making over time so you have those questions in front of you but wanted to see kind of calm I know dr. Acuff you've already made a comment and I appreciate that about who does the appointments and I think that really goes into making sure we're hearing from the right voices but other things as we think about this about this committee that we need to consider and again this is a this is a draft that we would we would move forward and amend as needed. I think this is a great idea. I would like for this board as our demographics have changed to

[01:53:04] do some internal work with the equity committee before we launch into something involving a whole lot of other people. I think if we can get a check on some of our own problems and biases first. I know that we did some work when I was on the board early and it was really helpful. So I wondered if we could do a work session or something like that with our some members of our equity committee early in

the stage I appreciate you lifting that up and I'm looking at miss Schmidt so we've brought up two things tonight first we talked

[01:53:41] about this a work session around technology and research and I think this one probably should pre see that one because one of the things we have talked about is as this board kind of continues to come together as a full board we many of us have joined at different times and there's different information that some of us have had and different work that some of us have done and so I appreciate you lifting that up and I think it's an important piece for us to do I don't like a nice there would you okay if we do it not note that in here but just oh yeah agree to do it as a work session right soonish yes yes and actually that's something that we can probably share as we plan those work

[01:54:20] sessions we should I can we can add that either next week or the next board meeting um what are those intended topics i think we did something around courageous conversations or something i don't quite remember but it was pretty good and uh i would just add that those were professional development sessions that were closed meetings um it's pretty intense and there's a lot of self-disclosure um so i i would just throw out there that they weren't uh work sessions dr harrison conducted more than 20 individual pd sessions of course we're it was during this uh

[01:54:56] pandemic so that people had more time on their hands to attend one hour zoom meetings with uh with us and the cabinet participated as well so uh but i just want to share that those are were professional development sessions that the board was able to really open up and have those conversations yeah that was good it was professional development as well because it it did feel like professional development more than yeah yeah anything else so we can think about how to best thank you for that clarification because that was before at my time so we should think about how to how to structure that in a way that is appropriate for the time that we have but also gets at that core and what do we need you know if we need to

[01:55:36] do some type of professional other professional development session um how we how we can do that yeah because i and consider maybe scheduling an additional time for that because we actually have three more work sessions in this calendar year may september and october i think that's i mean i think that's an i mean if this if this board is about continuing to understand the achievement gap um and as i look across you know um the board we are um a white board um and we need to understand except for except for no except for you i'm sorry except for you okay i didn't i didn't know i didn't

[01:56:12] mean to i i was about to say that i'm sorry i was literally about to say the white board is not accurate okay i'm sorry apologies exactly exactly yeah i can't i can't agree more yeah yeah no i agree or turn over and turn yeah agree we are really losing a lot of sensitivity and like understanding of these things and i think jumping into this well again a great idea needs a lot of understanding that people do not have thank you for thank you for saying that other

[01:56:48] Comments? Thoughts? I mean, I think that's a question, is what do we need to do as we move forward into that? I mean, what I would like to see, I mean, in addition to what both my colleagues have raised, I would just almost like to have a map of what we're doing.

[01:57:11] I mean, we have math specialists, we've increased our special ed support, we have the bellwether, and we had a good check-in last June about how we were doing. you know our strategic plan versus the bellwether but I sort of want to see a report card or at least a map of what we are doing right now we have literacy you know we have reading specialists we have technology support we have a lot of

stuff going you know we have culturally responsive education certifications and I would just like to have a big mush of it a map of it and see how it fits

[01:57:51] together and are there synergies that we could you know promote or conflicts we can reduce or sensitivities we can raise almost before the committee even started and since this has been a 20-year problem i wonder if looking at that map and thinking about okay this year things slightly got better in 2011 it got better what did we do differently 20 you know that longitudinal thing because this is not new i'm sorry where are you getting 20 i was going to say 20 yeah it was

[01:58:30] forever more i mean was it good and then 20 years ago no but but the day the state data i could only go back 20 years so that's why i chose 20. okay um so it's been a never-ending problem some years were slightly better than others or the things that we did differently and I know there is some institutional memory that we have here but again none of it was great so maybe it's not even worth

[01:58:54] looking at so is the is the uh will or the suggestion of the board to pause to do um some to do um uh self-reflection equity equity professional development um and mapping and

[01:59:26] then look at this later i think we need to do both and and rethink the charter you know um right i mean i think if we're going to do it we need to be ready to do it yeah and just keeping in mind that the doesn't pause the work right agreed so it's really the board's oversight and policy direction around it I would say also just the doing some work this summer around identifying a very specific thematic goal for a short term such as

[02:00:03] next year to go after I know you know the we don't have we won't have the results of the SOL testing until you know more than a month from now but watching our interim reading results throughout the year are I know at the cabinet level and the division leadership level our thematic goal this year was to increase our black students reading by I mean for me to say I was effective it needed to be a 3% growth to be highly effective 8% and we focused on that and the work that we've been doing has been very focused

[02:00:39] on that and you're seeing the needle move so there is a power of the board that we all need we all need a reset i think around courageous conversations about race dr kaiser and dr hayes and i have been engaging with gene cash who has the conversations about race it's not a different person but i think that's that should also be a forever project because as soon as you take your eye off of it your biases get crept right in again okay but i think that the the operational work is going to

[02:01:19] go on so i don't want you to worry that it's like well we're pausing to to be to develop you know and so nothing will happen i know on our policies we have an equity checklist every time we have a new policy but i wonder how any of our actions in the last year would have been or decisions would have been different if we had that mental equity checklist on every single decision that we made and i think even back to the capital improvement thing would the preschool have gone up on the list because that would make a heck of a more bigger difference than some of these

[02:01:56] other things if we're thinking about our number one goal is to reduce the opportunity so i'm hearing that we would like to ask cabinet particularly ms schmidt just because i know she's looking at at those work sessions, or however we want to do this, to make some recommendations, or we can work together if there are suggestions, again, for those of you who have been here before of professional development that was useful and helpful, that we

[02:02:34] can begin to schedule into our calendar, either as a work session or as a professional development. You can make some recommendations to us that we can discuss. And then Dr. Acuff, I think the idea of mapping, I apologize.

[02:02:53] Do we also want to direct staff to work on the map of those projects? Or do we want to hold on that? I just want to just make sure we're-- I'm enticed by that. I mean, I know we can lay it all out from the strategic plan, but I think a visual to help bring it all together would be valuable.

[02:03:15] Yeah. Yeah. So we will take the direction. So we will hold on this. We will-- and though we will come back-- if we could come back next-- I know we have a lot, since it's only a quick turnaround. If it's not possible to bring back the suggestion about professional development, we can do it for the-- I'm not going to do it off the top of my head-- the May 2nd-- the first meeting in May.

[02:03:42] And then we can talk about what is possible around the map that I know will take much longer, particularly as we're moving into the end of the school year. graduations and everything so maybe we could do some professional development this summer when things are a little calmer and the um the charter is independent of those things so we can make the changes to the charter if the board agrees with what dr acuff suggested then we can we can bring back that draft of like really just taking it from um the aces committee process that's already outlined in the advisory committees to the board policy we can put that in there and bring it back for another look to for the board because I know there's some urgency to get things going so you

[02:04:21] can queue up participants going into the school year. Sounds great. I genuinely do not have faith that we can do all the work that we need to do the internal work that we need to do so that we don't get I can't remember which of my colleagues said this people involved in a thing that we don't know what we're doing so i i really would just put a hard pause on this until we do all that mapping and professional development right i mean although it would be lovely to have all the

[02:04:56] recommendations rolled out next september for the budget run up i think it's more important to see what we're let's do it right let's yeah thank you thank you for lifting that up um uh next point on our agenda is 8.0 other business do we have any other business by school board members or the superintendent if does anybody have anything because i have a couple items i realize it's feels like it's like 95 degrees in here i know i i thought about it but i do have a couple of

[02:05:36] yeah i thought about asking i thought about asking if you had the magic key to turn the the air conditioning on local government keep it hot yeah i don't know who to text usually i can text jeff rom yeah the building but i don't know who to text yeah i think we can blame the supervisors yeah i was going to ask if he knew where the key was for the air conditioning um so i do want i do i have two just two brief ones brief feelings a little but um we uh in reference to the grading guidelines um there is a uh survey going out tomorrow it's

[02:06:11] blasting out to all teachers tomorrow morning uh in the weekly digest for the super for the compass and uh it'll go out through all the emails and it's also slated to go out to our principals on monday through the superintendent's advisory bulletin and it's a it's a grading practices survey so we can get um we can get a current lay of the land from all of our educators and also my my my emphasis in the survey was to find out like we have the the stated objectives in the board policy which are very broad what i'd like to know is what teachers are currently doing

[02:06:50] in in the direction of that policy that's working for them so that rather than inventing something based on the the research or you know the books that come out or things like that there's there there are success stories all around the system around teachers increasing engagement through practices that they have so i uh we're going to be able to to do that i do want to talk a little bit about greer i will say that um you know in doing this work uh either as the assistant superintendent deputy superintendent superintendent over the last well more than a decade i've

[02:07:27] participated in a lot of principal transfers a lot over time there are there's 24 schools in the system and every year we look at the whole lay of the land all the principals have various experiences years of experience different certifications and when it starts to coalesce around planning is generally in january uh mr redding sends out a survey to all the principals and it's called an intent survey so what's your intent for next year we ask every principal what

[02:08:02] is your intent and some principals let us know before that uh what they're thinking we get all kinds of responses like well i'm retiring uh there was one one principal that we're filling a vacancy now let me know in august that he was going to retire but we get various responses many say i'm gonna i'm staying put some say i'm staying put but i'm looking around for jobs outside the system or in other fields or some say i'm retiring and we we put all that together it gives us a general

[02:08:35] sense of the churn that we're going to need to deal with going into the spring and the summer so dan follows that up with individual conversations with every principal to find out more about what their their plans are and what they're open to and that's important because we will have vacancies with our principals um even in there was a year a few years ago where i told the board i don't think we're going to have any vacancies then we ended up with like six as we got to the summer so we have to know what the interests are of the sitting principals so that as openings come up we can

[02:09:13] then make make decisions but it's an ongoing conversation with each principal there is no snap decision about moving one principal from one place to another that would be a disaster if we did that and as i've said for the most part we've been pretty successful over the years in terms of those changes so we start in january we talk about it and we keep working with the principals who have said they would like a change or they're looking for a change or they're going to retire or they want to stay put we do emphasize stability and long-term tenure

[02:09:51] I would say that over time, the tenures have gotten a little shorter because it's intense work. And so at the schools, the day of the Ben Hurt, 30 years as principal of Albemarle High School, I think those days are over.

[02:10:09] We have principals that range right now from a handful of years, and really Josh Walton is our longest-serving principal right now. In fact, we named the school after him as a result. Just a little humor there. um we do want stability uh we also want to ensure that each school has the leadership it needs to move forward so the two things go hand in hand um we also um so talking specifically about uh greer at this point and i really can't i'm not going to talk about confidential conversations

[02:10:44] that i've had with uh dr saunders or anybody else involved with it that's just never going to happen um i would need to turn in my resignation uh while i was doing it so let's just be clear about that it's not a cone of silence we don't keep secrets it's just a fact that we don't talk about changes in our personnel whether it's a teacher a custodian a principal anybody we don't talk about it and i'm not going to talk about it um so greer for about 11 years had a principal named

[02:11:20] matt landau he transferred at the end of his tenure he transferred to what was then kale elementary school which is now mountain view after him there uh robin bowling had a four-year tenure when i became superintendent a principal started there named jill lee she was only there one year and i went to uh you know we went to a transfer and dr saunders transferred from baker butler i hired him to be the principal at baker butler he had a successful run there i asked him at that time

[02:11:56] if he would transfer it's all in the past and he made the transfer so transfers do occur in fact last year when baker butler opened up um when brad hendrick uh took a position in the city we transferred a principal from a title one school uh nancy mccullen that the school is thriving under her leadership red hill and had not been thriving and after several years of her leadership was thriving and we asked her would you please you know consider would you consider uh baker butler and she now that's where she is paula gately successfully um is the principal at red

[02:12:36] hill and she came from stony point and all three schools are doing great this year because we have great leadership in our school system we've grown a strong bench and we bring people in from the outside to try to shake things up and make a difference where maybe we haven't been able to or maybe it's been incremental improvement instead of some something better than that we could strive for and it is true the key player after the teachers is the principal um so when we look at

[02:13:10] when we look at um crozet crozet has principal vacancy dr england is retiring that school's a great school in fact i was just out there today everybody knows now but she was awarded the leader of the year award for our school system as part of our teacher of the year first-year teacher of the year and support education support specialist she through nominations and division level review and other principals review and my final review she won that award so that school is a is on a on a good track all of our schools are on a good track they receive

[02:13:47] labels from time to time but i would hold them up we take care of kids greer is also a strong school many good things happening steve's been there for seven years a lot of great things happen at that school and um and the staff there has been phenomenal um but it can also that doesn't mean it's not appropriate for new leadership with a fresh perspective there as well doesn't mean that that doesn't mean that we've got a hiring process um frankly um i am disappointed they didn't move forward with the interviews yesterday we were trying to conduct them simultaneously with

[02:14:25] agner agner went through with their interview process we have a diverse candidate pool we have a diverse committee for greer that at least in my conversations with individual committee members i haven't talked to all of them but they were pretty excited to get started and and get started in the process so i am disappointed about that but we'll move forward next week that's that's the plan to do that i wanted i do want to acknowledge the impact to greer um i think we've all been through or at least from my perspective i've worked in schools as a teacher when the principles have changed i had good relationships with those principles

[02:15:02] i was disappointed when they left and when the new ones came in i was even a little cold shoulder but over time had some of the best relationships i've ever had with those new principles and i think everybody here that's been a teacher could say the same thing and they make a difference and they can all make a difference i want to assure the board as i have before that these decisions are made thoughtfully when the whole the whole school system in mind that's my role is to look at all the schools

and all of our programs and and they're made in consultation with my colleagues and with the principals involved all the way through the

[02:15:41] process so let's i'm looking forward to the process to play out and i'm excited about the next possibilities for all of our schools you can't talk do we have any other business um before the board with no other business before i just want just one thing um i had hoped to say something about transportation when jamie was still here but perhaps ms schmidt can convey it um i would

[02:16:16] love to have a brief update on transportation where we are we have not heard any i've recently They run into two different events, two different bus drivers who sang Ms. Gellner's praises, and since we haven't had any crises in the past few months, I think we need to recognize the work they're doing, she's doing, and the whole department is doing, because as we can all painfully recall, it has been a sore point, and given that her department also had the

[02:16:51] highest Gallup scores I think we need to recognize the work that they do absolutely you know I will gladly relay that and I agree with all of that but I will also use it as an opportunity is we are continuing to struggle with hiring there's a lot of good things happening a lot of improvement but because you don't hear all those stories we will be reinstating an employee referral bonus and other things so we were trying to get the word out so we would be glad to have a public conversation on that as well we typically schedule that in the july time frame so we'll look probably

[02:17:28] maybe in june or july and just give a general update right i mean even though i haven't heard anything from from my my plants in the bus driver field i mean you know saying that the mornings are covered but the afternoons might not be and uh there's so little and there's to no follow the staff there right now so through the bench if someone's sick it's really challenging so anything this board can do to support that work it would be great thank you anything else before the board with that i will adjourn us at 10 to 9 tonight thank you so much



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