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Chesterfield County School Board Special Meeting, Thursday, January 16, 2025

Date Thursday, January 16, 2025
Place Chesterfield County School Board, Virginia
Length 19m (video)

- Official meeting video (Swagit): <https://chesterfieldschoolsva.new.swagit.com/videos/326049>
- Official minutes (BoardDocs, on the Feb 25, 2025 agenda for approval): [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DDML4Q54C094/\\$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202025.01.16%20Special%20Meeting.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DDML4Q54C094/$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202025.01.16%20Special%20Meeting.pdf)

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-25. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:06] Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to call the January 16th, 2025 school board special meeting to order. We will now have invocation by Mrs. Hudgens, followed by a flag salute led by Mrs. Heffron. Please pray with me. Dear Lord, we are so thankful that today has finally come.

[00:00:31] We thank you for guiding us with wisdom and discernment through these many months as we've searched for the next superintendent for Chesterfield County Public Schools. We are grateful for the many candidates who applied and were interviewed, but we are most grateful for the candidate who stood head and shoulders above the rest.

[00:00:52] We pray that you will give him wisdom and compassion, courage, and grace as he leads our district into the future. Amen. Please join us at this time for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:01:14] Board members, may I have a motion to approve this afternoon's agenda as drafted?

[00:01:36] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion. Dot Heffron. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The agenda is adopted.

[00:01:53] Next, we have discussion and motion to appoint a candidate for employment. Before we begin, I would like to first start by acknowledging our Board of Supervisors members who are present with us today. We have our Chair Jim Engel from the Bermuda District, Our vice chair, Mark Miller, from the Midlothian District.

[00:02:16] We have Jessica Snyder from the Clover Hill District. And then Jim Holland is on his way from the Dale District. And Kevin Carroll is on his way from the Matoica District. And then we also have our Dr. Joe Casey, who is also on his way.

[00:02:35] Also, I believe our clerk of court is also out there, Amanda Poles, too. So, as you know, the school board has been working to find the next superintendent of Chesterfield County Public Schools. The process included listening to employees, families, and community partners about what they value and what they want in a superintendent.

[00:02:59] With the help of our consultants, we conducted in-person meetings, online gatherings, and a survey. What we learned is that Chesterfield County wants a superintendent who is a strong educational leader, who values communication, who is engaging and collaborative, and who connects with all stakeholders to build on our school system's academic successes. After a nationwide search, no one even came close to our very own Dr. John Murray. Over the last few months, we have seen tremendous energy and positive momentum to improve our school division forward. There is no doubt

[00:03:39] that he is the right person to lead Chesterfield schools. Dr. Murray has spent his life in Chesterfield and his career in Chesterfield County Public Schools in teaching school leadership and division leadership roles. But even more importantly, he is dedicated to our students and staff. He is fully committed to academic excellence and his exceptional leadership and communication skills, innovation vision, innovative, excuse me, vision, and his proven ability to improve student achievement

[00:04:11] will move our school division forward in this next chapter. Dr. Murray has served as our interim superintendent since September, and before that, he served as deputy superintendent. He has held many roles during his career here at CCPS, including executive director of constituent Services, Director of Middle School Leadership, Principal of Metoica High, Principal of Carver Middle, Assistant Principal at Metoica Middle, Assistant Principal at Robius Middle, and a 7th grade history and language arts teacher.

[00:04:47] His experience and dedication to the success of every student aligns with the school board's vision for our own school division. His background and his experience closely match the characteristics that the community members told us they wanted in a superintendent.

[00:05:04] Madam Clerk, would you please read the resolution for appointment for Dr. John T. Murray as Division Superintendent? Resolution for the appointment of John T. Murray as Division Superintendent. Whereas Dr. John T. Murray was designated as Interim Division Superintendent of Schools by the School Board of Cheshawil County, Virginia, also known as the School Board, effective September 1st, 2024, to serve until a new superintendent is appointed by the school board.

[00:05:34] And whereas the school board desires to appoint Dr. John T. Murray for a full term as the division superintendent. Now, therefore, be it resolved that Dr. John T. Murray is appointed division superintendent for a term commencing January 17th, 2025 and ending June 30th, 2028.

[00:05:55] and be it further resolved that the school board chair and clerk to the school board are authorized to execute an employment agreement with Dr. John T. Murray adopted by the Chesterfield County School Board the 16th day of January 2025. Thank you Madam Clerk. Board members do I have a motion to adopt the resolution as presented? So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members

[00:06:23] Is there any discussion? Ms. Hutchins. The decision to name Dr. Murray as superintendent reflects the school board's commitment to find a leader who can navigate the complexities of our growing division and vision, excuse me, with vision and dedication.

[00:06:42] We conducted a nationwide search, and Dr. Murray stood out for so many reasons. He has a proven track record in our own very large and complex school division. He understands rapid growth and the challenges it brings, and he's dedicated to improving academic progress.

[00:07:05] He places students at the center of every decision. Dr. Murray understands Chesterfield County Public Schools at his core because it has always been a part of his life. I believe he will build on our academic successes and continue to improve the learning experience for all of our students.

[00:07:29] I look forward to continuing to work with Dr. Murray and have no doubt that his leadership will bring a fresh perspective, strategic approach, and innovative solutions to our district. Ms. Heffron.

[00:07:45] Ms. Heffron. Thank you. It's such a joy to be able to share this news today. Dr. Murray, we couldn't be more proud of you and delighted to welcome you into the role of superintendent officially.

[00:08:01] Dr. Murray has a reputation for his focus on educational excellence, and I feel certain he is the right leader for Chesterfield County Public Schools. And over the past few months, we've had an opportunity to see a glimpse of what lies ahead under his leadership.

[00:08:17] And I couldn't be more excited for our students, our staff, and our families. Dr. Murray's vision and dedication align with the goals of our school board and the needs that our community has voiced so clearly. We are confident that his strategic approach and passion for helping all students thrive will lead Chesterfield County Public Schools into an even brighter future.

[00:08:42] Ms. Chatters. Dr. Murray was chosen for many reasons, but one of the things that stands out is his genuine approach to fostering equity and supportive environments for both staff and students and we all know he got his foundation in the district his ability to lead with transparency collaboration and a focus on the whole child aligns beautifully with the values and priorities our community expressed throughout this process and let's be honest we've seen his dedication to the school system shine through

[00:09:16] and everything he does including that winter break video i believe dr murray is the right person to lead Chesterfield County Public Schools into the future, and I am so confident in his ability to make a lasting and positive impact on our students, our families, and staff. I'm excited about what the future holds. Thank you. Mr. Pronto. The decision to name Dr. Murray a superintendent is the result of a thorough, months-long, nationwide search. We explored many strong candidates, but in the end, we knew Dr. Murray was the right choice for this role. He brings a

[00:09:55] depth of experience in educational leadership, particularly in his ability to connect with students, staff, and the community in many meaningful ways. I am confident in Dr. Murray's ability to lead Chesfield County Public Schools into a future of continued excellence, providing exceptional opportunities for every student. His commitment to clear and transparent communication, coupled with

his focus on creating a school culture where students and staff feel excited to come to school every day sets him apart, and we know this for the exceptional work that he has

[00:10:34] done in his many years in the Matoaka district. As we begin this new chapter of leadership, I am thrilled to see the positive impact Dr. Murray will continue to make. And I just want to say that I echo all of the comments that my colleagues have expressed here this evening, and I also have to say he's a part of the Bermuda District as well. So I think he's had a touch in every one of the magisterial districts, and that is one thing that sets Dr. Murray apart as he is embedded in

[00:11:11] Chesterfield County. We know Dr. Murray and many of our staff members, staff and members of the community know him very well, but the real reason that we are all here today is because of the vision he has for the future of our school division and I look forward to seeing what is next to come so there has been a motion in a second madam clerk please call roll on the motion dot hephron aye

[00:11:40] dominique chatters aye steven pronto aye lisa hudsons aye and cooker aye the motion is approved and chesterfield county school board is pleased to introduce the superintendent of chesterfield

[00:11:57] county public schools dr john murray to murray would you like to say a few words yes and and thank you and first i want to say um thank you to all of my colleagues uh central law office staff

[00:12:33] and principals who joined us a little while ago for uh an announcement that this was going to occur and for everybody that showed up there it was it was very warming uh to see the support because we're going to need it as we move forward for the next many years to come.

[00:12:51] So thank you. I am honored and humbled to accept the position of superintendent officially of Chesterfield County Public Schools. It is a privilege to serve the school system as superintendent, and I want to thank this board for the opportunity.

[00:13:08] This is a full circle moment for me, and it is deeply personal. I grew up in Chesterfield schools, from kindergarten at Chalkley to graduating from Manchester High School. After college, I returned to Chesterfield County Public Schools to start my work in education, and I have spent my career here. My mom was a teacher and administrator here.

[00:13:32] My wife, Tammy, is a counseling coordinator for CCPS, and both of our remarkable children are students in this wonderful school division. This school division has provided me with outstanding opportunities, and thankful does not begin to describe how I'm feeling right now.

[00:13:51] While I've been fortunate to have many wonderful mentors along the way, of whom I'm deeply grateful, too many to name, I would be remiss to not express my appreciation for the late Sarah Frere, who hired me on at Fallen Creek Middle School as a first-year teacher, and whose unapologetic approach to doing right for kids was and is something I've always sought to emulate. I also must thank our previous superintendent, Dr. Merv Doherty, who believed in me and allowed me several leadership opportunities in which to grow and shine along the way. Most of all, I want to express

[00:14:31] gratitude to my family, extended who you know who you are, but more specifically, my wife Tammy and our children, Grant and Emerson, not only for their support and encouragement, but the sacrifices that they've had to uniquely make while I've pursued these career choices along the way.

[00:14:53] As I step into this role, I want you to know I believe in the power of education, and I believe in children. I believe in our teachers, our school leaders, and our employees. I believe in our families and our

community. That is why I've built my life and career here in Chesterfield County.

[00:15:11] My primary goal as superintendent is to ensure that every decision we make is strategic and centered around our students' needs. Every decision should move students forward on their respective path to success. I'm someone who seeks input, values different perspectives, and believes in open communication.

[00:15:33] I am committed to making data-informed decisions and fostering an environment where every staff member and student feels valued and heard. It takes a team to make things happen. Working together, we can continue to improve academic achievement throughout Chesterfield County Public Schools.

[00:15:53] Our collective efforts can build on the district's solid foundation to create outstanding successes, strong relationships, and a bright future. I am confident that we will thrive, and I look forward to what we will accomplish. Again, thank you to this board.

[00:16:10] My gratitude and humble appreciation is beyond measure. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Murray.

[00:16:27] At this time, I would like to ask Dr. Murray and Chesterfield Circuit Court Clerk, Amanda Pohl, to come to the dais for the administration of the oath of office.

[00:16:52] I solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

[00:17:14] And I will faithfully and impartially perform and I will faithfully and discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me of the Chesterfield County Public Service.

[00:17:32] According to the best of my ability. Next, we have announcements, communications, and school board comments.

[00:18:10] School board members, are there any announcements or comments? I think we've said a lot. The school board will hold a budget work session on Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 4 p.m. here in the public meeting room.

[00:18:31] If there's no further business, we need a motion to adjourn. I make a motion to adjourn. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion. Todd Hefron. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto.

[00:18:48] Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. The January 16, 2025 school board special meeting is adjourned.



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