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Chesterfield County School Board Budget Work Session, Tuesday, February 4, 2025

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[00:00:04] Good afternoon. I'd like to call the February 4th, 2025 School Board Budget Work Session to order. Before we begin this afternoon, I would like to take a moment for two recognitions. We want to celebrate that this is Black History Month. Chesterfield County Public Schools honors the contributions of our black students, teachers, employees, and families in our school communities, past, present, and future.

[00:00:29] It is vital to ensure that black history remains an integral part of our curriculum and Black History Month is a time for all Chesterfield County Public Schools students to learn about and be inspired by black heroes. During our February 11th business meeting, the school board plans to adopt a resolution in honor of Black History Month and the significant contributions of black Americans to our nation's advancement.

[00:00:56] We would also like to recognize that National School Counseling Week is February 3rd through 7th. This annual recognition is designed to focus public attention on the contribution of school counselors throughout the United States.

[00:01:12] I believe I speak for our entire school board when I say that Chesterfield County Public Schools counselors are among the best of the best. Our school counselors make a daily difference for the children

of Chesterfield County. School counselors are with our students for their happiest moments, like college acceptances.

[00:01:32] And school counselors support our students when the world seems bleak and overwhelming. School counselors have truly stepped up to support the wide variety of academic, social, and mental health needs of our students. National School Counseling Week is an excellent time to thank school counselors for their vital work they do as an integral part of our school division and as caring adults in the lives of our students.

[00:01:56] So for our work session, next we have our annual report from our Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee from Mr. Walker. Good afternoon. My name is Justin Walker. I'm here to represent the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee.

[00:02:23] I have been part of the board for a little over three years. And just a quick reminder that the board created the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee in 2020 to make recommendations on best practices for our school operations and environmental sustainability, as well as educating our students in our community.

[00:02:43] Our discussions on the board are really directed toward things that help reduce waste, both from an environmental standpoint and from a fiscal stewardship standpoint, and around things that help teach our kids to do the same thing. We want them asking the same questions that we are asking as part of this committee.

[00:03:00] And we try to align our initiatives with stated priorities from the board, such as improved high quality and efficient facilities, reducing emergency maintenance, focusing more on preventative maintenance, and the use of local food and some other things like that.

[00:03:22] We have a great board this year. We've had a couple of changes in positions, a little bit of turnover. Our board is made up of some folks like myself who really come from the facilities and management side and actually quite a few educators that are part of the county.

[00:03:40] Speaking of that, Jason Woodby is here with me today. He'll be talking about a portion of our initiatives with you here in just a few minutes. He's also an educator at Carver Career Academy, a science teacher. So very glad to have the wide variety of perspective on our board. This year, we've done a few things that we haven't done in the past.

[00:04:00] We kind of set up and looked around and said, hey, there's probably other groups in the region or in the state that are doing similar things to what we're talking about. Maybe we can go and learn from them. So we spent some time benchmarking and identifying other groups that are doing the same things and trying to learn how they are, what they are pursuing and how they're doing it and how they're helping with funding and some other questions, big questions like that.

[00:04:22] We've also started a social media platform to help share more about what we do with the community and kind of try to get some community involvement. There are good ideas out there and see if we can get community support for some of our initiatives. I'll move into the recommendations.

[00:04:42] Our first recommendation focuses on energy efficiency and performance. I'd like to say that this is one that we have talked about for several years now. It's not because nothing is happening, but this one. This one, the board is making progress through facilities.

[00:04:59] They are working through the process of doing this initiative. It's basically upgrading all of the old building automation controls. There's a lot of good reasons to keep focused on that. The primary reason is that has a dramatic impact on how well our facilities team is able to control the comfort of our buildings, which we know directly impacts the ability for our students to learn and our teachers to be happy in their jobs.

[00:05:24] So really that's at the forefront, but right behind that is it reduces, having a well-functioning building automation system dramatically reduces the maintenance burden for our staff, which means they can focus on a lot of other things instead of having to chase hot and cold calls all over the district all of the time.

[00:05:43] It also helps diagnose issues. The newer systems have advanced tools that help us understand when things are broken and how we can fix them easier. It also has a dramatic impact on our energy usage, which is why it's part of our initiative. It does reduce our carbon footprint, but also dramatically reduces our cost when we're controlling those rooms in a much better way.

[00:06:06] So we want to thank the board for their support in that and just reinforce our desire for that to continue and maybe even accelerate as we move through the next couple of years. One other added benefit to the new systems that Facilities is seeking out is that it takes us out of this old situation where we were locked in with a single contractor or a single type of equipment at one school.

[00:06:32] These new systems are basically what they call open platform, which gives us a lot more options when it comes to competitive pricing and changing out things and making adjustments as we go forward. If something's not working, it's a lot easier to make changes. Our second item is one that we've talked about a couple of times that has had a little bit of progress, but it's sort of ad hoc progress.

[00:06:57] This is the district-wide LED lighting conversion. It's something that we feel like we're going to continue to talk about because it is the single biggest thing that our district can do. It's the lowest of the low-hanging fruit in the largest environmental impact.

[00:07:13] It also has a dramatic cost impact. Basically, the idea is to go across the district in one single project, updating all of the lighting that's not already LED. The technology that's there now in a lot of cases is 15 to 20 years old.

[00:07:29] The new LED technology, not only does it perform a lot better as far as energy goes, it's a lot more reliable. It's going to take some burden off of our principles from having to change out fixtures and manage that process. It also makes the single biggest visual upgrade to the schools out of all the things that we're going to talk about from an environmental standpoint.

[00:07:50] This is something that's very, very visible. Facilities is doing a good job of addressing these as it can. They've done some work toward this initiative, but it's sort of piecemeal. And what you end up with in that situation is if you do this work over 10 years, you have two things.

[00:08:09] First, you have a wide range of color and product type that facilities has to manage. And the second thing is you have to pick which schools get done first. And that can be very challenging for a lot of reasons. And so approaching this as a holistic, single-phase project, it brings all of the benefits immediately.

[00:08:32] And based on our calculations and the work we've done with clay bowls at the county, We've looked at the numbers, and we feel like this has somewhere between a five- and a seven-year return on cost because the energy savings is so dramatic. And that assumes that rates don't change anymore.

[00:08:48] That's at today's rates. So there are a lot of reasons to consider a project like this, so we'd like to encourage the board to continue to think that direction. All right. We'll talk about solar PV for just a moment.

[00:09:05] This is something that facilities continues to employ. I think we have seven sites now that have active solar arrays that are being provided through our power purchase agreement partner, whereby they bring all of the equipment and put it on our roof and then sell us the electricity at a cheaper rate than we could get it from Dominion.

[00:09:27] Obviously, it's a good scenario. We thoroughly encourage that. Something that I do want to mention is that we've had some discussions on the committee about the possibility of the district owning that equipment directly. Apples to apples for the first 10 or so years, if you were to, say, borrow the money to buy that array, you get roughly the same amount of return as you would from a power purchase agreement where you're buying the energy from someone else.

[00:09:55] But after that loan is repaid, those savings go up dramatically. And that's what you can see represented in the orange portion of the graph that we're sharing with you. The savings increases dramatically because there's no loan payment and you're not paying the PPA provider for their portion of the risk.

[00:10:12] We're owning the entirety of it, which means we get all the benefit. Something that sometimes comes up when we mention that is folks will say, hey, this is a really complicated technology. We don't own solar arrays. We wouldn't know what to do with it. The reality is that they are very, very simple.

[00:10:30] Once they are designed and installed, mostly all that has to be done is a little bit of annual cleaning, and it performs reliably. The chart that I'm showing shows 25 years. Most of the equipment lasts between 30 and 35 years. So these are long-term assets that would provide a long-term value to our district.

[00:10:54] I'd like to talk about buses for just a few minutes. This one is new. We previewed it a little bit last year, but we want to kind of lean into it a little bit more this year. You know, we've got almost 700 buses in our district. The target age is well above our goal.

[00:11:10] The buses over 16 years old make up more than half, sorry, more than 25% of our fleet. So one in every four buses is over 16 years old. The biggest concern about that is reliability. 25% of our buses are in the questionable reliability range.

[00:11:27] Most of those also don't have any cooling in them. So in the really warm months, they're incredibly uncomfortable for our students and for the bus drivers. If we were to bring the entire fleet age down to our target age, we're going to reduce our fuel spend because we're improving the bus fuel economy by 25% for each of those buses.

[00:11:53] That's going to bring us somewhere close to the \$1 million range per year in fuel cost savings, not to mention the environmental impact, all of those buses that are 16 plus years old are not able to meet even the 2009 emission standards. So pretty, pretty far behind. Another new component that we're going to

address this year is the concept of geothermal cooling. This is not a new technology, but it has definitely taken off in the last couple of years with some technology

[00:12:27] advancements. The basic idea is that if you think of your cooling at your house, the unit that sits outside takes the heat from inside and throws it away to the air. If you take that and you put it in the ground, you reduce your energy usage by up to half because the ground can absorb that heat so much better. That's basically the concept. You take that, you multiply it, and you put it on a really big scale, and you put it at a high school, and all of a sudden you can reduce the cooling and heating costs for that facility by up to 50%. When you consider that cooling and heating itself is about half of the energy usage at a site, you're talking about a significant amount of

[00:13:06] cost savings, not to mention the environmental impact. For a lot of these systems that we've looked at, the cost, the first-time cost is nearly the same when you consider federal credits that are available for this work. In addition to that, the front-time cost for any cooling and heating equipment is usually roughly about 10% to 15% of what you're going to spend a lifetime. That means the vast majority of the costs that you spend on heating and cooling equipment is in the operation phase. It's the electricity and the maintenance for that equipment. If you reduce that by half,

[00:13:43] you have a significant impact on the energy budget for that facility. So we'd like to ask that the board consider and encourage staff to consider geothermal projects for new sites, for sure, And in many cases, they work well in retrofit scenarios also.

[00:14:04] All right. I'm going to turn it over to Jason to share some thoughts on environmental education. Hi, guys. As Justin mentioned, I'm Jason Woodby. I'm the representative from the Bermuda District on the committee.

[00:14:19] And mainly what I want to talk about today is our proposal to change the environmental science curriculum. This is really based around trying to increase the amount of outdoor educational opportunities and, you know, kind of service projects, service-oriented opportunities that students might have.

[00:14:39] The current curriculum for environmental science includes a service project or a citizen science project, and it's listed as if time allows. Our main proposal is to kind of drop that if time allows part and make this a required part of the curriculum that students would take part in throughout the school year.

[00:15:01] And we've come up with several different projects that classes could choose to take on. That might include starting a vegetable garden or a composting program or a wildlife garden, like a pollinator garden. And we would like this kind of put into the curriculum for a couple of different reasons.

[00:15:22] When people have tried these types of projects in the past, it's usually because one staff member or a small group of staff members or really excited about it, and they'll typically get the program off the ground, and then a few years later, they'll either become frustrated by the process, lack of support, or they'll maybe switch jobs, they'll move to another school, and then those programs often kind of die when that person leaves. So by putting it into the curriculum, it's going to build some longevity and have a person assigned and a class assigned to continuation of that project year after year.

[00:15:59] If somebody has the ability to, if you guys could click on that picture, it's actually a video. If not, just check it out on your own time. But this was a video that a student of mine took with a digital

microscope in an ecology class a couple years back.

[00:16:15] And at the time, we were really learning about predator-prey relationships and ecosystem dynamics. And I originally, when we were in the garden, saw these oleander aphids, that's that kind of yellow bug up there, on some of our plants and thought it would be, you know, a good opportunity to bring that in, have some kind of real life experience looking at some of these things. While we were doing that, one of my students actually saw the kind of brown aphid there. And what we had discovered after watching that for a couple of days is that aphid had actually been infected by a parasitic wasp. The wasp hatched out inside the aphid and then began to eat its way out. And what you're

[00:16:54] seeing in the picture is the wasp head emerging from the aphid. From that point on throughout the year, anytime we talked about parasitism or predator-prey relationships, we always came back to this one example. And it provided a real sense of reality for the kids. It gave them something real life that they could kind of engage with and think back to. So we really think that by improving student access to things like pollinator gardens or composting programs, it's going to give the students some real life examples and some things that they can remember. This ties back to the curriculum. The environmental science curriculum is directly, you know, written to

[00:17:34] include these things. This also is involved in the biology curriculum. Some of the earth science standards could be supported by this as well. So we really would like to see more, you know, vegetable gardens, more outdoor education, and we really feel like this is a good opportunity to make that happen. This also is something that would cost pretty much zero money to make happen.

[00:17:57] You know, it's just writing a curriculum change. In the appendix of this presentation, you guys will find kind of a write-up that we put together. Included in there are some resources that people could reach out to for help. There are some, you know, direct kind of explanations of how this would tie into a curriculum.

[00:18:21] And our hope is that enough schools will start doing this to where we can kind of build a community where those different classes can help each other out. So, for instance, the past several years, I've been really trying to create a pollinator garden at my school. And in doing so, I've actually been able to gather up lots of wildflower seeds of native plants.

[00:18:39] If other schools were interested, I would be happy to ship those seeds over to those schools or help them out. We've also touched base with the master gardeners and master naturalists. They both said they would enjoy coming out to schools, help plan or help in whatever way they could. And honestly, I got most of the wildflower seeds I started with from the master naturalists.

[00:18:59] So our proposal is to tie that into the curriculum, provide some longevity. We're also suggesting that we get the environmental champions stipend back to where people who choose to take this on will get an additional thousand dollars a year to help out.

[00:19:19] This is mainly because these types of projects often require that staff that's taking it on to be able to stay after hours to come in over the summer and do work. So we feel like this would be a fair way to help encourage people to do that and, you know, make this a little bit more of a sustainable idea for people.

[00:19:40] Included in this would be, you know, like I said, composting, recycling programs. We want to try to encourage reusable items in the cafeteria, so trying to get rid of, like, single-use waste. And we

believe that these things would actually help expand environmental literacy.

[00:19:57] Just getting our students more educated on this topic would make them, you know, environmental stewards for life. So that's really kind of what's behind this proposal. Thank you. So we'll just leave you with key takeaways.

[00:20:13] As Jason mentioned, there's an appendix that has some information on the curriculum program that he discussed. Also in the appendix is some information about the lighting project. It's some kind of interesting numbers. Happy to talk through that with you all. On a personal note, I want to thank all of you for the effort that you're putting in, the value that you're adding to our county.

[00:20:31] I know budget season in particular is rather arduous, so thank you for all the long hours and the hard work, and thank you for supporting environmental stewardship. We'd love to speak with any of you or see any of you at our meetings if you'd like to join us to learn more. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Walker, and thank you, Mr. Woodby, for your presentation.

[00:20:52] I don't know if any board members have any thoughts or comments. Thank you. Yes, I know. Drop the mic and walk away. Y'all don't know. I will stay up here all day.

[00:21:09] Any discussion from the board? Dr. Heffron. Sorry, I just gave you a promotion. I gave you a promotion, Ms. Heffron. Hi, Justin. Thanks so much for the presentation. Thanks for the work that you do. The entire committee, we appreciate you.

[00:21:27] I'll just reflect your gratitude back to you. We appreciate the work that you put into this. I do have a question about the LED replacement. Can you just go over again why your recommendation is all at once?

[00:21:44] that it's not as neat. Like when one light bulb burns out, we put another light LED in. Yeah, there are two primary reasons. I'll focus on the technical one first. Every hour that a light is on costs us a certain amount of energy dollars. And if we can reduce that cost by more than 50%, which is what the new technology would give us, we get those savings as soon as we start that project if I wait five years to do that I've given up five years of savings when you when you

[00:22:17] look at the when you look at the math over time you get a lot more benefit by doing it doing as much as you can as early as you can understand the limitations with doing an across-the-board project from a financial standpoint but with a return as low as this project would have we feel like it's that that's the right move from a technical standpoint um from a i don't know i don't uh let's call it uh optics an optics standpoint if i don't do all of them at once

[00:22:52] then i have to pick which ones i'm going to do first which means inevitably someone from one of your districts will have a building that is last and you have to answer for why is that and that can be challenging um i i failed to mention this so just my background i've been in the high performance building space for a little over 25 years. I've worked with K-12, higher ed, municipalities pretty much across the nation doing projects similar to this. And that's one of the things that ends up being a really big deal. When I'm talking to a facilities or an ops director

[00:23:29] about a project and they want to do part of it and they go to the board for a work session and say, we're going to do these buildings, somebody says, wait a minute, why are you not, we've got these other buildings and it becomes a big part of the discussion so those are the two main components a third

one is it's it's it doesn't have nearly as much value as the other two but it does need to be taken into account that if you do these projects a little bit over time and I think John Thuma and on the facilities team would probably tell you this product selection type changes over

[00:24:05] the years you you can't because the way the industry works it's hard to go back can get the same lamp every time, every year. Every January, I'm going to buy a thousand lamps and put them in this year and eventually I'll have them all done. Well, it's a different thousand lamps and those differences can be minor and unnoticeable or they can be major and very noticeable. What you might end up with is schools that look different from each other, but even worse, you might end up with portions of a school that looks different from each other. You might end up with product that now he's having to manage five or six different types of lamp for the exact same fixture, which can become very challenging. Which one do I have on the truck? Did I buy the right

[00:24:45] kind? Are they out of stock on that one? Instead of, I have three lamp types for the entire district and everybody's got them on their trucks all the time. So those are the three main reasons. Thank you so much for explaining that. Happy to. Mr. Bronto? Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. A couple questions in regards to the LED lighting as well. Is your recommendation, Obviously the schools, but does that also include the stadiums, fields, dugouts, everything that we have lights in?

[00:25:16] Does that \$5 million cover all of that, or is that \$5 million strictly the school buildings themselves? If I recall correctly, and I'll beg your pardon, I haven't looked at it recently enough to know for sure. I think it included every interior space, so it would include gyms, but I do not believe that included parking lots and stadiums.

[00:25:35] But I will get back to you. I'll check and see you and get back to you on that. I appreciate that. Certainly. And then moving on to the panel, the solar panel conversation, and you had mentioned about annual cleaning. Obviously, let's just say they're purchased.

[00:25:53] What is the cost for that? For annual cleaning? Yes. That we would be responsible for doing, right? So someone would have to be trained and have knowledge on how to do that. Are you aware of a cost associated with that? Most of the time when I'm proposing a project to one of my customers, we have, it's usually maybe a \$3,000 annual fee that would cover a lot of things beyond just the cleaning.

[00:26:20] If the district owned and operated the arrays themselves, it's minor things like updating software, which is a few button clicks. And the cleaning, frankly, for our region, probably doesn't even need to be done annually. RAIN cleans these very effectively.

[00:26:36] This is a matter of, and mostly, so think of flat roof with walkway by code, and you would go up there and spray them and wipe them, and that's it. And it's a, you know, you're talking an hour of someone's time per rooftop. So it's very minor if it needs to be done.

[00:26:54] In our region, probably not the dustier, you know, move toward the southwest with a lot of dust, things like that. It's a bigger concern. Appreciate that. And then with the waste reduction presentation that we saw, is the recommendation all grade levels or secondary?

[00:27:10] I'm going to let Jason answer that one. So for the change to the curriculum, that would obviously just be the high school level. We would honestly like to, you know, expand this to all schools. We made a decision to go through the curriculum route just because the environmental science curriculum so closely matches so many of these projects.

[00:27:33] So, yeah, right now it's just focused on high school, but in the future we would like to find ways to kind of work that into middle and elementary schools as well. So then the stipend for that would be for each high school to have a representative teacher, whomever, that's going to take that on.

[00:27:50] Yes, sir. Okay. Thank you. Appreciate that. Thank you. I did have one quick follow-up note about the stadium lighting. The cost benefit and the environmental benefit is highest when the lamp is used the most.

[00:28:06] Classroom lamps usually are running between 10 and 12 hours a day. Stadium lamps don't run that much most of the time. So it's worth considering. Sometimes those projects don't have as good of a financial return as the interior spaces do simply because they don't get used as much.

[00:28:23] So that's something that we would look into. Right, and I appreciate that. And that's why my question was mainly around stadiums, thinking year-round, right, football. Then we move on to soccer. We have lacrosse. Several sports throughout the season will utilize the stadium, so that's why I was asking would the \$5 million cover that because I would imagine then if it did, that would be a benefit as well because that would be used more frequently than an occasional home football game.

[00:28:54] Right, right. And when you start to look at the math on it, you know, they're running, say, call it 6 to 10 p.m., you know, four days a week or so, you know, four hours times. it's fewer run hours, but it also ends up being year-round, like you're saying, instead of just during the school year. And definitely very highly visible to our constituents. Thank you.

[00:29:21] Well, thank you very much, Justin and Jason, for this presentation and to the entire ESAC committee. Very thoughtful, very well thought out presentation and all the information that you bring to us.

[00:29:36] So thank you so much. Thank you. I appreciate the time. Next, we have an update on Head Start from Dr. Fogelson and Ms. Taylor. Good afternoon, Mrs. Coker, Mrs. Hudgens, school board member, Dr. Murray.

[00:30:03] Mrs. Taylor and I are here today to review the IRC and related Head Start standards as required by federal regulations, as well as provide some pre-K updates. Ms. Taylor? Hello. How are you all doing today? All right.

[00:30:18] so um some of this information is some review for you um but as required we have to preview every single school year um and i realized last year i hadn't really given you an overall um understanding of what pre-k is here in chesterfield um so i have a little bit of that information for you as well all right so just kind of an overview we do serve 736 students throughout the county that's within 41 classrooms in 16 schools as you know we have three different

[00:30:52] programs we have head start which currently serves 196 students vpi which serves 432 and then title one pre-k which serves 108. there isn't really a lot of difference as far as i'm concerned with the program i have the same standard for all of them making sure that it is equitable across the board as far as teacher responsibility and what students are given throughout the throughout the school year we do have seven inclusion classrooms which I am very proud of and we have opened four new ones are actually

[00:31:29] five new ones this upcoming school year or for this school year and we're hoping to open up more at this upcoming school year so if you'll notice on the PowerPoint the schools that are bolded are

actually the ones that we do currently have inclusion classrooms in and we are looking at hopefully Crestwood Davis Ettrick and CECLA as possibly having more or new new centers CECLA just in case you didn't know also feeds 12 of the elementary schools within that area all right getting to ERC so ERC means

[00:32:08] eligibility recruitment selection enrollment and attendance this is what we use for our coordinated enrollment approach when we are accepting pre-k applications and those opened yesterday with this this is a head start standard but like i said because we are coordinated enrollment we all follow the same guidelines all right for eligibility we do currently have an age requirement students must be four years old by september 30th in order to enter into pre-k we also have income requirements

[00:32:45] for head start families income must be equal or below the federal poverty level of at least 100 percent we do have some allowance there of an additional 35 percent of students whose incomes fall believe below 130 percent i did actually do some calculations and this school year we have about 36 students that are meeting that overage. We also have things that automatically qualify students. That criteria includes homelessness, foster care, and or if they receive TANF, SSI,

[00:33:21] or SNAP. For VPI or Virginia Preschool Initiative, those families' incomes must be 200% or below the poverty level or meet some sort of other eligibility criteria, which I'll get to in a second. And then for Title I, there is no income requirement, but there must be some sort of need identified. And again, that goes kind of back to that local criteria that I'll talk about in a little while. All right. For eligibility determination, when we are determining if a student is eligible for the pre-K program, we have kind of an application process that we go

[00:33:58] through. So currently, we opened applications yesterday. They can apply online. If they do not have the availability to apply online they can either call our welcome center and we will complete the application with them over the phone or they can come into our office and that way we can scan in the required documents for them. Right now we are asking for birth certificates and proof of income and then this year in order to make registration easier for both families and for the registrars we are asking for residency information too just to kind of do a first

[00:34:33] check to make sure that they are in that school zone each family has a we have a file that keeps all of the documentation in there including what we do with the interview with the family the family then signs off on the application making sure that everything that they have represented to us and given the information they've given us is accurate and we use a system called child plus that's our family data collection system and that helps us with our eligibility determination. Another criteria for eligibility is also that we are required with Head Start and

[00:35:11] VPI to have 10% of our students with disabilities in those classrooms, which we have gone above that 10% for the last two years. All right, getting to that eligibility criteria that I previously talked about. So we do have, like I said, there are those categorically eligible children. So that's foster care, homelessness, or if they receive some sort of public assistance. We also ask the age of the mother at the child's birth, primary language of the student. We ask about parental status,

[00:35:48] so whether that's a foster parent, whether it's just a guardian, or whether it's a one or two parent household. We also ask the educational level of the family. We ask kind of when it comes to that trauma question, we actually have broken it out this year. So I have whether they've experienced physical or sexual abuse, whether the child has ever experienced neglect, whether a parent has been incarcerated

in the child's life, has the child ever witnessed or experienced domestic violence? Have you as the parent ever witnessed or experienced domestic violence?

[00:36:28] Has the child ever witnessed any community violence? Is there any diagnosed physical or mental illness in the household, and then living situations. So that's, again, where we review whether it's homelessness, whether they're living with somebody involuntarily, voluntarily, or whether they're currently owning or renting.

[00:36:45] We also ask about speech, developmental, and behavioral concerns, and also ask if they currently have an active IEP within a county or a city. All right, recruitment.

[00:37:01] This is what we are currently doing and continue to do throughout the school year because we are required to maintain a wait list. So we are currently achieving this through flyers being sent home. I have the print shop printout flyers for all pre-K schools, so all of the schools that feed into CECLA, as well as all of the other schools that have pre-K programs, we'll get enough flyers to send home with pre-K through fifth graders to get the word out.

[00:37:29] We have signs at schools and in neighborhoods. We try to recruit through apartment complexes, whether that's giving them flyers or providing them with the sign to put out. We also go on to the Spanish radio and advertise through there. And then this year, I'm happy to say we were able to partner with the Chesterfield County side, and they've provided us with a little bit of advertising as well. Like I said, we have to maintain that viable wait list if the number of applicants is greater than the enrollment

[00:38:01] opportunities within the program. Selection. So this is where we start to choose which students will be entered into the program based on their eligibility. Normally this is done in June, but we are backing it up a little bit just because we're realizing with schools starting earlier in August that we want to get that information out to parents in order to provide them with enough time to register and come for the required screenings. So again, we look at the selection based on with the families with the greatest need, and that's based on that income information as well as that local criteria eligibility.

[00:38:41] It is a requirement that we fill Head Start slots first, and then we attempt to fill VPI slots next. But if students do not meet that criteria and there's a Title I classroom at that school, there's a possibility that that student might go into that Title I pre-K classroom.

[00:39:00] All right, enrollment. Enrollment opportunities are vacancies that exist at the beginning of the enrollment year or during the year as families move. We have a lot of families that either decide not to go into the program or have moved. And so, again, we use that wait list, that active wait list, to ensure that we are maintaining that full enrollment.

[00:39:22] All right. Attendance. We do track attendance. My family engagement specialists track that this each month. We do ask that teachers reach out to our family engagement specialists if a child has not been at the school to ensure the safety of the child and to also see if the family is in need of any of our community resources or anything that we can provide them. Like I said, we do track this basically monthly, overall monthly, but if the teacher or instructional assistant is concerned and they reach out to us, we will reach out to the family. We do try to

[00:39:58] offer as much support as we can by ensuring that the family is able to get to school. We offer resources such as morning routines, you know, just things to help them try to make that successful

attempt of getting their child to school, because as we know, we want to start them off early with that attendance. We do not withdraw, suspend, or expel students based on many of the requirements for Head Start and BPI. If a parent voluntarily withdraws his or her child from the program,

[00:40:36] Every effort and attempt is made to determine the cause, and then we, like I said, we do not voluntarily remove, terminate, suspend, or expel children. All right. Getting into the Head Start standards, again, this is just providing the services to the children and basically outlines all of the requirements of the program.

[00:40:57] The standards include ERSI, Program Structure, Education and Child Development Program Services, Health program services, family and community engagement programs, and additional services for students with disabilities. And then the last one is actually a transition to kindergarten, which is a requirement.

[00:41:18] And then a little bit just more about the pre-K program, we do have a few curriculums that we use. Our main curriculum is the creative curriculum that has different studies that the teachers will use for four to five weeks, depending on the student's interests. That can range from trees to buildings to pets.

[00:41:37] And they seem to really like it. They do a discovery. They really incorporate that hands-on learning. PAAS is our social-emotional curriculum. It's promoting alternative thinking strategies. This is used by having an already made book that tells the story alongside puppets.

[00:41:58] And so, again, it's working on those self-regulation skills, those social-emotional skills that, at this young age, are really starting to develop. For our supplemental curriculums, we do have Hegarty, which is one of our language and literacy curriculums.

[00:42:14] And then we have Zophonics, which is a letter recognition curriculum. I used this in a previous county, and the data that we've seen since I brought it in a couple years ago has shown that with our VALS assessment, that the scores have significantly improved based on that curriculum. And then finally, the assessments that we use. The VALS is the Virginia Language and Literacy Screener. This is what replaced pre-K PALS a few years ago. And then we have the VKRP, which is broken down into two different assessments. One is the EMAS, which is the Early

[00:42:49] mathematics assessment system and then there's this cbrp which is the child behavior rating scale and again one is kind of self-report from the teacher for the social emotional piece and then one is direct testing and then three years ago I introduced a report card again I'm starting to want to align more with K through 12 so a report card goes home twice a year and that's looking at a variety of assessments and or anecdotal notes that the teacher has taken. And then finally,

[00:43:25] this is an assessment that is completed, an assessment slash observation that's completed on teachers. This occurs twice a year locally. And then the video, we will send out an external observer to do this observation as well. So the class observation, the one that I'm showing up here is the pre-K version. It looks at emotional support, classroom or group organization and instructional support and as you can see it's broken down into different indicators the way that the observations occur is someone will go in observe for 20 minutes just note-taking they will

[00:44:05] score for 10 minutes and this happens for four cycles so it's basically a two-hour period and then what will happen is the coach will go in and talk with the teacher about their scores and talk about

what they will continue to work on throughout the year. And one has already happened in the fall, and another one we are starting on the 17th of February.

[00:44:25] And those scores actually get sent into the VDOE, and now all of the schools have their own profile, which lists the scores for this. As we're preparing for the 25-26 school year, we wanted to share that we will be seeking approval to move away from our Head Start funding and shift any future enrollments under VPI, which would increase our VPI program by at least 196 seats.

[00:45:01] And a few points that are important to note, this is a discussion we've been having for well over a year. We will continue to serve our students with the greatest needs with the same criteria that was shared today by Mrs. Taylor.

[00:45:18] There will be no changes to our current students. They will matriculate to kindergarten, and we will maintain all current staffing. So our goal will be to enroll the same number of students into our programs, just through VPI and Title I.

[00:45:34] We believe this will allow us much more flexibility in our eligibility process, enable us to serve more students who meet that criteria, as well as have us operate more effectively overall with our pre-K staff.

[00:45:54] Any questions for Mrs. Taylor or me? Thank you both for the presentation. Board members, is there any discussion? So many. We'll start this way. Ms. Heffron. Can you go back?

[00:46:10] The start of the presentation, the slide that started with the Head Start eligibility, discussing the – that's it. So when we're filling seats, we start with Head Start, correct?

[00:46:26] We do. So that is part of the reason that VPI was created was because of the overage for Head Start, and so that is why it's a requirement. With Head Start, every single month I have to go in and tell them what our enrollment numbers are and justify why we haven't reached that amount.

[00:46:46] And so that's why we have to fill Head Start first, plus those are the students that have that 100% or lower poverty level, so we want to make sure that we're filling those with the greatest need first. And how are we going to continue to do that without the Head Start program? So, VPI can be 200 or under, and so those students would still be filled under VPI.

[00:47:07] How are we prioritizing students whose household income is below 100% or below 130? We still calculate income, so nothing with our application process would change. With VPI, we still have to calculate income, and we still have to have that local criteria.

[00:47:25] And so what we would do is, again, as we're pulling people onto our tracker, we can see the poverty level. And again, you know, those students would be placed first as far as the 100% are below. So they would be prioritized still.

[00:47:40] Yeah. Okay. Not just. And then my other question was the eligibility criteria, the list of other eligibility criteria. So are those questions asked even if the student is categorically eligible? So we still do ask those questions.

[00:47:56] We find the interviews to be very, very helpful for us to kind of get to know the families, especially when we're going to continuously be working with them throughout the year. And actually, this list comes mainly from VPI because VPI has, like, we are required through Head Start to have an interview, but VPI actually looks more at that local criteria.

[00:48:19] And so this will still be maintained, and this will still be relevant for that process. Are there any referrals made for any wraparound supports or services based on the responses to these questions?

[00:48:38] Is that a matter of practice? Yes. So actually, last year in the application, when it's continuing this year, it's called agency-specific questions that you can ask. And so I ask other questions besides what is on this eligibility criteria piece.

[00:48:54] That includes whether the child speaks in four to six word sentences, whether they, you know, have make-leave skills, whether they are easily, you know, easily share with others. It's probably about 10 to 15 questions that go on that, and actually the teachers will get that information, too, to kind of see where the students are starting out.

[00:49:13] And then, like I said, we do complete that eligibility criteria checklist with the interview. If parents do have concerns, we do try to refer them to the schools, and then when I, four years ago when I started in this position, I actually, students started coming in for their screenings, so they'll get a vision and hearing screening and a developmental screening that will be done when they first, before they even enter the classroom, so again, if we have concerns, we can address it at that time.

[00:49:43] Great. No, I think that's it. Thank you. Mr. Bronte. Thank you. So I want to go back to the grading, the scoring system that BDOE, if I understand that correctly, comes in and observes and what have you.

[00:50:08] So where are we with that as far as our success overall? Are you talking about class? Yes. Okay. Yes, with class, we are actually above the state average. I can pull those numbers for you, but we have been above the state average as an average.

[00:50:29] through since my time here but like I said for the first probably for the past six years they have kind of slowly rolled it out as this is you know something that's starting to happen this is what's going to happen and now again it's more public information than it has been previously and just kind of to give you a note too this is actually done in early childhood special education classrooms as well but they use the toddler tool instead of the pre-k tool but it's great to hear that we're above yes the expectation that's always a good thing

[00:51:07] um and and so i i appreciate that um so with the information i guess the feedback that's that's given um how does that go towards planning for what's coming up next if that yeah make sense

[00:51:22] Yeah. So there's a couple of different options. Actually, a few different options. I always look at where we are low and base professional development on some of those areas. Like I said, we do have coaches that are assigned to each of the classrooms. And so the coach can either decide, depending on the scores, whether we want to have kind of an informal coaching or whether it needs to be more of an action plan coaching session.

[00:51:50] with both, you know, they will have items that they will need to do. We have actually one of my coaches just went in and videoed one of her teachers and instructional assistants so they could watch that reflect back and talk about areas in which they could improve. Is that a mentorship that exists in between the coaching feedback? So what I'm asking is if a teacher has concerns or they're not sure of whatever it might be, their resource is that coach?

[00:52:20] Correct. Throughout the year? Mm-hmm. Okay. Yes. Thank you. Hello. Can you go back and reiterate, excuse my voice, can you go back and reiterate which programs are going to get the inclusive classrooms?

[00:52:39] I know you mentioned the bolded ones, but you rattled off four more. I missed it. Yes. It's going to be, there's going to be more at CECLA. There will be one, a new one at Ettrick, at Davis, and at Crestwood.

[00:52:55] Thank you. Then my next question was about the eligibility and age and income. Yes. You had mentioned the federal poverty level. Can you tell me what that dollar amount is? It depends on how many parents are in the household.

[00:53:11] I believe it's a little over \$15,000 for a one-family household. Again, I can pull those numbers for you because it changes every year, and they just came out with it for FY25 a couple weeks ago. Thank you.

[00:53:26] And then under the eligibility criteria, I was curious about some of the questions that VPI is asking, and I don't know if you know, so if you don't, that's fine. I was just curious as to why only the age of the mother and not the father? That is not, I'm not sure why it's only that.

[00:53:47] I know that we do, I will say that we do have a lot more single mothers that apply for our program, not to say we don't have single fathers, but it's usually the age of the parent. Okay. And then there's the one about the education level. Why is that? Because we're seeing that if we have some families that have not completed high school, so the possibility of their economic status might be a little bit different. It just kind of depends. Again, that's another vpi question but that's kind of what they're looking at is how their education

[00:54:25] might affect their employment the program is free to them correct yes and then my next question was on i think mr paranto asked it it was related to the class system yep i wanted to know how we were performing and then right before that the curriculum and the assessment tools that we're using are they are we more aligned to what elementary schools are using so that they're not going into They're like, oh, I've never seen this type of thing before when they get to kindergarten.

[00:54:55] So I am working with the elementary curriculum specialists. We have open court now, and so they do not actually have a program for pre-K. So Zufonics is very similar to that. So we're working together to kind of bridge that gap.

[00:55:12] Hegarty was actually suggested to us three years ago when it was mainly used by Chesterfield before open court came in. So, again, we're kind of using it side by side. Okay, thank you. I just have one question.

[00:55:30] So, on the same slide, the eligibility, I see the bottom one is active IEP. Often students get an IEP once they're in school, and these would be students that would be eligible if they had an IEP. I just wonder how does that work?

[00:55:46] So, we look at, so for early childhood special education, students actually can come into the school system at the age of two with an IEP. and so early childhood special education classrooms are serving those students so hopefully we get them you know kind of moved in like I said because of that requirement for students with disabilities to be in our program that is one reason why we ask that but

again it's also gaining more information we do have a lot of families that will say oh my child's receiving outside OT or speech services not knowing that the school system offers those services for free and so that's when again we'll try to kind of bridge

[00:56:24] that gap with them by introducing them to the school that they're zoned for to start getting that referral process started. And just kind of to note too, VPI three years ago took away the income requirement for students with IEPs. It used to have a threshold of 350 percent and they've taken that away. So any student with an active IEP is automatically eligible for VPI.

[00:56:50] I just have a couple questions. Sorry, were you done, Ms. Hudgens? Okay. So you mentioned a wait list. What does that look like? What is our number? It depends on the school. Okay. And it also depends, like I said, we maintain a wait list, but those could be families that aren't necessarily income eligible. So again, but we keep them on those wait lists in case they move possibly to a Title I school where the income is not an issue. I think right now we have about 300 people, but again, a lot of those families are over income, but we're keeping them on just

[00:57:29] in case. And then on the one slide that talked about age being four before September 30, in CECLA, we have some three-year-olds. Those are all early childhood special ed education students. Checking on all three-year-olds. Okay. All right. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[00:57:53] Next, we have a presentation on the proposed FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan from Mr. Davis. Good afternoon. It's my pleasure, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Murray.

[00:58:12] This is always an exciting time. We have so many needs, limited resources, so let's get moving. We're thriving and growing, and we need to continue to grow our infrastructure and to maintain it.

[00:58:28] So when Mr. Meister spoke to you about the CIP, he mentioned the capital improvements, the school projects. He mentioned major maintenance, and he also mentioned leases. I'm not going to be talking about leases. I'm just going to share that right away. Those other two categories are plenty beefy today.

[00:58:44] So both the county's models and ours predict slower growth than we have experienced in recent years, but about 2% growth over the next five years total, approximately 1,300 to 1,400 students. I'm not going to recite all the projects that were approved in your last budget.

[00:59:03] I think you're familiar with them. It's a healthy list. some of which are nearing or under construction, and we'll talk about all of those, plus the ones that have yet to break ground. But, of course, we want to talk about our needs in a long-term plan, and we've got a policy that regulates how we go about doing this.

[00:59:21] This is just a chart on the enrollment that I already mentioned. I do want to note that it says 261 instructional classrooms and modular units, so that's a daunting backlog, you might say, to overcome. But a year ago, that was 274. So we have been making progress, and we hope to continue to do so.

[00:59:43] Here are, as Mr. Meister showed you, our projects under construction and our future projects. We're going to go through each of these here in time, and we're going to sort of categorize them in some ways. So, again, I won't recite all of these to you, but they're all needed projects that you have discussed and held in your CIP before.

[01:00:06] The money's what's tight, and it's a lot of money. And we have received generous funding from multiple sources to include the bonds that were issued by the county for the two middle school projects, which are nearing completion. The bond referendum was a big decision thanks to our taxpayers in 2022.

[01:00:26] We really wish that it occurred a year earlier. But you see a list of projects that are listed there. And again, Mr. Meister talked about how we're not sure. We're pretty sure, actually, that \$375 million will not get all of these projects done. So we'll, again, chat about the financing of them and some of the cost estimates that have been updated as we move through the presentation.

[01:00:49] So we need other funding, just as we have received from the county in the past. The examples such as project savings, you know, we've had grants that occurred following the pandemic. ARPA was one of those. We use the term gap funding.

[01:01:05] That's basically the county digging deep into their pockets to help us find sources for projects that aren't in the referendum necessarily. And, of course, we're going to continue to monitor the construction market. Mr. Meister talked about inflation. He showed you a national cost index about how costs have increased nationally for construction about 30 percent in the last three to five years.

[01:01:29] Got a little evidence here. What's that mean to Chesterfield? For our elementary projects, in 2017, we averaged about \$237.50 per square foot. Seven years later, we bid two jobs, \$388. That's a 63% increase.

[01:01:46] So in that category, which is very important, we do a lot of projects, we've seen even higher inflation than that national. But we'll note that Henrico County has had to pay an even steeper price for two jobs that are very similar to ours that were bid also in 2024, well north of \$400 per square foot.

[01:02:05] Middle school, we didn't feel quite as much pain in regards to inflation. In comparison to 2018, the Falling Creek job was 20% higher per square foot, and the Deep Creek job was 12% higher. So huge ranges there from 12% to 63%, but it's definitely all going up.

[01:02:24] Well, why? There's a variety of factors. The basic materials. We need materials and labor to get these jobs done and some management expertise. And the critical materials, 55% to 72% to get these jobs built.

[01:02:39] Labor wages, at least 25% amongst almost all of our subcontractors, 11 out of 13. And some of the services that we need have also gone up close to that 30% mark that Mr. Meister described. So here's somewhat of a way you could categorize our jobs.

[01:02:58] New capacity schools to put a brand new school in place and provide capacity to help take care of that overcrowding. We've got a lot of old schools, some of which were covered in the referendum, and we need to replace, and we've got more on tap.

[01:03:13] So we'll talk about not only the ones that have been in your CIP, but perhaps the future of schools that might need replacing. And renovations is always a step that we can take, whether it's for additional capacity, add special programs, or achieve some equity. Rewind a little bit. Here's a big success.

[01:03:32] We opened Falling Creek Middle this past fall. It was our first opening in two years. Mosley opened in August of 22. Again, the referendum, all the economics, we had a little pause, but this was a big victory. It's not quite complete. Once it's no longer used as swing space for Bensley Elementary, we're going to knock it down and put in some playing fields, hopefully in the summer of 26.

[01:03:56] Deep Creek Middle, this is almost a victory. We're very excited. It's coming up. It's the same prototype that you can see as Falling Creek Middle. We've got a description that, again, I won't recite to you, but it's a three-story facility, 254,000 square feet, lots of classrooms and everything that we need for middle school today to achieve the instructional goals that we have for our students and everything else that they need in terms of enrichment, such as student athletes and activities indoors and out.

[01:04:29] And it's new capacity that we really need in the growing area of the county. You went through a difficult process of redistricting. We've made a decision. We chose option two. You chose option two, and so that will bring in students from Tomahawk Creek, Bailey Bridge, and Swift Creek, and we expect to enroll 1,472 students, and it won't be exactly that much, but we're excited to see how many will come.

[01:04:51] This was not a block or a tile in your CIP, but it's an important project that's ongoing right now. It's the renovation of CTC at Hull. As our headquarters staff moves to the new central office building, we're going to be able to add 650 seats for our career and technical education students.

[01:05:10] And right now, we are working with an architect on the programming. We've done some nice conceptual work with Chad Macklin, but we've got a series of stakeholders meeting with our architect this Friday to really start digging into the details and helping us understand what we're going to be doing in the next 18 months to open this facility in a renovated state in August of 2026.

[01:05:33] Swinging back to those three big reasons of why we're having these projects. New capacity. Again, under construction is Deep Creek. We also have the West Area Middle Elementary School, which is under construction. Under design is the high school.

[01:05:51] More on that in a little bit. But you also had two important projects in your CIP, and we'll chat about both of these, the Dale District Elementary, where it says design is funded. Some of that funding is also for the land, and again, we'll chat about that in a little bit, and Old Hundred Area.

[01:06:07] But these, again, are unscheduled because the land is uncertain, the funding is uncertain. And we can say for consideration, again, it hasn't been a tile or a project in your CIP is another early childhood learning center. We just heard about CECLA and all the other pre-K centers that we – or pre-K classrooms that we have, and we may benefit from another center where we consolidate some of those operations, safe classrooms at our elementary schools.

[01:06:36] So we have overcrowded elementary schools. There's a graph on the right. Instead of going left to right, I'm going to go right to left. There's 11 schools. This is our data that's displayed on the county's Stratus web page, showing how overcrowded we are, with the worst overcrowding at the top well over 100 percent, down to around 100 percent.

[01:06:55] And these 11 schools have 135 of those modular classrooms. So at the elementary level, a lot of work to be done. And the projects listed on the left address all but one of these. They won't necessarily alleviate all the overcrowding, and I'm not going to recite them again to you because we're going to go into each of these projects, but each of them will contribute to bringing down that demand that you see on the right side where we've exceeded our capacity.

[01:07:24] We have a new prototype. Again, when Davis opens, it's the first of the three that are already under construction with more to come, hopefully, from the Mosley Architect two-story, It's 1,000 student design capacity. We're really ready to see it.

[01:07:43] And I see Ms. Hudgens smiling. She did get to take a tour of the Davis Elementary project a couple of months ago. So it's turning into reality, a lot of excitement. We hope to see this blossom in not only these six places, but some others as we continue on. So let's go through some of the projects.

[01:08:02] Here's the Davis project. It's going to open in August of 25. It's at the existing location in the rear of the property, and it's going to provide that additional capacity that we need. Twenty-two classrooms were in modular units there, so that 261 is going to come down when we open this one, which we welcome.

[01:08:23] As opposed to doing any type of large-scale redistricting, you're going to get a presentation on special education in a little bit and some of the new programs and budget requests that they're making to you. We expect more students, and some programs have been planned to go into this building when it opens.

[01:08:40] And, again, we've broken ground. We're getting ready to bring the students in August of 25. Bensley's the next of the elementaries. These students are over at the Old Falling Creek Middle Building for now. We've been able to bust them effectively.

[01:08:56] They've got a temporary home that's working, but we need that capacity. We had eight trailers at this site. This is a building that will more than take care of all of their students, And we have an opportunity to perhaps redistrict students from that area that we've shown you that's so overcrowded into this larger building.

[01:09:13] So we're looking forward to opening this school a year from August in 2026. The Western Area Elementary, we broke ground shortly after Bensley, out in the west end of the county. This is right behind the Deep Creek Middle School and that property that we got from the Economic Development Authority.

[01:09:32] That's going to not only include those two schools, but the high school. We expected to take hundreds of students that are currently at Grange Hall, the ones that live right out the, I'll say, out the gate, but the neighborhood, Westerly, Summer Lake, that are in front of this project. But we're also going to bring in students, most likely, from Moseley and Woolridge.

[01:09:50] And as we've been starting to dabble with some lines, and when we bring you the redistricting plan, we might even consider some students that are at Old Hundred, which is another crowded school. So you'll have some options to consider when you do redistricting this coming fall. The Dale District Elementary.

[01:10:08] I'm going to spend a little more time here because I'm pretty passionate about this one. We've got four elementary schools in the east end that were all on that list that I showed you. 62 classrooms and modular units. Falling Creek, Hopkins Road, Beulah, and Henning.

[01:10:24] We do expect the growth to continue. We've been working with the county on finding a site. The county has said they want to fund this, and they are interested in helping, and we do need their funding. We need land. I was just looking at my emails.

[01:10:40] The process really started formally in December of 2023. There was some informal discussions of good sites. We do have a meeting with county staff tomorrow, but here we are 14 months later, and this project is not going to open in August of 27 as we had originally envisioned, but at the earliest, August of 28.

[01:11:02] So we look forward to the dialogue tomorrow. We hope that a solution will be found in terms of land. And again, I mentioned the appropriation. It's not only for design, but for land. So we've got some money in the bank to get this started. We just need a good decision to be reached in negotiations with current landowners so that we can get to work.

[01:11:25] Out in the Old Hundred area, again, this is not a second school on the same campus, but we use that term Old Hundred area, that western area of the county where we're seeing continued high growth. We've got the Old Hundred mega trailer here shown with you. That's a school that opened in 2019, and just like Mosley down the road, already has a mega-trailer.

[01:11:45] And we know that it could help us not only with Old 100, but perhaps Watkins, where we're going to add a mega-trailer this year due to growth continuing there. That's a school which has ridden that roller coaster before. But we've added them also at Clover Hill and Swift Creek. So a little bit of limited site evaluation is underway.

[01:12:05] It's an important project, but we've made a little less progress in regards to finding a site. But there are some ideas and concepts that are out there. But let's move away from the elementaries briefly to the high school. And I want to pause briefly here because there's been even some more developments here in the last week since we had our meetings with you for agenda review.

[01:12:27] But we haven't done this in 20 years almost. A brand new school, a beautiful design from our partners at Stantec who have opened schools that look very similar to this in northern Virginia. Cosby's had two mega trailers, several hundred students over capacity.

[01:12:45] It's going to continue to grow, so we need this project done, and it's going to happen. It's also going to be expensive, but we've made some good progress. Just today, I learned the county has approved our site plan. We've also received wetland permits from the Corps of Engineers, and the county has decided to pay for the wetland credits, if I'm using the right term, Scott.

[01:13:09] Is that, yes, wetland credits. It's a complex process, but we have to pay a little bit of money to consume some wetlands. And this statement about the bids being due on February 6th, we have delayed that five more days.

[01:13:26] So it will be next Tuesday, February 11th, that we will receive the bids. There's been a lot of very healthy dialogue between our staff and the companies that are interested in doing this job. And as they've asked lots of questions, we've issued, I think, four addendums to the original bid package.

[01:13:45] The fifth addendum actually changes this bid date. So you will have two weeks later, hopefully we'll bring that to you for approval. And that will hopefully give our architect time to look at the bid package and ensure that it's a quality builder and that the procurement team will do what they need to do to say we're ready to go into a contract for your approval.

[01:14:11] So we're not changing your approval date, but we are giving them another five days, and we think that this is for the best. So we're going to get underway. Hopefully a notice to proceed in March. Let's cut a ribbon here around spring break and then open that school in 27, and then we'll have another big redistricting project in the fall of 26.

[01:14:34] Okay, we talked about the new capacity schools. Let's talk about the ones that are a little old in the tooth. And we've got some that are already. I've mentioned that are being replaced under construction,

Davis and Bensley. Mentioned the Falling Creek Middle. That was definitely one that was needed to, was outdated.

[01:14:52] And you've got some that are in the CIP that are recognized. You've got a couple of these hundred-year-old schools, Midlothian Middle, Grange Hall Elementary. They were in the referendum, but that funding's a little uncertain due to the inflation. That price tag that we see from the high school projects could be real important as we figure out how much referendum funding remains.

[01:15:09] And then we're going to look forward. You also had included an expansion to Thomasdale High School. We'll chat about that a little bit. And the remainder of the Matoica Elementary, what was called the East Campus, which is an unfunded project that wasn't in the referendum. Others that you might consider would be that Thomasdale West Campus and the next elementary schools.

[01:15:30] So there's more opportunities, and I'm going to show you after we go through these individual projects what might be next, as you think, out 5, 10, 15 years. Again, Midlow Middle, we do have some sites that are being explored by the county. I don't want to go into details.

[01:15:46] It's just somewhat of a confidential subject, right, Ms. Hudgens? But we hope that this is identified and that the funding is identified. Again, it's a very, very old building, and this is the one that we definitely need to replace at the middle school level next.

[01:16:04] Grange Hall Elementary, another 100-year-old. I won't quite call it a dinosaur, would you, sir? It's still thriving. We've got great leadership. We've got great students and families, and we're keeping that thing running. Do we have the occasional facilities activity? Absolutely.

[01:16:22] We've kept it together, but we do need to replace it, and we are looking at some alternative sites. Mr. Peranto's counterpart, Mr. Carroll, has been very involved in looking at some potential sites, and we're going to be meeting again later in February on the next steps there.

[01:16:40] Thomas Dale Main Campus Expansion. Right now, we have the two campuses. We have about 2,500 students spread over the main campus and the very old west campus facility. This campus has some age, too, as I'm going to show you in a little bit.

[01:16:55] There are some land constraints, and it would require also some expansion and reconstruction of bus parking, athletic facilities. And this is one of those inflationary things where we've taken a much harder look. Scott said, hey, Josh, can I make the wing two stories? Yes, Scott, you can. So he's gone into a bit more detail, but this would add about another 40% to 50% of the footprint.

[01:17:18] It would be the largest high school in this area, no doubt, and it already is in terms of its enrollment. To get them all together, I think we'll definitely have some benefits, but it's in the referendum. It'll be up to you folks and your counterparts to determine its priority as funding becomes available.

[01:17:38] And similarly, the Matoica Middle School, my goodness, we wish we had built it all when we opened that wing six years ago because you see the modernized-looking wing in the picture on the left. That's just a portion of what we called the Manchester Middle prototype.

[01:17:56] That school was rebuilt in its entirety at about the same time frame. And this did consolidate the two campuses, took the west campus away. We built the Matoica Elementary there. But it would cost significant dollars, \$70 million, to build out that entire prototype attached to the wing as shown.

[01:18:16] So you see a little site plan there, and again, it's a very worthy project. It's unfunded at this point in time, and it was on your CIP in the last two years. So as we go forward, what else could be considered? Mention the West Campus.

[01:18:32] It's 1943 origin. Carver career, 1948. And I'm not going to recite all of these to you, but you've got three elementaries from 59, a couple from 1962. You see renovation timeframes are shown for all of these, but that's not all of the 60-year-old schools.

[01:18:50] We mentioned Matowica Middle, Meadowbrook High, Thomas Dale High Main Campus. It's at 60 already. And then you've got Falling Creek Elementary, Bellwood Elementary, and oh, by the way, we've got 10 more schools that are at least 50 years of age. So we've still got a daunting task.

[01:19:06] It doesn't mean that all of these need to be replaced in the next five years because they can't, but we've got to start thinking about what comes after your CIP. So I just wanted to share this data. And what we're trying to do internally with our facility staff is to understand the condition because we may have a 50-year-old school that's in far worse condition than a 65-year-old school.

[01:19:29] So there are assessments ongoing. These are some emerging priorities in regards to our difficulty in continuing to maintain these schools. and might be a possible order in which they are either given back to the county or replaced in some way.

[01:19:48] And in terms of renovations, you do have a project that was added last year by Ms. Chatters in terms of equity amongst three high schools that were built at the same time. Elsie Byrd did add an educational wing at the time that these gymnasiums were expanded at both Midlothian and Monacan, and she would like to see the bird gem also be expanded to match the capacity and the features that they have at those two schools too.

[01:20:17] So you added that to your CIP last year, so of course we're going to continue to keep it on there unless the board reaches some other decision. Moving away from buildings to major maintenance. You've seen some of this. We've talked about it before, so I won't try to belabor it.

[01:20:35] Again, they generate from the condition of the buildings, what needs to be replaced, what do we learn from our PM work? What do we learn from the facility condition assessments? And what are our new initiatives, such as safety and security, when we added cameras, when we added vestibules? And so we have those initiatives that also fall into this category. This is the bar graph that shows how much we've been spending over the years. Fortunately, we have been funded through a variety of sources, primarily a bond from the county, an FY20 that gave us a \$57 million infusion, multiple sources

[01:21:12] as we came out of the pandemic through various grants that have enabled us to be spending at these bars that you see hovering between 25 and 30 million for five years. So we've made some progress, and we've got to keep going. You know, when we go through severe weather episodes like we have the last four weeks, we see where things still haven't gotten done. In regards to that balance that we've had, you can see over time our actual spend is showed in that bright red line in the middle through FY25, where we just penned it at 30.

[01:21:47] We think that's what we're going to spend. And if we were to continue at 30, based on if no other funding occurs except the annual transfer, which is shown in green at the bottom, we would get through FY26 and then run out of money before FY27 is halfway done.

[01:22:03] So it's something we really need to pay attention to. And frankly, we need to do even more at a higher pace. When we look at the current replacement value, that's kind of an important metric for how much maintenance should be done. The industry standard is 2.5%.

[01:22:20] The county makes it clear in their financial plans that they spend that much on the county buildings. We're not even at 1.5, and we're showing you here, if we were funded at 1.5, which is about \$45 million a year, how our balance line that you showed would change.

[01:22:38] So, of course, we would be in a much healthier condition, but this is just an illustration to show you what it would be if we were to somehow achieve that amount of funding in the next two fiscal years. We don't think that's likely, but it's a good illustration to show you. So, to summarize, major maintenance, we're okay, probably through next year.

[01:23:00] We're still not getting everything done that we should be doing, especially based on CRV, and hopefully new funding will be found to take us forward into FY27 and beyond. And your current funding transfer from operations each year is \$9 million.

[01:23:17] And I think that did increase by \$500,000 last year. But we're going to need some much larger infusions to meet the needs of our schools in the future. So try to rattle through that. Be happy to entertain any dialogue and questions. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

[01:23:35] Board members, any questions? Go with you, Ms. Hudgens. Yay. Thank you, Mr. Davis. That is a lot of information. It's very well put together. I appreciate it. So I have a question, basically the last slide, about the percentages.

[01:23:56] You talked about the varying ages of our facilities. What would the, I guess, long-term lives of schools be if we were at 1.5 or 2.5% in that major maintenance?

[01:24:17] How much more life would we get? I know this is like a shot in the dark, but I guess literally what you just said, you know, that 2.5% versus an entire school building knocking it down because we're not taking care of it.

[01:24:36] So do you have any idea how, if we actually maintain them the way the industry suggests, how much more life we would get out of them? I'm going to take a shot in the dark and say we could afford to have more 80- to 100-year-old buildings.

[01:24:54] But they're running out of gas before then. The ones that are as old as we described, they've made it. We've patched them together. We've spent some money. 50 to 60 should be the minimum life of a building.

[01:25:11] But if we can invest in major maintenance and those system replacements in a wise way, you could have significantly longer life. And that's just me taking a stab at it. It's a great question because we'd love to keep some of these historic buildings because there's a lot of community love for some of those old buildings.

[01:25:33] But without the maintenance dollars, they really become sorely inadequate after time. Mr. Pronto. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Davis. Quick question.

[01:25:49] So the high school bid has been pushed out to February the 11th. Yes, sir. So will we be presented with that at the March meeting? I'm sorry if I didn't make it clear. We still intend to bring that to you at February 25th, the evening that you're going to adopt the budget.

[01:26:06] We're going to have two additional action items, and that's one of them. Okay. So pushing it out five days, the goal was still to hit that late February presentation. When we told you a week ago that it was coming in at February 6th, our desire at that time was to still come at the 25th.

[01:26:23] So, again, compresses the time of our architect and procurement to certify it and say that it's ready for board approval, but we believe they can get that done. We've seen it in two weeks or less already, multiple projects. Appreciate that. Thank you. This is a big one, so we need to get it right.

[01:26:39] Thank you. Ms. Chatters. Hi, Josh. Two questions. Is it possible to get estimates for some of the e-site recommendations on our new bids? Like, could that be a line item that they put in there?

[01:26:56] And if it's, like, way out of what we can handle at the moment, we can at least – because I would like to know how much it would cost in a new construction to implement some of the ESAT recommendations. So the one in particular that Scott and I have chatted about in the last few weeks is the geothermal HVAC in cooling. I've toured a school in Virginia Beach that's fairly new that had that installed, and it was pretty cool, and it was working.

[01:27:19] It would involve us including that as a concept earlier in the procurement cycle. You know, we don't want to stop this high school project right now. But let's say for the Dale District School, we could ask our architect, explore geothermal as an option for its HVAC system.

[01:27:42] And then that would be a part of one of the early surveys that take place. Right now, we've dug a well at the high school, and we've done some geotechnical surveys, and that's early on. So Scott, correct me again if I'm wrong, but that would be the time when we're doing things like the geotechnical surveys because the geology under the ground is really what shows you whether or not that's possible.

[01:28:06] Okay. Thank you. I was just curious as we continue to build or refurbish to check that out to see the viability of it. And are we going all L.A. do with our new construction, Scott, already? led new cons thank you that was my next question um next was about the thomas dale main campus expansion what what is the optimal size for a high school our numbers don't um our high school

[01:28:45] numbers vary drastically they do and uh again we've got 2,500 students there now we're building a new school that's 3,000 i saw that that's why i'm asking what one of my point is we're building one at 2,400. So that's what we feel should be the capacity of future schools, and that's what the Planning Commission has stated in terms of county guidelines. So yes, we're considering building one bigger, but it's already bigger in terms of its enrollment. And we could chat about another new high school, but again, you've got some community sentiment that they love being

[01:29:24] Knights. We do know that, and those are difficult decisions to make. I don't know whether anybody else has anything to chime in on the size of the school and what's ideal so the reason why I ask is because we have already established that things are getting more expensive if we continue to x thomasdale was on the list of the old schools yes old old facilities right yes the west if we continue if we continue to band-aid the situation because people are um the bermuda district is so

[01:30:01] attached to being a Knight. It's like, are we not spending the money in the right way? Is it even feasible to have a second high school in Bermuda? They are the only district with one high school. Of course it's feasible.

[01:30:20] You can leave that there, John. You don't have to go anywhere. You had talked about redistricting, that we're not going to have to do redistricting for elementary schools, depending on if it's a rebuild of an existing elementary school.

[01:30:40] Is that correct? Not necessarily. I said we decided not to bring you a plan for Davis Elementary, which is the one that's about to open. We would have brought you that plan in November. Instead, we are going to bring in some additional special education programs. But when Bensley opens in 26, there's definite opportunities to add some more territory to their attendance zone to balance the utilization of that building and perhaps one or two of their neighbors.

[01:31:09] And, of course, the Dale District would be a large redistricting exercise because that's a new capacity school. My last question is, you said utilization rate. What is the number, percent-wise, that we're looking for when we do these?

[01:31:27] That question came up before. I said 85%, and I'm going to stick with that. Thank you. Ms. Heffron? Thanks. Thank you. That was a lot. Thank you. the work that you put into it shows um when when you started your um the slide deck you're talking about the increase in materials costs um and then projected across time um and this is probably something that not a lot of people have considered until recently but do you have the capacity or the

[01:32:04] capability to determine the percentage of building materials that are sourced from Canada or Mexico because we would need to consider building an additional construction cost. We could ask. What I've heard here in the public media recently is about all the lumber that comes from Canada, but in regards to the steel and the concrete, the precast panels, I think those are more local in regards to sources, but some of those things might be imported.

[01:32:43] You know, we talked about the solar project. Those came from China. And when tariffs were employed at one point in the recent future, that project slowed down for a while until those tariffs were lifted. So that's certainly one of the things that worries me, as we all think about our personal and our public finances, is the reinvigoration of inflation.

[01:33:07] We noted here the materials inflation has moderated. And I think that's been true in regards to inflation in general. After the one really bad year, it has come down significantly. We haven't gotten to that 2% level that the Fed's aiming at. And I apologize for digressing too far.

[01:33:24] But we hope it doesn't reignite and we hope it doesn't impact the construction sector. I'm going to just look at Scott one more time to see if I've left out anything important. I'm glad I've got a great team. Like everybody else, I've enjoyed the news this weekend.

[01:33:40] And, yeah, the housing construction, the housing, the impact of the lumber. But I appreciate you pointing out that that is really more residential use than what we use. But something to be mindful of, I guess. I don't really have any questions.

[01:33:59] I just want to kind of, I guess, speak to what my colleague said over here about Bermuda and the Thomasdale expansion and give a little back history, back story. So for the Thomasdale expansion, one of its main purposes was to consolidate, obviously, our campus so we didn't have the two, you know, our ninth graders over on a separate, across a street, if you will, to bring them on to the same footprint as the main campus and the rest of the students.

[01:34:31] Would Bermuda love to have another high school down in our area? Of course. I mean, that is something that has been mentioned in the community for quite some time. um i think part of the issue is right now we're at 2500 if you split that evenly then you have two you know 1200 size high schools and that is a little low for a high school um but again you know love that idea to have another high school um down in the bermuda area would not oppose the conversations around that and then as far as the west campus yes it is one of i think according to

[01:35:11] your list there the top as far as aged facilities so looking at getting students out of the west campus is should be something that's in our our forefront and paying attention to and ma'am as you know the lc bird attendance zone goes quite a ways down and wraps into the bermuda district some too so we could i think it's all worthy of a little study and examinations thank you just wanted to shed that information. Madam Chair. Mr. Peronto. One more question. Looking at this slide on six,

[01:35:51] the middle school projects, is the Falling Creek building and the Deep Creek building mirror each other? Almost. So here's the Deep Creek building. You may recall from the groundbreaking, if you were to look to the far right, that end of the building is where the entrance is at Falling Creek. The entrance to Deep Creek is here on the side, which is a kind of similar to what you see at Manchester Middle, you walk in with the academic wings to your left, the auditorium's directly in front of you, cafeteria and gym to the right. And so that's what you'll have here,

[01:36:28] is we're going to enter from the quote side, it's the north facing towards Westerly Boulevard. So given that this is the better design, frankly, we twisted it and turned it to get it into that tight site at Falling Creek. So this is probably a slightly better design in regards to folks coming into the center of the building as opposed to one end it's a long way from one end to the other if that makes sense it does can you go back to slide six please the 341 square foot number to

[01:37:07] the 317 square foot number was why i was asking the difference between the two schools if they're relatively they mirror each other and we've seen the price of material and everything go up which is a good thing how did we come in lower on on deep creek than we did falling creek what was the what was the difference there and it's the same contractor so um it may have had to have again to do with the site they had a nice for lack of a term virgin open site to work with and uh some of

[01:37:47] the constraints that they were dealing with at falling creek in regards to special equipment uh they had to build a big retaining wall at falling creek and uh and in some of the infrastructure in regards to parking and bus loops was it was a lot trickier there's a demolition that again we haven't even bid out yet so actually the falling creek job is going to get even a bit more expensive

[01:38:09] so that makes sense i appreciate the comparison got something this time scott did we hit a pocket

[01:38:47] with the high school we're about to find out of course i'm sure hoping for something closer to 300 than 400 or above got it got i appreciate it thank you thank you again mr davis appreciate it Next, we have an overview of the FY2026 technology budget from Mr. Longworth.

[01:39:13] Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the Board, Dr. Murray. I appreciate this opportunity to provide an overview of technology budget planning for FY26. Here's a statement of how we support the division.

[01:39:33] We provide a robust and a secure and innovative technology environment that supports not only the operational or the business end of the division, but also the teaching and learning, you know, the goals of teaching and learning, the classroom environment.

[01:39:50] This is how we're organized to support the division. We have three primary departments, departments overseen by directors, and we recently went under a reorganization. But our tech services department, our student information system, state reporting, technology, hardware, replacement cycle.

[01:40:11] A newer department has about two years as information security, cybersecurity, and we have a network services department that's everything, the network, and then the applications that go on the network for students and staff as well. So kind of approaching this work in October and November, we had a lot of internal conversations within the Division of Technology Services about challenges, longer range and shorter range priorities.

[01:40:40] We engaged the broader group of stakeholders as well, so that being other divisions within Chesterfield Schools, our procurement department, our finance office, and some of our vendor partners like our Lenovo contract for Chromebooks and our service providers, just to see what was reasonable to consider in the short term and in the long term as well.

[01:41:03] And then the last part of that work was kind of a tour around our schools and meeting with our principals to be realistic about expectations for technology and technology support and technology planning moving forward this is a look at our budget so currently we have about an eight million dollar budget it's used to provide a wide range of things it's not only like the the intercoms and telephone systems in schools that the things that are just kind of fundamental it's all of our student information system our network the stuff that supports the network and the behind-the-wall stuff, the in-front-of-the-wall stuff, all our classroom

[01:41:42] technologies, the stuff that our students and staff touch, like projection systems and computers, teacher laptops, student Chromebooks, information security, cybersecurity software, and staff laptops as well.

[01:41:59] So out of those conversations and that planning, three kind of high priorities emerged. One of them was around creating a sustainable Chromebook model. We've had a one-to-one program with Chromebooks for some time now, and this is relooking at some changes in how we approach acquiring and managing Chromebooks moving forward.

[01:42:21] A second priority out of this early work was establishing hardware replacement cycles, and lastly, kind of taking a long-range approach at improving our cybersecurity, information security posture. So digging into Chromebooks a little more here.

[01:42:41] When we started this program around providing Chromebooks, and we started in middle school and went to high school and elementary school, we've always typically operated out of a lease model. And with that lease came accidental damage warranties as a part of the whole four-year period. Over time, we've moved to a purchasing model where we own all of these devices now, but with that ownership, they're different ages, they're different models, And at different periods of time, their accidental damage warranty is kind of falling off in stages.

[01:43:17] This has created a lot of challenges for us in being able to plan and budget. So we've kept services and the devices separate as separate purchases. We don't charge students a fee for Chromebooks.

[01:43:33] And currently, sometime after COVID, those intentional damage fees that were collected by the schools got inconsistent. That's something that we're going to need to look at moving forward as well. So moving forward, we want to move from an ownership model to a leasing module.

[01:43:51] That's going to ensure that we have new devices and that all of the devices are covered throughout that four-year period by accidental damage. So over in that left-hand column, you'll see two that I indicated in red there. Those are costs that we can't possibly forecast.

[01:44:09] I say sometimes we're one TikTok challenge away from disaster around Chromebooks. So intentional damage and accidental damage are something that we really want to address in our future approach. Again, we would use a cooperative contract, and that's more around the timing of the need to compete as well.

[01:44:28] No student fee moving forward as well. The cost of that is \$10 million annually over four years. \$8 million of that is the device lease, and \$2 million of that is in services annually. Some of the real numbers around this, to give you a feel for the impact of ownership model versus a lease model, currently we're spending around plus or minus \$110,000 a month on repairs for \$15,000 out-of-warranty devices.

[01:45:02] And remember, I said those fall out of warranty at kind of different stages. So that's what we're spending now, another \$45,000 a month on intentional damage. And those are two gaps that we hope to close up. Now, right about now, an additional \$48,000 of our owned devices are falling out of accidental damage warranty, meaning each time any one of those 48,000 devices breaks, we're responsible for parts, labor, that sort of thing.

[01:45:37] Some hidden costs is attached to those. Because we're in an ownership model, we also have to maintain parts, and the easiest and most efficient way for us to do that now is to purchase additional Chromebooks that we cannibalize for parts.

[01:45:55] That's so that we can quickly turn around and meet our service level agreement of no student going more than a day without a working Chromebook. That's not desirable as well. Worth noting that keeping our device lease separate from our service model allows us to continue to have conversations with our principals and community around things like how we approach Chromebooks.

[01:46:20] Like in K2, for example, do they necessarily go home? Do they always go home in the summer or just for certain circumstances? So keeping those services outside of the lease gives us flexibility to continue to have those dialogues with stakeholders.

[01:46:40] Replacement cycles. So now in terms of this conversation, we're transitioning for things that we have line of sight to the money to things that are kind of dependent on future funding. so ideally um we we want to move currently we we fix things um when with year-end money when we see what's available at the end of the year or when they break and it's an emergency and they have to be fixed um so these things go way back intercom systems last 25 years or so some of our phone systems are 25 years and when they're purchased all at one time but they haven't been on a cycle

[01:47:16] an intentional, strategic, we know they last this long, so we're going to start preparing in advance for those things. There's a lot of examples of things, school and departmental technologies, that are typically on a replacement cycle. They have known end-of-life, they have known costs, and there's benefits in being strategic about slowly rolling those out and replacing them.

[01:47:42] So moving forward, and this wouldn't be in this budget cycle, we hope to make some beginning steps with this, we would take inventory of the age of these things currently. And actually, I have a slide that details that out a little better moving forward.

[01:47:57] So I'll hold that part for a moment. And so a number of benefits of getting on a replacement cycle, the biggest win being budget predictability. So should funding become available to begin taking steps on that road, the highest priority would probably be some of these intercoms that are that are beyond 25 years old excuse me they're they're past end of life and honestly should they break we couldn't even find replacement parts these five just happen to be the oldest the schools that we've identified here but

[01:48:34] there's 25 right behind them that are equally old that are equally in need these are just the oldest some other of that replacement starting posture would be with a staff replacement cycle and with the first year going to the new middle school.

[01:48:56] This is that more detailed look at how we could approach this over time that I talked about. On the far left-hand column there, these are all the school and division technologies that we provide. Some of these things over time we've provided out of our operations arm, and now we provide them out of technology and vice versa.

[01:49:18] A lot of the reason of that is those things have changed. Intercoms have been things you put on the Internet. Phones are things that you put on the Internet now. But these are all the things that we know they have an end of life, variable end of life. We know we're going to need them.

[01:49:33] We know we're going to have to replace them. And in the next column is our known how old those things are in our division. The next column is the anticipated end of life for these things, how many units that we hold in our inventory and dividing our inventory by the replacement cycle gives us kind of how many we hope to replace each year. Unit replacement cost and annual extrapolated cost there. In total, you'll see a number of, looks like it's off the screen there,

[01:50:09] but around \$20 million annually. But worth noting is that top line is Chromebooks. We've already discussed that as a separate \$10 million. So some relevant conversations to have around this topic as time goes on and we continue this planning. I think I indicated it's not just a matter of like moving around within existing operating budgets. That's not going to go very far. But there are some opportunities for operational decisions we can make.

[01:50:42] When we send back Chromebooks in the summer, it's easy from a management standpoint, but they don't come back at higher rates and when they do it's like pet cemetery they're kind of not exactly the same um you know um when we talked about redundancy and things like that um for example as schools uh you know age up and we we we replace systems functionality is added the best example i can provide is um you can go in a classroom in chesterfield right now and there might be three different possibly four different ways to do the same thing which would be

[01:51:19] notify the front office that there's something to be concerned about we have buzzers we have a phone in the wall that you can you can use we have an intercom functionality and moving forward mr. Davis is working on a Raptor emergency alert system so being strategic about that we can look at you know you need one way to notify the front and probably in a safety situation only want one way to notify the front office but there's lots of examples around redundancy there as well looking for new funding

sources being more strategic about how we leverage our e-rate grant funding always considering full cost of ownership like lots of the stuff that's out there that we talk

[01:51:58] about has a lot of hidden cost um the stuff behind the wall the upgrades required to run new equipment things like that resetting and managing expectations around schools and it's not a no silver bullet on this screen it's kind of an all-in strategy these are all things that we have so I appreciate your time. Thank you, and I welcome any questions or dialogue you have.

[01:52:24] Thank you very much, Mr. Longworth. Board members, any discussion, questions? Ms. Chatters? I just want to say I appreciate you showing us the details of the replacement cycle and what we should be on. The each is very well done, and apologizing in advance for my K-2 child and what they've done to their Chromebook. So I understand that you were talking about me in public, and I'm fine with that.

[01:52:52] And I do think we need to come up with a better way for that group, right? Because they're so not ready for that responsibility all the time. But I appreciate you laying it out as detailed as you did. That was very helpful.

[01:53:08] Thank you. I appreciate the Pet Sematary reference. That was a first. That was a first. Also, you just celebrated, is it 30 or 35 years?

[01:53:27] Completed. I'm in my 31st year. You're in your 31st year with Chesterfield County. Well, we greatly appreciate your service to Chesterfield County Public Schools and are happy to have you as our Chief Technology Officer. So thank you for your dedication over the years and quite an undertaking that you now have with budget and understanding, especially with the Chromebooks, and going back and forth between trying to piece things together.

[01:53:54] I greatly appreciate something that you said. I don't know if maybe they are. I don't know if the general public is aware. But within one day of a child turning in a Chromebook, they have a new one to use. And if you think about, you know, in excess of 64,000 kids, that is quite an undertaking that your staff goes through in order to make that happen.

[01:54:18] And so I greatly appreciate the due diligence from your team to ensure that our kids aren't missing a beat when it comes to needing that essential piece of equipment so that they can continue on in their classroom, regardless of what happened to it, right?

[01:54:33] We understand things happen. And the also thing I greatly appreciate was the breakdown in the cost savings from going to essentially a lease versus owning in that with putting pieces of the puzzle together again, right, to make something versus I get to just ship this back.

[01:54:53] They're going to send me another one so that we can use that at a later time and that's at a lower cost to us. So I greatly appreciate the explanation and breakdown into that. I look forward to seeing what that looks like as we continue to move forward under your leadership. So thank you. My pleasure.

[01:55:11] I echo the same sentiment. Thank you for all the detail. And Ms. Chatterjee, you're not the only one he was referring to. So thank you very much. Thank you all for your time. Next, we have an overview on staffing for special education and English learners from Mr. Meister, Ms. Manos, and Ms. Jenkins.

[01:55:35] Thank you, Madam Chair, Vice Chair, Dr. Murray. I'll kick off here and then I'll turn it over to my colleagues here to walk through the meat of this presentation. Really, if you think about what our

budget proposal that we came to you with had, it was about \$14 million in there in terms of student needs that were yet to be funded, but we're anxious for the funding to materialize for that.

[01:56:01] We see some promising notes from the state. But I think after you hear what my partners in crime here are going to say, you will sort of nod your head and say these are definitely needs and we're excited to talk about them. But before I turn it over to them, I wanted to take a step back and talk a little bit about how we staff schools more generally.

[01:56:18] I'll be pretty quick. This could be a two-hour conversation, but I'll do the five-minute version of it here for you guys. And then I'll turn it over to Summer to talk special ed first and then her to Tara. So when you think about staffing in CCPS, there's really three different ways a human being can get into a building, right?

[01:56:38] One, a formula-driven aspect. You have X number of students equals Y number of teachers, et cetera. That's a big piece of our pie. The other way is differentiated funding. This is where we look at what the specific needs of the school are and look to address those through a specific need, whether that's an additional security officer, a reading specialist, other needs, additional teachers to lower class size.

[01:57:03] Those type of things are really looked at through that middle differentiated bucket. And the last bucket, we talk about it as department funding, and generally that looks and feels like folks on my staff or Mr. Smith's staff department positions, but it's also super relevant for this conversation is some of those positions, especially in special ed, are department positions that are ultimately allocated to schools based on needs of the school as well.

[01:57:28] So I wanted to make sure we kept that piece front and center as well. And Summer will talk to you a little bit more about how that shows up with some of the instructional aid discussion. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this side, but I think it's really important for the board and the public to recognize that the standards of quality, we talk about SOQs all the time, are really where our staffing models have to start.

[01:57:50] It's also important to recognize that's not where our staffing models end. Look at the JLARC study, look at what's in our buildings. We are staffed well above the state minimum, and that's what the SOQs are, the absolute minimum of what is required at the state in order to educate our children.

[01:58:05] We're well above that, and I'll show you a slide in a second that talks about that. So if you take a typical elementary school, this one is about 740 students. What this looks like is about 62 FTEs would be what the SOQ would require.

[01:58:24] If you look at our CCPS staffing formula, that goes up to about 79 FTEs. That's about half of those are teachers. Another five or six are additional instructional aides. If you think about what is actually in the SOQs for IAs, it's essentially a couple for special ed.

[01:58:41] Those are important. But for general ed, it's really only if you have a large kindergarten class. Otherwise, it's a big goose egg. So the other piece of this that I think is worth talking about, CSEs, Coordinators of Special Education, not an SOQ position, and for my hypothetical 750 student elementary school, that would allocate a principal and half an AP.

[01:59:06] Could you run an elementary school with that leadership? Probably not. We don't think so either, hence we're north of the SOQ. And then you see for this particular example about five other

positions, reading specialists, et cetera, that we could allocate to the school based on need. to get to a total staffing for the school of about 83 and a half, give or take.

[01:59:25] So if I can get this to work, there you go. I also mentioned, and mostly as a lean-in to Summer's position, there are additional positions at our department level. I noted the IASE here, but also social workers and psychologists are really staffed at the department level, and they're placed in schools as necessary.

[01:59:43] Many of them handle caseload from across the district as they go forward. IAs a little less so. Those are targeted for the IEPs, and Summer will talk a little bit more about that as we go. But just so I don't end on a small set of special ed staffing, it is important to note that the entire suite of special ed staffing is really based on both those handful of department positions as well as formulaic ones that are really driven by the school need and the staffing and caseloads at our various schools.

[02:00:12] You can see the various positions here. Happy to take questions afterwards, but I really wanted to just make sure we didn't leave the high-level special ed conversation without also noting that many of the staffing is really formula-driven as well. So with that as a quick high-level overview, I'll turn it over to my friends and Summer first. Good evening, board chair, vice chair, board members, Dr. Murray.

[02:00:40] Thank you for an opportunity to speak a little bit more in depth with you about specifically the budget items related to special education. These are the items that we'll be reviewing in depth in the next couple slides. This plot shows the count of our students with disabilities and is meant to provide overall context, showing the increase in our special education student population over the past several years. We expect this trend of increased students requiring special education services to continue as it relates to our overall student population. As a school division, we are

[02:01:18] obligated in the Office of Special Education to meet the related services needs as outlined in each student's IEP. Historical data indicates that we have been understaffed in these critical areas for a variety of factors. When we don't have the internal hires to provide these IEP-mandated services, we must hire contractors to provide the services to our students. The following slides will provide additional information on each of these three areas of required services for our students with disabilities. This graph shows the number of allocated speech and language pathologist

[02:01:55] positions, which has remained constant as indicated by the horizontal black line, the number of internally filled speech and language pathologist positions as indicated by the teal bar, and the additional need beyond filled positions as indicated by that pink bar. Since these positions provide services, we're legally obligated to provide students based on their IEPs, we have to fill the teal bar, which we're currently filling with our hired speech and language pathologists, and the pink bar, which go out to contractors.

[02:02:26] Essentially, anything pink is what's driving those budget increases. If there's a pink section between the teal bar and the allocated line, these are positions that are allocated, but we're having to fill with contractors who are more expensive than if we had internal positions. If there's a pink section above the allocated line, these are positions we haven't allocated for in our budget, but we are obligated to provide these necessary speech and language services for students with disabilities, again, in accordance with their IEPs.

[02:02:55] Funds to pay for the pink contracted services have previously come from a combination of unfilled positions and end-of-year reserves. This graph shows the number of allocated nursing positions, similar to our speech and language pathologists, which has again remained constant, the horizontal black line, the number of internally filled nursing positions, which is the teal bar, and the additional need beyond filled positions, which is the pink bar.

[02:03:22] Since again, these positions provide required nursing services to students based on their IEPs, We have to fill the teal bar, which we're currently filling, and we have to fill that pink bar, which is going out to contractors. Essentially, similar to our speech and language pathologist situation, anything in the pink is driving that budget increase.

[02:03:41] If there's a pink section between the teal bar and the allocated line, these positions, again, are allocated but are having to be filled with contractors. The pink section above the allocated line are positions that haven't been budgeted for, but were obligated to meet the needs of the students with IEPs who require their services to access their education.

[02:04:01] This graph shows the number of allocated unique needs, instructional assistants of special education, who are assigned to schools when students require constant adult supervision. This need might be for behavioral support, medical support, or a combination of need.

[02:04:20] These are the positions that Mr. Meister just mentioned are department-level positions and not formula-driven. These positions have remained constant, the horizontal black line, and we have been able to successfully hire and fill these positions. There remains an additional need, however, beyond the allocated and filled positions based on the needs of our students, as we received 323 requests from schools for a unique need position for students in 2024.

[02:04:47] Since these positions provide support to students to access their education throughout the day, we have to fill the teal bar, which we're currently filling, and some of the pink bar, as noted by the dashed line, which is filled by contracted services. The needs remaining in pink above the dotted line are currently being filled through schools utilizing their existing staff to meet the unique needs of their students throughout the day.

[02:05:14] These items show our current established programs that are experiencing growth relative to our overall student growth population. We currently have ADP and IDP classrooms, adaptive arts, and early childhood special education classrooms. These needs are reflective again of the growth in these established programs, and we're required to continue to offer these programs to our students with disabilities as the number of students that require them continue to grow. Both Hairgate and AM Davis, as was previously mentioned, have been slated to open ADP and IDP classrooms based on

[02:05:49] the need of the students in those areas. Adaptive Arts is offered across our secondary schools, and this position would be increasing a 0.5 teacher to a full-time teacher, and this position provides both on-site and curriculum development support. Our early childhood classrooms, again, which were previously mentioned by Ms. Taylor, are slated to be opened at CECLA, Ettrick, AM Davis, and one site to be determined, again, based on the student needs, as students are found eligible for requiring

[02:06:19] those early childhood special education services. That is everything that I wanted to share on behalf of the Department of Special Education as it relates to our student needs and just some more in-depth information for you. I'm happy to take any questions that you might have about any of these areas.

Thank you, Ms. Manus. Board members, any discussion? Is that one clarification point for the nurses? That's one-on-one nurses, correct? That is a student that requires nursing services

[02:06:56] consistently throughout their day because they have intensive medical needs that need to be attended to from start to finish. Yes. Ms. Chatters. So in a perfect world, you would want the VDOE to change how they do their formula, correct?

[02:07:14] In a perfect world, the SOQs are significantly less than what it really takes to meet the unique needs of our students at our schools. If parents wanted to help, they should engage their local officials and their delegates and their senators to say, hey, can we work on?

[02:07:32] I could not imagine a better way for a parent to advocate for schools, all public schools, again, just to get funding that really does match the true need of our students. Thank you. Yeah. Thank you all so much.

[02:07:51] Appreciate your time. Madam Chair, Vice Chair, Board Members, Dr. Mary, Dr. Hall. I'm glad to stand before you tonight on behalf of ESL programs.

[02:08:07] And I'd like to begin with a reminder of our commitment to our students. We are committed to meeting their individual needs, to give them access, meaningful access, to rigorous, relevant curriculum, effective instruction and access to all of our wonderful extracurricular programs, work-based learning and beyond. Our mission is clear, every English learner always and in all ways. And what that captures is that our English learners will have access to high quality education that is not

[02:08:45] a pathway of isolated, solely focusing on language, but instead a pathway that does honor and validate all aspects of their educational experience and beyond. With a brief history and understanding of who our English learner population is, before we analyze numbers, it's important to understand the child behind the numbers. And we have to appreciate their story, which is rich and diverse

[02:09:16] and linguistically different than the rest. So we have 10,669. That was as of a couple of days ago, So that number, I can assure you, is higher today. It also includes our students who have successfully exited ESL services and are in monitored services for four years.

[02:09:40] We have over 100 languages represented in our student population and as well as over 100 countries in our population. Our population is diverse. We understand that, but it's important to note that linguistically, while we have a large population that's represented, let's say, in Spanish, Spanish represents within itself a very wide and vast demographic that must be honored, and that comes with nuances that when we look at instruction, we must meet the needs, the individual needs of every student.

[02:10:12] These numbers are our projections. It also captures where we've been historically. So since 2016, you can see that we have continuously grown over time, with the exception of a very infamous year.

[02:10:30] As we look at the dotted line that represents the projections, and I would like to point out that if you were to analyze 24-25 school year, we have already exceeded that projection. And so while our projections, we really look at everything from geographical changes to what we're noticing as far as newly arriving students, it's also a moving, always growing number that we truly try our best to support schools and look at historical trends.

[02:11:02] These numbers are a little less static and more factual to what our schools experience. Here you see over since 2020, fall and spring student record collection. As you notice, the fall numbers are

definitely lower than the spring numbers.

[02:11:21] And that is because as students arrive into and enroll in Chesterfield County Public Schools, they are required to be identified. If they are an English learner, they are required to be placed within that school year, regardless of their time of enrollment. So our schools need to be prepared to receive every student and be prepared to instructionally support every student, regardless of their time of arrival.

[02:11:47] That brings me to the SOQ. Historically, BDOE has gave us an SOQ of 1 to 50, a ratio of 1 to 50 students for English learner programs.

[02:12:04] Chesterfield County, several years ago, but prior to FY25, we honored our schools, we honored our students. We recognized the need and we introduced a differentiated staffing model, which was for level 1s and 2s, 1 to 25, and for level 3s to 4s, 1 to 40.

[02:12:23] At both times for VDOE and for Chesterfield County Public Schools, it's important to understand there was no staffing model for students who were in their monitor year, which is referred to on the slide as level 5 plus. Why was it differentiated? Because we understand a student who is newly emerging in their language might have different needs and might need a different type of instructional support than a student who is a higher proficiency ready to exit out.

[02:12:50] And so that's what this differentiated staffing allowed us to do with hiring qualified ESL teachers to support our programs. Fast forward to present time, BDOE General Assembly adopted a new SOQ, which they echoed Chesterfield County Public Schools with a differentiated staffing.

[02:13:09] However, theirs is a lot more nuance. They are looking at the unique needs of every level, and for the first time, we introduced a staffing model for monitored students, which is 1 to 100. This did bring implications because we were already using a differentiated staffing model.

[02:13:30] Our division was in a great place to be able to meet and continue to exceed SOQs. However, we went ahead and we looked at the growing trends in our schools, and we started this year with adding additional ESL FTEs to make sure that our schools were supported and also to ensure that we had a little bit of buffering between this, our staffing and the SOQs for our VDOE.

[02:13:56] So finally, as we look at FY26, we do have a slightly, it's slightly lower, a lot lower than what you've heard today. However, it is a need, \$4 million to represent 43 ESL teachers, highly qualified ESL teachers.

[02:14:16] Our schools are continuing to actively engage, recruit, retain quality instructional stakeholders within our buildings. We have done a lot of work with HR through Participate Learning to bring in ESL teachers.

[02:14:34] We also have embedded internal cohorts with partnering with University of Richmond to provide praxis opportunities for teachers who are interested in acquiring their ESL endorsement. And so we're hoping that as we look at all of those efforts, we were proactive and we'll see the fruit of our efforts with teachers who are ready to step into these 43 positions.

[02:15:00] I just want to give you a reminder, while we have an SOQ for the compliance of staffing, it is driven by English learner identification. So it's important to know that is also not just something that's nice to do, but it's a requirement. And that is all I have for you tonight.

[02:15:19] I welcome your questions. Thank you, Ms. Jenkins. Board members, is there any discussion? Ms. Chatters? I just have one in regards to the same thing. Well, two then. What I asked Ms. Manos is about the VDOE's change, right?

[02:15:37] So we're grateful that the ESL department was ahead of the game, so we're not impacted as drastically. But I did have a question about that level five monitoring. So the impact to what we were doing before, which was zero because we weren't monitoring, probably not right now, but that number, what that looks like for us now, If I can, if we can share that information of we went from zero to this because of the new SOQ.

[02:16:02] Absolutely. We are tracking that. And again, that is something that historically we did not, but we do have our own enrollment data information. So we are partnering and working with the BDOE. We're also looking for more guidance as far as when we celebrate a student who has now exited out of our programs.

[02:16:19] What does staffing look like? What is their expectation of us to ensure that we're aligned? not only just staffing but are our programs effective in meeting the mandates and our federal requirements so i will get those numbers thank you and then the last question is this the new the total projected of 320 ftes for esl if at some point we can get the list of where all those teachers are going to be yes we have those records and we can provide that for you thank you yes i I would like to say in Chesterfield County Public Schools, every school, K-12, has an ESL program.

[02:16:56] We do not identify students in pre-K, so you will not see English learners in pre-K as far as identified English learners. We also provide staffing for our CTE and alternative programs. Thank you very much.

[02:17:14] Thank you. Appreciate it. Next, we have announcements, communications, and school board comments. School board members, are there any announcements or comments this evening? Ms. Coker.

[02:17:29] I almost forgot. I wanted to make sure that folks were aware of the budget town hall that's taking place tomorrow evening, 6.30, at Tomahawk Creek Middle School.

[02:17:45] Get your tickets now. They're going quick. Mr. Ferrante? Thank you. Also, to piggyback on the town halls for the budget, it's going to be February 10th in the Matulka District at Manchester High School.

[02:18:02] That's at 6.30 p.m. on the 10th at Manchester. Thank you. Ms. Chatters. Just wanted to iterate that the Spanish-speaking budget town hall will be at 6.30 on Thursday at Manchester High School. So our next school board budget work session will be held next Tuesday, February 11th, 2025 at 3 p.m.

[02:18:38] here in the county public meeting room. It will be followed by a business meeting at 6.30 p.m. Public hearings for the superintendent's proposed budget and capital improvement plan will be held at the start of the business meeting. If there's no further business, we need a motion to adjourn.

[02:18:55] We make a motion to adjourn. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion. Dot Heffron. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens.

[02:19:10] Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. The February 4th, 2025 school board budget work session is adjourned.



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