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Chesterfield County School Board Special Meeting, Thursday, February 27, 2025

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Place Chesterfield County School Board, Virginia
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[00:00:02] 1025 School Board special meeting to order. We will now have an invocation by Mr. Paranto, followed by a flag salute led by Mrs. Chatters. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to lead, to be trusted upon by our constituents, to act on their behalf as we focus on education and empowering our students and our teachers and our staff.

[00:00:35] Father, would you continue to instill in us that way forward as we work together, regardless of opinions, but focusing on our students. Father, thank you for this opportunity to look at a budget, to set forward, to continue to move forward. We ask all these things in your son's name we pray. Amen. Please stand. To the United States of America

[00:01:11] and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and Justice for all. Board members, may I have a motion to approve this afternoon's agenda as drafted?

[00:01:33] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion? Scott Heffron. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Copeland. Aye. The agenda is adopted.

[00:01:49] Next, we have public comment. For this meeting, citizens were given the option of submitting their comments online or in person. Comments submitted via the online form were sent to the board

prior to the start of this afternoon's meeting, posted to BoardDoc site, and will be included in full as an addendum to the meeting minutes.

[00:02:07] In-person comments will be summarized by the board clerk and included in the official meeting minutes. Documents submitted along with in-person comments will, upon request, be distributed to the board but not included as a part of the board's official minutes.

[00:02:24] Madam Clerk, would you please announce this afternoon's in-person speakers? Madam Chair, we have one speaker this evening, and that is Wendy Little. Each speaker will have four minutes to address the board. There's a timer set up on top of the podium that will turn green when you begin speaking, yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining, and red when your time has expired.

[00:02:45] As a reminder, no personal belongings other than a cell phone and speaker notes are allowed at the podium. Please have your materials organized in a manner that as you arrive at the podium, you are prepared to start speaking. Please note that comments equivalent to campaigning for any public office are in violation of school board policy 11-10 and are prohibited. May we have

[00:03:03] Wendy Little. Hello again I'm Wendy Little from the oppressive special education discriminating special education scholar hating constitutional rights blocking first amendment depriving school district of Clover Hill. Earlier this week I mentioned the special education laws rules and

[00:03:42] regulations you must follow and abide with fidelity and while I do not have complete packets for everyone what's known as the purple book is included in some of your folders that's this they're not all purple because um i didn't get them all in purple but uh again i refer to the other books that i showed before um also in some of your packets are today's speech and it includes several violations that you're violating every single day right now all of last year all of this

[00:04:13] year i would not sign a special education idea part b plan just think of that at any rate moving forward uh for my for my input for cip budget is that josh davis has been doing a fantastic absolutely splendid job in every way it was a pleasure and a fine distinction to meet him just prior to joining ccps he defines the actual meaning of leadership for operating budget grants ccps had even advertised in its search for a superintendent that ccps was already hemorrhaging grants and your

[00:04:51] bos has been aware and has no plans no desire or no obligation to bail you out when you lose funds due to continued malfeasance and violations i've included some of your violations it is your obligation as a school board any and all of you to direct your superintendent to fully resolve these issues because you don't want to falsify another special education plan which in reality is your ide a part b funding application yet again you and i had a very brief conversation outside after that i said i wish i hadn't done that you didn't know what you they were asking need to prove. You were hoodwinked into voting for a fraudulent grant funding application signed

[00:05:28] by Dot Heffron. Operating budget, wasteful spending. Merv Doherty, just a few documents in some of your folders, has been defended by up to four attorneys at a time for two plus years. The public deserves to know the cost to their taxpayer dollars. Provide the public their lost taxes in what led up to the civil charges, including multiple superintendents across Virginia. As elected officials, your obligation is to your constituents, voters, taxpayers, and scholars residing in Chesterfield County, not VSBA who rules and restricts you.

[00:06:01] That may render you an NGO. Food for thought. Your 2025 plan states ineffective programs will be eliminated. Just as one proactive example, has anyone audited how many software licenses constituents for which constituents are paying but not in use? My guess, no. Why not? You do not have but desperately need someone with a strong business acumen for operational efficiencies and compliance in your ranks there are so many ways you could save a lot more and pay teachers what they truly deserve there is no shortage teachers school divisions have been hemorrhaging great educators due to low pay high demands and politics shoved down their throats instead of travel

[00:06:36] conference vacation professional development and training cost thousands to attend plus airfare hotels and conference justification letters one is included to explain away the exorbitant cost of how many other positions especially special education personnel to attend conference to learn how to defy special education law to keep your school division non-compliant, keep taxpayer and grant misuse dollars flowing to Sands Anderson Law and their law firm alliance partners across the U.S. These and similar conferences defy fiscal responsibility. How many are you

[00:07:08] sending to Phoenix to receive bonuses and kickbacks April 27th through 30th in Phoenix? The answer should be zero when you can do the law class for 180, 200 bucks. Do follow me for more tips to how to save your flailing school division from a business operations and business intelligence expert who also knows more about real special education law than anyone, and yes, it's been designed that way.

[00:07:35] The current state is not the legacy you desire. Thank you. Madam Chair, that concludes this afternoon's public comment. Thank you, Madam Clerk. Next, we have action items. Mr. Meister.

[00:08:17] Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, members of the board, Dr. Doherty, I appreciate the opportunity to come to you once again to just talk about the FY26 operating budget, and I present to you memo 2525 to do just that. We spent a lot of time over the last month plus going through this. Most of this will be review for you, but I feel obligated to walk through a few key points here to make sure yourself and the public are aware of what you are about to vote on. First and foremost, the operating budget as set today, seeking your approval is \$986.7 million, a 4.5% increase, or just

[00:08:55] under \$43 million of new spend. Again, this revenue is based on the General Assembly's recently approved budget. As is typically the case, that is still pending the governor's final approval, and we must pause for a little while and wait for that process to bear out before we can fully know what that state budget is.

[00:09:18] but when you put that operating budget of just under 987 million together with uh food service grants and argues uh it gets you to 1 billion 72 million dollars a 4.3 percent increase as we think about what we've been what we've done it's a great time to pause and thank the board thanks to thank the community thank other members of ccps and especially thanks my staff for their efforts throughout this process, as Dr. Murray has talked about throughout. This is a year-long process. It feels as if we are constantly doing this, and it's because we generally are. July

[00:09:57] through December, we spent a lot of time reviewing various department budgets, seeking input. January, we rolled out the superintendent's proposed budget to you all. We spent the last month walking through various budget work sessions, town halls, all leading up to this point and the approval, hopefully tonight. From here, we will turn the budget over to the county where they will do their process, and that begins with the March 12th presentation in their work session on that afternoon. The state budget

was a big unknown when we started this process. It began with the governor's budget release in December that proposed \$12 million in increased funding for

[00:10:35] Chesterfield schools. The General Assembly came back and added to that, we're thankful to say, And that came through as primarily two items that impact the FY26 budget and one likely to impact the FY25 should these amendments be accepted by the governor. The support cap was removed.

[00:10:52] This was a long-awaited good news for our funding, about \$12 million in revenue there, as well as they provided some enhanced special ed funding of about \$3 million to the county, so 15 or so in total of new funding. and also a proposed \$1,000 budget for basically instructional positions that will be funded this year should it pass. So it does not impact FY26, but should that stay in the state budget, that would be a FY25 expense. And one last time, we must wait for all this to play out still, but our process dictates that we must turn over a budget to the county by March 1. So I come here

[00:11:29] looking for your approval, assuming the general assembly budget plays forward. So what does that look like, and this is a slide I shared with you a couple days ago. We are going to incorporate \$15.4 million in state revenue from those two sources, that removal of the support cap and additional special ed funding. We've also talked with the county, and they've agreed to another \$1 million adjustment to help us close our gap. That shows up in two different ways. One is through additional one-time funding of about \$600,000. Use of reserves is what that will show up as in your formal documentation, and a reduction of \$400,000 in some shared service expenses that we had anticipated.

[00:12:08] So what that leaves us with is \$16.4 million of new funding to essentially fund what was a \$16.8 million funding gap. We have closed that remaining \$400,000 through two means, and I discussed both of these with you a couple days ago.

[00:12:23] One is to seek alternate funding for the Recovery Academy of about \$300,000 and reducing our need for transportation fuel based on some recent good news we've seen in the fuel price expectation for next year by the other \$100,000. All this was the primary adjustments.

[00:12:39] We've also made a net neutral adjustment to our pre-K funding strategy, moving away from Head Start and into VPI, which is state funding, so you'll see that as we flow through as well. Put that all together, \$17.2 million of additional funding from what was proposed by the superintendent on the 23rd of January to lead us to that \$42.8 million.

[00:13:01] You can see \$28.7 in new state revenue, 16.6 from the superintendent proposal to now, which is that 15.4 plus 1.2 for that pre-K swap and the 600,000 county contribution that I mentioned.

[00:13:17] We are balanced in what we present to you today in this budget, 42.8 million in new revenue, 42.8 million in expense side changes as well. You can see how that plays out here. This incorporates all of that 400,000 of changes from what we had been talking about, the bucket one previously, the afforded adjustments, bucket to the ones that we know we needed to afford and it leaves us with just those a couple adjustments that we still are ultimately looking for the big number in here is that 3% compensation adjustment twenty point two million I'll echo dr. Murray's comments from the other night we know that's not

[00:13:53] enough however it's all the we can afford at this point we will continue to look for alternate means of funding continue to hope that the JLARC study comes through ultimately with more funding to be able to lean into staff compensation more we know three percent isn't enough but we know this is all

we can afford as we sit here today about three and a half million of essentially inflationary costs and the million eight for the lease at spring line bucket two those that we said we needed additional funding for we were able to close most of that gap with the House and Senate proposals you can see the only adjustments there being the recovery school and the fleet numbers roughly 10

[00:14:33] million in new special ed funding four million in ELL funding and a little over a million in other inflationary items that we would have had to solve through other means had we not seen other funding our donut looks pretty much the same as it did before 986.7 million you can see 57 of that so just about 550 million from the state a little over 400 million from the county what do we spend it on not a surprise 70 towards instruction uh 10 towards operations and you can see the remaining uh buckets here as your appropriation categories that you will ultimately see on your attachment fee.

[00:15:13] So you put this all together, 4.35% in total for CCPS, 4.33% when you add in the governor's school. I will note that the grant number here is reduced. Remember, this is reduced Head Start funding that is now state-funded BPI. So you see that as an increase in the operating line.

[00:15:33] We have also provided for your consideration a list of unfunded priorities. This list will not surprise you. These are the items that we've talked about over the course of this budget as the additional needs that we're not yet able to incorporate in this budget for operations and technology, replacement cycles, major maintenance, those items, staffing and student needs, and compensation with our drive to get to at least \$60,000 starting salary and \$16,000 minimum wage.

[00:16:01] Timeline, where are we? Where do we go from here? Today, we seek your approval so we can get the budget over to the county so they can begin their process. I mentioned the March 12th date for the county budget work session. Immediately following that over the course of the next couple weeks are the county town halls.

[00:16:19] You see the dates and times there, starting at Manchester Middle on the 13th. I will note the 324 Facebook Live event as well, make it a little bit easier for citizens to engage in the county's process there. And ending on the 25th with the Matoka L Town Hall.

[00:16:37] March 26th, I'll skip the governor's one here for a second. March 26th, the Board of Supervisors will come back together for their public hearing in early April. I believe it's the 9th. They will vote on their budget and hopefully approve the county's budget. All while that is happening, the state is still going through their process.

[00:16:54] We've talked about we need to wait here. The governor has until March 24th to act on those General Assembly amendments. The General Assembly is anticipated to reconvene and act on whatever it is the governor does on April 2nd and hopefully shortly thereafter we'll have an answer to the case.

[00:17:11] But as you all know, in previous years, that process has drawn out longer than that. But for now, I'll keep my fingers crossed that we'll be able to hit our timelines here. So next steps for you as a board, I can offer memo 25-25 for your consideration, including just over a billion dollars across all funds as reflected in attachments B and C, your unfunded priority list, as well as a resolution to the county board of supervisors for the same.

[00:17:38] I'll turn it over to the chair for questions or comments. Thank you, Mr. Meister. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo 025-25 as presented? So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion?

[00:17:58] Ms. Efron? I would just want to thank you for creating a workable plan and reverse engineering that we have to do to come up with our budget every year. and you and your team are always top-notch.

[00:18:15] I appreciate the work that you're doing. Thank you, ma'am. Sorry, Mr. Bronto. That's okay. Thank you. I echo the sentiments there.

[00:18:34] I greatly appreciate you and your team and the amount of hours and effort going into this does not go unnoticed by this board. I do have a question in regards to the naming of the memo. So will next year's be 26-26?

[00:18:52] I really hope so. Okay, just curious, just curious. But on a serious note, thank you very much. Greatly appreciate you and your staff being open to the questions that I know I have had offline that have been answered rather timely and the commitment to the community for transparency.

[00:19:09] So thank you. If I can continue on the joke, I was really disappointed when the CIP memo that's coming up is 26-25 and not 25 26 but you can only have so much well we'll talk to josh about that fitting for numbers folks for sure all right there has been a motion in a second madam clerk please call roll on the motion dot heffron aye dominique chatters aye steven pronto aye lisa hudsons aye and cooker

[00:19:41] Aye. Memo 025-25 is approved. Next, we have memo number 026-25. Mr. Meister. Thank you again, Madam Chair, Vice Chair, other members of the board, and Dr. Murray.

[00:19:59] Back here again to talk CIP this time, and I present memo 26-25 for your consideration on our capital improvement plan. So your capital improvement plan consists of a five-year plan of building, renovation, new construction, major maintenance, and some technology expenses totaling just over \$600 million, including \$144 million in FY26.

[00:20:24] 135 of that is related to new school construction and renovation. Nine million of that is related to major maintenance. In 26, there's no need for the Chromebook lease. That will kick in in 27, given some promises from the county to fund the 26 portion using FY25.

[00:20:43] Those current and proposed CIP projects, this is a slide you've seen before, Deep Creek, AM Davis, near completion. Bensley and West Area shortly on their heels and West Area High School in August of 2027. I will note that this CIP does include the update that we'll be pending, Josh and Scott, a little later in this memo for the revised pricing of that.

[00:21:08] In our superintendent's proposed budget, we had assumed a \$205 million price tag. This current plan assumes \$196 based on favorable pricing from that bid. So we're happy to bank a little bit of savings versus expectations. It's still well north of referendum expectations, don't get me wrong, but we'll take a little bit of good news where we can get it.

[00:21:28] And you can see the future projects from Dale at the top down to Bird Gym, not in any necessarily prioritization order, but several projects that also exist beyond the most recent five on the table. Major maintenance, the other big piece of this, we've established a baseline spend of around \$30 million.

[00:21:49] We have the ability to maintain that roughly \$30 million into FY26, assuming the \$9 million transfer that's embedded in this CIP and your operating plan. As I've said before, after FY26, we will have a hole.

[00:22:05] If this is not addressed, we will continue to work with the county and other funding sources to ensure that we do not experience a dip in major maintenance spend after FY26. And lastly, you've seen this slide as well, the Chromebook lease, just to remind you, this is about an \$8 million expense beginning in FY26, but to be funded in \$25 for the first year, so this \$8 million expense kicks in in FY27, and going forward, many advantages to this plan, and I'll refer you to Dr. Longworth's presentation on this.

[00:22:40] did a fantastic job of walking through the benefits of this Chromebook lease versus the ad hoc purchasing of Chromebooks that we've had since the pandemic began. So with that, memo 26-25 is in front of you for your consideration.

[00:22:55] Again, \$602.6 million expected spend in 26 through 30, including 144 to be appropriated in 26. So with that, I will turn it over to the chair for questions or conversation. Thank you again, Mr. Meister.

[00:23:10] Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo 026-25 as presented? I moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second.

[00:23:29] Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Scott Hefron. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. Memo number 026-25 as approved. Next, we have memo number 027-25, Mr. Davis.

[00:23:52] Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the board. Dr. Murray, it's an exciting day for us in regards to the West Area High School project.

[00:24:08] We've been planning this for some time. It was approved by our citizens in the referendum in November of 2022. We've been working with our architect, Stantec, for about 18 months. We'd love to bring them back to maybe address a work session in the future to give you some more details if you'd like it.

[00:24:26] But today, let's talk money. You've got the memo that was mentioned. number 27-25, and it includes the invitation for bid, which went out on December 30th, 2024.

[00:24:43] We received six bids, very healthy competition. Five of those six bids were tightly grouped within four or five million dollars. Gulf Seaboard General Contractors has been determined to be the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Western Area High School Building and Site Construction Project, with an award recommendation provided by the project architect, which is also an attachment to the memorandum.

[00:25:13] We have an ambitious schedule to get underway. Upon your approval this afternoon, we will send contracts to the contractor tomorrow. They'll hopefully be back in a couple of weeks. Procurement will do a review, get it to legal, and we'd love to have a notice to proceed within the next four weeks, and hopefully a groundbreaking this spring before our students go home.

[00:25:34] So our recommended action, staff recommends that the school board authorize the procurement director to award a construction contract to Gulf Seaboard General Contractor Incorporated for the Western Area High School Building and Site Construction Project in the amount of \$161,802,400 and approve any necessary change orders up to the full budgeted amount for this project.

[00:26:02] Be happy to take any questions or post discussion. Thank you, Mr. Davis. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 027-25 as presented? So moved. Is there a second? Second.

[00:26:19] Board members, is there any discussion? Mr. Perranto. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you as well to you and your team. And this has been a journey in and of itself. For those that are paying attention,

Golf Seaboard should be a familiar name.

[00:26:37] Could you reiterate their current projects that they have been working on for CCPS? The current one that is underway is the Deep Creek Middle School, which will be opening this summer.

[00:26:54] They also recently completed Falling Creek Middle School, which just opened this past fall. And a few years back, our Reams Road Elementary School. So they've been very busy and a very good partner with us. Absolutely. And the reason I bring that up is just to say, if you've been to the new Falling Creek Middle School, I remember when we walked in there for the first time, the impression that I received was from a young student who walked in and their mouth just dropped because they're really excited about what they saw.

[00:27:24] And there's a lot of telltale signs to a good quality, right, of course. But to see the excited students walking through the doors and, you know, what is awaiting for them really does change things from an educational standpoint.

[00:27:39] And so I'm obviously very hopeful that that great work will continue from them as they embark on our high school as well. So it's great to see that the bids were competitive and obviously rightfully awarded.

[00:27:57] So greatly appreciate that. Thank you. So there has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Scott Hefron.

[00:28:13] Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. Memo number 027-25 is approved. Next, we have memo number 028-25, Mr. Davis.

[00:28:28] Thank you again. Memorandum 028-25 is the subject, Approval of Bell Schedule for Bon Air and Clover Hill Elementary Schools. We've been discussing many important subjects over the last few months associated with new buildings and redistricting and how transportation will support our students in the best and hopefully most efficient way.

[00:28:58] And staff brought a presentation in November, which looked at a group of opportunities for the board to consider, presented again as an attachment to the memorandum that you have today. At your subsequent business meeting in December, the board did approve assigning both Tomahawk Creek Middle and Deep Creek Middle to the Tier 1 schedule, which is 7.35 a.m. to 2.05 p.m.

[00:29:26] And we, in operations and transportation, look forward and, frankly, need some additional adjustments. If we were to move forward in the status quo, we would have a significant imbalance in regards to the demand for buses and drivers across the three primary tiers.

[00:29:47] Tier one would have a demand of 35 more buses and drivers than the other two tiers. And so we have requested, the superintendent requested a survey of the Bonaire, Clover Hill, and Winterpock communities regarding proposed schedule changes that are shown as an attachment to your memo.

[00:30:09] But to summarize, both Bonaire and Clover Hill were proposed to move from Tier 1 to Tier 2, which is about a 45-minute difference. And a more drastic change was suggested for Winter Park Elementary to move them from Tier 3 to Tier 1, which is a change of about an hour and a half.

[00:30:30] You had received some feedback from some of the other communities. I'm not going to list them or recite them. They're in the memo, the others that were considered, that will probably come back

next fall when we talk about some other new buildings and opportunities for redistricting and bell schedules. But we want to just focus on these three schools that you surveyed.

[00:30:48] The surveys were not especially striking. For Bonaire, the families slightly favored the change, and the staff slightly disfavored the change. At Clover Hill, slightly different dynamic, the families favored the change, a pretty good percentage of them, and a pretty good percentage of the staff disfavored the change.

[00:31:09] At Winterpock, it was a little more striking. The families slightly disfavored the change, and the staff actually strongly favored the change. However, at this point in time, staff cannot recommend a change for Winterpock to Tier 1 because, recall, we were talking about that imbalance.

[00:31:27] So if we were to move Winterpock and there is some validity in that discussion for the future, other moves would have to occur along with it. So where we are today is we recommend that you move Bonaire and Clover Hill from Tier 1 to Tier 2.

[00:31:46] We've recited some more things and reasons that would occur to our transportation system if we do not make this change. And we just appreciate the board's support and consideration. Our recommended action is that the school board approve placing both Bonaire and Clover Hill elementary schools on the Tier 2 bell schedule.

[00:32:07] The approved bell schedules would take effect for the 2025-26 school year. Thank you, Mr. Davis. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 028-25 as presented?

[00:32:24] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? Ms. Hutchins? So, Mr. Davis, thank you for this, and we really appreciate your attention to the details and the ways to make our transportation hum.

[00:32:47] And every change is, people don't like change, typically. And whether it's good or bad, Bonaire is one of my schools, a school in my district, and I've spoken with the principal, and she's reached out to people in her community.

[00:33:09] And similar to what you found, it's, you know, slightly, I think some of the community members were like, it's a little, it will be difficult on them for child care, et cetera. However, can you say what would happen if we chose not to do this so they can have a picture of what that would be?

[00:33:33] As I mentioned, the 35 additional buses and drivers on Tier 1 would cause us to schedule double backs at almost every Tier 1 school from the beginning of the year. A double back is when a single bus does two routes.

[00:33:50] So opportunities would be found with hopefully a pair of short routes. But in the morning, some children would be getting to school extra early. And some bus loads in the afternoon would leave late, later than planned. And that would be the plan.

[00:34:06] And then on days in which we had more absences or bad weather or more breakdowns, we would see chaos perhaps might even be the correct word in regards to our ability to pick up all the students and meet that 97%.

[00:34:24] goal that we've been achieving in student transportation in the morning. And if tier one goes poorly, that trickles into tiers two and three. So we're really talking about the entire system and how we really need to get off to a good start in tier one. Our best chance of doing that for the next school year is to

move these two schools to tier two. Thank you. There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dot Hepron. Aye.

[00:35:02] Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. Memo number 028-25 is approved. Next, we have this evening's superintendent's report, Dr. Murray. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:35:21] Before our presentation, since I don't have remarks this evening in our agenda proper, I would like to do that first, if I may. So throughout February, Chesterfield County Public Schools has celebrated Black History Month with classroom lessons, events, partnerships, field trips, and more.

[00:35:41] As the month draws to a close, and on this penultimate day, we want to take a moment to recognize some of our close partners in the work serving in significant leadership roles for our county.

[00:35:58] So first, Jim Holland, our Dale District Board of Supervisor, a great advocate for all things students. Colonel Frank Carpenter, our newly appointed chief of police, a great partner again in the work.

[00:36:15] And my dear friend and right hand, our new deputy superintendent, Dr. Lisa High. But also our very own school board member representing the Dale District, Dominique Chatters.

[00:36:31] As a veteran of the military and a military instructor, as a community leader, and as an involved parent, Ms. Chatters serves as an outstanding role model for Chesterfield students in our entire community.

[00:36:47] Please join me in recognizing Dominique Chatters, the first black woman ever elected to local office in Chesterfield County, but we know it won't be the last because she has broken that barrier.

[00:37:03] Thank you, Ms. Chatters. I should have saved the best for last, but not saying that your presentation isn't awesome, Leslie.

[00:37:41] So, following that, I would like to call Dr. Harris to provide an update on CECLA, which actually is very warming. Good evening, Ms. Coker, Ms. Hudgens, Dr. Murray, and school board members.

[00:38:03] I'm Dr. Harris, principal of CECLA, and I am elated to be here this evening and share an update with you all on CECLA. So, this is our amazing staff for this school year. I'm happy to report that we are fully staffed.

[00:38:19] So, that is certainly something to celebrate. Just a reminder that these are the schools that our students will be going to next year. We do serve the youngest scholars in the Bermuda and Dale District, so the Dale schools are indicated there by an asterisk.

[00:38:42] Right now, in terms of our enrollment, we have 362 students currently enrolled. We have 29 classrooms and four Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms in our building. Right now, we have 12 early childhood special education classrooms.

[00:38:59] Students have to be eligible for special education services, and they can be as young as three years old to be in our ECSE program. On my slide, I have VPI slash Head Start. I know you all have made some changes with that. So combined, we have 17 classrooms, and the poverty guidelines for those programs for eligibility are 100% up to 200%.

[00:39:23] And then I also have linked in my presentation the Head Start Guidelines. Also, if a student is considered homeless or receiving TANF or SSI services, all of that makes them eligible for those two

programs.

[00:39:39] At least 10% of our students in those programs have to have a disability, and students have to be four by September 30th to be eligible for those programs. This is just a little information about student engagement at CECLA.

[00:39:58] As you can see by the photos, we try to make sure that our students are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities. So there are lots of opportunities for them to build. We were pleased to have Dr. Macklin come and support as Santa this year and provide books to students.

[00:40:17] We use the class assessment tool, which is a tool that evaluates the number of positive interactions between the teacher and the children in the classroom. We also use the creative curriculum, which is a theme-based curriculum, and Hegarty, which supports our students' language and literacy development.

[00:40:36] We also give the VKRP assessment to our students and the VALS assessment, which used to be the PALS assessment. We also have incorporated a program this year called Duphonics, which helps students with letter identification and letter sound awareness skills.

[00:40:54] We have interactive hallways in our building, so there's lots of opportunities for students to learn even when they're walking in the halls. We have a full resource team, an outdoor classroom, four playgrounds, and two blacktops. We did receive a grant from Chesterfield Education Foundation last year to expand our blacktops as an outdoor learning space.

[00:41:15] So there's a picture here of some patterning blocks that we've included. There are also some yoga poses out there, and we also got a brand-new gym floor. We do have before and after-school care with the YMCA.

[00:41:30] Our students do have an opportunity to come to school for before and after-school care at no charge to the parent, and that is through a grant with the Chesterfield Education Foundation. So we are truly grateful for their support. We also have a very strong partnership with the Chesterfield Tech Center program.

[00:41:48] We do have an early childhood education program on our grounds. Students are working on their child development associate. We have about 29 students involved in that program currently, and they have an opportunity to not only receive instruction in the classroom from their CTC teacher, but they're also paired with a teacher in the classroom, so they get a chance to get some real field experience in the classroom working with our early childhood students.

[00:42:14] We have family library nights where we encourage parents to come and engage in literacy activities with their children and actually learn ways they can support their child's development at home. And we also have the Watch Dogs program, which is our male involvement program, to get our fathers and father figures in the building and engaged in their children's education.

[00:42:35] And we just try to provide opportunities as often as we can for community members to be in the building supporting our students. This is an update on impact data for our school. So this is actually last year's data and I do have some numbers to share regarding our mid-year data but that data wasn't available before I had to get these slides to you all. So last year for the VALS assessment in the area of letter

recognition skills our students only had only 15 percent of our students were in that high category or in that strong

[00:43:11] category. And in the fall, that bumped up to 60%. For the VKRP assessment, which we use to evaluate students' self-regulation skills and social skills, in the fall, only 7% of our students were in that strong category. And in the spring, that increased to 31%. Our ECSE students take an APES assessment, which evaluates the whole child. For our school, we particularly are looking at their cognitive development and social communication skills, in the fall, 21% of our students scored within the

[00:43:49] high range for that assessment. And then in the spring, that bumped up to 35. And then under social communication, our students scored 12% in that area, and that bumped up to 23% in the spring. And then related to syllable segmentation, I wanted to note that students that were at CECLA, When they took that same assessment in the fall in kindergarten, non-CICLA students only scored 74.65%, but our CICLA students scored just a little bit higher, 75.08%.

[00:44:24] Also to note, we have nine students last year that participated in the CTE program and actually earned their credential in early childhood development. And historically, since 2012, only 10 secondary students in Virginia have earned that CDA, which is an industry credential.

[00:44:42] I wanted to mention our mid-year data. Currently, in the fall, we had 14.93% of our students in the strong category on our VALS assessment, and that was 43 students.

[00:44:58] And in our mid-year assessments, that has already gone up to 39.58%, which is 114 students in that strong category. And this is just our mid-year data. So very excited about the progress our students have made thus far. Noted recognitions and awards.

[00:45:19] We do lots of school tours, promoting preschool and expanding preschool is a goal statewide. So we frequently do site tours to other school divisions. We have Williamsburg, James City County schools coming actually next month.

[00:45:37] That was just recently scheduled. They're seeking to create an early childhood center. So they'll be touring CECLA next month. We've had visits so far this year from VCU, LEED, Virginia, and we've gotten several grant awards. We did receive two VDOE awards this year.

[00:45:56] We received a breakfast award, and then our CTE program was recently named Region 1 CTE Program of the Year this summer. Upcoming events, we do have, I'm actually presenting in 10 minutes, a virtual presentation for successful innovation.

[00:46:17] and i'll be presenting a parent workshop on family engagement practices at home for preschoolers we will have a read across sequela day in celebration of read across america week on march 5th where i've invited community members and some of our faith-based partners to come into the school to read to our students we're going to have a sneaker ball which is going to be a fun time for parents and kiddos and we're going to also have kindergarten transition night on may 13th And I'm really excited about that because we invite the homeschools for next year into the building.

[00:46:53] They get a chance to meet our kiddos. And all of the students that attend will get a backpack full of kindergarten school supplies. And parents won't have to incur that cost. And as I mentioned, we will have Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools coming to CECLA on March 18th.

[00:47:10] And, of course, future opportunities. I never miss an opportunity to promote expansion of preschool in the county. So with many pre-K classrooms in our schools, we really want to continue to seek opportunities to potentially provide another center for early learning in the eastern part of the school division.

[00:47:31] Thank you so much for your time. Does anybody have any questions? I just want to say thank you to Dr. Harris. So proud of you. Thank you. And yes, board members, is there any discussion?

[00:47:48] Mr. Bronto. Yes, congratulations on your doctorate. Oh, thank you. So I bragged on you, and I hope you're okay with that. So sitting on the CEF board, when they were talking about grants and what they're actively currently doing, and I asked them, I said, did you know that at CECLA, and I've referenced the spring of 23, 24, fall 15%, and then spring 60%, and I asked them, when you're going out and you're talking to folks about grant money, they need to see what this

[00:48:25] is actually contributing to our students, the success. And so good on our CEF folks and the partnerships that they have to help you and your team, but more so congratulations to you and your team on such a successful progress moving forward for the early part of the education experience for our kids in Chesterfield County. And I know you're talking about duplicating on the eastern side.

[00:48:54] I just want to put a plug in for the western side, just throwing that out there, because when it works really well over here, we want it to work really well over there. But again, thank you very much. Greatly appreciate you. Thank you so much. We truly appreciate the board's support in seeing the investment that's needed in early childhood education in preparation for kindergarten readiness.

[00:49:16] So thank you all for your support. Thank you. Thank you. And good luck at your presentation. next we have announcements communications and school board comments school board members are there any announcements or comments this afternoon the school board will hold a work session on tuesday march 11th 2025 at 4 p.m here in the public meeting room it'll be followed by a business meeting at 6 30 p.m if there's no further business we need a motion to adjourn so moved

[00:49:51] madam clerk would you please call roll on the motion dot heffron aye dominique chatters aye Steven Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. The February 27th, 2025 school board special meeting is adjourned.



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