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Chesterfield County School Board Business Meeting, Thursday, December 18, 2025

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Place Chesterfield County School Board, Virginia
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- Official minutes (BoardDocs, on the Jan 6, 2026 agenda for approval): [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DQ4MAY594FDD/\\$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202025.12.18%20Business%20Meeting.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DQ4MAY594FDD/$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202025.12.18%20Business%20Meeting.pdf)

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[00:00:00] Good evening everyone. I'd like to call the December 18th, 2025 school board business meeting to order. I would like to thank everyone for attending this evening and remind the audience that comments to the board may only be made at the podium during the public comment period.

[00:00:19] Comments from the audience are prohibited and are in violation of section 18.2-415 of the Code of Virginia, Disorderly Conduct in Public Places. in school board policy 6141. I appreciate everyone's patience and understanding so that we can conduct the business meeting in an orderly fashion. We will now have invocation by Mrs.

[00:00:41] Chatters and the flag salute led by Mrs. Hudgens. Before tonight's invocation, we want to remember with a moment of silence an outstanding graduate of Chesterfield County Public Schools who was killed at Brown University. Mohamed Umur-Zokov graduated from Midlothian High School as a member of the class of 2025. He worked diligently toward his goal of attending an Ivy League university, a goal he proudly achieved this fall when he enrolled at Brown University. Tragically, Muhammad suffered a fatal injury during the December 13th campus shooting. He will be

[00:01:18] remembered as an incredibly hard worker and a deeply caring individual who was always willing to help others. Please join us in a moment of silence. Thank you. Please join us at this time in the

Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:01:52] Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Before we continue, Mrs. Chatters is going to continue with the invocation.

[00:02:20] My apologies. I was, the moment of silence just took me a little bit. This message is for, it's a holiday time of year, but some people are not enjoying the holidays right now.

[00:02:38] And so I just wanted to speak to the joy and the sadness that is happening right now. It's called Between Joy and Missing You. The lights go up, the season starts, bells ring soft around our hearts. Tables fill, the music sways, we toast to love to those days.

[00:02:57] But in the glow of red and green, there's an empty space we've seen, a silent chair, a whispered name, the holiday is not the same. we laugh out loud then catch our breath joy brushing shoulders now with death a smile breaks a tear runs through because love still knows what a loss can do for those still here the room feels warm voices rise traditions form hands held tight memories made life insisting unafraid for those

[00:03:31] now gone we feel them near in every song and every falling tear in ornaments and candlelight In dreams that visit us late at night This season moves to a steady beat Grief and gratitude finally meet Not enemies, not far apart Just sharing space inside of our hearts So we honor all, both here and gone By loving deeper and carrying on We laugh, we cry, we stay sincere Missing them and holding dear Because the holidays, truth be told Are both joy and sorrow, tightly rolled

[00:04:10] And love once given still shines through between the lights, between the you. Thank you. So tonight's consent agenda includes agenda adoption, approval of the minutes from our November 12th, 2025 work session, our November 12th, 2025 business meeting, our November 2nd, 2025 joint legislative delegation meeting, memo number 162-25 recommended personnel actions, Memo number 179-25, FY2026, Acceptance of New Grants.

[00:04:51] Memo number 163-25, Acceptance of Donations. Memo number 164-25, Appropriation and Allocation of Funds to CTC at Hull. Memo number 180-25, Deed of Gift for New Library Furniture at Clover Hill Elementary School.

[00:05:09] MMO number 181-25, Deed of Gift for Old Hundred Elementary School Sound System Upgrade. Are there any additions or corrections to the consent agenda? Madam Chair, there are no additions or corrections to the consent agenda. Are there any requests from a school board member to separate an item from the consent agenda for discussion and individual action?

[00:05:34] Hearing none, may I have a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. I make a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Is there a second? Second. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion? Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto.

[00:05:50] Aye. Lisa Hogan. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have awards and recognitions. Mr. Smith. Thank you, Madam Chair and Board Members. For our first recognition, if I could ask our Project Adam schools to come forward at this time.

[00:06:08] Our schools continue to work towards achieving designation as heart-safe schools through Project Adam.

[00:06:48] This designation means that schools have taken steps to implement a quality sudden cardiac arrest program to promote a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors. Congratulations to these schools for recently achieving their Heart Safe School designation and for being prepared in the event of a cardiac arrest.

[00:07:06] Watkins Elementary, which is also the first Cheshire Elementary school to achieve this designation, Falling Creek Middle, Byrd High School, and Manchester High School. Project ADAM, which stands for Automated Defibrillation in Adam's Memory, is a national nonprofit developed in memory of Adam Lamelle, who suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and died while playing high school basketball in Wisconsin.

[00:07:29] In Virginia, Project ADAM is led by the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, and Dr. John Phillips is here representing VCU. Please join me congratulating these schools. Well, congratulations, guys.

[00:07:47] And we have another Dr. Phillips in the house, guys. Dr. Phillips in the back. Dr. Phillips, John Phillips, too. To John Phillips, yes. So I got sidetracked on that. So Heather Snyder, you spearheaded this, right?

[00:08:06] And this is incredible. And this is round two, multiple rounds of three? Okay, third round. Third round of getting these schools so that something like that that happened to Adam doesn't happen again. And so our schools are safe, and this is a big deal that these schools are taking care of our kids.

[00:08:27] So we thank you for this. I am going to just pass the mic for fun. You guys tell me. I'm going to start with you. You can speak. You can pass. It's a fun day. This is our last December meeting, so free for all.

[00:08:45] Thank you very much for having me again, my third time here. And Chesterfield County continues to be a leader in the state. Thankfully, Project Adam has really gotten going in the state. We're up to 116 designated schools presently and many more to come.

[00:09:03] The state legislature that was passed last spring helped things going. But Heather and her teams did not need that law to be in place because she started even before then. So I just am very thankful for all of you. I'm particularly thankful for Heather. I'm going to pass this to you so I can give her an early Christmas gift.

[00:09:22] Just a private ghetto t-shirt. Thank you all very much. I am Brenda Myers, and this is Amy Lott. We are the proud administrators of Watkins Elementary.

[00:09:40] We have a special program at the Manchester High School, and Ms. Hickson is our other nurse. Ms. Harrison is here with us this evening. Ms. Hickson really spearheaded us, and we wish she could be with us, appreciate all of her work, and we're proud to be part of Project Adam. I'm Amy Redden. I'm the school nurse at Watkins Elementary.

[00:09:59] I'm Quincy Waller, the principal at Falling Creek Middle School. Nurse Hoff could not be here this evening. She is attending her daughter's first orchestra performance tonight. But she wanted to be here, but she has been a strong advocate for this program and really motivating us to get prepared should any circumstance arise that we can handle.

[00:10:19] So I want to say thank you to her and happy holidays to everybody. And I just want to say how thankful I am to all of the schools and administrators and nurses that have made this possible and just taking that extra step to make sure that we address safety on every level and are prepared for any worst-case scenario.

[00:10:42] Thank you. I'm Adrienne Blanton, principal at Lloyd C. Byrd High School, and our nurse, Fisher, couldn't be with us this evening due to an illness. But we're super excited to have accomplished this, and we have used hands-on CPR with emergencies at school, and our kids have jumped in. We make sure, as all high schools do, that all kids graduate with hands-on CPR, and this is just one more part of that puzzle to make sure we keep everyone safe.

[00:11:06] So thank you, and again, happy holidays. Thanks for having us tonight. Thanks again. Next up, if I could ask our friends at Hopkins Elementary to come forward.

[00:12:07] Hopkins Elementary has been recognized as a 2526 Purple Star School for support of military-connected students and families. This is the third time Hopkins Elementary has achieved its designation. The Purple Star designation is awarded to schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the needs of military-connected students through programs, staff training, and community engagement.

[00:12:28] Since 2018, the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children have awarded over 1,000 Purple Star designations. Of those designations, only 132 schools have been recognized three times.

[00:12:43] Please join me in congratulating Hopkins Elementary. So I think I was chosen to do this recognition, not because Hopkins is just in Dale District, but my husband and I are both active-duty soldiers when we first started with Hopkins.

[00:13:03] And they had two of my babies while we were both still active-duty. And I can just say that the level of understanding for the nuances with the military child was very much appreciated coming from our first school. And so I just want to say thank you for the work that you've done and the work you're continuing to do.

[00:13:22] It means so much because our military children are dealing with different things, right? And so if I'm here by myself because my husband is deployed, which was the case, I need a little extra help. And so I just appreciated knowing that I didn't have to scramble for the help that it was already offered to me at my school.

[00:13:42] So I'm going to pass the mic, and you can tell us what your favorite thing about this program is. Hi, my name is Jenny Cox. I'm one of the school counselors at Hopkins. My favorite thing about the program and just Hopkins in general is we have a very inclusive environment in so many ways for students, especially transient students from military families or just any student to feel safe and a sense of belonging at our school.

[00:14:06] So even though I'm here accepting this, I wanted to thank all of my colleagues back at work for everything they do for our students to feel special, safe, and important at our school. Good evening, happy holidays. Jenny is very modest.

[00:14:24] She works very diligently with our students to make sure that they enjoy times with each other where they can just talk about things that other kids don't understand because their families haven't

served in the military by having military mornings and then also having family members come in.

[00:14:40] We really do, she does a great job during April, the month of the military child, of celebrating those families. So my favorite thing is watching her leadership in this role and just watching the benefit that our students get from it. And as Dominique said, it's been a pleasure to bounce ideas off of her, and neither she nor I have a hard time saying what we think, so I really appreciate hearing that it has been beneficial to her family.

[00:15:06] Let's give them a round of applause. Next up, if I could ask our REB award winners to come forward.

[00:15:22] The REB awards recognize excellence in public education by awarding cash grants to outstanding public school teachers from Chesterfield, Richmond, Henrico, Hanover, and the Department of Juvenile Justice in those localities. Across the region this year, a total of 28 teachers were selected as finalists,

[00:15:57] then 15 teachers were named award winners. Four of the 2025 award winners teach in Chesterfield County Public Schools. Amber Cooper, who teaches art at Burt High School, won \$15,000 to examine the deep connection between artists from Japan and France and how it's molded art and culture worldwide. Anne Wynne Long, who's a first grade teacher at Alberta Smith Elementary School, won \$9,700 to explore diverse American quilting traditions and engage students in making a collaborative school quilt. Brian Sheets, who teaches landscaping and turf management at Tomstale High School, won \$14,300 to visit sporting facilities, including Dodger Stadium

[00:16:34] and Wrigley Field across the United States, and attend conferences to learn best management practices for turf in various environments. And Jennifer Williams, who's a kindergarten and teacher at Enon Elementary School won \$10,000 to spend three weeks in Mexico observing classrooms, connecting with local educators, and experiencing daily life and exploring Mayan sites.

[00:16:55] Please don't be congratulating these REB award winners. I'm just going to put this out there right away. If you want someone to tag along when you go to Mexico, just let me know.

[00:17:10] Or Wrigley Field, you know, I know that these are sacrifices that you have to make, and I'm very sorry, and I will share that burden with you. But in all seriousness, this region, we have the top four teachers receiving the REB award.

[00:17:27] This award started back in 1988 and has been granting various projects to teachers, not only in high school, but also in elementary school and middle school. And it just goes to show that we have some of the best in Chesterfield County Public Schools.

[00:17:43] I love the projects you're working on, the meeting behind them. And I know that what you learn, teachers are continuous learners, what you learn, you're going to bring back to your students. And I think there's no price tag that we can put on that, which to me is extremely valuable.

[00:17:59] So thank you for what you do. And again, congratulations. And I'd like to start if there's anything you'd like to share about your project or maybe what you're hoping to find or anything along those lines. I'm Amber Cooper, and I won the award to go to France and Japan. I'm an art teacher. I have always wanted to go to France to see Claude Monet's home.

[00:18:18] and that's kind of what started it. There's a big connection between France and Japan and the reciprocal relationship between their artwork. So I'm super excited to learn so much and bring it back to my students. So I'm Anwen Long, and I am actually so excited to actually stay in America.

[00:18:39] And I've traveled abroad, so I wanted to stay in America. My great-great and a couple more greats granddad was Amish, So I'm going to go up there and I'm going to see the quilts up in the Amish land. And that just makes me excited. And then there's a family farm that I'm going to go to.

[00:18:55] And they're going to open the trunk and look at the family quilts. And I'll travel around the United States looking at quilts. And then I cannot wait to bring it back to the classroom and Alberta Smith and make a huge quilt for the school. I'm Jennifer Williams. I teach kindergarten at Enon.

[00:19:11] And the trip that I'm planning to take is to travel to Mexico. And I will spend three weeks in the Mayan culture, and I actually am super excited because I'm going to spend an entire week in a classroom there, and I'm going to co-teach and bring back information to our schools to help with our EL population in all of our schools, actually, the things that I'm going to put together, so I'm super excited.

[00:19:35] Good evening. I'm Brian Sheets, Thomas Dale. I'm really excited like everybody else is. To learn from professionals and bring that back to my kids firsthand is one of the coolest things. We always say within our industry is a field is not just a field. It's a place for families and memories to be made. It's not just a sports field.

[00:19:59] And to see professionals bringing that to thousands and thousands of people all across the country and then seeing our kids at the high school level going into that field and learning how to manage a field properly and safely, to make those connections with our community is huge.

[00:20:17] So I'm super excited by that and really excited to bring it back to our kids. Again, fantastic. Thank you so much for what you do. I think we have some of the best teachers in the state, in the country, and there's four great examples standing right here.

[00:20:38] So on behalf of the Chesterfield County School Board, thank you, and congratulations to each one of you. Thank you. Next up, I'm going to ask Heather Snyder to come forward.

[00:21:14] Heather Snyder, coordinator of the Office of Student Health Services, was recently recognized with two statewide awards from two different groups. The Virginia Association of School Nurses recognized Snyder as the 2025 Outstanding School Nurse Administrator of the Year, honoring her excellence in nursing administration and coordination of health programs.

[00:21:32] And the Virginia Nurses Foundation honored her with the Leadership Excellence Award, recognized her contributions to public health nursing practice and leadership in professional organizations. Snyder serves as coordinator of the Office of Student Health Services since 2021. In that role, she oversees health services for 64,000-plus students in 68 schools and serves as a school system liaison to the Central Health Department of the Virginia Department of Education.

[00:21:57] Please join me in recognizing and congratulating Heather Snyder. So I sit on the School Health Advisory Board with Heather, and I just knew she was a learned individual.

[00:22:15] She is a lovely human being, and I adored her. I did not realize how actually amazing she was. So I'm just going to read again. She won two awards, not one, two awards. First one, Virginia Association of School Nurses.

[00:22:31] Okay, that's a lot. She is the 2025 Outstanding School Nurse Administrator of the year. Okay, so number one, that's it. Second one, Virginia Nurses Foundation honored her with the Leadership Excellence Award.

[00:22:49] Again, so she is just a servant leader, a lovely person. You ask anyone, and I'm telling you I've asked anyone, and they just cannot say enough about her. You are, you saw her up here tonight. This Adam, Adam, excuse me, let me refer to Project Adam.

[00:23:06] Got my notes. Project Adam, that is her, one of her innovations. Another one is creating 17 in-school immunization clinics. And she partnered with communities and schools to begin in-school dental programs, among other things.

[00:23:23] So she is unique. We are so honored and proud and happy to have you in Chesterville County. Do you have anything you'd like to say? I prefer to stay out of the spotlight, but I will take any opportunity to highlight the great work that our school nurses do.

[00:23:39] And I'm proud to be part of such an awesome team. I've been in school health for over 26 years, and it's amazing in how much the needs of our students and our communities have changed throughout that time, and our nurses continue to rise to the occasion and just be able to provide the care and safety that our students need in so many different aspects, and I'm just really proud to be part of that team.

[00:24:08] Congrats. Well done. Next up, if I could ask our Learning With You participants to come forward at this time. Learning with You is designed to help members of the multicultural community connect with Cheshaw County Public Schools.

[00:24:45] The latest round of this free program took place this fall, offering participants information about the school division, including resources available for students and families, while helping CCBS leaders connect and learn more from multicultural communities. And I'd like to turn it over to Juan Santa Coloma. Good evening.

[00:25:05] Unfortunately, from the 16 members of our community who finished the program, only four were able to come tonight. But you are awesome, guys, and thank you for participation. And remember that you are now our people outside in the community, and please share what you learned with us.

[00:25:25] First, Elizabeth Castellanos Romero, Victor Maestre, Gilbert Nisan, and Jennifer Spragans. Once again, thank you so much for your help, for your assistance, for your participation.

[00:25:49] And keep in mind, what you learned with us is to share. Thank you. So I just want to say that if you haven't had an opportunity to be in a cohort for this class, for learning with you, you need to give it a try.

[00:26:10] You need to go back. Because they're learning so much while we're in here. And I'll echo what Juan said. You have to share it. Let's not gatekeep. Let's share. So I want you to each tell me something about your favorite part of the program.

[00:26:28] So hi, I'm Jennifer Spragans. I work with the Chesterfield Food Bank Outreach Center. I actually participated in a program at the advice of my friend Liz, and one of probably the most interesting things that I got to learn was the unique experiences of members of our community, as well as learning how the county is dedicated to actually enhancing that learning experience for everyone.

[00:27:10] He said thank you for the opportunity that he had to learn and he's going to tell many people. Hello everyone, my name is Victor.

[00:27:26] So I'm really, I'm very thankful for this opportunity. I'm an ambassador teacher from Participate Learning and I have been here just for five months. Yes, five months. And it's been a great opportunity to learn.

[00:27:42] Yes, because I have learned a lot from the all educational system here in the United States as a teacher in Thomas Day High School. But this opportunity was a great opportunity to see different perspectives that I'm pretty sure that all what I have learned will help me to guide not only my students, but also all the community, the parents, and the society, just so that they can receive, especially those Latin American people, those Latin American students and those foreign students that are part of the CCPS,

[00:28:23] a hand in hand every time that we are there just for Helen to share all that we have learned throughout all this experience. So thank you very much. It's an honor for me to be being here, and I'm so thankful. Thank you very much. I would like to say that.

[00:28:45] Thank you, Juan Santa Coloma, and thank you, Amy, for this great opportunity to be with you. It's fantastic to know about the schools, teachers, all you do for our kids.

[00:29:02] However, I'm representing our community, our Hispanic community, and I will be there more time. Thank you. Next up, I'm going to ask our friends from Niagara Bottling to come forward.

[00:29:45] Tonight, we recognize Niagara Bottling for the countless ways it quietly and powerfully pours into our schools. From donating water to supporting school and division-wide events to partnering with the Cal Ripken Senior Foundation to expand STEM opportunities, Niagara consistently steps up when asked, and often before we even ask.

[00:30:11] Niagara team members not only give resources, but also their time coming to schools to learn, connect, and volunteer as true community partners who are deeply invested in Cheshire County Public Schools, students, and families. Please join me in thanking Niagara Bolling. I love the opportunity to talk and speak with our outside partners, folks that are not connected to CCPS, but they want to be.

[00:30:39] and they want to be for many different reasons and so i don't want to take any of your thunder but i would like to know what is it about chester county public schools and the involvement from yourself and niagara bottling that wants that you want to be a partner with us if that makes sense well i'm caitlin shot i'm the hr manager for niagara bottling for our chester location just a little bit about niagara but we have 52 locations throughout north america and this is the only one in virginia and one of the things that niagara empowers each one of our plants is to find a project that's important to us.

[00:31:13] And for our team members, it is children and making sure that no one goes hungry and no one can say they don't have any water. And so that is where our heart is when it comes to making sure we're not only giving back, but we're here in Chester. And so no better place to give back than Chesterfield County.

[00:31:30] Majority of our team members live in Chesterfield County or in the surrounding areas. And so it's really important that we are asking them, hey, if you can't give back in your community, Are you good

with giving back in this one? And they are always willing to drop off water at schools and sign up to build the latest gym equipment at Thomas Dale.

[00:31:49] So we're very, very fortunate that we have an incredible group of human beings that just really want to give back to the kids in our community. Well, again, thank you for what you do for us. And as I always say, we would not be as good as we are if we did not have great partners such as yourself in Niagara Bottling.

[00:32:07] So on behalf of Chesterfield County School Board, thank you so very much. Next, we have recognition of outstanding drivers with Dr. Fry.

[00:32:34] Good evening, Madam Chair, board members, and Mr. Roberts. It's my pleasure this evening to introduce to you and tell you about our Drivers of the Month. There are many bus drivers that could be recognized this month, but each transportation area manager had to make the tough decision of selecting a single bus driver to represent excellence in their area.

[00:32:58] We'd like to recognize and honor the following drivers. Quentin Williams, Area 1, bus 507, two years of service. His assistant manager, Ms. Dowdy, will be accepting his award. Quentin's manager says he's a reliable team member within our organization and consistently goes above and beyond to get to know all of his students.

[00:33:20] His strong knowledge of each student and his quick, proactive actions have greatly supported schools when issues arise. Jason LaGreca, Area 2, bus 209, two years of service.

[00:33:37] Mr. LaGreca is unable to join us this evening. His manager, Ms. Jeffers, will accept his award. The Area 2 managers and staff say Jason is willing to help his students and co-workers whenever and wherever there is a need.

[00:33:55] He is committed to safety and making everyone's day better. Birgitta Kirby, Area 3, bus 640, nine months of service. Birgitta says she loves being a bus driver for Area 3, and the kids she drives to and from school are the best.

[00:34:14] Birgitta states she wakes up excited to start her day, enjoys working with everyone and helping the area office whenever she can, and we appreciate that. Joritha Lewis, Area 4, bus 619, one year of service.

[00:34:34] Doritha says, I love being a bus driver because I'm not only getting up for my own children, I'm getting up for my students, knowing that I'm who they're expecting to see behind the wheel of the bus. It's also my safe place. Crystal Cooper, Area 5, bus 950, eight years of service. Her assistant manager, Mr. Howell, will be accepting her award. Crystal states, being a CCPS bus driver is amazing i enjoy working with the children i also am very grateful for the office staff

[00:35:09] and couldn't ask for a better management team they're very helpful and respectful thank you for nominating me for the driver of the month thank you everyone wait a second so congratulations guys this is a very very big deal we have a lot of buses and a lot of bus drivers what you all do is so important you all and you all i'm looking at the two that are here and you all are represent thank you for coming and representing so um but what you are the first the first face that the kids see in the morning and you are the last face they see in the evening that is a big deal you set

[00:35:48] the tone and you can recalibrate the tone and so um we all the while driving a bus i might add it's unbelievable i thought you know when i get a bigger car i'm like driving a truck i can't even back it up. It's incredible. We are so grateful for you all, what you do. You, Eric, you managers, it's incredible what you all do. You make us run. How many miles?

[00:36:14] Nine million, right? It's a lot. A whole bunch of miles. Thank you all. Do you all want to say a little something, maybe a little something about your person or yourself, what you love about them? Crystal couldn't be here tonight. She had a prior engagement with her children, but she is very thankful to be awarded this honor about it.

[00:36:38] I just want to say, to be honest, I absolutely love my Area 4. They are very supportive, been supportive, and I absolutely love my kids. Like I said, I have three of my own, and I don't just wake up in the morning for them.

[00:36:55] Just to see my kids, they go crazy if the bus breaks down and thinking I'm not at work, but I'm there. So I just, I have to say, like, it's a blessing to be here, to be honest. I appreciate it.

[00:37:11] I don't know. I have to disagree. I have the best area. I have area three. They're amazing. They help me a lot. I have a lot of questions, and they're always there to answer. But my kids, I have the best kids. They are just all smiles and get on the bus, and they're like, hi, Miss Bus Driver.

[00:37:28] They're so cute. I love them all, and I've already memorized all their names. It's amazing you can memorize all those names, but it's great. I love it. So Jason does a super job for us. He does, like we said, he does anything that we ask him to.

[00:37:44] He also has kids in the school system, so he's at a chorus concert with his own. He's like, I don't know what to do. I can't be in two places. I said, go watch your child. I was like, that's the important thing. Those are minutes you can't get back, but he does a great job for us. And, yeah, like you said, they're not just, you know, watching 50-plus children.

[00:38:02] They're also driving that vehicle while they're doing it, which is very difficult. So Quentin also had a prior engagement with his child, basketball. So he wanted to be here as well, but we just love him. He knows his kids inside and out, and they know when they get off that bus tomorrow that he will be there when we come back to school.

[00:38:26] And, you know, Area 1 is a good team, too. But we're all team, as Calvin says, we're all team transportation. So I'm just thankful to be a part of this team as well. and y'all have a great holiday. Next, we have public comment.

[00:39:05] 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 tonight's meeting, posted to board doc site, and will be included in full as an addendum to the meeting minutes.

[00:39:22] 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. Madam Clerk, would you please announce this evening's in-person speakers? Madam Chair, we have four speakers this evening. They are Sachet Gandhi, Rob Hamill, Carrie Ann Stout, and Merlin Santos. 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 60 seconds

[00:39:58] remaining and read when your time has expired. As a reminder, no personal bloggings other than your 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're prepared to start speaking. Please note that comments equivalent to campaigning for any public office are in violation of school board policy 1110 and are prohibited. May we have Satchik Gandhi. Chair Coker, Vice Chair Hudgens,

[00:40:36] members of the board, and Superintendent Dr. Murray, good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Suchit Gandhi, and I'm a CCPS parent continuing the request I shared last month that Diwali be recognized as a student and teacher holiday in our school calendar. Since I last spoke to the board, support has only continued to grow. Our petition has now passed 500 supporters from families across all faiths, all united in believing that no child should have to choose between their religion and their education. Major local community organizations are also contributing their voices to the matter.

[00:41:11] Both the Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce and the Cultural Center of India, longstanding pillars of the Richmond community, have provided formal letters of support. And the Hindu American Foundation, the national organization that recently helped advance statewide Diwali recognition in California, has also provided a letter of support for Chesterfield.

[00:41:30] I will be submitting all of these letters to the clerk. Beyond this community and statewide support, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, VCIC, a long-standing CCPS equity partner and contributor to Virginia's Task Force on Inclusive School Calendars, has also offered to support Chesterfield in future calendar cycles.

[00:41:52] This conversation has gained positive regional media attention as well, with both NBC12 and VPM covering the community's support for recognizing Diwali, reflecting the momentum and broad interest around this effort. We've also received encouragement from elected leadership. Senator Ghazala Hashmi, now Lieutenant Governor-Elect, has expressed her full support and urged us to continue working with this board.

[00:42:16] In the past several days, our community learned with disappointment that the 26-27 calendar was finalized back in June. But knowing this now gives us a clear path forward. It allows us to shift our energy towards the next calendar cycle, where we hope to partner with you early, collaboratively, and transparently.

[00:42:36] Regionally, Chesterfield stands out, but not in the way we want. Henrico and Richmond Public Schools both provide Diwali off, including the Monday observance day when the holiday falls on a Sunday. This is consistent with how holidays are observed for other religions. The day off allows observance as well as recognition of its value to those who follow the faith.

[00:42:58] Respect for your own faith as well as tolerance towards others with different religious practices is a fundamental American value. There's no reason Chesterfield, one of the largest school divisions in Virginia, should be the outlier. And beyond policy and precedent, as many of you witnessed last month, this is about real families and real children whose identities deserve recognition in their own school system.

[00:43:21] To the board and to Dr. Murray, I truly appreciate your openness and your commitment to equity. I know calendar decisions involve many requirements and perspectives, but I also believe Chesterfield has an opportunity to lead, to align with regional peers, and to take a meaningful step toward ensuring all students feel seen.

[00:43:40] So my request tonight remains simple. As you begin the early stages of planning for the 27-28 calendar cycle, I respectfully ask that Diwali be included as a formal agenda item in your calendar work sessions and discussions, and that you consider inviting VCIC to support the calendar charge.

[00:43:57] Thank you for your time and consideration, and as this is the final meeting of the year, I wanted to wish the board and the superintendent, Dr. Murray, district staff, and all CCPS families a Merry Christmas. Thank you. May we have Rob Hamill?

[00:44:22] Hello, school board members, colleagues, and friends. My name is Rob Hamill, and I am the president of the Chesterfield Education Association. It's the night before the last day of class, before our winter break.

[00:44:38] As a kid, I looked forward to these holidays just as much as summer vacation, and I'm sure many of our students share that excitement this week. Some of our staff might be even more excited than the kids. So it was a busy month for the Chesterfield Education Association. We've held two CPR classes since we last saw you.

[00:44:54] We have another one scheduled for January 29th. Registration will open on January 5th as soon as we come back. Interest remains high in these classes. In the last three months, we've provided first aid recertification to 23 different staff members. We've also started a new partnership with Optivise.

[00:45:10] They are a vendor for Washington Mutual Insurance. So we'll be able to offer our members a variety of new benefits, including college savings plans and supplemental insurance. Our members will also gain access to the benefits team at Optivise who can help them save even more money with their existing VEA and NEA benefits.

[00:45:26] We hope this partnership will allow us to offer our members additional value with their dues. And we also hope that working with the Optivise team will help us get into more buildings each week and talk with more members about what they might need. We had site visits in the last month at Manchester Middle, Deep Creek Middle, Davis Middle, and Mosley Elementary.

[00:45:43] And at all of these buildings, we fielded a lot of questions about collective bargaining from both teachers and administration. Our entire staff is looking forward to new opportunities to collaborate on our contracts in the next few years. In view of this interest in collective bargaining and anticipating a likely change to Virginia law, our association is offering a new incentive program to our officers.

[00:46:04] Starting in the third nine weeks, building reps and board members of CEA will have the opportunity to earn cash stipends for participating in union work. Officers will need to sign a memorandum of understanding and complete a checklist of responsibilities defined by our representative council.

[00:46:20] And if those responsibilities are checked off, our officers will receive checks at the end of May. We've already seen this initiative generate more interest in service on our executive board. We are rapidly

filling our vacant board positions. With a stronger union structure for CEA, we hope to be able to better function as a collective voice for our membership.

[00:46:37] We also hope to use this opportunity to strengthen our committee structure. If we can get a budget committee up and running, we will be in a much better position to work with you all to lobby our board of supervisors and our general assembly to increase funding for our district. We often hear from staff who express concern about our compensation and benefits.

[00:46:55] However, few of them join together in organized groups to try and pressure our elected officials to fund our schools. As our incentive plan strengthens our union structure, we hope to strengthen our ability to work with our school board and administration to get those needed funds to Chesterfield and into our classrooms.

[00:47:14] One of our members pointed out this week that Chesterfield does not seem to offer an internship program for aspiring administrators. Educators pursuing advanced degrees in educational administration are often required to do internship hours. It's comparable to the student teaching hours that are often required in undergraduate programs.

[00:47:32] In our surrounding school district, staff may be granted the opportunity to take those internship hours in the building where they work. And as you can imagine, this creates opportunities to train up talented teachers into our next generation of administrators. Chesterfield does not seem to have an internship system like that in place. I searched our handbook and intranet today, and I was unable to find anything like this offered for our staff.

[00:47:52] But we do seem to offer classes to our tech center students who aspire to work in education. Our member requests that you examine the possibility of starting a similar internship program for administrators, or should one already exist, to please make it easier to find. Lastly, I will remind our members and residents that large parts of Chesterfield County are in Senate District 15 and House District 77.

[00:48:13] Virginia will hold special elections for a couple of seats in those districts on January 6th. Please come out and cast your vote for your state representatives. Thank you for this opportunity to speak about education in Chesterfield, and I hope you have a wonderful and warm holiday season. Thank you.

[00:48:29] May we have Carrie Ann Stout, Merlin Santos? Madam Chair, that concludes this evening's public comment.

[00:48:47] Thank you, Madam Clerk. Next, we have this evening's superintendent's report, Dr. Murray. Thank you, Madam Chair. For this evening's Meaningful Moments segment of the meeting, I wanted to share a recent highlight from Fallen Creek Elementary. Students at Fallen Creek Elementary are gaining meaningful life lessons through their work with monarch butterflies.

[00:49:10] Through an outdoor classroom initiative developed in collaboration with the Chesterfield Master Gardeners and the Virginia Master Naturalists, students are engaging in hands-on activities that deepen their appreciation for the natural world and highlight why pollinators matter.

[00:49:28] This year at Falling Creek, we lost our after-school program.

[00:49:48] That's primarily when we've been able to do the activities in the outdoor classroom that we've built over the last two years. So we've been brainstorming ways that we could involve the entire student

body. And the first thing that came up for us was the Monarch Butterfly Project.

[00:50:04] So we work closely with the Chesterfield Master Gardeners and the Virginia Master Naturalists. And they monitor community gardens and rescue the monarch caterpillars when they emerge from their eggs and they're eating on the milkweed.

[00:50:20] So they started to bring those to us with the pavilions. we set up a large display in our lobby outside of the cafeteria so all of our students have been able to watch the life cycle of the monarch. We've collected caterpillars, we've collected milkweed, we've provided cages, we've provided visuals. In the classroom visit we go into the life cycle of the butterfly. We talk to the students about it, we pass things around and then they come out here, they see the plants, they see the flowers that they land on, their host plant, the

[00:50:56] milkweed, and they tag the butterflies. The project is called Monarch Watch and it's out of the University of Kansas. The scientists are collecting the data showing, of course, if there are more monarchs, if there are less monarchs, what time of year they arrive, where they're from. So it's It's really a wonderful project as far as getting students involved in real science.

[00:51:33] We had several of our groups last year that participated in the symbolic migration and this year we decided to do it with all of the fifth grade writing groups. So they're writing like a pen pal letter. Also in their art class they're creating a beautiful monarch butterfly that all will be mailed and it will follow the migratory path of a monarch.

[00:51:53] So they go between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The kids get to understand and recognize what school's like there in Mexico for them and what they're going through and then they kind of share that information back and forth. We try to get the kids to understand the migration process and how important it is to have the monarch butterfly actually in the community and out because if without them we don't have the pollination and the other things.

[00:52:16] The butterfly population has decreased so dramatically that that's a lot of what we're trying to do is to kind of get that understanding within them. I've found that students who maybe have trouble in the classroom, they come out here and they're a different person.

[00:52:31] They put their hands in the dirt, they look at the flowers, so it makes it a real life experience for them that they'll remember forever. I don't think you remember or retain anything as much as when you put your hands on it.

[00:52:47] There's no way any child that's participated in this is not taking this in as a core memory. we're committed to this outdoor classroom space and we're always looking for things that we can bring in those academic pieces where they're getting their hands in the dirt. Actually seeing that child overcome that fear and actually hold that butterfly in their hand and to be able to release it the kids are just it's almost like they're being released at the same time the butterflies are being released they really get into it so it's been pretty amazing watching that.

[00:53:17] Thank you Dr. Murray. Board members is there any discussion? Mrs. Chatters? All I gotta say if You missed the opportunity to go by there.

[00:53:38] You missed out on something beautiful and fun. So next season, come by. More than welcome to visit and take a look. My son and I helped till the garden last year in preparation. And so if you are

handy and you like to donate your time, we take all donations of free labor to help us maintain our outdoor garden.

[00:54:01] So thank you for that, Dr. Murray. And quite fitting from our work session today with the ESAC group talking about hands-on learning. So very, very timely there. Thank you, Dr. Murray. Thank you.

[00:54:18] Madam Chair, the next presentation this evening is a report from the Special Education Advisory Committee with Ms. Manos and Ms. Gleason. Or just Ms. Gleason.

[00:54:34] She can join me. We'll have all the company up here. Dr. Murray, Madam Chair, school board members, thank you so much for having me this evening. If we haven't met, my name is Christina Gleason, and I serve as chair for the Special Education Advisory Committee. If you have met me, you know I'm a chatty Cathy, so I have my little note cards to keep me on task.

[00:54:52] And I was given a remote, too. Oh, man. If you're listening this evening and you're wondering, what is SIAC? We are an advisory committee that provides recommendations to the school board on the unmet needs of students with disabilities. We are volunteers, and we are not legal counsel.

[00:55:10] Who serves on SIAC? We have a fantastic group of volunteers, parent volunteers, who have children receiving special education in the county. These folks bring a depth of personal and professional knowledge to the table, and I am so grateful for each and every one of them. This is just a quick overview of our meetings from last year.

[00:55:29] We follow a very similar meeting cadence from year to year, with at least six meetings from September to May. So this evening, our goal is to go over the committee's recommendations to the board.

[00:55:45] Our annual recommendations are pulled from meeting topics throughout the year and reflect either current needs or emerging priorities. We're going to jump into our budget recommendations. The committee supports this first recommendation put forth by the Special Education Department.

[00:56:02] These positions you see here will support two unique programs in Chesterfield County, the Autism Day Program and the Intensive Day Program. These positions, the board-certified behavioral analysts plus registered behavioral technicians and a social worker will hopefully create positive outcomes for these very unique programs.

[00:56:20] As you know, unique programs have unique needs and have unique solutions. Next up, this is regarding instructional assistants and their contract hours. We hear this often on the committee. The challenge is presented due to the length of the IA's hours of six and a half hours when the school day is seven hours.

[00:56:42] I don't think anyone here will deny that IAs are crucial to the success of students in special education. The board fully recognizes that this is a significant expense. However, we view this cost as a critical investment to the safety of special education classrooms.

[00:57:01] Next, this is super fun, communication boards for playgrounds. If you're a student who uses alternate means of communication, a communication board, an AAC device, This would allow our students to see a little bit of themselves on the playground or perhaps in the cafeteria, and it would give their non-disabled peers an opportunity to see, this is what my friend uses.

[00:57:24] Shout out to Stacey Bayer, our teacher representative, who did some research for us and got the cost to print these through the CCPS print shop. Next, you'll notice that there's not a total here. There's not

a number for this recommendation for community-based instruction and funding for special education tools like flexible seating.

[00:57:46] As we were working on this annual report, this recommendation sort of morphed into a letter that the committee is working on to send out to principals to recommend a portion of their discretionary funds be allocated for the items here.

[00:58:02] So that letter, the committee should have together by our next business meeting. All right. The rest of our recommendations fall under categories and themes that reflect issues the committee hears about frequently. Again, the goal here, we just want to shed some light on some of these areas.

[00:58:18] First, we have inclusive and safe learning environments. We would love to see measurable targets to increase inclusion opportunities. We also would like to see some systems strengthened to prevent bullying. Children with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be targets of bullying.

[00:58:39] Emergency protocols and transportation. The committee talked a lot about transportation issues that arise from year to year, And as we were discussing this recommendation, we really feel that training could be amplified for all staff, specifically on the appropriate use of durable medical equipment and how to appropriately handle that medical equipment.

[00:58:59] We also want to point out and bring light to a new law in Virginia. It's noted here that talks about how IEP teams should assess whether that student who has the IEP needs specific accommodations during an emergency situation.

[00:59:17] Next up, early identification and intervention strategies. I think eligibility in the whole IAB process is probably our number one issue that we hear about on the committee. So eligibility and the whole process, parents are experiencing very different experiences depending on what school system they're in.

[00:59:42] If you're in this district or that district, and we should be across the board having similar outcomes. One parent shouldn't have a better experience just because they're at school A versus school B. So these inconsistent practices we would like to see addressed. Transition planning.

[00:59:59] We encourage the county to support a successful transition to adulthood, specifically for students aged 18 to 22 with developmental disabilities who may have unique needs and challenges and vulnerabilities. Finally, family engagement.

[01:00:15] Parents continually want transparent communication and consistent communication. Partner with us. We are here. We want to be your partner. There are many ways that we can engage and educate families. We love the in-the-know videos. You guys are doing a great job with those. So maybe that is an opportunity to have some of those be geared towards special education and, again, partnering with parents.

[01:00:39] So I want to take an opportunity to thank some members who have rolled off, Laura Smith, Stephen Peeks, and Siobhan Johnson. Thank you for your time on the committee. I also want to thank Mr. Paranto for coming and attending and really listening. We truly do feel like we are being heard. um it's not lost on me this opportunity to stand here tonight and share with you all um if you have spent any amount of time with me i hope you would take away that i do deeply value collaboration and i do very much

believe that there are good things happening in special education but i also know we have a lot of work to do so this evening i want to encourage you

[01:01:17] school board members to get curious about special education ask questions find out what's happening in the schools in your districts i encourage you lastly to be an example of what collaboration looks like and to lead the way to building those bridges between parents and schools because that's how we're going to move the needle forward for special education thank you all for having me this evening are there any questions thank you ms gleason board members is there any discussion mrs chatters i just wanted to say two things one that's a great presentation i like your recommendations um as an advocate parent myself i would say one of the ways to get at some of the things that you're asking for

[01:01:56] is to engage, unfortunately, the people who control the purse strings. And I'm talking about the purse supervisor. I'm talking about our state elected officials because they need to see the information that you're presenting, right? So they can see something tangible, perhaps. The visual will help them understand the impact of what they're not giving us is doing, right?

[01:02:15] And so I love your advocacy, and I would ask you to take it up. Thank you. Mr. Barante. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, thank you for your leadership on CI. uh what the folks on the board may not know and those in the gallery um you have been a fantastic chair and we greatly appreciate you uh but you have made the decision to step down from chair but you're remaining on the board which i'm very happy about uh so um a little biased because you're in the metoica district uh but you're a fantastic advocate yourself and so thank you for

[01:02:52] what you do for seac and for our families uh in working collaboratively with staff and the amount of time that's spent behind the scenes that folks just don't know about but you do it very willingly and very graciously and I do greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you on the SEAC committee because as you know that is a passion of mine and a bedrock of why I'm sitting in this chair and so with that being said as I did last year I'll ask this board again for this budget season come up to strongly uphold the recommendations from this committee in regards to the funding that they're asking for, our special education community in not only Chesterfield

[01:03:30] County, but across the nation for years has been overlooked on different levels, not just the state level from a financial perspective, but overlooked in regards to how we as a community can partner and better understand them instead of asking them to understand us.

[01:03:48] And I think one of the things that stood out tremendously in the recommendation, which I think is an easy fix that some folks just would not maybe understand unless you're you're in that arena is in the IEP accommodation for what happens when we have a fire drill how does a child with special needs respond to that that's a very abrupt thing that happens and the alarms go off and the sirens are loud and people are getting up and to better understand our students who may not understand what's going on, and adding that as an accommodation, I think, is overlooked and

[01:04:27] something that should be done. And so I greatly appreciate that that's one of the recommendations that SEAC has made. So always have an advocate in me. I greatly appreciate you, and I greatly appreciate the board. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Next, we have action items. Mr.

[01:04:46] Smith. Good evening, board members. Dr. Murray, before we start this presentation, I do want to acknowledge, board members, you have two programs in front of you. The first is the legislative program. It's got the draft watermark on there, which I'll kind of walk you through briefly this evening. The second piece is a publication regarding Judicial Recovery Academy, and this is actually a required report by law to the General Assembly, which we've

[01:05:24] sufficed to do that through this publication, but also gives you additional background information. As we talked about the 2026 General Assembly session, the first thing to consider really is kind of our timeline. As we know, clearly with this conversation, other conversations, This really is a year-round process for the elected boards and obviously for staff.

[01:05:49] So we continue the conversations about discussions with staff, about our needs with industrial schools, as well as how they advocate directly to the General Assembly through the work that I've been doing. Obviously, I've been monitoring the legislative study communities that have been about in their work.

[01:06:06] Certainly, Election Day did bring some changes with regards to political landscape, which I'll talk more about that along the way. Mid-November, the finance committees, the Senate side and House side, met, discussed, as per usual, that they will say that there's limited funds that are out there, really to kind of set expectations more than anything else.

[01:06:28] Really, for them, it's about prioritization. Early December, we had our legislative delegation meeting, which is a very productive conversation with the delegation and certainly some new members joining the delegation. And obviously, listed here was our pre-date of December 9th before we rescheduled this meeting.

[01:06:47] Yesterday, the governor did make announcements regarding the budget. I'll talk about that in a few moments as well. The session does begin on January 14th. Throughout the session, I will monitor legislation. Typically, you see about almost 2,500 to 3,000 pieces of legislation introduced.

[01:07:04] When it begins to be narrowed down, it's between 300 and 400 pieces of legislation that directly impact education, which I will track, work with staff, as well as the school board to ascertain certainly where are places we want to advocate for and against different pieces of legislation.

[01:07:20] Midway through the process, the General Assembly will begin to narrow down their budget selection points. I would note what's unique this year is having an incoming governor. So process-wise, the outgoing governor introduced his budget yesterday. The incoming governor, after she's had her inauguration, does have opportunity to put in place budget amendments, which is a very unique piece for incoming governor to do.

[01:07:46] Then the General Assembly will take all those into consideration, essentially write their budget. Once they agree upon that, then that will go to the governor to make additional amendments to sign and ultimately through the veto session. From that, as we know, obviously we will incorporate and make changes to our budget and policy along the way after July 1.

[01:08:05] When we think about our legislative principles, these are our core principles, which we use to look closely at legislation. So when we talk to legislators, when they ask us what is our position on certain legislation, primarily what we're asking them is to consider our legislative principles. Obviously, that's ensuring equitable, fair, and unbiased access, supporting maximum discretion in our school division.

[01:08:25] Really, the important part there is understanding that we're a unique school division, unique needs. We're the fifth largest school division. We kind of take that for granted, knowing that we're here in Chesterfield, but we do have almost 64,000 students. They have unique needs. We're asking for supporting the flexibility and relaxation of certain mandates, obviously the opposition of any new ones that come along the way.

[01:08:44] And the last bullet point there is unique this year, which is the timely re-benchmarking process, which the governor has put in his budget to fully fund. Our key legislative positions certainly focus around increased funding. As we've talked about over the years, there has been a legislative study through JLARC, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, that really has set the bar in our school division, that shows that we have been underfunded by over \$200 million. It's important to note the General Assembly has made some progress over the years in lifting the support cap. However, we do

[01:09:19] have additional funds that are needed at the state level. The other piece for us, obviously, is investing in the workforce and certainly the pieces that you do as a school board, also working closely with the General Assembly when it comes to pay raises. We know that certainly the board looks closely at unique positions that we have and certainly incentives where we're able to fund those. The last piece here really is the collaboration of the county government. The tone obviously our support is set for us as staff obviously is the work we do close with the county government and we work closely with them as staff members to make sure we're advocating on the same

[01:09:54] page which we always do but we also want to support their initiatives as well which we do on a staff level. I would note that in thinking about the governor's budget announcement yesterday A couple of highlights. One is to note, as Mr. Meister talked about in the work session, we were fortunate to see that the governor did put in his budget the additional half a million dollars, \$500,000 for Recovery Academy.

[01:10:19] I would note that we're very appreciative of those funds. However, it does not cover the full cost of the program. And so we've been working with the county government over the years to pull together additional funds. So I think we'll see that conversation grow, certainly has a new General Assembly, a new governor, but we're fortunate and thankful that that did make it in the governor's budget.

[01:10:41] We're also appreciative to our delegation, Dolores McQuinn, worked closely with the governor's office to advocate for us, so we're appreciative of that. The governor does have in his budget some funds set aside for potential bonuses as well as 2% pay raises for employees.

[01:10:59] We'll be looking to see certainly what the general assembly does with those. It's important to note that when we have those initiatives come forward, that's only covering a portion of the cost. That's certainly the state share versus the share that we have to come up with as a locality. The last piece, obviously, just to note, is obviously there will be some different political priorities along the way, certainly with the outgoing governor, incoming governor, and new general assembly.

[01:11:24] There will be conversations with regards to prioritization of education, Medicaid costs, as well as the conversation they're having at the state capitol with regard to tax relief. Certainly along the way, I'll be an advocate for our school division, working closely with our delegation.

[01:11:40] I know that members of this board will be obviously engaged in that conversation through some of our conversations with the delegation. We're appreciative of the work they're going to do, as

always, for our school division. Madam Chair, this evening you do have a recommend in action. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Board members, may I have a motion to approve Memo 170-25 as presented?

[01:12:03] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pranco. Aye. Lisa Hudgens.

[01:12:18] Aye. Ann Picker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have Memo 171-25 from Mr. Meister. Thank you, Madam Chair. In front of you is memo 171-25 related to the FY25 year-end funds.

[01:12:42] At the end of the fiscal year 25, we've completed our audit with much help from the county and have landed the year with about \$22.2 million of unused funds that we are asking for the board to consider their uses going forward. Of that \$22.2 million, I recommend \$7 million be appropriated. It is part of the 2027 budget process to support what we've called one-time funds, an additional \$8 million to be appropriated to the debt reserve to help manage the, essentially, our mortgage payments going forward, and the remainder to be used for several items, including \$3.5

[01:13:22] million to appropriate for replacement cycles for largely technology items, including staff laptops intercoms and classroom projection uh just under 650 000 to appropriate for vehicle replacement uh for a vehicle fleet and the last 3.1 million uh to the cip to support the construction project at ctc hall and i then turn over memo 171-25 for your consideration thank you thank you mr meister board members may i have a motion to approve memo number 171-25 as presented So moved.

[01:13:57] Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye.

[01:14:12] Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have memo number 172-25, Mr. Smith. Madam Chair and board members, staff recommends revisions to our current policy, revisions of policy 4021, home instruction.

[01:14:32] This policy has been updated to reflect and clarify current practice. I would note we've had some conversations in Chesterfield through families who had their children through home instruction, and they asked for some clarification within the schoolwork policy. I would note that we felt from a staff perspective their concerns were covered, but these are clarifying concerns, I think, which certainly illuminate certainly the concerns that they have raised, and it's largely around the disclosure piece of information.

[01:15:02] School Board Policy 1200 provides that, quote, if circumstances warrant immediate action on the proposed policy or regulation, the school board may suspend its rules and bring up the policy or regulation for immediate adoption following a first reading, end quote. Therefore, it's recommended the school board suspend its regular rules of policy adoption by waiving a second reading of the policy containing this memorandum and approved following this first reading.

[01:15:23] Opposed changes have been reviewed by the school board attorney. If approved, this provision will become effective immediately. Madam Chair, you have two recommended actions. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Board members, may I have a motion for the board to suspend its rules and waive second reading? So moved.

[01:15:38] Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Cooker. Aye. The motion carries.

[01:15:55] Board members, may I have a motion to adopt the policies to become effective immediately? So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second.

[01:16:11] Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Bronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have memo number 173-25, Mr. Smith. As a result of this meeting on October 23, 2025, the Superintendent's Advisory Policy Review Committee, known as the PRC, recommends revisions to current policies and regulations as follows.

[01:16:35] Revisions to Policy 4190, Student Wellness. These revisions to further reflect the current practice and intent with regard to recess. Proposed changes have been reviewed by the school board attorney. It is recommended the school board approve the above reference proposed revisions to current policies and regulations.

[01:16:51] Thank you, Mr. Smith. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 173-25 as presented? So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? Mrs. Chatters? I just wanted to thank the OB Gates PTA and those parents who raised the concern for us to look into and clarify the language a little bit clearer so that everyone is operating on the same page.

[01:17:16] I want to thank them for their advocacy and for reaching out and for having the conversation the way the conversation should be had by reaching out to their leadership, engaging the school board, us doing PRC. That is how the process should work, and I would continue to ask for families that have concerns to make sure you involve your school administrator in your concerns so that we can handle it at the right way.

[01:17:36] Thanks. There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Anne Cooker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have memo number 174-25, Mr. Smith.

[01:17:54] As a result of this meeting on October 23rd, 2025, the superintendent's advisory policy review committee, known as the PRC, recommends revisions to current policies and regulations as follows. Revisions to policy 3170-R, requirements for a waiver of the 140 clock hour rule, and a draft new policy 3176, awarded credit by assessment.

[01:18:18] Proposed changes have been reviewed by a school board attorney. It is recommended the school board approve the above referenced new policy and proposed revisions to current policies and regulations. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 174-25 as presented?

[01:18:35] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Paranto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Ann Cooker.

[01:18:51] Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have memo number 175-25 from Dr. Pope. Good evening, Board Chair, Vice Chair, members, and Dr. Murray.

[01:19:06] Before you is Memo 175-25, entitled Changes to the 2026-27 CCPS School Calendar. Following the school board action on June 3, 2025, in Memo 084-25 to adopt the 2026-27 CCPS traditional school calendar, the following edits are requested at this time.

[01:19:27] In first semester, change the previously approved holiday on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, the correct date of Monday September 21, 2026 and in that same week of September remove the three hour early release notation for students on Friday September 25th making this now a full day of instruction in the second semester note Thursday March 25, 2027 with an end of third quarter

[01:20:01] notation this will be a full day of instruction for students add Friday March 26, 2027 as a full day holiday notation while these edits move us from a 178 to a 177 day calendar instruction all hours are recovered by eliminating two of the three hour early release days as I just noted it is recommended that the school board approve these edits at this time as it will allow staff to move forward with the hiring preparation and other critical division planning tasks for a

[01:20:36] successful 26-27 school year. Thank you, Dr. Pope. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 175-25 as presented? So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? There has been a motion and a second. Madam Clerk, please call roll on the motion.

[01:21:00] Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Paranto. Aye. Lisa Huggins. Aye. Ann Coker. Aye. The motion carries. Next, we have memo number 176-25 from Dr. Pope. Good evening again. Before you is memo 176-25 entitled Bellwood Calendar Transition.

[01:21:18] With the school board action on September 9th, 2025 in memo 127-25 to discontinue the year-round school model at Bellwood Elementary School beginning in the 26-27 school year, a subsequent action is required to identify the transition timeline for Bellwood to return to that traditional calendar.

[01:21:38] The memo before you presents a transition timeline in which Bellwood students will complete their 25-26 school year on June 3, 2026, as already noted in their approved calendar. Rather than some Bellwood students attending a summer intercession, as noted on their currently approved calendar, qualifying Bellwood students will have the opportunity to join the traditional CCPS summer school offered from June 22nd through June 16th.

[01:22:09] Bellwood teachers seeking summer employment are also invited to apply to teach in the traditional CCPS summer school program. The summer vacation window for Bellwood students not attending summer school will be June 4th through August 23rd, 2026 after which all Bellwood students will return to the 26-27 school year following the traditional calendar for daycare and vacation planning purposes we recommend the board take action to approve this transition timeline so that Bellwood families and staff

[01:22:42] can plan accordingly for their summer thank you Dr. Pope. Board members, may I have a motion to approve memo number 176-25 as presented. So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? Dr. Pope, can you state again what the summer school dates were?

[01:23:06] The traditional calendar summer school is June 22nd through July 16th. Okay. So students would end at Bellwood on June 3rd, and then they would begin summer school on June 22nd. June 22nd. Okay. Thank you, you're welcome there has been a motion in a second madam clerk please call roll on the motion Dominique Chatters aye Stephen Paranto aye Lisa Hudgens aye and Coker aye the motion carries

thank you thank you next we have items for board review madam clerk would you please read the items for this evening madam chair tonight's agenda includes the following items

[01:23:44] for board review number one magisterial district improvement funds fy 2026 number two board committee reports number three pre-k update october 2025 number four recovery academy report number five fy 2026 financial reports for quarterly period ending september 30th 2025 number six memo number 177-25 awareness of technical edits to the 2026-2027 program of studies and number seven memo number 178-25 revised vboe division literacy plan template

[01:24:23] thank you madam clerk next we have this evening superintendent's remarks dr high i was going to kick it over to her i can see things happening down with the with the t up i've got some comments too but uh i want to thank i want to thank lisa for being prepared to stand in today in the event I might be absent so she had prepared some of her own updates which don't match all of mine so I'm going to yield some of my time to my wonderful deputy Lisa. Thank you Dr. Mary. Good

[01:25:02] evening everyone. The holiday season is upon us and there has been a lot of merriment in our schools this week. A few highlights this evening we visited several schools this week. One very fun event was CECLA had a special visitor and students were smiling. I even saw a picture of Ms. Coker visiting with our special guest. We also went to Ecoff Elementary. We were asked to judge a gingerbread house competition. Third grade won overall. They were the Grinchmans. And second grade came in second place and their gingerbread house was We Are the World. And there was really

[01:25:39] only a 0.2 difference between the two, 15 to 14.8, but congratulations to both third grade and second grade on their win. At the middle schools, we've begun preparations for curriculum nights and open houses for rising sixth graders. A shout out to Deep Creek Middle School, who hosted a fantastic event last evening. In our high school, we've recently announced the inaugural class for the Play Chesterfield Scholar-Athlete Program, a collaborative effort with Chesterfield County's Division of Sports, Visitation, and Entertainment, as well as CBS 6 WTVR.

[01:26:14] We look forward to the weekly spotlights of these student-athletes that will appear on CBS 6 beginning January 11th and continuing weekly, showcasing two students from each of our high schools. And lastly, I know Dr. Murray is going to also say this, but I want to wish all students, staff, and families a wonderful holiday season and a restful winter break, and we look forward to seeing our students back on January 5th, 2026.

[01:26:41] Thank you, Dr. High. A few other items of note. One, we're starting to get some communication traffic asking about graduation dates. I just want the community and our staff to know that we're not arbitrarily holding on to that information.

[01:27:01] It has been well-planned and thought out very early in the year. We are hesitancy is when a contract is not yet signed and VCU has had a hiccup on their end with somebody that they're working with.

[01:27:18] They have confirmed that it won't be an issue, but it might be another week or two before we are able to put that information out. So when you come back, we'll have an additional present for everybody in early January, hopefully revealing the dates and times of high school graduation.

[01:27:38] Also of note, very recently the VDOE put out not just our full accreditation report. We're proud that all of our schools remain fully accredited. But for those maybe a little more unaware, this is the first year that they've now assigned additionally a ranking for schools.

[01:28:00] And what this did for us was underscore what we've already known, what we've been saying for a long time, and where we've structured a lot of our work and resources. And that is that great work and learning is happening at many of our schools.

[01:28:20] But there are also many needing greater support. And fully funding schools at the state level is a means by which for school divisions to accomplish that. So on a related note, and Sean kind of peeled back, and Bob as well, some of the governor's budget initiatives.

[01:28:40] Among things that we were pleased with, and there were several, we were most excited about the re-benchmarking that will infuse the Commonwealth and school divisions with around \$1.2 billion additional dollars designated to public education.

[01:28:58] Being a division our size, we expect a decent piece of pie, but we are waiting on the calc tool to reveal what that will look like. But we anticipate a nice little infusion of money that we didn't get last year.

[01:29:16] I also want to thank the Board of Supervisors for their work on securing a lot of land for our future projects. Last month, I believe I was able to share or thank them for Grange Hall Elementary as well as land for a brand new Dale Elementary School.

[01:29:39] In January, they will vote on acquiring land in the Midlothian Corridor, which would then be home to a replacement Midlothian Middle School, which is a 100-year-old building, as well as a brand-new elementary school in the Midlothian District.

[01:29:57] I also want to clarify that we use the language more geographically. It says Old Hundred Area Elementary School. That is not a replacement for what is still a pretty brand new Old Hundred Elementary School out there.

[01:30:14] It would be an additional school in that corridor. So we're very excited about that. And then lastly, and kind of piggybacking on Dr. High's sentiments, I would love to wish everybody just a relaxing, joyful holiday and season and winter break.

[01:30:36] But I also want to acknowledge how Ms. Chatters kicked off with our invocation that this is a tough time for some folks as well. So may they find some peace in being around family and friends. I also want to tell our parents of seniors, so our 12th graders, that this is a wonderful, disconnected time to apply for college scholarships or apprenticeships or to go meet with your recruiter.

[01:31:06] Help your parents out a little bit. Don't make them push you out the door. Go first. And lastly, to our staff who are either taking some leave because they're otherwise expected to work a fair amount of winter break or for those who have those two weeks off.

[01:31:23] My expectation is that when you are off, that you disconnect because we need everybody recharged and reset and ready to go for the second half of the school year where the rubber truly meets the road. And I want to extend warm wishes to each of you as well this holiday season.

[01:31:41] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Dr. Murray and Dr. High. Next, we have announcements, communications, and school board comments. School board members, are there any announcements or comments? Mrs. Shatters. I just wanted to give some shout-outs to some of my schools.

[01:31:58] I got a chance to be a judge at Meadowbrook High School for their Deck the Halls contest. And I will say they really did go Deck the Halls. We had a live Santa Claus with live trees, and that's the PE department.

[01:32:13] I think they came in tied for first with Polar Express, like the whole hallway was laced with a train and student spaces. It was amazing. So shout out to Meadowbrook High School for that. I also attended Obie Gates Inclusive Winter Concert, where I got to see our children who are using sign language or learning Chinese and singing and performing to those things. We had a um a blind child playing the drums like it was so beautiful to watch um and then we had Jacobs Road Elementary School going over to Manchester Middle School to watch the orchestra perform

[01:32:50] holiday music um so that was a nice sight to see as well so um as I said earlier in my remarks this is a tough time for folks and my heart goes out to our school board clerk and I just want everyone to know that during this time it's okay to not be okay right you should have a support system or somebody you can call and just yell at or scream on the phone to and then go ahead and do all the things that you're juggling with so take care of yourself this holiday season and happy

[01:33:25] holidays to my fellow colleagues. Mrs. Hutchins? So first of all I wanted to express my very deep condolences to the family of Muhammad Murzakov, the student who recently graduated from Midlothian High School. Other than just being stunned, shocked, saddened, and just, I don't

[01:34:00] know, without words, every time I heard someone speak about this individual, it was always with such the theme again and again was he was deeply caring he was such a kind-hearted person he was brilliant he was driven but he had a heart and he was a beautiful person and you know I heard that but I didn't really put it in I couldn't visualize it until I was reminded by Dr. Abel the principal

[01:34:35] at Midlothian that he had come up here for an award and we were able to give him an award for work on the Latin they had done this podcast and it was really cool and there was the teacher a new teacher a couple of teachers and two girls that he had worked with and then and then Muhammad and the the two girls didn't really say anything when they were they were given the opportunity and then he took he took the mic he was very comfortable you could tell he was confident

[01:35:10] comfortable but lovely and he didn't talk about himself he didn't talk about how excited he was or the work he put in he immediately shone the light he shined the light on these two girls and he talked about them and what they put in and I was at the moment I was I was just charmed by this person. But then watching it back, it was just beautiful. He was a beautiful person. It was a

[01:35:41] beautiful moment to relive. And I just, my heart is broken for his family, his friends, and frankly, the wider Midlothian community. So that's all I have. And I just wanted to wish his family my deepest condolences. That's all. Mr. Baranto. Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the things I read about Muhammad is he was willing to be a doctor to give back. And so I just, you know, there's no

[01:36:17] explanation. But one of the things I saw that really made you pause was there was a GoFundMe set up for the family. And the last time I looked, there was over \$300,000 plus raised. And I'm sure by now it's, it's higher than that. Money doesn't solve this, right? It doesn't make things any, any better. But as, as fellow citizens, we want to be able to help in times like this. And I think that's a way to let the family know, you know, that you care, that you're here and that you're,

[01:36:56] you know, you want to, you want to help. And so I greatly appreciate not just within this community, but across the nation that saw that GoFundMe and felt moved to contribute to that. And so on a very much lighter note, I do want to give a shout out to Woolridge Elementary.

[01:37:16] Excuse me. They had the opportunity to sing the national anthem the other evening at the VCU girls basketball game where they took on American. I think it's American University. VCU won. It's probably because the Woolridge kids sang so, so well.

[01:37:32] um, little biased, uh, on my end, right. That's, that's for all, uh, you know, everyone knows that's where my son goes and he was a part of that. Um, but just to, to experience, um, seeing it through their eyes, these kids out on the court, uh, because they put them center court when they sang the national anthem and, uh, you know, they have the flags in the background and, uh, you know, the lights dim and whatnot. And it's really, uh, pretty awesome to watch. Uh, but I just, I greatly appreciate ccps and the different administrators who seek out those opportunities for our students for them to experience something different that they would probably not get the

[01:38:11] opportunity to experience had it not been for maybe the music class that they were in or the administrator that they uh are are um you know partnered with and so greatly appreciate that um it is rough i will admit that it is rough uh however um you know we we have to look for the light. And I think it's very fitting that those that celebrate Hanukkah, the season of light, they're currently in that season. So I wish those that practice that happy Hanukkah season were coming up on Christmas. So for those who observe Christmas, Merry Christmas. And

[01:38:50] immediately after that is Kwanzaa. So that those who observe Kwanzaa, all my best. And we have a new year coming up. And I think like many people, right, you just you hope for the best and you want to put your best foot forward. And I hope that our teachers and our students, our faculty, our staff and administration and central office folks that we do that collectively and we become better than what we were before, because that's the only way we're going to get progress is if we do it together. So with all that being said, thank you. Greatly appreciate it. Thank you to all my

[01:39:30] colleagues for their words and I want to thank Ms. Hudgens for reminding us of the story of that young man I want to go back and watch now I mean because that is that's what it's about it's to remembering those moments so thank you for sharing that and for the fun activities that happened this week at CECLA as Dr. High mentioned not only did those students receive a book but they also We had a generous donation from an organization up in D.C., partnered with Toys for Tots,

[01:40:06] and there were thousands of toys on the stage. And to see those kids when they came into lunch, which they could not go up and see these toys or touch them during lunch. They were very well behaved. Our special guest went to their rooms along with some of our students that do the Teachers of Tomorrow to deliver those toys to the students.

[01:40:33] And so it was just a warming moment to see that happen at our preschool. And then ECOF, I'm glad to hear who won. I did not hear who won. That was a very hard competition. The gingerbread houses were amazing. And then to the Wells Elementary School, unfortunately the snow canceled one of their holiday events.

[01:40:54] I was going to be a guest reader, so next year I will be there. But happy holidays to all of the CCPS family. As Dr. Murray said, please rest, recharge, enjoy your family, and God bless.

[01:41:11] Our school board will hold its annual organizational meeting on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 6.30 p.m. here in the public meeting room. If there's no further business, we need a motion to adjourn. I

make a motion to adjourn. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion? Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Anne Coker. Aye.

[01:41:36] The motion carries. The December 18, 2025 school board business meeting is adjourned.



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