



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Chesterfield County School Board Work Session, Thursday, January 22, 2026

Date Thursday, January 22, 2026
Place Chesterfield County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 49m (video)

- Official meeting video (Swagit): <https://chesterfieldschoolsva.new.swagit.com/videos/372968>
- Official minutes (BoardDocs, on the Feb 10, 2026 agenda for approval): [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DQYVDP804504/\\$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202026.01.22%20Budget%20Work%20Session.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DQYVDP804504/$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202026.01.22%20Budget%20Work%20Session.pdf)

Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-24. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] Good afternoon. I'd like to call the January 22nd, 2026 School Board Budget Work Session to order. First, we have an update on the Chesterfield Recovery Academy from Mr. Savoy. Good afternoon, everyone. It's good to see you finally do this presentation.

[00:00:28] I know you're excited about the hearing of all the nice budget discussions afterwards, but I'm going to go ahead and hit you with our information first. I'm Justice Savoy. I am the program coordinator for Chesterfield Recovery Academy, and I always like to say the first recovery academy in the state of Virginia. So with our journey, it started back in June of 2022 with former Governor Glenn Duncan, where he signed the legislation for our funding.

[00:00:51] August the 2nd, we had our ribbon cutting. September the 8th of that year, we had our first day of school, and we've been running ever since. And we're now in our fourth school year. So with funding Health Bill 6001, we receive half a million dollars per year, and that goes towards personnel, operation costs, transportation costs.

[00:01:10] Also, with the Department of Behavioral Health and the CSB, they have funding for our clinical team, and that provides for the clinicians, the peers, drug testing, and outside therapy as well. And so our enrollment, we're currently at 14 with seven different counties represented in all grade levels as well.

[00:01:30] And so you'll see through years, there's going to be a fluctuation in enrollment, and that will be based on students graduating, those who are moving, but also those who may transition back to their old school as well. So our current staff positions, we have 10 positions altogether, and I would like to stay on our first day of school. We started with three people, myself, our office manager, and our teacher, and now we have 10 positions all together. So we have made a lot of growth over the last three years. So with our community organizations, we still work with Chesterfield Mental Health.

[00:02:01] They provide our supervision for our clinical team. They assist with hiring our clinical staff as well, but also providing that backbone that they need for providing good services for our students and also community resources as well. We work with VCU Ransom Recovery. So they are basically the collegiate level of the recovery high school. So these are college students that are coming in and they have group work kids every Friday. And so it's better when you have those who are closer in age. And so they teach about life and sobriety after high school and what that looks like and also how to navigate life after high school. They also teach them how to teach their story. A lot of times when you go through addiction and then you're finally in recovery, you have to

[00:02:38] explain what happened. So being a teacher of people their story and how to explain it is actually a confidence booster for our students. So we also work with Recovery Corps. They're a part of AmeriCorps. They provide our peer navigator. And so the great thing is that they pay their salary and their benefits.

[00:02:57] And so they are basically a free staff member to us for a two-year contract, which is amazing. And so with a peer navigator and also a peer recovery specialist, this is someone who has a personal journey in recovery themselves. But they have gone through a training program, have over 500 hours of field experience, but then also have passed a national certification test to be a peer recovery specialist.

[00:03:16] So highlighted events. We were awarded a grant through the Oak Road Abatement Authority that will cover transportation costs and outreach of over \$340,000, which is amazing, because transportation is a huge barrier for our students if we do cover 15 different districts.

[00:03:38] For leadership, I presented at the National Conference last summer about being a new administrator for a recovery high school, so it was three years strong, operating a recovery high school for new administrators, and so I believe it was well-received. It was a good presentation, and so I haven't asked to present again, but adding on, an additional fourth year, and going through the accreditation process.

[00:04:02] So another great thing is the expansion of recovery schools in the state. So this fall, three additional schools open up. You have Harbor Point and Chesapeake that is operated by Virginia Beach. You have River Ridge within Waynesboro, and then Rise Academy in Loudoun County. All three academies are based on our model.

[00:04:18] All three academies have provided technical assistance in opening the schools. We have a new facility dog, Valen, which is great. So when you have a facility dog or a therapy dog on campus, it helps a lot of the anxiety for our students when they first come in, especially for intakes because they don't know what to expect when they come in.

[00:04:39] Also, the dog is trained to go throughout the building so they can be in class, they can go to lunch, they can be in therapy sessions, which actually helps a lot of our students actually open up and

express themselves. For accreditation, so November 6th and 7th, we had an on-site visit from the Associates of Recovery Schools, so they were there all day.

[00:05:00] It was a lot going on there, so on that team was basically a bunch of, I would say, heavy hitters on this team. So it was led by Dr. Andrew Fentz, who basically wrote the book on how to open a recovery high school. He's also the co-founder of the Social Recovery Schools. He is a professor at Vanderbilt University. And so he leaves a lot of the recovery grants, not only that, but also research in the area as well, dealing with adolescents. Our lead for clinical was Ms. Beth Samuelson, who had 30 years of experience. And then also for academic with Robin Mead, who had 25 years of experience in recovery school.

[00:05:34] So this team was the top notch that came down to evaluate us. So they were there. They had classroom observations. They met with students. They also had clinical observations. So they sat in our groups and individual sessions to see how we actually interact with our peers and also our students.

[00:05:51] They had 10 interviews overall. So it was central office, myself, clinical staff, academic, students, parents, community partners. So there was a lot going on the last two days. And then overall, we had a great outcome. We met 24 out of 26 standards, which is great because we had only been open for three years and three months at that time.

[00:06:11] And so with our academic standards, we met all 36 indicators for academic, which was basically 100% for academics. And so over the Christmas break, I got official word that we are officially accredited for the next year, so 232.

[00:06:26] So now we're the first recovery high school, the first for credit recovery high school as well. for, well, no longer upcoming events. It passed already. So we had our safety event, and we prepared our students for the winter break because, you know, they're home for two weeks without being on campus.

[00:06:45] So we prepared them, like, how to use Narcan. If you were out in the community, someone made an overdose, how to prepare them for EMTs. Don't leave your friends or don't leave people in the community. Prepare them. I've talked about the state report of law, and also parents were invited as well, so they got to see our community resources, how we interact with our students, and then they also were trained as well.

[00:07:05] And then we have our end-of-year ceremony. on may 14th you'll receive your invitations later this is we're going to celebrate all our students participating in the program and our students can wear their cap and gowns and they're recognized so we do this the week before graduation so they participate in both our ceremony but also their high school graduation as well for future goals for this school year to come up with 25 enrolled and have 60 of our counties represented last year we hit 53 so i'm going for 60 this year and then just continuing to maintain our new accreditation status and then just building our growth within the community as well.

[00:07:45] Thank you, Mr. Savoy. Board members, is there any discussion? Mr. Paranto. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Savoy, thank you.

[00:08:01] For those who may not know, you were actually supposed to present at the last meeting, but because of time constraints, you were very gracious in coming to today's work session to give this presentation. So I apologize for the time constraint last time, but thank you for being willing to come today just a few questions uh for understanding purposes uh could you share with me the difference between a

specialist and a navigator well those are just simply uh titles so we're recovery corps they just name navigators but their true title is a specialist it's just a thematic thing okay

[00:08:38] got that thank you and then how does the transportation work you had mentioned over three hundred and forty thousand dollars for transportation is that a bus is that a van what does that look like? So it's both. So usually the kids in county will receive a bus. Those are out of county. We have a private car event. And so that's door to door. And so that's with our silver fleets. So that's where a lot of the costs come from. Because right now we have one student that comes from Charles City. And so their ride is about an hour every day. That answers my next question, which is, do we make a route to pick up the students? But if it's coming from Charles

[00:09:13] City, you're not making a route. That's a direct shot in back. And then last, just a request. Valen is more than welcome to come with you next time and would like to meet him or her. And, you know, I just want to get that experience as well.

[00:09:29] Just throw it out there. I'll bring him in. But thank you for the presentation. Thank you for answering my questions. I do appreciate it. And keep up the great work. Thank you for what you do. Thank you. I have a quick question, again, about the dog.

[00:09:47] Is he there every day? Well, every day that Mr. K is there. So he went to New York for two weeks and trained with canine companions. Wow. So every day that he's there, Valen's there. That's really cool. Well, thank you. We really appreciate you sharing and your patience. No problem.

[00:10:04] Thank you. Take care. Next, we have a presentation on the superintendent's FY 2027 proposed financial plan from Dr. Murray and Mr. Meister.

[00:10:25] I just want to say before we kick off with this presentation, congrats to Justin. That accreditation is a pretty big deal. So impressive job by you and your team and the kids. So, okay, sit for a little while.

[00:10:45] Yeah, that's fine. Well, good evening, Madam Chair and members of the board. It is mine and Bob's pleasure to share with you all this evening our proposed operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year as well as our capital improvement plan.

[00:11:02] Before I jump into the slide deck, I first want to thank Bob Meister and Denise Branscombe for their heavy lifting of this work, making the numbers make sense, making our vision of where we wanted to spend money wisely and prioritize certain needs that are going to best support our students and staff a reality.

[00:11:26] So thank you, Bob and Denise. Last year, you may recall that when we presented the budget, we had some columns, and they looked like things that we must do and we have money to do.

[00:11:44] And then we had another column that was things that we must do and we don't yet have money for them. And then we had some other buckets of things that we should be doing and things that we desire to do in the longer term. Well, this year, Bob and I are pleased to present a balanced budget that does not have that second column.

[00:12:07] So things that we must do and things that we really wanted to do, we were able to do. And so I want to express some gratitude first to the state for their re-benchmarking. I would be remiss, however, to

say that while that number is nowhere close to what JLARC has suggested our school division deserves, it was a big, healthy step in the right direction.

[00:12:37] And so we were able to do a lot of neat things. And Bob will kind of walk through all the technical puts and takes of that. But the re-benchmarking coupled with a contribution back, if I can call it that, Bob, through VRS, provided a healthy infusion financially where we were able to kind of get a lot closer to some of our big goals, one of those being a \$60,000 starting teacher pay and \$16 an hour for hourly employees.

[00:13:13] What you will hear tonight is that that gap was right around 10% if we bid off that apple all at once, which we cannot afford, but we get halfway home with this year's proposal. Some other centerpieces of this budget include a very thoughtful bus fleet program that will allow us to double the amount of new buses we purchase each year. This year was 22, next year

[00:13:43] will be 45. And with a very strategic investment in a financial plan over a period of time, we will be able to see our goal of making sure that our kids are in buses that are 15 years or newer a reality. And our goal now is that they will be 12 years or newer in very short order.

[00:14:10] We also will explore with you some increases, cost of doing business, opening new schools, inflationary adjustments, et cetera, while also earmarking funds that continue to support our students.

[00:14:27] So I'll jump in at this point. And these next 11 or 12 slides are more for our community. You all are very familiar with these. To those tuning in or watching a recording later, I just want to express that it is codified that superintendents present to their board, respectively, a needs-based budget.

[00:14:55] That is what we have done. I'm sure the county government will be pleased to see a balanced budget and one that is not asking for their rescue to fulfill anything that we still have hanging out there as required to fulfill.

[00:15:14] Also, for the community, this just kind of paints a timeline picture. Our budget process is a year-round effort. We kick off in the summer. We move through the fall. We have our white paper initiatives, and then we begin our prioritization.

[00:15:32] We wait on the governor's proposed budget, the calc tools, to see how much we can fulfill. And then I present to you, and we move into the community and listen to their feedback at town halls, which are likely to be rescheduled. So stay tuned for those meeting notice updates.

[00:15:50] Then you will eventually vote on this budget later this year. we'll send it over to our friends at the county they will approve and then we wait for the final state budget and then it comes back for your final approval what we know to be true is that the reason we've seen the growth that we have in chesterfield over many many years is for a host of reasons but one of those being that our schools are great places

[00:16:28] to work and learn. So families choose to call Chesterfield home, not for the big booming businesses that are nearby, but for the remarkable school atmospheres that our principals and their teams, their staff, create each and every day where the magic truly happens. On this slide, you'll note just kind of some of the bigger stats. Chesterfield is, even though a bedroom community where we kind of tuck away in our little niche communities or suburbs. We are one

[00:17:04] of the 65 largest school divisions in the entire country and one of the five largest in the Commonwealth. And with or among our 68, soon to be 69 schools, we're proud that many of them carry unique designations noted in the top right. We are 100% accredited, which divisions around the region cannot lay claim. So we're very proud that we exemplify compliance. 64,000 students

[00:17:39] across 68 schools, one of those being pre-K setting, two technical centers, and then a bunch from elementary, middle, and high in between. This is one of our famous slides, our nine slide, which i feel like we're we're serving less meals this year it used to be nine million i was going to stick with that but we're we're cleaning more square footage this year by 0.5 so that makes up part of the difference we still travel a lot of miles on the road to get our kids to and from

[00:18:17] school safely and ernie and his team deployed 65 000 new chromebooks this year you'll see at the top, if you stretch your eyes a little bit, where the portions of our over \$1 billion budget are contributed. It should be no surprise that the majority, almost 70%, are designated to instruction.

[00:18:44] So we're not just a traditional school division. We do have several opportunities for students to explore their learning. I mentioned early childhood. So learners as young as three years old join us each and every day to set them up for a path to success once they enter kindergarten. We are still home to the first K-8 virtual school in the Commonwealth. And as Justin mentioned in his presentation, also home to the

[00:19:19] model recovery academy and the first in the commonwealth of course you know we have our two ctc campuses we are excited that we are in renovation of the ctc hull street campus where later this fall it will give way to to new programs and new learning over a two-year period We will see 650-ish new seats realized over there so that students can really choose what pathway is going to set them up for the greatest success after high school.

[00:19:56] And then in high school, if online learning works best for you, we do have CCPS online serving 3,000 plus students. Our ultimate goal, graduating our seniors.

[00:20:13] Last year we graduated just over 4,200, and to the right of that infographic, you'll see how much our teachers have set these kids up for adulting success.

[00:20:29] Many college credits earned, as well as work-based learning experiences, and career and industry certifications of just over 9,000. Bob likes to say that he and I don't sit in a room and create this budget by ourselves.

[00:20:49] Indeed, we look for input before we even get to this point. On this screen, you'll see some of the contributors that got us to what we are presenting here tonight to include division leadership, directors, chiefs, et cetera, various departments, your school board advisory groups that you oversee, as well as school personnel.

[00:21:12] I want to take this moment, and I think Bob has a slide for it later on, to thank the members of our cabinet, so division leadership. We asked this year that we kind of explore the white paper exercise a bit more deliberately.

[00:21:28] So white papers, for those tuning in, are new asks, so things that we're not currently doing that departments or chiefs want to see come into reality. What we asked this year was look at your overall budget and see where we could be more efficient in our spending.

[00:21:48] If something is not working the way that we anticipated it to, or it has lived out its age and something different is better for it, then allow that to kind of mitigate the cost of your white paper ass.

[00:22:05] So we called them red papers. I think Dr. Pope came up with a more clever term of pink papers. marrying the white and the red. So I want to thank them for their work there. And a lot of that work allowed us to explore some priorities more currently than putting it into the budget proper.

[00:22:26] We were able to free up some dollars now to do some things this year as opposed to letting things sit and absorbing it through this process. You know this, but we are required to be in compliance with state and federal laws.

[00:22:44] there are teacher to student ratios there are expectations for resource and ESL and special education teaching caseloads as well as counselors and nursing positions and we are committed to compliance so some of what you'll hear about this evening speaks to financial commitment to

[00:23:16] ensuring that we remain compliant with a growing landscape. But what we know about Chesterfield is we've never been comfortable with SOQs or being compliant. We want to go above and beyond, and that's why we can point back to that slide earlier in the presentation of why folks move here. Our schools excel because we commit over what state allocations suggest would be okay. And we're not

[00:23:51] okay with okay. So when you hear about SOQs, and this is more to the community, we would offer, if you're looking for a way to push in and advocate or support, when we get unfunded mandates from the General Assembly or partially funded mandates, we have to work some things around, and it might mean not doing something that we wanted to do. When we hear about teacher raises from the state, Governor Youngkin put in a 2% budget. We see half of that, and it's only given

[00:24:29] to SOQ positions. We come up with the rest. So I'll end with that while many districts around the Commonwealth are shrinking in enrollment. Chesterfield has remained pretty flat for the last couple of years and even this year, maybe even with a slight decline of about 100-ish students. Probably got that wrong, but Bob will correct me. It's somewhere in that ballpark.

[00:25:04] And frankly, that has given us an opportunity to address some years-old infrastructure issues. We're building schools now in partnership with the county government that we could have used several years ago. We're glad that we have many on the horizon that you will hear about in our capital improvement plan later this evening.

[00:25:24] But we do project a modest growth through 2031 of nearly 2,000 students. And I'll end with stealing some of Bob's thunder. Another number that we're very proud of, I kind of spoke more generally about the pay raise.

[00:25:42] Last year, you'll recall, we did a 3% raise. That was more than we could afford at the time, but we knew it was important. This year, we are proposing a 5% raise for our staff. Bob will get into the technical aspects of that.

[00:26:00] We're also proposing raises in our stipend positions, so academic and athletic stipends, as well as our daily substitute rate and some other areas of compression that we have addressed this year.

[00:26:18] With that, I'm going to turn it over to Bob, and he's going to talk through about 70-ish slides between the two slide decks. So settle in. I hope Elke left you some chocolates. Thank you, Dr. Murray. And I promise not to take any more than three or four hours, if that's okay. In all seriousness, we will move

through this relatively quickly. I am happy to say that we do have several other opportunities to engage this board. If you have questions, by all means, I'm happy to answer them as we go.

[00:26:49] we have some work sessions set up as well. But before I sort of dive into the details, I want to pull back up and talk about our budget at the 10,000-foot level. First and foremost, I want to talk about sort of where we get our money from. So you can see here local, state, and federal make up the three big pieces. That's no surprise to anyone. 54% of our funding comes from the state and this includes all funds uh so our normal operating fund where we tend to spend most of our time talking but also grants and food service uh but state still remains the main

[00:27:25] contributor to our uh to our ongoing funding local and community contributions uh property tax etc 41 and the last piece i highlighted here uh as federal support programs five percent of our money, give or take, comes from the federal angle, think IDEA, title funds, things like that. I pause on that here and highlight it more so now than previously, just given some of the uncertainty we've seen at the federal level over the last several months. I wanted to, one, point out to this board that 5% is not zero by any stretch, but it is not a major

[00:28:04] portion of our budget either. Are we sensitive to it? Yes. Do we want to see any disruption to it? No. But I do want to just make sure the board is comfortable knowing that it is a piece of the puzzle, albeit a smaller piece of the puzzle. So how do we fund ourselves with that money? We generally spend our money in three buckets. The operating fund, which is what I'll spend, I don't know, 80 of these 75 slides talking about. There is a few others related to food service and grants. You see both of those are about 4%. I will pause for two seconds and comment on the 8 million meal comment.

[00:28:45] Unfortunately, heading into next week, this may prove to be true this year as well. We had a few more snow days last year than we did the year before, and at about 50,000 meals a day, those add up. So we wound up just under nine this year on food service. Hopefully, we will get back over nine so we can keep the integrity of the 9 million slide next year.

[00:29:05] So as we put all that into the, I'll just say the nerdy bobslide, here is the sum. We are at \$1.1, just over \$1.1 billion with all funds included, including ARGs here, just under a 5% increase. You can see operating fund at about 4.85% and just under \$48 million of new revenue coming in.

[00:29:27] We'll supplement that with some savings on the operating side, which we'll talk about in a second. But we're starting this year in a much better place than we were in previous years, and we'll get into that a little bit more as well. I will continue to stress grants and food service here.

[00:29:43] You see mostly flat on grants. I'll talk about that a little bit more here in food service. Sort of food price inflation is the main driver of that increase as we look forward. And more on those two services here.

[00:29:59] I mentioned heightened sensitivity to grants and food service. I will pause for a few slides to dive a little bit deeper into that at this point. Typically in the budget presentation, I don't bring up grants and food service to late in the game because there's quite frankly not much interesting that happens there. What happened last year tends to be what happens next year and that tends to be the place where this goes. Although this year we are continuing to watch and observe closely. I mentioned federal uncertainty. We have a proposal here of a flat grant proposal more or less largely on the back of what has been happening at the

[00:30:35] federal level for continuing resolutions at that level. For those of you who aren't aware when the federal level, when they do a continuing resolution for the federal budget, that basically means pick up last year's budget and repeat it next year, which equals for education funding flat.

[00:30:52] Yes, a lot of these things are likely to move around to different agencies, which may come with different rules and different regulations. We're keeping our eye close on that one. But at this point in the game, continuing resolution looks to be where we're going to land. Even the House Appropriations Committee came out with their preliminary budget estimate just yesterday.

[00:31:12] or maybe two days ago, that suggested FLAT as well. So I think we're safe with this assumption for now, but I will say I won't know anything more until much later in the game, probably spring, summer, so well after when this budget is approved and if we do need to make changes, we'll come back at that point.

[00:31:32] So looking a little bit more at what FLAT means for the grant fund, I wanted to take just a moment to explain what is included in that bucket. You can see here, total's not on the page, but it's about the \$39 million you saw a couple pages ago. The bulk of that comes through either IDEA or Title I.

[00:31:51] IDEA obviously supports special education. Title I, low-income households, we've got a number of Title I schools where that, give or take, \$10 million gets allocated. You can see the other title monies make up the bulk of the remainder. There's a few odds and ends at the bottom that add up and are important.

[00:32:08] But I do want to stress again that we are keeping things flat on the grant side and we are continuing to monitor. But with the uncertainty, we are not just saying we're going to monitor, we're actively looking at, I'll start with the bottom first, we're monitoring expenses, looking at needs assessments and contingency plans on all of these funds to ensure that we are set up for success on these no matter what happens at the federal level. For IDEA, what that looks like mostly is there's some opportunity to consider new positions as special education needs increase.

[00:32:43] We could put new positions on IDEA. We're going to choose not to do that this year. We're going to put new positions, and there's a handful in the proposal. We're going to put them in operating, not to create additional staff that may be at risk if something odd happens at IDEA.

[00:32:59] I don't envision that happening. That has never been on the federal radar, so I'm pretty comfortable with that. But just a note there. Title I, Title II, III, IV, a lot of this looks at optimizing funds that aren't spent over the course of the year for various reasons, making sure we're keeping our, it looks and smells like a reserve, so I'll call it a reserve or carryover, at a point where we can absorb sort of short-term fluctuations.

[00:33:25] And also we're taking a look at mostly within II, III, and IV, where we do have positions on those funds. Can we move them into the operating fund? I will say we don't need to look at that opportunity right now. There are more pressing needs in our budget.

[00:33:40] We're filling those up, but we are continuing to monitor that. And this is one of those areas, if we do wind up with more funds at the end of this budget at the state level, we'll likely look to move some of these positions into the operating fund as a long-term mitigation strategy. Food service, similar but different.

[00:34:00] The highlight here is what is going to be the impact of some of those federal changes on things like medicaid and snap or food stamps for uh in layman's terms a lot of eligibility for those programs drive what we consider our community eligibility provision uh thresholds it's called direct certification we can go into that detail more but eligibility for those programs drives eligibility for those essentially free meal programs to the extent that there are fewer people that qualify that could create pressure on the food service program the good news is we can recertify these things early. We can look, we can get in front of it. So this isn't

[00:34:39] a next year issue, but it is something we are actively watching and quite frankly, are a little nervous about as we look forward to not necessarily 27 or maybe even 28, but beyond that. More near term on the food service angle. You've heard this before, inflation, food costs continue to go up.

[00:35:01] Unfortunately, within food and nutrition services, there aren't multiple grocery stores you can shop at. There are only certain vendors who offer school nutrition eligible food, so the ability to compete foods with different vendors is less than it would be for you and I choosing Publix or Food Lion. It's a little bit more complicated than that, unfortunately, and obviously we're continuing to look closely at Health and Human Services and monitoring those dietary guidelines as they change. That obviously has an impact as well and could come with other implications. More time than

[00:35:36] I usually spend on grant and food service in this meeting, but I thought sharing some of that detail and some of those concerns were important for this group as we look and spend most of the rest of our time here today talking about the operating fund and the CIP. So within the operating fund, this is based on first and foremost the revenue from former Governor Youngkin's proposal as he laid that out in December. We know there's a new governor in town, and we'll see what happens from that process over the next several weeks as the General Assembly is in session, as well as we got our preliminary estimate from the county that adds up to that \$48 million

[00:36:16] that we'll talk about, and I'll explain a little bit more behind that in a second. My two bullets are less rah-rah than the way Dr. Murray explained it, but this budget is really showing an afforded budget, a balanced budget. We don't have that middle bucket in here that says these are things we absolutely need to do and don't have the money for it.

[00:36:35] this year. It's a, we have the money to do the things we absolutely need. Are there things we need or want to do or should do beyond that? Absolutely. And I'll explore those a little bit as we go as well. So what does that look like on the revenue side? Again, we're talking just operating fund. So these numbers look a little bit different than the aggregated numbers for all funds before, but just on the operating fund side, you see just under 58% from the state, just under 41% from the county and a few other items make up, make up the remainder for the roughly \$48 million increase that we're talking through today. Where does that \$48 million come

[00:37:12] from? First and foremost, I'll talk about the state. Dr. Murray mentioned re-benchmarking. That is essentially taking a look at the underlying assumptions that drive the state math, not necessarily saying at the state level we're going to implement the assumptions from JLARC that we need more teachers or we need more. It's really taking a look at what is the demographics and enrollment of Chesterfield County, how has it changed for the last two years, and how does that fit into the new formula. You put that in with the knowledge that our

[00:37:45] enrollment is roughly flat, that winds up being a pretty big \$27 million increase to us. There's some puts and takes in there. Happy to walk through a more detailed state budget math with you guys, either in a work session or offline. But for the sake of this discussion, I'll leave it at that and say \$27 million from the state rebenchmarking. The other piece of this, and Dr.

[00:38:07] Murray mentioned this as well, is the Governor Youngkin proposed 2% raise. That is worth \$7 million to us. I'll pause on that one just for a second. 2% raise, \$7 million. So from the state level, we talk at \$6 to \$7 million for each 1% raise on our side. Easy to divide that number in You can see it works out to state funds about half of the raises that they suggest, promise, etc.

[00:38:38] Moving into the county bucket, it says \$13.2 million here. That's anchored in a \$15 million increase to the ongoing transfer. And Ms. Coker and I's favorite item, our one-time funds, continues to be a bit of a drag here.

[00:38:53] We have had one-time fund usage in our budget for several years since the original compensation studies were put forward. This was well over \$10 million a few years ago. I think it started at \$15. This budget ramps that down to \$7. We're getting into the area where I'm feeling more comfortable.

[00:39:10] I'd love for this to be \$5 or under going forward. I think this is one more step down next year. Then hopefully we can avoid that negative in our budget going forward. But for now, the \$15 less the \$1.8 leaves us with a \$13 million increase from the county. A little bit of increase in local.

[00:39:28] most of that is things like building rentals and things like that, where our facilities group has done a nice job of using our facilities for other activities on the weekends, things like that. You also notice some fees that are part of that plan as well as we roll that out. So you put that all together, \$48 million of new spend. Where do we spend that? Not surprisingly, you've seen this wheel before, 70% towards instruction. Other items to the left make up smaller pieces of that puzzle.

[00:39:59] the next biggest chunk, not surprisingly, is operations and maintenance. No big surprises here as we turn forward. Left side, \$48 million. That's what I just talked about. Right side is where we start to get into our shopping list and what are we paying for this. Dr. Murray teased this a little bit earlier, but the technical adjustment here is a big deal. I'll have a slide on it that'll explain in a little bit more detail, but this is a VRS contribution adjustment for the employer side. I'll say it here. I'll say it a few times as we go forward. This is not a change to the

[00:40:36] VRS program. There are no changes to what is in folks' employee retirement accounts with VRS. This is strictly employer contribution reduction based on the funding status of their plan. You put that all together, that's about a \$13 million reduction in monies we have to contribute to that plan with no change in benefit for employees. That's money that we can reallocate for things like compensation. So we started this process, and Dr. Murray again alluded to this a little bit, with a robust process of review with all of our departments, with our chiefs. Part of that was the

[00:41:13] white paper, red paper, pink paper process. Part of that was just a structured review of all of their various budget line items. We do that every year. This year we didn't do that any differently with the exception of a little bit more focus on what can we do differently, how can we reduce spend, You can see a few examples of where we're able to capture some of that spend here and fund other items that don't show up as a sort of new initiative.

[00:41:40] Curriculum development, close to \$2 million there, largely from, quite frankly, our version of the VRS story. I've come to the board and talked before about the Supplemental Retirement Plan being in a very well-funded position, just actually 99.7%.

[00:41:57] I'll say the percent now, which means I need to contribute less to that program as well to keep it very viable. No change to the program. I'm just able to allocate more of that money back to curriculum, back to the students where, quite frankly, it belongs. A couple other items here where our chiefs were able to look at their budget and able to shift things around, make changes, make other adjustments to free up monies for the two examples here.

[00:42:22] security infrastructure and areas of opportunity and price increases within school improvement and school engagement to the tune of \$400,000, \$500,000, so we didn't have to come and add to this list because of the scrubbing of their own individual budgets, which I think is a great step.

[00:42:40] VRS, technical adjustment. I'll stress it again. No change to VRS benefits as a result of these state-level assumptions. Fear not. This means that your state-level VRS is doing very well, and they are in a position to actually require less contributions from us in order to keep it doing well. You can see the funding status.

[00:43:03] This means a lot to me. It may not mean a lot to others, but they're currently just north of 85% funded with a pretty gentle glide path to 90%, even with this lower assumed contribution. You can see what that looks like. That's taking what would have been 14.2% contribution of a salary for teacher, for example, down to 12.2%. There's some other minor adjustments in other places, but you put all that together. That's about \$13 million that we can allocate elsewhere.

[00:43:36] So before I get into the other laundry list of things we can do, re-benchmarking, a little bit of a raise from the state level, a solid contribution from the county in line with historical norms, plus this \$13 million, give or take, of technical adjustment puts us in a position to provide a budget that's balanced and meets the needs.

[00:43:59] Again, I said it before, there are other things we probably want to do, but I think we're hitting all the things we need to do in this budget. So what are those as we look at this? And we have other slides on each of these, so I'll fly a little bit quicker through this slide than I might otherwise. The headline on this page is compensation.

[00:44:17] You see the 5% increase laid out here in a few different buckets that I'll talk about more in a second. That's the bulk of that compensation line item. Required increases, there's a lot of really interesting and exciting things embedded in that \$6.5 million debt service bus financing major maintenance line.

[00:44:36] That sounds like paying your mortgage, but there's really great things in there that I'll be really excited to talk about a little bit more. We're opening new schools. There is some inflation that we have to manage. And I think the exciting thing on the right in student support and other, the first item, I grouped them together because they all relate to things we have been doing in our buildings already.

[00:44:59] If you remember a couple years ago, Governor Youngkin allotted us some one-time money in something called the All-In Program. We were using that for several sources, two of which were tutoring and attendance specialist support. This budget keeps those programs going into the future at levels that were comparable to what we were using the All-In funding for.

[00:45:20] So really exciting to avoid the, what I've been calling the All-In Cliff on those items. You see other targeted positions, each of which have a good story around it that I'll talk about a little bit more when we get to them. So on the compensation side, you can see here step scale, teacher and school level administrators, about 5% here split through two means, about a 1% step adjustment.

[00:45:48] They vary a little bit between different positions and different places on the scale and a 4% COLA to get to the 5% in total. What that leaves you with is a \$57,300, a little bit less teacher starting salary, up from just over \$55,000, as Dr. Murray said, about halfway to our \$60,000 goal.

[00:46:07] The graded range, this really is anchored in our starting hourly rate. You can see here moving from \$14.70 up to \$15.28. A little bit more work to get to \$16 an hour, but another great step here. And we have a few other positions that fall in different scales that we're following the same path on as well.

[00:46:29] One more compensation slide is listed here. These are a few of these other targeted adjustments. Transportation scale, some of you may remember in a rainy weekend in 2021 where we increased the bus driver pay.

[00:46:45] That came as an adjustment to the bus driver pay. That had implications up through the transportation organization that we've been, quite frankly, putting Band-Aids on for several years. This takes that adjustment that we made back in the day and puts a good structured scale around it for consistency within the transportation org.

[00:47:05] Really excited about being able to fund this one finally with something other than duct tape and Band-Aids. Nursing adjustments, stipend adjustments, substitute pay, all part of the plan as well. I'm happy to say that Dr. Huff will be coming to your first budget work session to dive a lot deeper on all of these.

[00:47:25] She'll do this a lot more justice than I will, but I'll leave it at that. A lot of great things happening in compensation headlined by that 5% number on the previous page. Moving into required increases, I'll get really excited about spending \$6.5 million more on our mortgage, both here and in the CIP presentation.

[00:47:49] This one looks like \$5 million to contribute to our broader debt service bucket. We're building a high school. We're building new schools. The debt service on that is going to increase. We've got to increase our funding there. The other two are really about laying the operational funding foundation for some really structural changes in how we're addressing major maintenance and bus financing.

[00:48:13] Dr. Murray kind of hinted at the bus financing program here, moving to a plan for 45 new buses a year, 15-year replacement cycle. That does require us to contribute about a half million more in our operating plan to fund that, to get to our buses being on essentially a 15-year replacement cycle. Half a million is a very easy pill to swallow to make those improvements in our transportation happen. Similar on major maintenance, we typically have an increase in PAYGO funding here. Our current funding levels is \$9 million. You'll see this in the CIP deck as well. We've

[00:48:51] been talking about a world where we have been using one-time other debt funding to support major maintenance for a while. That funding runs dry after this year, so without a change, we would take what would have been a \$30 million or so annual expense in major maintenance down to \$9 million. I don't want to work at a school district. We're only spending \$9 million to support 68 schools. So we work closely with the county. Exact terms are still being worked out, but with a plan to enable through a debt

program to spend at least \$30 million this year to maintain that. Dr. Wattico will come and talk a lot more about this, and I'll talk a little bit

[00:49:30] more about it in our CIP program as well. New school personnel and programs. Three big things happening this coming fall. We're opening Deep Creek Elementary School. With that comes things like counselors, assistant principals, things like that at that school that weren't there before, some scale with teachers, et cetera. 1.7 million related to that building, CTC Hull. We talked about funding the building in previous board meetings. We have to fund the teachers and the instructional supplies here as well, about 1.2 million to fund the exciting work that's being

[00:50:06] done or will be done teaching those kids in those CTE programs at CTC Hull. And we're another year closer to opening that high school. With that comes planning staff for that high school. You need to get a planning principal in. You need folks on the ground to build schedules, all those fun things before you open the building. So those are things that need to happen this coming FY27. We'll bring those people on to make sure that that high school opens as it should and in good shape. Technology and other increases. This one you're less excited about, as am I. This kind of reads like inflation.

[00:50:45] That's what it is. This is the rising cost of doing business within first technology. You can see things like contracts and laptops for new staff, things like that. Cost of doing business, about \$1.2 million there. Similar in other administrative areas, about \$1.7 for various forms of inflation. Workers' comp and risk management, two big ones. The cost of graduation, What we do at VCU isn't cheap.

[00:51:10] They continue to see similar inflationary pressures that we do in food service. We've got to cover that and other miscellaneous contracts and services as well. The operations side, Dr. Wattica's piece of this puzzle, I call it out separately, here at about \$2.6 million.

[00:51:27] The first \$1.6 million of that is, quite frankly, contractually obligated for our custodial contract. Not much I can do about that \$1.6 million of increase in custodial contract utilities. Yes, it's an assumption. We'll see where utilities costs go over the course of the year, but it's assumed at 4% based on some input from the county.

[00:51:48] And there's some other items in there, software and other items from the operation areas for the last \$300,000 or so, to be about \$2.6 million of, just quite frankly, higher bills within our operation area. Health and dental.

[00:52:04] Health care costs are not going down here or anywhere. Again, this is an assumption of a 5.5% increase in the health and dental costs beginning in January, this says 26, that was this year, in 27, that's a typo, I apologize, starting in January 2027.

[00:52:23] This is for both likely to be the employee and the employer contribution, but the exact rate will be subject to ongoing negotiations with both our providers and our HR and county's HR departments on what that will actually look like. That's about a \$1.25 million anticipated costs. And that is fortunately offset a bit by a half million dollar reduction in retiree and Medicare costs. Nothing changing here other than we've observed lower run rate costs over the last few years. It's finally gotten to the point where I feel comfortable absorbing some of that lower costs and making it into our budget, which helps offset some of those health care costs.

[00:53:03] Regional tuition, about \$2.5 million. You see some modest increase in tuition for our friends at Maggie Walker, Arges, and Code RVA as up to about \$250,000 in total, keeping our seats consistent at these

three partner schools. And, which leads me into the last bucket of student support and other, \$2.9 million, excited to say I avoided the all-in cliff.

[00:53:32] With this one, tutoring of about \$2 million for both face-to-face and online tutoring. We spent about \$1.7 million through these means last year. I anticipate that to increase a little bit this year with more uptake and a little bit more again into 2027, hence the \$2 million tag that I'm putting here.

[00:53:53] An attendance specialist, nine of them for the cost of about \$900,000 for those positions as well. Special education needs are not going away. I mentioned this a little bit when talking about IDEA.

[00:54:10] We do anticipate continuing growth in special ed needs. We've got about a million dollar placeholder here. We continue to work with Summer and her team to refine what's needed in the classroom. Obviously, very much dependent on what IEPs look like, what enrollment looks like next year, but we know it's going to be higher than this year, so we want to make sure we have money set aside for that.

[00:54:33] You'll also notice some behavior support in here of about six positions that Summer Manos, to her credit, said, hey, these are positions that we really need. I'm willing to carve out room in our IDEA plan to fund these. We said, hold on, time out.

[00:54:48] Let's not put more positions on the grant, given some of this uncertainty. Let's go ahead and find a way to make these happen in our operating budget. And that's what you see laid out here. TSAs, technology specialists, is another big important item. You see here 10 positions, which we have not increased the number of TSAs in about a decade.

[00:55:09] Needless to say, with students, enrollment has increased over that period. The use of technology in the classrooms and by the students has increased, and we really need to catch up. This 10 does also come with a SOQ compliant element to that.

[00:55:27] We've been in compliance. I'm not saying we're not, but in order to maintain that, we want to make sure we're doing it in the right way. And adding these 10 full-time positions into our plan is the smartest way to do that. Mental health support, not going away either.

[00:55:44] You can see here requests to the board to fund additional diagnosticians, school counseling specialists, and some software to support this work as well to the tune of just over half a million dollars in additional mental health supports. Replacement cycles, these are things that I get excited about.

[00:56:02] We have half a million earmarked for technology. Ernie Longworth came here a couple months ago and talked about the technology plan. He laid out a need of about \$10 million in this space. We have about \$1.9 million in our budget for technology replacement.

[00:56:19] This additional half million would continue to claw our way back to that 10 where we likely need to be. You can see if all goes well, we're hoping to use that for classroom projection replacements. At the end of the day, we're behind on our replacement cycles.

[00:56:35] So final allocation will depend on, quite frankly, what breaks. So we'll keep that in mind. I fully expect us to come back in the 28 budget with a long-term sustainable solution to this, like we're doing with major maintenance and buses this year. This one's next on the list.

[00:56:52] We've supplemented this with some year-end funds just a couple months ago to help sort of keep this afloat until we're able to get a longer-term sustainable financing program in place for this.

Software and HR supports a few analytical softwares that we need to continue to invest in and some HR administration support, similar to the TSA position, more teachers, more HR, employee relation caseload continues to increase and need to increase the support in that area as well.

[00:57:25] And lastly, Communities in Schools, last but certainly not least, one of our favorite programs here, this would add one more Communities in Schools specialist to our fleet, if you will, to provide that wraparound support within our Communities in Schools program that we want to continue to push forward.

[00:57:47] That's what we can afford. That feels a lot better than last year where I stopped that conversation halfway through and said, here's other things we need. Everything I've said so far is afforded within our current budget as we know it. As Dr. Murray said, as I've said, there are other things that we would like to do should the state come through with additional funding.

[00:58:07] We'll certainly look at some of these things on this list, operations, student support, compensation, whatever other recommendations, either from the school board, advisor groups, et cetera, acts as we see additional funding. To put some context around some of those in the operational areas, ongoing maintenance, you didn't hear me talk about that outside of general inflation.

[00:58:32] This is an area where we have a reasonable budget, but it's been a budget that for the last several years has been also supported by one-time money. You can think back a few years ago, it was ESSER. We've been continuing to contribute year-end funds to this bucket as well.

[00:58:47] A lot of times I'll come to you in March or April and say I need to shift some essentially teacher vacancy money over to operations to fund ongoing support. I'd love to get out of the business of relying on one-time money for some of these ongoing maintenance issues. That's high on my list if we have extra money to tackle that dragon, if you will. Vehicle replacements, technology replacement, you heard me talk about that a few times already. Staffing and student needs, we can always look at more mental health support, more school staff, more administrative support. We hear this from our schools. I'm sure you do as well. Unfortunately, you add one extra

[00:59:27] teacher administrator to each building, that's \$7 million. That's a percent raise. These adds up quickly. So we need to be targeted with this as we go forward. But there is clearly an opportunity should additional funding be made available to do some targeted adjustments here as well.

[00:59:45] Last one, the one you're probably expecting me to lead with, but I'm ending with it, is compensation. We mentioned the \$16 an hour and \$60,000 starting salary a few times. The rough costs around that, if we were to do that now, are listed here, give or take \$6 million to do the \$16 plan, give or take \$25 million to do the \$60,000 starting salary. There's always other bonuses, other market considerations that we could consider as well. So this leads me into, I talk about what we can do if extra money comes through.

[01:00:20] This is the part where I pause and say, really, this budget process is weird. You see, our process is that middle red bar in there. Yes, we know a little bit from the state side. The governor's proposal, we'll know a lot more over the coming weeks and months.

[01:00:38] You can see over time, that process has dragged out a fairly long time, even into June. Some years, we'll be hopeful that we'll get an answer sooner than that, but it will be certainly after your February approval of this budget.

[01:00:54] Similarly, the county budget, well, we've got some initial estimates from the county in here. Their process kicks off immediately after ours. We're actually an input into their process, and we'll have to come back and reconcile changes from both the state and the county side if there are any after your folks do your approval in end of February.

[01:01:15] So what does that state budget process look like? A little bit more detail here. I'm certainly not going to walk over or walk through each of these. I will highlight two important dates in here. The first one is in *italic*. That is your date. That's February 24th when we are on the hook to approve a budget from you folks and send it over to the Board of Supervisors.

[01:01:36] Budget Sunday, that's when we'll have a little bit more idea of what the General Assembly is proposing is a mere two days before that. Needless to say, we'll only be able to react so much to that. Hopefully, we'll have some knowledge of what's likely to be in there, but there really won't be much time to react, or we won't know what necessarily the governor's opinion is on that crossover either, and you see veto sessions as late as April as well.

[01:02:03] A little bit more on the governor's proposal, just to continue to ground us in that. This is year one of a biennium, which means re-benchmarking, which means before I talked about a little bit of uncertainty. This is where it becomes a little less uncertain and a little bit more certain.

[01:02:20] Good news is with this re-benchmarking, it does look at underlying county assumptions, which includes our local composite index. Good news for Chesterfield County, that was flat, which means we saw no upward or downward pressure in our budget as a result of LCI.

[01:02:36] Across the state, if you look at the total state math reconciliation, there's about a \$70 million or so state reduction because of this calculation at the state level. So NET, their overall LCI math says the state needs to contribute less based on the LCI calculation.

[01:02:54] Fortunately, ours was flat, so we were not hindered by that. Other assumptions, as I mentioned, enrollment, state technical adjustment, a little bit of the offset to the VRS. You put all that together, that's about that \$26 million of re-benchmarking. I've mentioned the 2% raise.

[01:03:11] That's worth about \$7 million. You put those together, that's the \$33 million. Not new funding. You heard Justin talk a little while ago. It's important to note that the \$500,000 in support for the Recovery Academy, we need to make sure is in the budget every year. We're happy to say that it is, so that will continue to be funded at the \$500,000 level, plus the other funding that he had already talked about and did a lot of the heavy lifting.

[01:03:35] He's not still here. I was about to thank him for me on that piece as well. This is a slide that you've seen before. Mr. Smith came and talked to you about your legislative program. I mention this only to highlight the middle bucket or middle bullet really here as we think about the legislative principles, as we go into a general assembly that is, quite frankly, new.

[01:03:59] The thing that I'm anxious about and looking at really closely is unfunded mandates. I don't know what they're going to say. I don't think anybody does. Mr. Smith is starting to collect a long list of bills that are proposed, and I want to highlight that we don't know what's going to come out of that, but I want to highlight that it's really important that we look at those closely so that we understand whether there are funds attached to any of these new mandates that may or may not come from the state level.

[01:04:27] County revenue, not a huge news story here. \$15 million is their staff expectation for their transfer. Official numbers will come out with their budget that follows us. \$15 million, though.

[01:04:43] We'll also talk about county a little bit as part of the reduction in the one-time usage. That reserve sits at the county, which is why we put it in this bucket, but that's really our walk down from that one-time funding we talked about before. And this is also a great point to pause and remind the board and remind the public.

[01:05:02] The Board of Supervisors and county do a lot of great things with us inside this budget, but they do equally as many outside of this budget process that needs to be recognized, whether that be additional one-time fund contributions, additional work on CIP, Maintenance funding, things like that, are all super important, and it's good to recognize that work that comes out of both this budget and outside of that process.

[01:05:26] Budget summary, you saw the slide before. That's how we get to our roughly \$48 million with a couple of big highlights in there, including the 5% headline raise, some funding for major maintenance, bus replacement, avoiding the all-in cliff, opening new schools.

[01:05:44] A lot of great things in this budget that I'm pretty proud to present to you. So where do we go from here? There's board working sessions urge the public please attend the first one on February 3rd I can tell you the agenda for that will feature two important topics as I mentioned Dr. Huff will come in and talk a little bit more detail about compensation Dr. Wattica will also come in and talk a little bit more detail about the CIP which I'm about to talk about in the next deck February 10th February 18th are a couple others that we have scheduled which we will be a little flexible with those agendas depending on questions that we hear from the board that

[01:06:23] we'll be able to address, all driving towards that February 24th approval. For the community, we urge you to attend our town halls, weather dependent. You see them listed here. To the extent that any of these need to move due to weather, we'll obviously notify the public and make adjustments as necessary once we know. But as of now, the first one is at Salem Church Middle on January 26th.

[01:06:51] So with that, the state is in process. Please continue to advocate to your state representative for fully funding K-12 education. Continue to make progress on pays. And the one that I'll stress most here is limit unfunded or partially funded band-aids as they may cause us to need to take funds from one bucket and move it to another.

[01:07:15] And again, I'll end this part of the discussion urging our public to attend our town hall meetings to continue to engage in this budget. And with that, I'll turn it over to you, Madam Chair, to facilitate any questions. Okay, thank you, Mr. Meister. Board members, is there any discussion?

[01:07:35] Ms. Chatters. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Bob, I just want to say thank you for a really great presentation. I really appreciate the different methods you're using to convey where the numbers are coming from. I think it's easier to understand for the public, and I appreciated how you broke that down.

[01:07:54] Really, that's like the top of my paper. So I appreciate what you did there. I also wanted to say thank you for going deeper into the federal support programs piece. Like you said, you normally don't do that, but I know I've been asking you a lot of questions about that part because it's concerning for my family.

[01:08:10] So I appreciate the deep dive, and those couple of slides will be very helpful for them to understand that we're not just sitting here waiting for it to happen. We do have a backup plan, and this is what we're doing, and I appreciate all the detail for that. You answered my question about the VRS reduction.

[01:08:26] So for the part where you were talking about bonuses, what I didn't hear, and I just want to know if it's in there or is it for something if we get more money, the stipends that we normally get for high-needs schools, is that still in there or is that not? Yeah, no change to our current bonus structure.

[01:08:44] Great. And Dr. Huff will highlight that in her presentation as well a little bit more explicitly, but yeah, no change to what we are currently offering. The last two things I had is give-to-support funding. know we received a presentation from GIAC regarding what they thought they could use to help the gifted program, and I didn't see it listed there, so is that going to be on the, not that we have a list, but if we were going to have a list of the things that we wanted to make it a little bit easier since we've grown the gifted services program and not necessarily grown that office?

[01:09:16] It was on a version of the middle slide, the other student support. We've made it a little bit more generic for the sake to give us a little bit more flexibility as we go through and we see what we need to adjust for. But yes, it was definitely an item that Cabinet, Dr. Murray, and I, we had discussed as part of that bucket, for sure.

[01:09:34] Perfect. And the last thing I had is, is there a way to put the number of employees that we have on our infographic? Like, we are the largest employer in Chesterfield County. Like, all those students are on there. I think if we put the number of employees that we have, it might send a message to the community how impactful the things that we're asking for are.

[01:09:55] That was all I had. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Pronto. Thank you, and I appreciate that comment that you made in regards to having the staff teachers on there. I think that is extremely important, so I'll cross that off my list.

[01:10:14] Thank you. I do have a few questions, though, but before I do, thank you again to you and your team for the amount of work and hours and the departments that have contributed and gone back and went back to you and went back again, and probably a little bit of a ping-pong match there if you were to watch that.

[01:10:35] But with the bus purchase program, the 15-year rotation, do we have an idea as to the cost savings on maintenance that we will not have to spend because we're rotating through, not having to worry about 20- and 30-year-old buses?

[01:10:51] I don't have a number for you here, but yes, that's clearly part of the safety, efficiency, et cetera. is all a big piece of that. And it is something that we will certainly see in our fleet and fuel costs as we go forward. And so that number is, was that number included in this, in any of that that was presented in regards to the buses? The way that will show up in, short answer is no directly. The way that'll show up is cost avoidance in the future. So we'll see some increases because of inflation, other things in fleet maintenance and fuel. As we have a fresher

[01:11:31] fleet, we'll be able to increase that less, if that makes sense. It does. Thank you. You also mentioned the custodial contract. We have different companies that we have contracts with from the custodial standpoint. We do. The number that you gave, is that all of them combined?

[01:11:50] Correct. That contract? Okay. Yes. Thank you. Probably should have been an S on there, fair. No, that's okay. I wanted to make sure. And then last but not least, the special education funding. No surprise for me, understanding that Summer Manos came back and said, well, I really need this, right? Which was a very difficult thing to do because essentially you're looking at other students and saying, well, I'm not going to advocate right now because that's not a part of the budget, right? At least that's the way I look at it.

[01:12:25] I would like to ask this board with additional funds that may come in is to consider what is truly needed in our special education department. And that would definitely come from Summer about that. This is a very marginalized group and their needs are extremely unique, so forth.

[01:12:45] And I do believe, Mr. Meister, that you mentioned, you know, the students we have coming in that require special needs. We may not know exactly what they are, and we don't know if we have the people, you know, currently on staff for them. So, you know, there should be some room for that, and I don't know what exactly that looks like.

[01:13:06] But if there are additional funds, like I asked last year of this board, I'll ask again this year of this board, is we consider those positions so that we can ensure that the students who are currently receiving a substitute special education teacher receives an education special education teacher that specifically has that skill set needed for that student so just want to put that out there and ask the board for that consideration thank you madam chair if i just want to make sure that in my notes that i've reflected your comment

[01:13:39] accurately mr paranto what mr meister presented was it reflected the positions from the special Education Department that were asked for. The anecdote was, I think, at the risk of using any of our operating funds, it was suggested that they be paid for through a grant where Mr. Meister very effectively put that or supplanted it into or embedded it into our operating funds so that

[01:14:15] they remain solvent in perpetuity so it must have yeah i understand that and and this has to go back to that five percent funding that's that's uncertain and so we're using our budget to make sure that those needs are met 100 understand that not downplaying that um at all i'm greatly appreciate the forethought to make sure that we have uh the funding available for what's needed the where i got the the note taken down was when we had said we you know and rightfully so right go back and look at your budgets um is there anything that could be trimmed down and i think

[01:14:52] that's that's fair for anybody to ask that question and for people to come back and say yes i think we can do without x y or z you know what what have you um i just want to make sure that we're not saying or giving the perception of that we're looking at our special education folks and saying, hey, we're not going to move forward with that right now, even though that need is truly there.

[01:15:16] So when we have those additional funds coming in from the state, that's what I'm asking for, is that that funding would go towards those other things that are going on that may not be seen right up front. Yeah, I think there's a couple elements of what you said, if I could parrot some of it back to you a little bit.

[01:15:33] One is, are we meeting the needs of our special ed kids? Are we telling Summer no when she has a need? I would say generally no in every sense of the word. We are doing everything we can to meet those needs. Not reflected here, there is a relatively small pool of what we call discretionary dollars that

we keep for needs such as that that come up later in the game that we don't have line of sight to, so we don't have to go knocking on the county's door for money for an individual teacher, things like that. So we are leaning in. We are meeting the needs that Summer highlights

[01:16:09] as we go forward. Can we be more explicit about a special ed bucket for that? I think that's worth talking about and worth considering. The other piece of it is you mentioned substitute. Recruiting special ed teachers is not easy. I'm not going to speak for Dr. Huff or Summer on that piece of it.

[01:16:29] It may have a sub because we aren't able to find the qualified teacher that we need, not because we don't have money to pay for it yeah that fair assessment fair assessment in that like i said i'm going to make sure that the funds are there so that the needs are met at the end of the day however we do it uh within the budget or funding comes back from the federal at the five percent that we were hoping we would get and we got it whatever that looks like 100 on board um and i greatly appreciate that that um that viewpoint from you so thank you understand sir dr darby

[01:17:07] I just want to say thank you Mr. Meister and Dr. Murray for the really clear presentation I echo what Ms. Chatter said that you made it very palatable to understand some big numbers and some complicated decisions that went in and so I appreciate your effort and work here presenting it and also the huge number of hours that have gone into getting us to this point so I just want to say thank you I don't have any specific questions but I do look forward to hearing from everyone at town hall meetings and continuing to dig into this over the next month. The board has alluded to this, but this is a lot of time, not just for my team, but I appreciate the thanks, but

[01:17:46] the whole division really leans into this. I want to extend special thanks to chiefs, division leads, etc., who have helped me get to this point. So, in addition to my team, as you guys have already thanked. Thank you. Ms. Coker. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:18:02] Yes, thank you to all CCPS staff members that went into putting this budget together. Thank you, Dr. Murray. Thank you, Bob, for really looking at some of the items that maybe we haven't been able to touch on over the past few years or decades even.

[01:18:24] Thank you for that thoughtfulness. Thank you for just digging into those seat cushions for the cabinet and leadership there. That's hard to do. But I think in the long run, that's a right thing to do.

[01:18:43] So thank you for that effort and really excited to see where we go next in some of our additional work sessions. That's where I'll hold more questions for. Awesome. But thank you very much. I would like to echo what my colleagues have already said.

[01:19:03] Thank you for your work. I'm thrilled with, I'm very, very excited that we were able to give this 5% pay raise. I sat in with a bunch of other counties recently, and let's just say I'm thrilled.

[01:19:25] So that's all. And to echo what Ms. Coker just said, we are digging in, making sure that every bit of money that comes in, we use in a judicious fashion and we don't have anything extra and we use it well. I think all of us really appreciate that. And then to be able to find it. Also, I have gotten, I don't know if anyone else has gotten these emails from PTAs, parents across the county from the governor on down

[01:20:03] saying, hey, JLARC happened in 2023. Can you guys please? I really appreciate that, and I hope that that will make them wake up, and so this re-benchmarking is a positive move in the right direction, and I mean, a tiny, tiny bit. It's not \$300 million, but it's a couple bucks, So we're really appreciative of that.

[01:20:26] So thank you for your work. And next.

[01:20:42] We're not going to stop a good thing. Keep rolling. You got it. Madam Chair, Vice Chair, other members of the board, the capital improvement plan is in front of you here. I've teased a lot of this with my operating plan.

[01:20:58] A lot of it overlaps, needless to say. But I'm proud to present this plan. This is a massive step towards structural improvements rather than sort of continuing to skate by. Yes, we have a lot of great things we've done in the last few years and that I'm really proud of as well.

[01:21:14] But I think this one you'll hear a different tone in terms of really setting ourselves up for the long term. And as I led, we are really addressing long-term structural issues with this CIP. You can see here some new school openings that are on the horizon.

[01:21:30] This is not an exhaustive list. We've got other things further out from here, but Deep Creek Middle, Davis Elementary opening this year, Bensley Deep Creek 26, and the West Area High School in August 2027. Super excited about all those.

[01:21:46] Those really are there to address some of the longer-term both building and student needs. We're also looking at other pieces where the CIP can help, right? This is where things like Chromebook program that I introduced to you last year, the major maintenance and bus programs that we talked about a little bit in the operating plan really come to fruition. These are big structural changes that we are looking to put in place now that will put us into the right long-term sustainable financial answer to some of these big problems. Is it all of them? Does it get us all the way there? No. Is this a multi-year journey?

[01:22:20] Absolutely. But this is a great first step on that journey. So first and foremost, what is a CIP? it really includes three big things, right? It's school construction and renovation, it's major maintenance, and then it's the infamous Other. Over the course of time, this board has largely not heard a lot about Other because we didn't do a lot there. This year, Other becomes a much more interesting and important thing. Chromebooks are part of Other, major maintenance funding becomes part of Other. The bus program becomes part of Other,

[01:22:55] so other is a is a big win as we look forward doesn't sound all that exciting but yay other so looking at school construction I'll start with the highlight here we continue to grow slower pace than we have in the past but 1900 or so by 2031 the project includes the projects that I talked about that are in development and other projects on the horizon that I'll dig into a little bit deeper in a in a slide or two but before i get there i will want to highlight and reiterate uh that this is governed by a board policy anchored in uh things that you guys have

[01:23:33] already talked about and voted on in policy 7240 a few of the items here permanent classrooms yes we want kids out of trailers uh existing space with sound educational practices uh older facilities need to be renovated. Essentially, let's put kids in good spaces. Let's make sure they work, and let's make sure that everything is up to snuff in terms of HVAC and there's not leaky roofs and all that other important stuff as well. Enrollment, you've seen this slide in the operating presentation, but a reminder, 1900 student growth, that means one thing on the

[01:24:11] operating side. The other bullet on here that is super important on the CEP side or CIP side is the 235 instructional classrooms in modular units or trailers. Happy to say that many of the projects that we have in development or right on the horizon are going to move that number down significantly.

[01:24:32] I think it's safe to say line of sight to less than 100 when we get through with the items that we actually have a date on, so that's pretty exciting to see that. I wish that was next year, but it's on the horizon. We're seeing great trajectory on this. I think this was close to 270 last year, so even one year we continue to make progress on this number.

[01:24:54] So starting with the big one, major construction projects, here is our list of items that we've had on the CIP for a few years now. excited to talk about grange hall elementary replacement in the dale area elementary slash pre-k school as uh both site secured and well not yet funded commitment from the county to have uh funded in a strong enough way that we can start to put dates around those two items uh you can see grange hall opening august 29 and the dale uh elementary slash pre-k august 2030.

[01:25:32] Dr. Wattica will talk more about this in his presentation as well, but I do want to highlight that this Dale project solves two needs with one building. This is an exciting project where it's going to not just have an elementary school, but a pre-K wing attached to it with, give or take, 150 additional seats for pre-K, which will allow further consolidation like a CECLA, but at Dale Elementary in that area.

[01:25:58] You see other items on here, mid-low-middle will probably get the most attention as that has gotten some news with where is that going to land at the Board of Supervisors meetings. As of right now, we don't have a site for that.

[01:26:14] Funding is not secure. It remains high on our list of things we know we need to do, but until we know where we're going to put it, I can only say pending. Similar with Old 100, Dale Elementary, Matoka Middle, and Bird Gym have been lower in the timeline for a while they're going to stay there for at least one more year until we sort of see Where sort of the next funding batch comes from as we look forward to those projects. What does this look like in a graph form you notice the Bensley deep Creek and CTC hull renovation set for

[01:26:47] opening soon west area high right behind that and not part of the CIP proper because we'll fund this offline from the CIP but the Completing the Falling Creek Middle site, super proud to have on this sheet as being in design, demolitions and creating those fields at that Falling Creek Middle School site where the current Bensley Elementary or the old Falling Creek Middle currently is, able to get that done by August 27, if everything goes well, which we're super excited about.

[01:27:18] Looking out further, you see the dates for the Grange Hall and the Dale Elementary slash pre-K site that I mentioned earlier, and then the other future projects with either funding or site pending. Some pictures, I'm sure Dr. Wattica will do a better job of this when he talks to you about each of these as well a little bit.

[01:27:36] You see both Fensley and Deep Creek well on their way, similar design, similar prototype at each of these schools, similar stage of construction on each of these. We gave you a different angle from each so you can see how the school sets up. As you think about that Dale pre-K site, you can think of it as another wing off the backside of Bensley, if you will, just to put that in your head as you think about that as I talked about it.

[01:28:02] CTC Hull expansion upstairs in that building. You can see they cleared out the office space. We'll begin that construction soon. That'll open in the fall. Really excited about that project. and the big expensive one you can see the high school a lot of great progress there you can see the structure coming in

place on the second floor big building a lot going on scheduled for that august 2027 opening for the for the high school happy to say these span the county you can see

[01:28:36] where the current and expected future projects are hit most areas of the county here and we'll continue to work for this however it's important to note that there are other needs out there that are not listed. This is sort of the placeholder for that. We know that there are older schools out there. We know that there are other needs that are, quite frankly, we don't know about today that will pop up in six months or a year. We need to make sure we're mindful of that. Dr. Wadick is looking closely at this list, making sure that we know what's coming after what we have on our list.

[01:29:13] Major maintenance, exciting story here. First and foremost, what is major maintenance? I'll start with that \$50,000 number in the middle. These need to be big projects that really are looking to extend the useful life of the building.

[01:29:29] So things like roofs, things like HVAC, structural changes like that. These are major maintenance. This isn't a fresh coat of paint necessarily in the locker room. These are big, big projects. You can see some examples of projects that are being done in FY26, like rooftop HVAC units at both Byrd and Dale, moving down to boiler replacements at Jacobs, ice storage tanks, et cetera. They span the gamut on different projects. Major maintenance has been a story that I've been talking about, Dr. Murray's been talking about, Dr. Doherty before him have been

[01:30:07] talking about for a long time. This slide is a bit that says, here's what we told you last year, here's what we told you years before. We have been spending more or less a specific bond issuance from 2021 and ESSER funding to supplement that \$9 million, if you remember, PAYGO to maintain funding in around that \$30 million level. These slides to the right are slides from last year's budget presentation. This isn't a new story. We've been saying that one-time funding is going to run

[01:30:40] out. I am here to say it's going to run out next year, so we need a different answer. I don't think I could be satisfied and happy in a school district with nine million dollars of major maintenance with 68 buildings. I know I said that in the operating plan, but I think that's pretty striking, so we're working with the county to make sure that is, in fact, not the case. First and foremost, we need to determine what our major maintenance needs are. You heard Dr. Watika talk a little bit about these two approaches when he talked to you in December. One way to look at this,

[01:31:16] which sets a benchmark, it's one number, is looking at current replacement value. Essentially, this uses the, what is the, essentially, value of the building times a certain percentage. Two and a half percent here is the percentage that the county anchors to for their building, so I'm using that as a data point. That would suggest about an \$85 million annual spend for major maintenance.

[01:31:40] \$9 million is less than \$85 million, quite frankly, as is \$30 million. So we're going to continue to look at that. That's only one way to look at it. There's a lot of factors that could contribute to that over just a 2.5% benchmark number. Age of buildings, if you put up a new high school, for instance, that doesn't need a lot of maintenance. So that has a big value, but not a lot of major maintenance needs things like that so the other way to look at that is a facility condition assessment that's on the right that takes a lot longer to put together because that you're going in and looking at the uh hvac units at midlothian high school and say how does that

[01:32:16] look you're looking at the boilers you're looking at all of the various structures within the building uh reed has gone through that process at least has started we're not done with it that's something that we're going to continue to look at but i'm going to say that we're going to form a better conclusion of what work needs to be done next year, the year after, what's the right long-term run rate from that exercise than necessarily a 2.5% benchmark. But I think it's important for the board to understand that either way you look at it, the target is much more than what we're at today. That being said, we're doing okay at \$30 million. We're able to fix what breaks

[01:32:54] and we're able to keep things moving. So what I want to make sure we do as we figure out the answer to the question on the right is not to make things worse, which gets into our major maintenance funding plan. I'll take a second to walk through the math on the right, but essentially what this does is it leverages approximately \$1 million extra investment in major maintenance to triple our capacity from give or take \$9 million to close to \$30 million this year. How do we get there? We have a pay-go baseline of \$9 million. You've heard me talk about that number a few times.

[01:33:28] I have a proposed increase of \$1 million in the budget. You heard me talk about that a little while ago. That gives me \$10 million of PAYGO money to use all else equal. We're working with the county on a bond program to fund major maintenance.

[01:33:43] We've done this before. This is a bigger bond fund back in 2021 that kept us afloat for a few years. This would be, as proposed here, a smaller fund that we continue to draw down in future years. exact structure of this is to be determined, quite frankly, as we work with Mr. Harris over the course of the next year to put this in place. But for the sake of this budget, let's assume that we go with a \$21 million debt issuance. I'll have to pay for that, at least the interest and principal in year one. First year payments usually aren't all that much, call it a half million. That allows me to leverage that \$10 million in PAYGO available to be

[01:34:19] \$30 million of major maintenance next year, which keeps us more or less in the same game that we've been playing in the last few years, which is a massive sigh of relief from our folks in the maintenance department that we're staring at a cliff. This prevents that cliff from happening.

[01:34:35] This does not solve the long-term problem. I mentioned that we likely need to be spending more than 30. This doesn't necessarily address going above and beyond. I think we've got a plan to do that over time, but this at least keeps us above water as we continue to work and develop that plan. And this largely says what I just said. We're working through a lot of things, including that facility assessment continuing to work with the county to secure that funding we've gotten assurances from them that they will that will happen we need to continue to partner with them to ensure that this is not just a one-time fix for this year but it continues ongoing and

[01:35:12] that's what you'll see in your overall CIP document that's also attached here school bus replacement the excitement here has already been shared so I'll go relatively quick here other than to say we have \$3.4 million in our current ongoing operating budget that buys the 22 buses that we've talked about before. If we buy 22 buses a year, that's a 29-year replacement cycle. Who would be excited to put their kid on a 29-year-old bus going to school? Didn't think so. That being said, we don't have 29-year-old buses. We have been supplementing this for years with various forms

[01:35:49] of one-time funding to get those most old buses off the road. But what we're doing here is really looking at what is the right replacement cycle, what is the right age of buses, and that 12 to 15 years is

really what we're targeting. So if we're able to, similar to what I just talked about on major maintenance, leverage some of that ongoing spend to finance a portion of the fleet, which allows us to essentially double our ability to purchase these funds or these buses from 22 to 45, that puts us on a 15-year cycle, which puts us on the right long-term trajectory to have about

[01:36:25] a bus in sort of normal day-to-day service for its first 12 years of its life and spend the last three years as a sub or emergency vehicle as it waits to go to the whatever a bus goes to when it passes. So this does require a \$500,000 ongoing investment that we talked about in the operating plan to make this true, but I'm really excited to be able to offer this school bus replacement to the board as a great long-term structural improvement to our bus program.

[01:36:58] Chromebook lease, don't need to spend a lot of time on this one. We talked to you about this last year. It remains a give or take \$8 million cost in our budget, 65,000 kids. We've purchased more than 70,000. They've got to last a few years, breaks, replacements, things like that.

[01:37:16] Ernie's been doing a great job managing this program. They're all out in kids' hands right now, and we're going to continue to enjoy the fruits of the Chromebook program that we inputted last year as well. Unfortunately, this all sounds great, but we do have to pay for it, which equals essentially the mortgage payment, as I call it, the debt service.

[01:37:36] These all come from various and different funding sources, the big one being the bond referendum, which you see here, the Chromebook lease as a piece of that. Vehicle financing, food service does contribute some directly from theirs, their budget for a piece of the major maintenance funding to do things in the kitchens.

[01:37:53] And then there's other funding sources. These are the things that we are looking at in the future, things like a VPSA bond to fund the Dale School, as an example, likely something similar for the major maintenance bond as we go forward. We'll continue to look at various other one-time sources. Often we have project savings. We reinvest those in things. That was a big piece of how we're paying for the CTC hull expansion, if you remember that.

[01:38:18] So there's a lot of other ways to solve this bucket, and these are areas where we work closely with the county on as well over the course of the year. Here's the slide where we pause a little bit because this is a pretty steep slope, but what this slide shares with you is our debt service expectation, given what we know now over the next few years.

[01:38:38] You can see we're currently budgeted at \$68 million. Our \$6 million or so increase this year puts us right around \$74 million. You can see we've got a nice glide path up to close to \$100 million in debt service payments over time. The good news is we do not have to bite this all off with one operating plan pill.

[01:39:01] I don't think this board or anyone would be really excited if I came in here and said we need to allocate \$25 million to debt service this year. That would not be the rah-rah operating budget that you guys would want to see. You guys have been working off of this really three-legged stool for a while now.

[01:39:19] Strategic reserve utilization and targeted one-time contributions go together. We have a debt service reserve set up at the county that does have a sizable balance in it that will help us through this hurdle. If you remember, you contributed \$8 million of your year-end funds this past year to that fund to help mitigate this bump.

[01:39:40] The county contributed more than that. I think it was \$12 million as part of their funds mid-year last year. So we do continue to build that reserve fund up. And we do want to recognize that we will need phased operational increases. You see the \$5 million we put in this year to continue to work our way up that cliff.

[01:39:59] I can handle a \$3 to \$5 million increase as we work through other things. I can't handle a \$25 million, so working through other means to do that. And we feel pretty comfortable with where we're at for the next couple of years as we continue to work through our path to meeting our debt service payments.

[01:40:17] So that's how we're going to pay for it. I want to pull us back at the end to remind the board that there's a lot to really, really like in this CIP. It really starts to address some structural problems that we've had for a while, some of which we've been working on with new buildings.

[01:40:34] That's not a surprise. I don't want to minimize that effort, but we continue to move the needle on opening new schools. But we are making significant inroads in technology, in buses, in major maintenance as well with this program. And I'm excited to share that with you as our CIP proposal.

[01:40:52] Last thing before I forget, because in case people are just turning into this one, we do have school board work sessions set up over the next several weeks. Dr. Wadick will do a deeper dive on the CIP in our next session on February 3rd. And please come to our town halls, citizens, to hear more about this and ask us questions as we go.

[01:41:12] And with that, I'll turn it back over to Madam Chair for any questions or comments. All right. Thank you. Board members, is there any discussion? Ms. Chatters. Sorry. Thank you, Bob.

[01:41:28] I just wanted to mention two things. The growth chart that you had in there, you had it in the first presentation. I meant to say something about it. But I'm glad that's in there because there's a misconception that enrollment in public schools are going down. And I appreciated that Dr. Murray and you both highlighted the fact that that might be what's going on in Virginia, but not in Chesterfield, right?

[01:41:51] And so the notion that we're getting smaller children or parents are choosing not to send their children to public school is not the case here. And I appreciate us taking the time to show that we're still growing. We're a hotspot. Like, everybody wants to be in Chesterfield.

[01:42:08] So I appreciate you putting that on there. And I also wanted to, final comment, is to thank this board and the Board of Supervisors for turning the icon for Dale District's Elementary School and Pre-K from the red area to the somewhat green area.

[01:42:23] I truly appreciate it. I know my community is truly excited for the opportunity to get out of instructional trailers, to not be on top of each other, and then to, on top of it, be able to have our little version of DECLA is super cool. and I appreciate the support from both boards to make that happen.

[01:42:39] Thank you. Mr. Baranto. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mrs. Chatters, this is twice now. This is twice now. Next time I'll be faster to the button, and then you'll have to go, well, wait a minute. Not an answer right now, obviously, but the 1900 projection from Stratus, do we know of a breakdown in district as to what that looks like for the population increase per district, rather than just saying Chesterfield County is going to have 1,900 more?

[01:43:14] I clearly don't off the top of my head. I'll talk to our planning department and get back to the board. Yep, that's fine. I greatly appreciate you doing that for us. Thank you. Dr. Darby. I just want to again say thank you, and I feel like as someone who has taught in schools to say that all these things in a capital implement plan directly impact student learning, that it is difficult to teach or to learn if the classroom is too hot or if things are going wrong or if technology isn't working.

[01:43:47] And so I really appreciate the thoughtful presentation and all the work that went into making these plans. Okay. I just wanted to say I see in both of these, but particularly here, there's a lot of creativity.

[01:44:08] Y'all see problems, and we're creative in solving them. And I'm impressed every time. I'm like, wow, okay, they avoided that cliff. And that's really, really awesome. I also see collaboration with the county, and I think in this one you mentioned that five times.

[01:44:28] And that is refreshing and incredible, and we are grateful. We're very grateful. I wouldn't mind Midlothian Middle being not red, but another day. If I may, I just want to answer that lingering question that Bob threw out into the arena so you don't go home wondering where buses go when they die.

[01:44:56] It is, in fact, to the bus stop, according to Best Dad Jokes. I have to walk away. So next on the agenda is the school board discussion.

[01:45:17] Thank you, Dr. Murray, for that. Board members, is there any general discussion related to this year's proposed budget, our process over the next several weeks, or the work in front of us? Ms. Chatters. I did have one thing to consider.

[01:45:34] I know it's last minute, but because we're in Virginia, and inclement weather is a thing, for future reference, Is there a way that we can work on doing hybrid town halls? Like, is there an option before us that we can Zoom it or Google Meet it or something to give the opportunity for people who are going to stay at home but want to know what's going on?

[01:45:54] I love in-person, so don't get me wrong, but I do want to accommodate where we can people who would run the information online. So that was my only thing I would like to toss out there for something to consider. Yeah, and I don't know if the board clerk or Mr. Roberts want to chime in or we can send you the information.

[01:46:13] There are very specific rules about when you can allow for such a virtual meeting when it has to be noticed with representation from more than two board members.

[01:46:30] I'm sorry. So I'm talking about these town halls where it would just be, for example, for the first one on Monday, if the ice doesn't stay, it would be myself and Ann. that doesn't necessarily have to be noticed it's only two of us but if the weather was out of control then could we put it on youtube on the ccps channel so that people could still participate and not necessarily as well as chatters you're also considering like you would be at the building but you're only asking for it to be virtual for the public correct whichever version makes sense

[01:47:06] Next, we have announcements, communications, and school board comments. School board members, are there any announcements or comments?

[01:47:27] Okay, Mr. Bronto. Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely not school-related whatsoever. But with the weather that's coming in, one of the things I love about Chester County is regardless of what's going on outside of our county, our neighbors pull together, which we might have to see or not have to see.

[01:47:49] We might see that with the inclement weather that we're projected to come our way. And I would just ask to look out for your neighbors, especially those that might have a disability or don't get around very well. Just checking on those folks and just making sure they're okay and helping out however possible, but also reaching out for help if needed.

[01:48:11] So just a shout out to our community. I know that they'll pull together and help out wherever needed. But just a friendly reminder that there would be folks that, you know, this storm is going to impact greatly. And so if we can help out, just ask that we do. Thank you. Thank you.

[01:48:28] That was very kind. So the next school board budget work session will be held on Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026 at 4 p.m. here in the county public meeting room. If there's no further business, we need a motion to adjourn.

[01:48:46] So moved. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion? Ann Coker. Aye. Jenna Darby? Aye. Dominique Chatters? Aye.

[01:49:02] Stephen Pronto? Aye. Lisa Hudgens? Aye. The motion carries. The January 22nd, 2026 School Board Budget Work Session is adjourned.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com