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## Chesterfield County School Board Business Meeting, Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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Place Chesterfield County School Board, Virginia  
Length 2h 0m (video)

- Official meeting video (Swagit): <https://chesterfieldschoolsva.new.swagit.com/videos/382236>
- Official minutes (BoardDocs, on the May 12, 2026 agenda for approval): [https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DTUL98537B86/\\$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202026.04.14%20Business%20Meeting.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/chesterfield/Board.nsf/pfiles/DTUL98537B86/$file/DRAFT%20MINUTES%20-%202026.04.14%20Business%20Meeting.pdf)

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**[00:00:01]** Good evening, everyone. I'd like to call the April 14th, 2026 School Board Business Meeting to order. Before we begin the meeting this evening, I'd like to thank everyone for attending the April 14th School Board Business Meeting and remind the audience that comments to this board may only be made at the podium during the public comment period.

**[00:00:22]** Comments from the audience are prohibited and are in violation of Section 18.2-415 of the Code of Virginia. Disorderly Conduct in Public Places, and School Board Policy 6141.1. I appreciate everyone's patience and understanding so that we can conduct a business meeting in an orderly fashion.

**[00:00:46]** April is the month of the military child, and the school board has included a resolution under the consent agenda to recognize this. We'd like to take a moment to honor students whose parents serve in the armed forces, as well as acknowledge the valuable contributions of military service members, veterans, and their families.

**[00:01:07]** We will now have an invocation by Ms. Coker, followed by the flag salute, led by Dr. Darby. Before we begin this evening's invocation, we would like to observe a moment of silence in memory of two valued employees and a student who recently passed away.

[00:01:26] Richard Dunn served his community with distinction, beginning with his career in law enforcement as a member of the Richmond Police Department. After retiring from policing, he continued his calling to serve, not in uniform, but in the classroom, where he shaped young minds as a history teacher at Meadowbrook High School.

[00:01:48] His journey as an educator took him across the world to China, reflecting both his adventurous spirit and his deep belief in the power of education to connect people. Upon returning home, he continued teaching at Community High School and later transitioned to Salem Middle School, where he served as an ESL teacher, supporting students as they found their voice and place in a new language and culture.

[00:02:14] In 2020, Mr. Dunn brought his talents and heart to Academy 360 as a success teacher. In that role, he did far more than teach. He mentored, encouraged, and uplifted students who needed someone to believe in them.

[00:02:32] And he did so with patience, humility, and care. Even after retirement, Richard Dunn never stopped serving. He continued working with students through homebound services with the Chesterfield Adolescent Resource Pathways Program and gave his time to mentor young men through boys to men, investing in the next generation long after his official career had ended.

[00:02:56] Richard Dunn passed away on March 13, 2026 at the age of 70, leaving behind a legacy rooted in service, faith, and community. We are also saddened to share the loss of September Worsham Dabney, a valued employee who passed away on March 30, 2026.

[00:03:17] She served Chesterfield County Schools with commitment and care for 18 years as a dedicated bus driver, forming meaningful connections with her students and their families. Her contributions made a lasting difference, and she will be remembered with great respect and appreciation.

[00:03:34] Our thoughts are with her loved ones during this difficult time. We would also like to express our deepest condolences to the family of Cameron Thornton. Cam's big heart and priceless smile warmed the room. Cameron attended Thomas Dale as a sophomore after attending Matowica High School as a ninth grader.

[00:03:55] Cameron was a member of the Thomas Dale JROTC program. His team first attitude, compassion, and warm spirit helped to strengthen our tight-knit program. Cam's extensive friend group knew no bounds people from every community background and walk of life called him friend we are all better because we were fortunate enough to share a talk a smile or a moment with Cam it's on us to ensure that his light shines through us and we share that

[00:04:30] light with others Cameron you are forever with us and forever a Thomasdale night please join us in a moment of silence. Thank you. Heavenly Father, we come before you today with grateful hearts, thankful for the opportunity to serve our community and its children. We ask for your

[00:05:07] guidance and wisdom as we gather to make decisions that will shape the future of our schools. Grant each member of this board clarity of thought, a spirit of collaboration, and a commitment to what is best for every student. Help us to listen with open minds, speak with kindness, and act with integrity we pray for our teachers staff and administrators that they may feel supported and inspired in their work we lift up our students asking that they grow not only in knowledge but in character confidence and compassion may our discussions be thoughtful our decisions be just

[00:05:44] and our actions reflect a deep care for the well-being of all in your name we pray amen

[00:05:49] please join us at this time in the pledge of allegiance the consent agenda includes agenda

[00:06:24] adoption approval of the minutes march 10 2026 work session march 10 2026 business meeting memo 34-26 recommended personnel actions memo number 35 035-26 fy 2026 acceptance of new grants memo number 036-26 acceptance of donations memo number 037-26 career and technical education local plan approval memo number 038-26 nomination for vsba excellence and workforce readiness award

[00:07:03] memo number 039-26 approval of student fee schedule for 2026-27 school year and 2026 summer fees reaffirmation of the school board code of conduct and governance manual resolution recognizing our schools for their support of military service members are there any additions or corrections to the consent agenda madam chair there are no additions or corrections to the consent agenda are there any requests from a school board member to separate an item from the consent agenda for discussion and individual action hearing none may i have a motion to approve

[00:07:43] the consent agenda as presented so moved is there a second second madam clerk would you please call the roll on the motion. Anne Coker. Aye. Jennifer Darvey. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. The motion carries. Mr. Smith, would you please announce our new administrators? If I could ask Megan Ryan Smith to come forward to this time. Madam Chairman, board members, with your actions this evening, you've appointed Megan Ryan Smith as the principal for

[00:08:22] Matoka High School, effective July 1, 2026. Megan currently serves as assistant principal at Patrick Ewing High School in Hanover County Public Schools. She previously served as assistant principal in Hanover County Online School, administrative intern in Herico Virtual Academy, and biology and AP environmental science teacher, Verona High School, and Herico County Public Schools.

[00:08:44] Please show me congratulating Megan and her family.

[00:08:59] Next, we have awards and recognitions. For our first award and recognition, Mr. Smith. At this time, I've got to ask our SAGE recognitions to come forward this time.

[00:09:50] The Superintendent Student Advisory Group on Education, known as SAGE, provides a unique leadership opportunity for high school students in Chester County Public Schools. Two exemplary students from each high school are selected by their principal each year to represent the school community on SAGE. Working collaboratively with students across the school division, the outstanding representatives strive to make a positive impact on CCPS by providing meaningful student input, proposing solutions to relevant and authentic problems, and engaging in deep discussions with senior leadership.

[00:10:19] This year, the group is excited to present to the cabinet their feedback and recommendations for the use of AI in schools. The topic is both timely and relevant, as division leaders are currently working to provide professional development for educators, resource procurement, and best practices for AI use. This evening, we're pleased to honor the 2526 representatives from Byrd High School, Jaden Jones and Lucy Casey, Carver College and Career Academy, Jeremiah Green, Cassidy Stamos, Clover Hill High School, Prisha Gupta and Campbell Redding.

[00:10:51] From Cosby High School, Narend Ponousama. Real close, real close. Ayush Punchal. From Tomasdale High School, Lund Bowser and Daniel Lewis. James River High School, Camille Marks and

Julianne Cario.

[00:11:12] Manchester High School, Catherine Pavlansky and Davis Neum. From Matoka High School, Samuel Knoll and Stephen Ankeel. From Medrick High School, Kristen Nadab and Angel Maldonado Mendoza. From the Lithian High School, Towns Linkowitz and Haley Wilson, and Monacan High School, Nicolette Walker and Anna Elliott.

[00:11:35] We're also pleased to recognize our sage of mentors who've not only stewarded the process, but whose commitment enriches the student experience. Dr. Stephanie Mooney, assistant principal of the Lithian High School, Mr. Roscoe Johnson, assistant principal of Matoka High School, and Christopher Warman, assistant principal of Cosby High School. Please join me in congratulating these students.

[00:11:57] So we have some stuff to pass out up here. So what we're doing first is we're going to give our seniors their pin. So we have Lucy Casey. Step forward, Lucy.

[00:12:13] There you go. Congratulations. Catherine. I'm not even going to butcher it. Ayush. And your pin.

[00:12:32] Towns. And Daniel. And then every other member gets a beautiful certificate.

[00:12:53] Anna. Congratulations. Nicolette. Congratulations. And Naren. Congratulations. So I gave out gift bags to our mentors.

[00:13:09] So I have a question. How was it being on the advisory board? Because that means you gave them good ideas. You had a great project to work on. So if one of you want to speak or all of you want to speak, that's fine. But I want to know the best part about being on the advisory group.

[00:13:26] You're first. Yeah, well, I thought it was a really great experience to kind of share how my classmates feel about the AI usage in school and kind of implementing a certain scale or giving basically feedback on how AI should be used in school and kind of getting rid of the norm of cheating.

[00:13:51] I've done this for the past two years and I think the collaborative aspect and seeing what every different school, like all the representatives have to offer is very, very interesting. I've also served these past two years and I agree with Ayush, it's really interesting to collaborate with peers from other schools and just getting to see the different perspectives that everyone brings.

[00:14:11] I agree, it's been really fun getting to meet new people and talk about AI and it's been a really great experience. I also agree it's been fun to collaborate with others in SAGE and just meet people from different schools and talk to them and learn about new perspectives. I would like to say I'm blessed to be a part of the group and I'm glad that we came up with everything we came up with and pushed each other every meeting. I was also in this group for two years and I really appreciated being able to just meet with other representatives from the different schools

[00:14:49] and just being able to see how their school is and just collaborating and talking with each other and being able to build off of each other and talking about AI and what we talked about last year. I have also served for two years, and I think my favorite part is really having my own hands in my education and being able to see the effects of my ideas.

[00:15:16] Well, no. This is my third year. Just an opportunity to work with these students has been remarkable. They've done a great job this year, and also an opportunity to work with my colleagues. This is

my first year, and it's been an amazing experience to see the leadership qualities in our young people from all across the county.

[00:15:35] It's been great. I've been doing this for several years. I don't know the exact count. One of the things that I love so much about having this opportunity to serve in this capacity is just getting to be impressed on a monthly basis every time we meet with the ideas and the thoughts.

[00:15:51] that our students are bringing to us to help enrich and to really provide a service to the community and to Dr. Murray by providing their feedback and the student perspective. Thank you.

[00:16:12] - So one other thing, you're gonna wear your pin for graduation. It's part of your regalia, so you get a little bling for all the seniors. And I just wanna say thank you for your service that you've done, and I look forward to those of you who are returning. Returning, raise your hand.

[00:16:27] Nicolette, okay, I see you. Okay, so we'll be seeing more of you next year, and thank you to our mentors for continuing to pour into our children. Let's give them another hand.

[00:16:45] If I could ask our Monacan High School swimmers to come forward this time.

[00:17:15] Coach, do. Congratulations to Brian Singleton and his swim team at Monacan High School for winning the state championship. The Monacan High School swim team is a powerhouse in the Virginia High School League, Class 4, recently cementing a dynasty with the girls' team winning its fifth consecutive state championship in February 2026.

[00:17:43] The program has been remarkably successful, since becoming a sanctioned varsity sport in the 2017-18 season, with the girls' team winning seven of the last eight state meets. Please join me congratulating Coach Singleton. We understand that in evidence of how involved your swimmers are, they are also still swimming tonight and working and doing other sports and doing incredible things.

[00:18:10] So it just shows that you are an incredible leader of this team, that they are not here because they're out representing our community in other ways this evening. So thank you for being here. thank you for leading this team seven out of eight state champions is just an incredible record and we are so grateful for your leadership in our division working with the swim team so I'll turn it over to you to share just a highlight from this past season and this group of girls that you just led to the states thank you very much yes this year was another special year as you guys

[00:18:44] mentioned it was five in a row for us um so we've had two classes come through monakin now that have been undefeated during their four years um this meet was really really challenging it came down to the very last race um and i was talking to the kids before the very last race and the meet could have gone three ways we could have lost we could have tied or we could have won and it really came down to how they performed on the last race and sometimes it's out of our hands it also depended on what the other teams did and the girls rose to the occasion and they were able to finish the job

[00:19:22] we went into the year knowing it was going to be a challenging year we had a really good class graduate last year some that are swimming in college and we have a really really special swim on our team this year that is graduating she'll be swimming at nc state next year and so she's

[00:19:39] actually out in Colorado right now swimming with the junior national team. Next up, we have our

[00:20:02] High School Yearbook Award. Nashville County Public Schools is proud to recognize several of our high schools with outstanding achievement in its classic journalism and yearbook design. On March 23rd,

[00:20:42] Cosby High School, James River High School, Matulka High School, Midlothian High School, and Tomsdale High School proudly announced that their yearbooks have been selected for inclusion in Varsity Yearbook's Distinguished Portfolio. This national showcase recognizes the most outstanding yearbooks produced by this leader in yearbook printing. This accomplishment places these five schools among the 686 schools featured in this year's edition, selected from more than 900 submissions reviewed. Please join me in congratulating these students. So we do have a little something to give

[00:21:18] you, but before we get to that, when you think about yearbook, right, if you're buying a yearbook and you thumb through it and you're looking for yourself or a friend or what have you, you really don't maybe give a lot of attention to the detail that goes into creating, establishing, and publishing a yearbook. Many, many years ago, I won't tell you how many, but in my high school, I had the opportunity to work on a yearbook. And the amount of time that went into it, and editing, and picture, and framing, and editing that, and then giving it to the editor, and then they give it back, and then

[00:21:56] you have to redo it all over again. I get it. I hear you. And listen, to not only establish a yearbook for this year, but then to also have it award recognized is just absolutely outstanding. And I say this to a lot of folks that stand up here, you are the best that we have to put forward in Chesterfield County Public Schools. I hope you know that. I hope you recognize this is not something that is just, oh, everyone does this. Out of 900 submissions, right, that's a lot of schools competing, and you guys rose to the top. So that's absolutely outstanding. Congratulations to each and every one of you and to the staff that's overseeing them.

[00:22:34] Thank you so much for your time and dedication and pouring into them as well because that does not go beyond us either. So with that being said, what is it about your book? And not everyone has to say something if you don't want to. That's okay. Just pass the mic down. But what is it about your book that made you go, you know what, that's something I want to be a part of?

[00:22:54] Hey. I know for me as an advisor, It gives me the opportunity to see students, like, grow over years. I've had Abby for four years.

[00:23:13] Yeah, Journey, and working on you for more. And these guys, we get to see these guys grow up. It's a lovely opportunity to have publications. Yeah, I love your book. It's my third year. I'm a senior. I really enjoyed it for, like, the photography aspect, but I really like the writing, and I'm actually doing Mass Comm in college.

[00:23:34] But I love that I can meet new people and make a really good friendship. It's like a big, happy family. This is my first year, and so far I've really enjoyed yearbook. I love the opportunities I've been given to meet new people and get to know them about what they did in the photo.

[00:23:54] And I just think it's an amazing opportunity to have. This is, like, my second year. I just love seeing, like, all of our staff's, like, creativity come together to create, like, one big book that everyone in the school can see. And I'm not, like, an athletic person. I'm not involved in anything else.

[00:24:11] So it's, like, it's nice to know every different part of my school, whether it be clubs or anything else like that. This is my fourth year doing yearbook. And I have to say, working with people every day or

every other day who just love meeting new people and representing our student body is just really exciting to be a part of.

[00:24:35] This is my fifth year in yearbook, and I would say that my favorite part of it is definitely the family that we build, not only within the class, but we also get the opportunity to talk to people who are in sports and just different electives, and we interview them and take pictures of them. So we just really get to build a family with the whole school, and it's just really interesting to see how different everybody is and where different people excel.

[00:25:00] I agree that the best thing about being a yearbook advisor is getting to see these students grow over four years. You don't really get that opportunity in any other class to see them grow from a little freshman into a senior who takes on a leadership position and does really impressive things with everything that they've learned over those four years.

[00:25:16] So that's definitely the best part. So I've been in yearbook for four years, and I've continued with it just because I've learned a lot of experience with deadlines and working as a team, and I've been provided with so many unique opportunities, and I've met so many new people.

[00:25:34] So this is my third year in yearbook, and my favorite thing about it is being able to document the year, obviously, and also work with people that you wouldn't think you would be able to work with before, like creatively and being able to collaborate and meld our new ideas together.

[00:25:55] So that's really awesome. This is also my third year in yearbook, and my favorite part is I don't think I would have been able to get to know as many people around my school if I hadn't done yearbook and know as many things about people at my school if I hadn't done it. So as an advisor, my favorite part is watching them take an immense responsibility of it's their book. I'm just there in case things fall apart or there's other stuff that they need me for, but it's entirely their book. And that's just a really rewarding experience.

[00:26:32] i guess i'm last so like i said we do have a few things now midlothian you had you had two awards correct so we have two gifts for you so yeah absolutely please do um let me see here thomas dale who would like to take this for thomas dale oh okay they brought the break the big doll for thomas dale to receive this one absolutely sir thank you and congratulations

[00:27:07] appreciate that let's see uh we're going to go back over here i apologize to midlothian Coach, James River. All right, and we have Cosby.

[00:27:30] Who would like to receive it for Cosby? All right. And then Metellica. You'll take it. Fantastic. Well, on behalf of the Chesterfield County School Board, thank you very much for what you do. Congratulations on this acknowledgement, and we're very happy for you, and thank you for representing us with such great pride.

[00:27:47] Congratulations. If I could ask Sheila Pope to come forward this time.

[00:28:24] During School Social Work Week, Chesterfield County Public Schools recognized and celebrated school social workers for the vital role they play in supporting students, families, and school communities. The annual celebration includes naming the school system school social worker of the year. This year's honoree is Sheila Pope, school social worker for Tomsdale High School and Curtis Elementary.

With 43 years in the field of social work, she is a recognized leader throughout both schools. One of her outstanding initiatives is the Pups Club, which includes a

[00:29:04] therapy dog and brings together high school and elementary students. Please help me congratulating Sheila Pope. Congratulations. You are an amazing social worker for our students. Thank you for your years of dedication for we are lucky to have you at thomasdale at ccps and at curtis we had a work session earlier and in that work session we were given some updates on social work tasks and things and so over 3 000 plus requests for social and emotional connections that our

[00:29:40] social workers do so thank you for that and what you do for our students and the pup club is awesome And I have gotten my picture taken multiple times with Rosie and the therapy dog there. So thank you for everything you do. Would you like to share what got you into social work and, like, what makes a day bright for you?

[00:30:04] Thank you. Yeah, I have been doing social work for a long time at this point. And I first became interested in it, actually, surprisingly, as a very little girl. We had an apartment complex behind my house, and I used to go over there and carry groceries in for the older people that lived there, and I didn't know that that could be a thing, but then as I grew and went to college and learned about the opportunities, so it was a great fit for me.

[00:30:35] And the thing that really brightens my day is the opportunity to work with very many like-minded individuals at my schools to create amazing opportunities for students. It's important that they all feel welcome and that they all feel like they have a voice.

[00:30:51] And we work really hard to make them know that and, of course, to know that they can achieve. Thank you. If I could ask Jessica Sanchez to come forward at this time.

[00:31:24] Congratulations to Jessica Sanchez of James River High School for being named Virginia's winner of the Outstanding Speech and Debate Educator Award.

[00:31:45] The National Federation of State High School Associations selected only 15 people for the 25-26 state awards. Jessica joined the Jennifer High School faculty in 2012 and started with the speech and debate team in 2015 as assistant coach. Her award citation states, Jessica Sanchez has transferred speech and debate at James River High School in building a nationally recognized program.

[00:32:08] Please join me congratulating Jessica Sanchez. Congratulations. I really don't know where to start. You have created something incredible. You bring out the best in your students, similar to what the yearbook people do.

[00:32:28] You do that, too. You see students who, at the beginning of the year, can hardly speak, and then at the end, they're winning awards. And that is a gift for you that you give them and that they give you. I want you to tell me what is your favorite part about this and what, like, keeps you going.

[00:32:50] And also one funny thing. One funny, yeah, if you have a funny thing. I will start by saying, like Mr. Calfie said, I'm much more comfortable tossing this ball to my kids. I was struck walking in how many times I've been lucky enough to bring my students here to be recognized and how much more fun and easier that is to just say, look at these guys go.

[00:33:14] Aren't they great? And step to the side. But the truth is, I feel like Miss Pope, that this has been something that has been who I am and what I'm called to do for my entire life. And so that, I think, is my

favorite part about this. My favorite part about this is watching the kids flourish, helping them find their voices, supporting them.

[00:33:33] Of course, I can't support them without the support of the people who help me. Like, you have been so tremendously supportive. Obviously, Dr. Murray loves my program, and I couldn't do this without the support of my principal, Dr. Volker. My kids are amazing. And so to be able to stand here year after year and say that they are going to be state champions again for the fifth time this year and that I have 13 national qualifiers that are going to compete in D.C. and Richmond this year is a beautiful, beautiful thing to be able to say.

[00:34:01] We say that winning is a consequence, not an objective. Our objective is to be better people and to find our voices, and our consequence is that we get to stand up here and be recognized. So I appreciate being part of that. Again, it's a little strange to be the one getting the recognition, but I will admit the funny part about it for me, I guess it's not really funny, but it is finally a place in my life where I can say, wow, this feels kind of cool, right?

[00:34:26] Like to say I got a national recognition feels like all the work that my kids have done gets poured on top of me, and I'm very grateful for that. Now you see why she won the award. Worth a try.

[00:34:54] If I could ask Amanda Volker and Randy Smith to come forward this time.

[00:35:26] Yeah, that's good. Chesma County Public Schools is proud to recognize two outstanding school leaders who successfully completed the Virginia Department of Education's Principal Distinction Program.

[00:35:47] This prestigious recognition honors principals who demonstrate exceptional leadership, inspire excellence, and make a lasting impact on student learning and growth. We're pleased to celebrate the concerns of Dr. Amanda Volker, Principal of James River High School, and Dr. Randy Smith, principal of Ettrick Elementary School. Please join in congratulating these two principals.

[00:36:04] I'm just not so sure folks in the gallery understand the powerhouse of principal and the caliber of excellence that we have standing here this evening.

[00:36:22] I truly mean that. We always strive ourselves to be better at what we're doing in Chanceville County Public Schools. But sometimes when we're trying to do that, we need leaders to show us how to do that. And every single time there is something to accomplish, your names are always in conversation and being mentioned.

[00:36:43] For good. Yes, for good. And the students. When we gauge how things are going, we look at the students. The students are a direct representative of your accomplishments, not only your staff's accomplishments, which I know Randy pretty well, but I would venture to say that you would say you're here because of your staff.

[00:37:11] The accomplishments are because of your staff. And 100% yes, not going to argue that at all, but your staff needs a leader, someone that they can look to, someone to get direction from, someone to get counsel from. And every time I have conversations with teachers, in that conversation, their principal's name always comes up, and in a very positive way, not negative, in a very positive way, because of what is going on behind the doors that we don't always get to see.

[00:37:39] But your staff sees it, and your students see it. And so on behalf of Chester County Public Schools, congratulations for this distinct honor. It's fantastic to be on the stage with you. And I could go on

and on, especially, Randy, because I know you very well, being in the Matelka District of all the great things that have happened at Ettrick.

[00:38:00] But I also know some fantastic things that Lisa would be bragging about as far as James River is concerned. So I don't want to take any more of the limelight from you. I would like to know from you, what was it that made you want to be a principal and then just rocked that every chance that you got?

[00:38:19] I don't know. The influence of other leaders. Along the way, they saw something in me that I never saw, and they pushed me into leadership.

[00:38:36] My mom was a teacher and a great teacher, so that started the teaching part for me and then just other great leaders. I have a little bit of a competitive side, so that's why I do stuff. But I like working with other great leaders.

[00:38:52] So that's how, yeah. Sorry, your turn. So as a Chesterfield graduate, Curtis Elementary, Chester Middle, and Thomasdale High School, go Knights. I am a product of this community.

[00:39:11] And ironically, 11 years ago tonight, I was named the principal of Chalkley Elementary School. So I've had the opportunity to be a principal on the elementary, the middle school level at Providence, and now James River. So for about 350 students, I've been their principal since third grade.

[00:39:28] And I've followed them all the way to high school. And each year, I get the opportunity to graduate more of our Chalkley and Providence students. And Randy and I had a great opportunity with this, with our capstone project. And ironically, Randy is a high school endorsed teacher, but is an elementary principal.

[00:39:48] And I am an elementary endorsed teacher, but a high school principal. So we get along very, very well. And it just like Randy said, it really is this community and the leaders before us and hopefully the ones that come after we're gone.

[00:40:08] Congratulations. Thank you.

[00:40:22] If I could ask our friends from Hope Point Church to come forward this time.

[00:40:49] Hope Point Church is an incredible partner to our schools, always stepping in whenever there's a need. Whether it's supporting staff through meals and appreciation efforts, providing weekend food bags for students, or enhancing school spaces through garden cleanups and refreshed teacher workrooms, they meet needs big and small without hesitation.

[00:41:11] They show up both as an organization and through their individual members, connecting people to meaningful ways to support schools and students across our communities. Their flexibility, generosity, and consistent presence make a lasting impact on our schools. Please join me in thanking Hope Point Church.

[00:41:30] So I always like to say it takes a village to raise children, and you are part of that village, and we are so grateful for everything that you're doing as a community partner. We know you could be helping other people, you could be helping other districts, but you chose us, and we're grateful for that, and we appreciate everything you've been doing for us.

[00:41:49] And we have this little something about being better together for Hope Point Church, And I would just like, I don't know who wants to speak. It could be all of, okay, they already nominated you, sir.

Tell us what's the best part about why you like helping out in Trestville County Public Schools.

[00:42:05] Yeah, I figured that might happen. Very dangerous giving a preacher a microphone when we've already been here an hour, but I'll be very brief. I don't know the one thing, but there are many amazing opportunities that we have. But what I would say consistently is that CCPS and CIS, which is such an incredible partner for us, have opened the doors for us and empowered us to actually do what we believe.

[00:42:29] We believe we're called to serve and make a difference every single day, not just on Sunday mornings, but in the practical ways. Kids that are hungry, kids that need clothing, teachers that need morale and boost all that. And so it's an honor and privilege to serve. I want to thank everyone here. The things that you're doing, the decisions you're making, are shaping the future of our students in our county.

[00:42:48] And so, yeah, it's a privilege and honor to do whatever is needed, Whether it be a renovation or feeding kids or serving with teachers or doing gift bags with CIS schools, whatever the need is, we're happy to serve. Let's give them another round of applause. Thank you so much.

[00:43:22] Now we have Calvin Frye to share about the outstanding bus drivers.

[00:43:57] Madam Chair, board members, and Mr. Roberts, it's my pleasure to be here this evening. Before I introduce our drivers, I'd just like to thank you for attending our bus rodeo this past week.

[00:44:13] Our bus rodeo is an opportunity for our drivers to practice their skills and have some friendly competition. We had a large number, I believe we had over 100 drivers this year, and added to that were you and your participation. And I've got to tell you, to see you come out, get on the big buses, and drive around the course and practice those skills was just amazing.

[00:44:38] We all appreciated that, and it was great for you to have the opportunity also to see how much goes into being a bus driver. So thank you for that, and I encourage you to come back again next year and check your emails. You might have an application in there. Now for our Drivers of the Month.

[00:44:58] There are many drivers who could be recognized this month, but each transportation area had to make the tough decision of selecting a single bus driver who exemplified excellence and dedication to represent their area. We'd like to recognize and honor the following bus drivers.

[00:45:15] Garcia, Floraval, Area 1, bus 781, two and a half years of service. Garcia serves as a runner for Area 1 and consistently demonstrates a polite and professional demeanor on every route.

[00:45:33] He interacts respectfully with all students, helping to create a calm, positive, and safe environment on his bus. His area office says he's a valued member of team transportation. Ali Rowe, Area 2, bus 506, two and a half years of service.

[00:45:54] Ali can't be here this evening, so accepting her recognition is her manager, Ms. Jeffers. Ali says being a school bus driver means being a part of a child's journey every single day, good and bad. Her area office says she is flexible and always a team member.

[00:46:13] Steve Norris, Area 3, bus 728, two years of service. Steve says he enjoys driving a school bus and getting to know the students and seeing them mature and grow. Steve also likes helping his fellow bus drivers whenever there is a need.

[00:46:30] Sherelle Mack, Area 4, bus 90, 3 ½ years of service. Sherelle says she takes pride in being a bus driver for her community. Making a positive difference in the lives of students every day is what makes her

motivated to do this job.

[00:46:51] And knowing she makes a difference is truly what matters. Anna Rivera, Area 5, bus 334, 7 months of service. Anna says she enjoys being a bus driver because she likes kids and is proud to get them to school and back home safely every day.

[00:47:11] She also appreciates that Area 5 feels like a family. Thank you all. Let's give them a round of applause. Thank you and congratulations. You are the best of the best and recognized this month.

[00:47:29] Thank you for your dedication to our students, getting them to and from school safely. As people say, you are the first that they see in the morning and the last that they see in the afternoon. So you set the tone for how the day will go, and then you help us parents in the evening with how they come off the bus.

[00:47:46] So thank you very much for all that you do. If you would like to, you can pass the mic if you want, but just share why you became a bus driver. Hi, I'm Anna Rivera, and I became a bus driver in 2003.

[00:48:03] I moved to Virginia, and they gave me a chance, and I'm here, and I just enjoy it. It's just, I'm happy to come to work. If you like your work, you're here every day. Right. Well, thank you for the opportunity.

[00:48:23] Hi. I became a bus driver to give back to my community, to be that small and that little encouragement that sometimes violence isn't always the answer, and you have to make good choices.

[00:48:42] And I enjoy doing that every day. I became a bus driver, well, I was kind of semi-retired, and I'm just not the kind of person to sit around. I've got to work. So my friend Sandy, she used to be a bus driver.

[00:49:00] She told me I should give it a try. Went through the class, enjoyed it, got to drive the bus, and the more I learned, the more I enjoyed it. Loved messing with the kids. I mean, even though if you've got to fuss at them every now and then, then they come back and give you a hug right after you fuss. So it's just very rewarding in that and getting to know the other bus drivers also.

[00:49:20] So I'm accepting for Ms. Rowe. She's been driving for a couple of years. But one of the things she did just recently, which I love, is she actually sent us an email and said, what else can I learn? What else can I do? Where else can I – what other skills can I have?

[00:49:36] So she's been picking up. She runs for us on third shift, on third tier. So she – last minute, we say, hey, go to this school, do this run, and she figures out how to get them home, which is awesome. It's not easy. So for me, well, I'm Garcia.

[00:49:55] For me, it's kind of, describe it, but it's like a circle moment for me, from being a student, attending Manchester Middle Meadowbrook High School, Chesterfield Technical Center, from getting an internship from the Technical Center, being an intern for two years at the Chesterfield JDR Court, and then somehow find my way back, a different career avenue to being a bus driver.

[00:50:22] So for me, it's more of a pleasure serving my community. Thank you all for everything that you do. Congratulations.

[00:50:42] Before Berkeley goes, I just want to give a shout out to Area 1. My daughter left her phone on the bus, and it was a crisis moment.

[00:50:59] And I just want to thank the Area 1 driver who knew how to contact me through the phone being locked and all the things. I appreciate you. You saved me from a night of pain. I appreciate y'all so much. Thank you. Yes, she did.

[00:51:16] Thank you so much for the suggestion. Madam Chair, Board Members, Dr. Murray, Mr. Roberts, thank you as always for the opportunity to recognize some of our Outstanding Food and Nutrition Services team members. I believe it's incredibly important to take every opportunity I can to recognize our staff because the impact that they have on students extends far beyond what we often see in our day-to-day.

[00:51:41] Recently, in collaboration with Mr. Hurd in our art department and in celebration of School Lunch Hero Day, students throughout the county created artwork and wrote about why they considered our cafeteria staff to be heroes, and their words were powerful. Amongst things that were shared by students were included, that's why our cafeteria workers are superheroes, because they help people every single day in big and small ways.

[00:52:06] Another wrote, they wake up early to cook delicious food that helps our brains think, our legs run at recess, and our hearts feel happy. And perhaps most telling, the students said, lunch ladies and men do so much more than just serve and make you lunch. They interact with students and change their lives.

[00:52:22] Couldn't have said that better myself, frankly. Of our two honorees this evening, unfortunately, I know our first was unable to join us this evening, and that is Ms. Debbie Dabney. Ms. Dabney is a food service associate at Matoka High School, and she's been with us for 27 years.

[00:52:39] Her nomination includes the following. Ms. Debbie is a team player and has an eye for detail, and she likes things done right. This is her last year with us, and she will be greatly missed. Ms. Debbie says, when people ask me what I like most about my job, I tell them that's easy.

[00:52:54] It's the students. It's been an honor and a privilege to get to know so many wonderful children at Matilka High School throughout the years. I will treasure my years with food service, and for all those I've met along the way, thank you for allowing me to be a part of a wonderful organization. And our manager of the month is Ashley Wright.

[00:53:13] Ms. Wright is our assistant manager at Grange Hall Elementary School, and she's been with us for six years. Her nomination includes the following. Ashley does everything that is asked of her and is an asset to her kitchen and her children. Ms. Wright says, working in the cafeteria has never just been about serving food to me.

[00:53:32] The best part of my day is the kids, their stories, their smiles, and watching them grow. When a student stops by just to tell me about their day, it reminds me that sometimes the smallest moments are the most meaningful. So thank you to both of our recognizees this month.

[00:53:51] Thank you, Mr. Dunbrek. Thank you, and congratulations to all of tonight's honorees. Next, we have public comment. For this meeting, citizens were given the option of submitting their comments online or in person.

[00:54:09] Comments submitted being the online form were sent to the board prior to the start of tonight's meeting, posted to the board doc site, and will be included in full as an addendum to the meeting

minutes. In-person comments will be summarized by the board clerk and included in the official meeting minutes.

[00:54:28] Documents submitted along with in-person comments will, upon request, be distributed to the board but not included as part of the board's official minutes. Madam Clerk, would you please announce this evening's in-person speakers? Madam Chair, we have eight speakers this evening.

[00:54:43] They are Rob Hamill, Jason Rodriguez, Christina Concepcion, Wendy Little, Dimna Schad, Joshua Wise, Sally Walker, and Cassidy Height. Each speaker will have four minutes to address the board.

[00:54:59] There's a timer set up on top of the podium that will turn green when you begin speaking, yellow when you have 30 seconds remaining, and red when your time has expired. As a reminder, no personal belongings other than a cell phone and speaker notes are allowed at the podium. Please have your materials organized in a manner that as you arrive at the podium, you are prepared to start speaking as your time will begin once you reach the podium.

[00:55:22] Please note that comments equivalent to campaigning for any public office aren't violation of school board policy 1110 and are prohibited. May we have Rob Hamill. Good evening, school board members, colleagues, and friends. My name is Rob Hamill, and I am the president of your Chesterfield Education Association. It has been an eventful month for CEA. We went out to several buildings for our April site visits, and we have more lined up in the coming weeks. We're signing up new members almost every day during our early enrollment

[00:55:59] event. We held a social at the first Richmond Kickers game of the season, and we've been coordinating with area firefighters and health care workers on a social focused on collective bargaining. We've been coordinating with area firefighters and health care workers on a That will take place next Friday, April 24th. But the main thing we want to talk about tonight is the situation at Bellwood Elementary School.

[00:56:17] We understand that there will be some changes to the contracts of the staff after the switch from the 12-month calendar to our regular 10-month calendar. However, the staff of Bellwood has made clear that the two options put forth by the CCPS Human Resources Department are not workable. Both the 24 payment and the 26 payment options for next year's contracts create a fundamental inequality between our Bellwood staff and all of our other CCPS staff.

[00:56:41] There is no reason to punish the folks who show up at a hard-to-staff school and give their all to our students. They deserve the same consideration in their pay that we extend to every other CCPS employee. They deserve to be paid fairly over the summer. So we have proposed a third option, to write 12-month, 24-pay period contracts for the Bellwood staff that start on July 1, 2026.

[00:57:02] The staff at Bellwood could continue to renew their contracts on July 1 for the remainder of their time at CCPS. Yes, that creates a group of workers with different contract start dates within the county. However, Bellwood's contracts already renew on July 1st. We've had this group of 70 staff members with July 1st contracts since 2017.

[00:57:20] HR has commented that a contract start date of July 1st would amount to payment in advance for work that the staff has not yet done. We argue that all of our contracts work that way. No one shows up to work on August 1st, the official start day of the 10-month contracts. All of us get paid in advance for a portion of our contract.

[00:57:37] The staff of Bellwood have communicated to me that they would be happy to accept an extra paragraph added to their contract, stating that if they quit between certain dates in the summer, that they must pay some money back to the county. No one here wants to keep money that they didn't earn. They simply can't sustain a month-long gap or a significant reduction in pay. Since our press release about this issue went out last Wednesday, we have seen benefits, finance, and HR staff visit Bellwood twice, and we applaud the efforts of the HR team and our administration to find a solution that works for everyone. We also thank them for the extension of three weeks for Bellwood staff to make their decisions about their pay.

[00:58:10] We don't think HR has offered quite the right solution yet. The idea suggested this morning to pay out the \$1,500 bonus from the General Assembly in July is a step in the right direction. After taxes, most folks would net about \$900 of that bonus.

[00:58:26] That definitely helps in July, but most of us have more than \$900 of bills in a single month. This idea also does not address the problem of the VRS contributions or of the health insurance premiums that the 24 Paycheck Payment Plan encounters. We are hopeful that we can reach an equitable solution to this problem.

[00:58:43] All of our staff deserve to be paid on time for their labor. We are determined that negotiations about the Bellwood pay should continue until our staff are made whole. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Chesterfield Education Association and the educators at Bellwood Elementary School. Thank you, Mr. Hamill.

[00:59:03] May we have Jason Rodriguez? Good evening, members of the school board, Madam Chair, and Dr. Murray.

[00:59:18] Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Jason Rodriguez. I am the CEA Vice President, and not only am I a teacher within our school district, But I'm the proud parent of four children that attend our schools, so I have a vested interest within our schools. I want to take a moment tonight to highlight a group of educators who bring a main value to our schools.

[00:59:34] Career switchers. These are professionals who have chosen to lead their established careers in business, health care, the military, technology, the arts, and countless other fields to step into classrooms. When we talk about teacher equality, we often focus on degrees, certifications, and years in the classroom.

[00:59:52] Those are important, but for career researchers, their resumes don't start on their first day of teaching. They bring years, sometimes decades, of real-world experience with them. They bring leadership from corporate boardrooms, precision from medical settings, discipline from military service, creativity from design studios, and problem-solving from engineer firms.

[01:00:11] These experiences don't disappear when they walk into a school building. They transform into stronger classroom management, deeper content knowledge, and authentic connections to the real world. Consider someone like myself, who spent 15-plus years in retail management. On paper, that may seem unrelated to education.

[01:00:26] With my experience, I would be able to be extremely successful with classroom management, so much so that I was been told by fellow teachers and admin that if they didn't know any better, they would have thought that I had been teaching for 10-plus years. But to think what that experience truly includes, leading large teams, training new employees, resolving conflicts commonly under pressure,

analyzing data to improve performance, managing budgets, and communicating clearly with people from every background imaginable.

[01:00:52] Retail managers learn how to motivate diverse groups, de-escalate tense situations, and adapt quickly when plans change, sometimes hourly. In a classroom, those same skills translate into strong classroom management, differentiated instruction, effective parent communication, and the ability to build a positive culture where students are seen and supported.

[01:01:13] The setting changes, but the leadership remains. Students benefit tremendously from this. When a former engineer teaches math, students see how equations apply beyond the textbook. When a former journalist enters and teaches English, writing becomes purposeful and powerful. When a former small business owner teaches economics, lessons come alive with lived experience.

[01:01:34] Career switchers help answer the questions the students ask most often. When will I ever use this? But if we truly value what career switchers bring, our policies must reflect value. Career switchers should not be required to start at the very bottom of the pay scale as though they are entering the workforce for the first time.

[01:01:49] They are not entry-level professionals. They are experienced leaders choosing to serve in a new capacity. recognizing relevant prior experience and salary placement is not just a matter of fairness it is a matter of recruitment and retention if we want to attract talented professionals into education we must ensure that they are not financially penalized for answering the call to teach beyond content compensation career switches model courage and lifelong learning they show to students that is never too late to pursue a calling to serve a community or to reinvent yourself in meaningful ways that message alone is invaluable as the board i urge you to continue recognizing and honoring the backgrounds of career-searching teachers, support induction

[01:02:28] programs that respect their prior expertise, create pathways for leadership that leverage their unique skills, and ensure their professional histories are not as unrelated chapters, but as assets that strengthen our schools and reflect appropriately in compensation structures. Our students deserve teachers who bring both biological skills and real-world perspectives.

[01:02:48] Career switches offer both. Let's make sure that we acknowledge, support, and fairly compensate for the value that they bring to our classrooms every single day career switchers should not be at the bottom of the pay scale i implore you as a school board to consider this thank you for your time thank you mr rodriguez may we have christina concepts you on hi members of the board and dr murray i am here today representing the staff at bellwood elementary school as our year-round

[01:03:23] program came to a forced end this year we aren't just transitioning school calendars we are facing a total pay lapse for july 2026 that threatens our livelihoods after months of silence from the county we were presented with two options that are actually penalties option one we can take a monthly pay cut for the entire next school year in order to receive pay in july which would amount to eight percent less than other ccps staff or option two not be paid from june 30th to august 15th of 2026. If we choose option two to elect to receive our full salaries next year, staff will be

[01:04:03] hit with a triple deduction of insurance premiums on our first check on August 15th. For some of our staff members, that would completely wipe out that August 15th check, which would be going without three full paychecks. Option two also causes other issues such as miscontributions to VRS and

option one leaving the staff with eight percent less in their checks when the economy is crashing is just not a suitable solution for us. When we asked in our meeting with CCPS leadership on March 13th why our contract dates couldn't simply stay the same seeing as our

[01:04:40] positions aren't changing we were told that CCPS could do that but the county was unwilling to take that risk that we would not report to work next year even though we sign our binding binding contracts in may ccps leadership also noted it was a risk to the county taxpayers many of us at bay at bellwood are those taxpayers that love this community enough to live here and work here this financial burden being shifted onto the backs of staff members who have anchored this community's experimental program is shocking and unfair does this sound like integrity equity teamwork or

[01:05:16] ingenuity losing two consecutive paychecks on july 15th and july 31st is not a small inconvenience For many of our staff, it is a fast track to debt and even homelessness as we cannot afford to pay our rent and mortgages without a paycheck.

[01:05:33] We can't explain to our daycares, our lenders, hospitals that our employer decided not to pay us this month. We can't even collect unemployment. Luckily, the Bellwood staff have a simple solution. Amend our 2026-27 contracts and future contracts for the innovative Bellwood staff to have a July 1st start date.

[01:05:55] this administrative fix would cost the county nothing we don't want any extra money but it helps protect us from financial ruin we ask for the board and dr murray's immediate action before this hardship becomes a reality for us we also understand that fallen creek had these two options two years ago and we believe that was unfair and two wrongs won't make it right thank

[01:06:19] you for your time tonight thank you miss sepsion may we have wendy little i haven't started speaking it starts when you reach the podium my name is wendy little my son is aaron little we've tried to reach out to you miss darby we've not received a response whatsoever you took an oath to uphold

[01:06:54] the constitution and make sure that you take care of your constituents um i'm going to read to you some things my son has been deprived education deprived of faith that is not a concern it is not a disagreement. It is non-compliance with IDEA providing FAPE to a disabled student who deserves education. In 2022-2023, Chesterfield couldn't figure out how to get him out of a private day school to a public home zone school. I don't know if anybody else in here, my other son got 97

[01:07:32] percentile on his PSATs and he just received 600 on his English SATs. Pretty good. So at any rate, The state complaint is a legal determination with a federal order of compensatory education, which means you make up what you stole, you, staff, you're responsible for them, stole from Aaron Little for the 22-23 school year.

[01:07:59] That rendered your grants malfeasant that year. Refusing to comply with compensatory education in no later than one year, which was just after somebody was appointed deputy superintendent, July 2024, 34 CFR 300.600E, noncompliance must be corrected ASAP and no later than one year after the state identified noncompliance.

[01:08:24] Didn't happen under Dr. Murray still. And 20 U.S.C. 14.019, schools must provide FAPE at all times regardless of official complaints or litigation.

[01:08:40] FAPE equals comply with corrective actions, compensatory education, supplemental and related services, and supports to the scholar to be made whole. That has not happened still. This is year four, as you know. So I understand that once again, you're going to look at your special education grant applications.

[01:08:59] And for three years, I've come and said maybe you shouldn't apply for them. But because nothing happened at the feds the last several years, I've also advised that things are changing. We also have a Jay Jones determination that is critical. And some other concerns are, you know, depending on who does what, this could result in wire fraud, 18 U.S.C. 1343, mail fraud, 18 U.S.C. 1341, corruption, theft of bribery of U.S. federal public tax funds, U.S.C. 666, false statements, 18 U.S.C. 1001, false claims, 18 U.S.C. 287.

[01:09:37] You know, I mean, I just, compliance is give him tutoring, plenty of it, get him on his way. Four school years ago, didn't happen. So I usually, I'm up here saying, maybe you shouldn't apply for those grants. I don't care if you do, but I definitely want to see his John Hancock write on it in big print, okay?

[01:10:00] That's not for me to decide what happens, but I've been advising that maybe you shouldn't, because when you falsify assurances that you are providing FAPE, that is a problem. It just hasn't been a problem recently. So I am, but things are changing with that, and I want to leave you with, well, my page flipped.

[01:10:30] Anyway, Aaron was at Schreiner's Hospital. He was at Charterhouse School practicing pomp and circumstance for the graduates to be there that year. Thank you, Ms. Little. And it's very melancholy and sad, but you'll hear that. Thank you, Ms. Little. Your time's expiring. May we have Dimfna Shad.

[01:10:50] Good evening, members of the Chesterfield County School Board and Superintendent. My name is Dimfna Shad. It's okay.

[01:11:06] Oh, he's all the time. My name is Divna Shad, and I am a teacher at Bensley Elementary. I'm here on behalf of my colleagues at Bellwood Elementary as they navigate the upcoming transition from a year-round to a traditional school calendar. A transition of this magnitude requires a bridge to ensure no educator is left behind.

[01:11:27] Currently, the contract start date of August 1 creates a one-month gap in pay for these dedicated professionals, Asking educators who have consistently served this community to go 30 days without a paycheck is not just a logistical hurdle, but a crisis of financial stability.

[01:11:46] By moving the contract start date to July 1, the board has a unique opportunity to provide a soft landing for the staff. Aligning the contract to begin in July ensures that Bellwood teachers maintain a continuous, livable income.

[01:12:04] This demonstrates that the district values their livelihood and respects their labor. Transitioning a school's entire culture from year-round to traditional is a heavy lift, and starting contracts in July allows the Bellwood team to spend time collaboratively redesigning their curriculum, restructuring schedules, and thoughtfully preparing for this new model.

[01:12:27] We all want the best teachers to stay at Bellwood. Addressing this pay gap proactively prevents the loss of talented educators to neighboring districts. Retention matters, not just at Bellwood, but for the

strength of CCPS as a whole. As a teacher at Bensley, I stand in full solidarity with my fellow educators at Bellwood.

[01:12:49] We are one district, and when one group of teachers faces a period of working in the dark without a contract or pay, the shadow falls on all of us. It affects the morale of every hallway and every faculty room in the district.

[01:13:05] Our educators deserve to enter their traditional classrooms feeling respected, supported, and financially secure. I respectfully urge the board and superintendent to reconsider the contract start date for Bellwood Elementary staff and move it to July.

[01:13:21] Let's ensure this transition is remembered as a success story, one that reflects a district that sees its teachers' worth and protects them. Thank you for your time, your empathy, and your commitment to the people who are the heartbeat of Chesterfield County Public Schools.

[01:13:40] Thank you, Ms. Chedd. May we have Joshua Wise. Distinguished board members, Dr. Murray, thank you for your time this evening.

[01:13:59] I come before you this evening as a special needs parent. My son attends Chesterfield County Schools. He has since December of 2020. While we moved our entire family to Chesterfield County, looking for a better solution for our son, things have been good and bad. I'm here tonight to urge you, as we consider this next budget, to really spend time thinking about where money is spent for our special needs program.

[01:14:22] it hardens it hurts me it saddens me to see our district that has a budget of over one billion dollars to constantly be met with remarks of there's no money for that the number of times that i've heard and i apologize if i get emotional the number of times that i've heard we can't take field trips because there's no money for it for special education the number of times that i've heard the school will be going on field trips but not special education because there's no money for

[01:14:51] The number of times we've asked for accommodations to be made for our son and we get met with, there's no money for a specific example. There are some wonderful teachers in this county that love their job, that do a wonderful job advocating for their students.

[01:15:09] My son needed some equipment to be an active participant in PE. The PE teacher did her job. She was an incredible advocate for her son. We gave her the information. We provided her with the avenue to do so. It went to the principal.

[01:15:25] The principal looked at it and said, we're not spending that money for one student. That is incredibly disappointing, not just as a single parent, but I have to imagine that this happens for students all over the county. I understand that we have lots of things that have needs, but with a growing special needs population here in Chesterfield County, which is growing rapidly, where we spend our money matters.

[01:15:47] The people who get that money matters. How we treat the people in this district that have no other voice matters. And so I urge you to do that. I urge you to spend the money on training staff. The number of times we've sat in IEP meetings and met with staff that don't care, met with staff that roll their eyes during meetings when asked to do something.

[01:16:09] The number of times when we're told, well, we just can't do that because X, Y, or Z reason. And we're not asking for difficult things. Things like getting logs home on communication for students. Well, we can't do that. We don't have time. My son has a one-on-one aide. What do you mean you don't have time? The resistance that we're met with.

[01:16:26] I want to be part of the solution. I'm here tonight because I'm standing here telling you I want to be part of this solution. I'll do what it takes to be part of the solution. Our family has spent tens of thousands of dollars in advocates and attorney's fees fighting for the rights of not just our son, but the rights of the special needs community.

[01:16:43] My son, he's not quiet. He sticks out like a sore thumb. The number of parents that come up to ask, where do your kid go to school? What's it like? How's your experience? Strangers that have come to me and just said, what is it like?

[01:17:01] And most of the time, the shared experience is that it has not been good. There's been a few, and what I have to say about the few situations that have gone well, they're very personnel-driven. They're people who care about their job. They're people who love the special needs community. I don't understand why we can't make those people in our community and our schools the example and the role model that we can model other programs after.

[01:17:23] When we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars a year renovating schools, and they're not even ADA accessible after renovation, that's unacceptable. When we have teachers that park in handicap parking and staff that park in areas that they shouldn't park because there's people who need that parking because they have no other way and then officers that roll their eyes because they have to get them to move i find that unacceptable i know you guys have a lot on your plate and you have a lot to consider but i ask you and urge you please consider the special education community thank you for your time thank you mr

[01:17:54] wise may we have sally walker good evening thank you for your time my name is sally walker and i'm an occupational therapist i have had the pleasure of working for chesterfield county in the past and I enjoyed it immensely. I'm now in the private sector and I'm here to represent at least over 30 families with special needs and typical kids that are not feeling that their children are being

[01:18:29] taken care of and safe in their schools. They're reaching out to me because their children are getting suspended, asked to not come back because of their behaviors. And it's heartbreaking because I want to come to this in a positive way. I want to be a positive influence for these families.

[01:18:48] So then I go to the schools with meetings for them, and they are, they're being told no for accommodations. They're being told no for a communication log. And these are kids that don't have a voice or don't know how to express what's happening, why their body is not feeling the way it should, or they don't feel safe for whatever reason, you know, or they're not being presented with correct tools that should be available.

[01:19:18] I look at myself as an outside-the-box OT. I look at children from the time they wake up till the time they go to sleep to make them be fun and functional in every aspect, in school, in sports, in every opportunity that should be available to them.

[01:19:35] But unfortunately, I'm not seeing it happen in the schools. There is so many opportunities, so many tools, so many training aspects that can be available, but I just see the schools closing their eyes to it

and not making it available.

[01:19:53] And that just breaks my heart. And like Mr. Wise, I just want to be a positive influence. I want to be a tool for the school board, for the families, for the community, to get these tools available to them so kids feel fun and functional and safe in their educational environment.

[01:20:12] I've been on the education side as a therapist. I've been on the medical side as a therapist. I've been on the private side of the therapist. I speak at conferences all the time on how we can collaborate that gap between the medical model and the educational model in the therapy world.

[01:20:32] It should not be separate. It should be one big collaboration. We should be able to, you know, talk to the outside therapist and the school therapist and give this kid a simple tool called guided hands so if they have limited mobility, the art teachers would absolutely love it.

[01:20:49] The kids would love it, the teachers would love it, but when we bring it to an IEP meeting that we're told it's not available, TTAC has it available for students to trial it. Now, granted, they only have one. My proposal is you have how many programs for special needs kids or kids that have a missing limb or something small. Purchase one for each school so every school, every teacher has the opportunity to use a tool share it with a student and then we can get the student one it's it's not

[01:21:24] hard it's not rocket science it's it's a simple transition and i help families every single day get these tools where they borrow them they trial them and then it's a success and then we get it purchased for them either through their medical insurance through a grant through a scholarship through a fundraiser so i just i'm pleading to you guys to just really look at your special needs community, look at your resources, and reach out. You know, give your therapist the opportunity to shine and reach out to outside therapists that want to help inside. Thank you. Thank you,

[01:22:04] Ms. Walker. May we have Cassidy Haidt. Members of the school board and Dr. Murray, my name is Cassidy Haidt, and I am a librarian at Bellwood Elementary School, and I'm here tonight representing my colleagues. As our year-round program comes to an end, we're facing really tough financial decisions, neither of which are tenable given the state of inflation and economic strife that we face every day. We can either take a pay cut for the entire school year to receive two checks in

[01:22:43] July, essentially removing any relief that we would feel from the proposed five percent raise to our pay this year. If we find other ways to survive July and go without the paychecks from the county will be hit with three health insurance deductions on our first check in August.

[01:23:02] This triple deduction will inevitably lead to some of our most underpaid staff, like our instructional assistants, our library aides, missing a third paycheck. This is more than an inconvenience. For many staff, this is a fast track to more debt, more poverty, and more stress before the school year even begins. We have a simple solution. We're asking that the school board amends our 20 2026 2027 contracts in our future contracts with ccps to have a July 1 start

[01:23:36] date this administrative cost fixes or this administrative fix costs the county nothing in the long run but will save an entire building of staff from unnecessary and undue financial hardship we ask for your immediate action before this hardship becomes our reality thank you and i'm chair that concludes this evening's public comment thank you madam clerk next we have this evening's superintendent's report from dr murray thank you madam chair tonight's meaningful

[01:24:15] moments video highlights how carver middle school is helping students see what's possible for their future through the 100 mentor challenge community leaders are connecting with students and opening doors to new opportunities it's a powerful example of how relationships can inspire and motivate our

[01:24:34] learners enjoy this program is called the 100 mentor challenge we have a girls version and the boys version the goal for the 100 mentor boys program was that over the recent years over the couple decades there has been a decreased representation of male educators in school so with that we want to bring in positive males into our school to kind of they'll talk to our

[01:25:13] young men show them what they can be and the same thing with our young ladies we want to basically We expose them to different walks of life, plant that seed of like, hey, anything's possible and that you do have people that believe in you and that want to support you. As parents, as adults, we are trying to make them, help them become the best version of themselves.

[01:25:37] And that's the bigger part is that we're trying to give them opportunities to open their eyes to other things, to understand, hey, here's your future. How did you get there? Our community members, they come. We start with opening remarks and go over what to expect from the program.

[01:25:54] So when the students come down the stairs or they leave the classes, they have to walk through the hype line. And the hype line, that's us cheering them up, getting them really excited about what's to come next. We introduce our keynote speaker who then provides some advice to our students. Today was a great day. After he finished speaking, we ended up going to the cafeteria.

[01:26:13] And then all of the mentees came around and they asked us different questions. and some asking questions that wasn't on the paper as far as, like, how did we get to where we're at at this point. So we give the students a passport, and the passport has six questions. So the idea is they pick a question off the passport, they talk to the mentor, and the mentor initials off in the box.

[01:26:34] We have raffle prizes. To enter in, they have to talk to a minimum of three mentors and get three different initials. Some students, they got more than three. They got all six. So the kids have really taken to it. They enjoy the keynote speakers. So it was just positive energy from it.

[01:26:50] And I'm glad to expose our kids, you know, the things that they can be in the future. - Some of these students, some of these kids will be working in these spaces.

[01:27:05] And so the more relationship that we can build with our community, and the more that our community can be a part of our school system, the better we'll all be. - Sometimes students get in the mindset that you have to say that 'cause I'm your parent. You have to say that because you're my teacher.

[01:27:20] But you've got someone from the outside come in and say, hey, you know what, kid? This is what you can do. This world changed for the kids. We want them to be successful. We want to introduce them to new things so, therefore, they know all the possibilities that there are when they go out. So that's why it's very important for me to introduce more community members into the school to really say that, hey, this is a wonderful magic that's happening at Carter.

[01:27:42] We as mentors want to create this pillar for you and letting you know that, hey, you can be a success. You can be great. You can be good. You can be awesome. You can be whatever you want to be.

[01:27:58] And understanding those parts is key because some of these kids, they never see that. You know, some adults never see that. Being able to be mentored, you know, it's beyond where you not only can ask us about our journey, but how can we help you and guide you in your journey as well?

[01:28:21] Thank you, Dr. Murray. Board members, is there any discussion? So I know Carver Middle School did this, but so did Thomas Dale. and it is a very uplifting and wonderful program.

[01:28:42] Love to see it spread across Chesterfield County. It's a great opportunity for our students. Thank you for sharing. Well, thank you, and replication of great ideas is very powerful, and I was going to acknowledge the great work that Dr. McLaurin has done at Thomas Dale as well, and to see this now kind of go through the feeder pattern from Carver to Thomas Dale is very neat.

[01:29:10] to watch so and I think Wendell and I have uh been part of the mentor challenge as well so we come in all shapes and sizes um madam chair our next presentation is an update on our 2026 legislative program from Sean Smith thank you madam chair board members a chance to give you a brief update in the legislative session um as you know our work uh continues um as a district and so does for the general assembly I've continued to provide you updates over the last several months. At this time, this evening, just kind of a brief update. With the legislation that

[01:29:49] was passed at the General Assembly, the governor had by law until midnight of last night to complete her action on legislation. That includes signing, amending, or vetoing legislation. The legislation that she had before education, obviously, we've been tracking close to 300 bills. Remarkably, this year, there was very little action taken by the governor with regard to education-related legislation. I did share with the board a brief update earlier today with a spreadsheet with that.

[01:30:17] I would note that there were no education-related vetoes this session. There were essentially about eight pieces of legislation that involved amendments. I will say that there was closely tracking the amendments that were done on three particular bills were essentially putting them back towards the State Board of Education to look more closely at that legislation.

[01:30:39] We'll track that piece. The second largest amendment is with regards to collective bargaining. We will continue to track, obviously, the amendments the governor has put forward. I would note with the collective bargaining, essentially a lot of the framework does remain. The governor has pushed back some of the deadlines with that. I do want to pause and at least acknowledge, parliamentary-wise, kind of what happens next week, the veto session. The General Assembly, when they come into Richmond, they have before them only the amendments that are before them. They vote them up or down. They do have the ability to override a governor's action.

[01:31:14] From there, though, as the General Assembly, if they obviously look favorably on an amendment, the governor then has the ability then to again sign or veto legislation. So even with amendments that go forward, if the General Assembly does not act upon them favorably, the governor then still has the ability to sign or veto that legislation. So even some amendments we've seen that have come forward with regard to collective bargaining, if they do not pass the General Assembly, the governor then still could act favorably upon the essential underlying legislation. I say that only to say that we still have some moving parts that go with that legislation. I'll keep you updated with regard to the General Assembly and what they do next week.

[01:31:53] The second piece, as you know well, is the state budget still hangs in the balance. As of my standing here this evening, there's been, let's say there's been no favorable progress that's been made by the state government with regard to their budget. They are scheduled to have a special session next Thursday. It's our hope that they will move expeditiously to act upon that. From local governments, we do begin to enter this critical point to which decisions have to be made, and obviously local governments, school divisions, need to know certain things in order for us to put forward contracts, obviously for the localities, put forward personal property tax bills, and all

[01:32:30] those pieces come with that. It is our estimation that we could see additional revenue from a budget compromise, but we remain hopeful to see what happens. There are some pieces with the budget that we also need to see that we'll write in some legislation that comes with the budget, thinking closely at the sales tax referendum that could go towards school construction. That remains unresolved until the budget's passed and if language is evolved in the budget. Obviously, there's no legislation that did pass. So I use that as one example to say many things still hang in the balance with regards to the budget itself and the directives that come with that.

[01:33:07] Once we resolve that, obviously, I will again update you as the board and our senior staff in the community on all the legislation. I will note as we put that together into one digital document, it does span over 28 pages in readable print, I'll say it that way.

[01:33:26] And that's a lot of legislation, very well intended. However, our workforce has to put those things in action by July 1. You as the board, we'll work closely with you to bring forward policy changes that will be required by law. But for this evening, that's kind of a quick update.

[01:33:41] I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you, board members. Is there any discussion? All right. Thank you, Mr. Speckley. Next, we have action items. Ms. Manos.

[01:34:06] Good evening, board chair, vice chair, members, and Dr. Murray. I'm Summer Manos, the special education director, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to present the local special education annual plan for 2026-2027.

[01:34:25] in accordance with CCPS Memorandum 047-26. The IDEA Annual Plan is a federally mandated document governed by the Code of Virginia. The plan is essential for our school division, Chesterfield County Public Schools, to demonstrate eligibility for receiving IDEA Part B federal grant funds.

[01:34:43] The primary purpose of the IDEA Annual Plan is to ensure that our children with disabilities receive the rights, services, and protections to which they are entitled. This includes not only students in public schools, but also students with disabilities enrolled in private schools. Before we submit the plan to the Virginia Department of Education, there are several required steps in this process.

[01:35:03] The plan has been reviewed by the Special Education Advisory Committee, SEAC, on March 4, 2026. The plan has been submitted to and is currently being presented to you, the school board for your approval. And then the plan must be certified by the division superintendent, Dr. Murray, and submitted to the VDOE on or before May 8, 2026.

[01:35:22] Thank you for your time and consideration this evening. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you, Ms. Manos. Board members may have... Yes. Yes. May I have a motion to approve memo number 47-26 as presented?

[01:35:42] So moved. Is there a second? Second. Board members, is there any discussion? All right. There's been a motion and a second.

[01:35:58] Madam Clerk, please call rolled on the motion. Ann Cooker. Aye. Jennifer Darby. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. The memo is approved. Thank you, Ms. Mannos. Thank you all for your time this evening. Next, we have the discussion agenda. Mr. Smith. Madam Chair, board members, you have the 40th member and room 048-26. The first New Chesterfield County high school in 20 years is under construction on Duval Road in the Matoka District. Formerly known as the West Area High

[01:36:36] School is situated near Deep Creek Middle School, which opened in August 2025. Deep Creek Elementary School, which also opened in August 2026. Scheduled to open in August 2027, the new high school is part of a community facilities bond plan approved by Chester County voters in 2022. The two-story school will cover more than 340,000 square feet and accommodate 2,400 students. Schooler Policy 6160 gives the Chester County School Board the prerogative to name schools. Because there's already a Deep Creek High School in Chesapeake, Virginia, the Chester County School Board is

[01:37:11] considering these names listed in alphabetical order in the memorandum for the new high school stonebrook high school acknowledges nearby waterways while avoiding duplication nearby schools with creek in their names west ridge high school reflects both the western location of the campus and its elevation in western view high school recognizes the school's location and scenic views including the nearby reservoir and woods the recommendations the school board announced the name of the new high school during its main meeting thank you mr smith board members is there any discussion? Mr. Pronto. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Smith, thank you for that.

[01:37:52] It is always a good thing to build schools. Our population is growing. Chester County is a great place to live, work, play, and raise your family. And with that comes the responsibility of naming the school, and I appreciate you highlighting the fact that there is already a Deep Creek High School in Virginia, so it would not make sense for this board to name this high school Deep Creek High School. I would imagine we would get someone else's mail and vice versa, and sport teams would arrive to a stadium that was never expecting them to play. So with that being said, the explanation

[01:38:29] for Stonebrook, Westridge, and Western View are all in regards to, one, its location, as well as the area around it. You know, we don't want to get into naming after various things for other reasons that we have as this board has already experienced in the past and we do greatly appreciate the community's input through all of that and so with these three names looking forward to hearing from the community and then also in May voting for one of these three names to to be displayed on our school on our logos and our field so I appreciate this board's time and

[01:39:08] consideration in the names for the new high school thank you okay thank you Mr. Smith next we have items for board review. Madam Clerk, would you please read the items for this evening? Madam Chair, tonight's agenda includes the following items for board review.

[01:39:27] Number one, Magisterial District Improvement Funds, FY 2026. Number two, Budget Change Request Summary Across Categories, February 2026. Number three, Board Committee Reports. Number four, pre-K update, February 2026. Number five, FY 2026, Quarterly Budget Review, mid-year.

[01:39:48] Number six, memo number 049-26, proposed 2026-27, evaluation schedule. Number seven, memo 050-26, administrative action at 13330 Old Stonegate Road, attendance zone adjustment.

[01:40:10] Thank you, Madam Clerk. Next, we have this evening's superintendent's remarks. Dr. Murray. Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I want to highlight several exciting events to celebrate over the remaining April weeks.

[01:40:25] First up, it's high school prom season. I just want to remind our parents to remind our young people to have fun, but to take their brain with them. Having too much fun can have real life and long-term consequences.

[01:40:41] We want them to enjoy a lifelong memory appropriately. Today we got to enjoy one of the highlights of our school year out of James River High School, the first of two Little Feet Meets that we host. It was such a joy to see the few thousand folks that were out, 240 of the attendees are actually James River High School students who are then buddied up with some of our special needs students from over 20 elementary schools at

[01:41:15] this particular event. So I just want to thank the James River staff and students for making that possible. I want to applaud the little guys and girls who came out and competed. And then I definitely want to extend deep gratitude to Henry Castlebecki for kind of being the point person for that. And then finally, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate our partnership with the staff at the Special Olympics who helped make that day possible. We'll look forward to going down to Matoica High School next week, doing it all over again. Even though we need the rain,

[01:41:55] we're hoping for sunshine on that day. This week on Thursday, we get to celebrate two students of the year from each school who just embody and reflect our core values of Chesterfield, top-notch in the classroom, outside of the school, in their community.

[01:42:20] So we look forward to that great event as well later this week. Later this month, we get to celebrate the adult version of those students of the year as we celebrate our Hall of Fame inductees for this year.

[01:42:35] We have quite a slate of wonderful, impactful contributors from Chesterfield schools years past. We also have coming up something we're very excited about.

[01:42:51] Hopefully you read about it. It's the first of its kind in the country where our students have put on an AI fair and encourage folks to come out and see the products of their work and labor.

[01:43:07] It is very reflective of our position of how do we provide boundaries, not barriers, in this. AI is very real. It's part of our world, and we just need to educate appropriately at each level.

[01:43:24] an elementary school student, it will look different how we apply AI than a middle school student, than a high school student. And therefore, it will look a little different from the instructional side with our teachers as well. Sharon Pope and her team have done phenomenal work in this space. I know Randy Smith mentioned being competitive. Dr. Pope is right up there too, top of that mountain they share together and Dr. Pope has a vision of leading not just the commonwealth but in the country in this space she and her team she would want me to acknowledge them

[01:44:02] as well just doing great work we have our all-county awards on Monday where we will look to celebrate our academic installment so that's always a fun change of pace I want to thank you all for being

brave enough to get behind the wheel of a bus at uh transportation's rodeo not something that i would um attempt so job well done i will attend the banquet and hand out awards uh so that's what's coming up uh and then uh to our our families uh we're at that crunch time

[01:44:36] five weeks from today we will be wrapping up our fourth graduation um every minute matters uh and And I would love to see students in our seats each and every day, being on time, being eager to learn and get across that finish line strongly.

[01:44:56] And then lastly, I want to thank our speakers, especially those from Bellwood, for having the courage to come out and speak to you all this evening. I want to acknowledge, as I did in a communication to their principal and that it was shared forward, that any gap in pay is uncomfortable, and it certainly presents some uncertainty in certain households.

[01:45:23] That's not lost on our staff. However, I do need for the public to understand that those contracts will be paid in full. There is no loss of income. There is the prospect of a gap month because their contracts are structured, as mentioned tonight, from June to June, whereas the traditional school calendar is structured from August to August.

[01:45:51] And I just want to clarify, and I appreciate Rob coming out and speaking each month, but we do not pay for services that have not been provided. That first paycheck in August comes on the 15th, not the first.

[01:46:07] So that is after new teacher work week, after teacher work week. And we are beginning to set our sights on the first day of school that following week. So we have thought creatively, but also with some consistent application.

[01:46:24] It was mentioned about Falling Creek. Fallen Creek was given one option to either maintain 24 pay periods and miss the month of July or they could transition to the 26th and see a dip for one calendar year in their pay.

[01:46:41] This year, I had a little more autonomy because the General Assembly has passed a \$1,500, more of a retention and recruitment bonus, which allows me the ability to assign or award that bonus without it being tethered to services being provided.

[01:47:08] So I have indicated and communicated as such to the Bellwood staff that they will be receiving that \$1,500 bonus in July to help ease some of the pressure. I also would be remiss not to acknowledge that our staff will see a 5% increase in their pay.

[01:47:28] We know that, again, it's not perfect, but it is the path forward without getting into the tricky business of paying people before work has been performed. It also puts all of our schools on a traditional pay period.

[01:47:47] And finally, I need to acknowledge, and on behalf of the board, but also myself, we followed the data on this. We also supported the school's position that moving back to a traditional calendar was what was right.

[01:48:05] So here we are. It's tough, but we're going to get through it. And we've been creative in thinking through those things. One final thing, to maintain a June to June would prevent any Bellwood instructional staff from taking on a summer school, a traditional summer school calendar position.

[01:48:32] So anybody that would be interested in that, it would be stripping them from that opportunity as well moving forward. So that's all I have, Madam Chair. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Murray. Next, we have announcements, communications, and school board comments. School board members, is there any announcement or comment? Ms. Chatters.

[01:49:00] Yes, I'll start with my verbal comments before we move into this, but I had the opportunity to attend the Maggie L. Walker Community Connections event today. It was very eye-opening, and I just want to share some of the things that I gathered from that experience. What the intent was to show the community how they do it at Maggie Walker, to show us how our students are performing there.

[01:49:29] So we got to eat lunch with some of our students who attended Chester County Public Schools. It was myself, Dr. Full, Dr. Pope, and Dr. Spurlock. And one of the comments, the question was, what is it that we could do better to make you better prepared for high school or Maggie Walker experience and the two young ladies that sat there with us they're both sophomores uh one went to davis one went to bailey bridge and they talked about writing writing like a paper um like a real paper and she said she was so cute but she was like if i turned the paper in that i did in middle

[01:50:07] school here i'd probably get like a d or an f right because it didn't have the substance that was required for english at high school um and one of the other things they asked about was note taking like teaching our kids how to take notes because it's a skill that they need in high school and it was just nuanced things that I as a school member didn't think about but makes sense that we find a way to offer those opportunities for our children to have that rigor and to to the

[01:50:43] point of we don't longer have a writing SOL but we need writing when they get to high school it's kind of counterintuitive, but that was just two of the things that they mentioned. And then one of the other takeaways from that experience is we have so many things that we're offering here in Chesterfield County, and we don't do, in my opinion, I've said this before, a really good job at advertising all the opportunities that we have, right? So we talked about engaging our children before eighth grade about specialty centers and CTE. I've said that from here before. It was just

[01:51:18] echoed by the children in the room and the other um counties that were represented that we need to do a better job advertising what we have to offer because we have a world recognized cte program and our specialty centers are outstanding we just need to get our kids exposed to it sooner so they can prepare themselves mentally for the the challenge that they're asking for so those were my three takeaways from that and then i do want to shout out meadowbrook um they had an opportunity to give back for teachers for tomorrow so they all got together and they went to hopkins

[01:51:54] and did reading it was so adorable um and they actually enjoyed it themselves so it wasn't like they were forced to do it they volunteered to go back um to the school that they came from and do some reading in the classroom the kids were great just like if you did the march reading um they were having a good time so i just wanted to thank meadowbrook teachers for tomorrow for continuing to give back in our schools it was a really fun time thanks mr pronto uh thank you madam chair three things uh for the community one is with the naming of the western area high school i

[01:52:28] did not say this earlier so for all of our masters fans i'll ask for a mulligan if you were watching the work session earlier we had mentioned or dr wadaka had mentioned a lot of the rock needing to be broken up in order for foundations to be poured. So when we think about Stonebrook, it does go to the landscape there that the workers and contractors have had to work around in order to build the school.

The other two make sense, the western part. I think everyone can wrap their head around that. But I just want to talk to the Stonebrook as to why that name came

[01:53:05] up. I also want to just extend appreciation to the staff at Cosby today. They ran into a situation that was completely out of their control. Some work was going on at a nearby area, and power was inadvertently cut to the school.

[01:53:21] And so they had to get very creative on a very hot day and greatly appreciate the leadership from central office, Dr. Murray, as well as the principal there, Ben Snyder, for getting the kids by 12 o'clock out the door, back on the buses, our transportation department, many thanks to them as well, and then also making sure they had a bag lunch to take with them so they didn't go without lunch, you know, even though they weren't able to be in the building.

[01:53:48] So greatly appreciate all hands on deck for that. And then finally, we heard some speakers tonight talk very passionately, obviously, about our special education kids and the funding. And money doesn't solve everything. I think we all can appreciate and understand that.

[01:54:05] But it definitely bridges some gaps and makes things easier for us, not only as a board, staff, teachers, parents, and students alike. So we heard from Mr. Smith tonight. We're not sure what the General Assembly is going to do and what budget they're going to go with and what will come our way.

[01:54:23] But whatever that does look like from a surplus standpoint, I would ask this board, as I do every year, to take into consideration our special education students and staff as we look to figure out and talk about where that money should go.

[01:54:38] And I just ask that this board consider a special education in that conversation. Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Darby. I just want to echo something Dr. Murray said that I grew in my appreciation this week for the work that our transportation team and all of the bus drivers do, as I was not very good at driving a bus.

[01:55:01] I was very proud of myself for trying. My hands were sweating and I was shaking and I killed a few tennis balls and cones. So I really appreciate the work that the transportation team did to set up that event and include us. And for the administrators who showed up to support our transportation team as well, it was a really amazing event.

[01:55:23] My two-year-old thought it was the coolest thing in the world to watch so many buses. So I highly recommend it as a great activity for everyone involved. I also want to give a second shout out to Mr. Kaselvecchi, who, along with Special Olympics, today was just an incredible opportunity to get hit by softballs and by children running around.

[01:55:45] And it was just incredible to see kids trying really hard things and being supported by high school students. And that partnership between the partners and the students who were present was just really amazing to see. But we know it also takes a lot of adults to set up events like that and a lot of time and even the transportation to get the kids there.

[01:56:05] So I appreciate all the work that went into making that such a great opportunity for all of the students involved. And I'll just continue the high school students giving back to our younger kiddos. Thomas Dale's senior class has a volunteer Tuesday.

[01:56:24] So once a month on a Tuesday, they go to an elementary school in the Bermuda District and either do reading, like happened in the Dale District, or whatever the elementary school needs. So we are teaching our high schoolers to give back, and I think that is a great lesson.

[01:56:43] Thank you. Thank you. And I am going to echo both of these people on several items. First of all, driving the bus. last year, um, I had inappropriate footwear. I wasn't thinking, might've had a heel. I don't know. They tried to make it work, but in the end they were like, actually, no, you need, you need close toed flat shoes. And so I had the privilege of riding the bus that Monique Booth, um, drove

[01:57:17] and she was so, I cannot tell you how good she was. She was so good. Um, shout out Dr. Booth, amazing. And so I was nervous, but I was like, I'm going to, I'm going to do it. And I can do it that good. I know I didn't, I didn't end up doing it that well, but like, like Dr. Darby, I came away with an, just an increased appreciation for our bus drivers. And that kind of sounds like something you're supposed to say, but I'm serious. Like there is, you have to remember to, there's no,

[01:57:57] There's no park. You put it in neutral and you push the brake. I mean, we always put it in park. No, you don't. There are 45 things that you have to remember and imagine 60 kids on the bus. I'm just saying it's a big deal. They do it every day and you see them, they do it with a smile.

[01:58:14] My hat's off to them. Speaking of transportation, so today, segue, we were at the Little Feet meet at James River. We had tons of buses, tons of transportation people. The whole transportation leadership team was there. And then Cosby decides to go lights out. So they had to quickly think they had to find laptops and do all kinds of quick moving. And they got it done. It was pretty impressive to see. And so that was amazing. But also what Dr. Darby said about just my heart was

[01:58:50] so full watching our high school students bring such a level of preciousness and kindness and compassion and tenderness to the elementary school students it is every year it's something to see it warms my heart and I was talking with two other people from central office and we were all talking about wow i guess i'm not going to say you know talk smack about kids these days so it's um it's really good to see the good deep inside our kids and so it was a special day and it was hot but

[01:59:27] we're not allowed to say that because the winter was so cold um but it was it was wonderful and thank you to james river high school and dr volker and team for being willing to turn your school upside down for the day for something this this meaningful so that is okay so the school board will hold a work session in the county public meeting room at 4 p.m on Tuesday May 12th 2026 followed by a business meeting at 6 30. Madam Chair sorry I just want to also mention that school board's going to actually hold a special meeting on Monday April 20th at 5 30 p.m in

[02:00:06] conference room number D107 at CTC Hall. Thank you. Thank you. So if there's no further business, we need a motion to adjourn. So moved. Madam Clerk, would you please call roll on the motion?

[02:00:23] Ann Coker. Aye. Jennifer Darby. Aye. Dominique Chatters. Aye. Stephen Pronto. Aye. Lisa Hudgens. Aye. Motion carries. The April 14th, 2026 School Board Business Meeting is adjourned.



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