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City of Fairfax Joint COF/FCPS School Board Meeting, Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Date Tuesday, December 16, 2025
Place City Hall, City of Fairfax, Virginia
Length 0h 25m (video)

- Official meeting video (city, Granicus): https://fairfax.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4425
- Agenda: https://fairfax.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4425
- Minutes: https://fairfax.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4425&doc_id=34c549f0-dc5c-11f0-bb28-005056a89546

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-12. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] okay good evening everyone tonight is tuesday december 16th of 2025 and this is a joint meeting of the city of fairfax school board and the fairfax county school board um i'd like to welcome everybody um everybody from leadership um and our student reps um i thought we would start with introductions um dr reed would you like to start would you like to start Michelle Reed, the Fairfax County Public School Superintendent.

[00:00:32] Thank you. And I'm Sandy Anderson. I'm the Fairfax County School Board Chair. Good evening. Robin Ladey, I'm the Vice Chair and Transport Representative on the Fairfax High School Board.

[00:00:49] Hi, I'm Amit Hickman, one of the City of School Board members. I'm Sarah Kelsey, City of Fairfax School Board member. I'm Lauren Bartome, City of Fairfax School Board member.

[00:01:10] Christina Sessori, City of Fairfax School Board. Carolyn Pitches, Chair of the City of Fairfax School Board. Good evening Dustin right the city of Fairfax superintendent In young man service can be school board at large Ricardian to say fairfax County school board member representing the Mason district Ryan McElhin school board member at large Carl Frisch school board member representing Fairfax City adjacent Providence district Marcia. Do you wanna?

[00:01:45] Okay, great the first item on our agenda is the school services Agreement discussion, and I'd like to start by saying this is in no way a formal request to open the SSA It's purely a high-level discussion around the possibility of a board-to-board amendment per the SSA article 5 number 2 and There's just some outdated language And some directives that no longer are relevant or meaningful for either the city

[00:02:22] Or the county school board and there are some other areas where language is a little vague and might need some clarification So according to the SSA there is protocol that we need to follow to do a board-to-board amendment the board proposing the Amendment has until January 15th of any given year to send that proposal and the receiving board has until April 1st to either Respond either positively or negatively or try to engage or collaborate with the other board

[00:03:01] To come to some sort of consensus Some so I just thought we would like I said very high level There's just some examples in the SSA an article to it talks about buildings and equipment The first three items is actually an entire page that reference references the city being offered the possibility of purchasing Leighton Hall Elementary Westmore Elementary and Green Acres Elementary Leighton Hall is now Daniel's run Westmore was torn down in

[00:03:38] 2012 I believe and Green Acres is no longer a school and we had the right to purchase these I believe it was by June 30th of 1980 so the deadline on that is long long gone So, these are just some of the things that we hope to sort of strengthen it, strengthen the SSA by modernizing, taking out some unnecessary components.

[00:04:04] Additionally, at the time when the agreement was written, they don't refer to, they referred to the four parties in the contract, which is Board of Supervisors, County School Board, City of Fairfax School Board, and they talk about the city as a municipal, the municipal government.

[00:04:22] But it's actually, we have a city council now. So, again, just some language that needs clarifying. Let me see. Additionally, in Article 3, it talks about programmatic costs.

[00:04:42] And we were hoping within this amendment to clarify some of that language and look at the classroom rental for language and changes that in programming that didn't exist in 1978. A lot has changed since 1978.

[00:05:02] And finally, the article that discusses the termination of the contract, which is, I believe, Article 4. Yeah, Article 4, it also talks about the purchasing of the schools, which have been purchased.

[00:05:23] They were purchased prior to any of this 1978. MOST OF THEM WERE PURCHASED, AND, AGAIN, THOSE SCHOOLS DON'T NECESSARILY EXIST ANYMORE. SO I THOUGHT WE COULD JUST -- IF THERE'S ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SSA BY EITHER BOARD.

[00:05:46] YES, DR. ANDERSON. THANK YOU. THANK YOU FOR THE BRIEF OVERVIEW. I THINK WE HAD SOME BRIEF QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS, BUT I WOULD LOVE TO GET YOUR UNDERSTANDING on what are what is the mechanism to open the argument for discussion okay if you were to open up the ssa meaning we are opening up the contract which gives either party you can you can ask for the world to do that takes two parties to open up the contract so if we the city school board

[00:06:24] had wanted to open up we would have to get the council to also agree to that if you all You would need the Board of Supervisors. Thank you. Same with terminating the contract. Because essentially, when you open it, you're trying to terminate the contract that's already in place in a way.

[00:06:42] So would a review and an update of the points that you've just outlined, particularly the outdated provisions, would that be considered opening the agreement? No, it's an amendment. SO WE CAN REQUEST THINGS THROUGH AN AMENDMENT PROCESS AND THAT'S WHAT I SPOKE ABOUT THAT HAS TO BE PRESENTED TO YOU ALL IN WRITING BY JANUARY 15TH OF ANY GIVEN YEAR AND THEN YOU ALL HAVE UNTIL APRIL 1ST TO RESPOND.

[00:07:13] AND WE WERE HOPING, DR. WRIGHT AND I WERE TALKING, WE WERE HOPING THAT MAYBE WE COULD COME TOGETHER, EITHER CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS AND SUPERINTENDENTS AND MAYBE FINANCE TO TALK ABOUT -- JUST TO HAVE A CONVERSATION BEFORE A DECISION, A FINAL DECISION WAS MADE BY APRIL 1ST.

[00:07:34] SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE APPETITE IS FOR THAT, BUT THAT WOULD, YOU KNOW, WE THINK THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL. AND THAT WOULD JUST BE AN ADDENDUM THAT IS ATTACHED TO THIS PRETTY OLD CONTRACT. THANK YOU. I APPRECIATE IT.

[00:07:50] ANY OTHER QUESTIONS? MR. FRESH. questions but I mean generally speaking I'm never opposed to removing outdated language from one of these documents we've got outdated language in our governance manual that is ripe for being removed it still references our previous strategic plan for crying out loud so I'm in favor of having those conversations obviously I think there's probably a want by some to talk about other things too and I think that's if that's part of the conversation that's fine I don't think that should stop us from if there's not the ability to reach

[00:08:30] consensus on things that are more consequential than removing something that's outdated right that doesn't mean we can't move forward with you don't have to agree yeah you don't have to fix everything to make progress right you know and different people are gonna have different views of what fixing is but generally speaking I'm in favor of removing the outdated language and having a forum to talk I think the timing is awful um this should be something that is done after the budget is done and perhaps over summer um you can have an amendment so you know if if

[00:09:09] we're going to do that I think you have until January 15th that'd be one thing to maybe think about uh to plunk this right in the middle of budget season especially now is not optimal so And I apologize for that, unfortunately.

[00:09:28] How dare you write this contract? The SSA, this is how it is written. Thank you. Anybody else? Anybody on our board have any questions, comments? Okay. Dr. Wright, do you want to say anything, or are you good?

[00:09:50] I will just briefly share, I think, the willingness to continue to strengthen this partnership AND TO LOOK AT ANYTHING THAT CAN SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS AND SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY AND KEEP THE STRENGTH OF THIS PARTNERSHIP WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE.

[00:10:10] SO WE'RE DEFINITELY IN FAVOR OF A CONVERSATION AND WHATEVER THAT LOOKS LIKE AND WHATEVER WORKS FOR BOTH SIDES I THINK IS A GREAT NEXT STEP. Okay, and I am going to turn it over to Ms. Anderson, who's going to talk about the boundary review process for the city and the county.

[00:10:32] So, as everybody probably already knows, is that we're in the middle of a fairly wide county, or we're actually at the end of a fairly long county-wide boundary process. And through that, we've had a lot of conversations with members of your board related to the way that our two populations work together.

[00:10:54] And so what I am advocating for here is the alignment of our two boundary review processes to make sure that when we look, that we kind of set it on the same cyclical pattern because we do understand that there are certain triggers that reach your schools.

[00:11:13] that do impact the population of Fairfax County kids that can come to the schools. And we are worried, or I am personally worried, about creating more disruption for our families. So I'm really hoping that if we align the two processes together, that we can have that opportunity to kind of make sure.

[00:11:33] And so that would just be, I guess, your board committing to the same timeline as we move forward. the policy right now has that it's every five years we are not we have not been clear as a board yet as to when that five year is going to start for the next iteration of the cycles but we do want we do know that there's a fair amount of development going on in the city we know that there's a fair amount of development going on outside the city um and so we want to make sure that we are aligned so that when we're talking about population how the two are impacting school school capacity um that we're in alignment on that so and if the review process is every five years

[00:12:11] for you all would you propose that we would meet prior to like within that four to five year i think that if i understand correctly the superintendent's intention and i don't mean to speak for you um is to have some sort of process go on in between the five-year cycle so it's not so basically it will it will keep this fresh in the minds of what's going on and i imagine the same way we've included city members in that process up to this point that we would continue to do so or i assume that it would be the board's direction to encourage that so i think that we can continue the conversation

[00:12:46] and i think it will be very clear where we're going but i do think that that joint conversation of of being able to understand what the population i mean i know that we're tracking those things too but having that conversation between the two boards to to know where we're going in terms of boundaries or where we're going in terms of capacity at a particular school I think it will take kind of the temperature out of all of the different things because we know what's coming so that's that's the intention behind this

[00:13:12] item okay does anybody have any comments or questions miss Hickman three years at three years then yeah right yeah I think it works quite well I think as long as we're starting it at the five-year mark or when they're voted in

[00:13:50] and then and then that that's when your three-year mark so I think that this is one of those things that we can define as we're moving forward just to make sure that I don't know if you guys have a policy I'm I should have looked it up but I don't know if you have a policy specific to boundaries but just making sure that the two kind of work together I think might be helpful yeah I believe we have an MOU so necessary question maybe for dr. Wright's where staff perhaps would this be something that could be an addendum to the school

[00:14:25] services agreements kind of moving it from an MOU to more of a shared understanding of what those that process may look like you miss Anderson your board could in fact that could be an amendment to add an article around boundaries it doesn't have to be you know a whole page but you know just sort of a timeline it's an interesting idea and the benefit of doing that would mean that we could reference the policy number that we have in place so that way we as as i imagine

[00:15:00] our policy will evolve over time then it would be able to to to live on um and that way we can kind of put that portion of the agreement together you have a follow-up i do have a follow-up um in the

event that that policy does shift in any way um perhaps i would like to see language in our school services agreement to revisit that particular section of the ssa just to make sure that our priorities align? Yeah, I don't think that there's any circumstance that we wouldn't want.

[00:15:29] The whole intention behind this is to ensure that our policies, our practices are in alignment. So, yeah. Mr. Frisch. I would actually advocate against putting it in the SSA because of the likelihood that it could change and what happens if, you know, it isn't aligned on that three-year cycle with one year. So I think perhaps we just know that there's an agreement that maybe we update our policy to work with that indicates that we will partner with the city school board as one

[00:16:04] of the line items in the policy and maybe you all have something in your boundary policy that says that you'll work with the county. I would hate to have to get two entities to agree to change something that is in our policy if we wanted to change our policy down the road agree I think I think doing it through our separate policies would be but but I do think that generally speaking this is a great idea given what we went through at the beginning of this process with you know a little bit of confusion about what the process was how the city was engaged how the city would be engaged

[00:16:40] I think having those earlier conversations and knowing that you all have a policy is great to know about what the expectations are. And I think we can, you know, head that off at the pass this next time. Can I just ask what, what policy are you referring to? Well, we have our boundary policy. No, I mean, in the city, like we don't. Okay. Okay. So you're saying that we would all know what to expect. Okay. I didn't know if you knew something I didn't know. But, you know,

[00:17:17] Knowing that there's a commitment to the partnership I think is a good thing. Yeah, and I think, you know, that's part of this meeting is to just reassure both parties that, you know, we're in this together and that we're here to support your students and you all obviously are supporting our students.

[00:17:36] So, is there any other, oh, yes, Mr. Moon. You know, whatever the necessary changes are beneficial to both school districts.

[00:17:52] And I fully support, you know, adopting changes or adjustments to the existing contract, existing service agreement. However, when we talk about this legal document, we generally involve our legal counsels.

[00:18:08] And at least from our side, I don't see our legal counsel present in the room. So my suggestion is this. I know that, you know, we're not changing anything tonight. We're not making any decisions tonight. My suggestion is if the city of the school board can work with own counselor and suggest any changes in the language in the service agreement, make that proposal through whether you can send it directly to our chairman or our legal counselor so that we can have an internal discussion in the closed session for just a Fairfax County school board.

[00:18:46] And then we can report back to your board in that fashion. Yeah, and that's the idea, that we would propose an amendment asking, and it would be very detailed, you know, and then you all could take it, whoever, your legal counsel, talk to each other, come back and talk, you know, engage with us, and hopefully, you know, there's nothing, I don't think there's anything that's unappetizing,

[00:19:19] let's just say nothing serious so is there any other okay yeah nobody has any other boundary questions because i i know there were questions around miss hickman i know you have a boundary question so i guess i'm still trying to mull over how to get these timelines to kind of line up with

[00:19:55] what the mou we have and what you guys and obviously not making changes right now um so are you saying you will do the review in the sixth year with a plan to implement one or in the fifth year we haven't we haven't defined all of that okay right now we just have the policy we we had to get through this first iteration to find out and there will i'm not 100 sure if there's going to be some sort of cooling period just to this first time we haven't done this in 40 years so it's a it's a pretty big undertaking um and it's been disruptive within the community with and we understood that it would be but it's it's pain with a purpose and so we are

[00:20:35] we are hoping to have this be part of the process I am hoping that it's part of the process moving forward and so we just as a board are going to need to define what that looks like which is why I just want to make sure that we have an open conversation about what that looks like because if if there's a change in capacity at the school related to development that's happening in the city that can disrupt the the overall process for those those county kids that come in and so i would hate to have them off cycle of everything else so that was the only reason that i was trying to figure out how we could align them fully understand i'm completely on board with that which is why i was trying to make sure and clarify the the timeline of it um and i do think it'll be

[00:21:14] interesting in the next five years as the population is actually declining in schools where that's going to land us um in terms of you know there is construction but it doesn't seem to be having huge impacts yet and so we'll have to see what that looks like and i'm and i'm waiting to see what happens. You know, we've had dips in population before, and they've usually come back with force. So I'm waiting. I don't anticipate that it's going to be forever. And so I think that planning these things out is probably a better win when we're in that little bit of a decline where maybe it's not as urgent. So I think having that discussion ahead of time is probably

[00:21:51] helpful. Okay. And then I had one question for Dr. Reed. So when, before the vote happens, Is a last set of maps going to come out with any of the Scenario 4 boundary changes? So the next maps that are going to come out are going to be the maps that are posted for the January 8th board meeting.

[00:22:12] And then there's a public hearing the board will hold on the 10th. And then the board votes on the final votes, the last meeting in January. So there will be one last map that comes out. Okay, that's what I was wondering. And it'll be posted for the January 8th meeting.

[00:22:30] Thank you. Everybody's pretty excited about that. Dr. Reed, it's less than, it ended up being around 3% actual change for students?

[00:22:51] We're not done yet, but it looks like it's less than 4% of our students division-wide. We have flagged, in our last boundary advisory committee meeting, we created a flagged list. so that each region sort of put things that they would want to start first with at the next process.

[00:23:10] So I think what we wanted to do is not – it's not reasonable to fix everything across an entire county after 40 years, but we're trying to normalize the conversation and support incremental shifts. A five-year review will definitely – people will get used to it.

[00:23:30] Ms. Hickman? Sorry, I have one more. Related yet unrelated situation. So through the process, I actually feel that we have received many emails that were actually intended for all of you. It happens all the time.

[00:23:46] And as much as chair pitches, sends emails back saying, well, this is actually your magisterial district, or these are your at-large members, or it continues. So I would love to see some sort of a joint effort to advertise, like, here is how you can contact the right person.

[00:24:04] And I know it just seems, oh, school board at fairfaxva.gov sounds very much like it should go to all of you. So I know you do put it out, but maybe especially during those time frames, we try to always say, hey, here's our email address.

[00:24:22] But I'm sure you also heard a lot, but we kept trying to send back to you for feedback. We hear that feedback, and we try to also make sure that people know to come to you. Yes, I've received things. Yes, absolutely. Anything?

[00:24:38] Yeah, no. OK, all right, well, if there's nothing else before these boards, I am going to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 p.m.



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