

School Board “Mini-Minutes” for Charlottesville City Schools



Key Takeaways
from 3/7/2024

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PUBLIC COMMENT.....

- Public comment focused on topics ranging from questions about the various facets under consideration to improve school safety at CHS, a question about adding a strategic plan metric about kindergarten readiness to the data dashboard, and comments valuing the fifth-grade arts programs as we look ahead to the reconfiguration of our grades.

RECOGNITION.....

- Rachel Rasnake, Director of Student Services, [recognized Charlottesville City Schools Social Workers](#) for the exceptional contributions they make to enhance the well-being of our students, families and community.

DISCUSSION ITEMS.....

- Dr. Kim Wilkens, Education and Outreach Director at the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Virginia, and Dr. Jennie Chiu, Associate Professor, School of Education and Human Development, University of Virginia, presented an [update on the UVA Innovation Hub at Charlottesville Middle School](#). If approved, the Lab School project will take a community-oriented, interdisciplinary approach to teaching STEM and computer science skills embedded in real-life problem solving.
- Ms. Megan Fitzgerald, CTE Specialist, gave an overview of the [2024-2025 Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Local Plan](#). The Board will be asked to take action on the CTE Plan on March 28, 2024. (Find the [plan application here](#).)
- Dr. T. Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Equity and Inclusion, introduced the Charlottesville City Schools' [2023-2028 Strategic Plan Dashboard](#), an integral component of our foundational equity work and strategic planning initiative. The consultants who assisted with the development of the strategic plan have also developed this dashboard. Find the [data dashboard here](#).
- Ms. Kim Powell, Chief Operations Officer, gave an update about the [Middle School Modernization Project](#), including some current shifts to traffic patterns. Despite recent rain and more rock than we wanted, the project continues to move along on schedule. As a side note, the division offices have returned to their location at Dairy Road (near Walker School) following a light renovation.
- Ms. Powell shared the feedback from the [CHS safety](#) survey regarding weapons detection, resource officers and cell phone policy. In keeping with feedback from the survey, the staff recommendations for next steps were:
 - **Recommendation:** Proceed with purchase of Ceia Opengate detection system to be used primarily for athletic competitions (the cost of ~\$40,000 for 2 gates can be funded from the existing budget for safety/security equipment).
 - **Next step:** The Board will vote on this recommendation at the March 28 meeting.
 - **Recommendation:** Learn more about the Youth Resource Officers that connect the Cambridge (MA) Police Department with Cambridge Public Schools.
 - **Next step:** Following Board discussion, CCS and Charlottesville Police Department staff will move forward to continue learning about the Cambridge model, but it will take time to craft the optimal model for officer involvement in CCS school safety.

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- **Recommendation:** Maintain CHS student cellphone practice of focusing on instructional times (“off and away DURING CLASS”).
 - **Next step:** While the staff recommendation was to align the policy with a focus on CHS students’ instructional times, the Board elected to keep the student cellphone policy as-is (“off and away the entire day”).
- **Recommendation:** Form a working group for CHS climate & culture to use tiered supports, data, and intentional community-building to create a positive sense of belonging.
 - **Next step:** Following Board discussion, this working group will be implemented in keeping with the staff recommendation.

The [slide deck for the presentation](#) includes public feedback from the survey, along with more information about the staff recommendations and rationales.

UPCOMING EVENTS.....

- March 15 – No School for Students (Professional Learning Day)
- March 28 – School Board Meeting, 5pm, CHS Media Center (this is the “April” meeting, scheduled to avoid Spring Break)
- March 29, April 1-5 – No School for Students (Teacher Workday followed by Spring Break)
- April 15 – City Council Meeting, 5:30pm, City Hall. Adoption of Tax Rate, FY 2024-2025 General Fund and CIP Budgets
- May 2 – School Board Meeting, 5pm, CHS Media Center. Adoption of FY 2025 Budget with Technical Adjustments