

CCS Superintendent Message

A publication from Dr. Rosa S. Atkins for the
Charlottesville City School Division community



January 26, 2012

Dear Community Members:

The 2012 year began with great excitement as Charlottesville High School students received their computer tablets for schoolwork at CHS and at home. In December, Walker Upper Elementary students began working with their tablets in classrooms—one per student—and the same arrangement will go into effect at Buford Middle School in January. With the explosion of digital content and tools, the BLAST initiative (Blended Learning to Advance Student Thinking) will equip our students and staff to access information and interact in ways that prepare them for a global future.

Unfortunately, the new year has elevated concerns about funding for our schools. Like most school divisions in our region, we are searching for ways to bridge a multi-million-dollar funding gap as we develop next year's budget. Cuts and new funding calculations at the state level account for most of the approximately \$4.1 million shortfall. They include the following negative impacts:

- \$1.2 million sales tax loss due to the state's reconfiguration of how we determine the number of school-aged children. CCS is no longer able to count the number of school-aged children (18-19 years old) who are attending UVA;
- An increase in the Local Composite Index which reduces state allocations to our schools by nearly \$650,000;
- A rate increase for Virginia Retirement System contributions which amounts to \$1.7 million;
- Elimination of \$678,000 in one-time funds.

While the state budget will not be finalized until mid-March, we need to work with the figures in Gov. McDonnell's budget proposal in order to develop a budget proposal for February. Additionally, we do not yet have a figure in regards to City Council's allocation for education. Those unknowns will be important in addressing the deficit we face. Since 2009, we have made cuts to staffing (25.65 positions) and services (2.14% of general fund) while increasing teacher salaries by 5% and others by 4%. We have managed to expand programs, including our 3-year-old preschool classes, talent development, fine arts, technology tools for learning, and elementary Spanish.

Given our earlier adjustments, it is hard to find additional reductions without significantly affecting people and programs. We are currently considering all options, including two from the 2008 efficiency review that were not implemented—i.e., closing an elementary school or cutting assistant principal positions in elementary schools. Neither of those garnered community support in the past.

At this writing, it is important that we hear from staff, parents, students, and the community concerning what programs and services are most important for our students. Please come to any of our budget meetings or School Board meetings to share your thoughts or email them to the School Board. Budget information is posted and continually updated on our web site at www.charlottesvilleschools.org and we have included some Frequently Asked Questions with this newsletter. We appreciate your support and your solutions as we work together to address these challenges.

December 1, 2011 School Board Meeting

Educational Highlights

Gertrude Ivory, Associate Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction, and Buford Middle School Principal Eric Johnson introduced students who presented highlights of the school's Teacher Advisory Committee and the Premier Career Fair.

Jackson-Via Principal Dr. Tracie Daniels introduced teachers and students who attended the 4th grade visit to the University of Virginia in November. Lynda Harrill, Vice-President, QuickStart Tennis of Central Virginia, spoke about the Burnley-Moran afterschool tennis program.

Student and Staff Recognitions

Ms. Ivory recognized Mary Johnston as the Verizon Thinkfinity Teacher of the Year for her use of Verizon's free educational web site (www.thinkfinity.org). Eight teachers were named finalists and Ms. Johnston, a first-grade teacher at Clark Elementary, shared the title with one other teacher.

Superintendent Dr. Rosa Atkins and Board Chair Leah Puryear recognized Board members Llezelle Dugger, Kathy Galvin, and Guian McKee for their excellent service to the City of Charlottesville and Charlottesville City Schools. Ms. Puryear recognized and welcomed newly elected Board members Willa Neale, Amy Laufer, and Jennifer McKeever.

Dr. Beth J. Baptist, Director of Special Education and Student Services, presented the Wellness Regulations for Board approval and it was approved. The Board also approved the *2012-2013 Program of Study for Grades 6-12* as presented by Charlottesville High School Principal Dr. Thomas Taylor.

Information Items

Ms. Ivory introduced Instructional Technology Resource Teacher Rebecca Gibson, who demonstrated videoconferencing capabilities that are being used in City Schools for integrative and collaborative learning.

Ms. Ivory highlighted strategies that address strategic plan objective 1.2.1 regarding higher level thinking. Program Administrator for Virtual Education Stephanie Carter and Coordinator of Instruction Jessica Kalagher presented activities related to professional development, classroom observation, and mentoring whereby teachers can take their instruction to the next level. Data captured from eWalks showed higher levels of student thinking over the past three-year.

Mr. Edward C. Gillaspie, Director of Finance, presented the 2012-2013 Budget Update regarding the Local Composite Index (LCI) and its funding formula, which increased Charlottesville's LCI from .6560 to 6861. When the LCI increases, state funds decrease. The LCI is computed each biennium by the DOE.

Dr. Baptist presented the Ivy Creek Operating Agreement for first reading. The PREP (Piedmont Regional Education Program) operating and lease agreement describes agreements between PREP and all member school districts in regards to Ivy Creek School. Each school division has indicated a number of slots for which it will be responsible at Ivy Creek.

Dr. Baptist presented the proposed 2012 School Board Meeting Calendar for first reading.

Dr. Atkins, Board Chair Leah Puryear, and Board members Colette Blount and Ned Michie reported on their visit to China with the Chinese Bridge Delegation in November. The visit for 400 participants nationwide was sponsored by the College Board.

School Board Members reported on their experiences and the workshops attended at the 2011 Virginia School Board Annual Convention. Mr. Wade was named Chair of the VSBA Federal Relations Committee.

Information Items

Dr. Diane Behrens, Coordinator of Health, P.E., & Family Life, presented a report on extracurricular activities.

Dr. Baptist presented the Annual December Special Education Student Count.

Dr. Atkins thanked SHAB and Ms. Kadija for their work on the Wellness Policy and noted that it was a careful process with great input from the community. Dr. Atkins also thanked Ms. Dugger, Dr. McKee, and Ms. Galvin for their service on the Board. She noted that the current Board has transformed the school system through their input, rigor, determination, and commitment and that it could not have been done without them.

January 5, 2012 School Board Meeting

Moment of Silence

The meeting opened with a moment of silence in memory of Ms. Alicia Inez Bowler Lugo, who passed away December 21, 2011. Ms. Lugo worked as a teacher in the Charlottesville City School system and served as primary administrator of two major federally funded skills training programs: Central Virginia O.I.C., Inc. and

the Drewary J. Brown Job Training Center. Ms. Lugo also served 11 years on the Charlottesville School Board, including five years as its Chairman.

In accordance with School Board Policy BCA, the 2012 School Board Organizational Meeting was conducted to elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chair, and to appoint the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Ned Michie was elected Board Chair and Juandiego Wade was elected Vice-Chair. The Board approved the appointment of Leslie Thacker as Clerk and Jennifer Herring as Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Action Items

The Board approved the 2012 School Board meeting calendar and the Ivy Creek Operating Agreement.

The Board adopted a proclamation against bullying in observance of January as Anti-Bullying Month, as requested by the Virginia School Boards Association.

The Board approved a resolution regarding Revenue Sharing Agreement Legislation.

Information Items

Gertrude Ivory introduced Ms. Jennifer LoCasale-Crouch, Research Assistant Professor from the University of Virginia Curry School of Education, who presented information related to Preschool Transitions.

Ms. Pamela Bell, Director of Student Achievement and Program Evaluation, presented a Course/Program Enrollment Update to the Board.

The Board appointed its members to various boards, commissions, and joint committees of control.

Jim Henderson presented a draft of the 2012-2013 School Calendar.

Director of Finance Ed Gillaspie presented the 2010-2011 Year End Financial Results as well as a 2012-2013 Budget Update.

Preschool Applications for Charlottesville City children who will be 3 or 4 years old by September 30, 2012 are now being accepted. Classes for four-year-old children are located in each elementary school, Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Classes for eligible three-year-old children run five days a week from 9:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. School buses transport the preschool children to and from school. Visit www.charlottesvilleschools.org or call the Preschool Office at 245-2813 for information or an application. Applications are due by **March 1, 2012**. Space is limited so apply today!

CCS Special Achievements and News

French Educational Delegation Visits City Schools

Charlottesville City Schools welcomed a group of visiting school administrators and a French embassy educational liaison January 19 as a follow-up visit to October's successful cultural exchange between students and teachers of Charlottesville's sister city Besançon, France. Recteur Eric Martin was accompanied by administrators and university professors from the Franche-Comté district of eastern France as the group toured the City schools and discussed future educational and cultural exchanges. Plans include opportunities for students and teacher to collaborate in research and project-based learning using video conferencing and Web 2.0 tools. The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission, Alliance Francais, and the University of Virginia also welcomed the delegation. In April, CHS students and teachers will make a third visit to Besançon in conjunction with a physics field trip to CERN in Geneva, Switzerland.

CHS and Buford at Top of State Knowledge Master Results

The Charlottesville High School Pop Quiz team finished second in the state and 53rd in the nation in the Fall Knowledge Master competition, while Buford Middle School came in seventh in Virginia, 82nd in the nation. The competition is a two-hour team event in which students answer 200 multiple choice questions on math, science, literature, grammar, history, science, and current events.

CHS Team members participating were Captain Jonah O'Connor, Caroline Hylton, Garnett Schuyler, Michelle Brown, Seven Starosta, Auden Nelson, Wesley Morgan, Manning Turkheimer, Malloy Owen, Ryan Cox, and Gian Apusen. Coaches for the team are Patty Vandever, Kris Kishore, and Suzan Hiller.

Buford's five-member Knowledge Master team competed against 18 schools – all except two were larger than Buford. The team consisted of: David Kriete, Robbie Harder, Riley Doherty, Austin Shane, and Matthew Toscano. The team is coached by Jill Stubblefield and John Rimel.

CHS Students China-Bound for Break

Students in Chinese language classes at CHS have been invited to participate in a trip to China over spring break. The trip will be facilitated by student travel company Intercultural Student Experiences, a group that puts special emphasis on language immersion and home stay. Twelve students have signed up for the 12-day trip, which includes visits to ShangHai, HangZhou, XiAn, and BeiJing. The CHS Chinese program is in its second successful year, taught by Sara Epperly.

Four City Schools Earn State VIP Awards for High-Performance

Four Charlottesville City schools received 2012 Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) awards for advanced learning and achievement. The incentive program, which was created by the Board of Education in 2008, recognizes schools and divisions that achieve excellence goals and far exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards.

Burnley-Moran and Greenbrier Elementary schools earned the highest honor, the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. The schools will receive a display banner and a signed resolution of commendation from Gov. McDonnell. This is the third consecutive year that Greenbrier has been awarded this honor. Venable Elementary School earned the Board of Education Excellence Award, the second-tier honor, for its fifth consecutive year. Johnson Elementary School earned the Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award. This is the third year that the school has been recognized as a VIP winner.

Buford Band Excels in All District

Twenty-seven students from the Buford Middle School Band program have been selected to participate in the 2012 All District Middle School Band. Selection to the All District event is by audition only. Students must be prepared to audition in five areas of musicianship for the panel of judges. This marks the 22nd consecutive year that the Buford Band program has had **the most students selected**. The All District Band will meet February 3 and 4 at Albemarle High School. The performance will be on February 4.

CHS Band Students Earn All District Spots

There were 22 members of the Charlottesville High School bands selected as members of the District XIII All-District Bands. Auditions were held at Walton Middle School on December 10. Six students earned the highest scores/first chair placements and 12 students are All-State eligible. Selected students rehearse and perform a concert with other student musicians from around the region during the All-District event on February 3-4.

Buford Student Wins Essay Prize

Stephanie Thrift, a 7th grader at Buford Middle School, won the third place award for the essay contest, "I like living in America because..." The contest was sponsored by the American Legion Post 74. Stephanie won a \$100.00 Patriot Savings Bond series EE, a bronze medal, and a certificate of appreciation.

Tulips Focus on Global Reporting Activity

The Talent Development teachers at each elementary school are doing an environmental learning experience where students plant tulip bulbs at school. Along with many other schools across the country, students will be tracking the growth of their bulbs and discussing factors that can influence the tulips' production rate. The Journey North has a picture of the K-1 Talent Development group at Clark School on their website at <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tulip/fall2011/update120811.html>.

City Schools Benefit from CACF Grants

Charlottesville City Schools teachers and students will benefit from a variety of grants awarded through the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation. The following were recently awarded:

- \$2500 from the Quantitative Investment Management Fund for the Book Buddies program;
- \$722.66 from the Bama Works of Dave Matthews Band for a piano at Clark Elementary School in memory of teacher Dawn Reddick;
- \$6500 from the Twentieth Century Merchants Fund to support the Westhaven After-School program;

- \$10,000 from the Batten Family Fund to be used for supplies and teacher support at CHS;
- \$10,000 from the Batten Family Fund to support the WALK program at Charlottesville High School.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

January 26—CHS Choirs A Cappella. Concert at 7:30 p.m. in MLKPAC. Special guests Virginia Belles, The Virginia Gentlemen of UVA, plus The Sirens and T-Tones of CHS. \$10 for adults; \$5 for students of any school. Proceeds help CHS choir travel to their Spring competition in Orlando, FL

January 28—School Board Budget Workshop, 8:30 a.m. in Walker Upper Elementary Media Center

January 30—VSBA Orientation for new School Board Members/Superintendents and Chairs, Richmond Marriott

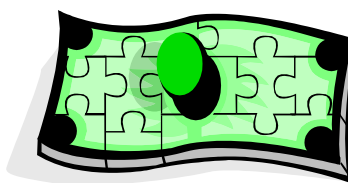
January 30-31—VSBA Legislative Conference, Richmond Marriott

February 1—CHS Symphony Orchestra and Chorus Concert at 7:30 p.m. in MLKPAC. Visual art will be displayed and a scene from the upcoming CHS Theater event, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" will be performed. Free and open to the public.

February 2—School Board Meeting with budget proposal and public hearing, 5 p.m., CHS Media Center

February 4—Super Saturday College Fair: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Charlottesville High School for area students and parents. Free assistance with FAFSA, financial aid workshops, representatives from colleges

February 5—NSBA Federal Relations Network Conference, Washington, DC



2012-13 Budget Development Meetings

Budget meetings will be hosted by PTOs at the respective schools but they are open to *everyone*.

Please attend one that is convenient for your schedule.

PTO-budget update and input: 1/24/12, 5:30 p.m.—Burnley-Moran Elementary

PTO-budget update and input: 1/25/12, 5:30 p.m.—Buford MS

PTO-budget update and input: 1/26/12, 6:00 p.m.—CHS

Budget work session: 1/28/12, 8:30 a.m.—Walker Media Center

PTO-budget update and input: 1/30/12, 6:00 p.m.—Johnson Elementary

Review of proposed budget and public hearing: 2/02/12, 5 p.m.—CHS Media Center

Approval of Superintendent's Proposed Budget: 2/23/12, 5 p.m.—CHS Media Center

Presentation of approved 2012-2013 budget to City Council: 3/05/12, 7 p.m. at City Hall

***Tentative City Council approval of 2012-2013 budget:** 4/10/12, 5:30 p.m. at City Hall

Budget FAQs from January 5 Board meeting

What items in the Governor's budget are affecting the division most?

The Governor's proposed budget produces a \$4 million negative impact for the Charlottesville City Schools.

This is primarily due to:

- A change in the way in which sales tax is distributed to school divisions by the state. Sales tax is distributed based on the count of children between the ages of 5 and 19 residing in localities. The change involves university students who will now be counted in their parents' locality rather than in the community where they reside while at school. For CCS, this change results in a loss of sales tax of about \$1.2 million. Cities with colleges and universities, like Charlottesville, are significantly impacted by this change.
- Retirement costs under the Virginia Retirement System are fully paid on behalf of employees by CCS by applying a rate against the salaries of all full-time staff. The Governor's proposal increases this rate by almost 50%, costing the school division just under \$1.5 million.

- One time funds, such as federal stimulus dollars, are being eliminated for 2012-2013, totalling just under \$600K.
- Reductions in all other state funding categories further impacts CCS by approximately \$800K.

What are our options in meeting the school division's financial needs?

Given the size of the impact of the Governor's proposals on the CCS budget, we need to significantly restructure and to begin the work necessary to prioritize among programs, each of which are of great value to this community and to our students. As always, we will do everything we can to protect classrooms and direct student services and we will connect any actions we take to the Strategic Plan.

It is important to keep in mind that 77% of the school system budget is spent on people providing services. This number is closer to 90% when you consider the large contractual obligations that are a part of the Operating Costs. These contracts are for such services as regional Special Education and vocational services, maintenance, and other ancillary services which themselves are largely comprised of people providing services. The current budget breaks down as 58.7% salaries, 18.5% benefits, and 22.8% operating costs.

What process will be used for developing the 2012-2013 school budget proposal?

The Governor's budget is always the first proposal to come out of the state budgeting process. There will also be House and Senate versions followed by conference committee work. The conference committees ultimately resolve differences in the three versions, which then leads to passage of a final state budget in early March. Other than changes in the final budget from the General Assembly, City funding is the last known factor in developing the budget and can alleviate the necessity for cuts to programs. We ask for thoughtful participation from the community as we work through the issues the school system faces.

The Strategic Plan (<http://www.ccs.k12.va.us/about/strategic-plan.html>) will always guide us as we make the difficult budget decisions. The status of the budget will be discussed at each regular board meeting held on the first Thursday of each month (5 p.m., CHS Media Center). In addition to regular Board meetings, we will engage a committee of representatives of the community and staff to advise the Superintendent. We also meet with PTOs across the division, and attend staff meetings at our schools. A calendar of budget meetings is at http://www.ccs.k12.va.us/departments/budget/docs/Budget-Devt-Calendar-2011_000.pdf.