



VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHARTING THE COURSE

School Board Services

Kathleen J. Brown, Chair
District 10

Carolyn D. Weems, Vice Chair
District 9

Mark Bohenstiel
District 3

Michael Callan
District 6

David Culpepper
District 8

Matt W. Cummings
District 7

Rose M. Dwyer
District 1

Sharon R. Felton
At-Large

Dr. Alveta J. Green
District 4

Kimberly A. Melnyk
District 2

Melinda J. Rogers
District 5

Donald E. Robertson Jr., Ph.D., Superintendent

School Board Regular Meeting MINUTES
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

School Administration Building #6, Municipal Center
2512 George Mason Drive
P.O. Box 6038
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
(757) 263-1000

1. ***Administrative, Informal, and Workshop:*** Chair Brown convened the Administrative, Informal, and Workshop session at 4:00 p.m. on the 10th day of March 2026. In addition to Superintendent Robertson, the following School Board Members were present in the School Administration Building #6, School Board Chamber: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers.
 - A. ***School Board Administrative Matters and Reports:*** Chair Brown mentioned tickets for the Pearls of Wisdom event, April 18. Ms. Melnyk shared concerns about Chromebooks and mentioned the discussion at the last School Board meeting. Mr. Bohenstiel mentioned the Advisory Council for Technical and Career Education meeting at Princess Anne Middle School, the upcoming GRC Gala on Saturday, March 14 at the Westin in Town Center, and upcoming basketball games for the state finals in Richmond. Ms. Rogers mentioned a few commemorative celebrations for the month of March. Ms. Felton attended the FACE Family Resource Fair on Saturday, February 28.
 - B. ***Budget Workshop #7:*** Crystal Pate, chief financial officer, provided the School Board information regarding the FY 2026-2027 School Operating Budget. The presentation addressed Board member questions, reviewed website navigation for accessing budget and benefits information, and provided a status update on state budget negotiations, including proposed teacher salary increases and updated Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding calculations. The presentation also identified key budget milestones, discussed preliminary SEON budget balancing considerations, and outlined next steps for submitting questions and completing remaining workshops prior to adoption.

After the presentation, a discussion followed with questions and comments regarding benefits and career points (beginning, mid, and retirement); information available on website; AADA costs; health fund; costs for salary increases; CIP expenditures (utilities, fuel, maintenance); McKinney-Vento additional drivers; and resources available for staff.
 - C. ***Recruitment and Retention: Funding Considerations to Enhance Compensation and Educational Benefits:*** Darnita Trotman, Ed.D., chief human resources officer, and Judith Wood, human resources specialist, presented the School Board information regarding proposed funding considerations to improve recruitment and retention through adjustments to the Unified Pay Scale, and increased part-time pay rates. In addition, the presentation outlined proposed investments in educational allowances for advanced degrees, employee professional development reimbursement, and additional duty

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supplements. Estimated costs for each initiative were summarized to support School Board discussion and consideration.

After the presentation, a discussion followed with questions and comments regarding number of retired employees working returning to work for VBCPS; educational allowances; professional development reimbursement; career opportunities, professional growth; provisionally licensed teachers; partnerships with universities; tuition reimbursement; unified pay scale; and entry-level salaries.

2. **Closed Session:** At 5:17 p.m., Vice Chair Weems made the following motion, seconded by Dr. Green, that the School Board recess into Closed Session in accordance with the exceptions to open meetings law set forth in Code of Virginia §2.2-3711, Part A, Paragraphs 1, 7, and 8 as amended, to deliberate on the following matters:
1. Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals. Any teacher shall be permitted to be present during a closed meeting in which there is a discussion or consideration of a disciplinary matter that involves the teacher and some student and the student involved in the matter is present, provided that the teacher makes a written request to be present to the presiding officer of the appropriate board. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be construed to authorize a closed meeting by a local governing body or an elected school board to discuss compensation matters that affect the membership of such body or board collectively.
 7. Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.
 8. Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

Namely to discuss:

- A. Employee Grievance #537-8-21-25
- B. Status of pending litigation or administrative cases.
- C. Consultation with legal counsel regarding probable litigation and pending litigation matters.

Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to recess into Closed Session. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

Individuals present for discussion in the order in which matters were discussed:

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- B. **Status of pending litigation or administrative cases;** and
- C. **Consultation with legal counsel regarding probable litigation and pending litigation matters:** School Board Members: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers; Kamala H. Lannetti, school board attorney; Donald E. Robertson, Ph.D., superintendent; and Regina M. Toneatto, school board clerk.

The School Board reconvened at 5:27 p.m.

Certification of Closed Session: Vice Chair Weems read the Certification of Closed Session:

WHEREAS, the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Melnyk made the motion, seconded by Dr. Green. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion for Certification of Closed Session. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

- 3. **School Board Recess:** Chair Brown adjourned the Administrative, Informal, and Workshop session at 5:28 p.m.
- 4. **Formal Meeting (School Administration Building #6 – School Board Room) 6:00 p.m.**
- 5. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** Chair Brown convened the meeting of the School Board at the School Administration Building #6, School Board Chamber at 6:00 p.m. on the 10th day of March 2026. In addition to Superintendent Robertson, the following School Board Members were present in the School Administration Building #6, School Board Chamber: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers.
- 6. **Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance**
- 7. **Student, Employee and Public Awards and Recognition:** There were no awards presented at the meeting.
- 8. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Chair Brown called for any modifications to the agenda as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Dr. Green made the motion, seconded by Ms. Dwyer. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.
- 9. **Superintendent's Report (second monthly meeting) and recognitions (first and second monthly meetings)**
Administrative Recognition: Superintendent Robertson introduced the following appointment, which was approved at the February 24, 2026, School Board meeting: **Michele H. Clark**, administrative assistant, Ocean Lakes High School, as coordinator, adult academic programs, Adult Learning Center.
- 10. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - A. **February 17, 2026 Special School Board Meeting:** Chair Brown called for any modifications to the

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February 17, 2026 special School Board meeting minutes as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the February 17, 2026 minutes as presented.

Mr. Callan made the motion, seconded by Ms. Dwyer. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the February 17, 2026 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

February 24, 2026 Regular School Board Meeting: Chair Brown called for any modifications to the February 24, 2026 regular School Board meeting minutes as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the February 24, 2026 minutes as presented. Mr. Callan made the motion, seconded by Ms. Dwyer. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the February 24, 2026 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

11. Public Hearing on FY2026/27 School Operating Budget and FY2026/27 through FY2031/32 Capital Improvement Program

There was one (1) in-person speaker. The topics included step increases; step disparity; base pay; raises for SOQ positions; funding constraints; and funds for advanced degrees.

12. Public Comments (until 8:00 p.m.)

There were five (5) in-person speakers (including one (1) student speaker). The topics included Virtual Virginia; live instruction; online education; real-time interaction online; student rights; academic freedom; DEI; recruitment and retention; compensation; supporting the staff; entry level teacher salary; and unified step compensation.

The Public Comments concluded at 6:23 p.m.

13. Information

A. **Policy Review Committee (PRC) Recommendations:** Recommended that the School Board review recommendations regarding the amendment of certain policies as recommended by the Policy Review Committee at its March 4, 2026 meeting. Kamala Lannetti, school board attorney, reviewed the following:

1. **Bylaw 1-36/Open Meetings and Closed Meetings:** There are no proposed changes to this bylaw. This bylaw is required to be approved annually by the School Board in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. There was a discussion regarding the policy; reviewing policy annually; remote participation in meetings, personal reasons, medical reasons; and recording the information regarding the reasons for remote participation.
2. **Bylaw 1-37/Annual Organizational Meeting:** There are no recommended changes to this bylaw, it is being presented in accordance with the 5-year review requirement.
3. **Appendix C/School Board Standing Committee Procedures:** The PRC recommends changes to reflect procedures related to broadcasting meetings, Student Discipline hearings, and the annual election of the committee chair. There was a discussion regarding Standing Committees; Student Discipline Committee; suggestion to add "by the School Division" to section 4.B. at the end of the paragraph; Vice Chair Weems stated/confirmed to add, "by the School Division." Chair Brown asked for any objections to the addition and there were no objections.
4. **Policy 2-59/Outside Legal Counsel:** The PRC recommends changes pertaining to the use and payment of legal fees of attorneys not employed by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach and/or Virginia Beach City Public Schools. There was a discussion on the increase of the settlement amount within the policy, and the reasons for the increase.

B. **Local Special Education Annual Plan – Application and Report for VDOE:** Roni Myers-Daub, Ed.D., executive director, Office of Programs for Exceptional Children, provided the School Board information regarding the 2026-27 Special Education Annual Plan/Part B Flow-Through Application. The annual review was conducted in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 and the

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Virginia Department of Education regulations governing special education programs, with input from the local Special Education Advisory Committee. The plan affirmed assurances related to FAPE, IEP implementation, least restrictive environment, and equity practices, and outlined required application components and funding uses. A proposed 2026–2027 Part B Section 611 and 619 budget was reviewed, including the removal of 9.5 positions from the Section 611 grant, along with input from the Special Education Advisory Committee.

After the presentation, a discussion followed with questions and comments regarding impact of staff reduction, student evaluations, funding, grants, operating budget; Local Jail Program; support for staff; military community; federal support; importance of social workers; and building opportunities for students.

- C. **Special Elections:** Thomas Shattuck, director, Office of Security and Emergency Management, provided the School Board information regarding two upcoming special elections on March 17 and April 21, 2026. The presentation summarized two special elections impacting Virginia Beach City Public Schools and the corresponding operational plans. It outlined the March 17, 2026, special election affecting 13 school polling locations, during which in-person instruction will continue with enhanced safety, security, and coordination measures. It also addressed the April 21, 2026, statewide special election involving 58 school polling sites and recommended a transition to synchronous virtual learning due to anticipated voter turnout and operational impact.

After the presentation, a discussion followed with questions and comments regarding synchronous learning versus asynchronous learning; communication plan to community; challenges and coordination, preparing for voter turnout; number of schools used for voting; signage for voters at schools; instructional day for students; and risk assessment.

- D. **Update on City Curfew:** Thomas Shattuck, director, Office of Security and Emergency Management, provided the School Board information regarding the new curfew for those under the age of 18 beginning March 19, 2026. The presentation summarized revisions to the City of Virginia Beach curfew ordinance for minors, which moved the curfew start time from 11:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. while maintaining the 5:00 a.m. end time, effective March 19, 2026. It outlined allowable exceptions to the curfew and described potential responses to violations, including warnings, citations, and placement at designated pickup or other service locations, depending on circumstances.

After the presentation, a discussion followed with questions and comments regarding the curfew; impact on various school activities (sports and games, prom, ring dance, plays, etc.); concerns about effects of curfew on students and parents; City Council presentation on topic; students working at night; communication strategy; curfew voted upon by City Council; enforcement by VBPD not VBCPS; written permission note from parents for students; and communicating message to VBCPS community.

14. **Return to public comments if needed:** As noted, under Agenda Item #12, the Public Comments concluded at 6:23 p.m.

15. **Consent Agenda:** Chair Brown read the following item on the Consent Agenda:

- A. **Religious Exemption(s):** Recommendation that the School Board approve RE-26-18 and RE-26-19.

After reading the item on the Consent Agenda, Chair Brown asked if there were any objections to voting on the Consent Agenda as presented. Hearing none, Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Culpepper made the motion, seconded by Mr. Cummings. Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

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16. Action

- A. **Personnel Report / Administrative Appointments:** Chair Brown called for a motion to approve the March 10, 2026 personnel report and administrative appointments. Ms. Rogers made the motion, seconded by Mr. Callan, that the School Board approve the appointments, and the acceptance of the resignations, retirements, and other employment actions, as listed on the March 10, 2026 personnel report along with the administrative appointment as recommended by the Superintendent.

Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion to approve the March 10, 2026 personnel report and administrative appointments. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

Superintendent Robertson mentioned the following appointments: **Jason D. Mokar**, assistant director, Building Trades, Physical Plant Facilities Management Office, Salisbury University, as director, maintenance services, Office of Maintenance Services; and **Joseph S. Varbero**, security specialist, City of Virginia Beach, as coordinator, security and emergency management, Office of Security and Emergency Management.

- 17. Committee, Organization or Board Reports:** Ms. Melnyk mentioned a teacher in one of the presentation slides and the video they created for National Board Certification. Vice Chair Weems attended the Harbor Hope Center Board of Directors meeting and shared updates on the program/students; attended the Gifted Advisory Committee meeting and discussed workforce development and CTE courses. Dr. Green mentioned the article in the paper regarding Harbor Hope Center. Chair Brown attended the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting; mentioned the School Board Retreat on July 14 and 15, and to share any input on ideas/topics for the retreat with the Chair and Vice Chair.

- 18. Return to Administrative, Informal, Workshop or Closed Session matters:** At 8:00 p.m., Vice Chair Weems made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Callan, that the School Board recess into Closed Session in accordance with the exceptions to open meetings law set forth in Code of Virginia §2.2-3711, Part A, Paragraph 1 as amended, to deliberate on the following matters:

1. Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals. Any teacher shall be permitted to be present during a closed meeting in which there is a discussion or consideration of a disciplinary matter that involves the teacher and some student and the student involved in the matter is present, provided that the teacher makes a written request to be present to the presiding officer of the appropriate board. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be construed to authorize a closed meeting by a local governing body or an elected school board to discuss compensation matters that affect the membership of such body or board collectively.

Namely to discuss:

- A. Employee Grievance #537-8-21-25

Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were seven (7) ayes in favor of the motion to recess into Closed Session: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Callan, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed, 7-0-0.

The following School Board Members were not present in the School Board Chamber at the time of the vote: Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Culpepper, Dr. Green, and Ms. Melnyk.

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Individuals present for discussion in the order in which matters were discussed:

- A. **Employee Grievance #537-8-21-25:** School Board Members: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohensiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, Mr. Cummings, Ms. Dwyer, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers; Kamala H. Lannetti, school board attorney; Donald E. Robertson, Ph.D., superintendent; and Regina M. Toneatto, school board clerk.

Kamala H. Lannetti, school board attorney, and Donald E. Robertson, Ph.D., superintendent, left the Closed Session at 8:05 p.m., and returned at 8:38 p.m.

The School Board reconvened at 8:38 p.m.

Certification of Closed Session: Vice Chair Weems read the Certification of Closed Session:

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WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Melnyk made the motion, seconded by Mr. Callan. Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were eleven (11) ayes in favor of the motion for Certification of Closed Session. The motion passed unanimously, 11-0-0.

Vice Chair Weems made the following motion, seconded by Ms. Dwyer:

**RESOLUTION REGARDING EMPLOYEE PART II GRIEVANCE
EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE NO.: 537-8-21-25
(TERRY POPE)**

WHEREAS: That on December 1, 2025, a hearing officer held a hearing regarding Grievant's (high school security assistant) complaint that he was not assigned the position of Security Lead for the 2025-2026 school year in retaliation for prior discrimination complaints. At such hearing testimony, evidence and argument were accepted by the hearing officer. On January 5, 2026, the hearing officer issued findings of fact and recommendations; and

WHEREAS: On March 10, 2026, the School Board reviewed the hearing officer's findings of fact and recommendation, the transcript of the December 1, 2025 hearing, and the exhibits; and

RESOLVED: That the School Board adopts the hearing officer's findings of fact and recommendation.

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FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Clerk is directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the Grievant and his legal counsel, the School Board Attorney, the Employee Relations Specialist, and the Chief Human Resources Officer, who is directed to place a copy of this Resolution, and the exhibits in Grievant's personnel file.

Adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach this 10th day of March 2026.

Without discussion, Chair Brown called for a vote on the resolution. The School Board Clerk announced there were six (6) ayes in favor of the resolution: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Weems, Mr. Bohenstiel, Mr. Callan, Mr. Culpepper, and Ms. Dwyer. There were five (5) nays opposed to the resolution: Mr. Cummings, Ms. Felton, Dr. Green, Ms. Melnyk, and Ms. Rogers. The motion passed for the resolution, 6-5-0.

19. Adjournment: Chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina M. Toneatto, Clerk of the School Board

Approved:

Kathleen J. Brown, School Board Chair