



Chesterfield County Public Schools

Chesterfield County School Board 2022 Legislative Program

Legislative Goals



In 2021, for the first time since the 1980s, Chesterfield County Public Schools opened before Labor Day. Even with masks, it was easy to see the joy of students and teachers who were finally able to come together in the classroom after being apart for so long because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clearly, the start of the 2021-22 school year was like no other. The cheer of face-to-face teaching and learning was accompanied by challenges, including difficulties with transportation. A national shortage of school bus drivers caused a ripple effect and created stress for everyone — families, teachers, bus drivers and other employees. Recruiting and retaining other employees was also more difficult than in previous years.

Despite ongoing challenges, many related to the pandemic, student enrollment is rising because the reputation of our public schools often inspires families to live in Chesterfield County. Chesterfield County Public Schools continues to be a leader in public education:

- 100% of schools are fully accredited.
- On-time graduation rate rose to 92.3% for the class of 2021, and dropout rate declined to 5.6%.
- 59% of the class of 2021 earned a more rigorous advanced diploma.
- Chesterfield County Public Schools staff members consistently win statewide honors. Virginia's 2021 psychologist, world language teacher, technology educator, art teacher, FBLA adviser and more all work in CCPS.

As we implement our strategic plan, Imagine Tomorrow, Team Chesterfield is creating classrooms of the future that will allow our students to soar to even greater heights. Our daily focus is to provide amazing learning experiences in remarkable learning environments while encouraging students and staff to exemplify personal responsibility and supportive relationships.

We all want kids to be back in the classroom safely and back to a more normal school experience. Families and staff members want to have a regular routine again. The school system is committed to providing students with a safe, supportive and nurturing learning environment and will continue working diligently to make that happen. But Chesterfield County Public Schools (and Virginia's other school systems) can't do this alone. Just as a change in state law allowed school systems to better manage their calendars and choose to open before Labor Day, additional challenges can be aided by a statewide legislative approach.

Legislative Principles



- ✓ Ensure equitable, fair and unbiased access to all resources and opportunities
- ✓ Support allowing maximum discretion in developing strategies for policy and budget decisions that will reflect the diverse needs of school divisions
- ✓ Support flexibility or relaxation of certain mandates
- ✓ Oppose any new statutory or regulatory requirements that are not fully funded

Equity

As defined in our strategic plan, a CCPS core value, equity, ensures fair and unbiased access to all resources and opportunities. This is present in our core value commitments:

- Create a culture open to different backgrounds and accepting of all voices and viewpoints
- Recognize biases and identify acceptance and inclusion barriers to be removed
- Demonstrate an appreciation of diversity and develop compassionate relationships
- Be good stewards of resources that support opportunities for all
- Hold high expectations while understanding challenges and identifying strengths

The effort to remove barriers has resulted in a number of accomplishments related to access and opportunities for our students and overall school communities. These accomplishments include:

- Opening of Chester Early Childhood Learning Academy (CECLA) has increased enrollment of prekindergarten students
- PSAT for all students grades 8-11 and SAT College Day for all eleventh grade students
- Serving more English learners at their home schools
- Implementation of the revised gifted-identification process
- Serving more gifted students at or near their home schools
- Transparency of curriculum options to all parents in the 2020-21 Program of Study
- Parent support materials in multiple languages through interpretation and translation options

In 2016, the Equity Committee, composed of CCPS educators and community members, provided transparency as well as guidance noted in the 2017 Equity Report. The role of the Equity Committee continues to address the remaining 11 recommendations with the understanding that the work of equity is the responsibility of all, and strives to align the Equity Policy, School Board Policy 1014, with all other CCPS policies.



Investing in the Workforce and Funding Actual Costs

The Chesterfield County School Board requests that the Commonwealth of Virginia continue to invest in our employees and fund actual education-related costs: We need to meet the needs of our students through appropriate staffing levels; we need to provide additional staffing to support an increasing student enrollment; we need to meet the needs of our teachers and staff by offering competitive compensation; and, we need to meet the needs associated with our daily operations by funding actual costs.

The State Board of Education recently cited the following: “According to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission’s report Virginia Compared to the Other States: 2021 Edition, Virginia ranks 27th of 50 for state and local per-pupil funding for pre K-12 education, and 40th of 50 for state per-pupil funding. These figures demonstrate the gap between state and local funding of public education. The majority of public school funding in Virginia, 55%, is from localities. The state contributes 40% of public school funding, with 6% from federal sources. From 2016-17 to 2017-18, per-pupil school funding in Virginia increased 2.5%. State spending increased \$160 per pupil, local spending increased \$190 per pupil and federal spending decreased \$27 per pupil. Across the country, state per-pupil spending increased an average of 3.2% between 2016-17 and 2017-18. Despite progress by the legislature, state direct aid per pupil has decreased 5.4%, adjusted for inflation. If the Standards of Quality prescriptions were funded, divisions on average would receive over \$600 more per student. For Fiscal Year 2020, Virginia localities invested \$4.4 billion above the required local effort for SOQ programs.”

- **Full Funding of K-12 Education** — The Chesterfield County School Board supports full funding of state education programs including basic aid, prevailing instructional support staffing levels and categorical funding, career and technical education, as well as capital, school construction/replacement and maintenance support. Such funding is critical to provide an education where students meet and exceed the Standards of Learning.
- **Invest in Employees**
 - The Chesterfield County School Board supports efforts to attract, develop, pay and retain quality teachers, especially in light of Virginia’s current shortage of qualified teachers. Compensation and benefits should attract beginning teachers and encourage teachers to stay in the profession over time.

Legislative Positions



- The Chesterfield County School Board supports efforts to attract, develop, pay and retain quality leaders (specifically principals), especially in light of the Commonwealth's current shortage of qualified leaders. Establishing opportunities for leaders to grow in their profession and experience leadership roles should also be provided.
- The Chesterfield County School Board supports incentives for employment of highly qualified staff for positions such as school bus drivers, maintenance and custodial workers and food service staff.
- **Enhance Education Funding from the Commonwealth** — The Chesterfield County School Board supports increasing public education's share of the state budget to support innovation, teacher salaries and retirement costs, reduced class size and early childhood programs. Enhanced funding should be provided for added social and emotional supports for students that will reduce student discipline problems, while also providing funding for local and regional alternative education programs so these programs are available as needed for students.
- **Eliminate the Support Cap** — The Chesterfield County School Board has long supported the elimination of the Commonwealth's cap on funding of support positions and providing funding for support staff positions (according to a formula that uses numbers of staffing and costs). These positions include school psychologists, nurses and social workers, as well as instructional support, attendance, security, transportation, technology, facility operations and maintenance staff. In the absence of full elimination, positions related to direct student services and to student mental health and safety — such as school psychologists, nurses and social workers — should be shifted out from under the cap. The Chesterfield County School Board supported the 2021 General Assembly funding of three specialized student support personnel for every 1,000 students as part of the Standards of Quality. These positions, including school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses, will be able to provide important student support services but additional funding is needed to realize the State Board of Education's SOQ prescription of four to 1,000 students for specialized student support personnel.
- **Establish Expectations for Future Funding** — The Chesterfield County School Board supports a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission of the true cost of education in the Commonwealth, an accurate assessment of the costs to implement the Standards of Quality and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Composite Index of Local Ability to Pay.



Measure Student Achievement and Growth

The Chesterfield County School Board supports measuring student achievement and student growth as a means of accountability for student academic performance. The Chesterfield County School Board supports incorporating student growth as a primary means of assessing student performance for accreditation, using tools that inform instruction and are designed to measure growth rather than using SOL tests as a proxy for growth. In the interim, the Chesterfield County School Board supports the reduction of the required number of SOL tests to the minimum required under federal law, and continued work to ensure grade 3-8 reading and math growth assessments are of quality and measure to replace current local growth assessments and current SOL assessments.

The 2021-2022 school year starts the phased-in implementation of the required through-course, growth assessments per HB2027/SBI357 (2021):

- Fall computer-adaptive assessment in grades 3-8 math and reading are being administered.
- Assessment will be based on content from the previous grade level but will be significantly shorter than an SOL test.

In 2022-23, a fall, winter and spring assessment will be administered with off-grade level content allowing the Commonwealth to better hone in on a student's proficiency.

These new state-developed assessments align fully to SOL content.



COVID-related Expenses and Funding Flexibility

Given the unknown needs and the potential for school divisions to quickly pivot to adapt their learning models to the ever-changing pandemic climate, school divisions need to be able to adjust their budgets and put resources where they need them when they need them. For example, there is continued budgetary uncertainty in the following areas:

- Recovery of Learning costs to address impact on student achievement tied to COVID- related changes to the learning models, including the need to expand virtual educational offerings for quarantined learners as well as expanding local virtual learning academies to allow for more capacity
- Transportation costs as schools reopen (i.e. the number of school buses and school bus drivers required to transport students and maintain adequate social distancing)
- IT, wireless hotspots, virtual learning curriculum and infrastructure, and providing one-to-one electronic devices as this is now an ongoing cost as virtual learning will continue to be vital to students' learning environments for the foreseeable future
- Paid sick leave and the associated substitute teacher costs, due to increased potential for more teachers requiring time off
- Needs and costs associated with acquiring appropriate PPE, including face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer
- Costs associated with implementing a more rigorous cleaning process, including an enhanced cleaning schedule, additional cleaning supplies and additional personnel costs, as well as improvements to facilities tied to ventilation and filtration
- Student meals and food nutrition, which is particularly important as school divisions are reliant on changing USDA guidance



Collaboration with Chesterfield County Government and Chesterfield Education Foundation

- The Chesterfield County School Board has a strong partnership with the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors in support of the respective legislative agendas. The collaboration between the school division and county government has led to unprecedented opportunities to provide increased services for Chesterfield County taxpayers. As such, the Chesterfield County School Board continues to strongly oppose the additional shifting of state education costs to localities.
- The Chesterfield Education Foundation provides equitable educational opportunities and increased classroom innovation for Chesterfield students. The Chesterfield County School Board supports legislation that permits any local school division to provide benefits to education foundation (associated with a specific school division) employees.



Chesterfield County School Board 2020-2023

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About Chesterfield County Public Schools



Fast facts

- More than 62,000 students attend 65 schools: 1 prekindergarten, 39 elementary schools (grades K-5), 12 middle schools (grades 6-8), 11 high schools (grades 9-12), which include 13 specialty centers, and two career and technical centers
- \$703.7 million operating budget (69.5% for instruction, 11.2% for operations and maintenance, 8.1% for debt, 5.5% for transportation, 3.3% for administration, attendance and health and 2.4% for technology)
- \$11,365 cost per student
- About 7,200 full-time and part-time positions in operating fund
- Approximately 34% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- The student body is 46% white, 26% black, 19% Hispanic, 5% two or more races, 3% Asian, less than 1% American Indian/Alaskan native and less than 1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Our team

- Chesterfield County Public Schools receives thousands of applications each year to join our team. Therefore, we are able to choose the best, brightest and most innovative individuals to work for us.
- 4,400-plus teachers
- 3,500-plus educators with a master's degree or doctorate
- 112 National Board Certified Teachers

Our operations

- If Chesterfield County Public Schools were a business, it would be one of the largest in the Richmond area — largest catering operation, largest transportation system, largest human resources operation, etc.
- \$703.7 million operating budget for FY 2021
- About 9 million miles traveled annually by buses
- About 5.5 million meals served annually
- 8 million square feet of space cleaned and maintained daily
- 61,000 devices used by students for 1:1 daily instruction

About Chesterfield County Public Schools



Up-to-date information:

The school division website (mychesterfieldschools.com) is a great way to keep up with news and activities. Here are others:

- Facebook (www.facebook.com/chesterfieldschools)
- Twitter (twitter.com/ccpsinfo)
- Instagram (instagram.com/oneccps)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com/ccpsva)
- LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/oneccps)
- Weekly digital newsletter (sign up at bit.ly/CCPSconnections)
- Chesterfield EdTV on Comcast 96, Verizon 26 and online at chesterfieldschoolsva.swagit.com/original-programming/
- Email ccpsinfo@ccpsnet.net, call 804-748-1405 or mail P.O. Box 10, Chesterfield, VA 23832



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