

Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2025

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Special Meeting Session- CMS Budget Request in the Valerie C. Woodard Conference Center, 3205 Freedom Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina, at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7, 2025.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair Mark Jerrell, Vice-Chair Leigh Altman
and Commissioners Arthur Griffin,
Vilma D. Leake, Laura J. Meier, Elaine Powell,
Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, Yvette Townsend-Ingram
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith
Deputy Clerk to the Board Arlissa Eason

Absent: Commissioner George Dunlap

NOTE: *Commissioner Powell entered the meeting when noted in the minutes*

Also in attendance: Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Superintendent Crystal Hill,
CMS Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer Beth Thompson
and CMS Chief Financial Officer Kelly Kluttz

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mark Jerrell, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chair Jerrell gave opening remarks.

25-0285 CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS FY2026 BUDGET REQUEST

Background: The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education has adopted a proposed operating budget for FY2025-2026 that includes a request to the Board of County Commissioners for County funding. Representatives from CMS will present the request for funding to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration as part of the FY2026 Budget.

Superintendent Hill, Thompson and Ms. Kluttz gave the presentation.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

2025-26 Budget Request

Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Valerie C. Woodard Center



About Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools



Endless Possibilities Start with CMS

- **2nd largest** school district in NC and **16th largest** school district in the nation
- **141,700** students representing **175 countries**, speaking **146 native languages**
- **186** schools, organized by **11** Performance Areas
- **100,000+** students are transported on **839** buses to and from **26,500** bus stops daily, covering **109,000** miles per day and **17,346,000** miles per year
- **115,000** meals are served daily



Data reflects current state as of August 2024

2025-29 Goals

Goals	From	To	By
➤ Increase the percent of K-2 students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS.	67%	91%	June 2029
➤ Increase the percent of students scoring CCR (college and career ready) on reading end-of-grade assessments in grades 3-8.	31%	50%	June 2029
➤ Increase the percent of students scoring CCR (college and career ready) on Math I assessments.	27%	57%	June 2029
➤ Increase the percent of high school students graduating with their graduation cohort on track to be enrolled, enlisted, or employed.	72%	85%	June 2029

2025-29 Guardrails

Guardrails
➤ While ensuring schools have the resources needed to meet student needs, the Superintendent shall not neglect strategies or resources for significantly reducing achievement gaps.
➤ The Superintendent shall not allow an unsafe environment in schools, at school-related events, or on transportation.
➤ The Superintendent shall not neglect social-emotional support, character development support, attendance support, or access to enrichment activities that successfully engage students.
➤ While ensuring all schools have teachers equipped to deliver high-quality instruction, the Superintendent shall neither neglect targeted nor comprehensive strategies for teacher recruitment, retention, and engagement.

2025-29 Strategic Plan (Year 1)

Endless possibilities start with



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

OUR MISSION

To create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

OUR VISION

To lend the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

2024 – 2029 DISTRICT GOALS

- Improve Early Literacy in Grades K – 2
- Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3 – 8
- Strengthen Math Performance in Math I
- Post-Grad Readiness

CORE BELIEFS

Public education is essential to democracy and necessary for economic opportunity, mobility, and the broader public good. We are responsible for building and maintaining a high performing school district. Each student is uniquely capable and deserves an engaging, relevant, and challenging educational experience. Our principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement and building a positive school community. The school system, families, and communities are necessary partners in ensuring the academic, social, emotional and behavioral success of students.

GUARDRAILS

- Fairness over Equity: Reducing Achievement Gaps
- Safety & Security
- Attending to the Whole Child: Wellbeing & Engagement
- Staffing: High Quality Teachers


FOUR PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

- Academic Excellence
- People Excellence
- Operational Excellence
- Engagement Excellence


OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVER **EXCELLENCE** WITHOUT EXCEPTION




Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools




Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Strategic Plan 2024-2029



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Annual Plan 2024-2025



2024-2025 Deputy Superintendent Annual Plan



NCStar Performance Report 2024-2025



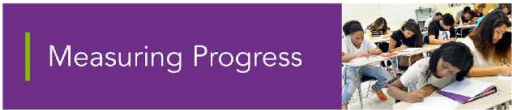
2024-25 Year in Review



Academic Excellence



click here!



MEASURING GOALS				
GOAL 1				
Increase the percent of K-2 students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS from 57% in June 2023 to 61% in June 2025				
Early Literacy	Early Literacy	Early Literacy	Early Literacy	Early Literacy
Initiation Measures				
1.1 Kindergarten				
Increase the percent of Kindergarten students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS from 75% (June 2023) to 87% (June 2025)				
1.2 1st Grade				
Increase the percent of 1st Grade students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by DIBELS from 66% (June 2023) to 82% (June 2025)				
1.3 2nd Grade				
Increase the percent of 2nd Grade students scoring at or above benchmark in early literacy as measured by ELPRI from 62% (June 2023) to 80% (June 2025)				

click here!

MEASURING GOALS	SOFG Videos
BOE Videos	
11-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 Progress Monitoring Report Kindergarten	
12-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 and 2 Progress Monitoring Report Grades 1-2	
06-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 Progress Monitoring Report	

MEASURING GOALS	SOFG Reports
Monitoring Reports	
11-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 Progress Monitoring Report Kindergarten	
12-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 and 2 Progress Monitoring Report Grades 1-2	
06-12-24 Student Outcomes Focuses Governance Goal 1 Progress Monitoring Report	



Academic Excellence



- CMS Students have received **\$46.2 million** dollars in scholarships as of April 2025*
- **11,621** of high school students are enrolled in college-level, Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- **39 mid-year graduates** completed their Associate's Degree. **250 students** are on track to earn an Associate's Degree in May.



*Students are continuing to report scholarship data



Academic Excellence



- Over 1,600 CTE students have earned Tier 2 or Tier 3 credentials so far this year
- CTE students have earned over 6,900 credentials so far this year
- We have held 3 large school career awareness events that included over 12,000 middle and high school students
 - Endless Possibilities = approximately 10,000 middle school students
 - Futures Fair = over 300 students, 43 business partners
 - What’s Your E?
 - Approximately 1,500 attendees



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools



People Excellence



- 99% of teaching positions are filled for the 24-25 school year
- Attrition rates are improving from 18.2% in 22-23 to 14.1% in 23-24
- 100% of teachers new to CMS for the 24-25 school year have had an onboarding experience.
- 82% of staff completing post onboarding survey indicate they were prepared for classroom and feel a sense of belonging at their schools
- 827 teachers are in teacher leader positions
- 92% of our schools have at least 1 National Board Certified teacher, with 1,450 active NBCTs in the district, ranked 3rd in the nation.



People Excellence



Teacher Residency:

- 180 teachers are being recognized on May 8th for completing the CMS Teacher Residency Program
- Approximately 300 more teachers are enrolled in the CMS Teacher Residency Program for next school year

Career Fair:

- The Endless Possibilities Career Fair had over 1,300 in attendance

At Home in CMS:

- Launched the CMS H.O.S.T. Initiative in all Priority Staffing Schools, offering personalized support to help teachers find housing options that best meet their needs
- Over 2,000 employees have taken advantage of webinars, fairs, open houses, info sessions, and personalized support (HOST)





Operational Excellence



Increased Data Security & AI

- Increased overall **cyber security** posture* and improved ability to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber threats, including conducting internal and external testing to enhance security defenses and expose any vulnerabilities that would allow access to sensitive data
- Established a comprehensive **device life cycle refresh*** system
- Migrated outdated OS platforms to the latest **Microsoft OS platforms***, resulting in improved security*
- Received over 10,000 survey responses and facilitated 13 engagement sessions, visioning workshops, and focus groups to inform the draft **CMS AI Vision Statement and Core Beliefs***
- Conducted an **AI Data Privacy Summit*** to provide guidelines for AI use within our organization



* 2025-26 Risk Mitigation Strategy



Operational Excellence



Modernization & Risk Mitigation

- Implementation of Phase 1 **Oracle***, **ServiceNow***, **FMX***, and **Red Rover***
- Successful transition of **School Funds Online** to the Cloud* in February 2025
- Prepared for new statewide **Student Information System (Infinite Campus)** implementation that ensures accuracy of data (reducing critical errors), including implementation of a online registration system (dramatically reducing data entry and improving accuracy), and many other enhancements creating efficiencies.



* 2025-26 Risk Mitigation Strategy
Phase 1 Oracle includes accounting and general ledger
Phase 2 includes budgeting with a go live date January 2026
Phase 3 includes HR and payroll for a go live date of January 2027



Engagement Excellence



- Launched **5 Superintendent Advisory Councils** and **3 Connections with Crystal** to engage various stakeholders
- Community Partners have provided almost **\$1.1M** in the form of in-Kind donations and almost **\$18M** in resources and programs
- Over **45,822** volunteers registered to support CMS
- Over **8.5K** volunteers supported a CMS school
- Almost **146K** volunteer hours were logged
- The community has donated almost **\$5M** in volunteer hours





Engagement Excellence



- Family Engagement Connections: 16,022
- Family Academy Participation: 5,183
- Virtual Lunch and Learn Sessions Held: 22
- In-Person Sessions Conducted: 23
- On Demand Availability: 29 sessions with a total of 1,729 video reviews
- Collaborated with 16 community organizations
- 13 Family Academy sessions that supported the understanding of Student Assessments



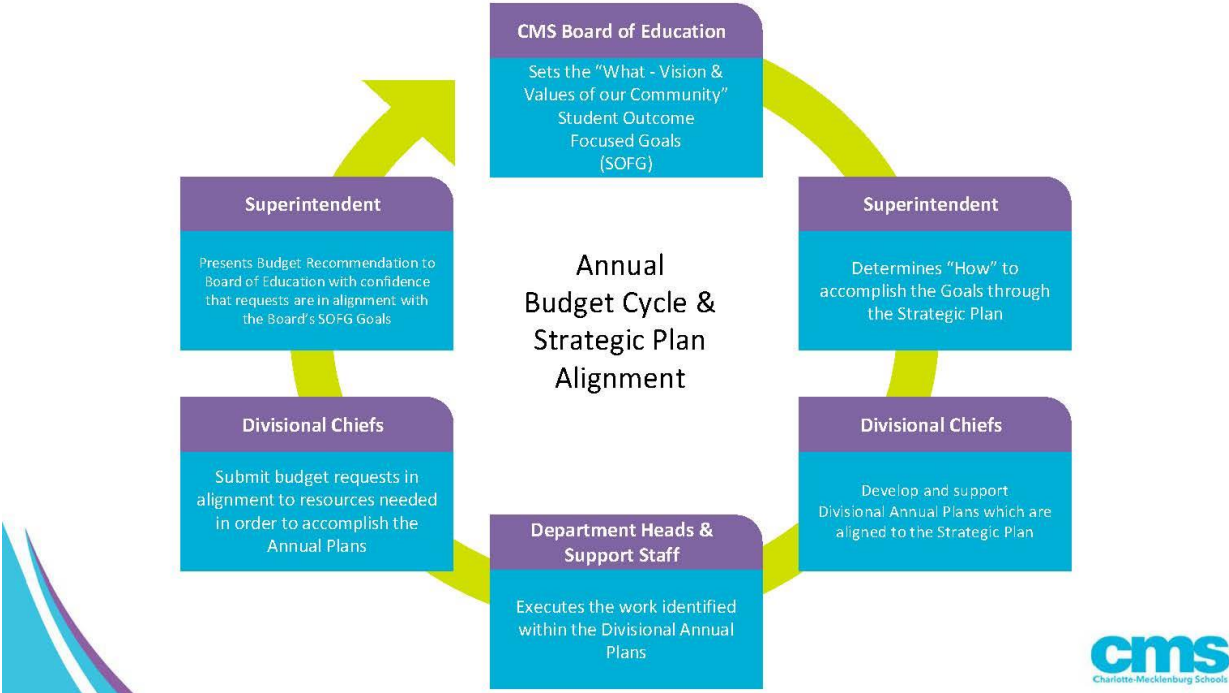
2024-25 Annual Plan Report



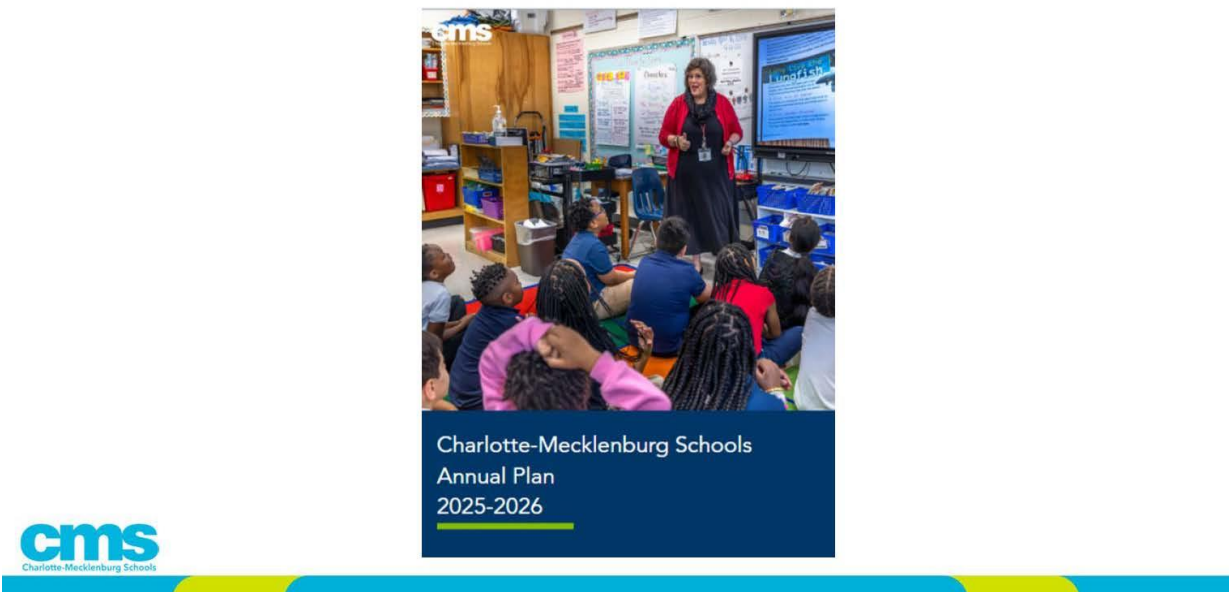
Preparing for and Resourcing 2025-26 Goal Targets



Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2025

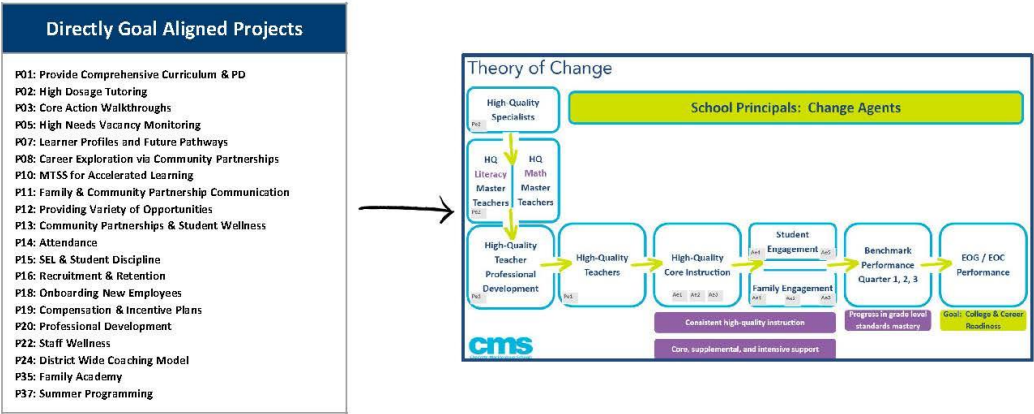


2025-26 Annual Plan



Moving from Projects to Systems

In 2025-2026, we are transitioning from reporting on isolated projects to building sustainable systems.



2025-26 Annual Plan Goals:
There is More to Accomplish

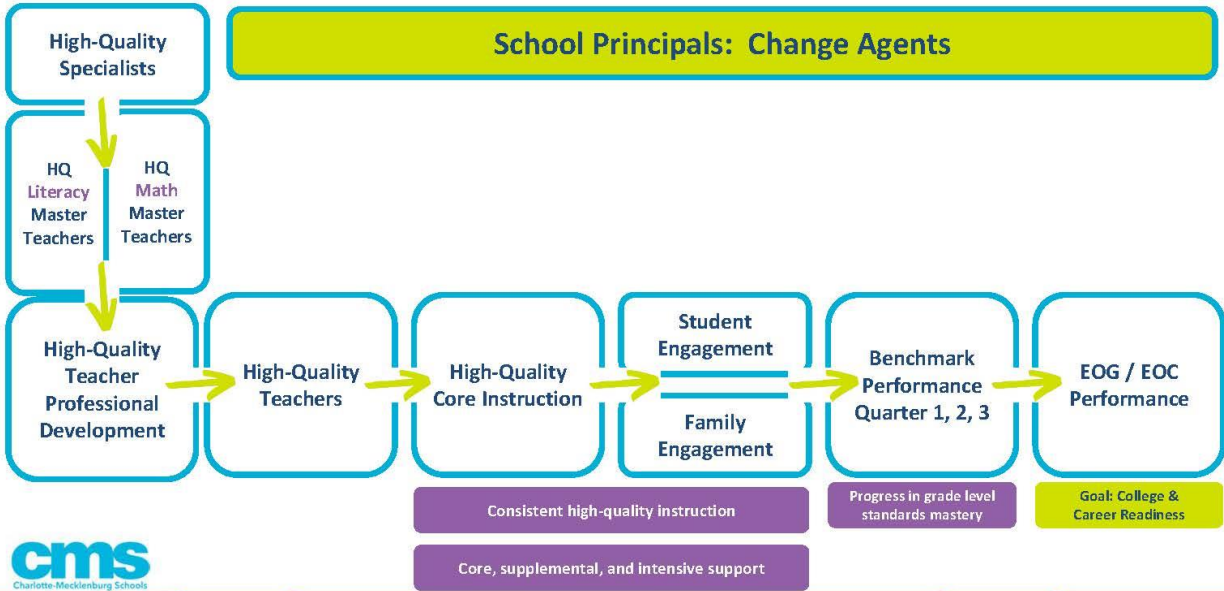
Goal for 2024-2029	2022-23	2023-24		2024-25		2025-26		2026-27		2027-28		2028-29	
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Increase	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Goal 1 (K-2 Literacy)	67%	71%	70%	75%	Sept. 2025	79%	+3-6%	83%		87%		91%	
Goal 2 (3-8 Literacy*)	31%	34%	30%	37%	Sept. 2025	40%	+6-12%	43%		46%		50%	
Goal 3 (Math I*)	27%	32%	28%	37%	Sept. 2025	42%	+9-12%	47%		52%		57%	
Goal 4 (Postsecondary)	72%	74%	76%	76%	Sept. 2025	78%	+0-2%	80%		82%		85%	

Needed 2025-26 Increases



* These targets reflect the percentage of students earning a level 4 or 5 on end of grade assessments (college and career readiness). Grade level proficiency (levels 3, 4 or 5) would be higher.
**Data reflects current 12th grade students having met at least one indicator as of 1/25/25; note that data indicating a student has met an indicator this year is not available until August 2025-January 2026, varying by indicator. Year end data is subject to change drastically based upon official cohort.

Theory of Change



2025-26 Budget



2025-26 Budget Highlights

- ✓ Clearly resources the boards student outcomes focused goals
- ✓ First Budget since FY 2019-20 without Federal ESSER Funding
- ✓ Minimal Increase in Total Operating Budget
 - ❑ Less than 1% Increase Year-Over-Year
- ✓ Year 2 of a 4-year, \$2M sustainability plan for student devices, ensuring equitable access and academic success



2025-26 Budget Highlights

- ✓ Prioritizes Retention and Recruitment
 - ❑ Assumed 3% State-Driven Pay Increase for All Staff
 - ❑ Average of a 5% Certified Supplement Increase
 - ❑ Implementing Phase II of Market Aligned Salary Schedules for Classified Staff
- ✓ Capital Outlay
 - ❑ Invests in safety, security, roofing and HVAC upgrades to mitigate operational risks



Federal Budget
Uncertainty



FY2024-25 Entitlement Grant Overview

	Title I	Title II	Title III
General Purpose:	Improving Basic Education & Neglected, Delinquent, and At-Risk Youth	Supporting Effective Instruction	Multilingual Learners
Examples:	School Allocations Multilingual Learners Title I Pre-Kindergarten New Teacher Support Family Engagement Delinquent & Neglected Youth	Teacher Residency Programs Beginner Teacher Development Principal & AP Development Curriculum Use & Instruction	Multilingual Teachers Professional Development
# of Positions	948	37	208
Allotment Amount:	\$ 52,751,589	\$ 5,464,614	\$ 3,308,124
Carryover Amount:	\$ 20,874,840	\$ 4,825,670	\$ 1,903,361
Total Allotment:	\$ 73,626,429	\$ 10,290,284	\$ 5,211,485



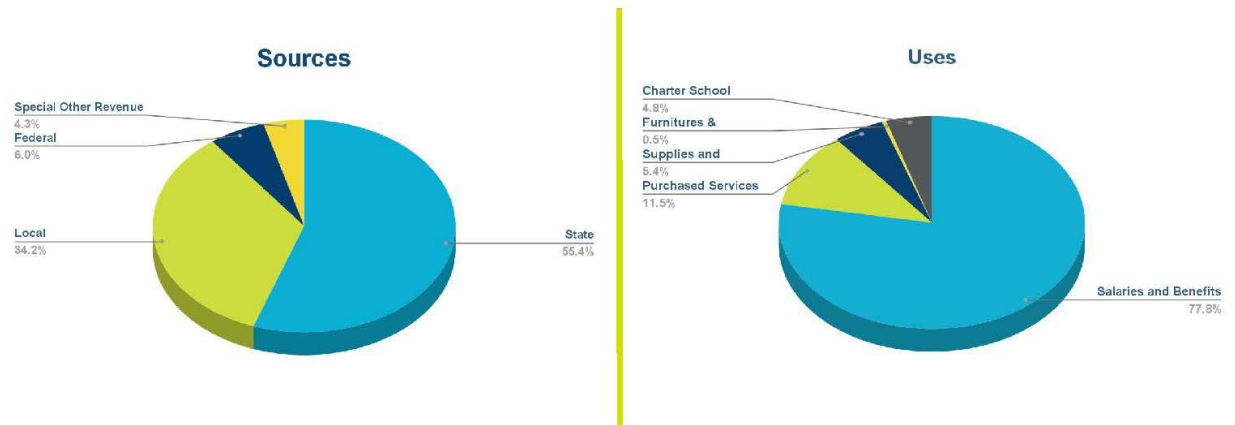
FY 2025-26 Budget
Recommendation



2025-26 Proposed
Operating Budget



2025-26 Proposed Operating Budget



2025-26 Proposed Operating Budget: \$ 1,951,050,035
2025-26 Enrollment: 141,726 Students



2025-26 Total
Recommended
Budget

Revenues by Source	Proposed Budget
State of North Carolina	1,081,398,539
Mecklenburg County	667,579,849
Federal Grants	117,309,966
Other and Special Revenue	84,761,680
Total Operating Budget	\$ 1,951,050,034
Capital Funding	
Capital Appropriation	22,960,000
One-Time Funding Request	10,000,000
Total Capital Funding	32,960,000
Enterprise Funds	
School Nutrition Services	95,470,787
After School Enrichment Program (ASEP)	11,297,510
Total Enterprise Funds	\$ 106,768,297
Total Recommended Budget	\$ 2,090,778,331



2025-26 Proposed Operational
County Appropriation



2025-26 Recurring Operational Costs
Funded through Central Office Reductions

Budget Expansion	Strategic Initiative	Amount
Compensation Adjustment (Assistant Principals)	PE.1	1,700,000
Compensation Adjustment (Specialist)	PE.1	1,000,000
Compensation Adjustment (Directors)	PE.1	400,000
Professional Development Platform	PE.2	150,000
Parent Square	EE.3	566,800
		\$ 3,816,800

Investments shown here are being funded through Central Office reductions or cuts that have been identified within non-personnel budgets like contracted services or equipment, depending on the department, as well as, eliminating select vacant positions.



Certified Supplement
(Average of 5%)



How are teacher salaries determined?

All teachers in North Carolina earn a **state determined and funded** base salary based on the North Carolina Teacher Salary Scale.

All teachers in North Carolina earn a **state determined and funded** teacher supplement in addition to their base salary except teachers who work in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Wake County, Guilford County, and Durham County.

Overwhelming majority of teachers in North Carolina earn a **locally determined supplement** funded by the local board of county commissioners.

Some teachers in North Carolina earn **an additional local supplement** as determined by districts that may have taxing authority or local government.

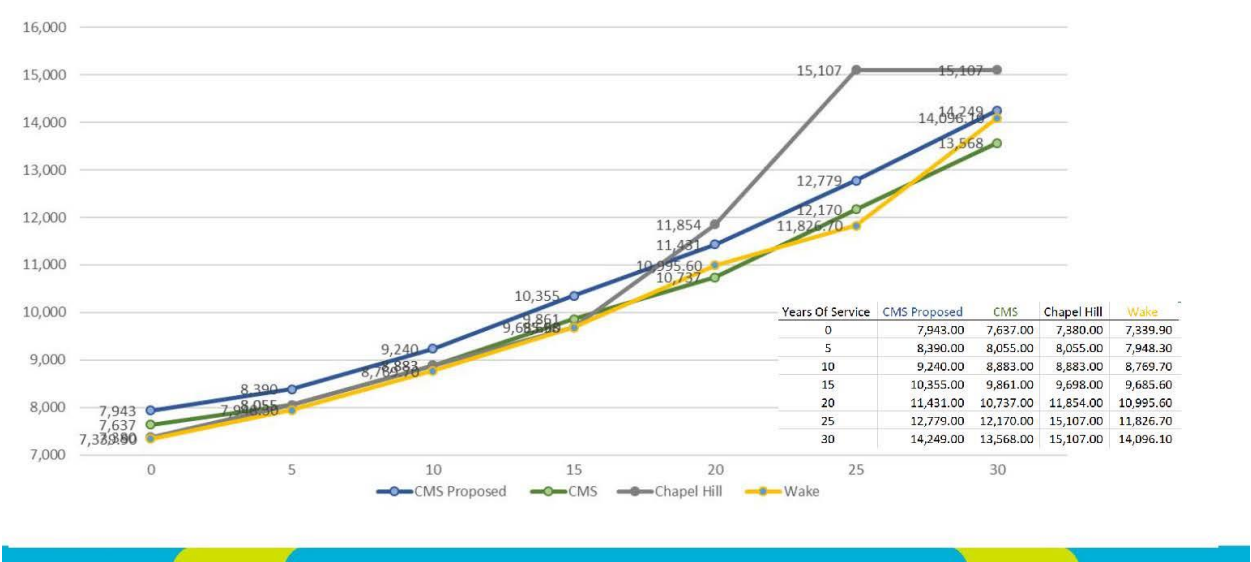


Certified Supplement - Average

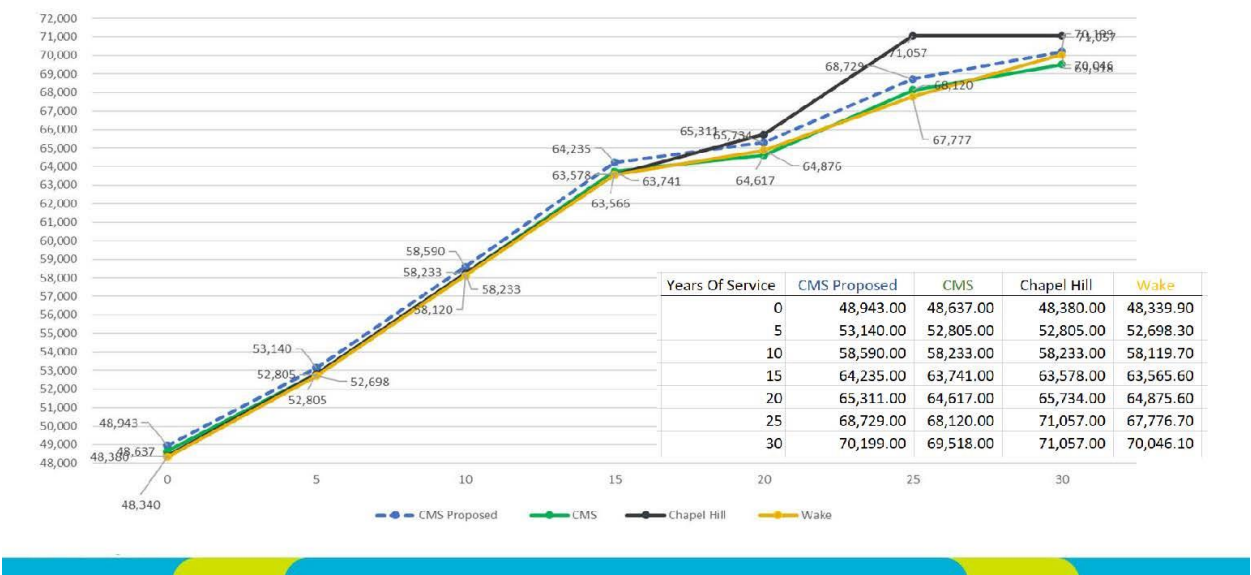
Rank	District	Local Supplement SY23.24	Local Supplement SY24.25	Proposed Local Supplement SY25.26	Beginning Teacher
1	Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	\$10,650	\$10,863	unknown	18%
2	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	\$9,797	\$10,287	\$10,801	18.63%
3	Wake County	\$9,828	\$10,221	unknown	17.90%



FY26 Teacher Supplement District Comparison
Current Schedule vs. CMS Recommended Schedule



FY26 Teacher Salary + Recommended Supplement
District Comparison





State Driven Salary + Benefit Adjustments



Operating Budget Assumptions

- Anticipated Salary Increases:
 - Do not yet have information on 2025-26 State Budget and any salary increases that may be included.
 - For now, CMS is budgeting with an assumed 3% increase to salaries based on the average of State salary increases over the last 5 years.
- Anticipated Benefit Increases
 - Do not yet have information on 2025-26 State Budget and any benefit rate adjustments that may be included.
 - For now, CMS is budgeting with an assumed 4.24% increase to benefits based on rate adjustments over the last 5 years.



Classified Compensation Study (Phase II)



Key Goals of Classified Compensation Study

Increase Minimum Hourly Pay Raise minimum pay to \$20 per hour	
Acknowledge Service	
Build in Annual Adjustments to Reward Service	
Adopt Market Aligned Schedules	✓ Pay Grades 6, 7, 8 and Bus
	⦿ Pay Grades 9 and above (phase ii & iii)



Student Device Refresh



20242025	20252026	20262027	20272028
<p>PHASE 1</p> <p>\$4 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 1 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$16M</p> <p>34,000 Chromebooks leased</p>	<p>PHASE 1</p> <p>\$4 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 2 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$16M</p>	<p>PHASE 1</p> <p>\$4 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 3 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$16M</p>	<p>PHASE 1</p> <p>\$4 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 4 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$16M</p>
	<p>PHASE 2</p> <p>\$2 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 1 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$8M</p> <p><11,000 Chromebooks leased</p>	<p>PHASE 2</p> <p>\$2 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 2 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$8M</p>	<p>PHASE 2</p> <p>\$2 MILLION RECURRING BUDGET</p> <p>Yr. 3 of 4 Yr. Lease = \$8M</p>
		<p>PHASE 3</p> <p>\$5M Request</p> <p>Yr. 1 of 4 Yr. Lease</p>	<p>PHASE 3</p> <p>\$5M Recurring</p> <p>Yr. 2 of 4 Yr. Lease</p>
			<p>PHASE 4</p> <p>\$5M Request</p> <p>Yr. 1 of 4 Yr. Lease</p>

CHROMEBOOK LEASE RENEWAL CYCLE

(*) Device refresh numbers are dependent upon pricing and tariffs

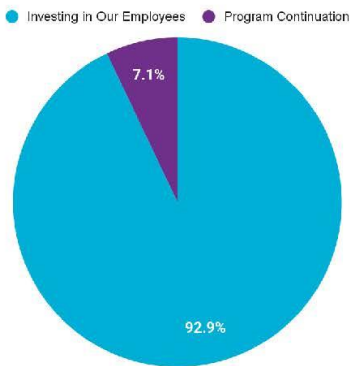


Proposed County Appropriation
2025-26 Recurring Operational Costs

Budget Expansion	Strategic Initiative	Requested Amount
Investment in Our Employees		
Certified Supplement (Average of 5%)	PE.1	8,066,000
State Driven Salary + Benefit Adjustments	OE.3	9,898,000
Classified Compensation Study (Phase II)	PE.1	8,300,000
Program Continuation		
Student Device Refresh	OE.2	2,000,000
		\$ 28,264,000



Proposed County Appropriation



2024-25 Adopted Recurring Operational County Appropriation	\$ 639,315,849
Investing in Our Employees	26,264,000
Program Continuation	2,000,000
2025-26 Proposed Recurring Operational County Appropriation	\$ 667,579,849



2025-26 Proposed
Capital Outlay



Proposed Capital Outlay

Capital Appropriation (<i>historical allocation</i>)	\$ 22,960,000
Facility Condition Assessment (Year 2)*	10,000,000
Total 2025-26 Proposed County Capital Appropriation	\$ 32,960,000

[*FY 2024-25 Budget Recommendation with Preliminary FCA Results](#)



5-Year Financial Forecast


Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Five-Year Financial Forecast FY 2025 - 2029								
Operational / Strategic Plan Requests	Request	Strategy	Fiscal Year					Estimated Budgetary Impact
			24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	
Strategic	State Driven Salary + Benefit Adjustments	OE.3	6,800,000	9,898,000	10,788,820	11,813,758	12,345,377	\$51,645,955
	Crown Academy	PE.4	-	840,000	840,000	-	-	\$1,680,000
	Compensation Study	PE.1	13,800,000	8,300,000	8,000,000	-	-	\$30,100,000
	Compensation Adjustment for Assistant Principals	PE.1	-	1,700,000	1,700,000	-	-	\$3,400,000
	Student Device Refresh	OE.2	4,000,000	2,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	-	\$16,000,000
	K-2 Student & Staff Device Refresh	OE.2	-	-	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	\$7,500,000
	Teacher Supplements	PE.1	7,400,000	8,066,000	8,791,940	9,319,456	9,878,624	\$43,456,020
Operational	K12 Insights - Let's Talk	EE.3	415,998	-	207,999	-	-	\$623,997
	Modernization Project	OE.2	-	4,700,000	4,700,000	4,700,000	-	\$14,100,000
	Student Growth (New Schools + Staff)	OE.1	1,800,000	-	2,180,000	-	2,500,000	\$6,480,000
	Utility Rate Increases		2,700,000	-	1,180,000	1,205,000	1,228,000	\$6,313,000
	Charter School Growth		4,000,000	-	1,500,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	\$11,500,000



Digital Budget Book



2025-26 Digital Budget Book



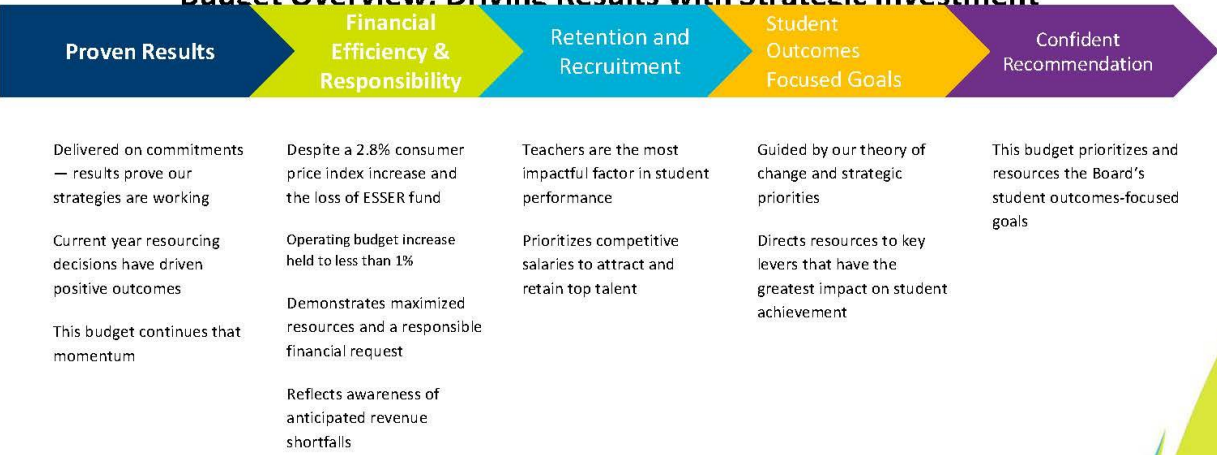
2025-26 Superintendent's Budget Recommendation

Proposed Version - 3/25/2025

Last Updated 03/13/25

<http://bit.ly/3Frv6Oy>

Budget Overview: Driving Results with Strategic Investment



County Operational Budget
Request Summary

Academic Excellence
Technology Device Refresh

People Excellence
Increase Employee Compensation

93% of Request



Comments

Commissioner Meier said she supported the teacher supplement and wished they could pay the teachers more. She asked for elaboration of the HOST initiative. *CMS Chief of Recruitment, Retention and Talent Development Nancy Brightwell said it was a program focused on increasing their housing stability and to provide them with white glove service and support for that stressor. She said it was launched about four months previously.*

Commissioner Meier asked what the TSL and TLP was and if it was federally funded. *Ms. Kluttz said TSL stood for Teacher Support Program and TLP stood for Teacher Leader Pathway. She said it was federally funded but they also had some supplemental State funds and local funds.*

Commissioner Meier asked if they did not get those funds, what would happen to those programs. *Ms. Kluttz said they would appeal but their program would not go away. She said they would look thoroughly into it to ensure it was kept.*

Commissioner Meier asked where they were putting the funds they were taking from their central office. *Ms. Kluttz said they were putting it into increased compensation for their assistant principals, specialists, and directors.*

Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2025

Commissioner Griffin thanked Dr. Hill and their staff for their presentation. He asked regarding their goal 4 how they would capture that and if there was a cost in the budget for capturing it. He asked how many kids graduated in 2024 with less than a 2.0 unweighted GPA. *Ms. Thompson said they were measuring by the percent of high school graduating seniors who met at least one of seven indicators that would deem them on track to be enrolled, enlisted or employed. She said they did not have their GPA but would get back with him on it.*

Commissioner Griffin requested more information regarding their kindergarten readiness through Meck Pre-K. He asked if they could provide feedback with those students and how they were performing in the 5 domains beyond Dibbles. *Ms. Thompson said they had a North Carolina Early Learning Inventory (NCELI) that was required by the State to be administered annually to kindergarten students. She said they began in September and went through January. She said it measured the 5 developmental progressions to determine what teachers needed to do to support the students. She said ultimately those progressions were entered into a state database. She said the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) did not provide the information at the district nor the school level as it was only to be used by the teacher. She said they did use Dibbles data, and they were also using a universal screener called I-Ready. She said, in future years, that data would give them more to work on.*

Commissioner Griffin said, prior to covid, they had 147,000 students and since, decreased roughly 5% to 141,000 although the community grew by roughly 100,000 residents. *Ms. Thompson said they had increased in enrollment year over year for the previous six years and they were ensuring they were marketing their school district as well as encouraging the community to be in their schools. She said the data also varied depending on grades. CMS Deputy Superintendent Dr. Melissa Balknight said they partnered with a 3rd party in the previous year to assess the trends and ensure they were going after the right families to bring them into the school system.*

Commissioner Griffin said their administrative costs were 4.43% but in 2025 they were 6.81% which was a 53% increase. He asked how they were addressing the costs of administrating the school district as apposed to going into classrooms. *Ms. Kluttz said she would have to know what his information source was so she could validate it and see what the discrepancy was.*

Commissioner Griffin said their goal of reading at grades 3-8 was 50% in 2029 and in 2019, it was 44%. He said over the decade from 2019-2029 they would have increased by 6 points. He asked if there was any way they could reflect in their budget how to accelerate their goals or maybe they could do more than 50% grades 3-8 being college and career ready. *Ms. Thompson said, in the 2022-2023 school year, their goals base line was 31% college and career readiness. She said, while there was no direct percentage from the State, it was based on student scale scores though it did not reflect grade level proficiency and their target increased 4% points annually while nationally, that would be on the high end of where they wanted to be.*

Commissioner Powell entered the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram thanked Dr. Hill for the detailed presentation. She said there were three federal grants that were terminated. She asked if there was a list of hard to staff schools and if the money had been supplemented. She asked how those schools were determined and being managed as well as how much of the County's budget and/or their ask in addition, was to supplement what it was they were not getting from the State or was cut from the feds. *Ms. Kluttz said they were not building any of the cuts from the federal dollars into their budget request because they did not have a final answer. Ms. Brightwell said it was a teacher quality program grant to fund supplemental support for teachers who agreed to come in to become teachers. She said it was intended to offer tuition free and supplements as they were working toward licensure and with the agreement that upon graduation, they would work in the hard-to-staff schools.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said they kept treating the symptoms or mental health issues instead of getting to the root of the problem and if they had more in-house services, she believed

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that would contribute to them achieving academically. She asked if there was a line item more holistically designed to go towards protecting the mental health of their kids. *Dr. Balknight said they had counselors in all their schools and psychologists to support them. She said they had an integrated approach to counseling services. She said they partnered like local community agencies to provide support for their students, and they continued to provide mental health services to all their students. She said they continued to bring on new partners every year to ensure they had a school-based therapist for every student who needed one and they had some funding to support the families who might be between insurance.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked what that would have if they were continuing to have violence in the schools and asked what evidence that had that what was being done was working. *Dr. Balknight said they were being intentional and bringing in the families to explain what was happening and the severity of the situation. She said it was being tracked but she did not have the data on hand.*

Commissioner Leake asked how many nationally certified teachers were actually teaching and not being led to work as administrators. *Ms. Thompson said they had 1,450 certified teachers and 1,087 of those were actively in teaching, counseling, or media coordinating positions.*

Commissioner Leake said K-8 students and teachers on the west side of town were not equipped. She said the competition and course work was not the same as other parts of the district. *Dr. Balknight said they recently began a new service delivery model to build the teacher capacity and strengthen the instruction in the classroom. She said it also focused on supporting the students and allowed them to better focus on their inner models and athletics.*

Commissioner Leake asked why they were still paying the nationally certified program \$10,000 per year for their teachers to participate in that program and how many they had listed.

Commissioner Leake requested a contractor and the person who worked with the city of Mobile, Alabama who worked with housing to begin communication with the CMS chairperson. She said they should discuss ways they could offer assistance to parents and teachers to be actively involved in helping themselves.

Commissioner Leake thanked County Manager Diorio for her assistance in building the new West Charlotte High School. She said she would like to know the attendance at West Charlotte to see if it was overcrowded. *Ms. Thompson said she did not have those statistics on hand.*

Commissioner Leake said the school of Performing Arts facility was a patch job and asked how they could focus their attention on getting the students an accommodating facility. *Chief Operations Officer Tim Ivey said they were in the final phase of the work on the Northwest School of the Arts which included a new building. He said it was a 9-12 conversion expansion.*

Commissioner Leake asked how much they were paying their administrative staff and what their salaries were compared to the salaries of the classroom teachers.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they filled 99% of their positions in 2024-2025 school year. *Ms. Brightwell said their strategy included tracking it weekly, modifying their marketing and recruitment strategies to divest from things including traveling and spending to places that were not fruitful. She said they were fortunate to have one of the most successful education preparation programs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Ms. Thompson said the quality and quantity of prospective teachers was increasing. Ms. Brightwell said their division created a total compensation simulator to help entice people to enter their district.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how many multilingual learners were being served. *Ms. Thompson said they had 32,891 multilingual learners which was 23.1% of their overall student population and the highest in the State of North Carolina. She said they were making the largest English learner student progress and had the highest rate of progress in the State.*

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Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested more information regarding the expectations of the teachers' supplements. *Ms. Kluttz said they identified the top three paying districts in the State and Chapel Hill had a taxing authority that helped them fund their supplement. She said Chapel Hill did a better job at retaining which increased their base salary. Dr. Hill explained the workings and technicalities to provide insight on the way North Carolina teachers received compensation.*

Commissioner Altman said they recognized and appreciated their work. She asked what they thought about their decreased enrollment with slow growth relative to the \$2B bond for school construction. She asked how they saw the recovery of their daily membership. *Dr. Balknight said most of the planned projects were replacements and there was a need to have the replacement schools to ensure there was space to put the students. Mr. Ivey said it was important to understand that part of the bond was about replacement and helped them deal with the aging facilities they had in their system. Dr. Ivey provided more information regarding the intended plans to utilize the bond. Ms. Thompson said they forecasted for the number of school age children to accelerate in growth in the future.*

Commissioner Altman said she was unclear how the rapid shift toward more technology was benefitting education and would like more information regarding the subject. She asked if it would be a good idea to go back to the basics, prior to the abundance of technology. *Ms. Thompson said all their State testing was done online, and it was not an option for students to not have technology. She said technology was present and flourishing and it was critical for their students to learn and explore technology to be prepared for the future.*

Commissioner Altman said that did not address whether technology was helpful in learning outcomes or if it was impeding social and emotional growth. She said she hoped they would reassess the topic.

Commissioner Powell said, regarding special education teachers, money was not the only incentive. She said it was the work environment, the management of disruptions, and ensuring they had support. She asked if the population that remained in public schools would have increased needs as the voucher system expanded. She asked how special needs were addressed in the budget ask and if there was a gap in the need for special education teachers. *Ms. Kluttz said they had EC funding that came from several sources including the primary source from the State. She said the formula recently changed and it often provided additional revenue sources. She said they received federal funding, the idea funds, Medicaid funding, and special state reserves, however the gap still existed and had always existed, so they had to divert funds. She said they often had to spend their teacher assistant funding on EC teachers' assistants, so they were supplementing.*

Commissioner Powell said she supported Dr. Hill in her statements regarding the general assembly and asked for the problem solvers and creative thinkers to think about how they could address the general assembly.

Commissioner Griffin asked for the logic behind not being able to determine kindergarten readiness based on a child's ability to recognize numbers, days of the week, etc. He said they spent millions of dollars on Meck Pre-K and were still unable to make that determination. *Ms. Thompson said 43% of kindergarteners entered school at or above benchmark in reading. She said they were implementing a universal screener for math to get comparable data as well. She provided information regarding the linkage of goals 1-4 to their work on kindergarten preparedness and determining the success rate of their work.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how long Mecklenburg had been left out of the supplements that were determined by the State. *Ms. Kluttz said they had always been left out.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how many districts had taxing authorities. *Ms. Kluttz said the municipalities of Chapel Hill and Mooresville City did as well.*

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Commissioner Griffin said they were combo districts, city and county districts.

Commissioner Meier said she did not understand the pay grades and asked if the custodians, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers were County or State positions in terms of who paid. *Ms. Kluttz said they were both. She said they got a small allotment for custodians and clerical staff, but they were underfunded, and they had to be supplemented.*

Commissioner Meier asked how they compared with other districts. *Ms. Kluttz said they would appear competitive in the State, but relative value had to be evaluated.*

Commissioner Meier asked if those staff would be offered assistance with their housing program. *Ms. Brightwell said they would be included.*

Commissioner Leake said she would be going to Raleigh on February 14th to lobby with the state legislatures and the governor for money for their teachers.

Chair Jerrell made closing remarks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Meier, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and unanimously carried, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board

Mark Jerrell, Chairman