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Select a Schools

Staff Directory

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Equity

- [2019-20 Commitments](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [Programs in Place](#)
- [2018-2019 Updates](#)
- [Equity Draft and Anti-Racism Policies](#)

Equity

Charlottesville City Schools serves 4,500 students who are economically, racially, and ethnically diverse, and we want all of them to succeed. This is made possible by a culture of respect, high expectations, and mutual support.



After a season of listening during the 2018-19 year, we have created **four focus areas** to move our school division beyond decades of “good intentions” into a new era of positive impact.

1. Supported/Supportive Staff

This includes diversifying our staff and equipping our educators to succeed and help all students succeed.

— Specific Commitments/Updates for Supported/Supportive Staff

Commitment: Vigorous recruitment plan to attract a staff that reflects and embraces our students' diversity.

Update: In the summer of 2019, a very strong applicant pool resulted in 30 percent of our instructional and

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administrative hires being people of color. Read [“School divisions changing tactics to boost teacher diversity,” *Daily Progress*, 14 Sept. 2019.](#)

Commitment: Revised mentoring program for first- and second-year teachers

Update: A network of experienced teachers is offering periodic check-ups on the well-being of teachers who are new to our division. They are providing support and steering them to practical resources like our instructional coaches or wellness programs.

Commitment: Revised instructional coaching model for all teachers

Update: Four years into our instructional coaching model, we continue to work with national experts to refine our system. While our coaches were previously available as requested, our new model reaches all teachers to assure that they — like our students — are growing, learning, and supported.

Commitment: Establishing supports for teachers of color to create a sense of belonging

Update: Community is important, and making connections within our schools and across the community can offer practical and personal supports. We are building connections with groups such as the [Black Professional Network](#) and [African-American Teaching Fellows](#).

Commitment: Greater awareness of ways to include and support staff of color

Update: As we grow in awareness of ways to see and support our students of color, let’s also fully support and recognize the expertise of teachers and staff members of color.

Commitment: Professional Learning on differentiation, particularly for honors-option (unleveled) classes

Update: To support our expansion of [honors-option classes](#) at Walker, Buford, and CHS, our teachers have engaged in summer and school-year training with Carol Ann Tomlinson, a national expert on differentiation. Read [“Walker, Buford prepare for unleveled classes,” *Daily Progress*, 21 July 2019.](#)

Similarly, to support our redesign of the gifted program, our gifted resource specialists have been working closely with Katherine Brighton of UVA’s Curry School of Education.

Commitment: Professional Learning on cultural competence and responsiveness

Update:

- Implicit bias training was held in the summer of 2019 at all schools and on the division level; sessions were facilitated by Dr. Joseph Williams of UVA’s Curry School of Education and Denise Johnson.

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- Institutional bias training was offered to division leadership in August 2019 by Dr. Joseph Williams and Denise Johnson.
- Ongoing professional learning on bias and related issues is continuing based on school needs, facilitated by Denise Johnson.
- Local history is presented to new staff by Charlene Green, manager of the City’s Office of Human Rights. As in previous years, this presentation is also available upon request at schools. See [“CHS professional development focuses on city’s racial, ethnic history,”](#) Charlottesville Tomorrow, 17 Aug. 2018.

Commitment: Professional learning on school culture (systems of supports, responsive classroom, social-emotional learning, trauma-responsiveness, etc.)

Update:

- New staff members are trained in our [systems of support framework for behavior, attendance, academics, and mental wellness](#).
 - A two-day workshop on [responsive classroom](#) and social-emotional learning was held for elementary school representatives.
 - A two-day workshop on [restorative practices](#) was held at Eastern Mennonite University for school representatives; a weekly study group for restorative practices is being led at CHS by mediator Bob Garrity, resulting in a handbook of resources distributed to all schools.
 - Planning for [Community Resilience Initiative](#) is underway to continue to build out our supports for students who have faced trauma and adverse experiences.
 - A workshop on students and anxiety was held for 130 representatives from City Schools and others, supported by staff from U.Va.’s Counselor Education program and Patrick Farrell.
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2. Diverse, Inclusive, and Rigorous Learning Experiences

Let’s embrace our diversity — in classrooms’ student composition and in richly varied and challenging learning activities.

— Specific Commitments/Updates for Diverse, Inclusive, and Rigorous Learning Experiences

Commitment: Expanded honors-option (unleveled) classes at CHS, Buford, Walker

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Update: At CHS, additional classes use the [honors-option model](#) and there is a greater emphasis on using honors-level work as the starting point for all students; at Walker, all classes are now unleveled; at Buford, science and social studies courses are unleveled in 2019-20 with plans for additional expansion in 2020-2021. [Read “Walker, Buford prepare for unleveled classes.” *Daily Progress*, 21 July 2019.](#)

Commitment: Redesign of gifted program

Update: The pull-out model of gifted instruction that served a small group of students has been replaced with a [push-in model for gifted instruction](#) at all elementaries, bringing the creativity and challenge of gifted instruction to all students. [Read “City schools embark on a new quest.” *Daily Progress*, 7 Sept. 2019..](#)

Commitment: Continued redesign of history/social science curricula to better incorporate diverse (and local) voices and experiences

Update: As part of a “Changing the Narrative” grant, teachers are working with partners at Virginia Humanities, Jefferson School, and more.

- [See “Albemarle, Charlottesville kick off history curriculum update,” *Daily Progress*, 27 Sept. 2019.](#)
 - [See “Telling All the Stories: The People and Places Working to Restore Charlottesville’s African American History.” *Cville Weekly*, 6 Feb. 2019.](#)
 - [See information about the Changing the Narrative project posted by Virginia Humanities.](#)
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Commitment: Continued implementation of new elementary math curriculum

Update: In year two of implementing the Investigations (K-4) and EnVision (5-12) standards-aligned math curriculum, we are building on the successes from year one by ensuring that all students have access to high-quality curriculum, instruction, and the supports they need to be successful.

Commitment: Pilot of new elementary reading resources

Update: Based on the success of our launch of the [Calkins “Units of Study” Writing Program](#) in 2018, we are piloting the use of the Houghton Mifflin [Harcourt Into Reading](#) program (supplemented by other resources). Pilot is in place at Clark, Jackson-Via, and in fifth grade at Walker.

Commitment: Better alignment of state learning standards with curriculum/resources

Update: Online resources are being developed to better align learning standards, curriculum pacing, lesson plans, teaching resources, and assessment tools. (Also see Illuminate roll-out, below.)

3. Growing Relationships/Community

As we help our staff and students feel connected, supported, and safe, we will learn from one another for our mutual gain.

— Specific Commitments/Updates for Growing Relationships/Community

Commitment: Positive school culture

Update:

- At CHS:
 - “Green Dot” Bystander Training Launched at CHS on September 24.
 - “Teen Mental Health First Aid”: piloted (one of 8 schools across U.S.) in 2018-2019; expanded in 2019-20.
 - Link Crew mentorship for 9th-graders at CHS further established.
 - For overview of recent teen mental wellness and positive school culture programs in place at CHS, see recent [coverage of Virginia Secretary of Education Qarni’s visit](#) to CHS.
- At Walker: “[Collaborative & Proactive Solutions](#)” model being implemented.
- At Walker: Students now choose two elective (not one plus Spanish). This is designed to help students explore their interests and increase a sense of belonging. See “[Changes to elective courses draw huge student interest at Walker](#),” Daily Progress, 23 Sept. 2019.
- At Buford: Positive student recognition program, additional clubs to build leadership capacity
- At elementaries: school-wide morning meetings at all schools; continued/expanded partnerships with Wildrock and City Schoolyard Garden. See NBC29 Coverage about [school-wide morning meetings](#) (30 Sept. 2019).
- At all schools: reframing attendance practices to be more proactive and preventative. Student Support Liaisons will focus on relationship-building and student/family engagement.

Commitment: Proactive, equitable behavior supports

Update:

- Continued establishment and refinement of [positive systems of support](#) for behavior, attendance, mental wellness, and academics.
- Walker and Buford are intentionally teaching social-emotional skills to students needing additional behavioral support (tier 2-3). Materials include [Second Step](#) and Ever Fi.
- Johnson and Greenbrier are piloting the use of Centervention social-emotional learning for students

Translate » er tier 2-3 support for behavior.

- Greater implementation of [restorative practices](#) at CHS, Buford, and Walker (see more in “Supported/Supportive Staff, above).
- New grant-funded positions via the City of Charlottesville to proactively promote positive behavior at Walker and Buford.
- Continued attention on suspensions, which have fallen 80 percent in the last decade at CHS, but which are still disproportionate.

Commitment: Expanded social-emotional learning (SEL) practices

Update:

- Elementary update: [Classroom-based social-emotional instruction](#) continues to expand. Last year, this was begun in pre-K and kindergarten classrooms, and in 2019-20, first-grade classrooms are implementing this curriculum. (In some Charlottesville schools, classroom-based SEL instruction is now pre-K through grade 4.) Elementaries are using the DESSA tool to measure SEL growth. This is in addition to the SEAL (social, emotional, and academic learning) classrooms at Greenbrier and Clark that continue to innovate and establish good classroom-based social-emotional practices.
- Walker/Buford are implementing SEL instruction for students needing further support for behavior (tier 2-3 instruction). Materials include Second Step and Ever Fi.
- CHS continues to strengthen restorative practices as the culmination of our SEL programs.

Commitment: Intentional community-building

Update:

- Professional learning session on “Growing Relationships” for instructional assistants scheduled for November 1.
- Classroom and school-wide morning meetings have been expanded at elementaries.
- See also “Positive School Culture,” above.

Commitment: Building out support networks with partnering organizations

Update: A Community Care Coalition is in development to meet the needs of individuals or groups as specific needs arise, during school closures such as holidays, or during extended emergency school closures.

Commitment: Creating a city-wide mentorship program

Update: A “Bring Back the Village” mentoring network is in development to connect students with mentors, n volunteers, and more.

Commitment: Revising communications practices to be more student- and family-friendly

Update: Ongoing. A web site refresh is being developed; other examples include the continued refinement of processes such as online forms.

4. Equity Foundations

We want to be systematic and proactive as we make positive change. Let's follow — and establish — best practices.

— Specific Commitments/Updates for Equity Foundations

Commitment: Clarifying the work and reconvening the division's Equity Committee

Update: First meeting to be scheduled later this fall.

Commitment: Establishing school-based Equity Councils

Update: School committees have been formed and guidelines given. First meetings have been established. Council members will receive institutional bias and facilitation training.

Commitment: Aligning ourselves with one or more regional or national equity initiatives

Update: We are part of the 2019-20 cohort for the [Racial Equity Leadership Network](#), and we are having ongoing conversations with other groups.

Commitment: Establishing an equity and anti-racism policy

Update: These policies have been drafted and are receiving feedback; first School Board hearing on October 3.

Commitment: Establishing key goals, definitions, metrics

Update: Ongoing conversations as we work with the Racial Equity Leadership Network and others.

Commitment: Better use of data to drive decisions and meet students' needs

Update: Illuminate data program adoption in September 2019 will provide better assessment tools and data analysis to shape instruction, interventions, and more. Implementation and training are underway in fall

Translate » build-out of Illuminate resources will be ongoing.

Commitment: Planned redesign of middle school and preschool facilities to better serve students

Update: Request for proposal for professional services to be issued later this fall.



For More Information

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