



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Meeting Minutes Education and Human Services Standing Committee

Thursday, February 12, 2026

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members In Attendance

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch - Chair (late arrival)
The Honorable Nicole Jones - Vice Chair
The Honorable Andrew Breton - Member
The Honorable Kenya Gibson - Councilmember

Staff in Attendance

Whitney Brown, Council Policy Analyst
Kiley Kesecker, Deputy City Clerk
Kimberly Morris, Assistant City Clerk
Pamela Nichols, Council Management Analyst
Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney
Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager
Candice Reid, City Clerk

Call to Order

Vice Chair Nicole Jones called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Public Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Kimberly Morris provided information on the appropriate way to evacuate the Council Chamber in an emergency along with public speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers.

Chair Stephanie Lynch arrived at 2:12 p.m., and was seated.

Presentation(s)

Early Childhood Development in Richmond

[CD.2026.035](#) Early Childhood Development

Attachments: [Early Childhood - OCF Deck for 02.12.26 EHS](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Jacqueline Hale, Management Analyst, Office of Children and Families, provided a presentation on early childhood development, the maternal health ecosystem, the timeline of early childhood initiatives, the Early Childhood Trust Fund, the Children's Cabinet, data, trends, and opportunities.

Member Andrew Breton asked how parents and children were connected to resources.

Ms. Hale stated that the Richmond Children's Cabinet brought service providers and programs together, and Richmond Public Schools assisted with pre-school registration. She also stated there was a wait list for the Virginia Childcare Subsidy Plan.

Amy Popovich, DCAO for Human Services, added that her office had grant making processes, and the Early Childhood Trust Fund and Office of Children and Families were strategic and driven initiatives.

Vice Chair Nicole Jones asked if there was a plan to formalize to the Richmond Children's Cabinet through legislation.

DCAO Popovich stated that the first launch of the Richmond Children's Cabinet would be a collaboration with the Office of Children and Families informally using the collective impact model, and after 12 to 18 months, a review would be done to see if formalization was necessary.

Ms. Hale stated that the main goals were home visits and assistance with promoting and enrolling children in RPS, along with other pre-k programs.

Chair Stephanie Lynch requested the following data points:

- Penetration rate for child care subsidy
- Penetration rate for Head Start vacancies

Public Comment Period

Emma Clark, Community Organizer with the Virginia Education Association, spoke about her concerns regarding Richmond Public Schools' budgeting and spending.

Discussion Item(s)

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Updates

Jason Kamras, RPS Superintendent, opened the floor for questions from the committee about RPS's budget.

Chair Stephanie Lynch asked for a breakdown of teachers' pay, and the base salary for applicants with a master's degree or teacher's license.

Superintendent Kamras stated that there were existing collective bargaining contracts that had commitments for the next fiscal year for \$5,400,000, and three bargaining units that were in negotiations that did not have a contract. He also stated an additional \$5,400,000 was needed to fulfill other commitments, \$3,000,000 to incorporate virtual learning, and two percent for teachers' raises. He stated the teachers' base salary was \$50,000, and a proposed share of health insurance by 50% with employees.

Member Andrew Breton asked if the current baseline budget amount was \$6,000,000.

Superintendent Kamras stated that the current budget proposal contemplates a \$9,000,000 revenue increase in total, and \$5,000,000 was anticipated from the city.

Councilmember Kenya Gibson asked how the district absorbed the impact of cuts in state funding, and what drove the drop in average daily membership. She also asked what the demographic was that reflected the drop in membership, and if virtual learning will be offered to the immigrant population.

Superintendent Kamras stated that the average daily membership and enrollment were two different numbers, and that enrollment was counted and reported to the state every fall, and had increased in the last year. He also stated that the average daily numbers were a reflection of how long a student was enrolled for the year, and RPS was planning to contact families to see who would like to participate in virtual learning.

Vice Chair Jones asked what the contrast was between average daily rates of economically disadvantage students, and higher graduation rates of those same demographics.

Superintendent Kamras stated that as demographics change in the city, it would be reflected in RPS, and state funded allocations for economically disadvantage students.

Member Breton asked what impact the ice storm had on RPS.

Superintendent Kamras stated students lost 7.5 percent of in-person instruction days, and he made a request to the School Board for additional instruction days.

Update from the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Human Services

Amy Popovich, DCAO for Human Services, presented an update on the funding formula for Richmond Public Schools, establishing a work group, the inclement weather shelter operations, and the partnership with the Salvation Army and CARITAS. She also discussed the Greater Richmond Transit Company bus routes that were used to shuttle the unhoused to shelters.

Chair Stephanie Lynch requested an after action report of the operations of the inclement weather shelter during the winter storm for the next committee meeting to discuss any successes, and if there were any improvements needed.

DCAO Popovich stated that the after action report would be presented to the full body and then a final report will be presented at May's committee meeting.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinances was considered:

2. [ORD. 2026-037](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$41,240.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority and to appropriate the increase to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by increasing estimated revenues and the amount appropriated to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services' OAA Harm Reduction Vending Machines Special Fund by \$41,240.00 for the purpose of providing funding for harm reduction vending machines to combat the opioid crisis.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2026-037](#)

3. [ORD. 2026-038](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to accept funds in the amount of \$100,000.00 from the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority, and to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Special Fund Budget by creating a new special fund for the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services entitled "OAA Mini Grants Special Fund" and appropriating the increase to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services' "OAA Mini Grants Special Fund" by \$100,000.00 for the purpose of providing grants to community partners to combat the opioid crisis.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2026-038](#)

Public Hearing

There were no speakers.

Member Andrew Breton asked how quickly the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority grant funds could be spent, and what outcomes could be expected.

Anna Jones, Opioid Response Strategist with the Office of Opioid and Substance Use Response, stated that it could take 7 to 10 days to receive the funds, and participants would be selected in May or June 2026. She also stated that the funds for the project will be provided by the Opioid Abatement Authority with no fiscal impacts to the city, and they were also deciding on locations for substance use response vending machines.

There were no further comments or discussions and Vice Chair Nicole Jones moved to forward ORD. 2026-037 and ORD. 2026-038 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Breton, Jones and Lynch. Noes, 0.

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2025-276](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute an Outside Agency Contract between the City of Richmond and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond for the purpose of funding the expansion of life skills programming at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School.

Patrons: Mayor Avula

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2025-276](#)

Public Hearing

There were no speakers.

Chair Stephanie Lynch asked if the committee could vote to expand the contract outside of Martin Luther King Jr. Middle school.

Eva Colen, Senior Policy Advisor with the Office of Children and Families, deferred to the standing committee attorney for guidance on amending the ordinance.

Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney, stated that based on the budget for the outside agency, the funds could go to schools outside of MLK; however, it would require the ordinance to be amended or withdrawn, and another ordinance drafted and introduced.

Will Perkins, Senior Council Legislative Services Manager, stated if the committee wanted funds allocated, the committee could state the changes, and Council staff would follow up with the City Attorney's office to draft an amendment to be introduced at the February 23, 2026 Council meeting.

Member Andrew Breton stated that he understood the motivation of the amendment to spread funds to more students; however, he would like the committee to receive feedback from subject matter experts to determine if the program would be in jeopardy or cause delays if amended.

Eva Colen stated that it was understood that delays happen with city grant contracts, and that the program was operational, and MLK and River City Middle Schools would not be affected.

Amy Popovich, DCAO for Human Services, stated that from an operational standpoint, the scope of work would remain the same.

There were no further comments or discussions and Chair Stephanie Lynch moved to forward ORD. 2026-276 to Council with the recommendation to approve with amendment, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 3, Breton, Jones and Lynch. Noes, 0.

Board Vacancies

None

Approval of Minutes

None

Staff Report

[CD.2026.044](#) Education & Human Services Standing Committee February 12, 2026
Staff Report

Attachments: [February 2026 EHS Committee Mtg Prep](#)

Council staff provided the committee with the February Education and Human Services Standing Committee staff report.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

