



Growing Enrollment Presents Opportunities for the Future

Charlottesville City Schools is growing, and that's a good thing. Dating back to 2011, our enrollment numbers have grown about 100 students per year, or about three percent annually. While this growth is welcome, it is bringing many of our schools to the limits of their capacity and raising questions about whether we need new or expanded facilities. As we look at our facilities, we also have the opportunity to modernize our schools to support 21st-century learning.

Recently, the schools and the City's Department of Facilities Development commissioned a study to determine future enrollment and solutions. The local firm VMDO Architects partnered with University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Their projections suggest that our preschool-to-high school enrollment will likely grow from 4,451 in 2017 to 5,190 for the 2026-27 school year.

What does this mean for our schools? We're already maximizing our spaces. Music teachers use auditorium stages as classrooms. Tutors and specialists work out of former storage rooms. This fall, we'll be using a modular classroom at Greenbrier Elementary. As Superintendent Rosa Atkins previously noted, "Our principals and teachers

are already feeling [the growth]. The nooks and crannies of our schools are increasingly being used, which impacts our schedules, our collaboration and our flexibility."

So what's next? VMDO provided several options for our community's consideration. One is creating a new elementary school or a citywide preschool center. A second is expanding all our elementary schools. A third is consolidating our students in fifth-through eighth-grade into twin or joint facilities on one campus (possibly the site of Buford), which would free up the other campus (perhaps Walker's) to serve as a preschool facility.

There's much to consider. Number one, of course, is our students' needs. We'll also weigh the possible timeframes for design and construction, cost and community feedback. This year, we'll be asking for community input.

Dr. Atkins concludes, "The same qualities that attract people to the area, such as culture, vitality, diversity and services, are present in our schools. We're delighted to welcome new students, and we're excited to consider how we can simultaneously expand and improve our facilities to better serve our community."



Beth serves as a community liaison for Charlottesville City Schools.



SPORTS ZONE



CHS SENIOR YOUNGEST TO WIN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Ten years after winning his first golf tournament at the young age of 7, A.J. Stouffer claimed the title in the Charlottesville City Golf Championship. At 17 years old, he managed to win one of the area's most prestigious golf tournaments and is the youngest player ever to do so. The rising Charlottesville High School (CHS) senior competed with 56 other golfers in the Championship, coming out on top with an eight-stroke lead and managing to dethrone four-time champion Philip Mahone. In the tournament's 30-year history, there has only been one other winner of high-school age. Wes Eklund won the title when he was a senior at Albemarle High School in 2007. Stouffer got his start in the sport in the First Citizen Junior Golf Tour of Central Virginia, which his father, Bruce, operates. He continues to golf in the Junior Tour and for CHS, competing in 25 to 30 tournaments a year.

