

For Immediate Release

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## Harrisonburg High students begin City's 2019 Service Learning program

HARRISONBURG, Va. – More than 20 students gathered Wednesday in the Harrisonburg City Council Chambers to see how they can become more involved in local government through the City's Service Learning program.

The students, all seniors at Harrisonburg High School, will spend the next few weeks visiting every City department and learning about projects and services those departments are working on and offer. The students will work together in groups and with City staff on projects impacting Harrisonburg before making recommendations on their findings in front of Harrisonburg City Council at the end of the program in May 2020.



*(Above) Harrisonburg Deputy City Manager Ande Banks speaks with Harrisonburg High School students about the 2019 Service Learning program.*

The effort can have far-reaching impacts for both the students and local residents.

“We hope that by you being active in this class, you are going to embrace these lessons you learn and take them out to your communities and wherever you go in life,” Jay Hook, the Honor’s Government teacher who leads the program for Harrisonburg High, told students on Wednesday.

One initiative studied by the Service Learning students last year went into action this month at Harrisonburg City Public Schools. The Handle With Care effort, a partnership between the school system and the City’s Fire, Police and Emergency Communications teams, alerts school officials if one of their students was recently impacted by an emergency or law enforcement event. This allows the school to be prepared to offer any assistance the student may need in the following days.

The involvement of the Service Learning students was integral to Handle With Care’s implementation. City staff hope this year’s students will see this as an opportunity to make their own impact on Harrisonburg’s future.

“We hope that, through this program, you all see that there are multiple career paths in public service that can allow you to excel at something that you are passionate about while improving your community,” City Manager Eric Campbell told students Wednesday.

The group's first project will begin next week with Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation, where the students will work with City staff on the Purcell Park Master Plan, which is currently under way. The students will form a focus group to provide input on the park's future.

*The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*



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