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MATTHEW PERSCHALL PHOTOS, THE NEWS & ADVANCE

A "LOVE" sign sits outside the Fairmont Crossing Health & Rehab Center in Amherst, Tuesday, June 9, 2026.

Feeling the love in Amherst

Reading challenge grows into partnership to create LOVE sign

JUSTIN FAULCONER
The News & Advance

A reading challenge for the entire student body at Temperance Elementary School this spring semester grew into a community partnership that is bringing generations together in the form of a new LOVE sign at Fairmont Crossing Health & Rehabilitation Center in Amherst.

During March, Temperance Elementary librarian Naomi Giles organized the "March Book Madness" competition featuring eight books centered on the relationships between children and older adults. Students voted to determine their favorite title, "The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read" by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, a true story about Mary Walker, who was born into slavery and fulfilled her lifelong dream of learning to read at the remarkable age of 116.

"When students read about the connections between children and older adults, I wanted them to realize that those relationships are real and meaningful. The stories became a bridge to something much bigger," Giles said in a news release from Amherst County Public Schools. "I wanted the students to make what they read stick. Instead of simply talking about caring for others, our students had the opportunity to



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demonstrate it." Inspired by the themes of caring, connection and respect for older generations, Giles partnered with Fairmont Crossing, which is within an industrial park close to U.S. East in the town of Amherst, to create a project that would allow students to build meaningful relationships with residents and leave behind a lasting contribution.

Giles reached out to Craig Maddox, who leads ACPS's career and technical education department. "Career and Technical Education is

about applying skills in authentic ways. Our high school students weren't just building a sign — they were contributing to a project that will have a lasting impact on others," Maddox said in the release. "The collaboration between elementary students, high school students, teachers, and community partners demonstrates the power of hands-on learning and community service."

The idea evolved into creating the large metal LOVE sign, which is designed to

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STATE BUDGET

Negotiators to meet after 14 weeks of deadlock

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

With two weeks left before Virginia's operating budget expires, General Assembly budget negotiators are preparing to meet Tuesday for the first time in more than 14 weeks in hopes of reaching an agreement on a new two-year spending plan to take effect on July 1.

House Appropriations Chairman Luke Torian, D-Prince William, confirmed on Monday that the 11 members of the budget conference committee — six from the House of Delegates and five from the Senate — are scheduled to meet at noon after the Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee hears public presentations on the state revenue outlook from the administration of Gov. Abigail Spanberger and a new Senate proposal for a budget compromise.



Torian

The conference committee hasn't met as a whole since March 6, when members met with Spanberger for breakfast near the end of the 60-day legislative session, which ended eight days later without a budget agreement. The assembly met again in special session on April 23, but again without a meeting of negotiators, as Torian and Senate Finance Chair Louise Lucas, D-Portsmouth, met privately to find a day to bridge a \$1.9 billion revenue gap between the House and Senate budget proposals with additional money from the state's lucrative data center industry.

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City council interviews for school board

MARK HAND
The News & Advance

The Lynchburg City Council interviewed 14 candidates for three openings on the city's school board last week, with many of the questions geared to finding candidates who will adhere to the Republican majority's conservative political philosophy.

Council is seeking to fill the seats currently held by District 1 member Christian DePaul, District 2 member Letitia Lowery and District 3 member Farid Jalil. Lowery interviewed last Friday for reappointment to a second term on the school board, while DePaul and Jalil chose not to seek a second term.

DePaul, Lowery and Jalil were appointed to the board in 2023, the first chance Republicans had to appoint members after regaining a majority on city council in the November 2022 at-large council elections.

For District 1, the school board candidates who were interviewed last Thursday were William Lewis, Jack Schewel, Shea Tinsley, Brittany Smith and Xavier Storey.

For District 2, the candidates interviewed last Thursday and Friday were Lowery, Angela Cox, Roman Franklin, Tiffany Goode and Toby Johnson.

The candidates interviewed for District 3 last Friday were Delisa Rogers, Tiersha Royal,

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MIDDLE EAST

Trump says Iran deal signed

The agreement would reopen the blockaded Strait of Hormuz

STEVE HOLLAND, PARISA HAFEZI AND MAAYAN LUBELL
Reuters

DUBAI — President Donald Trump said Monday a preliminary agreement to end the war in the Gulf is already signed by the United States and Iran, though details have yet to be made public.

"The deal's all signed," Trump said after he arrived in France for a summit of the G7 group of big economies, adding



Trump

that Vice President JD Vance would attend a formal signing ceremony in Geneva on Friday.

The agreement would reopen the blockaded Strait of Hormuz and extend a ceasefire for 60 days, allowing negotiators to tackle difficult issues like the future of Iran's nuclear program. Oil prices fell to their lowest level since March 10, shortly after the conflict cut off one-fifth of the world's oil supply.

The deal is the most significant step yet to resolve the conflict, which has

killed at least 7,000 people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, and upended global energy markets.

But much about the agreement remains unknown.

U.S. and Iranian officials say it could eventually deliver substantial economic benefits to Iran by lifting sanctions, unfreezing foreign assets, and setting up a \$300 billion reconstruction fund, paid for by neighboring Gulf allies.

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Iran would have to satisfy U.S. demands never to build a nuclear weapon and cut off support for

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Weather

Beautiful with some sun
High: 78 Low: 58
Forecast: B8

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