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City of Fairfax School Board Work Session, Monday, March 17, 2025

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- Agenda: https://fairfax.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4134
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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-13. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] Okay, recording is on. Tina's here. Yeah, you can hear us, right? Okay, good. Can you only see me or can you see? I think she sees the whole table.

[00:00:17] Okay. What? Do you need to call the meeting? Yeah. Okay, good evening, everyone. It is Monday, March 17th of 2025, and this is the work session of the City of Fairfax School Board how are you all doing good okay so we are going to start with presentations to the school board we have mr. Friedman here from Fairbanks high school who's gonna and Kylie Horne who is a former school board student

[00:00:52] rep and SAT rep that's right so I'm gonna do a little bit of background so we'll do a quick background and then we're gonna kind of dive into the expertise of Mr. Freedman and Ms. Horne. So, and then also I want to set up both of them to see, so Mr. Freedman is the this is his first year's leadership teacher and so while he can help us with what's going on he's not going to be able to help us with like decisions that were made in the leadership class 15 years ago, yeah. We are fortunate to have Ms. Horne here. She as you know is a former Fairfax High student. She's currently a fifth grade teacher at Daniel's Run.

[00:01:29] Kylie was also an SAT rep and a student rep. So I thought that it would be really good for her to have some perspective, not only from both of those places, but then to be honest with us about what she liked, what she thought maybe we could improve on, and things like that. So I'm just going to give a quick brief history, and then we will talk about where we are and then where we're going.

[00:01:50] So quickly, also just for distinguished, when I say student rep, I mean the school board student rep, and then SAT kids would be any kids that's on the SAT committee. So the student rep, there is no law that you have to have a student rep. just so you know the only real rule or law that is with the student rep if you choose to have one is that they're a non-voting member so it is totally up to you to the view when i'm in the district um as far as how they are chosen what their responsibilities are there is no law that you have to have one just you know recommendation um for fairfax county the way that they select them there is a student advisory council and those from kids that pull from every school and those

[00:02:29] kids choose their student rep. So it is not like a big election or anything like that. As far as the city of Fairfax, and this is in our policy manual, which is important because you have to talk about it. The policy manual says that the student rep is a one-year term. They do July to June. They are Fairfax high students. They can be a city or county resident. Either one is fine.

[00:02:52] We've had some debate on that for a while, but can be a city or county resident. It is a rising senior they need to have a 3.0 cumulative GPA be in good academic and behavioral standing as far as our policy manual responsibilities really is that they come to a regular school board meeting with an update it used to be just just fairfax high school and then it was expanded to now all four schools and so the student rep emails the principals about a week before gets some updates and then creates a meeting for i mean an update for us we have had some challenges in

[00:03:28] the past with that like they're emailing the principals too late or they're not conveying exactly what the principals were saying like you know we'll get a call from principals saying like i did not say that and so there is a little bit of mentorship with that they then send their report to amit and to barbara the goal is to have them sent the week before um i think we can safely say that's not always the case but you know right so we'll talk about that also in the policy manual is that they are to do a project a year-long project where they initialize initiate the project beginning the year and then presented at the end of the

[00:04:04] year and we will discuss that you will notice that SIA our current rep does not have a project and the reason for that is is the projects have been at various levels of success or failure we just we've we've not done well the projects and one challenge for that is that this student rep is not really overseen by anyone, you know, and so it takes, as Mr. Freeman can, it takes a lot of mentoring, even the best of the best children, they are still kids and they need a lot of mentoring, and so that's challenging.

[00:04:36] We've had some very challenging projects and some not so challenging projects, and so this year we decided that we are not going to have the student rep do a project, and so we can talk, we can talk about that if you want to continue with that. If you do, we do have to take it out of the policy manual they are to be meeting with the board chair and superintendent regularly also that's in the policy manual and we can we can debate that if we talk about the sat kids so the sat the history is that came from when dr bajardo became the superintendent it was a transition transition council she then just took out the transition became student superintendent advisory

[00:05:15] team it is made up of parents students staff members community members they meet quarterly we have had Catherine Johnson students on that committee in the past I would say again various

rates of success as far as are they able and mature enough to really grasp some of the things and have they been able to contribute maybe what what others have right now we have three students we've had anywhere from one to five students on the the advisory team right now we

[00:05:51] have three um how chosen we used to do an election um where they and this is for fairfax we used to do an election um where they were on the regular spring um ballot when they chose the other sga officers um two years ago fairfax high changed that um i know i didn't know that we had it in our policy manual they changed it without letting us know um which is fine because the reasoning behind that was that they felt that because there isn't anyone at Fairfax to really oversee it that in their I'm paraphrasing here in their minds it was kind of a popularity contest and they were

[00:06:29] concerned that someone could get through that just didn't wasn't a right fit so what they did is they moved it to an application process and those applications then are given to a panel made up of teachers admin and and then from that that that student is chosen and then those names are given to us um last year so the second year they've been doing that um miss pitches was part of that that panel and so we can talk about that about moving forward if that's the best way to do it as far as kind of discussion questions we can talk about what's the best selection process

[00:07:05] what is the best use of this these students and um and their time and then the question of the project and if we do then who oversees that project um what i would like to do actually I gave Ms. Horn a little bit of a heads up as far as asking her what she felt, what she liked about being, and we can talk in general, you don't have to separate out, but about being on SAT and a student rep, things that she liked about it, maybe places where we can improve, and so just wanted to get your thoughts.

[00:07:41] Okay, I have to, sorry, it's the end of the day and I teach fifth grade, so it's a little bit I'll say yeah short days feel like the longest days so it really didn't feel like short day to me even though it was um I think something I like I enjoyed being in the know I guess um I think it was nice from a leadership perspective because I had a role in our student government class as well as having this role so a lot of times the communication flow between like hey we need

[00:08:15] this done hey can we have this done um which i know is not in particular like this job but in terms of how it relates to a fairfax being successful perspective i think that that was huge um that i knew like you guys were like a text or an email away when um that group of people was there um i also think that it allowed like transparency i don't know like if there were things that we were talking about in meetings that i was allowed to go back and share like i always also shared in class um that was an expectation of the teacher who was my father

[00:08:50] yeah but um uh so I always I think I might be wrong you can tell me if I was wrong but I thought that I might have started the reaching out to other schools I think you did casually not as a requirement um just because I felt like I was getting up there talking about Fairfax a lot of the time, but my mom also worked at Daniel's run at the time. So I knew a lot of things going on there. And then I obviously knew that we wanted the pyramid to be involved. Um, so I like encourage that to like, if you're adding anything to the manual, I think that that would be a big piece.

[00:09:29] I think that the representation from everyone is super important. Um, I think that just worked out for me because I was a city resident. So it made it easy for me to know who the principal was, where the schools were um I think the when I was on the advisory team I thought that the makeup was very interesting um there's always when I was there students parents and staff members I thought that having

the parent perspective was interesting sometimes we got a little off topic when the parents were involved um but I thought that it was interesting from like a student perspective to see all that because there were just things

[00:10:08] that I didn't consider or think of or have no part in because I wasn't getting those communications or emails. So I think having students on that was important. I think it was cool. I don't know if middle school students started coming when I was involved, but that idea to me is cool.

[00:10:26] I know that many years ago they talked about having leadership over there. I don't actually know about that. They have a semester portion. Okay, so I think that having maybe people from that class represent is another cool transition idea.

[00:10:42] Can we talk quickly about the pros and minuses? One of the challenges we've had in the past is definitely I see the pros in having a leadership student be part of this. One challenge that we've had in the past is that we get the same kind of kid every year.

[00:10:58] Does that make sense? Yeah. Which is great for us as far as, you know, we get that and it's good for you, but then sometimes I feel we can be left out of other kids in the school. Does that make sense? What do you guys feel about that? I think that's the biggest difference I've seen in the years that I've worked with a student rep is the lack of connection this year versus other years, and that it does feel like there's a little bit more of an ability to kind of see what the big picture is.

[00:11:33] And I'd be curious, Mr. Perman, I know you're working really hard on having them work on new projects, and I do think having someone who's in the leadership class would give more of an opportunity or the student, I don't know what the difference is between the two types of classes, but would give more of an opportunity for us to be able to support a project that might already be kind of organically happening in the leadership class as opposed, because that's been our issue, is it's become, like, just totally brand new.

[00:12:00] And if they had the support of the class and then also had the support of the school board, it might actually help on both ends. But I hear what you're saying, that it is, you know, you have kind of the same kids doing everything all the time. Okay, so now if it's okay, Mr. Fimo, why don't you kind of start giving us some of your perspective and your thoughts?

[00:12:21] So it's super, I'm coming new to all of this. I knew that there was a rep and I knew that there was a team, but I wasn't really sure like what the goal was or what they were really doing. So I guess let me start here is that we're going to do a little bit of shift coming to leadership here next year.

[00:12:39] And what we're really trying to do is provide more scaffolding and mentoring within there. So we're going to have all three levels or all four levels in the same class. So we'll have freshmen up to seniors, we'll have level four with level one. The idea within there is sort of this idea of shadowing and mentoring so that those level ones get to learn what those level fours are doing.

[00:12:58] So when we have a child who's doing the homecoming parade, they also have a freshman or a sophomore who's following them along in order to sort of understand what they're doing and being able to replicate it. So to me, that seems to be like the role of this as well is like, let's get somebody in here who can do the job, but also pass it along, like, like, like pay it forward, so to speak, and really work with you on a sustained project that can, that can make a difference.

[00:13:30] And just, I just see like building capacity in students so that they have like a really under, a good understanding, not only of like what you do and what the school does, but like how the two coalesce. um and kylie almost it was i felt it was kind of that way before where it was almost a natural progression carolyn you might agree with me that the sat we had about four sat kids in a row go from sat to maybe three go from sat to student rep right and they i felt that they were very prepared and but again you were all leadership kids from a mentoring perspective or yeah from

[00:14:07] a mentoring perspective or like the being in the know i think that's kind of what you were saying like not to say that students that are not in leadership are not in the know but they might not be privy to the administration the information that we were privy to on in terms of like what's happening in the school what like yeah I don't want to exclude other kids but there is this bubble in leadership that if you aren't a part of it a lot of times you don't know a lot of what's going on I think that that could be a struggle to communicate like what's happening which I think is the role of this person.

[00:14:46] Sorry, I have a question. Is there a big difference between athletic leadership and? Yes. Okay. Do the kids tend to overlap? Is it? No, not as it exists right now. Okay, because I know one of our SAT kids, she's in athletic leadership and very active.

[00:15:02] I don't know that she. One challenge we have, and again, I can speak on this with the athletes, is it really is straining on your time. And being able to actually get to the meetings. And then they can't come to the meetings, right? I mean, I feel that that's been a challenge. So we haven't tapped too much into athletic leadership, mainly for that reason.

[00:15:19] Well, a lot of my leadership kids are athletes as well. It's just the nature of the kid that goes out for this. So we're going to run, the way I understand it right now, is we're going to run two sections of leadership next year.

[00:15:35] We'll have a fifth and a sixth period so they can get into the school and operate into lunches a little bit more than we're able to this year. And like I said, we'll have that mentoring sort of scaffold in there. And the athletic leadership, I think, is going to operate a little bit separately from that.

[00:15:55] Let's talk about selection. Carolyn, tell me about what you're thinking as far as selection process. Do you like the application versus the election? So the only problem I had with the application is the kids all look really great on paper, and you don't get a chance to meet them, and then it's not necessarily what you think you're getting.

[00:16:17] Does that mean? Yeah. So if we're going to keep the application process, that's fine. I think there has to be interviews. And I think somebody from the school board needs to be a part of those interviews. Because we can, I mean, I've had 15 or 16 student reps.

[00:16:35] And I can tell you that meeting them and even if you have like 10 minutes with them, you can kind of get an idea of is this kid going to be a good fit for this board. So you need to be a public speaker too. Yeah. So the way like we do principal selections almost is there's applications and then they narrow it down and then from there.

[00:16:56] So would you feel comfortable if there are the applications and then still with the panel looking at that and then they get the top two or three? And then from there, do you? Then I think, yeah, that would be. Perhaps the board and Mr. Friedman, just one or two people doing those interviews. It wouldn't have to be a big, right?

[00:17:14] We can work out the specific logistics, but I like the idea of adding the interview and we can figure out who sits on that panel. But, like, I do like the multi-tiered process where we have, okay, you have an application, let's select our top three or four, and let's bring them in, and let's interview, and let's see who these kids really are. And then I can add whatever perspective I might have from there, and I can also sort of canvas the school, and I can get, they can get letters, or they can get recommendations from teachers, and then we can reach out to those teachers or those coaches or whoever it might be in order to figure out, like, what the character of that child might be, like, in some different contexts.

[00:17:46] Yeah, and the one thing I did not like about it being an election is that we've had a year where we had people running who would basically, I don't want to say bully freshmen into voting for them, but they would advocate strongly.

[00:18:07] Are there any elections left at all? No, we didn't do it. No, no, no, for leadership in general? So, yes and no. There's the SGA, there's the actual leadership within there. And then what we are doing is we're doing a combination of the kid has to apply and then they're interviewed to get into leadership.

[00:18:28] I have a fairly low bar when it comes to that. But there are some kids who I might say, hey, I don't think you're a good fit for this particular team at this time. But they can be voted on to SGA but not be in the leadership class.

[00:18:44] So we had some scheduling snafus. This year we had a new director of student services come in, and so some of the recommendations that Mr. Shapiro had made for how the classes should be leveled didn't make their way through. So I think all the SGA kids are actually in leadership this year, but none of the student advisory council for the county ended up in there.

[00:19:10] And I don't have any juniors. I have all the seniors, but not the juniors who are SGA nor the sophomores that I can think of. Previously, that was a requirement of those positions to be on the school board, like the county school board advisory and to be an SGA officer, you needed to be in SGA.

[00:19:28] So I would almost say that this might be similar because that does give them the outlet of ways to work on it. Because we've talked about like the time and like to me and running the class, but a student rep to the city school board or an SAT member, if they're working on these projects, that aligns with the work they're doing in class.

[00:19:43] So to have that opportunity would be important. I just don't know if it's, like, chicken and egg because I guess if they don't know if they're in the class, like, I don't know how that works in terms of time. But I think what you're saying there is, like, the aspect of time because more or less if a student is on the school board, we're assigning them another class where they have a – if they're running a project.

[00:20:02] Like, that's how I was just thinking about it when you're doing this. And so if they can have that support and mentorship and scaffolding within the leadership class, then it's not a kid who is in three sports or taking seven APs or whatever it happens to be, or some combination of the two. So they do have some class time to work on it.

[00:20:19] That's what they need is they need the time and they need someone to ask questions to. And they need the access because I'll tell you right now that I think that the leadership kids are the only people emailing Ms. Dorsey right now. I want to do all the things in the world. Please, please, please. but only because I've worked with them.

[00:20:35] Right, but like it's about that access and about me knowing you and having that comfortability and like if I was more, if they were more involved and they were saying, hey, listen, we want to do something with the city. We want to do something in the summer. We want to do, we want to be more involved because the way that we're thinking about it last year, next year, excuse me, is that we'll have like the leadership one kids are going to deal primarily with the class and the class community.

[00:20:59] Leadership two and three are going to have a combination of the school and the school community. years of three and four are going to have the wider Fairfax community, our homecoming, our tailgates, our parents' night out, things of that nature. So we would fit into that. And that's exactly where it would be, and then it would give me the opportunity to every once in a while be like, hey, I'm going to send a sophomore with you to come to the meeting and attend.

[00:21:20] They will not say a word, but they are going to shadow you, because that's your shadow for the month. And they're going to learn a little bit about what's going on here, because nothing here is a secret, and most of it is, let me know. They're all televised. And it's that idea of let's build some capacity, let's get them comfortable, let's give them a couple minutes where that freshman, sophomore, junior can speak and say what they're going on.

[00:21:43] And maybe it's an SGA kid, or maybe it's an SAC kid, or maybe it's just a kid. How do you guys feel about the stricter rule in Kailin Conjoint as far as it has to be a senior? I agree. I will say one challenge, at least on my end or on our end, is that so they are pretty much out of commission in November, I mean in October, they're just really, really busy, and then they are studying for their APs, and then they're gone, right, and so sometimes I feel if it's a nine to ten month position, we get them for about seven,

[00:22:16] six or seven, so if there is a great junior candidate, I don't know, I mean I'm just saying that has been a challenge for us. I almost think it needs to be a junior-senior, where we have like the senior who's the primary rep and the junior who is the shadow and the idea is that when the senior graduate the junior moves in and then we're electing really the the person who is the the vice the the code the one who's learning in there and that gives them a year no that was the only year we did it was kylie's i did it weren't you the vice chair to someone else i was kate's yeah yeah

[00:22:55] what did you think about her study yeah but i thought that it like i was comfortable with everybody on the board at that point so then it was kind of like a kylie needs to get the role next year which was fine because i was set up to have that but i felt like as a senior especially being in leadership as a senior i had like the confidence to public speak i had the maturity i had the knowledge so i felt like that's the senior idea i liked that it was kate and i it also like we did share the work sometimes if it had to happen and like she couldn't come then i gave

[00:23:30] their report or maybe a middle school rep as well if like maybe not right away but like maybe that's something we yeah we think about we're working they don't have to come every meeting but and then and so then if the junior they don't have to give the report from the diet they could just give it from that they don't have to sit up there but they could just give it from so i don't know if an automatic succession would necessarily i don't think it has to be automatic but there because i think you went through it you still yeah i know i still had to be elected yeah i still had to be

[00:24:07] like i remember that um well they still have to go through an application process i mean if they as a junior aren't showing up to things and aren't putting in the time and effort then it would not make

sense yeah i didn't mean to say if somebody wasn't doing like what they were supposed to do no i'm not either i'm just saying and that makes us sort of like we only look at it every couple of years yeah and we have to have a junior and it's the senior would already be in place but Or we could have multiple juniors.

[00:24:32] Well, and I was also sort of thinking about, like, when that senior gets into their testing season or whatever, you have the junior sort of stepping up. So you do get the junior for 12 months, but it's three in junior year and nine in senior year. Does it need to be by school year? Does it need to be the June 1st?

[00:24:48] Could it be, like, January? So, again, remember, there's literally no rules. It's our decision, but this is what's in our policy manual. So I'm wondering if it would make more sense than to have it be, like, January to January. So it would be like end of junior year, beginning of senior year, and then the new person would start.

[00:25:03] It also gives a chance to do the interviews once they're already in the leadership class, right? I mean, we switch our board in January, every other January anyway. I like that idea. Having a student election similarly at the same time, like that you're switching?

[00:25:22] Not every two years, but like every other. Or if they're halfway through the school year, if they're doing a project or anything. Or does it give them the chance to plan their project all spring for a fall execution? Because sometimes it's hard. I don't know. There's so much going on in this spring.

[00:25:38] It's almost harder to execute. This is the busiest time of the year by far. If you had been preparing all spring and were ready to hit the ground in September before things gear up. For the project. And, again, the project can be anything. I was never a fan of the project, I'll just add. So I'm just going to bow out at this.

[00:25:54] Well, and we can say this, too. So we've talked about this. The project hasn't worked. It just has not worked. But if they're already doing projects through the leadership class, it doesn't have to be a city project. Does that make sense? They can come and update us on, I don't think we need to have a project agreed, unless there is someone on the board that is willing to absolutely become this child's mentor, which means you are meeting with them at the leadership.

[00:26:21] I know, but you have to get the kid. No, no, I know, but I like the idea that it could still be a mentorship and working with them, but it is a project that they're already working on in class, and then there's just a collab. It could be something that has more connection outside, right?

[00:26:38] I mean, the Pyramid Nights, I know, is a rarity. No, no, I agree. I'm just saying I want to speak nice to you because I love working with these kids. It is a ton of work. The Pyramid Nights are a ton of work, and then I get new kids all the time, you know what I mean, and you only get so many Amiras or Kylies, right?

[00:26:58] And so if you don't, you know, and these kids are great. I love them. It is, as long as you are willing, because we don't have the bandwidth, as long as you're willing to do that, go ahead. I think it's awesome. I'm just telling you, it's a ton of work that you are signing yourself up for.

[00:27:15] Yes. And could the project be something that they're already doing that they report on? Or could they report on the projects that are being done in the whole leadership? Which is essentially what Grace did, right? So Grace was just doing stuff with Nico, and then she just said, oh, this is what my project is. And that's fine, right?

[00:27:30] That is totally fine. And it doesn't have to be, it's not their project. It's, here's an update on what the students are working on. You know, we are going into Providence and doing, like, these are the things that maybe it's a one-time PowerPoint, and they say, here are the things that different people are doing. That's fine with me.

[00:27:46] We're setting it up like monthly projects where the teams will rotate, so my idea is to get different teams into Providence and Daniels Run and KJ here to do some tutoring and maybe work with a leadership class and things like that. And that's exactly what we would want them to come and report, because we would want to talk about how does it kind of trickle up back to the whole pyramid which is why I personally love the idea of KJ students on SAT even if they don't say a word the entire time to just sit there and observe like oh look at these interactions so we are really teaching these children really important soft skills that they're going to need to learn later in life and so all right so we are

[00:28:20] at 630 so why don't if it's okay with you Mr. Freeman why don't you all think about the January to January or the July to June and then we can talk about it you can maybe get some sense from the board and then we can talk and we know that you are under time coach that we will get you a decision in two weeks does that yeah and I would say I think we all agree an election is we'll go we'll keep it as the application with interviews we'll just decide on I guess two things when the term will be for this student and if we do something like you elect a junior or you hire

[00:28:59] whatever we're going to call it, a point, a junior, and that junior stays for junior and senior, and then the next year we get another junior, and they do it for junior and senior year. So it would be like every two years we have to go through this instead of every year.

[00:29:15] You still do it every year, but it's just – You would just do it in September instead of – Because you have a new junior every year. Yeah, if that's okay with you. Is there anything that we're missing? I think I was the only one to finish a project, which I'm not I'm not trying to I'm not trying to do my own horn I just they always ask them I was the first year that everybody had the same laptops yeah and then we went into covid so it actually worked out perfectly that that was my project but I like um surveyed all of the schools

[00:29:50] on their laptop usage and it was more like research-based versus yeah you know does that makes sense but at the time that was the only like direction 10 leadership kids in three classes I need things for them to do okay I've got and partly the scheduling thing but like you know in a class of 40 I've got kids who can hide and I can't get to all of them and a lot of my seniors are checking out so the more things I can give them to do the more things I can do to make them involved and make them feel like they have a purpose the better they want to be active they want to do things and that's why I've moved to more of the project based in like leadership one

[00:30:28] is like, hey, I want y'all to do something. You and I can work together. I've got some stuff. And I'm happy to come here. If you want to make this more regular and we can collaborate a little bit more, I'm happy to help. I want to make this work. I want to build this program.

[00:30:50] These kids are great. These kids are great. And like I said, they want to work. Let's give them something to do. So I'll do a quick summary after and then we'll make is that okay? Give you a decision two weeks and then I'm not rushing thank you both if you can get anything else don't hesitate and then I will do that on Wednesday I haven't got a building but I'll be back there as soon as I can it's silly they're not it's going to be fine

[00:31:28] We can do an extra pickup thing maybe now, but from the dollar point. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll figure it out. Yeah, or one of the side doors, you know, where the garden is or something like that. They just, as long as we know I had to put them all together. Put them all into the courtyard and we'll wrap them up in the parachute that I had and just carry them out.

[00:31:45] Just throw them over. We had a senior fun day today and we brought out the old parachute and they played with it. It was a lot of fun until the boys started tackling each other on the basketball court. And then I was like, we got to stop it. Thank you. Have a good night. Bye. Thank you.

[00:32:03] Hello. Can you come visit us anytime? I'm upstairs. My mom's downstairs. Maybe somebody else can come put their foot down. Please. That was a suggestion. That was not a, like, settlement.

[00:32:19] Like, that was not a good mom. Today, the mascot with me. He has his feet.

[00:32:34] He has shorts on underneath it. He's just, like, hopping along. It's totally normal. And I just looked at her, and she's like, I don't know. It's fifth grade. I don't know either. She was just so good with the flow. Okay.

[00:32:53] The panel questions or the budget? The budget. Okay. What did I do with... There it is. Sorry. Okay. Budget reduction exercise discussion.

[00:33:09] I think Christina had... Still with us, Christina? Yeah, yeah. Okay. Okay. So what this item is, is that we were tasked with an exercise last, I believe it was Thursday, to come up today by close of business.

[00:33:37] All of the department heads for the city were asked by the acting city manager to identify 10% of the cuts in their operating budget. And folks were asked to do that by the close of business today.

[00:33:52] And I know only from previous conversations it's been very challenging at best for all of us to kind of go about our work. And then the chair went ahead and made the obvious statement that this is absolutely absurd to go ahead and try to do this exercise as with many of the other departments who have boards such as Parks and Rec.

[00:34:18] And from what I understand from the statement, that Parks and Rec was struggling with it from the meeting they had the other evening. And really, to do this, because the city budget is so efficiently developed by the chief financial officer and the team, and the challenges with the current trends associated with the tuition and the growth in the general operating fund and so forth with Fairfax County Public Schools, it's challenging, but that's the only word you can hear me say, again, at best for us to try and come up with it.

[00:34:54] especially when they had given us two documents to work off with. One of the documents included items that are included in the tuition bill, and the other was the operating fund for the city of Fairfax schools. Now, approximately, each of those were approximately a million dollars, and co-mingling those put us at a bit of a disadvantage because it amounted to \$2 million or approximately \$200,000 that we were tasked with identifying.

[00:35:25] First of all, it didn't take into account the reductions that we had agreed upon in working collaboratively in the past with the city staff. And the reason being, when I inquired about it, was because the other departments were tasked with coming up to 10% of their operating budget.

[00:35:44] That was the ask. But for context, and we discussed it at chairs today, that we had gone ahead and already contributed from our initial path on the bond program approximately \$7 million of deferment

to accomplish really what this objective is, and it's to reduce the impact on the tax.

[00:36:07] In addition, we had adjusted our capital improvement program to defer some projects that are on our radar, that are very important, that are commitments that have been made in the past to fulfill the continuation of our artificial turf that we were providing at the high school to the next phase, which is the women's softball field.

[00:36:37] and also projects associated with HVAC replacement that we went ahead and reduced as well. So when you look at the adopted or the proposed Fairfax City Capital Improvement Program, you can see where those amounts are in the out years from when the board had taken action and approved it and sent it forward to the city for incorporation in their documents.

[00:37:05] So that being said, it was imperative, and as the board chair pointed out, that we go ahead and have this discussion as a group because it wasn't similar to the Department of Public Works coming up with 10% of their operating budget as a director of the Department of Public Works.

[00:37:23] And certainly as the superintendent, I didn't feel comfortable for the sole reason that anything we touch impacts the classroom, anything we touch. If you take a look at our operating budget, you know, as I said, there are two packages they sent us, one that's directly related to the tuition bill.

[00:37:41] It's riddled with instructional personnel, and the support personnel that were identified in that, and we'll get to some of the questions we had, are support personnel for instruction, for community use, for student use, and also reimbursement and revenue generation that we get from people who utilize the high school facility.

[00:38:02] that directly goes back into the school's use for instruction. In addition, it goes into the school's purser, if you will, for the school board to approve and consider authorizing those funds at the request of the high school principal for use for instruction.

[00:38:22] When you look at the operating budget, other than the one I was just speaking of, it's similar. The largest component item that we have in the operating budget is the school instructional funds, which directly impact instruction when we talk about the margins and we try to nitpick here and there and we went through an exercise of trying to pull some of the information together associated with that and questions about things like what are the fringe benefits well the fringe benefits

[00:38:57] are the FICA Medicare the city supplement and retirement program long-term disability short-term disability, group life insurance and the like, I don't really see when we start talking about these margins where we can come up with anything near or close to it. Madam Chair, members of the board, it really is a conundrum of major exercise that has some draconian impact and I just wanted to go ahead and set the stage really of what we are tasked with doing and open it up for conversation.

[00:39:31] I'll just say this, I'm not supporting any other than what we agreed to, which I, in my heart, believe is 10%.

[00:39:50] We've already pushed off something we've promised this community to help with the city budget. I get it. We have to, we have to, we have a bill.

[00:40:06] I mean, 90% of what we do is literally like getting an electricity bill. I refuse to take away instructional grants. I refuse to take away staffing that helps our students. And I will say that I do not support, personally, not as the board, pushing off the softball.

[00:40:30] Because if the baseball feels, it's only fair we do the same for the girls. So in my piece, that's cool. Christina, since I know you have to catch a plane, I want to give you the first opportunity to speak about this.

[00:40:51] I appreciate that, Madam Chair. Can you be okay? yes um i think we've seen the impact of the money we give to schools in our state of school presentations we see from principals um and i invite anyone listening

[00:41:26] to to come to those meetings come to those so it's pretty good but if we're going to go down this road of considering that we need more time um on the four of the evening i sent a series of questions from staff um when i first learned about the request i know my request um takes time to gather information um there's no way that you guys could turn it around to in the days um and having come into this budget check on mid-year as an official i just want to make sure that i understand how each item budget staffing and programming that we've seen directly impacts

[00:42:05] to before making any decision and in my heart i believe we've made the cuts we can um but i also want to call the elephant call out the elephant right there um you know we don't know what the federal funding may look like for our schools next year um even though a small percentage of federal funding goes to local schools that still makes a big impact and while we're waiting on specifics from fcps and i appreciate the constant outreach that our city staff is doing with fcps as a board Or remember, I know there's federal funding that directly impacts our schools, including Title I for disadvantaged students and IDEA for special education.

[00:42:43] And I worry about our schools if that funding is significantly cut or reduced. I want to make sure that any funding that goes, that we look at, we're always keeping students in mind there.

[00:43:04] I just want to move back and reiterate, it teaches me more time. If we're going to push this, we definitely need more time. I just don't think it's responsible of us to go to students in our school community to make any kind of recommendations on this page without having that time.

[00:43:20] Thank you. I want to fully suppose this extreme, as I just said. Ask us on a Tuesday night at midnight to turn around and get something done today until Monday night is unfair, to say the least.

[00:43:41] I think Mr. Pottenberg said it well. There's other departments that don't have a board that essentially oversees and approves the budget, as we do. even the other boards are committees more than you know they're not elected boards we are an elected board we're speaking for on behalf of our constituents and to do that and to choose what does or doesn't get cut um i don't think is appropriate for us to do in such a short time frame i completely agree and if this is something the city needs us to do then we need more we need more time um honestly we have public input when it comes to the budget so i'm not even sure that

[00:44:19] we can go back and adjust a budget that we have already voted on you know we would have to reopen it and it would be an entire process so I think that's the difference between our budget and the other budgets and I would like ask Mr. Plattenberg that you go back to the council and remind them of that it's not the same process and we would need to go and look into all the rules and see what would we even need to do in order to relook at a budget that's ready I agree with everything everyone's been saying and like in looking through the budget the only thing that would

[00:44:58] make that kind of money are the instructional grants and the staffing and those have real real impact and there's not that many positions they're all essential so i agree we would need more information like otherwise i feel like it's just we'd be randomly picking a position without understanding her livelihood not going to willy-nilly and just say oh let's just cut the avid person or the transitional counselor well and my understanding is when the request was made by

[00:45:36] council it was made specifically saying without reducing staffing yeah but then that was given as an option but i'm right well i'm just saying i think that's something we need to consider because we don't like you said we don't have anything other than like maybe this much instructional grants people can't see my little fingers but right there's it's really that's not making me on the budget is making it better so well i really appreciate this conversation because it touches on all the points when you talk about a body who includes a bond referendum formally that is part

[00:46:14] of the parliamentary process part of a legislative process that basically goes to the city council that we have presented our budget as a part of that process and what we have been hearing from FCPS about some of their programs like their bridge decay programs they've been considering when you find out they're talking about the impact of that they're having a meeting I believe it's today the principals had a meeting today to talk about that and the potential impacts that may

[00:46:51] that we may incur the only thing that our principals do is say hey how can we go ahead and keep these important programs going because they're affecting our residents and their children So I totally appreciate this conversation.

[00:47:12] It's very sobering. But to hear the perspective that each one of you, Ms. Sisri as well, Ms. Hickman, Ms. Barley, and also Chair Pitches, it provides me with a context that I think I could respond back to the city chief financial officer.

[00:47:32] I've tried to reach him a few times today. I know he's extremely slammed. He's been an outstanding reporter. He's also very sick. Yeah, and the fact that he's sick doesn't help. He's probably sick of this exercise, really, because I'm sure we're not the only ones that are in this position.

[00:47:51] Especially, as you said, Ms. Hickman, one of the priorities of the city council in their presentation was not to affect staff. So I'll be happy to convey those points and those tenets about being an approved budget we've done, that we have looked through this.

[00:48:12] We don't feel comfortable because everything we do will impact the education of the students of our community, and hopefully I'll be able to cover all of these bases. It would have been helpful if somebody from the council had come tonight to hear as part of the discussion.

[00:48:38] Well, thank you for that guidance. I can't really give you anything other than no. That's what I heard. All right. We're nice now. Two panel questions. Okay.

[00:48:54] Two, one's middle school and one's high school.

[00:49:18] I very much like the first one. I know a little bit. So every year in April at our April work session, we invite anywhere from 6 to 7 to 12 with the most middle school students and high school students.

[00:49:40] We've done a number of different ways. We've done small groups. We've done different ways. Kind of the way that what is rested on what's been the best is having a separate middle school and a

separate high school that when we combined them, we found that the middle school kids just weren't talking.

[00:49:56] And then instead of doing small groups, we used to have small groups where each board member would talk and then they would report back and then just felt that we weren't getting, you know, enough from everybody. So what we do is we have the middle school kids come and they line up and we ask them these questions and then it's about an hour and then they leave with the high school kids.

[00:50:18] Most of the time we'll have different themes. They've been anywhere from facilities to safety. Sometimes it is a challenge to keep everyone focused on what we can control and what we can't. So if they are talking about curriculum and that kind of stuff, if we can't help them and do anything with that, it's not super productive.

[00:50:35] But for them, we understand that that's what they, you know, that's what they do. So these are the questions that we used last year. And then, so input would be, what do you think of the questions? Is there any kind of overreaching topic or anything that you guys are hearing in the, you know, so one idea might be school start times.

[00:50:54] you know, things like that, that would be a hot topic, you know, something that people are talking about. We've done rolling gradebook in the past, we've done safety and security, we've done facilities, we've done, think about it, recess, right, you know, so things that have come up. Extracurricular activities, like in the middle school, they have a pretty robust.

[00:51:13] And almost everything is something that we can touch, right, at least that we can participate. So if it's rolling gradebook, we can certainly advocate, or if it's recess, we can buy equipment, you know, stuff like that. So unless it's something that we absolutely cannot touch, we try to stay away from it.

[00:51:33] That's the history. And how are the kids selected? So we ask the DSS, right? DSS. We ask the Director of Student Services and we ask admin to kind of nominate kids and find them for us. We ask that it's a wide range of ages, ethnicities, backgrounds, things like that.

[00:51:52] We have had, you know, almost a discussion with, you know, the same kid, the leadership kids, really want a big diverse group boy versus girl you know that kind of stuff so we do rely heavily on the school to find us those kids they they send us their names we get their addresses and we send them a letter and usually we have about a 85 75 85 95 percent acceptance rate from that group of okay so let's go start with the middle school student panel questions um looking at the

[00:52:31] first one i'm in favor of keeping it just because they have they're getting ready to talk about grading like what they're going to do with their grading policy in terms of one system two systems whatever um but i'm open if you guys want to get rid of that one and does the entire middle school they all do they all do so this is their first real this is their only rating system that they've yeah okay they've had so it's kind of difficult because they don't have any experience with a nine

[00:53:07] week numerical percentage grade like the high school because high school it's not every class so i'm you know that's the only downside of using this question with middle schools they don't have any of those anybody happens on that on that topic yeah on that one for middle or high school um facilities i always like to hear about what the kids think at the facilities and what they've

[00:53:45] seen at other schools because they go to schools all over the county for things like science olympiad and you know theater productions and sports so i typically do like the facilities question what about the mural and the turf question um let's take the turf off i was going to actually take both i think my only concern about asking questions about things we've already done is like what can we really do about it now I'd rather leave it more open-ended of like what else do you think could be improved right because we can say they we can ask them about

[00:54:24] the press box and what are we going to do if they're like it's the worst press box I've ever seen right like so but I would I do remember for middle school they were little confused with facilities like really like building that's building itself and that what's in the classrooms in the sea like yeah the exterior ground because I feel like they want a little okay so in the past remember we have had our student rent do that would you like me to ask you to do that or do

[00:55:01] you want one of us to do it okay so then we will work with the person explaining Or even if we each take a question or something, you know, and they just clarify it for them. Okay, so. And usually I send this with the letter so they can think about it.

[00:55:21] They got an answer for you when they come. It used to be years ago, they would just come. Wow. Everyone would be like, I need two months to think about this. Right, I think it's better if we mail it. Wait, are we going to keep recess, or do you want to change that until we start talking?

[00:55:37] Go ahead. I'm wondering, since that was kind of like the new initiative last year, but like the kind of big initiative this year has been the cell phone stuff. Yeah, that's great. Let's put the cell phone on both. Yeah, both. Just take off recess.

[00:55:53] And you can just add it to the high school. Add it to the high school, yeah. Well, I did have two, and I don't know if it's too many questions if we add it. I would be really curious what the middle schools think about start times. We're assuming that thing. Well, that said, it might be a good point.

[00:56:09] I just saw today that no matter what, it's not happening for 25, 26. No, it's not. And I talked to one of our board members over there, and they were saying that even when they put it in place the first year, they're saying it would be a pilot with one region.

[00:56:29] Well, the communication today, one of the board members said that it would be tied to boundaries or whatever. But I would be curious, because the hate school has been such a push with, like, positive morale fun activities you know i'd be really interested to see the responses let's let's let's just stick with this um all right so we're going to keep you want to keep activities and school what makes your school special i don't know about school being special i don't want to just let's just take that off and we'll kind of wrap that into facilities yeah i think that would be

[00:57:05] it so because then we're we have enough with the cell phone yeah yeah um i think that'll get it All right, so let's now move to high school. Is there anything else I could go to the middle school? Anybody else want to add something? Grade book?

[00:57:23] Go ahead. Are there a lot of classes using the grade book? Yes. Because, like, my kids have been having. Oh, you're lucky. Well, okay, that said, I'll take it back. Leadership is, like, some of the classes, but, like, none of the other classes.

[00:57:41] Oh, that is... See, I mean, there's a question right there. I feel it's challenging to have one teacher do it and one teacher not, right? And so should there be consistency? Yeah, that's not what I have to ask. I just pick a grade. I know, right? We don't care what it is at this point. Do you want to keep this on or no? I think we should keep it on because as the kids, because when they first, I will just tell you, in 2016, Dan will know.

[00:58:03] They just only did it for 9th grade world history, and then it sort of has gone all over the place. Now, I think they, I don't know, they listened. So what if we do, how many, we'll start, how many of you do rolling grade book, and then we can get a sensitive note of that.

[00:58:19] Or it could just be grading policies in general, like, how many of you have rolling, how many them came from rolling grade book at Katherine Johnson would be interesting to see what their thoughts are. If they have one they might not even have one like yeah I think just a more general grade book question. Yeah and I think if whoever's monitoring this needs to be one one challenge we've had in the past that we've heard about feedback from principals is we do not want these children like tattling on a teacher right so once it's your name right so in one sense we don't want oh my teacher doesn't bring my homework at all and then you know maybe you know my teacher says like, breaks rules. Does that make sense? And then we have the four principles. And that's what we're going to hear

[00:58:57] is, like, there's nothing in CIS, so I don't even know what my grade is like. Right, right, exactly. They all need to hear that, because that's been going on for nine years. So whoever's doing that, we'll make notes of it. Or even questions for them, like, do you understand that it's summative versus formative? Do you feel like you have more? Because there's intricacies in it.

[00:59:15] So, um, maybe, do you just want to personally take that one, or Carolyn, do you want to take that question? You can take it. Do you feel comfortable? I can feel comfortable. yeah okay and then if you could get your question to barb so she okay then we'll do the same facilities question um do you want to ask about specifics um in terms of the the beginning of april i think because i gotta make in terms of the gradebook somebody might want to check in with georgina around like what percentage of teachers are using rolling gradebook because

[00:59:53] if it's only you know five percent i mean it's been a lot in the past like they have gone from No rolling grade book, to a little bit, to a lot. I don't know what it currently is. Dan, do you feel okay?

[01:00:10] Just so we get an idea before we... Yeah, because she comes back and says it's less than... Yeah, there's no point, you know. And if it's only, like, elective classes, then who really gives... You know, you know. Well, I think elective classes oftentimes lend themselves more to that.

[01:00:26] Yeah, but think about it. Those kids were on rolling grade book in middle school all year for every class. Oh, I know. It's been a shock to my ninth-quarter system to be like, oh, it just ends then? Yeah. Confusing. So we'll keep the same facilities, but take out the thing about the turf fields and not ask specifics.

[01:00:48] Right. Okay, activities, things, school. Oh, yes. Necessary, sorry. All right, one thing you listen, can we add a question just thinking about grading and classes and socialize students about, like, the opt-out enrollment that they're planning?

[01:01:07] Oh, the opt-out. Yeah, that's the opt-out of the AP course. Yeah, and since they're doing it in – I mean, I don't know if it makes sense to do it in middle school now or right in the year, like a middle school

survey, but definitely for the high school students, this will be their second year doing the AP seminar opt-out enrollment.

[01:01:28] Okay, this is the second year? No, I thought it was the first year. This year was a pilot, and next year is the year they're putting all – Well, I don't know that they're going to have information. I don't know that they're going to have feedback because none of them have had to do it yet. Next year, we'll have the same. Next year, we're going to have it twice because we're going to have middle school is automatically enrolling all students in math seven honors.

[01:01:51] And opting out of math seven honors is going to be the opt-out. And then high school, we have the seminar in 10th grades. We think that maybe that's a better question just for admin to tell us what the things are because we want to be sensitive to kids if they opt-out.

[01:02:07] Does that make sense? We could also ask, I mean, we could also ask for some guidance from the school on what, I don't know.

[01:02:24] As far as grading or AP or just in general? Just the stuff that's teachers. I also don't like that part of it because I feel like that's when people were growing up. I was going to take that out. I was going to talk more about just the grading. I don't want to do that.

[01:02:40] They threw a lot of teachers under the bus last year. No, no, no. I was going to talk more about the actual, like, the grading policy is coming up, whatever. If we're talking about the opt out, could you frame it in a way like, how do you feel about the course, like the course selection process in general and like, do you feel like you are signed up for the right level of classes?

[01:03:02] Do you feel like the information was communicated to you about what classes to sign up for? Yeah, I like that. Do you feel like this year you were in the right level class for you or did you feel like you were pushed into too hard in the class or held back?

[01:03:19] like um so it could be reframed because that covers the odds out but it's like just really in in general do you feel like you're in the right which is going to be related a lot to their grades because oftentimes they will put their grades to help make a decision just finished registration so the activities i would actually add if there's one that we need to cut out i would cut that one the activities yeah i just don't know that there's anything new or different or middle school i think it's important because middle school activities are up or being cut by the board of supervisors

[01:03:57] but i'm not sure if it's as relevant sure um do you since and then since the four is similar to two um if we get rid of three and four would is there another way of grading cell phone class cell phone registration facilities you think those four would be enough i think that's i i am sure yeah it's not 20 minutes each the high school kids tend to talk a lot more yeah yeah and usually we Wait, sorry, we kept grading cell phones, facilities, course registration separate from grading.

[01:04:34] I think it's different. We can ask one right after the end. So maybe course registration/options, like are there enough options, are there too many? But specifically you want to know if they've got the right level of...

[01:04:53] Yeah, I feel like there's a lot of pressure that kids feel. You can take that one. So you take that one. Since you're articulating it very well, you can take grading. Right. Good. One of you will do facilities, and one will do so.

[01:05:11] All right. So Barb, do you feel good about what we have? Mm-hmm. So do you want us to formulate what that question is and email it to you? That would be great, yeah. Yep, and I have to, I'll be emailing the DSS's for names, so I'll be getting those back and then getting the letter, and then we'll get this to attach to the letter.

[01:05:30] Do we want someone to write the cell phone question, or do you guys just? Do you feel comfortable with the cell phone? You don't have to write it. I mean, essentially, it's like, tell us about cell phone. Like, how do you feel about cell phone? How are you, I'm sure we just say cell phone, and they're going to go off. What has been your experience with the cell phone policy this year?

[01:05:47] Yeah, I can write that. I can just write it to you and do the other one. Okay. okay and the facilities i think is a great question we'll just leave it the same just specify a little more the only um related to the activities i i'm not sure if you need it or not the only thing that i would wonder about is i do know there are kids who aren't doing any and the question is are they the ones right and so that's the question is but like why are the kids

[01:06:23] who aren't doing anything like that's a question that i think would be interesting to know but You know, maybe, too, that's something that we can ask Georgina about at her state of the schools report in April and maybe have her be. I know that a goal of hers was two years ago was that every student had a connection to an adult and whether that was in a club or a class, or does that make sense?

[01:06:45] And that they literally had a list and, like, who is this, who is Caroline Pitch's adult? And so, and they were doing that through clubs. So maybe we can ask her for an update on that. Does that make sense? I do know that some of the kids who don't participate are kids who have to work at that.

[01:07:02] Well, I mean, that's true. Or provide child care. But, like, I do know some kids who, like, tried out for a sports team and then didn't make a sports team. And then there was, like, nothing. And so it's like, why can't they just have to do something to squat? I think they did that.

[01:07:20] They just need someone to run it. So, like, I do know kids who did take steps to be involved, who are not involved. Yeah, that's a really good question. So, do we want to talk to her? We have a meeting with her. Yeah, but that would be common.

[01:07:36] Well, we'll stay at the school's meeting that we have with her before she comes to present. We'll go ahead and bring it up. That is something we'll just ask her to come. Okay. Does anybody have any, since we're here.

[01:07:55] I think we're. She has to get on the plane. She has to get on the plane. She said she's got to jump off because she was in a lounge. Okay. Okay. Anything else you want to say to them? No? Everybody's good?

[01:08:13] All right. And I'm going to adjourn the meeting. Carolyn, I have the MOU about committees. Do you want to give Carol a heads up for it, shouldn't it be, before we sit?



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