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City of Fairfax School Board Work Session, Monday, September 29, 2025

Date Monday, September 29, 2025
Place City Hall, City of Fairfax, Virginia
Length 0h 30m (video)

- Official meeting video (city, Granicus): https://fairfax.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4334
- Agenda: https://fairfax.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4334
- Minutes: https://fairfax.granicus.com/MinutesViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4334&doc_id=06c574d9-9ed4-11f0-8df7-005056a89546

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-12. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] okay we're on it is monday september 29th 2025 this is a work session of the city of fairfax school board we will begin with item 1.01 a discussion of the agenda of our upcoming joint fcps school board meeting in accordance with our school services agreement we are required to meet with the fairfax county school board in a joint meeting each december last year's chair pitch has discussed the school services agreement our schools and boundaries and capacity for our city schools there's also a discussion around the city fairfax school bond anything else i should add in

[00:00:40] there before we open the floor and maybe discuss ideas of where our agenda might be all right it's a quick reminder i know we're the work sessions are a little lighter so uh just if you have ideas feel free to share them just make sure we leave space for other people to contribute too so i will open the floor anybody have an idea they want to get started with and barbara will take notes on these ideas I have an idea I have a clarification my understanding is we technically hosted last year we we were supposed to host last year because it's every other year but they wanted

[00:01:20] to host because they want to get it away from when they have elections so we're hosting this so we are the official host this year so we set the agenda correct and in addition to setting the agenda to her we're looking at spaces right now and I think we're gonna look at sure I'll go look at Sherwood tomorrow I

looked at Blenheim it's just a little too small I think for everyone for with their staff yeah their staff their board we're gonna have the asked the choral teacher at Fairfax to bring her little group and she agreed so she'll they'll be coming to do a little

[00:01:57] performance ahead so and then of course the little reception will probably do as well. And that's another discussion that we're doing reception or full-on dinner. So we need to just iron these things out as well as what you're going to talk about. So to clarify, it's an actual like work session type meeting. Yes. This is different than the like dinner that we had. Well, there will be a presentation that they do and then we'll move into a dinner. So that's how it works. Yeah, we'll officially do a

[00:02:30] meeting or work session with minutes and recording and then afterwards we didn't do the dinner no we didn't you had to go to it separate because um right yeah right yeah they just held it at another location but they yeah there was a dinner there there was a dinner but it's not a required dinner and it's you pay for yourself isn't it no no it was um they had their culinary class at marshall high school without a, I think they did that the year before. That was two years ago. That was two,

[00:03:05] yeah. Because Christina and I went to that before we were, yes, sworn in, but I didn't. No, last year was in there, two years ago it was that, it was the meeting with the dinner at Hayville, or at Marshall, and then last year it was in their boardroom. It was in their boardroom. Right, but then we left there, and you went to the, and we went to Marshall. Yeah, we met, we met back at Marshall for the dinner so that's why we thought since done okay so there was a meeting prior to that dinner yes yeah so we'll they'll be two separate spots and we'll have our

[00:03:42] meeting and then just like so we're looking at the agenda for the meeting where we will be meeting yeah any any ideas of what you might want to I mean I think that right so we're going to continue with the agenda I know what do have an idea? I mean, I think that the boundary item is still relevant, especially if they're talking about redistricting that big section towards Jackson. The only concern with that is,

[00:04:20] I don't know, what's the date of this? December 16th. So they'll have presented scenario four, but they don't, I don't think the final scenarios will be out yet. I just don't know how much of it is within their control at that point. We can, I think we would need to ask them if that's something that's still a conversation like i don't want to overstep if we're still not there yet yeah yes i hear it yeah um i think we need to also possibly talk about i don't know how much it's been talked about or if it will be dealt with by then but we need to talk about

[00:04:57] providence's festival and sharing that cost because i don't know i know they're in discussion right now but that if it hasn't been fully gone i think that's something that needs to be discussed as a whole group so we're saying boundary and these are all it wherever we're at December to kind of look and we can revisit this

[00:05:34] get together so then PES festival cost-sharing and sorry you mentioned last year you want to talk about some other things that we talked about last year just so just highlighting what we discussed last year to get which was basically the bond and the bond schools the meeting mr. French started with sort that agreement and the agreement for this meeting that has to happen in December is about the SSA so we'll definitely put that on there as well

[00:06:07] just continuing talks on that and you know if I can suggest maybe even tuition is another I think I think the operating costs finding a way to potentially cap or streamline tuition increases over the for several years instead which which just you know relates to ssa so yeah i don't know if that's a loaded one though for that meeting

[00:06:45] that seems awful i don't like i don't know you'll get much else talked about if you're talking about that like and also if we don't know if you don't have the tuition sitting right in front of us and like lee burton sitting there as well to help explain because i guarantee they probably don't know all the stuff either i think it's worthwhile having a conversation as we're in the same room as our counterparts in school boards.

[00:07:14] And they're then moving forward with working with their board of supervisors for thinking about their costs for the following year. I don't think it hurts to just continue that conversation. Can I suggest possibly maybe having a discussion about legislative issues and kind of where, if they know at that point they're focused, just because a lot of them have the elections.

[00:07:40] And I know at least they've posted the legislative breakfast, so kind of seeing where everybody is and are there places that we can align, do a joint push towards certain legislation. That's a great add there. Thank you. Also, tentatively, based on the schedule that you're going to have Michael present at your December regular school board.

[00:08:08] So that would be December 1st. So the time might be perfect to have that conversation and see where we can jointly support. That's a good start, I think. Again, we can always go back and revisit all this.

[00:08:26] It's just a starting point for the agenda. Any other last-minute comments before we move on to the next item? All right, so moving on to the discussion on the draft memorandum of understanding on the capacity in our city schools.

[00:08:47] This was drafted, but we never sent it on to the Fairfax County School Board. So we're going to take a look at this and see if there's any recommended changes. Any thoughts?

[00:09:06] Turn off to the board. I did have some thoughts about this. so first thing is under threshold for action so my and maybe i'm reading ssa wrong my understanding and i don't maybe this is a word and there was that it was if it's been at capacity for two consecutive years then the discussion starts so the boundaries wouldn't even change until at least the fourth year because the conversation i don't know that that's clear in here i guess it kind of

[00:09:40] is at the start of the third like in the boundaries adjustment process it is but in threshold i found it a little bit confusing. Like, maybe we can just add something similar to what it says in 3. Combining item 3 to item 2?

[00:10:01] I mean, I guess I understand in theory, but until you read 3. I felt like I followed that okay. The threshold for action is just kind of saying, like, what's going to spur you into doing something. So I think it fits with the category. But I was confused by the last sentence in the background. When a city school is at IRV or capacity FCPS agrees that county students will be reassigned first to right-size enrollment before considering their reassignment of city

[00:10:40] students so we'll move county kids before any city kid cannot be moved out like if we had to I just thought we weren't moving city kids at all well so if something was to happen and Daniel's run was it a

hundred percent capacity for city kids then we would have to move the remaining children in other words we've move county kids out of providence before you tried to move yeah so it would only happen if a school hit 100 with city kids but then i feel like you those kids would go to providence first

[00:11:20] yeah they would yeah that's exactly yeah they're not necessarily saying out of the city but it would be that that would only that would only happen if the city had 100 all over you feel like that language and that sentence should be clarified or if you think it's appropriate i mean I thought it was a little confusing I don't know maybe maybe redefining it as county kids will be reassigned to a county school first to right-size

[00:11:53] enrollment before considering that statement yeah in terms of the timing of this I think there is a little bit of a complication because in that there have that cause to allow certain people certain students to choose which school so I wonder if we need to put a caveat in terms of that because if we are over capacity for two

[00:12:30] years because it's been everyone's been moved around but then the third year everyone has to go to the school they're assigned and all of a sudden we're in lower capacity we wouldn't want to or like that's my only issue with time since you have that third year to discuss it if then it went back down that third year it's like the process would stop and I think I mean who knows how the grandfathering end will work out but it seems like it should average out on some level if

[00:13:03] kids are staying like there'll be kids that won't come to fairfax but there'll be kids that stay at fairfax i mean who knows how it'll all shake out but so the other thing that when fdps did their grandfathering i'm pretty sure it's fourth fifth and sixth eighth and then tenth eleventh so i don't know if we want to just consider that i would say keep it consistent can we double check that. It's on the back, the second bullet. Or the second bullet with second bullet.

[00:13:41] I know for sure it includes 10th grade, but I'm pretty sure it was also an option too. What do you want me to check? See what FCPS is grandfathering in for is. Is it like a senior status? Yeah, well it's. They just passed it as a, I don't know if it was a resolution or to the the boundary study consultant to say this is who would have that choice, right? Incoming freshman, incoming seventh grade.

[00:14:16] I do wonder, just thinking about historically when we readjusted the boundary for Fairfax High School a decade ago, there was conversation of grandfathering families in. There was a family that, like, I do wonder if there should be some kind of language around that that if there's, say, Eleventh grade student who has a rising eighth grader or ninth grader even like that wouldn't fall under this grandfathering right now

[00:14:53] But maybe there should be something about family kind of keep things together within a pyramid at least. Which is interestingly not in the right Exactly. That's not the students. There's a lot of turmoil around. But with the consider it's not saying it's necessity, right?

[00:15:09] It could be develop options that consider Students. I did want to clarify like see if we could clarify capacity because I do you think that should be program capacity 100% program capacity not building capacity yet that will fluctuate as the years

[00:15:39] grow and I'm going to throw out a unique idea and that's when it comes to you know right now Katherine Johnson is over capacity I know some classes are impacted more than others I'm wondering if

there should be some kind of qualifier where that you know if it's not too much of an impact academically on students if perhaps we consider working with FCPS to find some kind of financial

[00:16:13] adjustments to the tuition so that if they're over capacity say within two three years that maybe we get more from FCPS monetarily there are you know reducing our tuition some capacity it's for increased rental charge because yeah exactly increasing that rental charge just to help maybe alleviate something to show that you know we recognize we do have families who are part

[00:16:43] of that community yeah i think i think it being tied to the classroom rental if you make sense my one question is really if we're looking at this as a two-year thing with sparking the third year i mean i guess it's the same in catherine only there for two years so it's very it's going to change constantly but you should be able to like if you're looking at this and you're like

[00:17:21] okay, we have a problem for two years, we should be able to look at the sixth grade and the fifth grade at those feeder schools and see if it's going to be a problem that's continuing or if it's a blip. So, I mean, we're not saying that two years means it's going to change, just that we're going to talk about it. And I think you would look at those, like, incoming classes and see what's going to happen. There may need to be also a definition here of understanding program

[00:17:57] capacity because i know that does fluctuate based on i believe this year the increased class sizes just to clarify what that formula may look like maybe revisit that a couple years so that might be something to throw in here any other comments all right so thinking of um do we want to

[00:18:31] revisit this draft and consider sending it because that's our next steps think about What next step? Sending it to Fairfax County School Board. Would you rather revisit this draft or lead a work session?

[00:18:48] Did we get a response from our inquiry about the numbers for Fairfax? Not yet. I think it would be helpful to put something in writing out there because I know at least at the pyramid night that I attended in terms of information for the boundary on Friday, there were questions that FCPS staff was not able to answer in terms of our capacity and our ability to decide what the capacity was like.

[00:19:21] just a little hesitant at the time i think they kind of like thrown this when all does this happen i i'm curious just what the response like i feel like it might depend on what the response is to that to that inquiry i think also seeing what scenario court looks like because it's supposed to take care of capacity issues yeah yeah but so this would not like to send this without knowing

[00:19:54] i guess they also could just be completely unrelated yeah and and this doesn't i mean the other issue too is the split feeder being created at willow springs which also a proposal and creates a split feeder because like a lot of the issues that it was trying to solve were not present in our pyramid i mean i guess there was a little bit of an island but i think we didn't

[00:20:30] have any split feeder i think we're overthinking this because this the whole idea with this was and we talked about this before you guys came on that it needed to be done because kj was our and fairfax kj has been two years at 100 plus and so this is just this is just saying if our schools get to this point this is the process that happens it has nothing to do with the boundaries this is something we just need to have in place for if that comes into play because whether they change

[00:21:06] the boundaries are not we need something in place for that we would then need to make that clear because the subject line is recovery adjustments and while technically we know the history that it's

unrelated because of the current conversation like it's but i think it says boundary adjustments because that's when the boundary adjustments need to start happening not have this has nothing to do with their boundary adjustments and that's that's what i'm saying just make that clear That maybe it's capacity management and student reassignment, you know, something along those lines instead.

[00:21:45] Yeah, I just, I think when we're thinking the boundary adjustments that they're doing and this, they're two different things. And that's where I think. I think we're agreeing. Overthink, overthink, yeah. Well, no, I'm just, I'm just saying, I think this conversation is kind of going. But it is helpful to consider kind of what's happening within KJ and sort of that adjustments happening there.

[00:22:05] But I agree. This was just something that we had talked about before you guys were on the board of it. So that's why, and that was before boundaries were ever mentioned by FCPS. I mean, I think I agree with both of you. It is a separate issue, but the subject change could, the subject line could make that more clear.

[00:22:30] Any other comments? No, I was talking about this. Who would sign this? The chairs and the superintendents. Well, I believe that this is usually memorandum of understandings are only between boards and boards.

[00:22:50] So it would be chair pitches to chair. Because our MOU with the SROs or with the superintendents sign that, both the superintendents do. That's because it's dealing with those entities. This would be an agreement between school boards. That's my understanding.

[00:23:05] But the superintendents are the ones that oversee the boundary? Because isn't that a superintendent committee, not a school board committee? That's what I'm saying, though.

[00:23:21] But it would still be a task, board would task. That's why I said I think it's the chairs and the superintendents. We already did an MOU last year. Where did that go? Well, we did an MOU for the committees, and that went chair to chair.

[00:23:40] Yes, chair to chair. But those are for school board committees. But I do think Ms. Hickman has a point in that this would be something that if there is an issue, this is when then as the board on either side would assign that to the superintendent. I don't know.

[00:24:02] Is this something that we need to ask legal guidance on? Just say. We can. I think she would be able to be the one who would know the best. I mean, that'd be a quick question, I'm sure. I'm just thinking the superintendent needs to have this understanding as well, and that's why I think they need to sign.

[00:24:24] Well, this is not different than what's in the SSA. It's just... Yes, it is. I don't think the two years is in the SSA, because I think that's why we were saying that it needs to be clarified what it says.

[00:24:41] I recall the conversations like, I know that chair pitches with the boundary processes that they're doing and that they quite understand that the city can stay no matter what.

[00:25:02] And so this came from that, I think, that just to explain to FCPS that this is the process as far as city students are. They're not moving. Your FCPS, you have to look with FCPS students.

[00:25:18] But we can certainly, I can look in the SSA if it's specific. I would imagine it has to be somewhere, because where did that come from?

[00:25:34] Unless there's another MOU out there, which I haven't seen. That doesn't mean it's not there. We can do some research on that. One thing that has come to mind for you, thinking about students who go to, say, Robinson for their IB program, or students who do, like, emerging courses in elementary school, what would happen to them in this agreement, in this understanding?

[00:26:02] say let's prevent FCPS saying Robinson's over capacity we can no longer accept city students. I mean I think they already they already can. And there's even conversations right now in place about that and sports and play a sport if you place into another school I mean it's probably the same with any magnet school or special prize program. Yeah because I think that the transferring for the IB and AP and all that is always dependent on space.

[00:26:35] So I would not, I don't want to take that opportunity away from city students. I think that's one of the value adds of being part of this county and partnership with the county. I don't know if there's something that should be. This is just if the city schools go over.

[00:26:55] I agree. Go over, not the. But it does impact. It does say regarding procedures when city schools operate at or above below. So it doesn't impact them. So, usually those are based on estimates from the previous year, which, in that transition, we could see a fluctuation of students go from, say, Fairfax for their AP program to Robinson to their IB program.

[00:27:17] Not messing a lot, but, you know, 10 kids is 10 kids, and that could mean, you know, we don't have to, that could drop capacity slightly down to where it's now below capacity. Yeah, no, I'm just saying, you asked how this affects those kids. It doesn't because they aren't in the city schools.

[00:27:35] So that's something that's totally different than what this would cover. So this wouldn't cover city kids that go to county schools. This would only cover the kids that are in city schools. While I agree with the letter, what's written here, I'm just saying what's sort of the bigger picture of that relationship there.

[00:28:00] I mean, to me, I felt like all this really said, I mean, they have schools below capacity and above capacity all over the county. I feel like all we're saying is we are not going to be the above capacity school. Like, these are our buildings.

[00:28:18] We're not sacrificing our students so that other county students can be below capacity. Like, to me, I feel like that's all that this is saying. That's what I'm trying to do.

[00:28:36] Yeah, but, I mean, I agree about those students. But, I mean, I do think we shouldn't let our schools go above capacity. Any other comments?

[00:28:55] So did we decide if we're moving forward with this? So, I think probably get all these notes and update it, and then maybe another work session, I think, is probably a good idea to see what you've incorporated, and then before you go, you know.

[00:29:20] I think especially if it's going to be a charity. I think there's nothing else. We will adjourn the meeting at 7-0-1.

[00:29:38] Thank you.



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