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City of Fairfax School Board Regular Meeting, Monday, October 5, 2026

Date Monday, October 5, 2026
Place City Hall, City of Fairfax, Virginia
Length 3h 0m (video)

- Official meeting video (city, Granicus): https://fairfax.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4669
- Agenda: https://fairfax.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=13&clip_id=4669

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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.

[00:00:00] meeting of the City of Fairfax School Board. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Okay, we have no changes to our agenda this evening and no other announcements, so I will start with the

[00:00:34] adoption of our agenda, may I have a motion please? Madam Chair. Ms. Hickman. I move to approve the agenda as written and distributed. Okay, may I have a second? A second. Ms. Hickman has moved and Ms. Kelsey has seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye. Those opposed? None are opposed. So the adoption of the agenda passes unanimously. Okay, we will begin with our citizen participation and we

[00:01:07] have one person signed up um no weed shinwari you may come to the podium you have three minutes just state your name and address please good evening chair members of the board my name is no weed shinwari and i thank you for the opportunity to speak and thank you for um thank you to our wonderful teachers um school boards um school staff and families for everything

[00:01:46] they do for our students. I believe every student deserves three things. First, safe place to learn, a strong education, and a clear path towards their future. First, as you consider school investments,

please prioritize the need that directly affects students every day. That includes safe buildings, accessible classrooms, reliable technology, and spaces where students can focus and learn.

[00:02:23] When resources are limited, we need clear explanations of which projects come first and why. Second, I ask you to continue strengthening opportunities that connect education to real careers.

[00:02:44] College is an important path, but students should also understand apprenticeship, technical training, and industry certifications. I work in technology and infrastructure, and I see the value of practical skills.

[00:03:02] Partnerships with local employers can help students explore careers, gain experience, and understand what different jobs actually require. We should help young people make informed choices about their future before they take on major educational expenses.

[00:03:25] Finally, families deserve meaningful voices and decisions about their schools. Information about spending and proposed changes should be easy to find, easy to understand, and be available in the languages families need.

[00:03:43] Chair and and or board members, please explain how community feedback effect influenced your decisions. Because I believe parents should feel participated and their participation should be matters.

[00:03:59] My request is simple. Invest in students' everyday needs, expand their opportunities, and keep families involved. Thank you for your time, and thank you for your listening.

[00:04:15] Thank you very much. The next item on our agenda is the student representative report. Mr. Murray? Good evening and happy fall. Good evening and happy fall.

[00:04:31] Here is a summary of events and fun activities that took place across our city schools over the past month. At Providence Elementary, the AVID program held a college awareness day with the students and staff wearing their favorite shirts and hoodies from different universities. The school also hosted a renovation update with Dr. Wright to discuss facility progress and held a fall cleanup today with everyone pitching in to clear out the grounds and get things ready for the season.

[00:04:56] Daniels Run Elementary kicked off September with a PTA-sponsored school picnic featuring food trucks, which led right into the back-to-school night on September 17th. They followed that up with a school renovation update session with Dr. Wright on the 23rd and held Picture Day last Friday. Katherine Johnson Middle School focused heavily on academics this month, administering map testing for math and iReady assessments for English.

[00:05:19] They also hosted Blue Star Welcome Week on September 26th to help connect military families with the local community and completed student hearing and vision screenings from September 15th to 16th. Finally, Fairfax High School hosted its back-to-school night on September 16th and held the first Parents for Safe Team driving session for sophomores and their parents.

[00:05:41] This month's highlight was the homecoming last week featuring the parade and the big game against West Potomac High School. Although we unfortunately lost the game, the week finished on a high note with a dance on Saturday. That wraps up my updates from our schools as we get started with October, and I'd be happy to take any questions you have.

[00:05:57] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Murray. Do board members have questions? Okay, thank you very much. We are going to move on to the next item on our agenda, which is the Fairfax Academy update. And we have Ms. Andrea Cook here, who's the Academy principal, and also Ms. Amy Hard, Career Experience Specialist from FCPS, or actually I should say Fairfax High School.

[00:06:24] Hello, friends. We have some exciting things to highlight in our usual fashion, but we also decided it was kind of time to go back and talk about the Academy from the beginning. and I think it really shows what we've done in the past few years and where we're going.

[00:06:40] It's the 29th year of the Academy. It's a big milestone, so definitely some cool things to share as we go through tonight. So first off, for my numbers people, just some Academy My Numbers. We have 1390 students currently enrolled in the Academy.

[00:06:56] We could take a few more. We have a few seats in certain classes, but we've pretty much maxed out every seat possible. We do still have some students on the wait list, about 200 across different programs. We've been lucky enough to seat most of our students. Arabic is the biggest area where we just can't seat enough students and electrical.

[00:07:15] Of that 1390, 440 of our students are Fairfax High School students and 145 are city residents. We also have about 339 of those Fairfax High School students are taking a one-credit class. The remaining 41 have two credits to their program.

[00:07:33] We're in our 29th year. We have 23 base schools represented, and for the first time in the history of the academy, all four transportation areas represented, which is great when transportation gets a little wacky because we can call all four areas. We have 14 teachers and nine support staff, and then we have 12 pathways. We've fluctuated between 10 and 12 pathways as classes have come and gone, but we're back to up our 12 pathways, and we have our three content areas, word languages and CTE.

[00:08:04] performing arts. So where did we start? 1998. Dance. That was it. Little tiny dance program. Mr. Ziegler was there for two periods. It was beautiful. As we were getting the academy up and running, I was fortunate enough to take master classes that Fairfax Academy brought in. I couldn't attend the academy, but I would come over and take some classes. So I, by osmosis and adjacency, got to experience some cool things. The next year we added musical theater, music tech, and Korean. Korean had been part of the base school program when we absorbed Korean at the

[00:08:42] academy. And then from there, we exploded and took off. Some programs were relocated from Chantilly to finish building out that arts pathway. We've added languages over the years. We've built our CTE programming up, all of that. Some classes that have evolved in really cool ways. Advanced technical theater is still on the books. We haven't done anything with it, but our base school technical theater programs got so much stronger, there wasn't as much interest and need and draw.

[00:09:10] fantastic evolution of industry those really high quality really cool specialized equipment were being passed on to base schools same thing for social media marketing that's now offered in more than half of the base schools in the county and then graphic design became what we now know as digital art so every high school has digital art so we were at the forefront many many moons ago and now it's just common practice for our students so that's just something the academy continues to be as an incubator for courses as we want to try on new things as it's cutting an industry we hope that eventually we can see the student interest and put it in every

[00:09:46] high school so every student has the opportunity to take an academy class without hopping on a shuttle we also really specifically targeted looking for student needs over the past few years and game design been lifted they were ideas we'd had for a long time but trades has always been part of the conversation and with the support of Dr. A and the city, we were able to start our electrical construction and engineering program this year. We have a full roster of students. We were initially going to start with just a few classes, but we are full with six sections, including level two and three. We were originally going to start with level one and we

[00:10:23] still have a wait list. And Edison still has a wait list. So between the two programs, we could see a third if we wanted to. So that's really exciting to see that interest so quickly. Highlighting our classes a little more specifically by content area, and I'm not going to dive into all the details on the presentation, but just some high points, and then you can reference them back.

[00:10:43] You're welcome to ask questions of anything that you see, but we have our three arts classes, so dance, our inaugural class. We have our four levels of dance, hip-hop, Broadway dance, and then this year we're piloting ballet. It was something the county had been trying to offer. It hasn't run at any school. Dr. Reed was like, please try to offer ballet, so we tried it, and we have a group of students.

[00:11:02] So we're going forth. We'll see how that goes. Our dance program offers two concerts a year, including this benefit concert that they do with community organizations. It's a really great evening, bringing the dance community together for a cause that's identified by the dancers.

[00:11:20] And then they attend the High School Dance Festival, which alternates between locations every year. And they really try to partner with whatever university that they're going to or whatever high school program they're going to to really expose our students to dance beyond just the Northern Virginia bubble because we definitely get stuck here and we want the kids to see everything that's out there for their futures.

[00:11:45] Musical theater, we have our four levels of musical theater. This will be the first year that we have seniors who are able to take all four years of musical theater. As we've built out that pathway, we produce two cabarets a year. We also partner with Signature Theater for our senior showcase at the end of the year.

[00:12:01] That partnership remains strong, and they bring in guest artists each month. And then we also have our musical, The Wedding Singer, this year in January and February. Stay tuned. And then we have our music tech program. That's gotten a little name revision this year.

[00:12:17] It's no longer music computer technology. It's just music tech. computer's kind of not as fancy a word anymore. It's been 29 years. So music tech, we'll be rolling out a dual enrollment option for our level one students with Nova next year. We had it a long time ago, changes in programming at Nova and with us, and now we're able to bring that back next year. So we're really excited about that. We've upgraded the lab over the past few years and added a much stronger component of audio engineering and music production beyond just the music composition that the program had been initially. I included information about all of

[00:12:56] our teachers there, just for your reference. Everyone's working professionals in the arts still, very actively engaged, which is fantastic to have. Our world languages, the languages get a little nuance when you're looking at different levels that exist in AP offerings that College Board has. So we have AP for

Chinese, our Arabic 4 program, our Arabic goes up to four levels of that program we're able to run Arabic for now, which has been a goal of ours. We have ASL. ASL can go up to level five. We have up through level three. We just need a few more students to be able

[00:13:34] to get ASL four lifted. We have a new teacher who's super eager about making that happen for our students, which is really fantastic. We're working on it. Have all of your children and all of their friends sign up and we'll make it happen. And then Korean, we have five levels of Korean and we're really fortunate that we're able to partner with the embassy to make sure that that fifth level of Korean can happen consistently from year to year for our students.

[00:13:55] Our Korean program is part of the Global Classroom Project through FCPS. They're also going on the first exchange program, not exchange, international program this year in the spring, and then we're hoping to build out an exchange program long-term. So really cool, exciting ideas happening in our languages.

[00:14:12] We are also working through, there's some new coursework that's coming out from other divisions that focus on careers in languages. So we're looking at how that may or may not fit into the academy with specific languages for the future so we can continue to connect our students to careers, not just in CTE and the arts, but also in the world languages.

[00:14:31] And our fantastic team. And then lastly, CTE. So digital filmmaking, you're probably thinking, Andrea, that's a new class that was formerly known as TV production. Our teacher is very excited, both here and at West Potomac, about the name change.

[00:14:47] Again, just an evolution. It started very much as a production class, and now it's a lot more creative in how the curriculum has shifted at the state so we have our three-year pathway for that we have electrical electrical construction engineering which is our three-year pathway and we do have two students who are signing up for trades for tomorrow so they spend every other day doing coursework and every other day leaning into electrical doing experiences through the county so that way they're really able to accelerate their certifications to be out there working sooner than later it's a really amazing experience for those students and opportunity fashion careers we continue with our dual enrollment option for

[00:15:21] level one for fashion careers with Marymount University. The annual fashion show is always a hot ticket item, and it's going to look different this year. Little teaser to shift expectations, but I will let Kendall lead. It'll be at Fairfax, and we're hoping to have more engagement with the students and the work directly, and more opportunity for all of us to connect with the students about the work that they're doing and not have it so isolated. So stay tuned. I know the wheels are turning. I love teasers. Game design, we continue our two-year pathway. A number

[00:15:59] of base schools have picked up game design. We are the only school in FCPS who's able to offer the advanced game design course. So we're going to continue to look for opportunities to expand game design, knowing that there's an interest, knowing that we have a lot of students that are leaning into advanced game design who can only get the one level at their base school. And so we're exploring a dual enrollment option with NOVA for that as well that we're hoping to get lifted here soon in the next year or two. And then lastly, professional photography, we have our two-year pathway. And then a couple years ago, we started our intro to Profoto EFEO. So EFEO is Education for Employment Opportunities, and it's courses for our special ed students who need an experience

[00:16:39] beyond what and who are really looking for job skills on the ground. So a lot of it was office initially when it started many moons ago it has evolved to different career pathways that we introduce students to and getting them skills so we lifted off pro photo efco for those students to start understanding what it's like to take pictures um we have one student who's in it for the third year and it's like amazing what Felix can now do um and we've had a number of students who've evolved from the efco intro class once they had that first or year or two of that class they were able to jump into the inclusion model with our level one class so it's been a really

[00:17:13] beautiful program to see evolve and change over the years and welcome students in. And that is our team. And I'm going to toss it over to Ms. Hard to highlight some of our career experiences. Hello, everybody. I am in my fourth year here and just now kind of figuring out what this space could become. So it's been really exciting to build some authentic and meaningful career experiences, whether that's like exploration or for most of our students, it's about actually

[00:17:47] making those connections. Internships, job site tours, getting a mentor, like some real significant pathway options where it's no longer a hobby or something that you like, but it's like, how do I get into this school? Or what does my future look like in this world? Especially now that we're going with electrical, which my only background is with theater, which still actually ties in. And so these kids get excited about that. It's like, oh, this world is so much bigger than what you might initially come into it for. And that goes for every single one of our programs, including the arts, where you go in thinking, I like to dance, and you leave thinking, I could be an artistic director

[00:18:26] of a touring company. So we're just trying to, at first, introduce them to how large that scope actually could be. We are making connections with local business partners. The longer that I'm here, I'm really enjoying all the city offerings that are happening, the community days and the market days, and I'm going to all of them with my kid, and we're making those connections, and it's been really wonderful to see how grassroots it can be here, and that they are very intentional about making opportunities for our kids. We have the expo. Thank you for supporting that. That's a huge

[00:19:02] one, because one of the things we teach our students, particularly our art students, but is that you are paid for your work. You are, you know, you're not just helping out, and these are these are gig workers and that we are able now to finance that is to bring in professionals from across all industries to speak to the classes but more importantly to offer in classroom workshops every single class in every single program has at least somebody come by like nobody is exempt

[00:19:34] in in November and they range from you'll see like Arabic calligraphy which feels it leans more arts right and then we have especially now with our ASL instructor today on our social media we shared that she had just interpreted the Jeff Goldblum concert at Mason for Arts Mason the other night that I was at and I got to get a little video of her but these intersections are getting really exciting of like oh wait we have Korean but we also have dance so what does that k-pop workshop look like. And so we're inviting kids to kind of travel across the academy for some of

[00:20:13] these opportunities. The ambassador program is starting something new and you all will be invited if you haven't been yet this Thursday. We are kicking off an annual united ambassador leadership training with our partners at iContact Coaching. It is a leadership program. At our school it looks differently than it does at the other five academies, but this is a chance for all of those student leaders to

get together at Fairfax and meet each other and find out what the other academies, you know, we don't need to live on islands, even though one might be doing HVAC

[00:20:49] and the other one is doing dance. We want them all to come together and go, oh, we all like know what do we want to do? And how do we get the word out that this is possible earlier? Like the gentleman earlier that came up and spoke, right? Like what are these career pathways, these like immediate things that aren't always the next step is higher education. Sometimes it is experience and sometimes it's apprenticeship. There's so many different options. We had over 125 applicants this year. We expect about 200 kids that day from all academies. And the theme of it is to tell your story, that your story will engage and inspire others. And that's what we're leading with this

[00:21:28] year. Work-based learning continues to go through the county. They can have opportunities to receive academic credit, as well as these really powerful networking connections where they have jobs lined up in the future, including everything from auditions to State Department connections for a kid who's fluent in Arabic and wants to lean that way, right? So we're really trying to partner them.

[00:21:52] We're always looking for new ideas or new connections. If you run across people that excited about those types of collaboration we thank you for your support we have would you like to take this part or you want me to talk about so PBIS we're trying to like encourage that student excitement of being at school and doing the right thing and doing something that makes other people do the right thing so we've got everything we did a big huge welcome and kickoff with every single class we invited them in this year for the first time to do a real orientation. As moms, it's like that was one thing I was noticing is like

[00:22:30] my kids coming into Fairfax for the first time from West Springfield. They've never walked into the building and they're trying to find their class and it felt a little disconnected. And this year it was really fun to say get off the bus and come into the auditorium. You guys are at Academy. This is what we're going to do. This is how this works. We're going to take a little tour and it really felt like there was a little bit more of that family connection where it didn't feel like just one other class and that is what we're trying to build is a culture that everybody can really get excited about that happens with ambassadors we do a lot of celebration activities that spread out to the community we thank all of our partners as well as these shuttle drivers that

[00:23:09] are doing a million runs a day to get people to us and students of the quarter things of that nature we have of course our guest speakers the expo ambassadors what else oh and then we also thank you for the funding funding so funding we used to have a very formal process when i first started that was very much modeled off of my previous principal um where it was these innovation grants and they felt so serious and teachers stopped applying for them and so i've changed it into more of an incubator funding and i'm like dream big i have a little pot of money it's not a

[00:23:45] lot but i can't send you across the world but i can give you a little bit of seed money to do something really fun and engaging with your kids. So our teachers have really leaned in because sometimes you just need 50 bucks to buy some art supplies on Amazon and create this really beautiful experience for your students to make the language feel authentic or to find a fun guest speaker to come in and talk to your kids. So it's been really fun to watch people just kind of have these what feels like silly ideas sometimes but are really these beautiful moments for our students to lean in authentically. So thank you for all the support. You help us dream is what I always people are like what what is what does the city money do for you i'm like we get to dream i'm not

[00:24:21] stuck in a box right as a former teacher for theater in the county for over 25 years i came in here and i was like wait you can just wait wait you can't you just have people that are like what do you kids need and it feels um very special very unique so um lastly so we've done all this cool stuff but what's next i always feel like that's the question what do you want to do next what do you want to do when you grow up, Andrea, right? So we're constantly looking for themes in our work. So career connections. I've really been re-engaged with the work, having Amy come on

[00:24:57] and talking through these career experiences and how can we build things out. We've gotten such increased community engagement over the past few years. I feel like post-pandemic everyone was looking for that connection, so we're just continuing to run with it. And so really looking at how we can build those pipelines for our current programs, but also being strategic about future programs and how there's that career connection.

[00:25:18] So what are we missing? Where are the critical workforce needs, like electrical, but what else are our students saying they want to do within our existing pathways that we could offer something a little special for to help them get to that first step and really try it on before mom and dad have to pay for college, but also get a leg up on some of their colleagues.

[00:25:40] dual enrollment continues to be a big conversation for us of things that we can offer for dual enrollment. We will continue to lean into that and being strategic about other coursework that does have that dual enrollment option. And then just always looking for more pathways for our students. We, looking more specifically, shifting to, as we lose programs to what happens at the base school and backfilling, we're also trying to make sure we're connecting everything. So some people are like, Andrea, you're the Arts Academy. Why do you have trades? As Amy shared, right? You

[00:26:15] need electricians. In the theater world, that's helpful. It can play in, our fashion teacher and I were having a conversation about how those students could maybe help support this new idea for the fashion show. So then we continue to talk. Well, word languages gets left out all the time.

[00:26:31] So we were also in direct conversations with the CT office about hospitality. And that's a pathway that has been tried to be lifted at some other schools, but making it an academy program could be really powerful and really does where do you where do your trades meet your performers meet your languages it would be hospitality and there's a dual enrollment option for that so we are looking at some different options like that that would tie everything together we're also looking at do we need to look back into event planning do we need to look at arts administration do we need to look at bringing the advanced technical theater program back so where are those needs for our students across the division and where are the needs at Fairfax

[00:27:10] High School since we know that we are a city a city program and we're right here and some of the of our Fairfax students can't get to some of these other programs and then always looking at that classroom to industry connection and pipeline as we build out these programs staying connected ahead of time with those industries that we might want to bring in so that way we also have a deep pocket of people to get into the classroom to teach our brand new ideas because that can be one of the biggest challenges. So really leaning into keeping those connections strong as we go through some of this brainstorming. And if I may, that like industry pipeline versus just

[00:27:45] it being something like inspiring. Oh, I remember what that person. We're having students, I've only been there, this is my fourth year, and I'm having students go, hey, I'm now dancing with Jose Limon

that you brought in as a master class now that I'm at school. Hey, we had school pictures recently.

[00:28:02] two former alumni came up from the photo class that I went to college, that wasn't for me. I went back and did what Mr. Smith told me to, and I contacted the local photo places, right? So we're having that evidence constantly and going, oh, that could be a little bit tightened up to where they can be actual partnerships, like it is with apprenticeship or like Teachers for Tomorrow with the county with Build Your Own, or Grow Your Own, sorry.

[00:28:26] We're a trade, so Build Your Own. But that idea, we're starting to see that get a little bit more in focus so we'd like to see more of that we've had our artists for sure audition and work with the local area regional theaters and dance companies and come back and work for them but now they're coming back in different ways we were able to open up some internships on the business side with arena stage last year and that's continuing this year where they're not doing the creative side they are going in to say what does hr look like within a regional professional theater and how can i do an internship there and see what that feels like so it's nice to see it

[00:29:01] actually happening instead of being in idea mode. That's it. What questions might you have? Thank you. Um, Miss Sessori, I'll start with you. I absolutely love this presentation every year. I know the Academy does such amazing work, but I think it's really pivotal because of what tangible programs you'll have. Like it's, you know, sometimes kids can feel disconnected with the traditional academic classes. And so to see like their, their learning skills that take them into

[00:29:36] potential careers and um with your partnerships with marymount and northern virginia providing them even that opportunity of college credit tied to that too in case that's something they want to see for that's i think just phenomenal um and i have to give a shout out to uh the leaders of 29 years ago who really came together from the city and the county to bring this academy as part of our programming i know not every high school gets an academy it's incredibly special for us to have that opportunity here in the city um to welcome so many students into that so i just want to make sure i stress that that's i'm very grateful that partnership too um just out of curiosity just more i'm a numbers girl right so i'm looking at their enrollment is that a

[00:30:16] traditional breakdown when we talk about like the base students versus like those who come in like when we consider the academies that's usually the ratio that we see right yeah we should really be sitting at 25 to 30 percent base school okay um if we start looking at programs creeping higher than that then the conversation typically is great fairfax high school you should probably run your own xyz gotcha um so we do we do like that there's that balance there's still a good bulk from the base school and that makes sense from just logistics standpoint and a lot of students will choose to people place but um but that's what we we anticipate seeing great awesome and then i

[00:30:52] love seeing all the conversation around our business partners too um just out of curiosity you know kj has a career thing they typically do i think on veterans day um oh yeah we go every year we go every year cool that's exactly what my question was um so that's that's great to see and i know as uh that the students will be excited about that too and luke donald our uh counselor academy counselor is working with other academy counselors now that we're starting to do a lot more i think it's a very intentional collaboration this year is like we don't need to sit alone anymore um on finding a middle school day much like um kids go to finance park you know across

[00:31:32] the county it's like this one field trip every kid kind of works through it's like well we have these career pathways things what could that look like so they're starting to to put some thoughts on that and one of the coolest parts about running the arts academy right now um i think i've hired everyone but two people at this point i think so it's kind of weird it's kind of it's kind of weird this year 10 as an admin it's very bizarre um but luke amy and i are all artists still so we're still in the industry so it's very fun to sit in this art space and talk to our kids and be like you can do this because we're still doing it on the side. It's a side gig now, but having Luke go

[00:32:08] and be able to present to students too, I think because our counselor has always been the first face most of our students see, but seeing an artist, seeing themselves in one of us has been really, really important. Thank you. Ms. Hickman. I could also rave on about how wonderful the program is and I will in a second, but I do have one question. Amy, are you the only academy career experienced specialist or is that across there is one at each academy so there are six of us all right so you're each doing that similar kind of work and collaborating it looks very different

[00:32:41] right so if you have a school that is like false church academy which is primarily medical she's doing so much of the credentialing and clinicals and sort of that getting people into those logistical spaces so that they can do the seat hours that they need and i'm going i'm bringing and a guest artist from Broadway, right?

[00:33:01] So it looks a little bit different, but it has the same objectives. Okay, wonderful, love that. I think that's incredible that students do understand that the things that they are passionate about can also be careers. And it feels like the careers that you're working on are the ones that with all of the AI stuff that's changing, like these are very humanistic-based careers that you're working on and things that I don't know how AI could replace a dance instructor or something like that.

[00:33:27] So I'm glad to see it. And I just want to personally say how amazing I've seen with the ASL teacher and the work that she's doing and how she's advertising it out there and showing students that, like, look, ASL, there's so much more you can do with it. So kudos to her and to you all for bringing her in.

[00:33:44] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Hickman. Ms. Kelsey. I would just like to say I really like the idea of how you're looking at the profession, but you're not just saying if you're in the dance profession, you have to be a dancer.

[00:34:00] There's so many other things out there that I know a lot of us don't realize go with that profession. You know, you always hear about the football player who gets injured and then he has to change completely. But there is other things just because, you know. The one thing I would like, and I'm pretty sure we've had this conversation before, but could you explain your ambassador program a little bit more?

[00:34:24] Like, what do they do? How do they apply? What do they actually do once they become an ambassador? Sure. Well, that's still evolving. Yeah. So when I came in three years ago, I was like, where are my teams of student leaders? Because as a theater director, I had design leads, and they had their crews, and I was like, and they would come over, and I'd say, this needs to get done, and boom, they happened.

[00:34:48] And I got there, and I was like, where are my people? She was like, you have to pull in the people. And I was like, how do I do that? I don't know these kids. I'm not their teacher. They don't

necessarily trust me. So I asked teachers to give suggestions and recommendations. That has grown into, no, I'm just going to make this seem fun.

[00:35:06] Do you want to celebrate the academy? What events are happening? Do you want to see what else is happening here? Do you want something really good on your resume? Do you want to, like, learn how to do public speaking, put a resume together, interview skills? Like, let's, like, create a group. And that got a little bit of something.

[00:35:22] And after that year, they started building some of the events, and more ownership has happened each year. So now it is a leadership and service organization. So they are coming together, and our first few meetings are hard. They go to 23 different schools. But our first few things are it's a lot that's done just in a Google form.

[00:35:42] What is something you wish we did here that we don't do here? How can you facilitate that? What does that look like? How many people? I mean, so we are teaching event planning. That has grown into they are now doing students of the quarter across every single program in class, including planning how they're going to do the certificates and present it and which kid is going to come down and take it, et cetera, to they do bus driver appreciation.

[00:36:04] They do some community events where they are just the help. They're showing up. They're like, what do you need me to do? They are recruiting and sitting on student panels that are asking about the academy. So they are representatives of the academy. They're going out to different curriculum fairs, elective fairs, et cetera, to teach, like, the KJ students with that career day, et cetera.

[00:36:25] Those are our ambassadors. And their pride, they're really excited about the academy, but at first they only could speak to their own program. So now it's grown to, oh, no. I mean, on Thursday they have to know these ten things about the full academy and they have to cross-pollinate, right?

[00:36:41] Like, you've got to go talk to this person. You've got to go into this classroom. So that's just exciting for me, is that their doors are opening through that. Kids that were primarily, like, maybe they came to the academy, they were in Korean 1, are now also taking our dance class. They're not also, like, we've got so many that are in two different classes, so that's exciting.

[00:37:02] So that's basically what we do. I do an obstacle course where, you know, 120-whatever kids are like, I want to be an ambassador. I'm like, great, finish this form by next Thursday. There goes half, right? cool now if you want to do this training thing you have to get this paperwork in by next Wednesday there are no exceptions we're teaching you how to be a leader this is not an after-school activity these are the expectations be a leader here's one reminder and then that calls it right so you keep getting there until kids are like this is us and let's build this and what if we did could we do and they start to have ideas and then I facilitate it but now they're they're doing the work and I'm

[00:37:41] just going okay I'll give you the space and what you need but yeah it's really fun awesome that's that sounds really great is there a certain grade they have to be to do that so and so right that's the hard part is because certain of our programs you can come in as a freshman and others you can't come in till junior year but they do they can earn a five point pin which is our little stars and for the amount of years of service they also have some big awards at the end of the year they then put on their resume. I write college recommendations. So it just, it's not just a, maybe I'll hang out. It really is there. I'm like, I don't have time to hang out.

[00:38:19] What are we building here, you know? So they're creative, and they have to be brave. They're in a room with people they don't know. Yeah, I love that. It's the buy-in that gets them more excited about it. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Barlmay? Thank you so much for the presentation. I appreciate it. I had a question about the electrical program.

[00:38:38] So you said you're offering... the higher level two and three. So I'm curious how those students got the initial background and kind of what that cohort looks like. So before this year, there were, there was one program. There are four sections of level one. There are one credit class. There's an OSHA cap of 20. So 80 students that then buy for 16 level two spots and four level three spots. You'll have maybe 20 at most that are seniors. Okay. But then you still have to get that 60 down to 16. So as we were starting to seat students, we were going to do part-time level one. The teacher over there and

[00:39:17] the admin over there advocated for, you know, we have enough level two students that really qualify that we have to say no to every year. Why don't you lean in and do a full program? So the CTE office, Regina and I had a conversation and ended up offering level two and three. The threes really take on the crew leads. And then the twos are able to kind of be their little crews. And then we get the one so and this is from edison academy yes edison academy is where it was so um so that's how we got them and then moving forward the two threes will be filled in by us okay thank you um i just have one question um what connections have you been able to make um in the city in terms of

[00:39:56] internships or externships or employment yeah so um mara with all her fabulous fashions and things has been really excited and her kid is part of fashion careers this year got a seat in the class so um we are starting to do some things with that we've done things with spotlight on the arts which has been really helpful because they've introduced everybody kind of across the board so it's like you've got josh from mckenzie's going how can i make music happen and then you've got michael de marco going we're going to get you out to community day with this and that with internships

[00:40:32] We have our Encore ballroom internship for fashion students that are going there, having paid internships, working on very, very tedious, you know, finicky work with these amazing ball gowns. We have another, a lot of fashion is happening in this area.

[00:40:52] We also have Guts for Electrical, who said that they want us to come over and do a job site tour and kind of get involved. And they're not sure which way, but we're all kind of feeling that out right now. We're taking all of that. We don't have a city MCT.

[00:41:09] We have a lot of connections with Mason, which isn't city, but they're very helpful because they can give you that scope when it comes to a particular area of interest. it's not like oh dancer go dance you know it's like oh come in and do this other stuff who am I forgetting I'm forgetting people um CFTC has brought us in Mantua Elementary continues to offer an internship to a dance or a theater person to come in and help with their musical then there's kind of organic one-offs that happen every year that are just unique

[00:41:47] so many moons ago a lot of the city schools had the dance program come over and perform various festivals that pop up in the city our students will be able to engage in and perform at national dance day was a big thing for the dance program to perform at that i know isn't happening yet anymore maybe we can dream i mean the day is happening yeah the day is yeah but there's just all these little things that pop up someone has this idea for the year and then we lean in in any way that we can and send our

students over which is really beautiful and and we have um our mct kids are working with the audio engineering for a lot of the outdoor festival stuff to to get some

[00:42:25] on-site experience there um and then fairfax the television is having us come in this year and so mike bass is like what can we do is that an internship what does that look like so that's exciting um and will be a new one for maybe our digital filmmaking kids but it could you never know where somebody's gonna pop up and say i would actually like to do that we get a lot of um asks for social media interns we no longer offer that as a class but with this generation and their skill set it's really exciting they're like I want to do that so sometimes there are internships

[00:43:01] that aren't even specifically for that program okay well I know the academy has been around for 29 years I haven't been on the board all of that time but I will say for 16 of your 29 years Mr. Wilson was there. I have watched, you know, when he left and Andrea took over and I've watched the academy just explode. The programming just expand exponentially. It's been really impressive

[00:43:33] and fun to watch. And also as a board to be able to help with, you know, resources or other things that you all need um but I also want to say that I do love that you guys continually are assessing you know what is the latest and greatest what are kids interested in where is this world going um in terms of you know technology and arts so um I just want to say I appreciate everything

[00:44:06] that you have done um Andrea you've made an incredible impression on our academy um I don't know what we'll do once you leave but yeah you're out with my walker yeah we'll be doing it um but so thank you uh dr wright do you have any comments or questions thank you chair pitches uh i would love to um just extend our uh gratitude not only to you for your leadership but again to all the teachers and the staff members in the program um that really make this happen i would um kind of

[00:44:40] echo a few of the things that you just heard there's a an education writer named ted dintersmith and he says we often don't teach what's most important to learn we teach what's easiest to measure and I think what we heard tonight is examples of wonderful curriculum and wonderful opportunities for our students but also really clear measurements of the impact that it's having in really quantifiable ways but then some of these ways that we just know are making a difference for our students in the here and now and then what they can do moving forward I will

[00:45:16] say my favorite parts of your presentations were towards the end. I loved hearing about the things that you do intentionally to support the culture in the academy around the ambassador program and around other opportunities for student leadership, but just also just trying to make it a community and a supportive one. And then my favorite slide was the last one about what's next, right? Where are we going to go over the next 29 years and continuing to have that mindset of we're in a really great place. We have a lot of wonderful things, and we can continue to grow. And we need to look at that assessment that you just heard from Chair Pitches about what are the needs of

[00:45:52] our students here, and we might need to start thinking about what are they, even though it's five or ten years from now, we might need to start thinking about that now. So really great work, and we really appreciate everything that you do. Thank you again, and we will see you soon.

[00:46:09] Sounds good. We will. Thank you so much. Have a good evening. Thank you. The next item on our agenda is the proposed capital improvement plan for 28 through 32. Fiscal years 28 through 32, Dr. Wright, the superintendent, will take this presentation.

[00:46:32] Thank you, Chair Pitches, and good evening to the board. The presentation we're going to provide for you this evening is the proposed capital improvement program. This is going to follow up on the priorities discussion that we had at the work session just last week.

[00:46:50] And for the close observers of the board, you're going to hear a lot of things that are very familiar. So as we look at the first slide, the three main requests that are going to be a part of this CIP program are right here on the screen. There's two, and I want to be transparent.

[00:47:07] These are requests in addition to the large elementary capital program that we have going on and the high school work. So there are three things for this board's consideration as you look at it during the next month and then vote on it in November.

[00:47:24] One is we'll start right in the middle is upgrades to the auditoriums at Catherine Johnson and Fairfax High School. Those would be primarily focused on visual projection systems and screens, some carpet upgrades and some painting upgrades just to modernize both spaces.

[00:47:42] On the right side of the screen is a proposal for a turf softball field. We have a proposed price there of what that would take to modernize that stadium for our softball teams and our community.

[00:47:57] And then finally, there is a recommendation for an allocation of CIP funding to provide proactive work on our HVAC units at both Catherine Johnson Middle School and Fairfax High School. The reason the elementary schools aren't included in this is because there will be new HVAC systems as a part of the capital projects.

[00:48:19] But trying to think about the age of those units across both buildings, the expected lifespan, are we at that lifespan, beyond it, and is there consistent and chronic maintenance needs? And our analysis shows that there are some of the units that we are concerned about that we want to make sure that we are being proactive in the event that we need to do something beyond repairing them and do a full-scale replacement.

[00:48:49] So those are the three requests for consideration that are a part of this. As we move to the next slide, you'll see what that looks like across a spreadsheet format in that proposed FY28 column on the left side of the screen.

[00:49:05] So that's everything that we'd be looking at this year, and we'll talk about what the process is and where it goes next. And as we mentioned before, that also includes funding for the elementary school capital projects and the Fairfax High School roof project. AS WE LOOK OUT, TYPICALLY WITH A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, YOU'RE LOOKING SEVERAL YEARS IN ADVANCE.

[00:49:24] SO SOME OF THE FUTURE FUNDING YOU SEE ON THERE IS FOR THE CONTINUED CAPITAL PROJECTS. AND THEN A SIMILAR PROPOSED PROACTIVE FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR TWO YEARS FROM NOW AND THEN FOUR YEARS FROM NOW RELATED TO THOSE HVAC REPLACEMENTS.

[00:49:40] AND THAT'S WITH CONSIDERATION OF WHAT WOULD BE A TIMELINE FOR POTENTIAL RENOVATIONS OF THOSE MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS. And if we're doing the assessment of those units and we identify that there's not a need to do those, then we can change those recommendations.

[00:49:58] As we move forward in the slides, you'll see just a reminder to this board and the public that previous capital improvement programs for the city of Fairfax schools included several annual

maintenance items, things like painting, carpet repair, concrete repair.

[00:50:17] THOSE ARE STILL GOING TO REMAIN IN OUR BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF FAIRFAC SCHOOLS, THEY'RE JUST GOING TO BE IDENTIFIED IN THE OPERATING BUDGET AS OPPOSED TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. AND THEN WE ALSO WANTED TO TAKE A MOMENT ON THIS NEXT SLIDE TO JUST REMIND THE BOARD AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT THOSE LARGE CAPITAL PROJECTS. THESE ARE THE BOND-FUNDED PROJECTS THAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING THROUGH. AND THESE ARE THE SAME BUDGETARY NUMBERS THAT WERE PROVIDED TO THIS BOARD LAST MONTH AS part of that capital project update and we just want you know these technically fall in the CIP program funding area so we want to make sure that it's clear

[00:50:55] that this is something that is a part of this as well even though we sort of think about it as a separate approach because of the size and the magnitude of these projects and then finally we just want to look at the timeline of what happens next so we're providing the presentation and the public hearing this evening this school board will have an opportunity to to vote on this CIP budget at the next regular meeting on November 2nd I have a little a slight update on that TBD so the following that the city will put all of the CIP requests for all the different departments together and it will go to

[00:51:34] the Planning Commission first and that meeting is on November 9th and then it It will go to a presentation to the mayor and city council, usually sometime in December. And then whatever the city manager puts together as his proposed CIP program, that will go through the budget process this spring and eventually be voted on by the mayor and the city council in May.

[00:52:00] One thing before we wrap up that I wanted to respond to the board, we got a suggestion and feedback at the priorities discussion at our work session last week around a possible consideration for work of the fields at Catherine Johnson Middle School.

[00:52:18] And so the reason that's not in here is because Parks and Recreation have included it in their CIP requests. And so that what it's two athletic fields and a track Area that would take up most of that field there at Katherine Johnson. So On the on the city level, it's being considered And I just want to be make sure that the board was aware of that and that's why it's not in the in the school presentation So with that, I will wrap up and be happy to answer any questions and thank you for your time Thank you, dr. Wright. Ms. Bartle may do you have any questions for dr. Wright?

[00:52:54] I just wanted to clarify that with the HVAC, with the funds every two years, that's a portion of the HVAC replaced, a portion replaced at each of those timelines. Absolutely.

[00:53:10] And it would not be comprehensive. I would say we have close to 20 units on each building, so probably, and I can provide exact numbers, and you can see units ranging between \$500,000 to \$1 million, depending on the type of unit that's up there.

[00:53:27] So over the course of five years nine million dollars would make a significant contribution to the modernization of those But it definitely would only be a portion of it. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Kelsey You just answered my question so I'm good. Ms. Hickman. Ms. Sessori. Just to clarify the HVAC Replacements for Fairfax High School be timed with the roof replacement as we go through that phasing process, right?

[00:54:00] Absolutely, and I'll provide a clarification as well of, you know, this is an attempt to be, there is not a broken HVAC unit on the roof right now that's not functioning. There are several that have chronic

maintenance issues, and that may at one point be, the answer will be, we need to replace that.

[00:54:22] And it's an attempt to be proactive around a funding model to ensure that when that happens that we're able to do that without having to enter into a process that we weren't prepared for. But absolutely, we would look at -- I mean, any use of this funding would be very targeted to the needs of those specific units.

[00:54:48] And we would definitely consider what portions of the roof are being changed while we're doing that. And one additional question. The systems that would be replacing that would meet, I guess I'm assuming they're purchased through the scope of what FCPS aligns.

[00:55:05] Like when we talk about their building scopes, just so that way there's maintenance needs and whatnot, that's sort of a... Absolutely. So to give you an example that is adjacent to I think what we're talking about, but hopefully answers your question.

[00:55:22] As we've been doing the planning process for the elementary school projects, we've had several conversations with Fairfax County public schools about the type of systems that we're looking to put in each building to ensure that they are not only systems that are compatible with all of their different computers and ecosystems, but also systems that they're able to maintain and we've been successful in that so definitely there would be high levels of coordination with Fairbanks County about putting in an HVAC replacement that would work with their systems and that they're able to repair if necessary thank you accessory mr. Murray does the softball

[00:56:01] field include like a renovation to the press box or like the surrounding area that's a wonderful question mr. Murray so the answer the price point that we're looking at right now would not include any changes to that the upgrades that were fairly recent and I think you know the the assessment that our team has done is that you know that portion of it is in in fairly good shape what we're looking for is to provide a more all-weather solution and a more durable solution through the turfing so that price is just for turf and all the work that goes with making sure it's flat and putting in the proper drainage and

[00:56:37] those type of things I believe it was replaced in 2016 or 2017 okay thank you Dr. Wright. I'm just gonna tell you to keep your mic on because the next presentation is also from you. The Plenum Boulevard recommendation options, just a reminder to the board, our part, and this is not our project, our part is to make a decision based on the seating options that are proposed for the property on

[00:57:17] the Fairfax High School site that faces Blenheim Boulevard we will consider it can I'm excuse me we will consider these options and we will talk them through any questions we have any comments during the work session and then we will make our recommendation at the November meeting okay thank you dr. Wright thank you madam chair so you did a great job of setting up this presentation where in In just a few slides, we're going to look at some of the possible recommendations to

[00:57:51] City Council about the Fairfax High School property portion of this Blenheim Boulevard multimodal project. So as we go to the first slide, you're going to see a graphic representation of the Blenheim Boulevard project and the area adjacent to Fairfax High School and then specifically right on the Fairfax High School property.

[00:58:14] you're going to see two sets of squares one is a black square that highlights an amphitheater seating area slash outdoor classroom is another term that's been used for it and the other set of squares that you're going to see are the red ones that highlight seating areas benches and tables that are part of the

project and so when we look at this next slide in terms of possible recommendations to the city council that this board could consider the first one is that there would be no changes the second one would be a recommendation to remove the

[00:58:51] amphitheater portion of the project a third option could be to remove just the seating and the amphitheater would remain and then the final option could be removing both the amphitheatres and the seating areas so we just wanted to try and lay that out in terms of just being really clear about what that could look like and then chair pitches did a great job of talking through the next steps which we'll see on the next slide which is there's an opportunity for discussion of this at the October 24th work session and then if the board

[00:59:28] so chooses putting together a resolution and a vote in November thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Wright. We will move forward with the public hearing for the proposed capital improvement plan for FY 2028 through 32. I do not believe we have anybody signed up for the public hearing so we will move on to our action items. We have one action item this evening. It's the approval of the for September 14, 2026 regular meeting minutes. The clerk has provided these

[01:00:00] minutes. Is there a motion? Madam Chair. Ms. Bartlemay. I move the City of Fairfax School Board approve the minutes of the September 14th, 2026 School Board regular meeting as printed and distributed. May I have a second? Second. Ms. Bartlemay moved. Ms. Sessori seconded the City of Fairfax School Board approve the minutes of the September 24th, 2026 regular school board meeting minutes as printed and distributed. Are there any changes, modifications, or discussions needed? Okay.

[01:00:34] being none, all those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye. Aye. Aye. None opposed, so the motion is unanimous. We will move on to superintendent matters. Dr. Wright. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate this opportunity to share a few brief updates and reflections as we close this evening with the board and the public. I'd like to talk a little bit about the 1% local sales tax referendum that is on the city of Fairfax ballot on November 3rd. There will be two more community town halls coming up which are opportunities for the public to learn about the referendum and ask questions. There's one this Thursday evening at

[01:01:11] Providence Elementary School and there'll be another next Wednesday at Daniels Run Elementary School. We appreciate everyone who has participated so far and it's are going to be our continued focus to make sure our community has clear and accurate information on this topic. I've been very fortunate to be in several of our schools in the past few weeks. Friday was a great time at Providence Elementary School excuse me Thursday was a great time at Providence Elementary School where we attended the SCA induction ceremony we got to see these young leaders right at the start of their leadership journey and it was great to be a part of the entire community they

[01:01:48] had I think all of their third graders through sixth graders in the auditorium or the gym for an assembly to welcome in their new SCA which was great been at lots of sporting events at Fairfax High School two sports I've not seen a lot as volleyball and field hockey so it's been great to be a part of that and it's a great reminder that athletics like any extracurricular activity is it allows our students to connect to develop those leadership skills develop teamwork and develop that sense of belonging as we've worked with other divisions and other

[01:02:23] leaders around the Commonwealth I was able to attend the Virginia School Board Association legislative conference earlier this month to hear about some of the key issues on both the state and

federal level and then two really important conversations one with the UVA k-12 Advisory Council that I'm a part of and another with a public school leaders network here in Northern Virginia that Miss Hickman was able to join around the topic of AI and what those policies look like at the school level what implementation looks like at the school level and then how school divisions are working through the ever-changing nature of that topic and then one other exciting community

[01:03:00] opportunity on Monday of last week I was able to join a program at Joint Base Anacostia Bowling with the United States Air Force where I was selected as an honorary commander to partner with the community and it's I'm really excited because it's with the Air Force Band and I think it's going to allow our Air Force Band to come and perform at our high schools with our students and it's going to be and in our community so really looking forward to what can happen with that in the future finally there's an opportunity moving forward for

[01:03:36] some really intentional focus on the teaching and learning that's happening in our schools later this month I'll be working with the region 5 leadership for what they're calling collaborative checkpoint visits which is meeting with the leadership teams at schools looking at their data and doing instructional walkthroughs with them so we all we know that being in classrooms learning alongside our principals and teachers and seeing their instructional priorities and actions are a great way to stay connected day-to-day to the work.

[01:04:04] So it's been a wonderful first six weeks of the school year. It's shocking that at the end of this month, it's going to be the end of the first quarter. You know, it goes quick, but I think that's a testament to the staffs in our schools and all the hard work that they're doing and the great students that we have that are filling our schools.

[01:04:23] So with that, Chair Pitches, that concludes the superintendent matters report thank you dr. Wright we'll move on to school board matters miss Bartlemay I just wanted to take a moment to commend our very own Kevin Murray and the other leadership students at Fairfax High School for all your hard work with homecoming it was a lot of fun you guys put on some great events and I know a lot of work went into it miss Kelsey I just want to say you know good luck to all of our students that are

[01:04:56] taking their PSATs and the SATs on Wednesday and wish everybody a you know good into this end of the quarter I want to say semester but quarter it's not there yet miss Hickman said both of the things I wanted to say so thank you miss accessory ditto but um thank you again mr. Murray so yes thank you Kevin I while I had to inadvertently miss homecoming for a little hospital vacation I missed your festivities but I was assured that you

[01:05:36] guys did a fantastic job and so congratulations on a successful homecoming if there is nothing else before the board I will adjourn this

[01:05:46] meeting at 7:36



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