MACHINE TRANSCRIPT · CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Fairfax County School Board Work Session, Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Date	Tuesday, February 21, 2023
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	2h 26m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeBTW-KoB8A
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

> Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:08] We are very excited to start this work session only an hour late, so I am going to call it to order. This is a work session that many of us have talked about for a long time, which is the importance of governance, but before we go into the governance agenda, I do need a motion, which I don't see here, for a confirmation of closed meeting, because we didn't close

[00:00:43] it out upstairs. So while somebody's getting that, do I have a -- I gave them to -- ah, thank you, ma'am.

[00:00:59] We've got one right here. In order to comply with Section 2.2.3712 of the Code of Virginia, it's necessary for the Board to certify that since the Fairfax County School Board convened a closed meeting on February 21, 2023, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matter is lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session.

[00:01:29] Closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the board during the closed meeting. Do I have a motion? Motion made by Ms. Omash, seconded by Ms. Keyes-Gamara. All those in favor?

[00:01:45] Secondly, thank you, that motion carries. And Ms. Cornell, did you register everybody's vote or do I need to do it again? Okay, excellent, thank you. The second item on our agenda before we move to the

order of our agenda is Ms. McLaughlin has submitted a written request to virtually attend today's work session due to a medical conflict.

[00:02:09] All those in favor? And that is unanimous. Ms. McLaughlin, are you dialed in now?

[00:02:25] She's having -- okay. Once she is back in, we'll just acknowledge that she has joined us. Thank you. We have a question about the order of the agenda, and I'm going to mute my microphone to hear from a board member a question she has, and I know that we have staff here, and we would like to prioritize that the staff are here and get that -- those items first on the agenda.

[00:02:49] Hold on.

[00:03:06] Okay. Wonderful. Without objection, I would like to change the order of our agenda today so that we address the procurement policies 5011 and 5015 as the first item so that we don't take up more of the time of our budget and procurement staff because we know that they are working on other things

[00:03:31] during this very busy season. Ms. Burden. Ms. Platt. Good afternoon. I am here to present the staff

[00:04:18] recommendation for procurement policies. With me I have Michelle Pratt who is the director of procurement services and Layla Sultan who is the coordinator of procurement services and if you have questions they'll be able to help me with that you can go to the next slide the objectives today are to codify the process improvements and reforms in procurement policies 5011 and 5015 we want to codify staff's recommendation for school board notifications and approvals and obviously this will increase school board oversight of procurement and all of

[00:04:55] this is to provide greater efficiency and, of course, enhance school board oversight. I thought we would show the timeline first. We created this timeline to illustrate the four OAG audits and work with the school board on contract-related topics over the last eight years.

[00:05:13] Started out in fiscal '15 when the OAG did an audit of contract management and that was their findings were that we needed to enhance our central controls and our monitoring by departments of their individual contracts in that audit they looked at dit isd and the office of benefits then in january 2018 there was a school board work session that was specifically related to consulting services and then another audit in fiscal 18 that was primarily about sole source

[00:05:51] documents and training of their principals and their departments on procurement processes then in fiscal 19 we had another department specific contract review again looking at isd and dit those audits are are ongoing and the oag's office picks a couple of departments that they want to to take a look at the October 2019 the school this the recommendations made it through governance

[00:06:24] but they they they died shortly thereafter we had a little thing called COVID and so this got put on the back burner then if you can go to the next page in fiscal 20 we had another OAG audit and And this was to review sole source again and see if error reforms had been put in place.

[00:06:46] And there was no findings on that audit. And then in February and March of 2021 and 2022, these documents went to governance. The first time, they did not make it out of governance to get in front of the school board.

[00:07:02] The second time, they did make it out. And then the result of that was the new business in May of 2022. And then in June, it went for action, and there was a request for a work session. And I'm guessing

that is why we are here today.

[00:07:20] We thought it would also be important for you all to kind of know the terms that we're talking about. So professional services, basically you have to have a license from the state examining board. And that's stuff like accounting, actuarials, medical, land surveys, legal services, architects and engineers, those kinds of things.

[00:07:41] Consultant services, that is where a firm exercises discretion and flexibility, recommends performance improvements, solves organizational problems for us, or evaluates what we're doing to determine in more efficient ways.

[00:07:58] And that's stuff like PD, tech system implementation, program evaluations, those kinds of things. Nonprofessional services is any service that's not specifically identified as a professional or consultant or there's no license required. That's like maintenance and repair services, snow removal, landscaping, and then just regular goods like materials, equipment, cleaning supplies, food products, milk, computers, office supplies, those kinds of things.

[00:08:29] And again, as far a quick summary of actions taken by the Office of Procurement Services to increase transparency through procurement reform are summarized on these slides. In FY15, we created an online procurement manual, and this consolidates the policies, regulations, procedures, and best practices into one place.

[00:08:49] In FY18, we worked with the school board to expand the definition of a consultant service and school board notification prior to award of all consultant contracts over $100,000 and created a public website of upcoming procurement opportunities so that our vendors and the public can see contracts that will be competed in the following six months.

[00:09:10] After the fiscal 18 OAG audit, we expanded our training offerings and implemented a number of processes to kick off sole source reform. We increased the scrutiny of all sole source requests. We revised the sole source request questionnaire and implemented a cabinet chief approval and signature requirement for every new sole source.

[00:09:33] In fiscal 19, after the OAG audit of ISD and DIT contracts, we created a new best practice to clearly describe the ownership of contracts for measuring vendor performance, and we developed and implemented an in-house contract request and management system to better track those contract requests by schools and departments.

[00:09:55] In fiscal 20, OAG audited procurement and contract management again, and there were no findings. And to illustrate the progress, you see the table of the number of sole source contracts awarded each fiscal year over the last nine years. We have come a very long way, and we are certainly proud of this.

[00:10:12] Also, in fiscal 20 during the pandemic, we implemented an e-bidding tool to allow vendors online access to solicitations and allow them to submit bids and proposals electronically. For context, out of the 615 contracts, 84% were competitively awarded.

[00:10:32] That means a competitive process was followed to select those vendors. The competitive process ensures transparency with the public, including the vendor community. And just so you know, the requirement ones, there's 374. Those are RFPs or IFBs.

[00:10:51] The cooperative are contracts that we piggyback that is another government entity who has competitively bid what they were seeking, and so that we are able to piggyback those contracts without doing our own procurement process.

[00:11:07] Sole source, of course, which you all are very familiar with. And then intergovernmental, those are like GMU, University of Wisconsin, those kinds of things. And those have always come to you all for approval and will continue to do so. The contracts by value, this shows the percentage of contracts by value.

[00:11:26] The total number of contracts, again, is 615. 25% or 152 fall under 199,000. 18% or 111 contracts between 200,000 and 499. 18 percent or 109 contracts between 500,000 and 999,000, 26 percent or 158 contracts between 1 million and 4.9, 7 percent or 44 contracts between 5 million and 9.9 million, and 7 percent or 41 contracts greater than 10 million. Of the 615 contracts, 43 percent fall below 500,000 in

[00:12:05] aggregate value. The changes on this slide summarizes the draft of 501-1 previously submitted and addresses three key areas: approval, notification, and reporting. The 200,000 threshold is recommended because it aligns with the formal procurement threshold as defined in the Virginia Public Procurement Act and the Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution. There's a lot of interest among the community and elected officials about consultants and professional services, and as a result, we are recommending school board approval for professional

[00:12:43] and consultant services over $200,000. Again, the $200,000 was selected because it aligns with the formal procurement threshold as defined in the VPPA and the purchasing resolution. But it should be understood that any school board review for approval results in only two options, approve or reject. A rejection means that we start over with an RFP seeking a vendor. We cannot exclude the selected vendor, and a normal RFP takes three to six months. A big solicitation can take a year or

[00:13:17] more, like an IT infrastructure project, those kinds of things. So to not approve something that staff has recommended will definitely have some consequences, but I wanted you all to be aware of those. So this is a summary of the proposed contract approval matrix. All consultant and professional services greater than 200,000 would come to the school board for approval prior to award of the contract. Current policy only requires notification. Intergovernmental MOUs and MOAs like

[00:13:52] University of Wisconsin, GMU at 200,000, they will continue to come to the school board for approval and that again is not changing. Sole source greater than $200,000 will also require approval by the school board prior to awarding the contract. The current policy does not require approval. And then goods and non-professional services greater than $500,000 would require notification. And that would again include routine big ticket items like food, dairy, custodial supplies. Current policy does not require approval nor notification. Now the ones

[00:14:29] are over 500 000 you should know that that is a notification prior to the award so that'll have to come through a john foster's office as a legal briefing because you do not want that information prior to the award to be out in the public so there is a legal exemption for that they would they would need to come through his office and the approval prior to the award would occur at a single meeting via the consent agenda. In closing, we've worked really hard to respond

[00:15:06] to the concerns of the school board and the OAG audits with process improvements leading to greater accountability for consulting services, sole source designation, and principal program manager

training identified in FCPS regulations. We've also provided greater transparency through enhanced access via our website, our e-bidding tool, and as well as reporting via the board briefing.

[00:15:29] The policies before you codify these changes and align with the Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution and the county's purchasing agent, which provides FCPS its delegated purchasing authority. FCPS's thresholds are a little more stringent, but that's allowed.

[00:15:45] These also align with the Virginia Public Procurement Act, which identifies methods of procurement. Neither of these, the Fairfax County Resolution or the Virginia Public Procurement Act, contemplates approvals or notifications by elected bodies.

[00:16:03] But we hear you, and so we are, of course, allowed to be more stringent than those two groups and their documents. So, we recommend that Policy 5011 and Policy 5015 move to the next regular school board meeting agenda.

[00:16:24] And just for clarification, at this point, I believe it's on new business for the next one and approval in the following one. So, with that, we have a number of people who have lifted their placards. We'll start with Dr. Anderson, followed by Ms. Cohen, and then Ms. Keyes-Gamara.

[00:16:45] Thank you. I feel like I've seen this document quite a bit. so i i appreciate all of the work that you have done and done again and done yet again to get us here hopefully this time we'll get it through the finish line um just a few inquiries um when you talked about and i don't have page numbers on this so it's hard for me to identify but this one that says contracts by by value um can you speak a little bit to what is the impact to multi-year contracts when you're talking about these amounts is it what it's worth in that current year's budget

[00:17:22] or is it what it's going to be worth over the lifetime of the contract there we go um thank you for the question so we are measuring over the initial term of the contract typically our standard initial term is five years not always but it would would the the the contract value we're we're presenting before you is the initial term it would not include any renewals so it would be over the five years correct and that would be the dollar amount over the five-year term correct and

[00:17:57] if we were to um reauthorize that contract then we would see it again at that five-year mark for whatever it costs in accordance with the proposed thresholds yes okay thank you and dr anderson i did want to point out that like on the contracts by type it says that we have 93 93 sole source That 93 reflects, if you look at the previous page when it says we have 12 this year, that 93 reflects sole source contracts that are still active but could have been issued as far back as fiscal 17.

[00:18:35] So that 93 is everything that is active now, but some of them may have been for years ago. So let me ask you this. Since this activation of you offered a really good timeline in terms of the audits and some of the work that the board has undertaken on this matter, since then, can you give us an idea of how many new sole source contracts have been enacted?

[00:19:00] Yeah, it's the sole source reform happened, well, the OAG audit was in fiscal 18, and that's when we kicked off making changes to how we were doing sole source.

[00:19:18] And that was a 2018? Yes, and then in fiscal 20, audit did a follow-up to see how we were doing, and that's when there was no findings. The list on that page of the contract shows how we've had, you

know, a huge decrease in the number of sole source since we increased the documentation that's required to put forth a sole source contract.

[00:19:42] So back in fiscal 14, fiscal 15, when all of this first came up, you know, 64, 53, 50. And now in fiscal 23, we're at 12. We had 10 last year, 15 the year before that, 7 in fiscal 20. So we've made great strides in reducing the number of sole source contracts.

[00:20:00] You mentioned that's due to the documentation that's being required. Can you give a little bit more specificity? So each department who's requesting a sole source contract has to fill out a three-page questionnaire. There's like 14 questions about why they deem this to be a sole source.

[00:20:17] And we review that. We may or may not approve their request. But once we determine that it will be approved, we then prepare an internal justification, which is maintained in the procurement contract file. That justification document is signed by four levels of approval all the way up to the cabinet level staff member.

[00:20:40] And then we retain those documents in our file. So the assistant superintendent also has approved the request for the sole source. so we're getting approval at the time it's requested and at the time it's approved by an l team and that one protocol has really decreased those numbers that's very interesting um one of the things that you mentioned on this page that says proposed changes um when it comes to the sole source contracts and contracts over 200 000 you said it's either approve or reject aren't those the only options for all of the contracts can you kind of tease that out a little bit more

[00:21:16] is it because you're saying there shouldn't be any conversation go ahead i think you're right i I think the point was more to emphasize that if we have to restart a procurement process, the delays, the time that it takes, the staff time, et cetera, would come into play.

[00:21:39] Also I think that it would be a negative impact on the vendor community who spend a fair amount of time and resources to submit proposals for us to evaluate. So if you think about the, you know, a contract is presented and for whatever reason the board decides we should not move forward, we still have an unmet need.

[00:22:00] Otherwise, we wouldn't have had the solicitation that was issued. So we'd have to sort of reuse all of those resources to try to get back to have that need met. So walk us through a worst case scenario. You bring something forward for an unmet need and the board decides this is not fiscally responsible and rejects the contract.

[00:22:21] You go back and you start the bidding process all over again. And you said that those that vendor that was up can also reapply and be part of the process. So the impact is that we don't have whatever is this thing that we need for the division for that period of time and longer as we restart the contract.

[00:22:40] Is there anything that is legally I please pause my time. I went up. John is here. Is there anything that is legally legal risk? to the board in that sense because if you have conversations with vendors and you get to a particular amount do we leak out to others what our thresholds are not kind of um unnecessarily oh you could start it again yeah i wanted to make sure i understood the question um you're asking

[00:23:17] is there heightened legal risk to the board for providing contract thresholds publicly is that the question no if one is denied and obviously all that information is being made public what is the impact to us legally i definitely hear that there's a reputational impact but legally would that now put us in a space where and also maybe from a procurement perspective does that put us in a space where the next contract may not be as favorable i don't see any legal risk i do worry about reputational risk to the board um if you're if you're taking that action um i you know

[00:23:53] i don't know if uh the procurement team has any additional thoughts on that i really think the reputational risk and then the resource use are the biggest risks. I think, too, depending whether it's a bid or an RFP, bidding is public. So the pricing that a vendor submits is made public at the time the bids are opened. That could get us into a place where vendors now have seen what

[00:24:26] their competitors are bidding and we're they may have caused a protest our recommendations so you know it's certainly something that we would want to avoid in my opinion so how do we mitigate that from happening we we I don't know I mean we we approve what's what's been presented I guess the

[00:24:58] question may then become do we really need whatever it is we were soliciting operationally. I'm going to come back to that because that doesn't seem to be as satisfying as a response as I would like to have had. On this page, the contract approval, this sheet, the first one, all contracts and amendments, proposed threshold, it says unlimited. Can you explain that a little bit? Is it unlimited or there's no minimum? That is for goods only. If you go to the third column,

[00:25:37] we're trying we're telling you what we're buying in column number three commodity type so there is no proposed threshold for goods only okay these are the goods that you described as the unprofessional services earlier correct these are commodities you know dairy milk right toilet yep um and my last thing here is the alignment to the county i know this was raised when we worked on this in governance and i'm not sure if you had a chance to articulate it here can you speak a little bit to how the proposed changes are aligned to what our counterparts

[00:26:12] on the board of supervisors have in their processes so currently the board of supervisors does not approve any contract the only thing they see are professional and consultant services over 200 000 and they receive notification prior to award and looking at here the notification we would receive are for one two three the fourth item the new contracts and contracts amendments for non-professional services so pretty much that one section is the only one that really mirrors

[00:26:50] what the board of supervisors engage in it's it's actually row two contracts and amendments for professional and consultant services over 200 000. so we have approval they have notification right i meant the only one that aligns is that fourth one i think i said the same thing in the opposite all right um in the opposite way um that's my time but i would love to get a sense of that earlier question um dr reed i don't know if you have any thoughts on um it was the question

[00:27:27] regarding kind of the risk that can be um available i guess to fcps if there is some notification of what the bids are and kind of how we would mitigate that and deal with it that's the only piece that i think has not yet been responded fully for me i mean there's there's a number of negative impacts when a board reviews awards. There are project delays. We can lose key personnel and management teams originally assigned to a contract. The contract transition could be

[00:28:03] affected because we would not have an ability to ensure a seamless transition from one contract period to the next. If we don't have an appropriate extension on the contract that we're not moving forward with then we could that we could have a gap there and you know as much as I hate to bring this up for example our health care if we could not continue with one and didn't award the other that would be devastating to our employees and that's just one example there's also

[00:28:40] supply interruptions and inability to predict the timing of award could adverse affect the supplier's ability to provide the items to us, increase supplier costs, reduce supplier interest as a result of, you know, well, you can't get it through their board, you know, something like that.

[00:29:03] If there was a lot of rejections of contracts, that's the reputational risk that Ms. Pratt talked about. And, of course, staff resources, additional time and preparation required by staff to start over and then board resources when you know they're tied up reviewing and approving awards um distracting you all from other important priorities thank you miss burden we have uh miss cohen and following miss cohen we have miss keys gamara and i'm going to ask um for our board members and i know you guys are always really good at this but to try to keep your

[00:29:41] questions tight and not repeating others and so that we also don't have a repetition of timing because we only have an hour and a half. Thank you Ms. Cohen. Thanks and I appreciate you all have run the gauntlet not once not twice but three times through governance so to say there's been a couple of boards worth of eyes on this is not an understatement. The biggest thing to me that I really appreciate is what you all have tried to do here is thread the needle between like making sure that we are not in a position where all of a sudden there's something in the news that's a

[00:30:19] you know $900,000 contract and we get asked and everyone goes I've never seen it never heard of it um and so you know we don't want to be left flat-footed and then the other side of that is that schools don't get toilet paper because it happened in between meetings or on the summer break or and we definitely don't want to be in the way of that so i know that this is not an easy place to be i appreciate you taking a crosswalk of trying to look at other jurisdictions and looking at the county policy and and and i think it is it's reasonable for us to be um you know pretty

[00:30:58] tight on on what we especially professional and consultant services that makes absolute sense to me but then having a higher threshold for non-professional you know makes a lot of sense and certainly the goods and services I don't think there's anybody on this board who wants to sit through meetings I've looked at LA County one time and they had like you know hours long meeting where they're literally just approving like you know um tissue and paper towels and all and if that doesn't happen then that's you have schools who go without that and it gets hung up

[00:31:37] at the warehouse and all the things that you said all of a sudden the contract is so delayed that the price of paper goes up and then everything gets canceled so i think i feel like we're in a really good place with this i know there's been so much hard work that's gone into it and you really have worked hard to try to um you know marry really good oversight but not muddying up this whole system how it works so thank you i i'm 100 in support as it was last time of it going um

[00:32:08] onto the board uh regular board meeting thank you ms cohen uh ms keys gamara please yes uh i i agree with the perspectives expressed so far um and i appreciate the the higher i'm understanding the $500,000 to be more for goods and services as opposed to professional. Where we've had some problems in the past have had to do with particularly sole source contracts, and that

[00:32:41] is perhaps where the most reputational risk can occur. So is there a process that we have for review of those i know you say people have to apply uh for a sole source contract to be approved um i when i looked through this i didn't see exactly how those are reviewed uh is that something that we can make available not just to the board but to the public especially those that are likely to complain about sole source contracts i think you're referring to the questionnaire that's

[00:33:19] submitted and then ultimately the sole source justification documentation um so currently those reside in our files and they have been foiled from time to time um we don't post them publicly because they're not part of the contract they're really just the documentation of the contract so we only post the contract documents publicly do we for example include a conflict a potential conflict uh evaluation i know we've been uh we've had some very public conversations about this these particular things could create a problem because

[00:33:58] this person knows this person or whatever i mean do we have a process by which we're trying to make sure that we're vetting that ahead of time in terms of relationships for example i know when i was on the planning commission i had to sign documents that i didn't have relationships with people that were coming before that board?

[00:34:19] The expectation is that all employees are in compliance with our policies and regulations, and I think that is addressed in the policy, conflict of interest policy. Specifically for competitively awarded contracts where a vendor is being evaluated, we have what we call a disclosure statement.

[00:34:41] We don't have that for sole source contracts. I think that might be something we could consider as sort of a continuous improvement step. I hadn't given that much thought, so.

[00:34:58] I know when I've heard about it, that's been the underlying concern, so I offer that just for consideration. Also, the notification for sole source is at the 200 level, 200,000? So what we've proposed is approval of sole source over 200,000.

[00:35:19] Okay. All right. So, I mean, with the exception of perhaps incorporating, I know there's a separate policy, although I know sometimes we don't look in a separate place.

[00:35:39] If I'm doing a contract, oh, let me check that conflict interest policy. So perhaps that's one thing that could be included, that everyone is taking a look at that prior to engaging in a sole source contract. but I the the overall goal at which I'm sure you know and and the board is in agreement that we want to avoid all appearance of impropriety so thank you thank you miss Keyes Gamara miss Tolan followed by mizomation thank you yeah

[00:36:15] thank you for all your work on this a couple of quick questions I just wanted to point out that I think if I got my math right on one of the charts it shows that now the board will be seeing like 75% of all of our contracts right so you know for anyone that's worried about you know are we doing the oversight job that we need to do um that's a large number of contracts in a district this size um i i just had one question i kind of follow this up with um dr anderson's question i just want to make sure i understand if we have a contract that we put out at a certain amount but then i know

[00:36:55] sometimes we add on to a contract you know if the vendor's doing a great job or there's some other function that they can do under that contract we add dollars onto it so where where will the board see it kind of along the way well again the 200 000 threshold would come into play so let's say for example we did a contract for 175 000 but then there was a later that would not come to the school board for

approval but then we there was amendment for 50 000 that took it over 200 000 then that that the whole contract would come to you all after that so yeah we

[00:37:35] have factored in amendments as something that if that pushes you over the threshold then that then it would come to you for approval so a contract might actually come in multiple times for approval just depending upon the amounts that are put under that contract okay thanks I appreciate that clarification and I do really appreciate all of the oversight with the sole source contracts and you know everything that we're taking a look at there and being very careful about I'm very you know aware of why that's necessary but I just want to

[00:38:10] throw out there I mean there are times where we do need a sole source contract or it totally makes sense you know we would do training with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for example I think they're the only people I can think of that have all the boats and all of the you know overnight facilities for our teachers to take advantage of so a sole source contract totally makes sense you know I just want to say that I think for my colleagues in the public that you know a sole source contract is not necessarily a bad thing but it is something we need to pay attention to and I think that's oh I have oh I just have one other comments and maybe you can clarify this for me

[00:38:50] are all of these contracts based on Virginia law we have to choose the lowest bidder so it depends what we're buying and and based on what we're buying how long we think we might need that thing or those services and the estimated value of the contract will make a determine of what the best method of procurement is and the method would be request for a proposal where the evaluation is based on qualifications and experience rather than an invitation for bid

[00:39:26] which is lowest price, lowest responsive and responsible bidder wins. So one's based on price, the other is based on qualifications and experience with the opportunity to negotiate price. So we have both methods available to us. Construction is only bidding. Construction is only...

[00:39:44] Correct. Then that's required by law. The lowest bidder. Yeah. I see. Our construction and some of our maybe grounds and maintenance kinds of things. Potentially. Mm-hmm. I see. So food is often a bid, right? We pick the food vendor that complies with our specifications.

[00:40:03] Right. And as long as they meet the specifications, you have to take the lowest bidder. Yep. Okay. Got it. Thank you. I know we run into problems with that sometimes. But I appreciate the information. Thank you so much for working on this. Thank you, Ms. Tolan.

[00:40:19] Ms. Omeish? Thanks. Thank you for joining us. I guess just to follow up, can you just flesh out a little bit more how we choose which we use besides what you already just said uh so um i mean i think past history will often be a dictator or a indicator of how we're going to move forward uh you know sometimes we attempt to bid and with bidding where we're looking at price being the driver a vendor will come back and take exception to some of our terms and conditions and if they so much as cross out a word or

[00:40:58] condition their price in any way then we consider that to be a negotiation and we deem them non-responsive so we look at those things to determine whether or not it might make sense to do the request for proposal process obviously an RFP takes significantly longer than a bidding process would take I would say bids take 30 to 60 days whereas RFPs take you know three to six months minimum is that

helpful yeah I mean combination of timelines and then factors I guess in the negotiation okay I actually was going to start off by just asking I know that

[00:41:35] this amendment or this policy has been kind of revised several times over the years can you just provide a bit of a narrative as to what if any were the triggering events from your knowledge that led to that and what some of the pros and cons in the conversations around the changes have been I don't know if that I'm sure the chair you know the committee can weigh in here too but

[00:41:55] perhaps we can start with staff and then go to the chair um well i mean all of the questions about consulting and sole source and scored oversight uh came about um before my time and actually before

[00:42:28] your time too um and it was the betel for kids uh contract that received a bit of scrutiny and And that was, I guess, the genesis of our procurement reform. That's helpful.

[00:42:46] And then I guess for the current proposed changes, I'm just curious about what some of the conversations are, because we can kind of rehash the same conversation governance has been having for months, or you can kind of give us, you know, a summary. So as the chair of governance this year, we have actually not looked at these policies again.

[00:43:04] Many of us who were on governance this year were on previous governance committees, and And I will tell you that I was actually the board member under the last board who put forth the motion to increase transparency and accountability of our contracting processes.

[00:43:21] And so when the staff came to me and said, look, this is standing out there. We haven't actually approved it. I said, well, we've had multiple opportunities to talk about it in the past. Let's just bring it to this session today.

[00:43:38] And I really appreciate Chair Sizemore Heiser's willingness to dedicate one session to governance so that we could do just that. That was pulled from consent a few times, right? Yes, please.

[00:43:55] Yes, this has been floating out there for -- before our time on the board, I will say, for several years. And it's been pulled twice from consent. And the last time it was pulled, it was asked to be sent to a work session so we could have a little more of a conversation about sort of the reasoning and the impact of this. So it's taken a little while to schedule that work session, as you know.

[00:44:14] So that's what this work session is about, is this policy as well as many other pending governance items. And so that was a purpose here. It is listed for new business and consent again after this work session. I hope that helps. Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, that's helpful. I guess there are only two things that mainly stand out to me.

[00:44:29] One, I worry about kind of the approval. Now that we've put more of a burden, if I'm understanding this correctly, on ourselves as board members to be approving some of these. it's on consent to approve them it just becomes pro forma and and so what are we yeah go ahead yeah it's it's on consent again I think to mr. Cohen's point about not having hours-long meetings but any board member can pull something off consent right action and then of course of course so miss Sizemore heiser I think what miss Omeish was addressing was not necessarily this policy being on

[00:45:07] consent but the concept of um the approval of contracts uh may be on consent and if i could clarify i believe as a board member it is my job ahead of time to look at what's on consent read what's on

consent and ask any questions that may come up in advance of that and you will see some work further on in this work session about really uh the role of board members right but then with the understanding that we're going to be receiving regular correspondence explaining the contracts

[00:45:43] absolutely yeah um in advance of them actually being posted yeah okay that's fine and then the second just the second piece that stuck out to me or stood out to me uh for staff i guess when you when you allocate a number like 200,000, 500,000, it might be more relevant relative to what the purchase is, right? So if it's buying some kind of service that's going to, I don't know, survey thousands of kids, it'll make sense that the number is this big. But then what about those situations? And I don't know how we would flag them for the board necessarily where the 200,000

[00:46:19] or the 500 doesn't seem proportional to the project, right? It might not raise that flag because it's still within the threshold but may otherwise seem excessive. Does that make sense? Like the number is only big relative to the project it's paying for.

[00:46:40] So what about those cases where the project is not deserving of that amount but it's still under the threshold and therefore will pass under the radar? Well, that's not the intent of the threshold because, you know, we do have this full-blown process where, you know, all the way up to chiefs, look at the, and so if something was, if the value was questionable, that would certainly be caught before it even got to you, because that's part of the review

[00:47:17] of the people that are putting together the proposal and reviewing, you know, offers, or is that they are looking at the price and what we're going to get for those funds. So all of that should be worked out before it actually makes it to an award.

[00:47:34] - I guess ideally, right? 'Cause we would still have this process, the whole reason we have this process is because some things aren't, right, caught, or perhaps the board's judgment on something differs from how staff chooses to proceed? - I don't think so.

[00:47:49] My understanding was that the board wanted greater oversight on consulting contracts and sole source contracts, that that's where their interest lies, and they also want to be notified about big contracts. Again, as Ms. Cohen pointed out, because you don't want to be blindsided.

[00:48:07] You don't want one of your constituents asking you about something, and you don't know anything about it. And so those are the things that we are trying to address with these changes in the policy for procurement. Yeah, no, no, I definitely see how that's responsive to what triggered this.

[00:48:24] I guess I still wonder about situations where it may still be, perhaps in our minds, an irresponsible purchase, But because it's small, proportional to what's being served, it won't meet these numbers.

[00:48:40] But I guess that's something for future consideration. That's somewhat subjective. And, you know, we have, you know, I guess 26,000 people that are experts in that area that are riding herd on that. So, yeah. No, I know.

[00:48:56] But the whole point of the exercise and having the oversight is because all those people making those decisions somehow haven't satisfied the board. right, in what we consider to be valid judgment or how about this, judgment that we feel comfortable being accountable for, right?

[00:49:13] Thank you, Ms. Omeish. And if you can get a majority of the people around this table to agree with you, then you can not approve it. No, no, I don't think to do that. I just identified a potential problem area that I'm concerned about. Thank you very much. With that, I'm going to move on to my colleague, Mr. Frisch, who is co-managing this session today.

[00:49:33] Thank you. Um, I think I was governance chair when, uh, we first put this to the board. So I think the thing that's being lost in this discussion, because so much is changing and believe me, a lot is changing here is the overarching benefit to the school division that we're getting out of this.

[00:49:55] We are significantly increasing the school board's oversight and transparency of contracting in Fairfax County public schools, something, an effort that began before this board was and continued through most of this board's term is finally coming to fruition and that is a big deal. As Ms. Tolan mentioned, we're going up to 75%. Let me give you an example of where this would have been helpful. Cigna. Had this been in place when we entered into our contract with Cigna, the board would have had to approve that contract and we would have had lots of questions to be

[00:50:33] clear to be sure in fact down the road as we consider other policy changes I think it might benefit us to have discussions about what it means for the school division to go out for vendors over a certain amount like if you have a vendor that you have a contract with that you're paying 20 million dollars a year 40 whatever it is and there's a want to potentially change that vendor then the board would be brought into that thinking before we move on to a major change like that but But that's beside the point because what this does is it adds a bunch of new classifications

[00:51:11] of contracts that we will be on the hook for approving. Some of those will be put on or they will be put on the consent agenda. And as this board has shown, we have no problem pulling things off the consent agenda. This policy is proof of that.

[00:51:27] And so I'm very grateful. One thing I do want to note is, and this is something that I'm sure Ms. Corbett Sanders is going to speak to, the question of what happens as a contract grows over time.

[00:51:48] So every kind of conceivable path of questions that the board and previous boards have had around contracts and dollar figures has been gone over. The policy you see in front of you is not the policy that school board members received from staff.

[00:52:05] We made significant edits and changes discussed with staff on numerous occasions. I think we had three or four meetings on it when I was governance chair. I know that there were meetings subsequent to that when I went back to the governance committee. So you know and I have I'm going to read a question from Miss McLaughlin because she's unable to dial in.

[00:52:26] But ultimately I think if there's any questions it's going to be around whether these these dollar figures are sufficient and I for one do not want to be on the hook for ordering toilet paper. So I think that we've struck the right balance, as Ms. Cohen said. To that end, I do want to read this question from Ms. McLaughlin. She says, I think we need to ensure school board approval of consulting contracts over 100,000 and school board approval of large contracts like Cigna Health 1.2 billion over five years. Perhaps you could address the reason that

[00:53:01] we chose the dollar figures that we chose. I think that might help respond to that comment. - Well, part of it was consistency. The Fairfax County resolution changed to 200,000 and we would like to be at 200,000 as well.

[00:53:22] In fact, I think one of ours was 250 currently and we dropped it to 200 just to, 'cause I have a great desire to simplify things where we can. Most of the time, all attempts to simplify must be thwarted, but this time, you know, we've at least made it here to talk about it with a simplified.

[00:53:40] So the 200,000 that's in the purchasing resolution with the county, that was what kind of drove why we chose that amount. I did want to point out that under this current recommendation, Cigna would not come to you all for approval, but it would come to you for notification prior to award.

[00:54:02] And I think we did that this time, but it was a much less formal kind of process. But even under this, that would not come to the board for approval and I think I mentioned the dire consequences of a contract like that that's running out and we need to move to a new one and that would be a problem.

[00:54:28] - Madam Chair, could I reclaim the 15 seconds I gave to Ms. McLaughlin? - Yes, Mr. Frisch. - Do not disagree and that's why a major shift like that should probably be discussed with the board before proceeding to RFPs for um a huge change because we're dealing with the aftermath of what happens when we move into a contract that makes such a large change thank you mr frisch and uh in prior changes like that they were brought to the board so i think that there's an understanding that that should happen uh ms darinac koufax thank you and thank you all for this work and miss burden i was

[00:55:08] going to ask that because i didn't think it was as it was stated that we that would never that wouldn't come to us but can you explain why the signa contract is not like under our to the public so they understand like you're saying under these new revisions the signa contract would not come to us for approval the services provided by signa are the management of our medical program and therefore are not considered by definition a professional or a consultant service thank you it's not a sole source it's actually a non-professional service yes so based on this

[00:55:44] It would be an over $500,000 contract and would go to the board for notification prior to award. Thank you. But thank you. Yes, Karen, you and I were together at those times, previous boards.

[00:56:00] So thank you all for your hard work. I think it's very important that we are at this point where we can do this. And as you said, this reform policy with more transparency will allow the board to, and we will have to do our own work, right? We will have to go and we'll have to be aware and look because as they will be on consent.

[00:56:19] But now, as other colleagues have stated, you know, we pull from consent all the time, but at least they will be there for us. And, you know, I just want to make certain that this is very technical, not technical, but very small, but making certain when they are there on consent, there's links to the actual contracts themselves.

[00:56:41] Because I don't know if that is always the case. I don't think it is always the case. So I think that's important that we have easy access when they come up because oftentimes they're just listed, but we don't have the link to the actual contract. So if we can do that. Thank you very much, Ms. Derenak-Koufax.

[00:56:58] I will take my time, but I see that Dr. Anderson put her placard up. If I can just keep you to one minute and then I will summarize and we'll continue on to the next one. Oh, I'm sorry, Ms. Seizmerheiser will go before Dr. Anderson.

[00:57:17] Just very, very briefly, I think as Ms. Tolan, my colleague, stated that 75% of the contracts will come to the board and they will be up on board dock. And I appreciate Ms. Derenak-Koufax for stating to

have the link to the contract itself.

[00:57:33] But I would recommend perhaps, and it's just a recommendation, that we have some sort of process by which perhaps in the Monday letter, Dr. Reed or some other place where upcoming contracts for vote, there's a little summary of here's what this contract's about, here's whether it's a continuation, whatever it may be. so that way the board has that and knows to say all right let me go take a further look because I'm interested in this or not interested or I have questions just to help that process along I would recommend just considering something like that as as we look and perhaps it's something even a conversation and whoever is in the chair seat and say here's the contracts coming up what

[00:58:07] information has gone to the board to help facilitate that process. Thank you Ms. Seismerheiser I will ask that that actually go through our legal department because of the confidentiality piece Okay. Dr. Anderson?

[00:58:21] Yes, very briefly. Going back to what I asked earlier in terms of mitigating contracts that may show up and the risks that come with it being rejected, I wonder if there's space for some pre-work to build understanding with the board when such contracts are to be on consent so that there could be a building of understanding prior to the public conversation and questions can be asked in order to one give you an idea of where people are in the success of the contract being approved and two to

[00:58:55] respond to inquiries that would influence the approval of such such contracts so we don't end up rejecting them and setting forth in motion all of the things you've described earlier i guess what i'm asking is there an opportunity for some pre-work with board members just to ensure um greater success yeah i mean that to me sounds like a communication challenge that and and everything over 500 000 that's you know not sole source not intergovernmental uh not consulting

[00:59:28] will come to you all for notification again via a division council briefing um and that would be the time prior to the award when questions could be asked and you know education could be provided about the item that's you know slated to be purchased or service so i think that will that will catch all the things that you know there might be an interest in that it dr anderson

[01:00:04] thank you very much so this item is on uh for approval and i will tell you that as somebody who made the very first forum topic on this item uh five six years ago uh i think that this is a welcome improvement i will address the question regarding 100 versus 200 because uh at the time of that forum topic it was 100 and the reason that we um that i feel comfortable with the 200 is because the economy has changed significantly over five years and the thresholds for contracting

[01:00:42] should adjust over time and so i am fine with that but i do ask all of my colleagues to please approve this so that we can move forward and we can ensure the transparency and accountability that we all expect as board members. And I want to thank you all for all your hard work and patience with us. Thank you. Could I just go, sorry, could I just go back, Ms. Keyes-Gamara asked me a question and I want to clarify our sole source request form does have an attestation from the people that are submitting and signing that says that they will not, they

[01:01:21] They don't have any financial interest or will benefit in any way from the selection or award of a contract to that vendor. So I just wanted to close the loop on the sort of perceived conflict of interest with a sole source. Is that helpful? I think it's a little wider than that, if I can.

[01:01:39] Yes, I think this is where it gets into regulations and what the actual forms are. And so rather than spending the time today on that, given the shortage of time, if I I can ask you to work through the superintendent to make sure that we have that transparency in the forms that are being used.

[01:01:58] Okay. Thanks. Thank you. With that, we're going to move on to -- and I hope that the next two items can go quickly. And then that would be the remote participation resolution, which you all have.

[01:02:15] I sent it around over the weekend. primary changes are aligned with the state guidance that we received. The big difference in between the state is that the state is silent on participation in closed sessions.

[01:02:34] And the recommendation was to have participate -- not to have virtual participation in closed MEETINGS UNLESS THERE IS AN EMERGENCY. SO DR. ANDERSON.

[01:02:56] THANK YOU. VERY QUICKLY ON PAGE TWO, YOU TALKED ABOUT A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MEMBER'S LOCATION. CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE IN TERMS OF WHAT IS EXPECTED AND IS THIS ALSO OUR DEVELOPMENT OR SOMETHING THAT IS CONNECTED TO THE STATE CODE?

[01:03:19] It is connected to the state requirement, and all it is is whether you're present in the state of Virginia, I believe. Oh, that's it? You're in the state of Virginia or you're not in the state? Yeah, I'm traveling outside of the state. I see. So it's fairly broad.

[01:03:35] And the other piece that I thought was interesting, and again, if you could just let me know, is this connected to the Virginia requirement? This is page three, reference to personal conflict. It asks to set forth the specific nature of the personal matter. It doesn't make it personal anymore at that point Can we speak to that a little bit? I believe that's in the code I'm gonna ask mr. Foster to speak to that please or into the guidance that we received

[01:04:05] Excuse me. That's correct that that that language is based on the Virginia code. Okay. I just your Anderson Do you have additional questions?

[01:04:22] I think I had one more, but I think you already spoke to it about the closed session, I mean the closed meetings being the newest section. No, I think that's it.

[01:04:39] Excellent. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. I have Ms. Seizmerheiser. Yes, thank you, and I appreciate a lot of the hard work on this. I just had one question on page two, and it states on number one that a remote participation request must be submitted 24 hours in advance after an emergency.

[01:04:56] is that also illness if someone gets sick that day? Does that include as part of emergency? - That would be covered under an emergency. - Okay, I just wanted to make sure that included illness if someone- - - Or if you were in a car accident or if you were, you know. - No, no, absolutely, I just wasn't, emergency and illness aren't always the same thing, so that's why I wanted to clarify that that would be included if someone woke up that morning with a high fever, let's say.

[01:05:16] - Right, exactly. - The idea is that for planning purposes, we do need to ensure that we have CORA. - Oh, absolutely, on page two. - Any other questions on this one? nope that was it thank you excellent so this too is going toward going to approval now if we could move on to school board member professional standards and this too was circulated to all board members ahead of time um the purpose behind this is really to address uh the changes um that

[01:05:54] have occurred with professional with the role of board members now that we have staff working directly for us. I have -- now I'm going to ask -- I saw Ms. Marron put hers up. Okay, thank you. I didn't know if you guys -- okay. So, Ms. Marron, would you like to speak to this? Sure. So, the Governance Committee worked with the draft from our Division Council on this, and at first the draft, if you recall, it really conflated two things. One was school board members interaction with our school board office staff as a matter of supervision, and the second piece was about school board member code of conduct and infractions. Upon conversation, the governance

[01:06:32] committee realized that those issues really should be separate with the former about supervision and matters with our school board office staff being in this policy, which is new, and then the school board member conduct being in the governance manual to be updated. That would include things like consequences or courses of action if there is an infraction of the code of conduct. So for the purposes of this policy conversation, it's just about the interactions with our school board office staff, which as the public may not know, we have a robust staff now of one staff aide or executive assistant per school board member, which is a little

[01:07:11] bit more than was granted a few years ago. And it just necessitates that we be formal about our supervision and processes and all of that. So my personal questions that I had that I wanted to raise to the board was, so involving this policy and in issues where there's a school board member and school board office staff member, you know, disagreement or need for some guidance, the role of the chair and how much the full board is involved in that process, because our chair is not the ex officio supervisor of our school board

[01:07:47] staff. So that remains to be determined. And then what the role is of the chair in matters of conflict. And then I saw at the end it says reconsider how, I'd like to reconsider how "all board members are to implement this policy" because we know if everyone implements the policy, nobody implements the policy. So what can be done to clarify the accountability?

[01:08:08] So I do think that this is worth putting forward and voting on with those additional things being addressed if we don't necessarily address them today, but at least it puts in place a process by which we can start to engage in some of the already available FCPS resources in HR if needed, but perhaps with the one thing being clarifying the Chair's role in that.

[01:08:32] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Marin. I do think that there's some language on the role of the Chair that was added for next steps may include and the role of the chair being notified up front when uh when council may be looking into a complaint and that is if you go to the last page of the guidance or second to last page under complaint resolution i do see that dr anderson also has a question i'm

[01:09:11] I'm going to let people read that, and if you are okay with this, Ms. Maron, if I can reserve your 41 seconds for you to come back to it. Excellent. Dr. Anderson. Kind of similar to what Ms. Maron just raised, and I am looking at Section 3, Part C, where it says what the chair would do.

[01:09:30] But what I don't see here, and I don't think it's necessary with all staff per se, like if it's your individual assistant, obviously no one else needs to be made aware of that. But what if it's someone that is like Ms. Cornell, who essentially supports the entire board?

[01:09:49] What is the communication link to the rest of the board that, one, this is taking place, two, there's an investigation, and three, whatever actions are taking place in the interim and the timeline,

however, we'll come back together. I don't see notice to the full board being included here.

[01:10:10] That's why we brought this to the full board. So if you would suggest that we need an amendment, perhaps under C, that might be the place to put it. Do you need what language now or later? Later when we bring it to the board, when we bring it to adoption.

[01:10:27] And it sounds like that you and Ms. Marin may be working together on some clarification on that. Sure. Okay. Any other questions? Ms. Sizemore-Hizer. Thank you.

[01:10:44] Great. I love the idea of clarifying some of the roles. I know part of the challenge can be in some of these is when the investigation is ongoing, we don't always, from an HR hat, I think you don't always let the person who's investigated know until it's done to prevent any sort of retaliation or potential issues.

[01:11:07] So how do you balance that in the regulation with notice to the board and notice to the members while allowing for an outside investigator? And I don't have an answer, but I'm wondering, and maybe Mr. Foster, is something that you can help um the committee weigh in on right when you're when laying out the process how do we make sure that when we have an outside investigator that the process is able to continue with notice to board members without it then um creating issues um with the investigations as needed to be done if that makes sense so that's something that perhaps you can help work with board members on right how do we have a process yeah that would be great i just want to make sure

[01:11:46] that the process is yeah yeah if you want to connect with that would be great because i do think it's important to really lay out very clearly who knows when how does and in the part of the process to make sure that it's um done with fidelity right and done with in a way that um protects all the parties involved people being investigated the people who are doing the investigation the people who are informing the investigation and the one who may have the um complaint to the issue in the first place we need to protect all of them in this process Ms. Seizmerheiser, may I make the recommendation that we've been working with council on this and that they actually present best practices on this to the board and then a motion be made?

[01:12:25] That's what I was trying to get to. Is that what you're suggesting? Yeah, that's what I'm trying to get to. Okay, make sure that whatever we, amendments or changes, just to make sure that it includes those best practices for HR around these things. That's what I was trying to get. Okay, Mr. Foster. I'm happy to work with Mr. Foster, so.

[01:12:43] Excellent, thank you. ms marin i see your uh you still had oh i apologize i thought you were done no no that was my first question and then um i'm also wondering if mr foster if that it's different that process between whether it's the board member and their individual staff person versus the board member and other staff who may be reporting to either the entire board or to other people in the division so i just wanted to put that out there as well thank you are you are you done miss seizmerheiser okay excellent so i believe it's on thursday for miss seizmerheiser

[01:13:22] can you help me it's for new business on thursday and adoption two weeks later is what i understood yes thank you okay we can do that while you're confirming that i'm going to go to other board members and um mr frisch was ahead it was ahead of um miss omesh refresh thank you um back to section

[01:14:00] c uh from part three um in addition to what's already been raised we need to make sure that there's a mechanism included for when the complaints concern the chair or the vice chair how those will be handled there's usually a carve out in human resources dispute resolution for when the person who's the boss we did this when we were looking at um our student rights and responsibilities and other things so we need to have a solution for that i think that it's so there's some errant commas which is not the name of a alternative band that opened for nirvana

[01:14:37] or anything but there's some syntax things in the policy so i don't know if those are things that should be sent separately or will have to be made amendments but there's like a comma that doesn't need to be there the indent the indenting of the bullets is not consistent etc so those things need to be fixed before we vote on it but in section 3c the second sub bullet which reads consideration and implementation of appropriate remedies i get really hesitant when we're talking

[01:15:12] about a code of conduct without specificity so i think perhaps we should do some thinking about what quote-unquote appropriate remedies are um some of that is laid out in here whether it's you know uh in our governance manual rather whether it's you know a letter to the board member those kinds of things but perhaps we should lay those things out in a little bit more concrete um uh there's other uh changes as well like i believe um section two six um it has a lowercase

[01:15:51] e that should be you know made capitalized whatever um so i look forward to those changes and i'll be in touch with colleagues about what language might be appropriate for um separating out disputes with the chair or vice chair so mr frisch similar to the conversation with dr anderson if you would make sure that you work with legal counsel on that because i know that some language they they're just want to make sure that we are fully consistent with hr law thank you um miss mayor miss omash

[01:16:25] yeah um thank you for this work i i guess i'm happy to follow that because i am concerned about some pieces here um one i do have a question about why we chose to limit it to discrimination or bullying as opposed to kind of the broader swath harassment etc etc mr foster i thought it was inclusive I think that we were trying to be consistent with the process that's currently and the forms that are currently provided by the office of

[01:17:00] equity employee relations really for any employee who is feels that they're being the subject of discrimination or bullying miss Kennedy you have something you want to come and use my okay it also does subject the school board members to 4952 which is discrimination and harassment so I mean it should be all inclusive yeah yeah okay yeah I guess I just want to make sure whatever are there any standard grievances that would be brought forward about a boss or

[01:17:40] another employee that are not covered by that I don't think we've this this would not be the grievance procedure because we you know we've we've talked about that in closed and that is probably something that needs to come back to closed at some point in terms of how to handle a grievance procedure for of this unusual situation.

[01:18:02] - Oh, so there are missing pieces to this, right? - Well, okay. We might wanna discuss that before we approve this. - Yeah, and-- - Kennedy. - Well, this closes the gap that's been created that you don't currently have a process for this complaint.

[01:18:22] So I think, you know, in terms of mitigating risk, you know, immediately getting this heart nailed down, and then I think we could bring the grievance procedure to close to make sure that that is

also, the steps are clear in terms of where those, they would end up at the top okay yeah i mean i guess maybe that would mean we modify this somehow in the future if there is something missing i i mainly say that because i do want to make sure that the standards we hold board members to are the same that any employee would be held to in the system and that anyone wronged by any one of us would have the same process availability of

[01:18:56] process that any other person would um okay so i appreciate that a couple of things i think that to carl's point with the board chair piece um this is no knock on rajna or tammy so this not i'm depersonalizing this i i think just the the way that our board can operate and dynamics and the political nature of it that never can be removed apparently um maybe it's more appropriate to have like the auditor general or the ombudsman or somebody who's just a relatively neutral party um end up overseeing i was thinking superintendent then i was like no that's that's too weird we work

[01:19:31] very often with that person but could it be like the auditor general that we assign her those roles to be part of you know the shepherding of the investigation is there an issue with that similar to the superintendent the auditor general reports directly to the board as well and so that is part of the challenge is that we as board in board governance have to to manage our own behaviors amongst ourselves because you put people at a diff at a in a difficult situation but then in

[01:20:08] the case that it's the board chair what i mean would it be someone on the board mr frisch has some ideas it could be the vice chair that's responsible for that it could it could be any number of things we have to nail that down um it can't be the in the same way that we can't have the people we supervise responsible for our supervision we can't have somebody who is responsible for the process responsible for their own complaints yeah i guess i'm i'm trying to think

[01:20:42] of ways to preserve dignity and and privacy in this i don't know that it's necessarily fair to do it that way so maybe it could be like the person chooses you know a list of three i don't know that it could be and then a choice is like somehow they raffle it or something i i only say that because we all know like the dynamics within the board and some are more charitable than others Because again, in thinking of fairness, that might be something important to consider.

[01:21:16] The other piece that I don't think we clarify here is whether that board member then is able to access an attorney, what role such an attorney would play, do they have access to the board's attorney, or can they ask our own division counsel for counsel?

[01:21:33] What are the limits there? Has that been discussed at all? Or is that something we feel is important to include? Okay. Okay. There was language on accessing an attorney, but that was actually decided to put it into governance rather than into this policy, because I don't think we were, as a collective committee, thinking of it from the standpoint of a board member needing that outside counsel

[01:22:10] in the process. So we should have a closed session on that, I believe. Okay. So I guess we can add that to the list of things to discuss in closed.

[01:22:22] No. Yeah, Tarashna's, you know, pleasure. So I guess the other piece then is informing the board. Again, I don't particularly feel comfortable with that piece. I'm going back and thinking out loud. Maybe it's not even just that person. Yeah, like if that person chooses a short list and then it's like a raffle or it's just random from the beginning so that there's some level of, I don't know, fairness through

arbitrariness, maybe not, but better than skewing it this way or setting it up in a way where it's already predetermined i think i'd be in favor of something like that thank you miss

[01:23:02] omage miss starnak koufax thank you and um you were um you and mr foster were dialoguing the way i was thinking right now um i miss seismar heiser i don't believe this is on new business yet is it no it's not and i think we're going to need a closed session this is um this is not just this policy but it's the role of the chair and the vice chair and the governance and there's legal implications, and I think it is difficult. I'll just leave it at that. There are legal implications,

[01:23:38] and you know when something, I'll leave it at that. I'm not going to give any examples. I was going down that road, but I think it's important that we have an honest and open dialogue enclosed. If people feel there are issues out there that need to come forward, I think that's It's important. And I also think that this is going to take a little bit of time for us to come to a process as to who is in charge of what on this board, and particularly if things go amiss.

[01:24:17] On personnel issues. Correct. Yes. So I will work closely with the chair to schedule such an opportunity. And I thank you for just pointing that out. I was saying that particularly on the personnel issues, which we are discussing here.

[01:24:34] Yes, thank you very much. Ms. Toland? Yes, just a couple comments. I would think, I mean, we've got a board. We have some supervision, some employees, right?

[01:24:50] It's not unlike a corporate situation. So there have to be examples out there that we can follow, right? So I would be interested in just hearing, you know, what some of those are, you know, in this upcoming session that we're going to have.

[01:25:08] You know, if there's someone on a board that has some type of misconduct, I'm sure, you know, corporations, other public entities have had situations like this. What's the best practices? I kind of get, you know, and then we've talked a couple of different things with the vice chair and the chair.

[01:25:27] One, if one of them is the person with the issue, how is that handled? But then if it's another person on the board, does it really make sense to have the chair or the vice chair involved? Should it be someone in HR that is used to dealing with these kinds of situations?

[01:25:46] That would be the kind of thing that maybe if we look at corporations and how they're handling it, some ideas all around that might come up. So anyway, just throwing that out as, have to be places we can go to get some more help thank you miss toll and one of the things that came up in our discussion was um trying to incorporate best practices to the best of our abilities but also recognizing that this is an elected board and it has um different conditions

[01:26:17] on what you can and can't do thank you uh miss keys gamara and then we'll go to go backs i i would say i look forward to that conversation and closed um i'm getting a bit worried about the level of weight that can be placed on the chair and vice chair for conflicts between board members when there are people who are trained to handle these kinds of things and so

[01:26:51] i look forward to getting some guidance from our legal to make sure that we are following best practices um i'll leave it at that i i think that that's that can be that can get pretty heavy and perhaps create some unintended consequences thank you thank you miss keys gamara we will work expeditiously to get

this on a closed session uh now for go backs i have miss marron i also see miss seizmerheiser are you for a go back okay yeah i just wanted to clarify that the reason that this

[01:27:31] policy is needed is because we school board members are in a different context than any other employee whereas in the school division any of the policies that are listed in section 2 paragraph 1 regarding non-discrimination which is a sexual harassment bullying and abusive work environment and discrimination harassment there is a different reputational risk because a school board member is involved, hence the reason to first have it turn to legal. But then, knowing that legal is not an expert in HR facilitation, then we talked about how the HR process could

[01:28:09] be drawn in. However, there's always going to be this reputational and legal piece of it, so there will be some involvement with counsel, even if we do bring in HR, but anybody in the school division is someone that we technically, you know, make decisions about their employment about, so it's not appropriate for anyone to be facilitating this outright on their own.

[01:28:31] So I just do want to be clear that this is about school board member staff and school board members. It's not school board member to school board member stuff. That's a totally different thing. For that reason, I do think that this should remain in a public open session. I don't see why that needs to go to closed session, and I'd love to hear at some point when it comes time to schedule what the merits are of that.

[01:28:53] But again, talking about this regardless, either way, however is appropriate, I think is necessary. And I do agree with clarifying things like the role of the chair in facilitating, if the school board staff has a grievance with the chair or vice chair, how the board is informed, and then the role of legal support, how that is.

[01:29:17] And a lot of these do have implications for our governance manual content, which is a whole nother conversation that then maybe that perhaps i could see that having enclosed maybe but i'd love to hear the rationale for keeping it closed thank you thank you miss marin i can assure you that before any of us go into a closed session we will get a clear uh delineation of what should be enclosed and what should be in uh public miss seizmerheiser thank you and i appreciate that miss marinol may shall confirm with mr foster and attorneys in terms of scheduling and i'll talk to miss corbett sanders as well as the governance chair since this is coming out of

[01:29:53] governance about how to manage that conversation and i would love to hear some of your thoughts on whether we want to have if we do a closed session where they want to keep them separate in terms of the policy regarding board members and our staff and then the governance manual changes regarding sort of border code of conduct with each other um i think there's there's pieces to have or and what's the process for managing both pieces they're separate pieces in terms of this one i know um i think it'd be helpful for us to really codify very clearly exactly what the role is in terms of the board chair and vice chair to sort of manage the process as it's going on versus the

[01:30:32] our division council and any outside experts in doing the actual investigation and those are for two different things and whether we want to leave those pieces there or what that process looks like i think it'd be very helpful to have that clarification we have some in our governance manual right now but it's really not as clear um i do think there is some legal guidance around the legality of different processes and roles of different people so but i'd be happy to circle back with mr foster to find out but i guess the reason i wanted to pull my placard up is that we've had sort of a process when these complaints come to make sure

that we have outside experts who do the investigation it is not the chair and vice chair who do the investigation it is the

[01:31:11] chair and vice chair who were informed of what's happening um along the way but the investigation is done through usually an outside to independent outside investigator when there is a complaint so i just wanted to clarify that for anyone who's listening but i think it's a good idea to have a longer conversation about exactly how to codify those different roles and responsibilities thank you miss eismerheiser miss omage oh okay thank you well with that um this obviously is not ready

[01:31:43] for prime time so we will not put this item on our regularly scheduled board meetings until we have subsequent discussion the next item on our agenda is the electronic signature policy which is a brand new policy for everybody and it was a policy that was brought to governance by mr sethe and asked us to fast track it because of concerns about the needs of people who are

[01:32:18] moving into fairfax county that may that it will facilitate the enrollment process as well as a trial that he wants to undertake next month so with that mr sethe do you want to give a little bit more guidance as to the why sure happy to and thanks for bringing this up we are piloting a product called online registration which will essentially allow parents to be able to fill on online registration forms to get their students enrolled in FCPS. This has been a need for a while and Dr. Reed asked us to accelerate the process to support the families which are moving

[01:32:56] from outside the state outside the country and possibly supporting our military families which generally tend to come in at the beginning of the school year. The initial pilot is to start over the next two months, getting everything ready in terms of training and support.

[01:33:13] And we wanted this policy in place so we can accept electronic signatures for the parents who may start applying when we pilot this application. We hope to have the whole system after the pilot tested and ready to go for the next school year before summer starts. Thank you.

[01:33:30] - Thank you, Mr. Sethi. Ms. Cohen? - Thank you. I really appreciate this. We are one of the last systems to get on board with electronic signatures and I hear all the time from not just our military families but any of our foreign service, state department, in fact on the doors this weekend I had somebody from the state department who's going to put us in touch with the person in this area who is supposed to be over logistics who could use some connections.

[01:34:05] So I said that we absolutely heard it, that we all continue to hear it and that we're moving towards electronic signatures which could make registrations a lot easier you know the other thing i would say is not just for folks coming in but families who are new to the system the hours of our sias which who work their tush is off so i'm not saying they should stay any different time but the vast majority of people are at work during those hours so trying to find time when you're in the middle of moving and you're trying to go up to the school in a very defined

[01:34:38] period of time over the summer when offices are open a much much shorter time um i it is very difficult for families and it really hurts us with our projection numbers so if we could know earlier that families are moving this summer here's their orders here's their address here's their rental agreement um you know they will be able to be accounted for when we start instead of people trying to come in in you know august 31st and and they're big enough to make a new kindergarten classroom and now we don't have any teachers that we can hire this late in the game so

[01:35:16] i think it's one of those rising tides it's going to help so many people in so many different arenas so i'm very very excited that we're joining in 2023 the wave of instructional no just kidding but welcome to i.t thank you so much mr sethe and dr reid for really really making this happen it's one of the number one things that i hear about from families thank you miss cohen miss tolan followed by miss keys gamara yes thank you very much we are by no means a leader in this effort

[01:35:54] i just wanted to hear a little bit more i think mainly for the public in addition to everything that miss cohen just said i would think that um mr sethe can you talk a little bit about how our digital identities might be much safer using this type of procedure?

[01:36:11] So this initial rollout is targeting parent registration so new incoming parents would be able to submit their documents through the through the online system which essentially means that they don't have to bring copies and leave it in the buildings and you know at that point in time they're being stored and managed through the building process. Obviously given it's in one system, we manage common protocols on securing those documents. In future instances, once this policy is passed, it also opens up opportunities for us to do digital signatures across a series of different places where we currently don't have digital signatures. So certainly opening up that

[01:36:50] option of capturing more approvals, signatures electronically from parents, even from staff, like a lot of stuff we do internally in our HR world is possibly still paper-based, so we can start moving all those systems into the this behind this policy so lots of opportunities thank you excited to move thank you miss toll and miss keys gamara yes i i want to say thank you for bringing this forward um i know myself i'm not the only one who's heard from a number of military

[01:37:24] families that have difficulty having to move from one district to the other and and we have not always made that transition easy. So I appreciate this step and look forward to other steps that we can take to improve that process and to support these families who, by no choice of their own, need to move from one place to the other and make sure that their children are connected with services within FCPS, particularly special education services, and it's nerve

[01:38:02] racking based on the reports that I've received to have to wait till they get here to figure those things out I do also look forward to the monitoring understanding the monitoring of how we're moving forward with this and making sure we're verifying like everything else there's a positive and there's a negative and so I'm sure the due diligence will be taken to avoid the negligent of the negative but thank you for bringing this forward you miss keys tomorrow and with that since I don't see any other placards I will briefly speak

[01:38:40] to this I when this came to us I asked the question whether or not it actually needed to come to the board for a policy versus is this operational and I was told that because of the nature of it being the registration we do need a policy for it and so I welcome this improvement I do have one ask and I think we have to be much more deliberate and intentional in how we communicate how

[01:39:13] personal data is protected by FCPS and how we are security you know protocols so that people have confidence that registering electronically is a safe and welcome way that also expedites the process and so mr. Sethi do you want to speak to that because I know you do so much in the area of cybersecurity yeah and I think we'll take that as feedback as we put out FAQs for this we'll make

[01:39:50] sure we list some of those things in the FAQ. One of the changes we started making with this new tool is going to be increased password security for parents. So as parents create new accounts, they're going to be forced to have more complex passwords, which is a critical component. We are also, as part of an RFP, which was put forward, changing our identity management system. And that's a massive shift. We are taking something which we acquired and built over the last 10 years to something which is more modern and appropriate in this day and age, that will allow us to put multi-factor authentication, which we all now see as employees, in front of parent accounts.

[01:40:30] And that, I think, is a much-needed, long-awaited change so we can start tightening up parent logons to systems like student information systems. And I've had questions that what keeps someone from registering a child that is not theirs through this process?

[01:40:48] how would that what type of security protocols are in place to ensure that a parent or guardian is the one who is enrolling the child so there is in the process itself and this is the training we will undertake with the sis they do get engaged in the process to have one verification somewhere in the process for the military families they work with the central registration teams and they have protocols built out for that and as we expand to all schools the SIAs would be the ones who will validate that bit of information before they confirm the

[01:41:24] registration for the families. Thank you. If you could build that into the FAQs that'd be great. Will do. Thank you. Any other questions on this item? Yes, Ms.

[01:41:40] Omesh. Thank you so much. I think you all have heard me say this too many times at this point but I am curious you know that registration is such an amazing opportunity for us to gather all kinds of information about our community that helps us then track our success with them as they grow in our system. And we've seen the limitations of not having all kinds of data, whether it's in tackling mental health challenges, whether it's in the calendar process, you name it. And we continue to only collect the federally required

[01:42:14] racial categories without thinking a little bit more expansively about all kinds of facets of our kids' identities and ways that we might be able to actually target supports and, you know, be stewards of our resources based on our understanding of exposure or lack of exposure they've had to various opportunities. So I know Ms. Youngblood Hall, I saw you here, yeah, I know we had talked about this a little bit before. Has any thought been given to how we might leverage these online forms tools to being more expansive in those ways in a county that speaks over 200 languages

[01:42:51] and being able to generate and then actually I hadn't thought of this before but I know we had thought of maybe even when it comes to something like language right rather than having boxes that people tick off of like what language they speak maybe Mr. Sethi I'm thinking like AI somehow it ends up kind of auto generating categories based on what people are submitting so we we allow people to rather than box them into like five options we allow them to put how they identify and then over time that builds out you know based on like how many people have filled out like the

[01:43:27] main categories and we can always maintain an other that's just constantly there just some thoughts but I just continue to think about guys the fact that we're only looking at like black asian hispanic native white in a system this complex we're missing the mark on so many problems where we don't even know the solutions could be screaming at us if we're able to disaggregate so many things. And it's not just race. You know, talk about gender. I know we talked about faith, socioeconomics. I mean, beyond FRM,

there's just so much. So I don't know if there are thoughts around that. This seems to be a huge opportunity to move in a direction that I think many of us

[01:44:05] see to be obvious. So Ms. Omeish, the purpose of today's is just on the electronic signature piece and the policy associated with that I think your question is broader than electronic signatures and goes into what's the type of data that should be collected on individual students and I think that's the subject of a broader conversation and a conversation that probably requires engagement with the community as to what type of data they'd want to see collected about them as well

[01:44:39] Right, but I guess the signatures reflect consent as to what's required or not, or what's, you know, so I think there's a lot of possibility there. Because I know that some of the concern around it was, well, will families feel comfortable to be asked about XYZ things, but certain things can be optional.

[01:45:00] So I don't know, I mean, yeah. Correct, and we could always look at that policy again. It actually isn't on the governance agenda at this point because we did it a while ago It's last year. Yeah, oh, I remember because when it came I had these same Questions, but I guess I was kicked off of governance by the time y'all voted on it. So Yeah, but anyways, I I guess that's something that I want to continue, you know logging about it

[01:45:38] Yeah, I mean I've been talking about this for three years. I know staff recognize that it's valuable When are we gonna do it? Thank you, Ms. Omej. Mr. Frisch. Just to be clear, the entire board had an opportunity to register their opinions on that policy when it went to consent last year.

[01:45:56] Any one of us could have pulled it off and offered it for a work session or amendments. No one was kicked off of any committees. No one was denied an equal opportunity to participate in the discussions around the policies that this entire board worked on. I think it is a disservice to colleagues to claim otherwise.

[01:46:14] otherwise. Thank you, Mr. Frisch. Ms. Cohen. Sure. I just want to clarify a couple of things, too. In the when we register our kids, you're allowed you write in what your home language is. Is that not accurate? Yes. Yeah. So it's not limited to a choice menu. You just you write in what you're OK. No, no, no. I just know. I just want to be sure that folks when it's your turn. So please go ahead and finish okay thank you so much um and the other is just i think there has um you know

[01:46:54] ms omesh brings up a good point about what other information um could be collected but i do think we've gotten some legal guidance in the past about what we're able to collect on on folks and um because we had the same conversation when we talked about employees and what we were able to collect and not so i didn't know i think again obviously as mr first said we could bring up this registration policy to have a much more robust conversation in context of when mr sethe and his

[01:47:27] department gets all this rolling it may warrant another look at the registration policy because you know maybe there's some different things that we want to reflect and we probably need to update to just talk about electronic records so it may wind up back with us thank you Miss Cohen with that unless people okay miss Omash you've had one go back it you're welcome to another one I'm going to keep it very tight though because we have one more policy that we need to have a go back I just had a turn okay well if we could keep it to less than a minute thank you yeah I just wanted to

[01:48:04] clarify with the legal piece because I do recall working with the legal team on this and you know the concern was that there's a chill effect with asking certain questions which again is why I

mentioned the optional piece for certain families to fill out whichever forms so there are those that are required and then there are those that are optional and that was really just a matter of bored appetite for moving forward with that despite that consideration we're certainly we certainly wouldn't be the first division to do so and I mean I I understand, you know, folks want to share, you know, show what they know and all, but

[01:48:43] I think with the language piece was meant to be an illustration of an example, where with race, for example, we have very limited categories and people have to choose. I still don't fit in any of those boxes today. And there are many more people out there who don't.

[01:49:01] And I think that data can be helpful and useful. And ultimately committee placements are a chair decision, but it requires some interest to work together to be able to move forward on any of this stuff anyway. Thank you, Ms. Homage.

[01:49:17] So we have one last policy to discuss today, and then we have governance priorities. Once again, I do appreciate us being given the opportunity to speak about these issues. The last policy is a policy that was brought to the board, I believe originally by Ms.

[01:49:36] Cohen and Ms. Seismerheiser two years ago and this new policy it was pulled off of consent. There were some input added to it and if I can just have that brought up and I know Ms.

[01:49:52] Marin worked closely with Dr. Anderson and the whole governance committee on the concerns. What is important about what we are bringing to you today is we have changed some of the nomenclature, to parallel what is done by the Board of Supervisors in calling them proclamations, and also giving more flexibility to individual board members to celebrate successes of kids and employees from within their regions, magisterial regions, or other affinity groups.

[01:50:29] So with that, I see Ms. Marin who worked so hard on this. Why don't you go ahead and add your remarks? Great. Thanks. And thanks to Ms. Heismerheiser and Ms. Cohen who worked on this. This is one of those other ones in the category of things that just didn't get wrapped up for various reasons.

[01:50:47] So, yeah, so what the Governance Committee did was a few things. One of them was to try and make more meaningful and well attended the recognitions of our groups. While we love to share in the joy of our students' accomplishments and our staff, it is hard to get to Luther Jackson Middle School at 7:00 in the middle of the week.

[01:51:12] We did look to the county board of supervisors as to what they did and they offered a proclamation. That is actually just for the observances of cultural heritage or we want to honor our staff or have a certain statement about values of the board.

[01:51:31] Those proclamations would be done and they are listed in the adjusted language. We did start by doing a track changes with this governance manual language, but it got very messy. There is some content that still relays, but the proclamation language is new, the description.

[01:51:48] but then the listing of the different observances is what was from that fall or spring, whatever was mentioned, of those different dates. I will say I think we might need to look back at a few of them. Some of them I think March is pretty full, so we might want to reconsider that. I know Ms. Cohen, you could speak to -- you had done a lot of research on which things fall and which days and months, so I'll leave that to you. And then it also pulls in from the governance manual the other ways that are already

listed that a board member can show appreciation or acknowledgment of an activity. So the existing in the governance manual is a letter from the school board chair on behalf of the school board. So that content

[01:52:27] has stayed the same. And then number three, the individual school board members' recognition. Again, so this is that part where we're taking those recognitions of the teams and our staff or anniversaries or renaming of school facilities and that kind of thing to having the individual magisterial members and at large members, or any school board member can of course attend, but really making it more personalized and localized and sharing in that celebration with the staff and students in the community.

[01:52:57] So that is listed there, and the last page is the form that is still from our governance manual, so that is just replicated there. So two things in the parking lot are, what if we have situations, whether positive or negative, where the board will want to make a statement at the outset of our meeting.

[01:53:18] The governance manual doesn't clarify what that is. So that's something that could reside here or in another part of the governance manual. And then the role of the student representative in offering recognitions. Originally this draft did have the student representative offering that recognition, and that could be further fleshed out. But again, the goal here is to streamline this, to make it enjoyable and meaningful. It's gotten, you know, to be very long-winded at times, and I've heard things from -- I didn't mean that negatively, but just it's gotten long, and I've heard from constituents who would prefer to have something more personalized and meaningful, so I hope that we can move this along as it's

[01:53:57] been on the hook for quite some time. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Marin. Ms. Darinac-Koufax, followed by Ms. Cohen, Ms. Pekarski, and then ms seismorheiser all right so on page two under development of process of a proclamation on mid midway through it says conflicting edits will be raised to the chair and vice chair and the maker of the motion has final approval what is publicly posted and brought forth as a motion I think when we were talking

[01:54:31] earlier about having too much authority as one board and being a level board with, you know, when we were talking about chair and vice chair rules, I absolutely do not agree that the maker of the motion has final approval. This has to be a board vote. There can be very widely conflicting thoughts about what should be said, so I would not be comfortable with that.

[01:55:00] And secondly, I guess I am a little, I am a bit, I think I understand, but I want to know what is prohibited and what is not.

[01:55:16] Oh, wait, one more thing on that. I knew I had another thing on that, on the proclamations. I don't think the chair and vice chair actually choose. We, Rachana and I don't choose. Bev has a rotation, Ms. Madeja, as to who has read proclamations.

[01:55:32] So it's not a cherry picking where, you know, somebody gets this because of another reason. So Ms. Madeja, will you confirm that, that you do? a um you have a listing or correct thank you thank you so i wouldn't be inclined to change that either um i would allow the natural rotation to come and then my the thing about i i i hear the advocacy um about individual board members going out to their schools or their communities

[01:56:06] but i do think there is some benefit of coming before the board the full board um and i'm not certain how you delineate that or not like um so there was let me just say this there was there was the time last year where we didn't get to the state championship basketball team and that was very messy and but

that was because we were welcoming dr reed onto our team and um what happened though was we ended up going out into the community and several of us went but it was much less than

[01:56:46] it was like four of us three or four board members that came and we were there with it so what are you talking about which one when we went to hayfield okay so well that was different i'm talking about the one that i experienced it was much less of a like ta-da experience um than it could and should have been so i i'm still not convinced that this is the right way to go and i'm not certain um you know how how we will define that yet but i think there are certain um

[01:57:24] there are certain achievements that it is very lovely to be represented to the whole community because the achievement is so large and i'm not certain if we have defined that yet so i'm still thinking we need a little work there thank you miss darina koufax miss cohen um thank you and thanks to melanie for pulling all of this back together again um i think russian and i met like four times five or six times i presume and i will i will say russian did a lot more work on it than

[01:58:01] i did um and so it's just so i just i appreciate you uh bring it back from the dead um i think you know to mr koufax point i think when we had this conversation at least in governance the idea was that the board member could choose because i recognize for some um for some folks it you know they may think that it works better um you know to have it be at a formal meeting and i we absolutely wanted the intention was absolutely to respect that decision but to allow some more flexibility for like we found a couple of times and that's i think why the lake bradoquan went

[01:58:41] so well we because of how crazy these girls schedules were with gymnastics and everything they did after we could never get the whole team to come and so it was amazing that the kids only a few of them had showed up to that board meeting where it didn't happen and then we were able to do at the school, the whole team came, the coaches, the trainers, everybody. And we coordinated it with the House of Delegates who had a proclamation at the same time. So they got their House of Delegates members, which probably is not a bad idea for all of us to do anyway in a perfect world.

[01:59:17] So I really liked that idea of then it went home in the Lake Braddock newsletter. Everybody got to see it. You know, it didn't sometimes some schools are better than that of others of pulling the pictures off of our website and all of that so we've kind of liked the idea of given some um you know some room for people to do different things um and i know sometimes too it's hard for our large folks like to find their way in navigating like that this is in this district or in this school or whatever and so we hope that like more flexibility allowed at large members to take

[01:59:57] ownership of whatever piece was happening, you know, all over the county and not feel like it got subsumed necessarily by a magisterial member. The other thing that we really worked, and I am fine if everybody wants to just summarily make that change to clerk of the board instead of chair and vice chair about the reclamation assigning, but, you know, I do feel like at the end of the day trying to align ourselves with how the county does it makes slightly more sense I think to the community we have definitely had I like the idea of changing it to a proclamation

[02:00:36] because we've definitely had people have some confusion I tried to look at as many other systems as I could and it seemed more systems than not used proclamation and not resolution and you kind of think proclamation evokes what you know you want this thing hanging on your wall instead of of just the vote. And since the resolutions took a second and voting and all of that, we felt like that was slowing down some of the time. So thank you. Thank you, Ms. Cohen.

[02:01:06] Ms. Pekarski? They're important to have, but it takes up so much of our business meeting time. And we bring people there to come share their opinion, and then we make them wait for like

[02:01:26] Over an hour, sometimes over an hour and a half. I mean, honestly, it's just it's embarrassing a lot of times. So my advocacy will be instead of saying that we can speak to it per Robert's rules, we have got to pick a time, whether that is two minutes, three minutes, whether it's just, you know, pick two, three people can speak.

[02:01:50] I'm open to ideas but even if we all just spend two minutes talking that is a half an hour with transitions and we have had board members speak to these for over multiple board members over 20 minutes just one person we just we have got to fix that it is a serious problem public doesn't like it I certainly don't think it is an effective use of my time and I would like to see something put in there i'd like to hear people's opinion on it i'll offer my own amendment if i don't hear anything

[02:02:25] from anyone on that um you know if there are ideas about how to streamline some of these if we you know don't do them every year or we alternate years i don't know but i think whatever we can do to try to streamline these is extremely important i don't i don't have a a very strong opinion whether we go out to the schools or we we do it in front of the board maybe we offer let people pick what makes you know the most sense for them and makes their life easier

[02:03:01] and and we can do it either way some communities some schools it's just is not an option for people to bring their kids after they work a full day or they're still at work so you know those kids should have that recognition as well. So maybe that's kind of a compromise.

[02:03:20] - Ms. Pekarski, I expect we will be taking this back to governance at our next meeting. Ms. Seizmerheiser. - Thank you. - Yes, Ms. Seizmerheiser followed by Mr. Frisch and then Ms. Keyes-Gamara. - I think she read my mind 'cause I have written down her time limits on speaking to this for the same reasons.

[02:03:39] I think sometimes then we get to the work of the board and some very important conversations really late where the public may not be watching anymore. So I did see that the proclamations still require a board vote and a motion and a second. I was wondering if the space to sort of, again, have a rotation where it's just read by somebody and we can figure out some, as opposed to the motion and the vote and the second.

[02:03:59] Just a thought. I'm not, you know, sticking to that. But I know currently we have some resolutions and recognitions and one is read by a member and the other one's a vote. So just a thought there. I agree with the time limits as well as maybe limiting who or numbers. I don't know how that would look, but I think that's a conversation worth having.

[02:04:17] I also want to thank Ms. Marin for all her work to pull this together, and thank my partner in crime here, Ms. Cohen, for the first round that we did on this. I did see that there's still something in here, but certain ones were suggested to be read by the student representatives, so I don't know if that's a conversation to go back to governance.

[02:04:32] I do think it's important to have a role for the student representative in these, whatever that looks like. I want to just clarify what Ms. Janet Koufax said, I agree with her. don't assign these at this point there's a rotation board members have the right to say i'm not i don't want to do one this month and it goes on to the next person in the rotation um board members can say this is an area that's particularly

passionate for me and ask make that ask but it doesn't come to us it's the clerk that does that um i just want to clarify on here it says any the letter from the school board chair just to say on behalf of the board not just a letter from the chair individually um it just says right now the letter from the chair but i also just my biggest advocacy

[02:05:10] here is um i don't think the maker of the motion should have final approval either this is the board's proclamation right and it's coming from the board as a body so i think it's important for whatever process we put in here that the board is a body um i will just say i think it is important to have a process to know how edits are going to be um accepted and who's in charge of that so i don't know what that looks like but you know and if the person who's reading it doesn't want to read it that's fine but it is the board's proclamation the board's resolution so i would just my ask to governance perhaps would be to come up with a really tight um process for who puts the

[02:05:45] original draft out there what's the timeline for that who's responsible for taking edits who's responsible for okaying edits how does that process look i think that's that's super important because we want the what the board as a body is celebrating to be what's out here so um that would that i don't mind reducing these uh ms call and i spent a long time on on looking at these heritage and staff and volunteers and trying to sort of combine categories to reduce the number that we did. I'm happy if governance wants to take a second look at those. That is totally fine, but I know that's what we tried to do. And as far as going out to the schools versus doing it,

[02:06:22] I would agree with Ms. Bukarski. I think let's leave a little flexibility in that space because if we're recommending, let's say, a staff member, they may want to bring their family and their family may not be available at the school. So I think having some flexibility there would be good. So I will stop with one second left.

[02:06:40] - Thank you, Ms. Seismerheiser. Mr. Frisch. - I also think that the board should be the final arbiter of the language. In part because the last piece of this, the recognitions by individual board members give the latitude of sending a letter or presenting a commendation to a group or a person where they can put their own two cents into it.

[02:07:06] I often wonder if that part of our meeting more about us or about the people we're recognizing and um i've i've wondered a lot and i've never asked because i think i know the the answer um how many people download the photos that we take at those meetings and i bet i could probably count the number of downloads from the last six months on one hand um you never you might see one or two of them used online i think i've certainly seen two of them used online over the last three years so at some point maybe i'll ask occr to let me know what the download data is for the photos that we take at board meetings

[02:07:43] you have to really dig to find them in the first place and i don't think we notify people that they're available additionally i'd be perfectly fine with no speeches for any of the recognition or whatever we're calling the proclamations now zero speeches and if somebody wants to address the the big occasion that we're celebrating on that day they can do so in their board matters But we have to agree that board matters is not going to be on the chopping block if that's the case.

[02:08:12] Now, that shouldn't be a problem if we're eliminating the two hours of proclamations and speeches and whatnot at the beginning of the meeting. We should have plenty of time to not be at midnight or one o'clock in the morning by the time we get to board matters. I'd be interested in knowing if we've ever surveyed past participants or recipients of these things to feel out how they feel about coming

out to Luther Jackson or whether they would prefer would have preferred to receive their proclamations or recognitions at their schools or at other events. So I think there's a little bit more work to be done here. It wouldn't

[02:08:50] be a bad thing to do a snap survey of let's say the last three months of participants to see what they think and get some some quick answers back on it. I of course think that we're missing things that we could be issuing proclamations for but I think that's why we're here in the first place is because we've tried to do absolutely everything and I am willing to sacrifice the few things that I would like to have added knowing that everybody at this table has a few things that they'd like to have added and then we're back at square one. Thanks. Thank you Mr. Frisch. Ms. Keyes-Gamara

[02:09:28] followed by Ms. Omash. I appreciate everybody who's tried to work on this. I don't think there's any any really easy answers. I think sometimes we kind of run into we clash with how can we be more efficient against what we're used to doing and and sometimes that creates a little angst in and of itself i do support the super the student rep having a clarified role i i am not real uh

[02:10:01] supportive of the idea of nobody speaking um i do you know i personally have had people make comments to me of feeling that they were recognized by board member comments and so perhaps there's maybe a way to shave those uh perhaps a lottery of who would speak at each one so that it's not 12 people i i know that there's this group thing that can happen where one piece person speaks and they go oh my goodness i wasn't going to say anything but now i have to so um maybe maybe there's a maybe there's a middle ground uh here i do agree with the board having final approval

[02:10:40] what is being spoken on behalf of the board and obviously I think typically we all have an opportunity to give comments but the final the final product should be something that we all agree with I'd like to propose that you know if we're having students come after these activities and I know my boys would you know it's it's that's when I got my frequent flyer driving miles and we're you know we land in Luther Jackson and all of that and so I just wonder if we want to think about perhaps moving them up in the meeting. I know that there are people

[02:11:16] who want to make public comment, but for the most part those are adults and these are students who have a really stressful, you know, sometimes very stressful calendar that they're trying to keep up. I think we may be able to identify other time-saving measures such as the lottery.

[02:11:39] may be someone who feels particularly strongly about a certain thing I'm happy to give my time if I don't have those same feelings so there may be some agreements we can make ahead of time so that we know how much time that we need I also support a survey I think sometimes coming to the school board meeting and being recognized by those who govern the school board the school system is is a big deal to some families but of course I think we can we can flush that out with with some of the things that mr. Frisch meeting mentioned

[02:12:15] and then the last thing I want to say is you know I would also like to figure out a way I know sometimes I have seen situations or not events that perhaps I wasn't aware of and I didn't see an email on it or anything and so we may want to also include in this ways for board members to understand how they can participate in the community in recognizing students. So thank you. Thank you Ms. Keyes, Gamara, Ms. Omej. Yeah thanks. I guess I you know this is such an interesting conversation in thinking of how we how we identify these and how

[02:12:51] we're fair and what voices are uplifted and I think about like if we're to try to be purposeful about this and thinking of this being an opportunity to uplift voices that are otherwise overlooked throughout the year or could you know be it could be celebrated etc i wonder if we can actually rethink the time we spend and offer it as an opportunity to hear about i don't know like what are what people in our division are doing around this celebration or give slots i don't know if it's like five two minute slots or something to sometimes we have

[02:13:29] like members of organizations or heads of organizations that represent or show up for the picture or whatever to hear about like what it's what it's like in their experience being a custodian being a teacher being a whatever um you know that might be more valuable than than our opining around any of these topics I'm wondering if that could be a way to use that time if we're claiming celebration of of these various groups um so something to consider uh

[02:14:00] Because I'm inclined to want to just not have anyone speak on it, but then the whole point is for it to take up some space, and the whole point is for it to be at the center for a moment, and hearing the amazing stories of our students, staff, whatever, related to that thing could be really helpful.

[02:14:19] The other thing is I wonder if, I know our equity team is already stretched thin, but if someone can give some thought, ideally the equity team, to just what are some of the pieces that are nationally celebrated, what are ways we can think a little more expansively, do the things that we celebrate properly, support and represent our community.

[02:14:45] that's constantly a concern for me with all of this it i mean we happen to celebrate the ones is our standard going to be federal federally recognized things is it like virginia celebrate like how do we decide what ends up on this list and what doesn't um like i remember there was disability heritage month we do inclusive schools week and we do disability acceptance but then what about heritage month like why is it this not that or even the immigrant heritage thing right as a constituent brought that up and we've added it and then where the resolutions fit in all this because that could potentially give more weight in certain areas that make it unfair

[02:15:24] to others so i i don't think we can have this conversation separate from resolutions um and i'd also try i'd also really like for us to show up at the table not with perhaps our own personal lenses into this but in really trying to think of like how we're being representative of the the community and of the county and what we're missing because I can only imagine I mean I can think of a couple things in my own mind but I'm sure that there are so many more that I'm not even able to think of because we haven't oh sorry I didn't even look at the time but yeah so so I guess this is scheduled for a work session in my understanding no this is the work session so we

[02:16:03] will take it back to governance with everybody's input and everyone checked out okay no I don't see everybody checking out but okay thank you so I see two placards going back up again miss but before we go to the two going back up again miss Toland please I'd be quick I'm just quickly just running through I definitely support if board members are speaking to have a time limit but I did also like some of

[02:16:42] ideas that were brought up later um perhaps if we just had if we were still doing you know with a proclamation if a board member presented it and it was seconded if just those two people spoke i mean generally we have a procedure where it kind of goes out by email these are the things coming up for this week you know does somebody want to first and second these um things so people that felt very strongly

about those topics you know could have the opportunity to be the ones that speak um i have been at some of the board of supervisors um proclamations and of course their

[02:17:18] meeting goes on for hours and hours and hours as well but they generally i think do have people from the public or the recipients of the proclamations have an opportunity to thank them and and speak and so i i do kind of like that idea i think we would limit it to maybe two board members maybe two people from the public or something to try to keep it smaller but um anyway and then just a couple of other quick comments is um i really do feel that the maker of the motion in this paragraph here um should not have final approval that it should be a board um proclamation and i also like

[02:17:57] the idea of um for recognitions that um you know people receiving those would have a choice as to if they would like to get that at their school or if they would like to come to a board meeting. I think for some of the people that, you know, we've recognized, I know from my district, they really were excited about the opportunity to come to Luther Jackson. So those are my comments.

[02:18:22] Thank you, Ms. Tolan. So we have go backs. I'm going to limit go backs to one minute. Ms. Cohen followed by Ms. Seizmerheiser, Ms. Keyes, Gamara, and Ms. Omash.

[02:18:38] Yeah, I just wanted to address that different equity office, different superintendent, different. So I do recognize, but when Rush and I did this originally, we sent it to equity, we sent it to ISD.

[02:18:54] I think we even sent it to Title I. We were trying to, MSAOC, to try to make sure that folks felt like, what are we missing? But I think it's never the wrong time to reevaluate that. So if it's coming back to governance, maybe Dr. King with everything that's on your plate.

[02:19:10] But if, you know, if you all don't mind just giving it a cursory review and see if we missed something, if it's coming back to governance anyway. And just to that point, I think that that's what's at root of the problem here is that when Ratch and I looked at it and we were trying to consolidate these because they were overtaking our meetings at the time, We all are going to have to give something, and I don't know what that looks like.

[02:19:38] I like your idea of lottery or different. I agree. Something has to give, and maybe we can come to a consensus on what it is. Seizmerheiser. Yeah, similarly, I agree, and it took us a long time to kind of streamline this list, and I think it's worthwhile taking a look at it.

[02:19:58] Dr. King, if you have time to look at it, maybe Madam Chair, as the Chair of Governance, take a look at that to make sure this list. And I know we struggled even talking about how many per month is too many or too few without cutting out, you know, trying to have the right balance of recognizing, you know, the variety of groups that we have and not leaving anybody out, but not having 10 per month that overtook the meeting.

[02:20:20] And we really struggled on that piece. So I think it's worth having another conversation and maybe as board members weighing in on what is that right balance. And maybe you can have more groups recognized if we have fewer speaking to it, right? for example if we're reading four proclamations but we have only two members and i'm making these numbers up so you know whatever it may be but if we have more members speaking to the proclamations we may want to have fewer in terms of the amount of time so i would just put out for governance to have that conversation of what's the balance like board members speaking versus the number of groups that we can recognize so this is a thought thank you miss seizmerheiser

[02:20:56] uh miss keys gamara followed by miss omage just one more consideration because i'm i'm picturing a menu, perhaps, of ways that we can do this. I may want to crawl under the desk when I say this, but we, you know, we've had public hearings where people have an opportunity to come and speak on whatever they want.

[02:21:17] I mean, we may need to have something, perhaps, at the end of quarters where our young people are doing amazing things, and we just want to highlight student success, right? And we designate a certain time to do that in a certain hour or so where we allow that and then, you know, we use the lottery system and everybody feels like we touched various groups that perhaps we haven't been able to do in the past.

[02:21:41] So I'll add that to the list and don't get mad at me. Thank you, Ms. Keyes-Gamara. Ms. Omash? Yeah, with that, I was actually thinking the equity office might collaborate, but really maybe the chief experience officer could be a better fit for this.

[02:21:57] I don't know, seems to be kind of in your wheelhouse, but just some thoughts, some collaboration between those two teams would be good. The other thing I was gonna ask, so what can our expectations reasonably be from here for the Governance Committee? 'Cause I know several of us mentioned things.

[02:22:14] We're gonna eventually see this again. I'm hopeful that it's reflective of some of the comments made, but I guess I wanted to hear. - So Ms. Omeish, you may have seen the very detailed email that I sent out over the weekend. you can expect a similar very detailed uh follow-up on this as well as with the school board conduct policy and it will be after the governance meeting a governance committee meets next and

[02:22:48] we'll have more to come back with on it it's not clear that if we build all of this in hopefully we can avoid having another work session but that we can bring it for adoption point of clarification yes mr can attend and participate in governance committee they just can't vote unless they're a member right that is correct and they are welcome to come we love seeing visitors okay um ms seismer heiser before just point of clarification if we if based on what happened with governance it could come to action instead of consent if you do want to have

[02:23:25] conversations on it as well so correct but it really depends on we need to have a meeting so i don't make commitments without knowing what i'm committing to so thank you we have one last item on the agenda today and i know that we are half an hour or 25 minutes over in the memo that i sent to everybody we talked about the governance priorities and a process going forward there are three items that we talked about. And if you could provide input or feedback to us, we'd really appreciate it. The first item is to have a process by which the beginning of every

[02:24:04] governance committee year, which usually is the beginning of September after committee assignments or in July, depending on the chair's prerogative, once those committee assignments are done, that the Chair of Governance would work with the Superintendent and identify two areas of the governance to focus on for the year, because as Ms. Marin has noted and so thrilled that she does, that there are a huge number of policies that have not been updated,

[02:24:43] And we need to have a structure in place that allows us to go through that. So this year you will see our business processes, our procurement, and our HR policies coming to you for review and changes

adopted based on the input from the superintendent.

[02:25:02] And that process would be built into our governance manual. The second thing that you will see in the note that I sent to you all was a recommendation that at the beginning of any individual board meeting that we would actually have an adoption of the agenda so that we have everybody committed to sticking with the agenda that is before us on the table and with that if you have any comments on either one of those or anything else listed in that note although i think we've covered everything today please let us know and i'm

[02:25:38] I'm going to try to give you all a gracious thank you for spending a half an hour longer than was expected. Ms. Marin. I just want to say, I think this is time so well spent. We just got through a ton of stuff in a short amount of time, like having these regular governance updates I think really can help us.

[02:25:58] So I hope that we can schedule this more often. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Marin. And with that and without objection, I would like to adjourn this meeting.

