MACHINE TRANSCRIPT · CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Fairfax County School Board Meeting, Thursday, March 30, 2023

Date	Thursday, March 30, 2023
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	3h 9m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlYKFHZeb2s
- 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.

[00:22:26] This March 30th, 2023, regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board will now come

[00:29:47] to order. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, and a performance of the National Anthem of the Poe Middle School Symphonic Band under the direction of Zachary

[00:29:56] Gomez.

[00:31:54] Agenda Item 2.02. In order to comply with Section 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia, it is necessary for the Board to certify that since the Fairfax County School Board convened a closed meeting ON MARCH 30, 2023, TO THE BEST OF EACH MEMBER'S KNOWLEDGE, ONLY PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS LAWFULLY EXEMPTED FROM OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS AND ONLY SUCH PUBLIC BUSINESS MATTERS AS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE MOTION CONVENING THE CLOSED MEETING WERE HEARD, DISCUSSED, OR CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD IN THE CLOSED MEETING. DO I HAVE A MOTION? MS. OMEISH, SECONDED BY MS. CORBETT SANDERS. ALL THOSE IN FAVOR?

[00:32:28] That is Ms. Bukarski, Ms. Cohen, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Darenak Koufax, Ms. Corbett Sanders, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Omeish, Ms. Marin and myself. That motion passes. Agenda Item 2.03, Announcements. Dr. Anderson is absent this evening.

[00:32:47] Mr. Frisch has submitted a written request to virtually attend this evening's meeting due to a personal conflict. Ms. Keyes-Gumar has submitted a written request to virtually attend this evening's meeting due to a medical conflict. All those in favor of approving those requests, please raise your hand. That is Ms. Marin, Ms. Omesh, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Corbett-Sanders, Ms. Derenak-Koufax, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Bukarski, and myself.

[00:33:11] That passes. Welcome, Mr. Frisch and Ms. Kees-Gumar. Ms. Kees-Gumar, can we do a mic check really quickly, please? Good evening, everyone. Good evening. Welcome. Mr. Frisch, can we do a mic check, please, really quickly? Hello. Hello. Welcome.

[00:33:27] Welcome. If you would like to review a copy of the agenda and any agenda item that is being discussed tonight, That information may be found at the back of the auditorium or on the website at fcps.edu backslash school board backslash board docs.

[00:33:44] Tonight's meeting is being broadcast on Channel 99 and live streamed on the website at fcps.edu backslash tv backslash channel 99. Agenda Item 2.04, Arab American Heritage Month Resolution. After reading all the recognitions and resolutions, the board would like to invite each recognition recipient to join us for a photo in front of the dais area.

[00:34:06] I call on Ms. Keys-Gamara for a resolution. Thank you. Whereas April is a time to celebrate Arab American heritage and culture and pay tribute to the contributions of Arab Americans and Arabic-speaking Americans, and whereas Americans of Arab heritage are very much a part of the fabric of this nation and Arab Americans have contributed in every field and profession, The Arab Americans' contributions in medicine, law, business, technology, military, government, and education have been and continue to be an invaluable part of American pride.

[00:34:42] And whereas Arab Americans come from 22 Arab nations and are ethnically, politically, and religiously diverse but share many values, and whereas people of Arab descent have shared their vast cultures, experiences, and traditions with neighbors and friends who are citizens and public servants whom are interwoven within the greater fiber of the United States, and whereas, unfortunately, many Arab Americans and people of the Middle Eastern heritage are still combating post-9-11 anti-Arab sentiments and hence face challenges every day, and

[00:35:19] now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board recognizes April as National Arab American Heritage Month in support of the many contributions Arab Americans have made to our society.

[00:35:38] - Thank you. Is there a second? - I'll second. - Ms. Marin, Ms. Keys-Gamara, would you like to speak to your resolution? - Yes, it is always a pleasure to celebrate the great diversity we have within Fairfax County.

[00:35:55] We benefit from so many cultures and today we celebrate Arab Heritage Month. According to the Arab American Institute, Virginia is a state with the 10th highest population of Arab Americans. A survey of Fairfax County public school students show Arabic is the second most common non-English language spoken at home, accounting for 3,200 families across the county. Throughout their time in the United States, Arab Americans have contributed in significant ways. Whether it was through their everyday work, extended family, broader community

[00:36:32] networks, and integration into civic life, their presence along with that of other immigrant groups has helped to form our nation. Arab Americans have made substantial impacts across a variety of professional and occupational areas and we have such notable Arab Americans as Donna Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services and President of the University of Miami; Ralph Nader, a consumer advocate and candidate for president; John Sununu, Governor of New hampshire and chief of staff to george hw bush krista mcauliffe teacher and astronaut killed in

[00:37:12] the challenger tragedy helen thomas white house correspondent and and journalist danny thomas comedian and actor and founder of the saint jude children's research hospital steve jobs co-founder of apple and michael debakery renowned cardiac surgeon whose work was instrumental in changing heart surgeries, including pioneering the artificial heart. Today, I'm happy to celebrate along with my colleagues, the fabric of our nation that is so diverse, that has been enhanced by the

[00:37:47] contributions of Arab Americans. I, for one, am grateful and acknowledge their contributions. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Merrin, would I just speak to you a second? Yes, please. I'm happy to see some 100 mil constituents here. Welcome this evening. So as I was reflecting on this resolution this evening, I did some research, and I learned that almost 4 million Americans are Arab Americans, that 87% of those individuals have been born in America, and that they are generations of families

[00:38:24] here, and that, yes, indeed, 10 states are where many Arab Americans are located, including Virginia. And then I went to history.com, and I said, you know, what's the history of the timing? Because I know about Irish immigration in the 1820 1860s especially being from New York it was very big up there everybody knows no not no Irish need apply and how the Irish were relegated to only certain jobs 1850 is a Chinese immigration wave until the Chinese Exclusion Act the war the wave between 1880 and 1920 where our Eastern European immigrants came from my own ancestors included and then by 1910 an estimated three-quarters of New York City's population consisted of immigrants

[00:39:02] And yet that history.com website on the immigration timeline does not mention the wave of the Arab immigrants that would become Arab Americans. It has a whole other page for Arab American history in which it says there that it was the late 1800s when we had our Arab immigrants arriving.

[00:39:23] So during that time when all those Eastern Europeans are arriving. But you know what? I don't remember learning about that in school. And I don't remember my kids learning about that. How is, I think it's a perfect statement of how when we look at equity and how we are teaching history, to look at where the holes are.

[00:39:40] There was this whole population of people coming, and it's not even in the mainstream immigration list, you know, in this timeline. So, you know, I also think about just the humanity of people, and I was reflecting, I remembered that the woman who, my friend who did my marriage ceremony with me and my husband, she was Yemeni, Yemeni-American, not first generation.

[00:40:00] and then I remembered my fifth grade Turkish pen pal who came here and the thing that drew me to them was that they were really you know they were great people and our values aligned and I thought that their cultures were really interesting and that's the thing about I think that we honor Arab American heritage this month but it's just like we honor all of the heritages it's the humanity that unites us so I think that we do have work to do in our history curriculum in the language arts curriculum, the works we put in front of our students, and how we talk about who makes up this country and when, because we obviously were not taught the full story, and we must teach it

[00:40:34] to our children. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. McLaughlin? Thank you. Seeing no one else who wishes to speak, Ms. Mish? I thought others would speak, but I'd like to take a moment to welcome and thank our Arab leaders and community members who have joined us in the room today, and to celebrate them and the thousands of Arab families in Fairfax County and FCPS. So Dr. Emel David, Warren David, Amal Jarada, Rab Al-Thiri, and others, the Arab America Foundation,

[00:41:12] National Arab American Women's Association, NAWA, the Virginia Coalition for Human Rights, the Arab American Institute, the New Dominion PAC, and the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, ADC, and their representatives. Thank you all so much for joining us. And I have to say, the Arab America Foundation was one of the founders of this resolution and pushed to get it recognized on a national level.

[00:41:33] So thank you all for your work. Please, let's hear it for them. Fairfax County is home to one of the largest Arab diasporas. Other than English, obviously, Arabic is the most common language spoken by Fairfax County Public School families after Spanish.

[00:41:52] This resolution is a nod to our Arab students and staff. We see you and we appreciate you. Your identities don't need to be hidden nor erased for you to be accepted and a part of this system. Last year, I spoke in celebration of the rich diversity of Arabs while pointing out problems of how we continue to see the dehumanization of the Arab experience.

[00:42:10] I also spoke about the cultural erasure of Palestinians, a cause dear to many Arabs and Arab Americans, and the need for all of us to teach truth and stand against efforts to censor discussion around Palestine and the Palestinian people in our schools. One year later, I continue to hear story after story from both students and staff where they have been prevented from speaking about their Palestinian roots or experiences.

[00:42:33] As a Libyan American, today I'm choosing to wear a modern interpretation of the Palestinian recognized for its traditional multicolored cross-stitching patterns. So, like I did last year, I'll continue to choose the path of education in an effort to move us in a better direction in the future. So two things. Number one, I'd like to introduce the term Orientalism, used by Professor Edward Saeed in 1978, which refers to an essentialized depiction of Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies as unchanging, as stagnant, in contrast to a vibrant and always progressing west, as if those things are polar opposites. In other words, that

[00:43:12] backwardness is inherent and part of the nature of Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies. While this sounds like a crazy idea, probably to those who are in the room, it describes something we actually see everywhere. For example, we all know Disney's Aladdin, where the chorus lyrics in the first iteration say, where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face, it's barbaric, but hey, it's home. Aladdin is not even from a real country. He's from a place called Agrabah, some hodgepodge mishmash of brown people whose identities are otherwise unknown.

[00:43:45] It paints the angry, sensual, devious, and aggressive Arab man, and the oppressed Arab woman whose father controls her destiny. These are Oriental tropes. We ought to learn more about interrogating and seeing where they seep into our own thoughts and assumptions about Arabs.

[00:44:02] And so, as this resolution notes, they have only gotten worse since 9-11. For educators and students. Number two, I would like us to be thoughtful about interrogating what we're learning in our

history textbooks or the required reading in English. Pull out any and all references of Arabs and in history, ask yourself, what are the words being used? In what contexts are they mentioned? And in English class, are they even mentioned at all? What narratives are being pushed?

[00:44:30] Most recently, you'll likely find tropes of war, violence, deserts, and harems. But imagine if instead we were taught truths about essential contributions to world history, to science, to medicine like heart maps and surgical tools that are still relied on to this day, math in what's our current numerical system, founding the world's first university, navigation using the astrolabe, and so much more. Or if we learned to dream like folks who widened our imagination by reaching for the moon and stars, quite literally, like Dr. Farooq Al-Baz, who was responsible for studying the geology of the moon, which was an essential part of the Apollo 11

[00:45:05] moon landing. So I urge you to learn a little bit more. If you're the nerdy type, the book Orientalism by Edward Said is the foundational academic work in this area. If you're into the arts and entertainment or prefer another medium, the documentary and companion book Real Bad Arabs on How Hollywood Vilifies Arabs by Dr. Jack Shaheen, expert in this topic, is a great resource.

[00:45:29] I encourage educators to consider either of these tools in their lesson plans, and I hope that we can all celebrate the beauty that our community has to offer. We owe it to our kids and we certainly owe it to a brighter future. Thank you, Ms. Omeish. With that, I will call for the vote. All those in favor, please raise your hands. That is Ms. Marin, Ms. Omeish, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Corbett Sanders, Ms.

[00:45:58] Dernot Koufax, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Bukarski, myself. That motion passes. Agenda item 2.05, VSBA Business Honor Roll Resolution. I call on Ms. Tolan for a resolution. Sorry. We're as public schools and local businesses and not-for-profits are an integral part of this community. And whereas many local businesses and community organizations play a crucial role in supporting

[00:46:33] our schools, and whereas the economic health of our community, state, and nation depends on a strong public school system, and whereas collaboration between local public schools and local businesses and community organizations strengthens schools and the business community alike by providing a well-trained, healthy, and highly educated workforce. And whereas, an excellent public school system is vital to the quality of life in Fairfax County and fundamental to preserving

[00:47:09] a strong democratic society now and in the future. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax county school board names the children's science center the greater washington partnership and real food for kids to the 2023 virginia school boards association business honor roll we are showing appreciation for such entities and their ongoing support of fairfax county public schools your work has aided this community in focusing on the goal of providing the best public schools we can for

[00:47:46] every child who attends them. I so move. Thank you. Is there a second? Second. Mr. Frisch, Ms. Tolan, would you like to speak to your resolution? Yes, I would. As we are saying already in our new strategic plan work, schools cannot do this alone. Without these key partners in our community, it would be impossible for us to afford the number of opportunities that we have for our students.

[00:48:21] So tonight, we are happy to honor three organizations, the Children's Science Center. They are an FCPS Ignite partner, and they've been a partner for the last five years, regularly presenting Family Science Nights involving a host of volunteers who provide dynamic hands-on STEAM activities to students.

[00:48:43] This school year, the Children's Science Center will support 18 Title I schools in FCPS with Family Science Nights. Also, many FCPS students are interns with this organization during the year and in the summer.

[00:49:00] The Greater Washington Partnership provides FCPS students with connections to real-world job experience through externship opportunities. Their Talent Ready Pathways Initiative is where FCPS students explore experiences in IT so that when employers from government and health care to the arts and energy hire workers, they might hire a known quantity, a trained FCPS student. The third organization, Real Food for Kids. Their mission is to change eating behaviors and improve health outcomes for children and

[00:49:39] families in the greater Washington region through sustainable access to real whole foods, impactful nutrition education, and to change local systemic policies. I worked with them early on in my time with Get to Green as we developed salad bars, farm-to-school efforts, and school gardens.

[00:49:58] They are now supporting us as we get our salad bars up and running again in all of our elementary schools. They were a big part of the reason the renovation at Marshall High School was changed to allow the kitchen to make more healthy and culturally varied food for the cafeteria there and surrounding schools. The Kids Culinary Challenge is a popular element of our partnership.

[00:50:23] At these challenges, school teams create a meal or a dish that complies with USDA guidelines for school meals. They are so popular that they're then offered in our cafeterias and some local restaurants have adopted the recipes. The next challenge, if you don't know, is taking place at Robinson Secondary School on April 15th. Thank you so much for your partnership. Thank you. Mr.

[00:50:48] Frisch, would you like to speak to your second? Yes, thank you. Here in Fairfax County, we are fortunate to have many amazing community stakeholders who want to support our students inside and outside of the classroom. From local businesses to nonprofit organizations, there is no shortage of folks who are willing to invest their time and resources in celebrating and strengthening our world-class public schools.

[00:51:13] Tonight, we're talking about three organizations that have gone above and beyond to provide an impactful learning environment for our students. First, we have, as Ms. Toland said, the Children's Science Center, an organization that has worked with many of our schools to host Family Science Nights.

[00:51:29] This school year alone, they have been working with 18 of our Title I schools to provide interactive STEAM activities for our students and their families. We also have the Greater Washington Partnership, whose Ready Pathways initiative allows students interested in IT to gain job experience by providing externships with local employers.

[00:51:51] This partnership opens doors for students after graduation, while also building a talent pipeline for employers looking to hire experienced and motivated employees. Finally, we have Real Food for Kids, an organization that many of us are familiar with and whose mission is to provide students with access to fresh and nutritious foods and to provide comprehensive nutrition education to students so they can make better food choices.

[00:52:16] Most recently, many of us on the school board attended the grand reopenings of our salad bars at many elementary schools with our friends in Real Food for Kids. They even host an annual culinary

challenge where teams of students across the D.C. metro area compete for the best dish across three different categories.

[00:52:35] So tonight, our school board says thank you to each of these organizations for their continued support of our students and for their support of all of Fairfax County Public Schools. Thank you.

[00:52:51] Ms. Marin? Yeah, I was just recently at Dogwood Elementary where they were the fortunate recipient of the Science Center evening, and it was really fantastic. There were whole families there, all-age kids, fantastic activities, and the parent volunteers and the family volunteers were wonderful, and there were also some staff that were doing activities and I brought my own fourth grader along with me to kind of work with mom and he was just astounded with one of our math teachers who was doing a math research teacher who had him doing math for 15 or 20 minutes him and his buddy doing calculations about how much a basketball would weigh on every planet so it's just so cool to see kids learning in this way and you know I've taken

[00:53:31] my own kids when they were little to the science center over at Fair Oaks Mall so I really appreciate that organization as well as Real Food for Kids for Keep Pushing Us and of course Greater Washington Organization. So thank you. Thank you. Ms. McLaughlin. I not only want to personally convey my appreciation to all of the organizations that are being honored in this resolution but I do want to give a special shout out to Real Food for Kids. As one of the board members who worked with them early on when they brought to our attention substantive concerns about how we

[00:54:07] could really ensure nutritional food for all kids and that we know with a poverty rate in this county now children qualifying 35% in our schools qualifying for free and reduced meals what we do in our schools matters for getting kids in the best place possible and we can't do it all ourselves as a school division and so when we have tireless volunteers who go out and become experts in these important areas and bring that information to us and

[00:54:41] really help advocate for our system as we did to do a whole scale review of our food that we were serving our students years ago and started a real transformation of the meals that Fairfax County was providing including those healthy salad bars I just really wanted to take a moment to emphasize my deep gratitude and and i know board members and countless residents are also very grateful for the time that you've given to make this a better place for our kids so thank you thank you miss corbett sanders thank you madam chair and i will be very brief i wanted to talk a little bit about

[00:55:21] the importance of our partners our business partners and our partners that are non-profits because it's with their help that we are able to be continuously looking for more innovation the way that we do things. And Dr. Reed has often spoken about the importance of innovation in our curriculum and in the service delivery, but it really starts with those partnerships in our business community and in our nonprofits who come to us with some very good ideas and they help us

[00:55:56] to be a better school system. And so, as you mentioned so eloquently, Ms. Tolan, we can't do it alone. Schools cannot do it alone. It is a community effort which there is no greater investment than investing in our kids with our time and with the business support either economically but more importantly their time and their ability to mentor our kids and together we become a better and stronger system to benefit all of our children. So this is a really nice resolution. Thank you. Thank you. With that I'll call for the vote.

[00:56:35] All those in favor please raise your hand. Ms. Bukarski Ms. Cullen Ms. McLaughlin Mr. Koufax Ms. Corbett Sanders Ms. Tolan Ms. O'Mish Ms. Marin and myself Mr. Frisch and Ms. Keyes Kamara that motion passes with Dr. Anderson absent. Agenda item 2.07 arts in our schools month resolution. I call on Ms. Bukarski for a resolution. All right well I've been waiting for this one too. Whereas March has been officially designated as art in our schools month, encouraging communities

[00:57:13] across the nation to focus on dance, music, theater, and visual arts education. It reminds us that all students deserve access to and equity in the delivery of dance, music, theater, and visual arts education. And whereas FCPS has a rich fine and performing arts education program with an average of 650 music educators and over 25,000 students in instrumental and choral programs and nearly

[00:57:45] 400 art educators and about 25,000 students in elective secondary art. FCPS hosts one of the largest theater education programs in the United States. FCPS Dance has programs at the elementary and high school levels. Dance, music, theater, and visual arts students at FCPS demonstrate the importance of quality, fine, and performing arts education programs to the lives of young people. And whereas FCPS art programs are known throughout the state and

[00:58:22] and country as a model of excellence emphasizing conceptual learning personal relevance and innovation in march and throughout the spring fcps pyramids celebrate the arts with pyramid art shows exhibiting the works of elementary middle and high schools in each community and each year middle and high school artists are recognized with regional and national awards through the the Scholastic Art Awards, as well as other art recognition programs.

[00:58:56] And whereas Fairfax County music ensembles perform at many conferences and have received several national accolades, notably the Suttler Flag of Honor, the Suttler Cup, Honor Band, Blue Ribbon School, Induction into the NBA, Midwest Clinic, and others, our groups often receive superior ratings at the state assessments, local competitions, national competitions, and festivals throughout the United States and abroad.

[00:59:24] And whereas FCPS Theater and Dance offer a vast array of extracurricular arts experiences, including dance showcases as well as plays, musicals, drama clubs, improv competitions, student-directed one-act festivals, the VHSL state one-act competition, and the CAPIs.

[00:59:44] The CAPES, an international high school program that celebrates theater performance, journalism, and student ownership, which originated in Fairfax County Public Schools, and FCPS theater students and teachers are recognized at an annual gala hosted at the acclaimed John F.

[01:00:02] Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. And now, therefore, be it resolved, Fairfax County Public Schools recognizes March as dance in our schools, music in our schools, theaters in our schools month, and youth art month to celebrate and acknowledge every day that fine and performing arts education, experiences and opportunities are an essential part of every student's well-rounded education.

[01:00:30] I so move. Is there a second? I second it. Ms. Bekarski, would you like to speak to your resolution? I would.

[01:00:46] Of course, I'm honored and so excited to offer this tonight. I, too, am a huge fan, so I appreciate that many of you are, too. The arts and arts education really is critical. I believe that on a very personal level.

[01:01:04] It is critical in our public schools. The opportunity to engage with art is essential to the experiences of all human beings, and And it allows us to connect with each other no matter our abilities or disabilities.

[01:01:21] It is really a universal language by which we all learn to communicate and express ourselves. I want to thank all of our amazing educators who give this gift, truly a gift to our students.

[01:01:41] We are so lucky to have you. change lives and I have seen that with my own children and actually some of my most beloved and impactful teachers also were music teachers orchestra teachers when I was in in school music as I've spoken before and this board knows is extremely important to my family as we have professional musicians and aspiring almost professional musicians in the family but also right now the arts are more important than ever especially as we see the higher levels of mental health

[01:02:21] issues in our young people engaging in the arts allows students to have reduced stress to have a connection to school a reason to get up and want to be in school a why it gives them a sense of purpose a social connection with others and it really motivates them to to be engaged in our experiences and above all I mean it's just really fun so what else do you need so with that thank you for all being for being here today and I'm so honored to be able to speak to this

[01:02:58] today thank you mr. Koufax would you speak to your second yes thank you thank Thank you to all of our amazing educators who teach our children to sing, to dance, to act, to create music and art.

[01:03:13] You help create joy for our students, their families, and all those who witness the screeching violins come together to play hot cross buns at the winter concert. The lump of clay that gets into the kiln that's so mysterious that turns into a beautiful vase or a dinosaur or a turkey handprint.

[01:03:35] I still have those in my drawer. And to all of those of you who take nonstop talking groups of teenagers and show them how to become enraptured in a midsummer night's dream. So thank you. As a proud drama mama, orchestra mama, chorus mama, band mama, all of these things that my children have benefited from, thank you all for your amazing talents and how you all come together and bring out some of the best in our children.

[01:04:09] Look, I'm just going to say it because it's my last year on the board. You are some of my favorite educators. I'm not supposed to have favorites. So thank you for providing this most enriching, essential part of our curriculum.

[01:04:30] We do honor you so much because you are so amazing for our kids. Thank you. You guys are quite popular tonight, so bear with us. Ms. Tolan. So my son participated in theater and improv while he was at TJ.

[01:04:52] And that was where he found his home after school. As the Herndon High Theater teacher exclaimed when he found out about this, I am a drama mama. Just like Tammy, I guess. While in college, majoring in film studies, my son took physics so that he could relax and do problem sets to release the tensions from the extensive, creative, and time-consuming work he was doing in his other class posts.

[01:05:24] He is now a film producer, I have to brag a bit, with a recent full-length film released on Hulu. So the arts can certainly, absolutely lead our kids to some incredible, rewarding careers.

[01:05:42] When I shadowed a sophomore at Herndon High recently, I attended a theater class and was happy to observe the students learning about the business side of the arts as well. They were learning about the human resources, the budget, the facility costs, etc. of running a theater program.

[01:06:00] I have to say the MBA in me loved to see that. And how about that all-county sixth grade chorus program that we just had and several of us were able to attend just last weekend?

[01:06:17] The hard work and the dedication of those performers was amazing. I mean, those kids were singing, as somebody said, with their entire bodies. It was amazing. I spoke with a sixth grader today at Hutchinson Elementary. Colton shared how much it meant to him to learn all of the different songs that he learned to prepare for that event, even multiple languages.

[01:06:41] He could not, absolutely could not, choose what his favorite song was. He loved them all. He loved working with his chorus and other students to make all their voices stronger, And he enjoyed the collaboration with all the other students and the guest conductor.

[01:06:58] And he was bragging about the portrait of graduate skills he learned with the all-county courts. Yay! Of course, I have to once again congratulate Cooper Middle School for winning the Suttler Cup. What an amazing accomplishment that was. So I cannot thank all of our arts teachers enough for the opportunities that you afford our students.

[01:07:22] Thank you, thank you. Thank you. Ms. Keyes-Gamara? I'm sorry, I left my hand up, but I too love the arts. All right, thank you.

[01:07:40] Ms. Corbett Sanders? So many, many years ago, I had an incredible drama teacher in Fairfax County Public Schools. She changed lives. And the impact of Ms. Kogelman, who the small theater at West Potomac is named after, impacted every child who came through her doors.

[01:08:08] even those that could not sing and could not dance, but they could build a set and learn all about the business side of theater. Then fast forward in the same building, my daughter fell in love with photography and being able to pursue her passion. She loved her violin. She just didn't like performing in public, as somebody in the audience remembers probably, but gave her a

[01:08:39] wonderful outlet to break away from the multiple APs and harder subjects in some ways, but she would say that the arts were as hard because they tested her ability to continuously strive and be better at her, to master these tasks.

[01:09:04] And so I just so appreciate that all of our arts teachers find that it's a place for each of our kids to find themselves. And then I'm going to leave one last comment, which was yesterday on CNN, there was a big article about how do you fend off or stabilize dementia. And the number one solution for adults

[01:09:35] is to be involved in the arts, but most importantly, dance. And so as we get older, we want to make sure that we take those dance lessons and tap into all those great skills that we were taught younger. Thank you. No pun intended. Ms. Marin. So I wanted to share a few things that the board has done to invest in our arts educators and our arts programs. The board has recently advocated

[01:10:13] very clearly to the superintendent to right size the stipends that you all get for the hours that you work extra. And well thank you. You shouldn't have we shouldn't have to be fighting for this. You deserve it and you earn it and we're going to figure out how to make it happen and the superintendent is committed to that. We were also figuring out how to store and share theater arts props, costumes,

materials, right, so it's equitable, affordable, sustainable. But ultimately, you know, I want to advocate for schedules that allow our students to partake in these courses. As soon as middle school,

[01:10:49] they have to decide, you know, they have to decide, do I take theater or music or art or language? And that's not a choice that a 12-year-old should be making. They should be experiencing all those those those offerings. I'm excited for the theater arts season.

[01:11:05] I'm already booked for one matinee. I'm going to fill that that weekend with all the shows I can get to. I have to thank my children's beloved fine arts teacher who was previously at Wolf Trap Elementary, Miss Bethany Molino, who continues to be a legend, even though she's moved on. And it's because of her that my daughter's artwork was selected to be in the Pyramid Art Show.

[01:11:22] I want to congratulate constituent Christopher Weiss, band director of the McLean High School Band, who just returned from the World Strides Heritage Music Festival in Orlando. And I don't want to steal Ms. Toland's thunder because she's always on top of what her bands earn and their award-winning performances, but they did really great. And we recently had our Terrace at Elementary students here led by Mr. Andert. And finally, I want to thank my daughter's technical theater arts teacher at Langston Hughes Middle School, Ms. De Winter, for helping students be contributors behind the scenes. So thank you.

[01:11:54] Thank you. Ms. Cohen? You guys better be careful. We're going to invite you to every school board meeting. This is the nicest people have been in a long time. Thanks, guys.

[01:12:11] Well, especially at a time in our country where music, art, and theater are under attack for being divisive and controversial, we all feel that it is especially important for you all to know how much that you mean to us collectively as a board and a school system, but also individually.

[01:12:32] You can imagine that my oldest kiddo, a green-haired autistic non-binary kiddo, school has not always been easy or fun. And the only thing that kept them going to school was you all.

[01:12:50] And every day when they didn't want to get up to go to school, I got to say, but it's music day today. I see Miss Wilson over there. Or it's theater today. Or don't forget today's ceramics. And sure enough, they were very grateful that at least in high school, they were split up over the purple and gold days. So there was something to look forward to at some point in the day. And it was the only thing that kept them going. And I now am lucky

[01:13:25] enough to have a kiddo who is going to graduate and start at VCU Arts in the fall. And that's because of you guys so for my family thank you does not even come close to covering it but you guys have a little bit of magic that you give to all of our kids and thank you for being the reason that so many of them want to show up we appreciate you miss mclaughlin well i have a tough act to

[01:14:00] follow from my colleagues but i do want to share that uh often people know me as being a voice for athletics. I played sports since I was a little girl, along with my father and my three boys and my husband. But often people are not aware that my father and I and my youngest son were also theater and arts singers, both at the high school and college level. And that was because of the very teachers and educators that are right here in this room. You plant the seeds. From the moment

[01:14:36] I was in kindergarten and my teacher was willing to allow me and my twin sister and another friend to do the most ridiculous play on Cinderella for the entire kindergarten class on a stage. I don't

know what she was thinking, but we thought it was very cool. But as you know, you ignite the spark.

[01:14:56] You ignite that spark and that we live in a county that is here tonight before this board, that is here every year wanting to say to all of you thank you for building that love of the arts we know for all the reasons stated here tonight that people lead and have fuller lives because the arts are in it and so i hope you are hearing tonight how important you are to educating the whole child we are so grateful for what you do and as laura jane said please come every thursday

[01:15:30] we have a business meeting. We love your energy, and I hope you have felt the love and support right back. Have a wonderful evening. Ms. Pogba, did you wish to speak? I'll take my turn after you.

[01:15:50] All right, so I will then take my turn, and I'm going to try not to get teary-eyed. Thank you to our core curriculum teachers, also known as arts teachers, because I think arts should be part of our core curriculum. Thank you to the teachers who do an amazing job teaching our portrait of graduate skills. Thank you to the teachers who save lives every day in our children, for those children who don't have a place to belong, who don't know where their people are. We know how important belonging and connection is, and I know how much that happens in the arts. So thank you for that. Thank you to Ms. Tara Taylor, who really educated me on the importance of right-sizing

[01:16:27] the stipends and on the Performing Arts Warehouse. And I know Dr. Reed is sick of me talking about stipends. I think the first time I met with you, I talked to you about art stipends, and we've been talking about it ever since. And so I'm so excited that you were right-sizing those. I'm so excited about our performing arts warehouse because that's going to create equity for our students and our schools. And similar to Ms. Cohen, I just wanted to say from a parent of an autistic young man who I was told when he was two and a half to put him in an institution because he was

[01:17:00] quote-unquote not able to do anything. And most of his education, all he could see was all the things he struggled to do except for the arts. And I remember his first dance recital, because he's actually not a great dancer, but he loved it. And the kids, he was nine, all finished their little poses, and he posed, and all the kids ran off stage, and he stood there and went, thank you, thank you very much, thank you, as he slowly walked off stage. And he's never stopped loving the stage since. Thank you to Mr. Graham, who I know has family in the audience, my son's longtime guitar teacher who gave him the skills and confidence to be the amazing musician he is.

[01:17:40] Thank you to Ms. Harmon for putting up with his goofiness and for being an amazing chorus teacher so that he could go on to audition on Broadway. He could go on to playing hundreds of gigs by the time he was 18. Mr. Maribel the theater teacher who said I'm going to make a room for a kid who cannot speak very well but has an amazing presence in the arts. I'm going to make a space for him in a way that he shines and he did year after year to mr gilbert the jazz band teacher who said i'm going to take this kid in jazz band because he's an amazing guitarist he is now a class of 2022

[01:18:13] cappy's nominee berkeley college of music's freshman and um he would not be who he is without you and one last person thank you to mr ribovich who was my theater teacher when i was in school and i tell these i tell students who ask me all the time they say what was your most important impactful class when you were in school and I tell them theater and I say theater because that gave

[01:18:45] me all of the skills that I need to be successful at any career I tried to do and I cannot wait till we have theater and musicals and dance in all of our elementary schools not that I'm hinting or anything so with that I just thank you for being here thank you for what you do for our kids thank you for seeing them seeing the ones that nobody else sees including the ones that are harder to include and giving kids a path to see how awesome they are thank you so with

[01:19:22] that I will call for the vote all those in favor please raise your hands miss Bukarski miss Cohen miss McLaughlin mr. not Koufax miss Corbett Sanders miss Tollan mr. Mish miss Barrett and myself that is unanimous thank you very much for all you do oh I apologize and mr. Frisch and miss keys Gamaro so that is also unanimous thank you for all you do I'm gonna pass the Ms. Gavel to Ms. Dernack-Houfax.

[01:19:51] I did not plan this well. What? Carl, did you want to speak to this? Your hand was not up earlier. I apologize, I left it up. All right, I call on Ms. Sizemore-Hyzer for a recognition.

[01:20:08] I didn't plan these well. Autism Acceptance Month recognition. April is National Autism Acceptance Month, and it is time to celebrate and appreciate the unique ways and strengths of each person with autism.

[01:20:23] According to the CDC, about 1 in 36 children are identified with autism spectrum disorder in 2020, an increase from 1 in 150 in 2000. Autism manifests in many ways and can affect an individual's social interaction and communication skills.

[01:20:42] National Autism Acceptance Month provides an opportunity for families, friends, and local communities to increase acceptance of autism and the special aspects and talents of all autistic individuals. The Autism Society's hashtag Celebrate Differences campaign focuses on providing information and resources for communities to promote acceptance of autism and encourage increased community partnerships with the businesses and organizations dedicated to building more inclusive experiences.

[01:21:10] Many also believe it is time to move from autism acceptance to promoting neurodiversity, which is the concept that there are many diverse ways of experiencing the world, of thinking and behaving, and these differences are not deficits, but part of the diversity of human experience.

[01:21:26] Please join the school board in honoring artistic students who make FCPS a better place. And I'd just like to say a few words. I'm not going to speak too much longer, but this is really important to me, and I just wanted to lift up one thing that I really appreciate my colleagues supporting us on a couple years ago, and that is creating the position of a neurodiversity specialist.

[01:21:54] And I see Ms. Hayner is here, a neurodiversity specialist is here. And I believe, I understand, I've not verified this, I haven't called every K-12 system, but I believe we are the only K-12 system that has a neurodiversity specialist.

[01:22:09] And we can be, as I've talked to Dr. Reid about, a real leader in this area. And I say this because one in 36 children have autism. It is beyond time that we recognize this is part of the diversity of human experience.

[01:22:24] And this doesn't mean we don't provide supports, it doesn't mean we don't meet their needs like we meet all children's needs. disability is diversity, autism is diversity, and there are amazing strengths and

talents and passions. And as my son would tell you, I am human too. And it's about time that we recognize that and we celebrate that and we own that. Because right now we are a society, we are a society that

[01:22:57] is ordered by neurotypical norms, run by neurotypical people for the benefit of neurotypical people and we will never be able to we will never be able to find a society where the one in 36 can find their best path to their best selves if we cannot figure out how to expand our live norms so thank you my colleagues for this if anyone else wishes to speak please speak miss tolan i just wanted to read a couple of quotes that i came across um regarding autism

[01:23:36] and we've come a long way when it comes to awareness now it's time for people to accept autism, allowing people like myself to be ourselves and benefit society along the way. That's a quote from Sivan Gandeka, who is an autistic content creator who has experience in digital, radio, and TV. Also, I especially like this one. No, autism is not a gift. For most, it is an endless fight against schools, workplaces, and bullies. But under the right

[01:24:13] circumstances, given the right adjustments, it can be a superpower. And that's from Greta Thunberg. There are five ways you can raise awareness about autism. Educate yourself. Awareness starts with each person taking responsibility for themselves. Attend local events. Get actively involved in supporting autism awareness and activities in your area. Be an advocate. Speak up and be a positive

[01:24:48] role model. Very excited for this recognition this evening. Thank you, Ms. Tolan. Ms. Keyes-Gamara? All right, I'm sorry. All right, so thank you all for being here tonight. We are going to take pictures with each of the groups, but I would like to invite first those in support of Autism Acceptance Month to join us at a photo for the front of the dais, and for my colleagues all to remain at the dais for the next two group photos. Thank you. Madam Chair, point of privilege before

[01:25:26] we do that. I just wanted to let people know that we do have suites for people on the way out if they wanted to just take one in honor of Arab American Heritage Month. So that'll be at the door.

[01:26:32] Now we would like to invite everyone here in support of the Arab American Heritage Month

[01:27:32] recognition to please join the board at the dais. I would like to invite everyone here this evening

[01:28:23] in support of Arab American Heritage Month to please join the board at the dais. And now we

[01:29:21] would like to invite everyone here in support of the arts and our schools month to please join the

[01:29:26] board at the dais board members please take your seats board members please take your seats agenda

[01:35:13] item 3.01 community participation the next order of business is community participation speakers must limit their remarks to no more than two minutes in length at the conclusion of two minutes the microphone or video will be turned off school board members will be listening but not responding to individual speakers the school board will not hear statements involving issues that have been scheduled for public hearings such as a capital improvement program budget and boundaries comments targeting criticizing or attacking individual students are not permitted during public meetings complaints regarding school-based employees should be directed to the appropriate school principal or other school officials speakers should refrain from using personally

[01:35:52] identifiable information in connection with an individual student or school-based employee Additionally, speakers should be respectful and observe proper decorum in their statements, avoiding profanity, inappropriate gestures, shouting, and comments that run counter to the spirit and letter of the school division's non-discrimination policy.

[01:36:11] The school board welcomes community members to provide comments at its regular business meetings and public hearings on school board deliberations, school-related issues, and particular topics. All statements should be directed to the school board and speakers should remain at the podium until concluding their remarks.

[01:36:28] As a reminder, speaker substitutions are not permitted. A speaker may not yield their time to another individual before or during their remarks. Shouting and outbursts from the audience will not be tolerated. We are grateful for those who have come to speak to us today and thank you for your cooperation.

[01:36:45] Madam Clerk, please call the first speaker. Our first speaker is student number one. Good evening.

[01:37:04] My name is Ethan Lam and I am a sophomore at Langley High School and I'm here on behalf of making boys volleyball an official school sport. For several years, Fairfax County student-athletes, coaches, parents, residents, and other supporters have been advocating for the approval of boys' high school volleyball as a recognized interscholastic sport and ideally a varsity high school sport.

[01:37:27] Why? Indoor boys' volleyball is rapidly gaining popularity in the United States and is now considered one of the fastest-growing sports in the country. With respect, Fairfax County lags behind. During COVID, I lost interest in many things, including the two sports that I had mainly done.

[01:37:46] And by the time I came back to school, I felt that I had no place in it, not being able to be an avid part of the community. Being able to represent the school gives us students a sense of pride and motivation to strive for higher, and together we can achieve such goal.

[01:38:02] As students, we have shown that interest exists and continues to grow significantly in the Northern Virginia area, similar to the rapid growth across the mid-Atlantic states. So far, we've gathered signature lists and the coaches' supporters, educated our principal and athlete directors.

[01:38:22] Now, with your help, we hope to make an FCPS High School Boys Volleyball program a reality. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is student number two.

[01:38:42] Can you hear me? Okay. Good evening, all. I'm Ethan Osterman, and I'm a freshman at Langley High School. I moved to the FCPS School District over the summer, and the first thing I learned in my freshman career was the five skills to be a portrait of a graduate and these five skills are in every FCPS classroom that I've been in and every time I look at these skills I think about how men's volleyball exhibits all five so for both communicator and collaborator are self-explanatory you cannot play volleyball one-on-one you have to collaborate and communicate with your team to play successfully for ethical and global citizen I play hockey which

[01:39:19] is unfortunately considered a very white sport. Even though this is not very true, that is the stereotype that surrounds the sport. But with volleyball, there is no such stereotype for any race or religion. I've talked to my teammates about their different cultural backgrounds, like my teammate who is

Cantonese, I talked to him about how he speaks his language, and then I talked to him about my Hawaiian background. Volleyball helps, sorry, volleyball helps students understand other people's cultures and thus helps people be ethical and global citizens.

[01:39:56] Though volleyball seems like a very simple sport, each and every play is filled with critical thinking and creative plays. In the heat of the moment, a player must decide where to pass the ball, where to sit and where to hit it. A player must decide when, where, and how they should pass, set, and hit based on information they have consumed in the current game in less than a second, which is the definition of critical thinking.

[01:40:15] Thus, volleyball exhibits creative and critical thinking. Every volleyball player I have ever met has told me that they want to improve at least one of their skills. Every volleyball player wants to get better, and thus every volleyball player is goal-directed.

[01:40:31] Every player has areas that they need to improve, and every volleyball player has the drive to try and to improve. Thus, every volleyball player is goal-directed and resilient. I hope bringing up how volleyball exhibits and teaches every skill that the entire Fair EFFECTS CURRICULUM IS BASED UPON, HELPS CONVINCE YOU TO MAKE THIS SPORT A VARSITY SPORT. THANK YOU.

[01:40:49] THANK YOU. OUR NEXT SPEAKER IS KELSEY LYLE. DO IT.

[01:41:06] HELLO. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. THE THREE OF US SPEAKING TODAY IN THE BLUE SHIRTS REPRESENT A GROUP OF MOMS AND PARENTS THAT HAVE COME TOGETHER OVER A COMMON CONCERN ABOUT THE LACK OF AN INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL SETTING FOR OUR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

[01:41:24] We have met with the head of Early Childhood Special Education, spoken with the Ombudsman Office, and we have provided public comment at several advisory committees for students with disabilities meetings before deciding to come here today. My son has Down Syndrome and is enrolled in the Early Childhood Class-based program.

[01:41:44] Love his teachers, AIDS, no complaints there, they're all wonderful. All of the students in his class have a disability or a developmental delay at this age. He has no access to typically developing peers. The surrounding counties of Falls Church City, Arlington, and Prince William all have inclusive public preschool options.

[01:42:07] Preschoolers who are eligible for special education have a right to be placed alongside their peers without disabilities. Students should first be considered for a general education classroom setting with supplementary services and aides as needed before they are placed in a segregated or contained classroom.

[01:42:28] Fairfax County needs to offer the full continuum of services for their youngest students. As we push forward for equitable and inclusive practices in this school district, let's hope we are considering the preschool years. I have high hopes for my son.

[01:42:44] I want him to reach his full potential and also feel a part of this community. And being included starts in the classroom. We are asking FCPS to get on board like our neighboring counties and the rest of the country. Thank you all so much for listening today.

[01:43:01] Thank you our next speaker is Monica Fevella. Hello board members we're here to advocate for inclusive preschool options for our youngest and most vulnerable students currently FCPS lacks a county-wide inclusive option for preschoolers with disabilities despite the least restrictive environment requirement under the individuals with disabilities education act IDEA when we ask for an inclusive setting the most common refrain we parents hear is quote we can't offer your child

[01:43:37] an exclusive inclusive setting because FCPS does not offer a universal preschool. We are not asking you to offer universal preschool, but we ask you to fulfill IDEA's mandate by providing a general education placement option for our kids. A best practice model for inclusion is a one-to-one setting with trained staff and pushed in service for student success. Every single study over the past 30 years shows that inclusive classrooms benefit all students. These These studies also show that early intervention is crucial for our children with disabilities.

[01:44:11] No matter how talented special educators and support staff are, the influence of same-aged peers who walk, talk, and socialize is irreplaceable for teaching our kids these essential life skills. We need your leadership to create a strategic framework for a countywide inclusive preschool option.

[01:44:28] FCPS has failed to meet the VDOE Indicator 6 state target for regular early childhood preschool placement for the past five years. In fact, this year, FCPS is under VDOE's needs assistance in implementing the requirements of IDEA.

[01:44:45] If you fail to take decisive action at this late date, you continue to discriminate against a vulnerable student population. We urge you to designate all 10 new preschools in the fiscal year 2023-24 budget as inclusive classrooms. Please prioritize inclusion and emulate neighboring districts.

[01:45:04] Make FCPS the best school district for all students. Include them from the beginning. Thank you for considering our comments. Thank you. Our next speaker is Rachel Herndon.

[01:45:22] My name is Rachel Herndon. My daughter, who has Down syndrome, attends an FCPS class-based preschool. I'm here tonight to speak about the need for an inclusive preschool option within FCPS. I wanted to tell you a bit about our personal experience, which mirrors the experience of many families.

[01:45:40] When transitioning into FCPS from infant-toddler connection, we were told by our case manager kids with Down syndrome are usually placed in the class-based program. Our daughter was already being identified for a contained classroom before even assessing her strengths and needs. Fast forward to our first IEP meeting, where we inquired about our daughter's access to her typically developing peers.

[01:46:00] It is written into our IEP. During the school day, she will access the general education setting through hallway transitions, library, and school-wide assemblies. This is a far cry from meaningful access to typically developing peers. We were told that we could pull her out to attend an inclusive community preschool.

[01:46:17] Many families choose to do this, we were told. What about the families that cannot provide a private preschool? We're a military family. What are we going to do if we have to move and the receiving division has a possible inclusive placement, but our daughter's IEP doesn't reflect that?

[01:46:33] Adding to the frustration is knowing that if we lived in any of the surrounding divisions, an inclusive preschool would be an option. We do send Alice to a community preschool part-time, and the

benefits of that inclusion are irrefutable for Alice and for non-disabled kids in her class. Our group of preschool families has been given a number of reasons why FCPS doesn't have a division-wide inclusive option.

[01:46:54] Lack of funding, lack of space, but what it boils down to is a lack of priority. We've seen FCPS use creative solutions to solve problems and allocate more resources for typically developing students. We're asking FCPS to make providing an inclusive preschool option a priority.

[01:47:11] VDOE has not only called for divisions to provide it, but has given them a roadmap to do so. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Our next speaker is Norm Hall. Good evening. Tonight, I also want to focus on FAPE, Free Appropriate Public Education, a topic I have argued should be the measure by which school board candidate platforms are judged.

[01:47:35] The annual school board calendar shows April 13th as the date when the special education annual plan will be presented and reviewed. I watched the previous school board rubber stamp this comprehensive plan twice to get state approval. This school board has had prior discussion which suggested this would actually be discussed with the community.

[01:47:54] I was hopeful. Well, this is your fourth take on this, but only the first time after a legal agreement was reached with the Federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. It was their investigation into FCPS that determined FAPE was not provided during the pandemic. FCPS limited its compliance to the flawed, litigated guidance of the Virginia Department of Education. So don't you think that now would be the time to make sure that the annual special ed plan and the stampeding accommodation meetings of the OCR agreement would lead to FAPE compliance for all?

[01:48:32] Apparently not, as there is a separate path working on the special ed enhancement plan that was developed based on the AIR study, which was specifically not charged with looking at pandemic era services and outcomes. More than half of the school board plans to move on when your term is up.

[01:48:50] I beg you, please, would you organize a committee to oversee these plans before you go? If that would work better than working as a group of 12 to get the job done, show the community that FAPE matters to this body. For all students, perhaps with data summaries of OCR agreement meeting progress by magisterial district, pyramid, region, good governance would be good politics. Let's see that applied here.

[01:49:19] Thank you for your time and listening. Thank you. Our next speaker is Robert Rigby Jr. Evening. Parents and caregivers, I caution those of you with children in the room, I will be speaking of hard things.

[01:49:39] The one correlation that is true is the following. Where there are more guns, there are more gun deaths. Where there are more guns, there is more death. It's not where there are more neurodivergent people or where there are more people with mental health needs or where we've not properly hardened this school, just go someplace else, or where there are more people of a certain immigrant or racial or gender identity or ability or whatever you want to be scapegoated.

[01:50:17] It's not where we haven't done enough lockdown rooms, or where we have. It's guns. It's not where there are more legal guns, or where there are more illegal guns, or any such thing. It's guns. Where there are more guns, there is more death.

[01:50:38] As an extranet, I'd ask people to look out for trans and non-binary families from Kentucky, where they essentially were outlawed today, because we will have refugees, as we did from Texas several years ago from Alabama.

[01:50:58] Our schools, our families, our institutions need to welcome these folks into our community. Virginia may not be the best place for them to go, but it's better than where they are. Thank you for listening.

[01:51:15] Thank you. Our next speaker is Marian Burke. Good evening. I'm Marian Burke. I'm with For Public Education, and I'm here tonight to make sure that whoever's listening has heard that an independent investigation found no basis to claims that notices of national merit scholarship commendations were intentionally withheld from students.

[01:51:49] The review confirmed that the eight schools didn't notify students designated as commanded by the National Merit Scholarship Group until November, but found no evidence that this was intentional or reflected any policy decision by FCPS or any of the individual schools.

[01:52:09] In addition, the review found no evidence of any inequity or racial bias in the actions taken by these schools regarding notification or distribution of these certificates. even with this finding ag mirrors attorney general mirrors is continuing his formal investigation of the issue so i have two questions first do the citizens of fairfax county and in virginia of virginia approve this waste of funds for a continued investigation and is miss anemani

[01:52:44] going to apologize for inflammatory but false allegations of this being part of her imaginary war on merit that she has shared in many media outlets in her continued efforts to defame and tear down Fairfax County Public Schools. I doubt that she will apologize, but I hope that she ceases and desists from this foolishness. Thank you. Our next speaker is Reem Kaldi. Good evening.

[01:53:22] My name is Reem Kaldi. I'm a member of the Arab America Foundation, Virginia leadership team. during the month of april the arab america foundation formally recognized the achievement of arab americans through the celebration of national arab american heritage month across the country cultural institutions school districts cities state legislators public servant and non-profit organization issue proclamations and engage in special events that celebrate our community rich heritage and numerous contributions to society last year the presidents of the united

[01:54:01] states recognized the month of april as national arab american heritage month with a special commemorative letter also in 2022 the the u.s department of state 45 state governors and close to 100 cities counties and school districts issued proclamations commemorating the initiative arab america and the arab america foundation launched the national arab american heritage month initiative in 2017 with just a handful of states recognizing the initiative each year our grassroots network

[01:54:38] over of over 250 arab americans volunteers in 28 states gather hundreds of proclamations from their states counties cities and local school districts this year there are several states where arab americans are seeking permanent legislation designating april as national arab american heritage month as of last year the following states have passed permanent legislation designating the month of april as national arab heritage month illinois oregon and our own state of virginia and indiana currently michigan ohio new jersey and rhode island are pursuing

[01:55:15] legislations we thank fairfax county school board for recognizing this initiative and helping to empower many of the students who are of thank you thank you everybody agenda item 3.02 strategic

[01:55:37] plan update i call on dr reed for the strategic plan update thank you madam chair and board tonight i have the opportunity to give an update and share some key milestones i really appreciated the extended effort by our board of directors this week as you provided feedback on the goals and

[01:56:17] pillars of the current draft goals and pillars we've had three stakeholder survey feedback opportunities closed since I last spoke to you and inputs been provided on all of the drafts by a number of community members one of the things I want to say that I really appreciated and definitely heard clearly from our board is that our core mission is academics and it must be front and center and the goals and I absolutely agree so I know that we're really looking at making sure that our goals are accountable to our academic achievement this morning our principals members of our leadership team and our

[01:56:56] central office administrators spent time and provided feedback on the draft professional practices for effective instruction and the professional pillars and practices so a lot of work was done this morning as well our upcoming milestones we're going to start our second round of community forums following spring break and the family team meeting will be april 10th i really want to encourage our family team to show up and provide continue to provide really key feedback our core planning team will spend another day on april 24th again this is our largest group and they are looking at

[01:57:33] all the feedback the data that comes back and forth and in addition to the community forums next month four of our planning teams will be coming together to continue the work and as you know your next strategic planning retreat will be april 24th it's important to stay connected with the strategic planning work if you're listening this evening make sure you check our website for our most recent updates i really want to appreciate our office of community relations and communication for their continuing work to make sure our website is current make sure that

[01:58:11] REGISTRATION IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN COMING THERE ARE REGISTRATION ON THE WEBSITE AND WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO REGISTER AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AND FINALLY WE'RE EXTRAORDINARILY GRATEFUL FOR THE COMMUNITY'S SHARED COMMITMENT IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK I'M HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ON OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE SEEING NO BOARD MEMBER HANDS UP I WILL JUST SAY I REALLY APPRECIATED ALL THE WORK THAT YOU AND YOUR STAFF HAVE BEEN DOING THE INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF community forums incredible number of planning teams and outreach to the community and including all voices and lifting up the student voice as well as

[01:58:50] the board opportunity to really dig into this work has been really wonderful and seeing this plan come together in a way that is reflective of the community and also reflective of priorities I see many lights coming on now so I will finish my turn and turn it over to my colleagues I think it's really wonderful and I'm excited to see it all come together and I just want to say I think one of our COMMENT JUST TALKED ABOUT THE SPECIAL ED ENHANCEMENT PLAN AND I REALLY THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THAT BE PART COME OUT OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN BECAUSE THE STRATEGIC PLAN REALLY COVERS EVERYTHING RIGHT IN EVERY STUDENT SO WITH THAT I WILL TURN TO MY COLLEAGUES MS. TOLAN THEN MS. MARIN YES DR. REED I WAS HOPING YOU

[01:59:29] COULD TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE BOARD STARTED LOOKING AT MEASURES JUST AT THE VERY END OF OUR DAY EARLIER THIS WEEK CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE PATHWAY OR HOW THAT

THEY'LL BE LOOKED AT THROUGH THE process. So one of the things that we've really spent a lot of time on is recognizing sort of key roles for the different groups and clearly the community is playing a key role in the development of our goals, our four or five student focused outcomes that we really want to create our North

[02:00:03] Star work on between now and 2030. I would say that the goals are the ends, if you will, of the organization the measurements are really how the board is going to hold me and the system accountable for achieving those goals so I think the time spent at the board table really being clear about what those measures are making sure they're research-based goals I think it would be really prudent for us to make sure that the goals and the way we measure progress towards those goals are are the right things to be measuring, because we don't want to spend a lot of work, time,

[02:00:41] and resource on a particular measure that, in fact, is not going to lead us to the successful attainment of the goals our community is going to expect once the strategic plan is in place. So the board, I appreciate us looking at the research this week, and you really putting, I think, measurements underneath our goal buckets. Those will go back to the core planning team for FEEDBACK AND THE OTHER TEAMS THAT I MENTIONED WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AT THE END OF THE DAY THOSE MEASUREMENTS ARE REALLY GOING TO BE YOURS TO APPROVE AND YOU'LL BE GETTING THAT FEEDBACK BACK AT APRIL 24TH WHEN WE MEET AGAIN BUT THAT'S A GREAT

[02:01:19] QUESTION THE MEASUREMENTS ARE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS THANK YOU YOU BET MS. BARON YES I FOUND TUESDAY REALLY EXCITING IT WAS REALLY THE CULMINATION OF ALL THESE MONTHS OF GATHERING COMMUNITY INPUT AND JUST THE SHEER VOLUME OF WHAT'S BEEN GATHERED AND THEMED AND ANALYZED, WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF THIS. AND SO I'M WONDERING IF YOU COULD SHARE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW THIS WILL BE ROLLED OUT TO THE COMMUNITY. AND YOU'VE BEEN VERY RESPONSIVE TO THE COMMUNITY IN ALL SORTS OF WAYS. HOW DOES THAT ROLL OUT? AND THEN ALSO HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE BUDGET THAT WE'RE NOW GOING TO APPROVE IN TANDEM? AND WHAT FLEXIBILITY DO YOU HAVE IN THE COMING YEAR WITHIN THAT

[02:01:57] BUDGET TO MAKE SOME CHANGES THAT ARE GOING TO BE DRIVEN BY THE STRATEGIC PLAN? SO GREAT questions the board as you know we're slated to really approve the strategic plan in the month of May the spring at that point I know our office of communication and community relations is planning an entire campaign if you will to introduce that plan not just to our external community but also our internal community it's going to be impacting our school improvement plans and our work our professional development the data we collect the systems that we need to put into place so this first year of implementation for our strategic plan is

[02:02:36] really a bridging year as you know we start our budgeting process in the fall for the coming year and we have some money set aside in the current 2324 budget for achievement gap closing strategies and given that our strategic plan I believe is going to speak very thoughtfully about closing achievement gaps those are monies that we're going to be able to definitely align with the different goals and measurements.

[02:03:03] So I think we'll hear more this summer. We'll be launching in August, both for internal community and the external community. And our budget is going to evolve to match the new strategic plan. Thank you. That's really exciting. And I think the only component that hasn't been addressed is the board's governance policy piece that we have been talking about right in this conversation now.

[02:03:25] And so I hope, as a board, that we can really focus on that. We always have unlimited topics that we could work on. but this will guide everything, so I'm really eager for our work to really be as specific and focused and process-oriented as our strategic plan process has been. Thank you. - Yeah, thank you, Ms. Marin, and I think that the accountability is connected to that governance, and it's exciting to look forward.

[02:03:49] - Thank you, and just to address that, we do, I think we just talked about doing a governance retreat in June to come out of our strategic planning work, so, and that's something I haven't had a chance to even talk to you about, but it's something we just talked about and shared is just kind of the timing, So we will be I think it's very great that you brought that up to talk about kind of how we do that accountability work.

[02:04:08] So exciting stuff. Oh, thank you, Ms. Corbett Sanders. I apologize. I was wasn't sure what you're looking at. Go ahead. Thank you. And thank you, Dr. Reed, for this update and for the time that you spent with us on Tuesday.

[02:04:25] It was a good use of all of our time. And but I did want to clarify something because there is some angst And the angst is, oh, are we doing out with the old and in with the new, and what's different?

[02:04:44] And, you know, how does this plan mirror up with what we are as a going concern school system already doing? You know, is this going to put a lot of pressure on our staff to do things differently?

[02:05:01] And I think that was so important on Tuesday was recognition that we're not getting rid of the portrait of the graduate. But that is what makes us the lighthouse system, as you like to say. And that what this strategic plan is all about is really how do we realize those goals and recognize that we have to be a school system rather than a system of schools.

[02:05:29] And the other piece I wanted to address was the issue of governance and that in the existing governance manual, we actually have operational expectations that seem to have been left behind. And so I welcome a conversation about how we relook at those operational expectations in light of the strategic planning process.

[02:05:53] And so I didn't know that we were going to do a retreat on that, but I am already thinking about how we can incorporate the new strategic plan and look at how we've done things in the past and how we can do them better, so thank you.

[02:06:11] - Surprise. - Thank you, and with that, I will turn to agenda item 3.03, academic matters, and I'll call on you, Dr. Reed, to share academic matters. - Thank you, Madam Chair.

[02:06:27] Academic matters this evening, of course, one of my favorite opportunities, AND I WANT TO SHARE THIS EVENING HOW RESPONSIVE OUR INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN. WE'VE HAD A LOT OF EXCITEMENT ABOUT HAVING AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE MORE TRANSPARENCY AROUND OUR CURRICULUM AND HAVE FAMILY-FACING CURRICULUM MATERIALS.

[02:06:50] SO AGAIN, THANKS TO DR. PRESIDIO AND HIS DEPARTMENT FOR REALLY BRINGING THIS WORK TO BE A PRIORITY. one of the things I want to share is that I believe following spring break we're going to be able to have available on our website actually I think it's available now we have our family facing versions of all of our core curriculum and that'll enable parents to really partner with us as that's really critical in our work with our young students but it will be able parents will

[02:07:25] be able to go online and actually see what that content is and be able to share information with tutors or other family members who might be supporting students or our sack programs or just we have a lot of our faith groups that are providing tutoring and different groups providing tutoring so this is really we're hoping an asset in terms of partnering so one of the things I want to share is that it's very easy to navigate the public web pages are going to be including overviews with unit titles, timelines by grade level and content areas, including key areas such as language arts,

[02:08:04] math, social studies, science, and physical education. And we're thrilled about a detailed view of standards by unit, so we're matching our VDOE standards and our state and division assessments by grade level, so our family members and our students, honestly, can track when the assessments are coming up.

[02:08:23] I know our students have a high interest in that as well. What you're gonna see when you join in and actually take a look at these as they're updated annually, is that each grade level page is gonna include information arranged by content area with details on what students are learning and when they're learning it.

[02:08:42] And that should be also for families who may need to take sudden trips or not be in school for some reason. They're gonna be able to stay current if they know what's coming. All pages will be accessible in over 80 languages and enable access for individuals with disabilities.

[02:09:00] There'll be direct links to Virginia standards, our school year calendar, and much more. It's actually a treasure trove of opportunity. So, I wanted to give you an example, and this is, as it states, a quarterly overview of grade three mathematics.

[02:09:19] Honestly, who couldn't love mathematics? And here we go with our quarter by week multiplication, division, fractions, some of our favorite work. It's almost too good to be true, right, Ms. Togbe? We can go on and practice fractions at any time.

[02:09:36] One of the things the pacing reflects is the recommended timeline for learning in each course. And it's important to note that sometimes students in certain classes may go a little faster than the schedule and sometimes a little slower because we know that our teachers are always going to work with where our students are and make sure that our students are going at the correct pace to make sure that they're mastering their learning.

[02:10:01] So parents and caregivers, again, can use this information as a resource, and we're really excited to be able to provide it. Finally, I know we've had a lot of questions about our social-emotional learning and how to better partner with our parents, and so following spring break, we'll also be having our Fairfax County Public School social-emotional learning lessons on the Division website be accessed and really encourage families to log on and check those lessons out and in particular have an opportunity to talk through those lessons with students at home as a partner

[02:10:37] to the conversations that we're having at school so again a big thanks to our instructional services department and we're just really thrilled to be able to partner with our students families and caregivers in this way so that is what matters in academics this evening madam chair well this is is very exciting. Miss Marin, you want to speak? So this is wonderful. I literally had a parent last week say he'd like to see the manual of what his kids are learning. And although I said it's not quite that explicit and there needs to be some flexibility, I respected what he had to say

[02:11:15] because parents do want to try and help their kids and know what they're learning. So I think, you know, the example of third grade math is very straightforward. What I'm wondering is how does that look in middle school and in middle school will also be as well that would be correct okay so and my question really relates to Schoology because right now it's very difficult to navigate Schoology and see the coursework and the courses and the deliverables and assignments so how does that get reconciled or what's the plan and and I I guess I'll lead the question by saying I haven't really met many people who are a fan of Schoology and I think it does a disservice to our educators

[02:11:54] and our students and i know we seem to be locked in a contract and i'm just springing this out there but i just it does not seem to be um working so well and i hear people constantly asking to go back to google classroom so all that said i i just am wondering how are having all these courses and if i'm the parent of a middle schooler am i going to be able to go on school g and find that nice you know correspondence of what's being taught and what my kid is actually going to see we're we're going to make it yeah what my kids doing so I think we're talking about two different tools and one is that the pacing calendars or curriculum guides

[02:12:34] that are on the website are going to be sort of generally standards driven yearly annual calendars with a rough estimate of timeline of where students will be in different grades for core content areas the Schoology function or the learning management system won't necessarily have those calendars because they're going to be more specific to a particular course. And I do know that we've had a bit of a flurry of questions from parents on Schoology recently, and we do have our department who oversees Schoology

[02:13:09] putting together really some responses around how our contract with Schoology and that RFP is matching up with the effectiveness or the perceived effective use we do know that it's important to have a learning management system and frankly there's canvas which is more often than not used and post-secondary education and Schoology is one of the more popular k-12 because it spans the elementary middle and high school levels having said that I think it's certainly a product we can go back and spend some more time on because there are concerns

[02:13:45] being raised and so I can get back to you with a more comprehensive look at that but it's a separate tool than the website thank you for clarifying and you know I know that and I've spoken with instructional staff about Schoology and integrating it in technology and classrooms that I know that your lighthouse project right for is looking to look at some best practices so I know there's a lot of good work happening it's just you know how we really you know empower educators and get them to use the technology in a way that meets their needs and students needs you know I guess I just the other piece of this too

[02:14:21] while we're on this topic well I have a second is just the transitions and so I'm gonna relate that to we're talking about the layout of the courses especially those between school transitions and making sure that families understand so that's a little bit more of a tangent but I just was on my mind so yeah transitions are important so I agree miss Marin thank you miss Corbett Thank you, Dr. Reid.

[02:14:46] I love that we are finally putting our pacing guides to this level of detail for every grade and every topic. That's really going to make a big difference in many of our parents' lives and help them be the educational partners that we want them to be.

[02:15:04] I was also very pleased to see that you're going to be sharing in more detail the curriculum around social-emotional learning, learning, because unfortunately, the term has become a volatile term because people don't necessarily understand what it is and what it is not. And so putting our curriculum on the web in that area is also really important. But I would share with you something that I learned today. As you know, I am on the advisory board

[02:15:41] for Boston University School of Education and Human Development. And they were talking about their industry board for the university and the quote-unquote durable skills that employers need to have in anybody they hire.

[02:16:04] That these are the skills that are so essential to a productive workplace and one that is successful for everybody on these teams, and they are called social-emotional learning skills.

[02:16:19] But I loved the expression that it was about durability, not soft skills, because so often we talk about soft skills, but these are the skills that are durable that allow our children to have the resiliency throughout the multiple careers that you often talk about in their life.

[02:16:41] I'm very pleased to see the more transparency and how we're doing that thank you great thank you very much thank you Dr. Reed for that report I'm very excited as well for all the information for our family so thank you and thank you to your staff for working so hard to put that together agenda item 3.04 student representative matters I call on Ms. Togby thank you madam chair good evening and happy Thursday everyone shout out to Shay Hermans Khan from troop 99G. I'm pretty sure they've already left but we love seeing our scouts at these meetings.

[02:17:19] Last week I had the pleasure to participate in a joint Braddock District Town Hall with board members McLaughlin and Cohen as well as Dr. Reed. We had an awesome turnout and there were many questions that were asked. There will be another Town Hall with the Springfield and Sully District with board members Cohen and Prokarski on Monday April 10th at 7 p.m. so please come out if you can and join us I wanted to speak a little bit about National Arab American Heritage Month I couldn't help but think about how it's such a beautiful culture and expressive community but it's also hardly represented in our academics so when Miss Marin was talking about their history and breaking it down I was just

[02:17:58] I was learning I was sitting here and I was taking that in and I was learning and I didn't have a moment to think to myself oh yeah like I remember learning that freshman year in world history one because I didn't and I can't recall that that because we don't necessarily have that so I really want to say that we should be doing better in representing our North African and Middle Eastern countries within our curriculum so that's something I really hope you guys take the time to reflect on to work to improve last week I got to attend the last and my third and final superintendents advisory council presentation to Dr. Reed Dr. Ivy and Ms. Hall this presentation was the

[02:18:35] culmination of over seven months of work and meetings some of the recommendations were honestly things that I think need to be discussions now from equal access or equal access to resources in terms of opportunities for success through avenues such as internships jobs other ways to receive academic resources one of their questions was essentially how do we ensure that all students are being notified of activities or have a platform where they can be posted that everyone can see fairly and equally and also make it easy to navigate so like we mentioned earlier Schoology is a really

[02:19:13] hard platform to navigate and it's one that I still haven't mastered another recommendation that really stood out to me was one about one line that I actually presented last year as well and it's about having some sort of comprehensive way for students to know what happens at our board meetings and I know that that's something we're very passionate about to see in the next year hopefully i was also super i was just super grateful to be present and participate um and i'm very proud of all of our sac representatives i was also able to present or i was also able to attend the second to last student equity ambassador meeting um they wrapped up all their work from

[02:19:51] this year and started brainstorming on what they wanted to focus on for next year so shout out to dr ivy for attending and chatting with all of the ambassadors and just kind of talking with them and and making sure that their voices were heard. I know they definitely felt heard and acknowledged, so thank you. As we wrap up Athletic Trainers Month, I wanted to talk a little bit about my personal experiences with my athletic trainer at my school.

[02:20:14] As the board continues to discuss how to get ourselves a method to adequately fund a second full-time position, I wanted to talk a little bit about Miss H. Miss H supports students in countless ways, and honestly, probably more than I, or even the other students in my building realize.

[02:20:30] I spoke to a few students about the impacts of their athletic trainers at their schools. But one conversation in particular that I wanted to talk about was with one of the underclassmen at my school, Maya Martinos. And she talked about how Miss H has been there for her constantly, whether it's from getting her ankle taped or just smiling at her in the hallways.

[02:20:49] And they even have a handshake that they have mastered since her freshman year. And keep in mind, Maya is a junior. So just knowing that Miss H is one person that is a trusted adult, as well as just being there and supportive for multiple students on and off the field.

[02:21:06] It's just something that kind of resonated with me. So I thought I would share that because I don't think our ATs get enough love and support. So thank you to Ms. H for being a great role model and such a bright light in our building. Lastly, with spring break around the corner, I wanted to wish everyone a happy and healthy time off, whether you're going on vacation, relaxing at home, embracing this time with your family, it's important that you prioritize yourself every now and then and please have a safe happy and healthy break as always thank you so much for your time and let's end the week strong thank you so much Ms. Togbin I hope you get some rest and

[02:21:40] relaxation over spring break as well agenda item four action items 4.01 confirmation of action taken in closed meeting I call on Ms. Marin for the motion my apologies I skipped right over superintendent matters my apologies Ms. Marin if you could hold I'll come back to you after that thank you for that reminder agenda item 3.05 superintendent matters i call on dr reed thank

[02:22:17] you madam chair um i'd like to start this evening just to take a moment to remember the families and communities who lost loved ones in the nashville mass shooting on monday and the first responders who were heroic in their work please thank you i did send a message out to our staff and I believe a message went out beyond that and just I know that it's a moment also to thank our Office of Safety and Security and all the work they do each

[02:22:54] and every day to keep us safe and our school resource officers as well in our partnerships with the county it's I feel like we continue to check and recheck our procedures and processes and our focus on

relationships are key as well as we address the concerns that continue to be concerns in our country on this matter.

[02:23:18] As Michelle Togby, Ms. Togby mentioned, it is spring break coming up and as hard as it's going to be to not see students for a week, we'll have to make do for a week, but I hope everybody enjoys a little bit of time away. Recently, I've been able to attend a number of schools today in particular, Had a great time visiting Chantilly, McLean, and Southlake's high schools to do some filming for our State of the Schools film, as well as visiting Hutchison and Coates Elementary schools with board member Ms. Tolan.

[02:23:50] And earlier this week, I was able to stop by Marshall Road Elementary School and Franconia Elementary School and just seeing amazing things happening out in our schools each and every day. I want to mention that chess has continued to be a critical thinking skill, and I'll have an opportunity to visit the National Chess Tournament tomorrow and have an opportunity to see some of our students participating as well.

[02:24:17] I do think that I was able to take in several rival middle school basketball games, including staff and student games and staff versus staff games. There was a lot of excitement in full gyms all over the county.

[02:24:33] I want to mention White Oaks Elementary School hosting their 13th annual multicultural night last Friday. It was very well attended and a lot of excitement. And last Saturday we had almost 700 of our 6th graders in our all-county choral event, which was amazing.

[02:24:50] I also want to share that this past week I attended the Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington dinner. It was our 49th annual event and heard about our own Sarah Tay was honored as one of our community service center volunteers and a person who's done a tremendous amount of work and just really want to give a shout out.

[02:25:13] Dr. Jackson attended that event with me as well. And this past Monday, I had an opportunity to visit the Temple Rodef Shalom to have a conversation with our Jewish community and really hear some concerns and ideas and be thoughtful in terms of how we can best move forward as well as attending another town hall on fentanyl and our county partnership continues I think to focus on that as a really critical concern finally I want to share that I

[02:25:45] have finally finished my review that you have requested on the topic of a a regional board for Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology. And so I do want to share and go ahead, Laura, if you wouldn't mind putting up the memo letter.

[02:26:06] One of the things that you had asked is that I take a look at and review all the source documents data, all of the relevant information that might result in a recommendation about whether or not to move forward in this fashion.

[02:26:23] And I have concluded after an extensive review, which is attached and will be posted this evening, that it would be in the best interest of the students and families of Fairfax County and the students and families of all the participating jurisdictions that connect to TJ that we have an advisory group rather than a regional board.

[02:26:47] This conclusion is based on the following: that the advisory group will ensure that Thomas Jefferson continues to serve the best interests of Fairfax County Public Schools its students including that

Fairfax students remain a majority percentage of the students at Thomas Jefferson it's my research that if we were to move to a governing board that this could drop the percentage of Fairfax students from the current 70% to 16% of the Thomas Jefferson student body the The advisory group will collaborate and advise and not govern the operation of TJ.

[02:27:24] The advisory group will sustain the reasonable financial cost for Fairfax County Public Schools and the participating divisions to operate TJ. If we were to give TJ to a regional governing board, this would significantly increase the costs of running TJ for the taxpayers in Fairfax and the participating divisions, as the governing board would need to operate as a standalone school and be responsible for its own human resources, payroll, facilities, maintenance, food and nutrition services, IT, etc.

[02:27:57] An advisory group will ensure continued retention of instructional and non-instructional staff at TJ as Fairfax County Public School employees. A governing board would need to hire the staff at TJ as its own employees, and they would no longer be employees of Fairfax County Public Schools.

[02:28:14] TJ already receives the least state aid on a per-pupil basis of any governor's school in the Commonwealth due to the formula by which state funds for governor's schools are distributed. The shortcomings in state aid for governor's schools will only be exacerbated if TJ is given to a regional governing board.

[02:28:35] Fairfax County taxpayers have funded TJ since its inception. The advisory group will follow the original purpose of the school and the commitment that the school board made to the Fairfax County public school community in 1984 when it voted to close Jefferson High School and open a new science and technology school in its place.

[02:28:57] Under our current cooperative agreements with other participating divisions, their division superintendents or their designees may at their discretion serve as an advisory board to the division superintendent of the Fairfax County Public Schools. Such an advisory group provides a far better way to give participating school divisions direct input into Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

[02:29:21] I therefore recommend an advisory group for TJ and it's my intent to forward this recommendation to our governance committee. - Wonderful, thank you very much Dr. Rhee for that extensive work and for that recommendation.

[02:29:38] We appreciate it. Agenda item 4 action. Agenda item 4.01 confirmation of action taken in closed meeting. I call on Miss Marin for the motion. I move that the school board approve and award a contract according to the terms and conditions discussed in closed session and authorize the director of the Office of Procurement Services to execute deliver and administer the contract on behalf of the school board. Is there a second. Ms. Tolan all those in favor please raise your hands. Ms. Marin Ms. Tolan Ms. Corbett Sanders Mr.

[02:30:12] Koufax miss McLaughlin miss Cohen and that is with and miss keys Gamara all those opposing all those abstaining mr. Frisch is abstaining that motion passes with dr. Anderson absent next I call on miss Corbett Sanders for a motion thank you madam chair a motion of the Fairfax County School Board approving participation in the proposed settlement of opioid-related claims against Teva, Allergen, Walmart, CVS,

[02:30:50] Walgreens, and their related corporate entities, and directing counsel to execute the documents necessary to effectuate participation in the settlements. Whereas the opioid epidemic that has cost thousands of human lives across the country also impacts the Commonwealth of Virginia and its political subdivisions by adversely impacting, amongst other things, the delivery of emergency medical, law enforcement, criminal justice, mental health, and substance abuse services, and other services, and whereas the Commonwealth of Virginia and its political subdivisions have been required and will continue to be required to allocate substantial taxpayer

[02:31:29] dollars, resources, staff, energy, and time to address the damage of the opioid epidemic has caused and continues to cause the citizens of Virginia, and whereas settlement proposals have been negotiated that will cause Teva, Allergen, Walmart, CVS, and Walgreens to pay billions of dollars nationwide to resolve opioid-related claims against them. Now, therefore, I move that the Fairfax County School Board, this 30th day of March 2023, approves of participation in the proposed settlement of opioid-related claims against Teva, Allergen, Walmart, CVS,

[02:32:06] Walgreens and their related corporate entities and directs counsel to execute the documents necessary to effectuate participation in the settlements including the required release of claims against settling entities there a second second Miss Cohen all those in favor please raise your hand that is Miss Bukarski Miss Cohen Miss McLaughlin Miss Janet Koufax Mrs. Corbett Sanders Miss toll and Miss summation missile Miss Marin and myself Mr. Frisch Ms. Keese-Kumara, I don't believe you can vote in the affirmative on this since you were not in the closed sessions.

[02:32:43] Thank you. All those opposed, all those abstaining, that motion passes with Dr. Anderson absent. Ms. Keese-Kumara, Mr. Frisch, you can abstain if you wish.

[02:33:01] I call on Ms. Corbett Sanders for a motion. I move to excuse from attendance at school certain student identified in closed meeting pursuant to Virginia Code section 22.1-254B1.

[02:33:19] Sarah second, Ms. Bukarski, all those in favor, please raise your hand, Ms. Bukarski, excuse me, Ms. Jernot Koufax, Ms. Jernot Koufax, Ms. Corbett Sanders, Ms. Marin, Ms. Omesh, Ms. Ktollin, and myself, all those opposed, all those abstaining, Ms. Cohen, Mr. Frisch, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Keyes-Gamara, that motion passes.

[02:33:50] I call on Ms. Bukarski for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who harassed a member of school staff and to modify the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent. I will second. All those in favor please raise your hands.

[02:34:08] Ms. Bukarski, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Omash, Ms. Marin, all those opposed. Ms. Cohen, Ms. Darenette-Koufax, Ms. Corbett-Sanders, all those abstaining. Mr. Frisch, that motion passes with Dr. Anderson absent.

[02:34:28] I call on Ms. Cohen for a motion. I move to deny the school reassignment appeal of a student who possessed and distributed a controlled substance at school and to confirm the disciplinary decision of the division superintendent is there a second second Miss Corbett Sanders all those in favor please raise your hands Miss Bukarski Miss Cohen Miss McLaughlin Miss Daronette Koufax Miss Corbett Sanders Miss Tolan are you in favor Miss Tolan Miss Omesh and myself all those opposed all those abstaining Miss Marin Mr. Frisch Miss

[02:35:05] Keith Gamara that motion passes with Dr. Anderson absent agenda item 4.02 fiscal year 2023 third quarter budget review I call on Ms. Toland for a motion I move that the school board approve the FY 2023 third quarter budget review as detailed in the agenda item is there a second I'll second Ms. Pekarski Ms.

[02:35:30] Toland would like to speak to your motion I'm just very briefly we had some conversations at our last board meeting when this was on new business just to remind my colleagues there are no operating fund revenue and expenditure adjustments in this FY 23 document the agenda does recognize some minor adjustments in the adult and community education funds and grants and self-supporting program funds where we are recognizing some grant awards that we got through

[02:36:06] the last quarter and needed to add into our budget documents. There were a couple of questions that arose as to whether or not we might need to set aside some funds at this point in time given the shortfalls that we are uncertain whether we will have with the state of Virginia miscalculation of funds for school districts.

[02:36:32] At this point in time, we are determining that it's a little bit early. We don't know exactly what is happening with the state budget, and we will also have a fourth quarter adjustment in our end-of-year funding to take a look at that, to take a look at those issues.

[02:36:51] So we're not dealing with that in this third quarter review. Ms. Bukarski, would I just speak to your second? I think that covered everything, and I hope people will support it. Awesome. Ms. Marron. Yes. Thank you, Ms. Tolan and Ms. Vicarcy. Thank you for that update.

[02:37:13] I just have to point out again that this is the second year in a row that the governor has not approved a budget on time for us, which delays us. And as we heard today, the other things that have occupied the governor's time regarding our school division are of little import. The most important thing we need to do is to pass our budget to pay our staff and educate our students.

[02:37:33] So I really hope that the governor will work with the General Assembly to get this done so we can move on. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Maron. With that, I will call for the vote. The motion before us is on the screen.

[02:37:51] All those in favor, please raise your hands. Ms. Pekarski, Ms. Cohen, Ms. McLaughlin, Ms. Daronak-Koufax, Ms. Corbett-Sanders, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Omeche, Ms. Maron, Mr. Frisch, Ms. Keats-Gumar, myself. That motion passes with Dr. Anderson absent.

[02:38:09] Thank you very much. Agenda Item 5, Consent Agenda. Are adopted rules of parliamentary procedure Robert's rules provide for a consent agenda listing several items for approval of the board by a single motion. Many items listed have gone through board review and documentation has been provided to all board members and the public in advance.

[02:38:27] Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member prior to the meeting. The consent agenda items are on the screen. Is there any objection to approving the consent agenda? Hearing and seeing no objection, the consent agenda is approved. Agenda Item 6, New Business.

[02:38:43] the following are new business agenda items there will not be a vote on these items this evening but action is scheduled at a future meeting the new business items are on the screen agenda item seven board committee reports I call on Ms. McLaughlin for an update from the public engagement

committee and then Ms. Corbett Sanders for a report from the governance committee and then Ms. Toland for a skipped update Ms. McLaughlin yes just briefly the skipped covered a number of topics one has to do with community participation where we will be recommending unanimously to the full board

[02:39:18] that when students come to speak before the board that their names will be listed and displayed unless the students when they sign up to speak will choose to check a box to opt out in addition we also discussed community feedback that we've received about speakers feeling that the environment can sometimes be less than hospitable is the nicest way I can put it and so we are reviewing with staff some options to consider on how to just create a more respectful space in place

[02:39:54] for when people are at the podium and how we can you know ask the audience to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and we'll be bringing those recommendations to the full board as well then we did have a conversation with staff about the draft timeline for the equity policy and engagement process and it was the unanimous recommendation from the PEC committee that we support holding a work session to discuss the draft equity plan once

[02:40:32] it's ready to be presented to the board and then we also discussed our standing committees as you may be aware that's these are the school board subcommittees and with everything that's been on our plate Mr. Frisch and Dr. Anderson have volunteered to review our subcommittees and bring some recommendations back to the public engagement committee that also includes Ms.

[02:41:02] Tolan and myself and then we will bring those forward to all of you and that finally with respect to the strategic plan that the update we received from the superintendent we are looking for ways to consider getting additional community feedback before the board were to take final action and that could include a community survey so that is the update thank you so much miss McLaughlin miss Corbett Sanders. Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. The governance committee met and had a very robust

[02:41:38] discussion about the three policies that are on our agenda tonight for new business. First is the recommended changes to the governance manual on changes on how we approach resolutions and recognitions. Secondly is the school board member code of conduct. And third is an update to the audit policy to reflect the distinction between auditing of our traditional auditing versus the role of the auditor general.

[02:42:08] All of these initiatives were discussed when the board met during the past month in our governance work session. We took the feedback from that work session back into the governance committee, refined OUR APPROACH AND HAD UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR THE POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN PUT ON NEW BUSINESS TONIGHT. I WILL BE SENDING AROUND A EXPLANATORY MEMO IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. IT'S JUST BEEN A

[02:42:37] VERY BUSY WEEK. WONDERFUL. MS. TOLAN? YES. MS. MCLACHLAN AND I PARTICIPATED YESTERDAY IN THE SKIPPED MEETING AND THERE WERE TWO TOPICS THAT WERE COVERED. I'LL TALK JUST A LITTLE bit about we heard from our teams for equitable school readiness they had an update on their strategic plan and there were a set of consultants that were looking at Fairfax County and areas of

[02:43:13] the county where we really do need to focus more on early childhood and we were able to share with THEM OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES SHARED ARE YOU KNOW THE FACT THAT WE DO HAVE CURRENTLY IN A BUDGET FOR 10 ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SOME OF OUR DISCUSSIONS AROUND THIS IN OUR STRATEGIC PLAN THEY HAVE AN

INSTRUMENT AN EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT THAT IS LOOKING AT 16 DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS WHICH ARE INCLUDED IN FIVE DIFFERENT

[02:43:50] areas physical health and well-being social competence emotional maturity language and cognitive development and communication skills and general knowledge so these are an instrument that's being given to our you know kindergarteners just to see how well prepared they are to actually you know be in school with us so it was very interesting we can share the presentation with the rest of the board and we also had a presentation on community schools and I'll let Ms. McLaughlin talk about that. Yeah the second major topic was on

[02:44:26] community schools and as the board may recall we did have community schools come to the full board where the request was staff to gather research and data on our three piloted community schools and so the skipped got to see sort of a draft recommendation that's coming from county and school staff and so my advocacy along with Ms. Tollens is that for our chair and vice chair work with the superintendent I believe her team is now

[02:45:01] ready to present that to us our board supervisor partners reiterated that they understand that this has a major impact on our schools and operations so they are eager for us to review the framework and that isn't that will include also a discussion on how we would want to operate this program. Emphasis on like the the SAC program, the school age or school age after school care for for children and that that is a county run program whether it would be schools or

[02:45:38] county but that we really need to look at something that's that comprehensive. right now we've we've kind of allowed more of our community-based partners to do that. So I would just really emphasize to everybody that most both Ms. Tolan and I were very pleased with what we learned and I think we're in a great place to bring this to the full board as soon as our calendar permits.

[02:46:03] The magic words Ms. McLaughlin. Thank you very much. Next on the agenda is board matters and I will start with Ms. Omesh. Thank you so much. This week We are grieving a loss that hits too close to home. Dr. Reed did touch on this, but as we all know, an act of gun violence took the lives of three young students with boundless futures.

[02:46:26] The Nashville mayor, John Cooper, said he's overwhelmed at the thought of the loss of these families, of the future loss of these children and their families. We keep saying these types of losses are unacceptable and it's time to expect our state and our nation to act. In other news, I did have the pleasure of connecting with students from an AP Capstone class to discuss the importance of local government and whether or not intrapolitical disagreement and ideology impact the functionings of the school board.

[02:46:53] They came up with a topic. I'll let you all decide on that answer. But it's always a pleasure connecting with students, and my inbox is always open to talk to anyone. Last week was, and next week will be, full of many holy days and holidays. Since our last meeting, our community observed Astara, the Wiccan holidays of the spring equinox, now Ruz, the Persian New Year.

[02:47:16] And coming up, there are many holidays. Mahavir Jayanti of the Jain community on the 4th, Palm Sunday, Passover on the 5th, Theravada of the Buddhist community on the 6th, Good Friday on the 7th, and Easter Sunday on the 9th. And still more coming, but we'll have a board meeting in the meantime, so we can celebrate those later on.

[02:47:34] But I do hope that these holidays are times for family, community, and overall togetherness for everyone and their loved ones and for our reflection to learn more about what our community is observing and the importance of these days to each subset of our community. Finally, I do want to wish those observing Ramadan, we're on day 10, hang in there, Ramadan Kareem, obviously Muslims around the world are fasting before dawn to sunset.

[02:47:59] If you see me step away from the dais to pray or to break fast or whatever, just know that that's most likely what I am doing. And I do appreciate your indulgence, Ms. Seismar Heiser, because I'm going to try to catch our night services, which happen every day of this month. And little sleep, little food, but we're pulling through.

[02:48:15] And finally, next week is spring break, so hopefully a time for students to relax, reflect, welcome some much-needed sun, and watch out for pranksters on April Fool's Day. But in any case, wishing everyone a happy and safe break. Thank you so much. I'll start on the sign. Thank you and enjoy the prayers.

[02:48:36] Miss Marin. Thank you. I've really enjoyed being out at many, many schools lately going to PTA meetings like at Madison High School and South Lakes High School, going to the community meeting for Armstrong Elementary as they begin their renovation process. I've also done quite a bit to continue to push for safe routes to schools and safe transit and was able to walk with several parents after school from Sunrise Valley Elementary as they would walk home and it was a localities lots of interconnected jurisdictions four different local jurisdictions would help keep this safer so you know just this it

[02:49:15] has me thinking about you know the community's promise to do what we are supposed to do as a community to keep our kids and our adults safe so I'm very eager to work with the county on the improvements of crosswalks of signage of sidewalks being not only safe but ADA compliant. I'm really surprised that we even have that, especially right across the street from a school such as Sunrise Valley Elementary. Also, I was able to catch up with an Oakton High School graduate who's a constituent now in her almost third year at Duke, studying. She's going to go into study democracy. She's going to get her PhD in

[02:49:53] democracy and government and what makes democracy work. So just really impressive and I also last night speaking of college I was able to attend the AVID College Fair over at Langston Hughes Middle School so AVID is a regarded program nationally and it helps students in all sorts of ways with their planning skills and note-taking skills and skills that they need to be successful in school collaboration and it's very it's very collaborative and so but with their eyes on the horizon of you know being college ready so the students had to pitch their school and did all sorts of extra things like hey you want a chocolate or like do this little game and you could have you know

[02:50:32] a sticker from one of our universities but it was really fun and so there had to be hundreds of people yesterday at Langston walking through the halls and then I went to actually Sunrise Valley for the show what you know event and now I've been to one there one at Marshall Road and one at Forest Edge Elementary and these are just so great they're so fun the kids do they pick a topic and then they present on it and you really see those portrait of a graduate skills the communicator and such. I do just want to reflect though on the comments made today about the inclusive preschool and you know it's exciting that we're going to be adding some preschool programs but again this related to my

[02:51:10] question about where does the strategic plan meet the budget because I don't want to wait another year for students like the ones that our parents talked about tonight to be denied their right to inclusive education or for other students to be, you know, denied any education that they need. So I'm really just thinking about how do we do this as quickly as possible to meet the needs we know are there, even though we're a school division. That's been very heavy on my mind. So the final thing I'll say, and I'm probably going to run out of time, but is just regarding gun violence, you know, I'm trying to think about what do we do when our legislators are not doing what needs to happen? How do parents and families

[02:51:48] get together to talk and create change. And so that's something I'm trying to posit to the community. Thank you and say, what can we do? Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Mayor. Ms. Tolan. Thank you. I'll follow up with that. After the event in Nashville on Monday, no surprise.

[02:52:07] I've had parents reaching out to see when will we be making more physical security additions to our schools. And while I do understand the need for the basic physical security, such as security vestibules that we're working on, As we have seen over 130 mass shootings in the United States in just this year, we really need to think about the bigger issue of why this is happening and how we can reduce access to guns.

[02:52:37] I know the community would often like to know more about our security measures, especially after these incidences. And I encourage everyone to read the note that Dr. Reed sent out this week after we heard about the events in Nashville. I do want to give a huge thank you to our safety and security staff.

[02:52:57] Much of the work that they do is unseen for very good reasons, and we need to respect that. So a huge thank you. I do want to mention something that happened several weeks ago, but we didn't do board matters at our last meeting, so I wasn't able to mention this.

[02:53:18] Through some of the work that Dr. Zuluaga has done in Region 2, and I have to give credit to a Drainsville parent for really spearheading this very diligently, the TJ transcripts will be altered over the summer of 2023 to show all honors and AP courses for our students at TJ.

[02:53:40] So that is good news. I took the Community Services Board Revive course this past week to understand more about opioids and the use of Narcan. It's super easy to sign up. They have classes all of the time and I encourage everyone, the course is available to anyone 16 and up, so I encourage my colleagues and anyone in the community to take this course as well. One of the advantages of taking the course is after you take it, you do receive Narcan. They mail it to your home so that you have that

[02:54:16] available. I was super excited to take Dr. Reed to Hutchison Elementary School today and to see the work they are doing on literacy in all grades. They jumped right into this work almost three years ago so they really were on the forefront and they have implemented this with fidelity across all of their classrooms. Hutchison, so you know, is one of our largest elementary schools. It has over a thousand students and it is a title one school with 85% of the population English learners and they have found what they have done to be incredibly positive

[02:54:55] they've got the data to back up how powerful the work is that they're doing it was a really incredible to see it firsthand and to share it with Dr. Reed oops we also went to coats and that was pretty amazing too but I guess I don't You get to go into detail.

[02:55:11] Thanks. Thank you. Mr. Frisch? Sorry about that. Thank you. Every time we have another tragedy in a school, I know each of us are contacted by families asking what we're doing.

[02:55:31] And so I just want to be clear about what we've done thus far over the last few years to respond to gun violence prevention. We now have an annual letter that goes out to families, sometimes more than annual, reminding them of their legal obligations to securely store their firearms, because we know that's where children have access, is in the home, and to provide them with gun violence prevention resources.

[02:55:57] Guns have been banned on school grounds for many, many decades, but until recently, they were not banned on school property that was not instructional. When the law changed, we changed our policies and became the first school division in Virginia to ban firearms from our non-instructional buildings as well.

[02:56:16] We requested a complete review of curriculum, professional development, and our security and safety practices as it relates to gun violence and suicide prevention. We have invested, as was mentioned, millions of dollars in technology and in fortifying our schools' exteriors with security vestibules that are still underway.

[02:56:36] And so we are doing our part, perhaps more than our part, and I'm hopeful that our partners in Washington and richmond will finally get around to doing their part as well since our last meeting i had an opportunity to visit falls church high school with dr anderson so that we could see the enormous renovation underway the progress has been pretty incredible with such a short amount of time we saw foundations being laid for the new music wing we saw the new parking lot that has more than 60 additional parking spaces that were not there before and we are very much looking forward to seeing this project come along

[02:57:16] and slowly be turned back over to the students in the schools. We also visited our friends at Timberlane Elementary School and walked the perimeter with Principal Chayette to discuss the need for a fence on the perimeter of the school to make sure that our students are as safe as possible.

[02:57:38] And we finished off that visit with one of my favorites, visiting with kindergartners as they were playing on the new accessible playground at Timber Lane. So in addition to the school visits since our last meeting, I've had the opportunity to meet with representatives Jerry Connolly and Don Beyer and their congressional offices to discuss our legislative agenda as a school system in my capacity as the federal legislative liaison this year.

[02:58:04] And finally, I joined many of my colleagues at the sixth grade all-county choral festival at Lake Braddock Secondary last weekend, and it was fantastic. Hundreds of kids singing their hearts out and it sounded fantastic. My partner, as folks know, is a choir director and he was tickled by the performance. It was fantastic.

[02:58:24] They did a really great job and it was really great seeing so many parents and educators in the room enjoying their great voices. So that's it. And I hope everybody has a great spring break. Thank you, Mr. Frisch. Ms. Keyes-Gamara? Thank you. I am going to defer to give my report next time.

[02:58:49] I want to wish everybody a happy spring break, enjoy, and look forward to giving you my updates next time. Thanks. Thank you, and feel better, Ms. Keyes-Gamara. Ms. Corbett-Sanders? Yes, thank you, Madam Chair, and I want to thank my colleague, Mr. Frisch, for reviewing all of the security enhancements that we have undertaken over the past several years between last board and this board.

[02:59:17] However, as many have said, we are in a reactive mode. We can do the best we can to secure our buildings, but we need action both in Richmond and in Washington to have common sense gun laws

because this cannot continue.

[02:59:42] We are at a crisis point in this country with the number of mass shootings and the fact that our children cannot feel secure going into a shopping mall, into a place of worship, or into their schools.

[02:59:58] And so I urge colleagues to weigh in with policymakers because this will be a contributing factor as we continue to face teaching shortages across this country because there is a fear by people entering the profession.

[03:00:17] Having said that, I also want to bring to everybody's attention that we have an excellent website in which people can go online and see what Fairfax County Safety and Security is doing, as well as how our tip line can be used to bring attention or raise awareness of a threat in the community.

[03:00:43] And each and every one of us has a role in if you see something, say something, because we have to collectively protect our communities. Now to other items. I was very excited actually today to start my day at the All Ages Read Together Classroom at Mount Vernon Woods.

[03:01:09] The All Ages Read Together Classroom is a classroom which is designed to meet the needs of kids who don't qualify for Head Start and whose families may find challenges in being able to pay for independent pre-K or private pre-K.

[03:01:31] So in the All Ages Read Together classroom, the children are taught literacy skills, numeracy skills in a fun play-like environment, and it is a collaborative agreement between Fairfax County and an independent nonprofit.

[03:01:52] I urge each and every one of you, I will be getting the list of where the All Ages Read Together is in classrooms across the county, and I urge my colleagues to please go and visit them. I'm out of time, but I do look forward to spring break, and I wish all those who are celebrating religious holidays in the next week to 10 days, happy holidays.

[03:02:19] Thank you. Ms. McLaughlin? it is late so I will just reinforce that I hope our students families and school-based staff who will be out of school for the spring break to really have an opportunity to rest and rejuvenate and come back joyful and excited for the fourth quarter I do want to thank my awesome Springfield colleague Laura Jane Cohen for a really wonderful town hall that we had with superintendent Reed and Michelle Togby thank you both for being honored guests

[03:02:57] with us that evening we had more than 50 people coming out for that in our communities and they really asked a lot of wonderful questions and also very appreciative that in our partnerships we continue to have with our board of supervisors my Braddock supervisor James Watkinshaw has now joined me in visiting a number of schools in the Braddock district including visiting Woodson High School and Robinson and Laurel Ridge Elementary and it's really given us a chance to again showcase Dr. Reed what incredible schools we have

[03:03:34] but also getting to show them the needs of our facilities and so I I know there's often the November is the month to bring your you know state legislators to our schools but I can't emphasize enough that every day and every month should be bring your board of supervisor into the schools and the only other thing that I did want to add Dr. Reed is that as the weather warms up and we have a highly engaged student community which we applaud and support and want to

[03:04:11] encourage but this has been for a number of years now I think a lack of clarity about when and how students can choose to walk out and hold an assembly on something that they wish to gather and share their thoughts and so the challenge is it it doesn't it's not clear what the regulations are saying and I I want to help our principals as they want to support students but I do worry that there may be many parents who are not pleased to have their children leaving the classroom when they're supposed during instructional time and so I think

[03:04:48] think that's something I'll follow up with you and the board but I I do believe there's a little lack of clarity there and again while we want to encourage our students to absolutely lift up their voices we do have a responsibility to making sure that they are engaged in instructional time and I think we do provide some avenues during return periods and lunch periods where we can maybe be doing that but I think this might need some additional conversation so with that I wish

[03:05:22] everyone for be observing their religious holidays and observations that you are blessed to be around your loved ones thank you thank you Ms. Cohen my spring break gift to the staff is that you can pass over me anybody no oh that was terrible Ms. Bukarski I don't have anything that good but um happy spring break to all and uh joyish

[03:05:54] joy no not that reflective and best wishes to all those who are celebrating um or observing different religious holidays good night Ms. Janet Koufax yes I wasn't here last time to provide some congratulations so I'm going to say congratulations to recent VHSL winter championship teams. West Springfield High School the boys indoor track won the class six championship and Hayfield Secondary School boys basketball team won their second consecutive championship with a win

[03:06:32] of 52-41 over Patriot High School. Also West Springfield was one of 16 schools selected for the 2023 first amendment freedom freedom award this is the first time west springfield won this award and it recognizes schools who actively support teach and protect first amendment rights and responsibilities of students and teachers with an emphasis on student-run media where students make all the final decisions of content i want to take a moment to congratulate the students and their teachers. Teachers include Beth Leone, Melissa Morgan,

[03:07:08] Alexa Whitlock for being selected for this prestigious award. And finally next week is spring break. I will be spending part of this with my colleagues tomorrow through Monday attending the National School Boards Association conference to learn about best governance practices. I also want to wish all students, families, teachers and school administrators a relaxing spring break if you are celebrating one of the many holidays next week I hope you find a sense of renewal and well-being as you as you observe thank you and in following in

[03:07:45] the tradition of Miss Cohen I will just say I hope everybody has a wonderful spring break and those who are observing the many holidays I am hope your observations and your prayers and your celebrations are wonderful with that this This meeting is adjourned.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com