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# Fairfax County School Board Work Session, Thursday, May 18, 2023

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWjk6d2D2E0
- Official School Board page (FCPS): https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/leadership/school-board

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**[00:00:02]** All right, guys, looks like we have quorum. Thank you so much. We're gonna go ahead and get started. Ms. Koh and team, I will happily turn it over to you. - Thank you, Laura Jane, and good morning, everyone. So, today we are going to discuss a very important topic for us, which is the Fiscal Year 24 Office of Auditor General Risk Assessment and Audit Plan.

**[00:00:29]** With me today, I would like to first introduce our Deputy Auditor General, Ms. Danielle Moore, and our Senior Auditor here, Joni White. Joni is our leader in developing the risk assessment and also the audit plan, so here to start with, I would really want to express my appreciation for her excellent work.

**[00:00:50]** So our goal today is that I will finish the presentation within 15 minutes, and so that we can leave most of the time for the school board to discuss. And so I'm going through the presentation, and there's also a document that comes with the presentation.

**[00:01:08]** Both of these two pieces of documents are available on BotDoc. So first of all, I would like to highlight the timeline of next year audit plan and the risk assessment. So this document has already been reviewed by the audit committee in our two meetings, both the April and the May meeting.

**[00:01:33]** And I also want to introduce this year, we have a little bit of a unconventional order of discussion where we would have our work session today. And then the formal presentation to the board

would happen next Thursday.

[00:01:48] And if any school board members have any remaining wonderings after the presentation, we also have our audit committee on June 21st. that school board members are invited to if there are any kind of questions we have to address and discuss in a round table format.

[00:02:10] And then the school board approval will be on July 13th. So just want to walk over like kind of the timing of how things will happen with related to this initiative. So this slide I'm on slide four, it goes over the mission and the policy that many of you are familiar with.

[00:02:28] So I am going to move over to slide five. So this slide highlights the procedure of how we come up with the audit plan for next year. And I'm thrilled to announce or to say that 12 out of the 14 requests that we made to the school board and the audit committee, we received like 12 of them.

[00:02:49] So really thankful for all of you to provide feedback for my office on the plan. then we also surveyed through like a hundred more than a hundred employees and then on top of that we also conducted almost 40 in-person interviews with the leadership team and also with the directors of our division and on top of that we also examined how the neighboring school districts are doing what kind of internal audit topics that are common for them and of course we consider the various risk factors as many of you are familiar with including

[00:03:27] the reputational, financial, legal, which is not here, security, we consider all the risk universe before we come up with the plan. Here on slide six I would like to pause for a second. This is the plan in a nutshell. So here you will see the two carryover engagements that have already been approved for the current year and and we will be finishing that within the next fiscal year.

[00:03:56] And then the items three through item 10 are the new engagements for this year. So you may ask me, right, Esther, what does it entail with each one of them? So I will go through each one of them in a little bit for you, for the new engagements.

[00:04:13] Here is a bar chart, and I'm sorry that it's a little bit small, but we are trying to fit in the timetable for fiscal year 24, again it will take place in two months, beginning July 1, about the various engagements and also the timetable to finish.

[00:04:33] And then going to slide 8 forward, here we discuss the details of each audit. Since the employee evaluation process audit has already been approved by the board last year, and again this is a carry forward audit, I won't spend the time to go through what it is because it has already been approved.

[00:04:54] But in case if the school board member would like to know more about the objective that I included, here is the slide for it. And then the second one is an audit that all of you, I'm sure, is very familiar with because we talked about it every year.

[00:05:10] This is the Local School Activity Fund. Since for audit, we can only audit after the events have taken place. The LSAF we're looking at as of June 30th of this year, so we would need to finish it after this year-end.

[00:05:26] And that's why it is a carry-forward audit. Okay, so here we go. Beginning on slide 10, these are all the new audit items that we come with the discussion with the audit committee and also consider all the different factors that I mentioned in the previous slide.

[00:05:45] The first new audit is the food and nutrition audit. So this audit, if I can just maybe go over the objective a little bit with all of you, that there are six different aspects that we are looking at.

[00:06:01] And it includes the compliance aspect, including the business objective and key performance measures of food and nutrition services. And we also will be compare how we operate with other K-12 education.

[00:06:16] We will also look at how we manage the vendor and also consultants, if any, because we all know that kind of like third-party vendor is at risk, like no matter where we go, food and nutrition is one of them, so we will focus on that too.

[00:06:34] We will also look at the how do we monitor food waste, the preparation, inventory, turnover, And last but not the least is the financial accountability, including the use of overtime because we know that this is one of the area that we incur more overtime, and also how we handle the student debts, if there are any.

[00:06:57] Then the next new audit is Facilities Maintenance Audit. So some of the school board, I think you were with us when we conducted the FY20, Fiscal Year 2018 Facilities Maintenance Audit.

[00:07:15] And I think two of the audit recommendations have not been fully implemented. So with this audit, we would like to take a new look at it to see where we are with the remaining recommendations from last audit and at the same time we will see how facilities maintenance is handling their work orders for the different facilities and at the same time we will also look at the overtime and the compliance with regulations and policies new audits number five

[00:07:48] is the grand audit and in the past years we have been focused on esser three kind of like as a continuous monitoring in this audit we would like to broaden our scope to look at other grants as well of course ESSER and also all the other you know pandemic related grants are very important but we don't want to lose sight of the other key grants that the division has as well so with this audit we will take a broader look into selected grants including looking at if the

[00:08:22] The grant expenditures are made consistent with the purpose and objective, the design and implementation of checks and balances. We will also look at how management is monitoring the goals of the grants, are they being met or not.

[00:08:38] So we will be looking at documentation that management can provide about how they are supervising the ongoing of the grants. The next one on slide 13 is the IT system access audit. So again, IT has been our focus of our OAG.

[00:08:57] We have our IT auditor as part of our FTE. And we will look at both the physical and logical access for system access. We will be also focusing on how we are making sure some of our laws and regulations are fully in compliance, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts in relation to the system access control.

[00:09:23] And then on slide 14 is the local school activity fund for next fiscal year. And again this is a state requirement that we are auditing all of our schools annually, specifically about the non-appropriated funding, in another word is the local school activity funds.

[00:09:40] And then slide 15, continuous monitoring. And I know that I speak about that every time. We will continue to up our game by using more technology-focused audit techniques to select sample, and

also to spot any irregularities before we even go to audit them so that we can tailor our resources on key risk area.

[00:10:06] And I also want to mention at the bottom I highlighted what is new this year. So in addition to the technology part, we will be also performing an announced cash counts and e-commerce collection of event fees for school events.

[00:10:24] So we will be going unanimously to some of the athletics events and some of the performing arts events to see how they are handling the cash receipt. And then we will continue with the business process audits. It is something that we have been doing for a long time for schools and also for offices.

[00:10:45] And then slide 17 highlights a lot of the different other OAG duties. And I just want to talk about two out of the eight listed on the slide here. The first one I want to talk about is the second item, FCPS Fraud Waste and Abuse Inquiry.

[00:11:03] So where we have been like supported a culture within FCPS of see something, say something, where our employees and community members have been really proactive in bringing concerns of fraud, waste and abuse to our attention.

[00:11:18] And I know that a lot of the school board members have been helping us to spread the words about the availability of the hotline. So really appreciate for your help. And I also want to highlight point number 7 here, which is the quality control monitoring and peer review.

[00:11:34] So I have mentioned it with the audit committee, but also want to make sure the school board is aware and the broader -- bless you -- and the committee members to know that too. Our office recently received a peer review, meaning we received an auditor audit OAG work, And we received a passing rate.

[00:11:56] In the rating, it's either passed or not passed, so we got the passing rate. So I specifically want to highlight the help from our deputy, Danielle Moore, because she actually prepared everything, go through a lot of checklists, making sure everything is in order.

[00:12:13] So really appreciate you for that. So I want to end this presentation with a few audit topics that we got high rating, especially from the school board members, but for this fiscal year we suggest not to focus on them.

[00:12:34] The first one I want to highlight is procurement audits. Many of you know that we have made some recent updates to the procurement policies. We suggest that while this is a very important topic, I would suggest to audit it in FY fiscal year 25 and beyond so that we have at least one year of implementation of the new policy.

[00:12:57] Retirement benefits as well as student mental health, again, they are very critical topics. If we decided to do it, if the school board decide, hey, Esther, we need to audit these two topics, we would need to hire a subject matter expert to support us, because they are very targeted topics that within our staff member, we do not currently have the core competency to handle that.

[00:13:23] So with that, the last slide is only for our community members who are watching the work session today. If they want to learn more about OAG, then there are some hyperlinks here. With that, I would like to hand the time to the meeting managers. Excellent. Thank you so very much. And we have consistently, I think, as an audit team told that I think we have the luckiest committee. Very, very organized. So thank you so much, Ms. Coe and Danielle and Joni and Luke and everybody in the office.

[00:13:56] All right. We have several folks who put their placards up. First, Ms. Toland, followed by Ms. McLaughlin. Thank you for the very organized presentation. I'm going to dive in because I have several things. I'm just trying to make some connections. Under the food and nutrition audit, a number have been asking questions about the approximately $1 million of lunch debt that we have.

[00:14:24] And I know in our Monday letter we had some information that was given to us on where that's coming from, how that's happening, but I think that should be included in that audit, you know, if there are potentially ways that we can reduce that or really understand what's happening and come up with some solutions.

[00:14:42] So I mentioned that. I noticed the audit also includes food waste, which of course our cafeterias are generating huge amounts of waste, whether it's food, recyclable materials, etc. And that is one of our key JET goals for the county.

[00:15:03] So I'm hoping that, you know, I'm excited to see that in there and, you know, so if you can work with, we will have hopefully a new zero waste person on board, you know, early in FY24, you know, to augment the staff that we have working on that.

[00:15:19] So I hope you can coordinate with them. I am very, very excited to see the facilities and maintenance audits. I will tell you I was at a PTA meeting yesterday and I may be a little bit bruised for good reason. You know, work orders, and this is not a new problem, you know, my experience with Gets You Green, the work orders in a lot of cases take unbelievably long.

[00:15:44] And so I really am excited that we're looking at that very closely. Again, that requires some coordination. I'm hoping with work orders we can look at their coordination with programming. You know, for example, I was at Kent Gardens yesterday.

[00:16:02] They're slated to have SOAR as a summer program. But there's a lot of work that's going to be happening there. They're removing trailers. There's a lot of things happening. I'm not sure it's the best place to have SOAR, for example, this particular summer with the amount of work that's going on.

[00:16:18] So I'd love to see a look at coordination with programming and also coordination with our key partners. In many situations, I think our PTAs, you know, we put through a DC-407 in a work order for things our PTAs are willing to pay for.

[00:16:34] But then they just kind of fall into an abyss. and we never hear back what's happening, and puts our PTA leadership in a bad position as well. So we need to look at that too. And also, the input that you get on the facilities and maintenance audit, as far as assets and asset management, will be a key piece to our renovation queue work that facilities is doing.

[00:17:04] So it all ties together. So, you know, we just need to keep that in mind. In addition, I would love to see the ERFC audit move forward. And also as part of that to take a look at what is the link with that program to, you know, our abilities to maintain our very senior level staff.

[00:17:28] I think it's, you know, pretty well known that with that program sometimes we have, am I totally out of time and I'm just talking away? I'm just like, oh, whatever. anyway you got it I'm done sorry no no worries I I could tell you were wrapping up your thought I'm Miss McLaughlin followed by mr. Frisch sorry oh sorry sorry yes yes of course thank you so first of all really appreciate Elaine for your

detailed you know comments I am taking a lot of notes here and I do believe a lot of your insights kind of like match exactly of what we are going

[00:18:05] to do. If I may just talk a little bit to respond to your comments and feedback. For the food and nutrition ones, I mean, I do understand this is a major thing, right? For me, I'm coming from Hong Kong, food is number one thing for us. And so I just want to make sure we are going to look at the lunch debts, right, as part of the financial accountability, right, to see what are we going to do with it why we have this challenge and what are the potential solution that we can offer for food waste you mentioned that is already on the very specifically is on in the scope of work

[00:18:43] about recycling and things like that definitely about the other audit for facilities maintenance and thank you work orders would be one of the key goal that we look at and to see how effectively right to making sure our facilities like the quality of like the facilities up for our students for staff members to be there for we did not currently explicitly say how we are working with the pta like the funding that they are supporting how this built into the bigger puzzle

[00:19:17] right of work order those if i may suggest that my team member the team lead is here today so We will take that as a note, so when we plan for this audit further, we definitely will consider that aspect as one of the factors.

[00:19:35] So Esther, I fully understand what you're saying. I was more thinking about communication in the work order processing. Who do they need to communicate with? You know, either we're going to do this work, we're not going to do this work. Why?

[00:19:51] PTAs need to be on that list for communication. Got it. totally agree like even though our audit the school board does a lot of wonderful work if we don't tell our community members that they do not know right so definitely thank you for the reminder the last one I just want to clarify it a little bit with related to the retirement benefit right and of course that all of us our employees all have a state in our ERFC right how could we maintain especially to your point our senior members right who have a lot of institutional knowledge about how to run the organization how to retain the

[00:20:30] talents right them and also others our suggestion for this year is not to include it in the fiscal year 24 plan the major reason is because we will need to hire someone externally to support however if the school board thinks right this is a major item we need to look at it now of course we can switch out and other audit you know to do that and at the same time I may likely need some financial support some funding in order to hire someone to do it so I just want to put it on the table that we know that this is a critical

[00:21:07] and important topic currently we don't have a plan for fiscal year 24 we are thinking that maybe the coming years if it makes sense it completely makes sense and i got that um i just thought i'd take the opportunity to say if we have an opportunity to do it next year that would be a good thing thanks all right next we'll go to ms mclaughlin i'm very happy to follow ms tolan um i'm going to begin dr reed and um fellow colleagues that i um really do not want

[00:21:45] Esther, the need for an external expert to drive our mission critical audits. So if we need it, we need it. We have an $8 million a year reserve fund for the school board. I mean, the superintendent has a reserve fund. But honestly, ERFC is an extremely important program.

[00:22:07] It is also very costly. It is a 6% per employee contribution. So I say this often, and I just am feeling this passion again because it's my last time weighing in on a budget or the audit planning for an entire year. This has got to be tackled. You know, we are woefully behind jurisdictions across the nation at state and local level of understanding how do we help attract and retain employees. And if ERFC is not doing that for the 21st century workforce,

[00:22:45] When they would rather have 6% a year in their salaries because they're not staying here for 30 or 40 years, we can't keep kicking that can down the road. So I really do support this, Ms. Tolan, thank you for bringing it up.

[00:23:02] Colleagues, I hope people will think about this one. I look at the rest of the topics, and I guess what I would want to ask next is take the experts component out of it. If we can pull up the chart where we weighed in and determined what, again, is most fiscally and operationally most critical division, speak from that.

[00:23:29] So may I just ask if the clock... I need the clock to stop. I'm losing my seconds. I'm using my time. No, no, the clock was going for me. Yeah, go ahead. Clark, do you mind to put up the presentation again? So why don't we look at slide six, Megan, if it makes sense.

[00:23:47] This is mainly the universe of what we are doing, what we propose to do. So, slide six. No, I wanted the next one that showed the bar chart. Okay. Oh, so where's the one that shows all the data that you collected on people saying, this is what we would like, because you survey all of us.

[00:24:12] Right. Then it will be on the document. I apologize. Sorry, I misunderstood the question. So, Clark, it will be the document, not the presentation. I apologize. I have it in front of me, so I just need to flip it.

[00:24:30] Thank you. I would add, Ms. Koh, that if your team can create a PowerPoint slide and add that to the PowerPoint, the public is going to look at your PowerPoint presentation, and I think it's important for them to see that data.

[00:24:49] Yeah, definitely. thank you for yeah yes we can fix that so if we go make it if we can make it a little bit bigger I'm sorry I'm getting a little bit old to see this if we can like pull down so right under procurement Ms. Goughlin is it what your refer like retirement benefits but here is the reason why we are not doing it so actually no I'm sorry Ms. Koh I'm looking for the section that shows the

[00:25:20] the survey results it will be under appendix one and i'm sorry that we have a lot of data here so just want to be it's on page 13. page 13 appendix one is the audit topic priorities so if we can um page actually page 14 item number 31 uh one more page down please no you're actually

[00:25:56] exactly where I would like this to be. Oh, I see. I see. Got it. Because we arrange it by alphabetical order for the potential audit topics, so retirement benefits is on the next page. Okay. Yeah. Does it? Okay. Yep. Yep. Stop here. So item number 31. So we've got like four counts from the FCPS employee. That's okay. Okay. Let me pick up from there. So for my colleagues, this is something that i always share with ms co i love that we survey that's important however we

[00:26:35] are not audit experts we are not operational experts and so one of the reasons that the school board the previous board funded a risk assessment manager for the office of the auditor general is for the auditor general and that team to do that annual evaluation of our risk for the system and so i've always

asked that this is kind of like your feedback form but that for you to bring your professional expertise of understanding a 3.5 billion dollar operation

[00:27:10] and what is our most mission critical risk that we need to address so you know sometimes the grand total tallies on what over 40 items um you know that's that's just by those 40 items alone you're You're gonna have a very widespread, Dr. Reed, based on people's just passion of understanding topics.

[00:27:33] In the end, as a board member, I'm less interested in where the tally marks came or even where the 12 of us individually are. I'm really, I remain very concerned that you guys are our only experts here. And I would prefer that the recommendations are coming.

[00:27:52] Number one, why UC is the biggest risks, the most mission critical time sensitive risks. And number two, it'd be regardless of if a subject matter expert has to come in. So with my time being up, I do hope you can maybe respond to, again, where I am on that.

[00:28:10] But I hope there will be a serious reconsideration of URFC. Twelve years in this division has not really done a holistic look at its impact and what are we doing here.

[00:28:26] And so thank you. And again, thank you so much, Megan. I mean, I think you always encourage us to think outside of the box, right? Like to really think about our value from Office of Auditor General added to the school board. And I really appreciate that you kind of highlight that's what we do as a living, right? And this is my only job after college. So I really appreciate for your trust in us.

[00:28:54] So what you see in front of you is part of the equation only, and I'm sorry that maybe the presentation doesn't come that way. That's why in the beginning of the presentation, I would like to frame it as this is part of what triggered the actual plan that our office proposed.

[00:29:12] And, of course, the school board ideas and what is important means a lot to us, because you hear from the constituents about what is important for them. So while we considered it, we also considered benchmarking, again, meaning comparing with other K-12 education.

[00:29:36] We also looked at what are the key hot topics that are happening in the world, in U.S., Virginia before we come up with the plan and the reason why we highlight retirement benefit is again is because we understand this is an important component to retain our employees and we know that in today's market like we are surrounded by a lot of for-profit company they can offer maybe money-wise much more than us and the retirement benefit is a key component for our employees to have, right, and to continue to be improved upon.

[00:30:15] So I want to raise about the cost component is just for transparency, right? This is an additional cost. However, if you know that the school board thinks that this retirement benefit is really more time sensitive than the other topics that my team proposed, again, that proposal go back to the list of 10 items, right?

[00:30:40] Including food and nutrition, including facilities maintenance, including IT system access management. This is much more important than the other one. Then we can think about reordering, right? And I don't, I'm okay, you know, to do this.

[00:30:59] But according to mine, if you ask for mine expertise, like based upon my past experience, maybe maybe a midpoint to do this is we can start the process to hire you know someone to do it during this year like while the audit may not be taking place this year we can at least start to hire someone

because that take time right and we want to make sure we follow the procurement policy right of course so we can start to hire like the expert to do this audit throughout fiscal year 24

[00:31:36] and but have the audit being carried out maybe immediately the beginning of FY25 something for the board to consider then we don't need to give up any current topics that we propose on FY24 if it makes sense so this is one option that we can put on the table for us to consider so just to clarify my question because I know I'll need to go back but to clarify here what I was wanting to hear from you and your team is that's a component we'll need to do an rfp to get the expert but what

[00:32:11] i wanted to hear from you is all that being said with just two board members who've spoken so far both saying we see the urgency and importance of erfc would you agree that taking the aspect of what you just shared you do or do not understand the mission critical component that we need to be looking at erfc sooner rather than later so since i'm also one of the beneficiary right i am part of fcps and also of course that's critical for me and for my family but if you ask me in we are all

[00:32:47] working with limited resources right so i would say that for the other other topics that we propose for fy24 plan i still stand behind them and for retirement benefits one thing i forgot i failed to raised is that they have like regular audits like an act but it's more focusing on the actuary right they looked at the numbers making sure the percentage everything calculated correctly what we are looking for here if i hear the two school board members correctly and we will be

[00:33:24] hearing from the others as well in a little bit is more to take a holistic look at our retirement benefit program to see if that is or is not so i would need some more clarification later maybe yeah i'll use my go back because i i think there's a disconnect in what we want for era what maybe we're looking for with the erc audit it would certainly be performance it's not fiscal because as you know we already have that getting done annually so thank you yeah may i make mr Frisch is next but just an interjection you maybe what we could do at the kind of end of this meeting

[00:34:03] is if we want to take a consensus if this is something that we want to pursue looking into and especially since we'd have to to take an external firm and you would need to get back to us about whether there's bandwidth on your team to even manage that external process because just the last one with air i know took a lot of of time even though it was being done externally um all right mr frisch followed by dr anderson thanks um just in case we don't have an opportunity to weigh in on that question before there's any kind of consensus vote straight up i am opposed

[00:34:42] to anything that jeopardizes the earned benefit of our erfc for any employees in our school system I am using my time to make my case and the shift away from defined benefits across the country has made retirement less secure for every worker where that has taken place period full stop and so I would oppose anything that jeopardizes that if we want to continue to raise salaries for educators and staff I think we do I don't think it should be at the expense of this the

[00:35:18] retirement that we offer all of our employees that are eligible in terms of other items up for consideration. First, thank you for all the hard work that you all have put in. It's been a joy serving on the audit committee in a way that I didn't anticipate it would be when I first joined in January. I've learned a lot that I did not know after two years on the board.

[00:35:42] Thank you. And in terms of other items, you know, part of what's difficult for me sometimes is to always remember fraud waste abuse. That's what we're looking at here, right? And so looking at the

facilities audit for next year, I'm curious if in looking at number three, the policies and regulations, if there would be space in that consideration for whether our current method of public use

[00:36:13] is wasteful. In other words, number three says, let me pull it up. For the clerk, it is presentation slide 11. Here we go. Number three says, evaluate FCPS policy and regulation and control surrounding facility maintenance assets and inventory and monitoring of hours, including overtime, blah, blah. One could easily make the argument that the way that we allow our facilities to be used by the public, which we should, at the expense that we allow them to be used,

[00:36:50] is wasteful when it comes to the hours that employees work the assets that we have at our disposal for maintenance because obviously whenever our facilities are used they become you know worn down and if we're not asking a suitable amount so i'm curious if that would be something that could be considered in this audit so and thank you carl for the question and um i of course that's a very important topic to consider we i think it's the current year we performed an audit in community use so we observe you know a lot of room for improvement so to speak

[00:37:29] right in terms of fee structure right like i'm trying to tie the use of the facility whether we are even make our both hands meets right like whether like for facilities we have to have like employees there safety and there are a lot of different aspects that we consider in that audit Maybe for this particular point, I'm just wondering, we are in the process of following up with community use of the various recommendations that we made.

[00:38:00] Fee structure is one of them. And of course, if we see any kind of like big gap that it has not been remediated from that audit, we definitely could consider that when we plan for the facilities maintenance audit to be part of it. And what we will do, Carl, is that for likely it will be the audit committee will bring, hey, this is what we see, assuming, and I'm sure community use will timely implement the recommendations. If they do not, then we will bring it back

[00:38:37] to the audit committee and say, hey, we did not see that implemented timely. Why don't we incorporate and other consideration in the facilities maintenance audit to see if there is any waste of public fund. Okay. If it makes sense. Yeah on slide 13 the IT systems audit we're you know we're going to be using a lot of Chromebooks in the future and I'm curious how that might be looked at in an audit over our systems access given that people consider these things to be

[00:39:14] relatively disposable so the asset maintenance is not necessarily going to be there although it could be um i'm curious if there's any consideration about how uh waste may or uh the access audit might evolve based on the equipment that we're maintaining pause my time no and so for the it systems access access audit is this war is looking at the our physical access and our logical access

[00:39:49] controls, so physical access being, you know, logging in using your badge and logical controls will be more so logging in using like a username and password. I think in our IT asset management audit we did identify some controls as it relates to those at the asset management part of it.

[00:40:10] And so this one will be more so looking at what are those controls to our most important systems who has access to the data based on their roles and responsibilities or should they have access to that data and that sort of aspect of it.

[00:40:26] Regardless of the content. All right, final thing. I think we're right to wait on the procurement audit because we have no idea how the policy will have impacted our work over the last year. Thank you.

[00:40:43] All right, we have Dr. Anderson followed by Ms. Corbett Sanders. I think I will need to go back because I have a number of questions. I want to start with the food and nutrition audit. Will this include an evaluation at each site? Would that require a site visit?

[00:41:02] I will respond and then we can pause the time. Yeah, pause my time. Yes, we will select the site, yes. But on a sampling basis. On a sampling basis. One of the things that I'm curious about is about the food waste. How FCPS monitors food waste.

[00:41:20] You may not know this question now, but I'm curious to learn how FCPS monitors the food waste, but I'm also, as typically with your audits, you provide recommendations. I'm interested if you would be willing to collaborate with organizations who help schools to monitor and recycle and have food recovery to be part of your recommendations, if you can be open to that kind of conversation and collaboration.

[00:41:49] I think it certainly can be an option, Riccardi, so of course we would not be specifically to say, hey, use this firm ABC, right, that's not what you're asking, it's more to work with like the industry expert, right, like who can provide us with recommendations.

[00:42:07] I'm sure as part of that audit we will also benchmark with the other school districts and see how they are operating. we see some industry leading practices and they may be using such organization to support them and i'm sure we can recommend that and the organizations are not they're not paid in any way it's just they offer strategies and they offer supports to the school i would love to make sure that the schools who are involved in that food recovery can be part of your audit that's why i asked would every school be visited if you spot check it's likely that you may miss the ones that

[00:42:45] are involved because i don't think it's many and various schools are in different places and their efforts for that food recovery so i would love to ensure that you can include those folks and i can provide you with some of the schools at least in my area that i know are involved in that food recovery and so you could be sure to have that conversation um thank you my second piece is regarding the evaluation audit which has begun can you provide a little bit more detail in terms of What employee classes does this include?

[00:43:19] Sure, so this will include all of our instructional employees, our principals, our teachers, and we're also looking at operational. We're looking at leadership team as well as all the support employees as well. Okay, that answers my question because I was also hoping for that. And that audit, as you're working through it, I would love to get some feedback from 360 evaluations that are taking place across the country in different systems, because I think that could be an important component for us. And I raise this because our school staff, they have the

[00:43:54] climate surveys that are provided to parents and teachers to complete, to help inform the principal's evaluations. I don't think we have a similar structure for the region folks. I don't think we have a similar structure for the leadership team folks that are here. And I think there's some space for us to be a little bit more broad in terms of how we evaluate those employees and I know that process exists in other divisions and I would love to hear your take and for you to gather that information to bring back for us. Thirdly, I do want to echo what Elaine and Miss,

[00:44:32] I'm sorry, what Miss Tolan and Miss McLaughlin shared earlier. I think it's really critical that we have that audit. It doesn't mean it's a decision that's being made, but it's information for us to be able to

make a decision. So I just want to lend my support to it, but I'm going to keep going down my list.

[00:44:48] I think they covered it. Just kind of a basic housekeeping question. One of the things that I noticed is that all of the audits seem to take five months. That's curious. Can you give some detail as to why that seems to be the marker? Maybe we should hire Dr. Anderson as our investigator going forward.

[00:45:05] That's a very good question. So we are, this is for planning purpose, right? So in the past, we tried some, say, four, five, and six. So without really going into the details, we don't really know exactly how many months we need.

[00:45:21] So we are thinking that in a proximity, right, that we spend maybe a month in planning or a month to two months, then we spend a month in doing execution, meaning we go with our paper and pencil to kind of like do the work, and then takes another two months or so for reporting, including getting all the readies, getting all the stakeholders buy-in to the findings and the recommendations, presentation to the audit committee.

[00:45:49] So give or take five months. And that timeline, we do need to adjust when we get closer. And then the status, for example, within the audit committee, Dr. Anderson, that we report to the audit committee, report to them about how the status going for each audit.

[00:46:07] Do we need more time, less time? when the actual reporting will take place. Those will happen when it get closer, when the actual audit takes place. - Okay, that helps. The reason why I was also interested in that, going back to the nutrition audit, I expected that you would be walking and engaging with 200 buildings.

[00:46:26] And I thought if you're doing that over five months and you're doing other things over five months, that would not, that didn't just, it didn't track very well. But I also want to kind of go back to the nutrition audit, Making sure that we are engaging with all types of buildings, not just our typical elementary schools, high schools and middle schools, but our centers and our alternative programs, because I'm sure whatever happens at those cafeterias may be a little bit different.

[00:46:53] We just want to make sure we're having a sample that is truly representative of Fairfax County. And that was my time. Go back, please. Happy to. May I, meeting, may I respond to the last point that Ricardi mentioned? so absolutely so we are going to use either continuous monitoring like we want to use the technology like method to help us to identify based upon the different factors right we looked at numbers we also will do a lot of like um pre like a pre interviews with all the

[00:47:29] like key stakeholders right to really find out where the risk may lie and i think if the school school board members do not mind, I will be happy to speak with you all to find out where the challenges may lie before we select the school.

[00:47:44] And I know, Ricardo, you are very kind to offer some of the school, and I'm sure some of the other school board members, you may have other school in your mind that you would like to communicate with us as well. So throughout that key informant interviews, we can collect more information from you all so that we can make a smarter decision on what to select.

[00:48:05] And I promise you all that the selection will be risk-based, right? We are not going to just randomly pick something, but based upon some information before that decision is made. - Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Corbett Sanders, followed by Ms. Sizemore Heiser.

[00:48:23] - Good morning, and thank you so much for this report. It's excellent, and for a plan. I do have a couple of comments. I would certainly support the suggestions by my colleagues on the food and nutrition audit to also look at the debt.

[00:48:42] I know that there was a write-up in, I think it was actually last night is when we received that letter. Yeah, yeah, something like that. On the facilities piece, I would love to see if, as part of that maintenance audit, We look at whether or not the facilities have been brought up to the ed spec when we're doing major maintenance in a building and whether or not as part of your work you would use the outcome of this facilities maintenance audit to inform the ongoing work with looking at the renovation queue.

[00:49:21] Because, obviously, what has happened in the past is certain buildings have just deteriorated for decades because of a lack of maintenance. And it actually increases the cost of the renovation. Next, on item number five on grants, I know we just had our special education audit, but the major, the largest grant we receive is the IDEA grant.

[00:49:47] And so it would be very helpful to understand how that works as far as do we have the right processes in place to ensure that we are managing that grant. Similarly, we should be looking at the ESSER grants that we have also had and that they are managed appropriately.

[00:50:12] Under your other OAG duties, and I say this as somebody who will not be participating, but I would hope that the OAG would add to their duties this year the onboarding of new board members because there is like, well, we know that at a minimum there will be eight new board members.

[00:50:33] On your recommendations, your recommendation status, If you could please look at possibly having a more standardized report that says these just kind of keeps all of the recommendations in one place and has a chart that says this is the status of each one.

[00:50:50] That makes it a quick look for board members and they don't have to look for each individual audit to do that. And I don't know if you could do that maybe through a recommendations dashboard, an audit dashboard for board members. But we're all excited about the work that's being done on dashboards.

[00:51:09] that might be a way of doing it finally the erfc um i actually am supportive of waiting on it and i will tell you my reasoning we are in the process of collective bargaining and i am concerned that if we start digging into erfc at the same time that the collective bargaining is ongoing um that it will impact those discussions and i think it's more likely that that should be a

[00:51:40] collaborative discussion. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Sizemore Heiser followed by. May I respond maybe a little bit to the comments. First of all, really appreciate Karen for your insightful comments because you always help us to be better, right, in determining the objectives.

[00:52:03] And thank you, thank you. So for the facilities maintenance audits, and I think it's a wonderful suggestion to have closer collaboration with FPAC right that they have done so much in it there they are the subject matter expert so when we take do a look back at what we proposed in fiscal year 2018 definitely one of the recommendation that has not been fully implemented yet is the need assessment right like to your point right if we can do the renovation earlier it can save us a lot

[00:52:39] of money before like until like something maybe detrimental happened so that definitely a great idea we we all have been taking a lot of notes so that's definitely one of the keynote that we will

implement about the grants idea and also ESSER definitely will be within consideration one other item I want to mention here with the board is that we also will coordinate closely with the external auditor, because they also looked at grants as well, so in the order of not to duplicate effort, right, that we want to make sure, because they tend to select bigger

[00:53:18] grants as well, money-wise, so we will be in close contact with them, but I know that external auditor, most of the time their focus is on the financial statements and then also So on the compliance side only, our audits, we got a lot of comment and feedback from our audit committee members should be also focusing on monitoring whether the goals and the outcomes of those grants have been met.

[00:53:46] So that will be definitely one of the things we will look at, but I just want to add on to that. And Grace's suggestion, and we missed the point about putting the onboarding of new school board members and that's definitely that we will invite ourselves to to making sure that the new school board members or even the veteran school board members can can know more about who we are and what we do in OAG recommendations we definitely can look into providing the dashboard we are all for innovation so we have that taking down and retirement benefits I think is a great insight

[00:54:23] about the collective bargaining to consider that about when we should have that audit so thank you besides more hyzer before you go i'm just going to ask a quick pause for everybody miss keys gamara has submitted a written request to virtually attend today's work session due to a personal conflict all those in favor of approving miss keys gamara's request that's unanimous with uh Ms. Marin, Ms. Bukarski, away from the desk, so approved.

[00:54:57] Thank you. A couple questions. Thank you very much, as always, for your really excellent work and your very detailed and organized work. It really helps me out as a board member to be able to participate effectively in these, so I appreciate that.

[00:55:16] A couple questions I had. I know the procurement audit wasn't on here, and correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounded like the reason the procurement audit isn't really being considered is because we just changed procurement policy. However, the procurement policy change was just changing what comes to the board, unless I'm misunderstanding the policy, didn't really change the process of procurement before the contract is ready to come to the board for final approval.

[00:55:43] And I think the procurement policy process is what was to be audited, not whether the right ones get to the board. So if you could help me understand how the new policy impacts the procurement process right the process from identifying a need right to putting out an rfp to making sure the rfp is um consistent with what the need was right to make sure captures what the need is and then the process of putting the rfp out and um selecting vendors that process making sure that then the contract that comes out of that process reflects the negotiations between the vendor and fcps so

[00:56:20] so the contract is reflective of the work and scope and costs, that to me is a procurement audit, right? An audit of whether at that point when the contract is done, right, and it's a certain dollar amount and over by a certain dollar amount comes to the board, that's just a tiny part of the procurement process.

[00:56:38] So help me understand how the policy means we need to pause for a year. And thank you, Reshna. And you actually helped me to think it through, right? And I believe, again, the major reason is because in the scope of work, we do believe that the school board reporting and keeping the school board in the loop of what we are approving, right, is very, is paramount.

[00:57:03] So we prefer, I mean, in just thinking about how we spend our resources is really to do one audit, but include the different aspect of objective, if I may just say that. but you are correct. There are a lot of core other objectives we should consider, right?

[00:57:22] And I'm just thinking, and I'm trying to kill many birds with one stone, right? Within the food and nutrition services audit as an example, and again, that's not kind of like an overarching procurement audit as what you are describing, but we are going to look at our relationship with the vendor, right?

[00:57:40] Like how we are procuring food, right? That's a lot of money, even though we are procuring products, but there is risk there as well. And I'm also thinking and also being as an innovative auditor, right? Within the facilities maintenance audit, right? If they are using a lot of vendors, we can definitely add the consideration of looking at how those procurements of the contractor agreements are being made, right?

[00:58:09] Like that's also have a procurement aspect on it. is that a full-blown procurement audit? That is not, right? But I'm just thinking about that. We know procurement and how we do competition, making sure that the request for proposal project, a process is good, is very important.

[00:58:29] So we can include aspects of that in the audits that we proposed. But if the school board would agree with me that the overarching procurement audit could wait for another year, then we can also look at all the different aspects of the policy that has been recently approved in that one audit.

[00:58:51] That will be my suggestion at this point. - I can understand that that's part of the audit, right, is are the correct contracts getting to the board, right? So I completely, I understand how that got there. I just wanted to flag that I wanted to make sure, right, that there's a lot that, you know, I defer to your judgment on risk, but I will just say I do think that that is an area that we may wanna make sure we prioritize the following year once we see how that contract goes on that piece of it. So I do understand I just and I think trying to look at some of that procurement piece and perhaps as you do the food nutrition audit or the facilities audit you sort of keep that in mind that you want to make sure you intentionally look at some of the procurement pieces as well because

[00:59:30] that also might help you when we get to next year decide you know what this isn't a risk or this is a risk right as you're doing that piece. So that would help inform our decision for next year's audit as well. So I appreciate that. One of the questions I noticed on the employee evaluation process, one of the things you're looking at is benchmarking against existing practices at other school systems to determine best practices, but I'm just wondering, is there space in here to look at best practices outside of what's already existing, but just best practices from, you know, research-based best practices in that audit?

[01:00:04] Yeah, that will be one of the areas that we will be looking at, just best practice overall as it relates to employee evaluations. And I think there's value to looking at other school systems, too, but I just wanted to make sure that was a component of it. That's my two questions for now. If I have something else, I'll ask for a go back. Thank you.

[01:00:20] Thanks very much. Ms. Omeish, did you? Yeah, I'll go ahead. Thank you so much, Ms. Ko. And we discussed this at length in the audit committee, so I won't belabor the point. I think I did want to just catch a couple of the discussion points. I know Ms. McLaughlin was asking just about how we prioritize and what's considered mission critical.

[01:00:40] I was wondering if you saw, you know, what you find to be mission critical or like what your risk assessment is on the list and how aligned or not it is to what ended up coming out based on staff and school board surveys.

[01:00:55] So, thank you for the question. And for us, what we propose is what we think at this time, right, for fiscal year 24, again, in two months, that's what we consider them as mission critical, right?

[01:01:14] When we come up a plan, we always think from the perspective of a holistic audit plan. So, we looked at, hey, what are the things that will impact the division across first, right? We believe food and nutrition, we believe facilities maintenance, we believe IT system access controls are something that impact the entire system, and not just internally, but also to our external stakeholders as well, community members and children and family members.

[01:01:46] And then we also add to the aspect about what is our bread and butter, right? Of course, it's provide education to have a portrait of the graduates, right? then we have to look into school. That is a must to us. So business process audit, looking at how schools are managing their fund, looking at the local school activity fund audit, that are very key. Even though they are money-wise, we are not talking a lot of money, especially maybe at the elementary school level, but the reputational risk is huge. So we suggest to really to keep

[01:02:22] these two components in the audit plan then we think about innovation right we are getting in the 21st century i know the superintendent always encouraged us you know to innovate to use iai or bots or chat gpt right of course we have to audit the result right then how could we implement that within office of auditor general and that's why we continues to do continuous monitoring we like Like I said, we are going to up the game.

[01:02:53] We have been in a current discussion with a potential software vendor. We are going through our security checklist right now to ensure we pass that compliance. But we are looking at method to how we can get real-time access to some of our database, including such as our HR database, such as focus, meaning our financial records.

[01:03:18] So we get real-time access. So we are not bound by audit, right, because audit is very stand alone. So we want to make sure we have access to real-time data, of course, only read only. Then we can see where the irregularities may lie.

[01:03:34] And then we can look at changing the plan, right, even though what we see here may be different six months from now, if the school board can allow us with that flexibility. And of course, if we change plan, we will first come to the audit committee, right, to seek approval on it.

[01:03:50] So that's why I see what we propose in front of all of you for fiscal year 24 is a balanced plan. And of course, there are other, you know, very key initiatives that we should have included, like all those talent retention aspects.

[01:04:07] And I totally agree with all of you, and they are critically important. It's just thinking about the pie that we have, how to use the current resources. That's the plan that we come up and present in front of the board. So I guess with that mention, relative to the full list, where do you see maybe there is a mismatch, if at all, or something maybe you would have prioritized higher based on your risk assessment?

[01:04:37] I would stick with the full list, meaning the 10 items that I proposed on slide 6. Yeah, sorry, I was referring to, so yeah, the page 1314.

[01:04:53] That full list right 1 through 49 and then obviously it became 10 based on feedback And whatnot independent assessment. Yeah. Yeah, so that's what I'm trying to determine based on I guess what miss McLaughlin was expressing as a concern Do you see that there are items in 1 through 49 that were left behind that are higher in priority in your risk assessment understanding so?

[01:05:19] Thank you for the clarification about I'm sorry that I misunderstood first Definitely the second runner-up will be the three topics that I put, right, meaning -- and again, let me just make sure I reference it so we all come to the same understanding -- is on the presentation slide 19 through 21, right, retirement benefit is one of them.

[01:05:43] Procurement is also one of them, because we do know that that is a very high-risk area. because again we can only do so many topics so that's why we suggest not to include them in FY in fiscal year 24. Okay so you're flagging them to be priorities for the following one? And also the fact that that we got a lot of you know feedback insights from the school board especially that those are the key topics and of course not just looking at the school board insights but but also the other risks that we consider, right, in terms of reputational talent retention,

[01:06:23] those are the next key ones that we want to bring it up to the table here. Okay, so I guess in terms of process for next year, when you have those, let's say, 10, right, are you going to end up looking for seven and having these be three? Sorry, can you clarify your question?

[01:06:42] So, for next year, when you put the plan, right, will these be slated as three of the supposed 10, let's say, of that year's priorities? For fiscal year 24? 25. I see. Yes. So, I would like to say this, right?

[01:07:03] Procurement, definitely, right? Because we all talked about the importance of that. We just need to make sure that the policy has the time to reflect the actual practice. And then in terms of retirement benefits, I think that we will need to discuss that further, right?

[01:07:19] After listening to Ms. Karen Carper Sanders mentioning about the collective bargaining, and my office is a little bit distant away, so maybe I would need some insight from the school board about if this is something that may impact the timing, right?

[01:07:34] I would need to have further discussion. And then in terms of the student mental health, I know that this is a key topic, social issue that we are experiencing, we may need to think a little bit further how audit can help to that topic. So that would be my comment at this time. Okay. No, I appreciate that. I mean, I guess I can appreciate Ms. McLaughlin's concern in that, you know, we do this often. The board has opinions. We, you know, our opinions are as good as any other citizen's opinions. And then, you know, you have decisions being made as a result of that, whereas you have some expertise in being

[01:08:13] able to look at it and perhaps identify things that our judgment didn't yield right so I think I'd want to defer and give you an opportunity to point those out and I think you have so hopefully moving forward whoever's less on this board can recall that and keep that in mind as we prioritize for the next one and maybe we want to reconsider how we do this process wise in general but you You know, so Ms. Ko, maybe board input is a factor, right, is something you consider, but weighs a little bit less perhaps than it does today in identifying what the top priorities are.

[01:08:50] Sure. I'm sure board members will have all kinds of opinions about that, but to your point about the retirement benefits piece being potentially impacted by collective bargaining, I know that in the last audit meeting I talked a little bit just about FNS. I know there were we passed a follow-on recently that changes or is introducing some you know Investigations and how we might do that differently there were two follow-ons in the past as well Potentially three I know at least of two in years before related to food and nutrition and and how we do that I know miss Marin was particularly passionate about this I don't know if you had the chance to look at that at all or not I just want to be mindful of how it might impact

[01:09:28] What the focus areas are depending on what the board has already voted to look into and then the second piece pieces, the facilities one, I think I shared with you that there's already a consultant that Chuck was, you know, right to bring in, to look at the renovation queue specifically, but even more broadly, and has met with all of us to get that feedback.

[01:09:51] So I think that's been an important component. We would just love to hear if you have any thoughts beyond what we discussed last time, but otherwise I know it's on your mind, so. So thank you, Abra. So feedback on the first item with related to the food and nutrition, definitely that we have been keeping up with what's happening with the school board.

[01:10:11] So for any decision that have already been made in related to our audit objective, right, definitely we will consider all of them, right, before we even carried out that audit. So thank you for highlighting those updates for us.

[01:10:27] And then with related to facilities maintenance, yes, absolutely, we will be in close contact with facilities, transportation services department to see what they are doing and to be able to leverage what the consultant is going to do, looked at both scope of work, to make sure that we, of course, not duplicating each other work, but also leverage what they found out and to continuously to further inform what our audit scope should be.

[01:10:55] So thank you for raising that up, too. And I believe I have already started the conversation, you know, with our COO, Marty Smith, and also with our assistant superintendent of FTS. So that discussion will be continued. Awesome. And maybe to benefit from them before their contract is over even, right?

[01:11:11] Right. But that's my time, and I have plenty of time in audit to talk more. Thank you, Ms. Ko. Thank you, Ms. Omesh. Just a few thoughts as we've kind of gone around.

[01:11:27] I guess I would love to know a little bit about what that onboarding of new members might look like, because I would, I would think theoretically that you would be, if you were looking at the onboarding of new board members, you would be auditing the process by which we onboard new members.

[01:11:46] Or were you just referencing, like, talking to them about how to, these priorities? Ms. Cohen, what I was suggesting is that because audit shops typically do financial risk and fraud audits, they also do reputational risk and legal risk audits.

[01:12:10] And so oftentimes if somebody comes into a board position such as this, they may not have the familiarity of what the role of an auditor does. And so I was thinking more from the standpoint of, you know, for one of the better term, audit 101 sure yeah absolutely thank you that's super helpful i appreciate that um sure um the other question i had too was the the grants um piece a couple of just ideas in that is also are

[01:12:45] we pursuing all that's available right like are we are we going after the right things or is there and i don't even know how you would audit that so it may not be a you know a possibility but in the world of all the available money that is out there for a system is there any way to take a look at do we have a mechanism where we're pursuing are we not leaving money on the table I guess and I'm not quite sure if that's a possibility in the audit another piece is structure of departments I think this is a conversation we just had this conversation a couple of us over some of the web

[01:13:23] services like our our web services people are scattered in all different departments and so i think a couple of us the question was is that a structure for the best function and so i guess that would be my question with grants too i'm not sure that even all of us know kind of where those people are housed is it just under j is it different places i know we have some people with the foundation like how are we so to me that would be an important part of that audit is to look at the structure is that structure getting us kind of what we want because i know there have been conversations in the past of people different people stepping on different

[01:14:02] people's toes about grants for money versus grants for things and we've all kind of been caught in that before as board members so that would be another piece and then the last thing i just wanted to mention the erfc piece if we're looking at fraud waste and abuse i don't think there's a person on this board that is trying to in any way say that that's a concern with erfc i think the question is is our staff getting kind of the best bang for their buck because we do something that is different than other systems so if that's the case i almost wonder and this is a question to my

[01:14:40] colleagues not really to miss ko um maybe that's one of those instances where we direct the the superintendent to have an outside auditor who takes a look at ERFC because to the point about collective bargaining, I think if I were engaged in collective bargaining, I would want to know what is even out there on the table. And so if there's a system that comes back and says, wow, this is much less costly for employees. And over the years, this is going to get you the same benefit. I don't, I would want to know that as an employee, because it's a big chunk of

[01:15:15] my paycheck. So just for your consideration, colleagues as a board, is that a conversation? I almost think, I'm not sure it belongs in Esther's wheelhouse, though certainly they could manage it. I know that's my time. I have three people listed for gobacks. I just wanted to check the list and make sure that that's okay. And then I'll, oh yes, Ms. Ko, please, sorry, respond. Thank you, I just want to kind of like response briefly to your remarks. So first of all, for the grant audits, what we structure for this time is more focusing on the specific grants. So,

[01:15:53] to your question, of course, right, we want to make sure that the division is aware all the possible, you know, grant opportunities in the market, then we can take advantage of them. So, I believe, I did not see Miss Burden here today, but I do believe that there's There's a grant development office under the budget office, under Lee Burden's structure.

[01:16:19] So I believe they are the one who is responsible for coordinating the different initiatives. And we can actually send out a link to our recent grant audit report, more looking at the holistic, you know, the grant approach.

[01:16:39] And there is a structure, organization structure there about who is doing what. So I can absolutely send the link out to all the school board members to see what we have done so far. In the proposed grant audit here, we are more targeted to the specific grants that we currently have.

[01:16:58] So I would like to clarify that. That's about it. Thank you. Thank you. I see Ms. Derenak-Koufax, who has not had an opportunity to go yet. So before go-backs, so Laura, three, yep, you're already on it, of course.

[01:17:15] Ms. Daronak, go-backs, and then followed by, Ms. Tolan, did you want to go back? Okay, perfect. I just wanted to just take this opportunity to thank Esther and her team for all of their hard work. I made my comments during the, you know, our audit committee work that we did on this topic.

[01:17:33] I don't have anything to add. I do have some opinions with some of my colleagues. I'm probably going to talk to you individually about some of the comments made as we move forward before we take a vote on this rather than discussing them at the table today. But thank you, team, for all of your hard work and really appreciate what you do and the thoughtful process you used to get us to this point because I know it's not easy.

[01:17:56] So thank you so much. Thank you. And just looking, Ms. Omish just highlighted that we're about out of time. So could everybody agree to a minute and then if that doesn't do it, we'll try to, 90 seconds.

[01:18:12] Fair enough. All right. Thank you. Speed dating with Ms. Coe. All right. That's Ms. Tolan followed by Ms. McLaughlin. Okay, great. Quick comments. On the facilities and maintenance one, I believe facilities and maintenance has a work order dashboard where they're following that.

[01:18:32] But I think it goes back to our dashboard discussion the other day. It's one thing to have a dashboard. another thing to to use the data and information so that's what I hope will be included in what you're looking at. There is, I just want to make a note, there is a small project group in design and construction where a lot of DC 407s and work orders end up so don't overlook that. They're not in facilities and maintenance so I don't want that group overlooked in the process. On the food nutrition Dr. Anderson was talking about food recovery which is a program that we have in a number of our schools and our get to green staff should be able to

[01:19:11] tell you which schools are doing that so there's food and recovery there's you know composting and both of those areas our staff has had a lot a lot of conversations with the county zero waste program to around JET and certainly should be working with you know our faith alliance for climate solutions group for example a number of outside organizations that have some good ideas around this but our gets a grain staff would should definitely be interviewed on that on the ERFC stuff my real focus is how do we maintain our experienced

[01:19:51] employees and not give them a financial incentive to leave so that's my big focus there thanks thank you for that clarification Ms. Coe anything you wanted to add on that one? Okay. Ms. McLaughlin followed by Dr. Anderson. In 90 seconds, let me see if I can capture this one. Very much appreciate what Mr. Frisch said because to clarify, I don't think any single one of us would ever want to jeopardize ERFC for our existing employees. I am familiar that the federal government and other organizations over time, if they've decided that

[01:20:28] the defined benefit of a pension is not where employees want their annual compensation to go and they would rather be able to have it portable, especially if they're not going to stay for 30 or more years, that there are ways to sustain the existing pension system for those who stay in it while then phasing it out for new employees who would like other choices. Six percent a year, Dr. Reed, is six percent

a year. That is what we put into the RFC and we are hearing from our younger employees who say, I am not going to be here for 30 to 40 years. And I put in 6% of my

[01:21:05] paycheck that I really need now. And so all I'm advocating for is to do the research, to do the benchmarking. No other school division in Northern Virginia, let alone the Commonwealth that I'm aware of, has a secondary retirement benefit program. And so I want to really elevate what Ms. Cohen said.

[01:21:26] Ms. Toland, this is just a looking at. It's not taking anything away. And frankly, we would help our employees in collective bargaining if we actually had the research and data to discuss with them what will help with employees. But without that, we are sitting here blind. And I'm tired of 12 years of blindness not knowing are we actually helping to attract and retain our employees long term to their benefit.

[01:21:53] But in no way would I ever advocate for jeopardizing ERFC for our existing employees. Point made. Dr. Anderson. Yes, going back to the report, number four, the facilities maintenance, two things that I was hoping that we could consider.

[01:22:14] From meeting and hearing from FSEAC, one of their concerns is that the staffing shortages have also created some unsafe conditions because people may be going on jobs solo when it used to be two people and they're in a room.

[01:22:30] I would like for that to be a consideration as well. Is that possible? May I? So thank you for the comments. So there are three outstanding recommendations from the fiscal year 2018 audits, Riccardi.

[01:22:46] So one of them is exactly what you mentioned, is the staff shortage. So in that particular recommendation, we did not specifically focus on the safety aspect per se. But we do know that overall that office has inadequate staffing because I remember back then we did a survey, not a survey, we looked at some industry leading practices, how many people we should have and how many people we have now within OFM, Office of Facilities Maintenance.

[01:23:20] There's a huge gap. So that definitely have different consequences, right? Safety is one of the key ones that we want to make sure our employees are working in a safe environment. So when we revisit the remaining recommendations from that audit, which is part of the scope for this particular audit, we could definitely circle back to look at how they are using their staff members now, right, to see if there are any safety concerns from that aspect.

[01:23:51] I would definitely appreciate that because I think safety concerns will be good information for us to determine how to prioritize when there are shortages, which we know exist everywhere. Going back to pages 13 and 14 of the report with the 49 items, and I appreciate what Mr.

[01:24:07] May shared, can you -- I can't get a sense of the third column that says FCPS employees. Who does this include? So I think we put a footnote there but maybe a little bit small and it's on slide, sorry page 15.

[01:24:26] So if I can just read that out here so we don't need it to pull it up. So we interviewed 38 leadership team members and non-leadership team members including directors, coordinators, principals, et cetera that make up the FCPS employees column.

[01:24:44] So these are the people that we talk to and really get more insider information about they really think those areas are in need to be looking at. And it definitely appears that you have exercised your

judgment in these because they're not the ones that we've selected and not the ones with the highest numbers of votes.

[01:25:06] And I don't know where this fits, but I'm going to throw it out there because I'm the liaison to the Athletic Council. And whether this is a conversation for today or some other point, there's great concern with the community use of facilities in terms of cancellations happening at the schools that are so last minute and sometimes for planned items that it really creates a safety issue depending on what the community use is planned for that day.

[01:25:32] So I can share that information with you just so you have some background, but I wanted to elevate this in this space. If there's anywhere where this can fall under any of the audits, I think that group will greatly appreciate that.

[01:25:49] That's what I wanted to say. Thank you. Excellent. Thank you so much. And the only thing I wanted to add to about ERFC is just for, again, my colleagues' consideration, there's also a disincentive.

[01:26:06] You start to lose money if you stay on with us. So, like, I have a principal who I worship in a door and would like us to like her to stay with us until she's 95 years old. And she next year will at 33 years, 34, I can't remember exactly what it is, but you start losing your money in ERFC.

[01:26:23] That makes no sense to me. Like, we should be encouraging folks who are excited to be here and doing a beautiful job with our kids. We ought to not be discouraging them to stay here. And so that encourages, and we saw it this year, many of our principals who were right at that threshold, who left and went to another system because ERFC is what was hurting them.

[01:26:48] Staying in Fairfax County is what was hurting them. And so they went to another system to continue buying into VRS, which they could continue to do if you work for 50 years, but then they wouldn't get hurt on their ERFC. So that's a major concern to me that we actually have a system where it costs everyone a lot of money and we don't want in any way to disincentivize staying in Fairfax County.

[01:27:12] This is not a bench or a farm team for, you know, Prince William and Loudon. So I guess that's a question I would have for my colleagues. If this is not the appropriate forum, I'm going to defer to Ms. Sizemore-Heiser. but I would like us to find an opportunity as a board to be able to have that conversation if we were able to ask the superintendent if she's willing to do this, but could we get an outside review of ERFC?

[01:27:40] What do you think about that, Rajna? I think we're already having to reschedule a couple things from yesterday, so that may have to go to the next chair and vice chair's term, but I think it's a worthwhile conversation to have. I mean, it could be a follow-on motion.

[01:28:01] Yeah, it can be a follow on motion for the superintendent to follow up with, you know, or however you wish to do that. But that would be my record. I don't know if we can necessarily have a work session now on it. But yeah, I would ask Dr. Reed in listening to today's conversation that maybe you reflect a little bit on how you would like to see this operationally because we can do it one of two ways.

[01:28:34] We're going to vote on the budget and we could have a follow-on directive that we would like the funds and the effort to do this initial study. Or we can do an amendment to the audit plan when we vote on the audit plan saying that we would like to have this RFP put out for an expert to help it in coordination of the superintendent and the office of the Auditor General to manage it.

[01:29:02] i think you can do it in either way it's going to be an amendment to the audit plan or amendment to the budget um and dr reed i think that would be helpful to us but as what miss cohen said all of us want to help the division make an informed decision and no decision can be made if we don't have information so this is really information gathering first is an analysis of the pro the program and anecdotally what all of us are hearing are we losing employees especially veteran employees or not and and what are our younger employees saying about that six percent

[01:29:38] annually and we're just talking about what the employer puts in then there's what the employee puts in which is at least what one and a half percent of their paycheck too for erc i don't have the data with me but definitely if i can look at my paycheck tonight yeah i'm sure there's saying i do yeah well i think those are data points that are important again and and and how much it is not to take a penny out of our compensation to employees it's just how they're getting it are they getting it in their paycheck are they getting it into a you know a retirement

[01:30:12] a secondary retirement fund so thank you um and the only other thing i'll flag is that typically we don't audit things that we participate in right so in fairness to ask your shop who participates in ERFC to audit this could potentially be a conflict so I know Ms. Toland, Ms. Sizemore-Hiser and then Ms. Corbett Sanders.

[01:30:39] I would just like to say through the budget process and our focus on this particular budget to support our workforce, I know Mr. Smith, so Dr. Reed, I know Mr. Smith looked into this work for working after retirement issue around erfc hello mr smith so you so i would suggest maybe that the two of you talk and then maybe come back to us with a recommendation about whether we want to have this as a follow-on with audit or a follow-on with um budget that was just

[01:31:13] at least one piece that there's already been some thought going into it um yeah i appreciate um what Well, Ms. Tolentz, and I was just kind of thinking about your question. I do think, I mean, there's a large operational aspect to this, right?

[01:31:32] And so I have also heard the same thing from some staff members who are retiring before they wanted to leave because of ERFC. So I think it's a worthwhile question to look into. But I do also defer a little bit to Dr. Reed in terms of whether it's something the board needs to direct or something Dr. Reed can look into and come back to the board with a sort of a plan that we can comment on or thoughts.

[01:31:53] You know, so, you know, I don't know if it needs to be a follow-on or not, but I think if we wanted to formalize it, the board would like more information, that's probably the best way to do it. Yeah, that may be a good way. It's just a request for more information from you, which we could informally do in this setting.

[01:32:09] Yeah. Ms. Corbett-Sanders. A couple things. In 2016, these questions were looked at in an ERFC report done by Ian Hewitt, which also included whether closing out the ERFC to new hires and what the impact would be on the stability of the fund at all.

[01:32:38] That's part of the challenge. I would suggest that we have a couple of different opportunities to engage with those that are impacted. We have a board of the ERFC. We also have our 4510 meetings in which we could have the question asked about what they're thinking about.

[01:33:01] And third, if you're looking at doing something, this study was done in 2016 and presented to the board. I would suggest that that be the starting point.

[01:33:18] Pardon me? Dust it off and re-look at it. And I don't think it's as extensive, but if I look at page, and I smiled, Ms. Coe, when you said that about not remembering things at your age.

[01:33:35] significantly older and I was like I know we did it and so I just checked into our board docs and on one of the slides that actually shows what the funding methodology is what the actual air actuary recommendations are and what the impact of changing the approach and it does so I would suggest that that be your starting point and then allow the superintendent working with the RFC board and the 4510 for

[01:34:10] them to come back to us with a recommendation of what they think what that collective discussion is so that this board can make an informed decision of whether or not we need to get say use some of the funds to update that study or do just try something new but there is a lot of data there that i would just suggest that's a starting point so may we with without objection and if someone objects feel free um but without objection may we lay this at your lap to um dr reed to kind of maybe either through monday's letter or something just to say the kind of

[01:34:50] preference for how we explore it and if you think that it needs to be something that's an add-on follow up follow on any and above we're happy to take that on but okay which what do you prefer monday letter response or whatever that'd be fine whatever mechanism you'd like to use all right yes ma'am guy writing smoke signals anything above all right um that means we wow we only ran four minutes over i would like to say since we started 10 minutes late um thank you so very much did you

[01:35:24] Just one quick to summarize it in 30 seconds right so if I hear from today's board discussion I think there are a lot of great suggestions to make the plan better when it really like in the execution stage and we have been taking a lot of notes right but I think I hear kind of like a concurrence right to the plan that we have right now except for the retirement benefits component. So since the presentation will be next Thursday in a week, so we have to

[01:35:59] put the presentation and documents very soon. So is it a fair assumption that I can use like today's DAC, right? Of course we are adding the onboarding components to the new school board member. We can easily do that to the other OAG duties. Is that a right understanding? I just want to make sure because the presentation will be next week. Yeah, I think my thought would be if there's an asterisk by ERFC that allows maybe some further conversation. Ms. McLaughlin? I would

[01:36:32] just ask from my earlier remarks about the surveying you did that your team create a specific slide in the presentation, the public presentation that talks about how many people you surveyed, the different categories that they were, what were the outcomes of their results on the 40 plus items.

[01:36:53] And sorry about that. I missed that. We'll add that too. Thank you, Megan. Perfect. Sounds good. I'm guessing it's 20 minutes for lunch, so 12.05-ish. Okay. All right. Thanks, guys. Thank you so much. We can go ahead and get started. We are here. We have the next hour and a half or so to discuss the FY24 budget in preparation for our vote

[01:37:28] on the FY24 budget at the May 25th school board meeting. Just a couple of comments. Please recall we got our original budget proposal from Dr. Reed in January and since that time we have a reduction from that of that budget amount of approximately $28 million, so there's not a lot of leeway in the budget discussion.

[01:37:55] We did send out, Stella Pekarski and I sent out several emails to folks looking for possible amendments or follow-up motions, and we've heard very little, which is a good thing given our budget

situation. I did ask for a little bit more information today from Ms. Burden and Dr. Reed around the step extension, since there were some comments about that at the public hearing.

[01:38:24] And so we can talk about that today. So with that, we do have our budget staff here with a short presentation. So we will run through that and then have time for board comments. Thank you.

[01:38:51] Yeah, so we have plenty of time. Thank you. Good afternoon. This PowerPoint is the same one that Dr. Reed presented to you all on Thursday night, so I'm just going to kind of hit the highlights.

[01:39:17] As Ms. Toland said, the county transfer was adjusted by $15.5 million. They fully funded the recurring costs and excluded the 1% salary retention initiative that was introduced by the governor in his budget back in December.

[01:39:35] The state aid reduction is 18.6 million and that is largely the 6 million that they would have provided for the 1% retention bonus but it's not in the substitute or skinny budget.

[01:39:51] So that has been removed and then the 12.7 million calculation error and those two things together equal the 18.6 million reduction in state revenue. And then we're also increasing the beginning balance to mitigate the state shortfall by $6.2 million, and we'll fund that out of fiscal 23 this current year end.

[01:40:15] And then the superintendent's recommendations on the expenditure side are, again, to reduce that retention bonus, which is not included in the substitute budget that the General Assembly passed, and that's $19.9 million. The Defer the Achievement Gap Strategies funding and fund that with year-end at $6 million.

[01:40:35] And then the Special Ed Compensatory Services Fund to year-end as well at $2 million so that we reduce revenue by $27.9 million and expenditures by $27.9 million as well. And that is pretty much it as far as changes to the advertised budget to align with the funding levels by the county and the state.

[01:41:02] I mean, we don't know when the state will come out with a final budget. It could be June, it could be September, is what I'm told. But if they do allocate additional funding, we'll have to pick that up at year-end as a change to the fiscal 24 budget.

[01:41:23] Ms. Burden, can you go into just a little bit more detail about why the Board of Supervisors did not fund the $15.5 million non-recurring expenditures?

[01:41:42] Yeah, the advertised budget that we stepped out with was largely based on, it was based on the state revenue that was in the governor's introduced budget the third week of December. And in that budget was included a 5% salary increase for employees as well as a 1% retention bonus.

[01:42:04] The cost of the 1% retention bonus is about 20 million, of which the state was kicking in, I think, somewhere between 6 and 7 million, and then the remainder of 14.4 million was the local share of that. But bonuses are non-recurring cost, and so the county decided that they would fund our budget but exclude that and potentially help us with that if that made it into the final budget.

[01:42:34] the local piece of it with their year-end, that we would partner together and be able to do that. So that is why they excluded that $14.4 million from the transfer. And then if you add the $6 million in for the state share, and then you see the total cost, $19.9 something, that's on the expenditure side.

[01:42:55] So all of that has been removed. And it's not in the skinny budget, so, you know, my understanding is it's not on the table right now. It's not something that's going to be funded. But they are discussing, potentially, it is my understanding, increasing the salary package from 5% to a greater number, another percent, another 2%.

[01:43:19] And that would be very, very challenging for us. Each 1% of our salary is $27 million, again, of which the state kicks in about $6 or $7 million, which puts us with a local share of 21 million. So if they proposed a 2%, that's a 42 million additional local ask for us.

[01:43:43] It's certainly something, you know, we obviously don't like to leave any money on the table, but that's a really big number in light of the fact that the county is slated to already give us 140 million in increased transfer in fiscal 24.

[01:44:00] Thank you. Okay, we can maximize time for board comments. Ms. Marin and then Kerber Corbett Sanders. Hi, thank you, Ms. Burton, and to your team. I have a few questions. Dr. Reed, I'd love to know what your experience was in your previous school divisions in addressing, you know, budget shortfalls and working with state partners, and I'd like to know if your team has any ideas on what recourse we have to the governor and to the General Assembly for not passing a

[01:44:35] budget i think the funding um processes and my prior division being is that we were in a different state we're very different we actually went directly to voters with our own levies and bonds so i in different state funding it is unusual to not have a clear budget at the time of passing our budget that's usually a given that you would know your budget prior to making budget decisions. So this is unusual for sure. And I'm told by our budget staff here it's

[01:45:13] unusual even for Virginia. So I think the funding is very different. In terms of thinking about prioritizing our budget needs, we're absolutely at the moment prioritizing our student needs first, right? In particular, as we're going to talk about our strategic plan next this afternoon, what's critical that we fund are those things that will lead to the attainment of the goals that our community and you as a board have set out i think very clearly i think that what we're going to have to do in terms of going back to work with our partners the board of supervisors and

[01:45:52] our county executive i do want to again thank brian hill our county executive for being such a good partner it's going to require us to be even closer partners i think when we have uncertainty from the state i do think education needs to be a priority in terms of state funding and we're going to have to continue with our county partners to i think make the best stewardship decisions that are also sustainable for us moving forward um thank you miss burden are you aware of any trends in the united states about

[01:46:27] when state budgets get passed in terms of being timely with the local school divisions are there any data that you're aware of or you could bring at a later time about? Because it actually, while it used to be unusual that the General Assembly didn't pass a budget, this is actually the second year in a row under Governor Youngkin where we have had a delayed budget that has impeded our ability to do our jobs locally. So, I'm wondering what the trends are nationally.

[01:46:53] Is this common? Can we learn anything from somewhere else on how to deal with this delay? I don't have any idea what other states are doing. It is definitely unusual for Virginia, even though it has happened these last two years.

[01:47:10] And I think it's just a reflection of the political environment and lack of consensus. But the other states, they're all so different. I mean, some are dependent, which we are, which means, you know, the local governing body is who determines the amount of funding.

[01:47:29] And others are independent, like Dr. Reed's previous jurisdiction where they have taxing authority. And those divisions typically get a majority of their funding from the state. So I think North Shore was getting about 75% from the state and 25% was from being able to do referendums and those sorts of things.

[01:47:50] So it's going to depend on that. Like all of the independent ones probably don't have this problem. The dependent ones would. But even the independent ones, I mean, there's still federal funding that comes in on Title One, or there's still some state funding. Are there any school jurisdictions that are completely run on local funding?

[01:48:06] I mean, there's always a mix of the three streams, isn't there? Yes. I mean, most of the federal funds, I mean, we only have IDEA and Carl Perkins that support the school operating fund. The grant fund is in a separate fund entirely. But we expect it. We know it.

[01:48:22] You know, we're getting into a pattern now of not knowing what our state body is doing, and we can't make appropriate decisions. So that's something I'm just curious about. I think the other thing I really want to underscore is this language that the General Assembly continue to uses, which I believe is not accurate, about funding bonuses.

[01:48:41] As you said, Ms. Burden, we would be expected to pony up 14 million to the states given 6 million. Now what we're gonna hear is FCPS is not funding bonuses. What the actual narrative is, is that the state

[01:48:54] offered a very high amount for us to try to access and I really think we need to say that clearly so that our staff know that we're not turning away money. It's just very hard to obtain and it's been misrepresented what it is and this happens continuously at the state level. Thank you. Well, that's true of Fairfax. It's not necessarily true of other divisions based on their local composite index, but all we can all we're we can do it. I mean, that's again, that goes back to my question what is our recourse the I've been and this is my eighth budget cycle

[01:49:31] that I have either been advocating for or been elected to be through to work through and every year it is the same conversation so what is going to be different what's going to differentiate and what recourse do we have if this keep happen if this keeps happening and at least we can control the narrative so thank you Corpus Sanders think the real issue is that the state traditionally funds education in the last the lowest ten of all the states and I think we're at like seven right now but don't quote me on it I don't know the exact number

[01:50:09] we have to be very careful about how we are addressing this in our words because by state code the state doesn't actually have to pass a amended budget this year they passed their budget last year and they have a biennial responsibility so So we are having to -- it will be the first time that they have not amended a budget in a very long time.

[01:50:35] That's a different thing, and it's one that we are optimistic that they will get their act together and amend the state budget. But from an advocacy point of view, I would suggest that we should be advocating for, with the next legislature, that we have to somehow address the LCI so that certain

jurisdictions all in the Northern Virginia area are funding 70 to 75 to 80% of their budgets locally and other jurisdictions are funding significantly less. So maybe there needs to be a minimum

[01:51:09] percentage of funding. I also want to talk though about the deferral to year end. We have quite a few deferrals to year end funding and one of my questions is where does the staff compensation come into the the retention bonuses come into that deferral to year end because that's my understanding in watching what the board of supervisors said they were looking at it as a deferral to year end and so if any documentation that we adopt at the board table we need to be very clear that we expect some sort of deferral to year end of that

[01:51:48] bonus structure if it were up to me. And also, I want to talk a little bit about the compensation at the upper step, especially, you know, and it's so funny because I don't think the average person looks at steps as being the criteria. They look at how much money is in their pocket at the end of the day and how much money is in their retirement at the end of the day. But there is a concern because there's a perception that you've got so far to go if you have all these extra steps.

[01:52:28] And so I would ask, Dr. Reed, if you could kind of talk about the pluses and minuses of adding additional steps versus taking that, and I think it's $8 million or something, I forget the exact number, or 4.2, I apologize. So that $4.3 million and what happens if you look at that as a way of readjusting it across.

[01:52:51] And finally, the last thing is I think we should, as a board, decide on how we are going to approach the absence of an amended budget and whether or not we have to do more of a full court press on that. Thank you, Ms. Corbett-Sanders.

[01:53:10] I think essentially one of the reasons we looked at adding the step at the higher end for teachers is we have a number of experienced teachers who otherwise would not see a pay increase of a step increase, and we really want to retain our most experienced teachers, educators, and staff members across all roles in the division. We know that to train new staff coming in is a huge expense, And just the experience walking out the door is an enormous loss to our division in whatever role staff members are in.

[01:53:47] I know Mr. Smith is ready to share kind of the mathematics behind that. But we really saw that as an incentive to support our staff members who have put in many, many years here in Fairfax County. it's also my understanding that if we were to take the four plus million dollars and redistribute among all the steps it would be a not all the steps just that top step I understand but I I think we've been asked if we're not doing the top step and we use that money to redistribute it across all steps that that would be negligible in anybody's pay at this point so Dr. Reed I

[01:54:25] actually sent in a request that was not to spread it across all steps it was to have a budget response on how it would be if you took it across the top steps i understand i'm just responding to the there have been questions we've received not necessarily from you directly but from staff who said why don't you just spread it out across all steps so everyone benefits from that and i don't even know if we it was almost negligible that there was any impact um so anyhow i'll turn it over to Ms. Burden and Mr. Smith to comment further. Yeah, I mean there were two, three reasons

[01:55:02] why we proposed in the superintendent's proposed budget an extension of the salary schedules by one step. First, there is always, you know, great discussion every year, at least in the five years I've been here, every year we have added something at the end to address the fact that the people at the top of the,

except for the pandemic years when we didn't give any salary increases at all, But the other years, we have always added something at the last minute to address the people at the top of the scale.

**[01:55:30]** So if we're going to do that every year, then we may as well build that into our budget as identifying our needs. In addition to that, we have very short schedules compared to the other divisions. Loudoun County has 30 steps on their teacher scale. Prince William has 30.

**[01:55:46]** Arlington has 31. We will have 25 steps in fiscal 24 with the addition of this step. And then, of course, as Dr. Reed said, the whole retention thing. We want to hold those people that are at the top step here in Fairfax County.

**[01:56:02]** And adding the additional step fixes all three of those things. One, that we don't have to add it here at the last minute. We've already got it included in the budget. Two, it increases the number of steps that we have. And three, hopefully all of those folks, which is 2,345 people, will decide that they are going to stay at Fairfax County Public Schools.

**[01:56:35]** I'm sorry. Dr. Anderson. Okay, thank you.

**[01:56:53]** I definitely want to echo Ms. Marin's comments about this position that we find ourselves in. And if there's any way for us to be really intentional, well, maybe I should wait for the superintendent to come back.

**[01:57:10]** You have to give me back my seconds. I'm teasing. But Dr. Reed, I was sharing that I wanted to echo Ms. Marin's comments that if there's any recourse for us to be a little bit more bold, a little bit more intentional in terms of how this impacts us, particularly given that we already get most of our funding locally, the little bit that we do get from the state really is helpful.

**[01:57:37]** And if there's any way for us to enforce that we expect for the General Assembly to act more timely. And I appreciate what Ms. Corbett Sanders shared, but I think there's some space for some advocacy here. And I would love to hear some ideas onto that.

**[01:57:54]** But we're on this ship, so I'm going to get into where we are right now. I think I have full clarity in terms of why the stipend was moved to year end. But I would love to hear some of the rationale behind deferring items E and F, the achievement gap strategies and the special education compensation services.

**[01:58:19]** How did you land on these two and not others? Because there's a lot in this budget that we could have selected. Because those items can be funded with year-end. And others could not be?

**[01:58:36]** Well, if we're going to fund something with year-end, that's one-time money. and so we try not to fund anything with year-end that has a recurring cost. Obviously, we're going to have to dedicate even more funds than are displayed here for the Special Aid Compensatory Services Fund. We established that fund at mid-year with $1.6 million because we got some additional revenue, and we wanted to add a couple more million to it, but we'll certainly had already planned to be able to, I mean, we'd planned to include, if we have funds available additional funds at you know in addition to this 2 million for the

**[01:59:13]** special education compensatory services fund and those items they may be recurring for a few years but they're not you know long-term kind of changes that have costs the achievement gap closing strategies that too is able to be moved to year-end and then the administrators and schedule C enhancement and fine art stipend and certified athletic trainers those are recurring costs, they are not in the budget, and they will be built into 25.

[01:59:43] We'll use the year-end funds just this one year for those items and then build them into 25, into the base, so that they're then funded with recurring funds. Okay, and I have a question about that, but I will come back to it. I want to go back to the achievement gap closing strategies. I thought those included math materials, and if those include math materials and the year-run budget is not in the last two years it's been approved in August or early September what would be the impact to the procurement of these math materials and the math materials were an example of something we might be utilizing I don't believe we

[02:00:23] have a specific plan yet on those and as you know one of the other things we cut when we cut the 28 were now cancel that I just the math materials are something if we're I don't think we're ready this summer to make that move but as we think about how we're providing math support in addition to our literacy support the monies are there but the timelines will line up all right okay thank you so but these would not necessarily be math textbooks it's not a textbook adoption well we were just leaving it wide open okay because the textbook adoption I

[02:01:01] thought would yield more than six million because those tend to be in the 10s if it's division-wide over a grade band yes so this was going to be more targeted targeted directly to the eighth grade algebra and so moving this to a an adoption and in the fall will not impact what needs to be done in this that's correct and i appreciate you raising that because it's an important piece thank you uh miss burden typically i i think i recall last year's year end was around 90 million is that a typical number what have we had across the last five years

[02:01:39] well it's it's typical for the last few years just because of the market and vacancies because you know any sort of labor intensive organization is experiencing increased vacancy savings as a result of the market and our inability to recruit a staff. We are still in that market largely and we do not have an estimate yet for what we think year-end will be this year. It could be less than that. It would be surprising to me if it were more than that because I think probably the market was

[02:02:16] a little worse in that we had more fallout in the previous year and the year before than now. but the 90 million last year that was also a year when the state budget was approved late and it did include a a retention bonus and so we were able to fund that with the year-end fallout that we had that was about 35 million i think and then it was because of how we is a little bit more than the numbers i've said previously today because of how we implemented it when the state funds a bonus or

[02:02:50] a salary increase it's for soq positions only but obviously we're we're not going to just give you know the people who are soq positions because everybody in the state is greater has greater staff than the soq requires and then of course we also included a bonus for our non-ft employees our hourly contracted employees basically everybody and so that number is a little bit larger so the So the 90 million last year funded 34 million for the 1% bonus, of which we did get a little bit of state funding for that.

[02:03:26] And then about 30 million was allocated to facilities for all of the projects that the board had expressed interest in, stadium restrooms, vestibules, all of those things were funded. We had some inflation costs that we funded with that 90 million, 20 million in staffing reserve which thank goodness we had it because we our enrollment has been coming up steadily all throughout the year and we used um many almost all of the staffing reserve um in the in the early part of the year and that was pretty much it those were the things that we funded with

[02:04:04] that 90 million sure and in this climate given that we see so many bus driver shortages substitute jobs not being picked up it will be favorable that well it's it seems likely that we'll have a hefty

year-end fund budget to deal with so that's good but all for the bad reason for the you know bad reasons so going back to what you shared earlier that it's likely that the state will increase teacher salaries by one up to two percent is that the plan for us to be able to not leave those funds on the table? I don't think I said likely because as you know I don't like to speculate as to what

[02:04:42] a group of elected officials might do or not do. I've heard that before from you. Yes because that's dangerous but I mean. So here's my question. I mean if they do that what is our plan? Is it year-end funds? Is it something else because not providing you know we left some things last year because we had to. I just want to know that we're kind of thinking and planning ahead. What could be the plan if they do take that action it depends um you know if they um provide funding for the

[02:05:14] support cap which is an item that's been around forever if they funded that which i think was it the senate that included yeah if there's consensus reached on that then that is 25 million to fcps with no strings attached and so that would be funds that we could access so if the state said okay we're going to give another one percent then we could use those funds for the the local share because they don't have any strings attached to them um and then there would be the straight

[02:05:49] share and we and we probably could make another percent happen uh two percent becomes a little more problematic um yeah we would have to make reductions somewhere or potentially we could fund it for one year with year end and then build it into the base for the next year but that's just you know pushing the can down the road because it's a recurring cost that you're going to then incur into the future and i want to share that if we do that and it's a topic we discussed to build it in means we would have to cut something next year so it's not a built-in and add on top we

[02:06:25] really feel like that you know it's going to move the whatever we need to cut decisions to next year i appreciate that but i think i'm hearing um two sides of this conversation where we are weary of adding recurring costs to year-end, but I also heard that we have three expenditures that are going to be added to year-end, which will become a recurring cost. That's correct. Those were very intentional in terms of their size. Oh, okay. I'll go back, please. They're not as large as a one

[02:07:02] percent. So that's just those three items, which roughly are what, three point something, almost for. May I have a go back, please, meeting managers? Thank you. Mr. Frisch, followed by Ms. Cohen. Thank you. I appreciate Ms. Marin's comments and would point out that we're not just talking about a delayed budget. We're also talking about an unfixed math error from the governor's

[02:07:31] administration and no real apparent interest in fixing it. So I think we all agree that we wish that there was more seriousness on these subjects coming from Richmond and that there are real consequences for not only the errors but the unwillingness to fix them.

[02:07:55] Picking up where Dr. Anderson left off, the possibility of a 1% or 2% raise, can you give the dollar figure again of what would be expected on our side? Each 1% costs $27 million.

[02:08:13] The state will kick in $6 million. So that makes $21 million the local share. If it's 2%, then it's $42 million, and the state would kick in $12. And so, doing the math in my head, we're still in a position, because of the LCI, where people hear a match and they think, oh, the state gives $6, we give $6, right?

[02:08:36] Or the state gives $40, we give $4, whatever it is. But in Fairfax County, we're still more than 80% of the money has to come from local sources, correct? Yes. I mean, yeah, give or take.

[02:08:51] And that's why we're talking about such monumental numbers compared to other jurisdictions. You know, I don't want to leave any money on the table, if at all possible. So I would like, perhaps the superintendent can talk to our lobbyist, Mr. Malloy.

[02:09:07] When we were looking at raises in the last budget, one of our advocacy points was flexibility around whether money could be accessed regardless of how much was committed as part of the match. So it would be great if Mr. Molloy could be in touch with our delegation, and I'm sure we all will as well.

[02:09:27] If this moves forward, we need to make sure that a school division does not have to put up the entirety of the match to access any of the match. You know, if they're not going to fix the LCI, which they're not, certainly not before the budget's done, then this is the least they can do to give us some flexibility here.

[02:09:49] Otherwise, you know, to the point about messaging, they're not giving us anything. You know, and it's not us denying the ability to access these funds. It's them denying us the ability to access these funds. And so hopefully our employees are watching this work session, perhaps later in double time, so they don't have to sit through the whole thing, and they will make their advocacy known to our legislators.

[02:10:19] Can you tell me what the average increase people, employees of the school system would see with the adoption of our budget in their paycheck? It's 5.22%. Step increases are an average of 2.22%, and we've included a 3% MSA.

[02:10:38] And as you know, MSA is applied to the salary schedule, so they all will go up 3% each step in grade. And steps are movement on the schedule, so you don't really see those. You should also know that one of the Wavy participants just did a survey of all the divisions, and there's compensation packages for this upcoming year.

[02:11:03] And the increases range from 4.4% to 6% with an average of 5.2%, and we're at 5.22. So we're right in the middle. We're right in the middle if we only think of it in terms of raw dollars and not how far those dollars get you wherever you happen to live, right?

[02:11:23] Because, you know, 10% raise in Loudoun is significantly more than a 10% raise in how far the dollar goes in Fairfax County. I don't know if I agree with that. I mean, the cost of living, I would think, is probably similar in Loudoun to Fairfax.

[02:11:42] But the further out you go, yes, the cost of living certainly is impacted. And so, particularly for us, we need to be cognizant of that, especially if we're averaging at 5.22 and the county is doing 8.

[02:11:59] We need to do everything we can to get our number up in the best way possible and partner with our partners if they're serious about doing it with us. Laura Jane, I'll invite you, Ms. Mace.

[02:12:20] Thank you. I appreciate this. I think I'd pick up a little bit where Carl left off. um you know of particular concern a few things to me we had put a placeholder for um the sped report from air for a few years and i'm kind of wondering in following that um they it was what two million each year or something we did the last couple um you know wanting to look at where that's going and not losing track of that placeholder money um and so maybe you can specifically speak

[02:12:53] to that for the community um another piece is we know we gave acsd a charge this year to look at staffing at burke key and kilmer um in particular quander and cedar were in there but the focus has kind of primarily become those three schools and right now in as a result of some uh significant increase

in the population at burke school and some significant increase in crisis we've put a whole bunch of staff in at Burke. And my fear is the problems don't end on June 16th. So is there

[02:13:32] a place in the budget where we have money to continue that staffing and or to be responsive to the results of the ACSD report? Well, okay, first the AIR report, $2 million was budgeted in this current year for that to be able to address the results of that report and my understanding is none of that has yet been accessed and then we have another two million for that purpose in fifth

[02:14:04] in the fiscal 24 budget and what was what was the last topic um asking about the staffing at berks school yeah the the finance staff budget staff has been meeting with uh the berks staff people and we have allocated additional staffing for them in fiscal 24 and then of course we also have the staffing reserve if their numbers you know continue to climb so i think we've we've got that that one handled with just our regular budgeted resources and i would argue i know we've had this conversation

[02:14:39] a few times but key kilmer burke but a lot of our schools who have either one-to-ones or you know students who we know have a nurse with them and the fact that our i'm going a little bit off but just because we're talking about staffing that our principals are trying to make that ask year after year with the same student with the same needs with the same iep and like they started ground zero again so you know i would just argue with burke key and kilmer what i don't want to see happen is we start the school year and we don't put all the supports that we have in you know we

[02:15:16] start them back again where every year they're fighting for staffing and we get more kids and we and we get to a level of crisis that is not acceptable for students and our staff and then we say oh well we have to find that money somewhere or oh now the reserve has been dwindled down because we didn't have teachers who came or we had a ton of kids who came back great problem to have but um the latter not the former um the other question for me is retention of sped of staff generally but sped staff specifically i know the dss in their update to acsd last week had some

[02:15:54] conversation i will say the committee as a whole felt like that was wholly insufficient um and i guess if you know if you could maybe speak mr smith to what are we seeing in terms of people who've put in that they are either going to retire or not come back here from sped staff and how are we proactively addressing that so i don't think we have those specific and good afternoon everyone i don't think we have the specific numbers yet uh what we will see is we'll see a bump around the june 15th time frame where teachers choose and elect to share that they're

[02:16:31] leaving the system and so we'll have a much better sense of that um and of course all of our reporting is in the arrears, so we'll be able to share that with the board with the dismissals and separations report. I know that in terms of the -- we're doing some things around the recruitment piece to ensure that we're spreading a wide net.

[02:16:52] With regard to recruitment, our HR team meets regularly with the Department of Special Services. We have advertisements out across the country. So we are working on the recruitment piece. The retention piece is always an issue for us across the board.

[02:17:12] I don't know if I can specifically answer any more of your question, but we can get a better sense of those numbers after June when more of our teachers will be separating with us. We've had this conversation a number of times and kind of leave it at your feet about are we going to do something to

compensate the people who are working at public day in a way that is markedly different than other systems.

[02:17:36] So I would still like to push that as a priority. And I could also follow up, if I may, on the staffing process for our higher-need schools. So with those unique need requests, our principals do place those requests earlier on in the staffing cycle.

[02:17:56] We run staffing meetings all summer long. We've actually begun those here in May, and a lot of those unique needs requests have already been approved. that we are, we try to be as responsive as possible to those needs where students have recurring needs year after year, and I do think that there are some opportunities for us to possibly look at the staffing formulas for those schools so that they don't have to come back every year.

[02:18:25] - Ms. Amache. - Thank you, thank you to the staff and the team for your work on this. I wanted to go back, I know in one of our public meetings we had a conversation around ESSER and some of the funds that ended up being adopted in the budget or folded in, and some of the ones that, or I guess we didn't know which ones weren't, but I don't know if there's any, if you guys have follow up or were able to go back and identify what if any of those items were not reabsorbed in the budget.

[02:18:55] - Yeah, I think that budget actually did that analysis. She's looking for it. - Okay, I can come back to it. I just wanna, yeah, if there's any of that, I wanna keep that in mind as we obviously approve this one. So I actually am really happy with Dr. Anderson's question that's where I was going to start. So I want to pick up a little bit there. I heard you say, you know, we prioritized what was going to be used for year-end based on what's one time, right, money. So I guess I wanted to better understand what other one-time funds

[02:19:30] could have fallen under that bucket based on what's here right now. I don't understand your question. Okay, so compensatory services and achievement gap, right, were chosen as year-end funds to be postponed because they were one-time funds what are the other one-time funds in here in in the budget i mean specifically these uh pieces that we're looking at right now i'm looking at the presentation that was made okay what page i mean the it was in the slides it was three but um

[02:20:10] mr burton i think so everything that's in the budget all the increases is that the page you're on i believe i think if you just even looked at this the yeah summary sheet yeah yeah investments the highlights all the lists yeah none of them that's i mean we already scrubbed all that out before the superintendents proposed um okay you're looking at page three yes so and what i would say to that is those items that those items that are in year end that are recurring as dr reed said

[02:20:47] earlier when you when you look at the size of of those items and the amount those are things that we would then consider as we then think about the fy25 budget and it's a smaller amount for us to have to consider to build into the base than some of these larger considerations with a possible one or two percent salary increase and what that would mean for the Fairfax County match. Okay, I guess that's confusing because there's a section called multi-year investments, right? But then you're saying all of the identified investments are multi-year? They're all of the items listed on

[02:21:25] this are recurring in nature. So they're not one time? Yeah, they're not one time. Like for example, The HR infrastructure technology project is in year two, but I think their original budget for HR infrastructure technology project was three million, and we said, okay, so what are all these things?

[02:21:42] And a million of it, and I'm making up these numbers, a million of it was equipment and things that we really will only have to purchase one time. It is not a recurring cost. So we pulled that out and only included the piece of it that was recurring in the superintendent's proposed budget and said we'll fund that other out of year end because it's one time.

[02:22:02] So that wasn't, I guess, even cybersecurity? Like there wasn't necessarily a material cost or something that was a one time? No. Or safety and security, things like that? Those are positions, so they're recurring. Okay, so then I guess I'm struggling to understand how the achievement gap piece is not recurring, too.

[02:22:21] It probably is, but it's reserve funds for the superintendent to be able to attend to the achievement gap. It probably is recurring, but we have to cut somewhere because we need to cut $28 million out of the budget.

[02:22:46] And so of the things, all of the things that are available to us, those are the ones that are easiest to be able to fund with year-end and then build into the base for fiscal 25 and then continue it as recurring.

[02:23:02] So we're just doing this as the interim to be able to balance our budget. So what else could we have chosen from this list that would have been in the interim like that?

[02:23:19] Yeah, this is a little bit larger amount. I mean, there are not components of everything on this page that are one-time because if they did have components that were one-time, we already made the decision to pull that out and fund it with year-end.

[02:23:42] We could have chosen, you know, we could have chosen the Equitable Access to Literacy Plan. We could have done that from year-end instead. But we decided that the items that we chose were the best ones for the organization moving forward to fund one year with one-time funds.

[02:24:02] Okay. And then reevaluate and see if we wanted to add them into fiscal 25. Yeah, yeah. So that's going to postpone implementation, right? That's good.

[02:24:20] If we're funding it with year-end rather than the budget? No, it would not. It wouldn't postpone it. It's just these items are the least disruptive to the organization, which is why they were chosen to be funded for one year with year-end funds and then build it into the base for fiscal 25.

[02:24:38] Yeah, and let me clarify, too, the equitable access to literacy, we chose not to move to year-end, so there would be no disruption in that planning. So it stayed in the budget. No, I understand that, but you guys are, so you're saying that there's not a disruption implementation in these projects, but then it was chosen to not have a disruption.

[02:24:57] I'm struggling here with that. I don't think it's implementation, and again, Ms. Burden or Mr. Smith can certainly speak to this. It's the difference between it's a one-time only expenditure versus these have ongoing, generally, personnel or people or HR-related costs to them.

[02:25:22] and we've taken those smallest pieces that we can put into one year only that also have that continuing piece because we believe that we can make those adjustments in the following year's budget because they're not large they're relatively small whereas i think to dr anderson's point when we were talking about one percent of a salary increase at 21 million that's a very different number than three million in terms of making an adjustment a year from now so that's that was our thinking but the achievement gap piece is not one time either that's it's you're

[02:26:00] exactly right the achievement gap is something that we will continually be working toward closing and we will then reassess how we're going to continue to fund that in future years and so as we looked at being able to attack to balance this year's budget and looking at those pieces that we could say yes we still see that this is a priority for us we will be able to find out of year end dollars and then any continued work would be built into future budgets those

[02:26:36] were the decisions that the superintendent and the budget team made to present to the school board based on our need to have to close the budget and balance the budget this year and the other significant distinction is there are not people in the achievement gap closing strategies and that's that's a significant distinction because then you've got to carry somebody through right and so there aren't people at this time in that budget can you flesh out a little bit more of what that is is determined based on the completion of the strategic plan so and the strategies moving forward and how they're going to

[02:27:13] be connecting with our school plans math was a significant piece to dr. Anderson's point okay so I'm gonna come back to this but my understanding was that the literacy plan was largely like basal resources which is part of why it's so expensive right how is that not a one-time okay to me like when you have a glaring 15 million dollar amount that is for at least a portion of which is a one-time because it's basal resources compared to risking the achievement gap

[02:27:50] piece not being folded into future budgets I would have preferred for us to put the basal resources part of the literacy plan into a one to into the year-end which could be which won't even need to be absorbed again in the future versus an achievement gap piece which we're going to have to carve out again in the future because this is a long overdue priority so help me under wrap my head around that we had to pick something we could have picked

[02:28:26] textbooks we chose achievement gap strategies the funding for strategic plan achievement gap strategies those kinds of things last year was funded out of year-end and so our plan is to do that again in this in the in the next year and then we'll reevaluate it and if we need to continue to provide that level of funding and it's it's clear that it's going to be recurring then in fiscal 25 we'll build it into the base um it was a choice among just a few alternatives to come to 28 million and these are the items that

[02:29:03] we chose and are recommending how much of the literacy plan 15 million is the basal resources i have no idea we would need the instruction people here to talk about that and right right And in that same vein, I would also say that we're always going to, hopefully at some point we won't see those gaps with literacy, but we're always going to have a focus on literacy and we're always going to need to have dollars to ensure that we're meeting the literacy needs of our students.

[02:29:35] And so having those dollars in the base as recurring funds from year to year will ensure that we continue that focus on literacy in future years. And so as we looked at balancing the budget, noting that there are increases that may come from the strategic plan, those are things that were still unknown because the strategic plan hasn't been finalized yet, but we do know that there's a focus on literacy and that there will be a continued focus on literacy.

[02:30:04] It's important to have those dollars in the base. - Yeah, no doubt. I think the question though is whether that achievement gap component, right, could be that instead. Okay, here's at minimum, can we, Dr. Reed, Talk to the instructional team, since the answer is not here today, to find out how much of the $15 million is the basal resources component.

[02:30:27] Because if that is a one-time piece and it's comparable to the $6 million here, I think good judgment suggests that we might switch those. So that the achievement gap piece can always be recurring and the basal piece that needs to be paid is just paid once. That would, you know, I'd feel a lot better about this budget if we did that.

[02:30:46] And I know that's my time, so I'll take a go back, but thank you. I'll follow up. Ms. McLaughlin followed by Ratcha. Thank you. Dr. Reed, at the last one of our prior work sessions, budget work sessions, I had asked for your team to do the benchmark against Prince William, Loudon, and Arlington for total career earnings for our teacher pay scales. Was that done? Yeah, that was included in the

[02:31:24] salaries and benefits pre-work session back on January the 24th. So So based on that benchmarking, as of the current scales, Ms. Burden, what did it end up revealing about total career earnings for FCPS teacher scales versus the other three school divisions?

[02:31:48] I don't have, I have it ranked as far as the nine participants, Wavy participants. I just wanted those, the three largest, Arlington, Prince William, and Loudon. Prince William is first, we would be second, and Arlington would be third.

[02:32:11] okay for total that's based on fiscal 23 because we didn't have fiscal 24 at back in january but they're giving a similar or third it's just about loud and prince william in fairfax everybody's on hold as far as their salary package and so it looks like that based on the survey that i just got today most are doing about a three percent msa um so we're probably going to all kind of stay in

[02:32:47] the same rank even though this was fiscal 23 data that i just told you again dependent on what the state does and who is able to add additional percentages if they do something um that might change the picture but if everybody kind of stays where they are well that's where we would remain in 24 as well thank you but in terms of the actual scales so not when you run the salary scale comparators among those top three the three largest for Northern Virginia and us then what

[02:33:19] you're saying is based on the scales for total career earnings we're coming out the number two I'm saying total career earnings yes just looking at Prince William uh Fairfax and Loudoun and where's our William is first oh and Arlington too okay so thank you Dr. Reed the reason I ask this

[02:33:52] and why I keep asking this is because we cannot make fiscal decisions in this for a 3.5 billion dollar budget that is 90 percent compensation driven if we're not using data to drive those decisions so if you if you and your team came to the board and said we need to add an extra step because total career earnings is putting us behind, then that's the conversation.

[02:34:21] And why I keep pressing on this is because the prior board, under Dr. Garza's leadership, specifically went and did a massive study. We were trying to figure out how to retain teachers and what, well, attract and retain, absolutely and retain.

[02:34:37] And the bottom line is the recommendation came back from the external consultancies, and with Dr. Garza's recommendation to the full board is compress your scale, don't be 30 years extended where teachers have to be almost 22 years in before they hit their max earnings, they're going to hit max earnings sooner, have it longer, and in the end they're still going to come out being similar career earnings than if they were with us or the other three, plus we don't even lay around the six percent a year we give to ERFC. So how many years now, Ms. Burden, is this

[02:35:13] request to the board that we're going to add an extra step to the scale and I mean all scales not even teachers the whole every well I mean for just adding one step this in fiscal 24 and fiscal 23 but remember that back with the previous board the the results of the salary study that you talked about had the bachelor's lane only going to 18 steps five more but that's a little bit different

[02:35:47] but we did add steps we have added steps along the way and and you know I think it's important to mention too that even that if you look at the top of the scale we don't compare favorably to the other divisions I understand that's the math and that's that that's why the total career earnings matter because Dr. Reed, the whole point is our top of the scale isn't going to look like theirs because they've stretched their scale over 30 steps and we compressed ours to 25 or whatever you're saying. So the bottom line here is if we don't run the math, then we're not even educating

[02:36:27] our employees to understand how to compare scale to scale. And I'm at the point knowing that we will never get more at least in the short term of 52 percent of the fairfax county tax revenue from the from the county government so we have a slice of the pie how do we do it the best way we can and what we said is give our employees more money sooner in their careers for a longer period of time if we're going to start playing the scale game then what we need to do is say we're going to revisit this and we're going to just mirror prince william loudon arlington so work for us work for

[02:37:01] them you're back now on a 30 year scale but it can't be done both ways we can't have a compressed scale where we're paying more and for a longer period of time oh and then we're going to also keep adding steps at the very last end can do you have some thoughts on it because i feel like i bring this up every meeting and i i don't understand what we're doing because we're offering to do something in a vacuum and this is making sure we take care of all of our employees So if we do it poorly, we hurt our employees.

[02:37:37] So one of the things that we looked at between the last meeting and this one is the scales for each of these divisions over time. And I think when the changes were made, when Dr. Garza was here, we were first out of the gate to make those changes here in Fairfax.

[02:37:55] And therefore, we were able to, I think, entice staff to come here because others weren't going high early and compressing schedules. What's happened is others have caught up. They've seen the strategy and what we, when I looked at the Loudon and Prince William in particular, they've raised their beginning salaries and compressed schedules and then kept adding.

[02:38:20] We've kept our same strategy and haven't added. So in other words, I feel like we've ran out that horse in the race, if you will, way out front. Other folks have kind of caught up with maybe different training or whatever, but we're not then making that other adjustment. So we're sitting with our folks at 25 years who did get the benefit of the early raise and the compressed schedule and are looking over the fence to see folks that now also are at the same place but earning significantly more. So when we look at

[02:38:58] calculating the overall salary, I think for some people at that space, you're correct. Their overall earnings with the RFC are higher, no question, and that was a testament to good thinking at the time here in Fairfax, and there's still an opportunity to go and earn significantly more. The one small thing we can do is to add something to those 25-year people, but it's, I guess I just want to say that the other divisions watched what we did, emulated what we did, and then went a step further, and we

[02:39:35] haven't done the step further. That would be correct. They also give more service when they transfer. I believe we cap the service we allow to transfer in so it makes us less attractive to transfer into with experienced people. And I can I can also add that with the teachers who are choosing electing to leave and go to other jurisdictions some of those teachers were part of the group who when we change the scale so again previously we would provide more dollars at the end of the scale so as you were with us longer you

[02:40:12] would receive more money we then change the methodology to provide more dollars at the beginning of your career with larger intervals in between smaller intervals at the end so you have some teachers who missed out on those larger intervals, because they were in the middle of their career, and are now at the two to one percent increases from one year to the next.

[02:40:36] So adding that additional step is a way to also help with the retention piece, because some of those teachers, when you think about career earnings, they didn't get to take advantage of those larger compensation or salary amounts at the beginning of their career.

[02:40:57] So I'm looking at this total career earnings chart, and just to be clear, even with Arlington to us, it's a $24,000 difference over 30 years. So you're talking about less than $1,000 a year. But we then give a 6% per year employee contributions for ERFC.

[02:41:14] So I keep saying this is what we do that's a mistake. Everything's being done in a vacuum. When you layer on our employer contribution to ERFC, we are at the top of every school division for total compensation to our employees and that's not the narrative that a single one of your team is talking about and it's no wonder we lose people because the narrative is you're going to earn less here and actually we are by far the best bank in town for a

[02:41:48] career. And if we don't fix that, Dr. Reed, this little $4 million a year isn't going to move the needle. So thank you, Ms. McLaughlin. And the 6% is significant. And that 100% agree with you.

[02:42:04] And if you and I are sitting at 25 years right now and are thrilled that we've had this benefit, right? And people are thrilled. Let me just put that on the table. Staff at 25 years are thrilled and and still have the ability to fully collect their erfc and leave and collect a higher wage next year at a different county they're going to leave and we have other people that want to stay but just the fact that they have what we have this year is not i don't know if that's enough

[02:42:43] recognition it's if we end up going to a 30-year step which is to catch up with everybody else then we will far exceed those other three districts because we compressed so i am tired of the fact that we don't have enough money to do what we need to do and so you can't pay it out both ways so either we decide to go to 30 and match them but this whole like we're just going to keep trying to do the delta between step 25 and 30 yeah it's not it's not honest math and it's going to hurt this division. It's going to hurt all employees by not doing this in a mathematically

[02:43:21] accurate way. I'll ask for a go back. I'm sorry. And I do want to follow up because I think this is really a helpful conversation. It's important to have publicly because I think everybody is asking these questions. So I appreciate this. I also would say we've had some long conversations about people who miss steps, right? Like when we weren't able to provide steps, what would that cost. We talked about lifting the cap on experience that we allow when people come in, which we have done, actually. But then what do we

do with the people that we didn't allow to have that experience? What's the cost? And the finance team's been great about calculating all

[02:43:56] that. Like, what would that cost be? How do we make people whole, our people? That's another strategy for retention, right? So what we're trying to do is look at all of these different strategies for retention that we can't fund all of them this year. But where can we start?

[02:44:12] Because your point is we have to take it in its totality and not one step or another step. And I think that work is going to be, I think, really important work as we move forward. I agree 100% with what you just said. Thank you.

[02:44:28] Ms. Sriracha, Tyson-Reiser. Thank you. I'll actually be really happy to follow on that conversation because I know I've talked to you, Dr. Reed, about this as well and the questions around the scales. And, you know, I think one thing that you mentioned is a really important point to lift up.

[02:44:45] and i agree with this mclaughlin too like we at some point have to have a holistic conversation here around people whose steps were frozen you know the compression of our scales the top end of the scales what's happened in our surrounding jurisdictions because that makes us competitive i know we did a really the board with dr garza did a really great study and did a lot of good work to sort of be competitive and leaders in that work but it's been a few years now and our landscape is different in terms of a teacher shortage and our teacher needs so I think there's just space as we move forward obviously not this year's budget to look at where are we now and how are

[02:45:24] we competitive with our you know what do we need to do holistically to be competitive you know with our surrounding jurisdictions and that's where I think just as we move forward into next year and I think part of that piece really needs to be helping as you said I'm glad we're doing this in public but we're not our funders right and so i think we really need to do a lot of work with our funders and our partners to help them understand the differences too because you know we've traditionally gotten 52 percent whether that 52 continues or not i don't know right but i think it's important to understand why it needs to continue or be higher and i think these nuanced

[02:46:01] conversations about our salary scales our erfc what happens why people leave i think that that's an important piece to have with our partners who fund us too to really understand where are we and why are we in this sort of place with compensation and what are the limitations on us um and as we build the bridge to maybe next year's budget i think in having those intentional conversations as well as the limitations from the state right and the need to ask the state to um to be clear about what a match means and do we have to match versus can we get the money and use it however we can use it because it's so much more for us our locality to fund us so i think these are just

[02:46:39] as we build a budget conversations in the fall i'm just going to maybe let all the sidebar conversations stop for a minute because it's distracting me a little bit there's like four of them going on so um if i could pause my time thank you so i think as we build towards next year and a budget process with your second year dr reed i think it's important to lay out a plan because I feel like just from my experience, sometimes we're scrambling to have these conversations. Maybe scrambling is not the right word, but we're like, oh, we should talk about this and talk about this. I really think sitting down with the next board leadership, maybe the

[02:47:17] next budget chair and vice chair, and what does that consistent plan look like for these conversations? So we're really helping to educate more than, you know, maybe more than we have, maybe more than we need to. I don't know, but I feel like there's space to do that in a systematic way. So that's what I wanted to say from the state level, from the challenges, from our local localities and also our partners you know our teachers our parents our families a lot of who really support fairfax county public schools how can they help understand these limitations and help us in the in that partnership and i know my time is almost up so i will just say that um in addition

[02:47:51] to that well i'll take a go back my time is mr koufax thank you so i i'll follow along with the same thought process. I do agree with my colleague, Ms. McLaughlin, where it's important to look at the totality of our monies. But I also, with no disrespect, understand that that is not going to help us today, right now. Ms. Seismarhiser, you talked about what I was gonna say. We've been working as chair and vice chair much

[02:48:30] too long not in a bad way but but yes you know where are we I have over here a million times LCI LCI LCI Richmond is stuck in inertia they are our partners but they are stuck and they are not willing to change that they're not willing to change that because it will anger people in other jurisdictions but it doesn't help us and no one's ever willing to change it Ms. Burden, I believe we have had, so we rely on our local funders, I believe we've had up to about 55% of the budget, and this year we're at 52%, is that correct?

[02:49:07] I looked at that recently over the last 16 years, and it has ranged from 51.6 in this current year to 52.8, 52.7 looks like has been, 52.8 has been the highest, you know, back in the 14, 15.

[02:49:38] So this is a 10-year? 10 year 14 15 14 was 52.7 15 was 52.4 16 was 52.7 17 52.7 18 52.8 19 52.8 20 52.8 21 52.7 22 52.6 then 23 adopted was 52.2 and the county executive as advertised budget was 52.2 but due to the changes that they made during markup, it dropped to 51.6 for fiscal 24.

[02:50:19] Okay. So not quite where I said, but I do believe, Mr. Smith, do you have any recollection of it being that high? No? Okay. All right. So anyway, so I'm off, but close to 53 and now we're 51 point almost 52 so what we have to do is we have to deal with the cards we are given and I am going to say I appreciate where we are right now as far

[02:50:52] as because mr. Smith we were a big part of that extensive review and the reason to compress the scales and the need to compress the scales at that time, but as you just pointed out, we are in a different time now. Five, six years can make a huge difference about where we are, and when people take us as the lead and then do better, that's where we find ourselves right now.

[02:51:21] so i am in support of where we are right now i am all for continuing to work with our state delegation in richmond that i have found over 12 years it's been a little bit of a frustrating battle and i hope we can continue to do better and then you know we have also talked about national right and where we are and we get back we get back to yes what we're

[02:51:54] getting for military families um children um ida funds so we have um as dr reed likes to say lots of opportunities and um but i am pretty comfortable with your recommendations and staff's recommendations right now even though but miss mclaughlin i am not going to discount what you said i think it's important i think it is to be part of the narrative it's part of the communications plan it has to be stated i don't know if it's going to fall on deaf ears or not because we're talking about millennials we're talking about you and i are both millennial parents and we know how

[02:52:29] you know this these are our younger teachers um but oh my time is up so that's it thank you um miss keys gamara we see your hand up there thank you um obviously my camera to come on uh all right i'm trying to turn the camera on but it wouldn't come on all right um dr reed i do support where we are but i do think also that it is perhaps an indication of how we may need to

[02:53:04] prepare for the future um i agree with my colleagues that said you know the lci perhaps is not going is not going to change anytime soon and it's my understanding there's actually a a constitutional requirement in Virginia that they balance the amount of funding for education across the state. I'm not sure that we are, you know, I know we believe we should get more. I'm not sure how that's going to shake out. Perhaps that's some of the hesitancy.

[02:53:35] With respect to our current recommendation, I do have a question regarding the deferment of SPID compensatory services. Is that going to hurt us at all in terms of following through with that commitment or is this just a way of saying we're gonna take care of it out of end of year funds?

[02:53:55] - Thank you for the question. It's a way of saying we'll take care of it out of end of year funds. - Okay, because I certainly don't want that to harm us in any way. And I know we're so far in the game.

[02:54:12] I hate to send a message to our employees regarding this deferred bonus. have we looked at any other alternatives where we might be able to meet that previously discussed option i have spoken to chief executive or county executive brian hill who has committed that once the state shares their commitment to the one percent bonus what their financial contribution would be that they at that time would sit down and look at county year end to support the one

[02:54:49] 1% bonus for us. However, I will hasten to add that if Ms. Burden's, I don't know what we would call it, her vision that we might see a different salary possible, maybe kind of increase from the legislature, we might be better served at that point. I don't know if we can do both, right? We'll have to look at is the, are we going to be able to address the salary percentage should that occur or the one percent bonus but i don't believe that we would

[02:55:27] be able to do both at that point unless miss burton corrects me about that but i think it's one or the other so i don't want to have you know i want to manage expectations do you have a comment i'm sorry i can't see people very well no dr reed is absolutely correct that it it we it would be unusual if we were able to do both okay okay so I guess my concern along with some of my colleagues

[02:56:02] Ms. McLaughlin and others is what does this experience predict about how we need to move forward in preparation for next year I know we're proving this but I'm wondering if we need to the board needs to formalize something to make sure that we're not caught in the same similar situation next year, would it be helpful to have perhaps a following motion to guide our

[02:56:36] budget discussion moving forward to look at a study and ways to improve our salaries, to attract and retain teachers, and also review our budget commitments to have streamline costs to provide the compensation increases we know that we anticipate we would need next year i do think and thank you for the question i do think the number one thing that would help our process is for the state to be clear about their allocation sooner so we could certainly make that comment but i don't know that we have any control over that i i do think further as we approach

[02:57:15] collective bargaining that these topics are going to become topics that will be discussed and i do believe that we do need to holistically to miss mclaughlin's point we need to holistically look at salary

and benefits for our employees in every role in this division as we expect to be world-class in that lighthouse division for the country we also need to compensate people in that way so does that suggest that the board should provide that kind of directive so that we will

[02:57:47] have looked at the concerns that have been expressed today uh going forward well i again i as the board wishes i think staff have a high interest a shared interest i guess with the board and looking at the compensation structure so i think as we think about what the state signals at this point and looking at the revenue forecast and just our economic situation holistically both

[02:58:23] as a county and as a state I think that compensation is going to continue to be a key strategy for recruitment and retention it's not the only strategy but it is a key strategy so I think we share the interest in looking into that Mr. Smith were you going to add something and I was only going to add that when you look at the the step increases for our neighboring jurisdictions and wavy schools they range anywhere on average from 2.4 to 3 percent and we're at a 2.2 percent so the way that we drive the system forward is to focus more on the market scale adjustment so that

[02:58:56] we can actually push ourselves beyond our neighboring jurisdictions because as we do step increases they will do step increases but a market scale adjustment raises the entire scale and actually places us and outpaces us with regard to our neighboring jurisdictions.

[02:59:15] And that's the education piece where many of our staff feel that STEP is part of that contract or that promise we made when really overall compensation is. And however we get that, either through a STEP or an MSA, an MSA helps raise us and helps us with our stance with other jurisdictions.

[02:59:35] I would also argue that the MSA is a larger number to budget for, which to Ms. Keys-Gamara's point is going to require as we approach a new budget cycle, if we're looking at larger numbers, then we're going to have to look at some other significant operational decisions.

[02:59:52] I think I've said several times in the last few weeks, we either have more people paid less or less people paid more, right? I mean, we can't continue to have more people paid more within our current budget. so it's going to require I think decision making as we prioritize compensation so I guess what I'm saying going forward is I think it may be I know it would be helpful to me I don't know how my colleagues feel um to kind of know what some of those big decisions may end up being right it

[03:00:25] sounds like a shift in strategy I'm also hearing that we can expect going forward that state monies are not going to increase um and the federal funding is also being cut short as a result of some of the coded funding so i'd like to see how the board can be apprised of strategies to address that from the next going forward i know this doesn't apply to what we're talking about today so perhaps we can consider having a plan um moving forward and if we need more direction on them

[03:01:05] that i would certainly support it i i think my time is running but i don't see the timer running on my computer so okay i'll give you 20 seconds um but dr reed i i'm i guess i'm looking to you because um i think the conversations may become increasingly more difficult which would require um some of that discussion ahead of time for the big changes that may need to occur

[03:01:35] Yes, ma'am. I agree. Ms. Pekarski. Okay, thank you. I don't have any questions, per se, because I get to work with you lovely people, and I am in support of where we are right now. I thank you for being flexible. It is frustrating to find ourselves here, but so be it.

[03:02:00] I've heard from several people, more than several, that there is some interest in ensuring that our local delegation understands why it is a pressing need for us to know whether or not they're going to change or amend or stay as is.

[03:02:18] And it has a very real impact on our budget, on our students, and on our staff. So I didn't hear any formalized way for us to do that. I heard, you know, Mr. Malloy, I'll throw it out there.

[03:02:34] Do we want to send a letter that is more formal? Do we want to maybe, you know, ask our Board of Supervisors to join in on that? I'll, you know, would leave that to our chair maybe to have that conversation. So, okay.

[03:02:55] Oh, yeah, yeah. I'll leave you. I just wanted to put it out there so that when we are going around again on go backs, maybe folks can comment on that, and then the chair will take a vote on, you know, a more formalized way.

[03:03:11] And I have not heard anybody say definitively that they have any amendments or that they have any follow-ons. I do believe because of the status of where we are this year, and right now we need to know that. So we don't have any last minute headaches or panics for our budget staff and our budget chair and chair of the board.

[03:03:37] So on this next round, please make that clear if you are planning to do anything or even if it's just a budding thought so we can follow up. we have on our list the folks who said they wanted follow up oh yeah I'll just say I have Karen Corbett dr. Anderson miss McLaughlin miss Sizemore hyzer so if you can put your placards down and if you want another go just put them down because we have you if I didn't call your name put them up so we can add you

[03:04:11] and I think miss Toland wants to also make some comments thank you thank you and thank you to everyone for your hard work including the my colleagues on this entire process just a couple of comments based on what we've been talking about one of the reasons I have keep saying I like this budget is because the main focus of it is compensation for our workforce and I think just given where things have been going particularly post-COVID and the way things have been going in education that is not something that will change will we be able to

[03:04:49] change that over the upcoming years. So I think our conversations today around, you know, really needing to have an overview and, you know, analytics around salaries, et cetera, I think will just be a part of what we have to do moving forward and as Dr. Reed pointed out, and we had comments at the public hearing, you know, hard decisions around other parts of our budget in the upcoming years to make sure we can support workforce and, you know, the salaries that go along with it.

[03:05:20] I just want to mention very quickly, I have heard so much positive input about the middle school athletics addition to the budget here, and people are really excited and looking forward to seeing, you know, what that will look like next year and, you know, how that might expand in the future.

[03:05:44] I think we also have to keep in mind, we are, you know, working on our strategic plan. So kind of back to my earlier comments, what comes out of the strategic plan will also generate budget priorities for the upcoming years.

[03:06:00] So, you know, workforce and workforce retention is certainly in there. And will lead us back to this holistic view of, you know, how do we retain and, you know, hire the people that we need. - Ms.

Amash, I just wanted to mention, because the achievement gap piece is titled that way, you know, that is, it's a pot of money that we had set aside for the superintendent based on what comes out of the strategic plan, what, it's a piece, a pot of money for us to be nimble and be able to react very quickly

[03:06:38] and be opportunistic as we move forward. So it's not necessarily tied to timing of any particular project, like the literacy money is. So, you know, just for the general public, in no way are we saying we are delaying work on achievement gaps.

[03:06:56] We are saying it's possible to move that to year end because as we finish the strategic plan, the timing works, still works for us to use that money wisely.

[03:07:08] And with that, I think we'll go back to our go backs.

[03:08:32] All right, a little accident here in the boardroom, but I think everyone's okay. Everyone's okay. We can proceed with the meeting. Okay, all right, so we've got several people with go backs.

[03:08:52] We will start with Karen Corbett Sanders. - Thank you. I actually wanna parse my go back in two areas. The first piece is I think many of us around this table have been getting phone calls, emails, expressions of frustration regarding community use and the increased cost of community use less worried about the increased cost but tying it to having an external insurance program where um they have to prove that they have a certain level of insurance even if it's just for a one time incident and so dr reed if you could look into that if we can find some way where people

[03:09:31] can even do individual, you know, event insurance, which is something that I used to do when I was active in the PTAs and boosters. The second thing I wanted to raise your attention to is really a risk that we are all facing not only here in Fairfax County, but frankly across the Commonwealth and across the country, and that is the ongoing discussions regarding the debt ceiling and whether or not what the federal government was doing. In some ways, we are luckier than other jurisdiction because

[03:10:06] we rely less on the debt ceiling or the debt at the federal level. However, there is a certain amount of debt or a certain amount of funding that goes through at the state level that then comes back up to us. And so it would be helpful to understand a risk analysis because I see the discussion both at the federal level and at the state level regarding a clawback of ESSER funds which seems unfortunate given that when those were allocated we were asked to make a three-year plan and that's the plan that we made and that we're working towards and so those are obligated funds and we would we should

[03:10:44] be able to say if you claw back this is how it's going to impact our children and so I would like to know and you don't have to do it today but what is the risk analysis associated with if we have pullbacks on the funding of social services at the federal level as well as the ESSER funds.

[03:11:09] I would just comment. I had a really thoughtful meeting this morning with our psychologists and school social workers, and I will say that there's a tremendous amount of frustration. i just was listening for an hour about the reduced services in our community and supports which very often have left families with no one really answering the phone except staff at schools so i think that we really need to again partner closely with our county board of

[03:11:43] supervisors, our county executive, and our partners just across the board in the not-for-profit sector as well, because I think with the SNAP benefits recently cut, which affected our food and nutrition, we have, we believe anecdotally, many, many more families experiencing food insecurities with housing

subsidies, you know, dramatically cut back. They're just, I think everything's getting tighter and we're kind of being caught right in the middle because we're

[03:12:17] often so that is precisely my concern is that with the cut in Medicare funding with a cut in SNAP benefits with a cut in or a clawback of possible ESSER funds what would be very helpful for this board is to have a impact analysis and one that is easily digestible that can be shared with the community so that people are able to say what their concerns are. Because if we end up with a stoppage of funding, just those families that are connected with the military and with the

[03:12:55] federal government make up a huge percentage of Fairfax County public school families. And I'm particularly concerned because it will happen during the summer. And whereas we were able to address some of these concerns the last time we had something like this but it happened right in the middle of the year this could be very very difficult for our families and so if can i ask you to have somebody do that risk analysis for us sure we can take care of that

[03:13:29] yes ma'am thank you dr anderson a couple of things okay thank you one of the things that i kind of want to hone in on is what our practices regarding year-end I'm really concerned I know we're in a tight situation but I'm really concerned when the practice and well rather the recommendations have been for year-end to be limited to one-time expenditures I think we've strayed far from

[03:14:08] that and that is a concern to me when it comes to the smaller dollar amounts I could kind of deal with it but it it all adds up and when we continue to add year-end items which are most optimistically one year one-time expenditures and then they get built into the base budget and then we continue to ask more I think it decreases our opportunity to focus on compensation and the greater scope that we've just we've just described that I don't need to go into but I would like

[03:14:40] for us to consider some commitment to having the best practice possible to our year-end funds so that we are not saddling ourselves with expenditures that we cannot continue. We had a similar action with the ESSA funds. We had lots of staffing, staffing that we know we need, but then we are struggling to continue to fund those and I see us starting the same thing here. I would like for some consideration to what Ms. Omeish raised, if there are some components of the

[03:15:16] literacy plan that are materials driven, that are one-time funds, having that be a swap, I think that would be a good testament to and a commitment to using year-end funds a little bit more conservatively. I had a question. I heard you say, Dr. Reed, that the cap for experienced individuals coming into our system was lifted can somebody give me a little quick background on that lifted from what to what and when did that occur so neither dr wilson or mr smith are

[03:15:52] in the room um but they came to me with a regulation uh that i believe like i think i better wait till they return because they have the actual specifics but we looked at the regulation the amount of hours and there were two different regulations we talked about but one was around lifting that cap and then another was around making sure we're compliant with retirement hours so we've looked at both of those so I want to make sure we cite the correct one and as soon as they return I believe we can provide that to you sure and I didn't leave myself enough time

[03:16:30] stella to kind of give some budding ideas regarding follow-on may i i'll be super quick um just sick leave um banking i've been really talking and thinking about having a follow-on motion for that to be um evaluated so that we can have that process be available for our students i know we've had some brief

conversations about that dr reed you want me to i said students i I meant staff. Thank you. If you want to speak about it, yes. If it's on the go, it saves me lots of time.

**[03:17:04]** We have discussed a leave share, going back to a leave share plan that we previously had such a plan. So staff are currently drafting a regulation for my review to go back to that practice for the coming academic year, which would begin July 1.

**[03:17:21]** And you just saved me a follow-on motion. And the other one that I wanted to have a follow-up motion on is to have a review of the security staffing at our middle and high schools just to reflect need, not just size. Because I think we have inequitable staffing when it comes to our middle school's security and the challenges that each of our schools face.

**[03:17:45]** And I think those are the two that I've been tossing around. Were you asking for a response to that? No, I was not. was trying to respond to stella's question in terms of what might come up next week because i do believe that the um that's part of the security audit that we should have by july 1. you're saving me lots of work yeah yeah perfect yeah okay uh we have ms mclaughlin followed by miss seiser heiser

**[03:18:19]** thank you um i just want to circle back on on something really important we talk about numbers so when i ran the numbers um ms burton i just want to check what is the employee contribution into erfc um it's changing for 24 but it's about 6.5 percent no no not the employer contribution for the employee doesn't the employee pay into erfc yeah uh three percent they give three percent

**[03:18:52]** okay so i thought it was closer to one and a half but okay that's even more of an of a point Dr. Reed, even if you just go with the 6% employer contribution over a 30-year career, the career earnings averages is going to be $162,000. So you add that on to their total career earnings of $2.7 million. We now surpass Prince William, who is number one for total career earnings because they don't have ERFC. Neither does Arlington, neither does Loudoun. So these

**[03:19:27]** These are the kinds of mathematical computations when I talk about total comp that I've begged multiple superintendents to do. To my colleagues, I may consider a follow-on motion in consultation with all of you, with Dr. Reed.

**[03:19:42]** My goal here is to help our employees understand that right here, right now, working for us, regardless of what the scales look like, we are still the best place to be working at, no matter where they are in their careers. And that's part of the -- when we talk about storytelling in our Office of Communications, I can't think of anything more important than helping people understand the math.

**[03:20:07]** Because every year we're going to lose people. So I am not against ERFC. I just think that we have to help people understand we're investing in these ways. But when you add on what Ms. Burden then said for what comes out of their paycheck to pay for ERFC, you know, now you're talking about another $80,000.

**[03:20:26]** So we're well over $200,000 of career earnings that, again, puts us well over the top of everybody in the region. That is a positive. So how we can get there, I'd like to do that.

**[03:20:41]** And then since I ran out of time, the only other thing I'll say is, Dr. Reed, I would like to get clarity on what, if any, positions for FY24, new positions, are being pushed to year-end as opposed to in the recurring budget because I had heard something about the athletic trainers and how we're going to fund

that and I just want to make sure we're not having any new positions coming out of year-end funding. So I'll follow up with you in

[03:21:16] our check-in. Yeah, it's the certified athletic trainers are the only positions that are recurring that are slated for year-end and we would have to fund that and we'd have to put that in the base for fiscal 25 and it's um five positions because it's a phase in a five-year plan um so it's five positions that we will in fund with your end as a one-year only strategy and then build it into the base for fiscal 25. So my colleagues I'll call you on that as well because I think that

[03:21:51] creates a hiring problem for people wanting to take a job that's being listed as a one-year only even if we verbally say well don't worry we'll build it in for next year I don't I don't think that's a good practice. Thank you. And I wanted to follow up a little bit on the previous conversation around the debt analysis that Ms. Corbett Sanders asked about. And I think there's a real space for Michael Malloy to be doing some of this work as we're moving forward into advocacy around, you know, and I talked earlier about sort of a structured

[03:22:28] budget advocacy process. I really think perhaps there's space this summer to look into what That is our sort of structured advocacy. We do our legislative package, of course. I'll pause. Can you pause my time?

[03:22:44] No, no, that's fine. Of course. Is she okay? Okay. Thank you. Okay.

[03:22:59] No, no, no. It's important, of course. So I just wanted to put that out there as something as, again, you're finishing your year and really taking maybe a look this summer, you know, about what does that look like, what's the role of leadership, what's the role of the board, how do we, and I think we're all ready to do it. And I think we all have individual conversations with our delegation and our Board of Supervisors. But I think having more structure and some more analysis perhaps that kind of helps those conversations throughout the year I think would be really helpful. So I don't know if there's a follow-on motion. I'm kind of toying with the follow-on motion around structured

[03:23:35] budget advocacy or structured advocacy. I'm just off the top of my head to come back with a plan, like a structured advocacy plan with um corresponding data analysis i again off the top of my head but i wanted to see if that's something i need as a follow-up which is similar dr anderson or something that you're just kind of sounds like a great idea so i'll pause there yeah thank you um seismorheiser i think um i think it is important and i think what is maybe most important and i will email mr malloy is not just the analysis and the advocacy plan but also

[03:24:12] in our different roles, how can we move the needle? And I know I've heard from staff saying, why aren't you advocating, you know, for more state funding? Because what the advocating we are doing isn't transparent necessarily to our staff or our community. And I think often of a lot of the work that you as a board do is not transparent. It's phone calls, it's visits at conferences and so forth. And I think part of this, what you're talking about is how do we make all the work you do behind the scenes more transparent. So I think it's an outstanding idea.

[03:24:44] Well, I think having a cadence to it, too, right? You know, especially you're going to have a new board coming on, at least eight new members, so having a cadence and a structure for us, for staff, and also maybe an education piece, because I think the budgetary, you know, the LCI, all of these are, you know, people may not understand it as well. We have a lot, again, community members. So I think that

community member advocacy piece should be part of this plan. So I'll talk to you offline about maybe a follow-on motion. And just in that 15 seconds, I wanted to ask about the literacy funds to year-end. If we put off basal materials to the year-end, does that impact PD or usage? I'm just kind of curious. I know that was brought up by a

[03:25:21] couple of board members, what that would do if that's... Not necessarily, no. We just wanted to make sure, I think, as Mr. Smith said, I believe that this county and our community, you know, that equitable access to literacy is really a core value and expectation and we just felt like keeping that in the core budget was critical as an ongoing concern notably because 15 million won't by itself pay for a full basal series that's part of the cost of the basal series and we have professional

[03:25:57] development and potentially other types of you know PD that's connected with that so it's not that a year-end or not year-end would impact that it's that I think it needs to be part of that ongoing budget it's not a one-and-done investment I guess is maybe the best way to say that I would wholeheartedly agree it's a core of our strategic plan reading by third grade so I think having in our year-to-year budget sends a really strong message but I just wanted to ask that question i know my time is up yeah i think it's difficult because everything we're talking

[03:26:32] about is important so it's um you know what we're trying to do is parse out um or stage things that are honestly all important so yeah thank you um mr mace followed by yeah thank you um uh just in terms of the achievement gap piece and all of that just uh miss uh tolan i appreciate you speaking to it um i think the hope is just that when it becomes a part of the approved budget that it automatically be something for consideration in future years as well

[03:27:07] um so hopefully that can be looked into and we can see i just wanted to loop back uh about the question on the esser piece i don't know if you guys are able to pull that up yeah please miss wickington so um at our esser meeting miss omishu had asked and we looked into it so there was a project that was mitigation measures that was one time that happened in FY 22 those costs were truly one time did not get incorporated into the budget at all there was a bandwidth so that was like our zoom bandwidth infrastructure our bus driver compensation pay that the board had approved

[03:27:45] and then there was our family liaisons and 10 positions for esau all of those were incorporated in this current year's budget as recurring funding. The ones we had to get back to you on were the multilingual texting, interpretation, hourly, and some online translation, and our follow-up with our departments and offices is that they have absorbed that within their budget, so that was also in the first year, and so they have took on, you know, those costs within the budget.

[03:28:13] So for an all intents and purposes between the recurring pieces that are in the budget as well as departments absorbing the only thing that really fell off was the mitigation measure so a lot of the cleaning and stuff that was associated with the pandemic no thank you for that when you say absorbed into their budgets I guess I'm assuming the budgets were not expanded though right that's correct that's correct okay yes so do you know what that meant for any of those departments I yeah so they're probably reducing something else that they're not going to do in order to pick up those costs that came in I don't remember off the top of my head for each one but I could probably take a look on what that

[03:28:52] that value was for all three of these I believe it was three projects that were incorporated I think it was an ISD was the department that that incorporated most of it into their budget and yeah those projects were what texting you said translation multilingual testing interpretation and then online

translations okay thank you for that and and the rest of the stuff you listed bus driver compensation family liaisons 10 ESOL staffers that was absorbed that is currently in the budget we expanded our parent liaison the ESSER budget had doubled that we had ten ESOL positions that we permanently

[03:29:29] added to the budget we had increased bus driver pay quite substantially and then that was incorporated and then there was the band with peace for zoom and the infrastructure so that's also incorporated in the budget very helpful thank you so I guess that leaves me a little bit concerned just on those three projects, the multilingual texting, the online translation, and the multilingual interpreters.

[03:29:52] Awesome that it's continued, but leaves me with questions about what was cut back, especially in the Department of Translation Services interpretation. We already know, you guys know I love the number, the 98 million shortfall of what we have yet to pay to meet the needs of our community on language and translation services.

[03:30:13] So something from that was cut in a place where we can't afford that. already needing to pay more so I don't know Dr. Reed if maybe we can look into that a little bit more carefully and asking Dr. Presidio or just figuring out where the cuts were. I for sure we will do that I think Miss Winton did you have a response to that? Yeah so I didn't mean to imply that anything in those particular projects were reduced but we can certainly talk to Dr. Presidio which we should so he'd often talks about a relook in his baseline and repurposing

[03:30:49] He could have gained some efficiencies, you know, stopped doing some things that weren't efficient. So he often talks about that review that's part of his process when he's developing the budget. So I would like to just make sure that we check in with him to get that clarity and to make sure that we're not saying something incorrect about what he's done internally.

[03:31:07] But they definitely, and we want that. I mean, we often talk here at the board table about what we're doing to not add to the budget. So that is part of the process is that we want departments to look from within to see how they can either absorb and gain some efficiencies or doing things that weren't as effective. But we should follow up with him first, since he's not here to speak on it.

[03:31:26] Yeah, in terms of what we might be able to know, so just in terms of the parameters of what a department can do, would it have had to have come out of that same kind of language and translation budget, or could it have been anything ISD? It could have been anything ISD. That's what I was trying to clarify. I am not saying that online language and translation is where the reduction came from. I am not saying that at all. So, let's check in with him about where some stuff was redirected in order to support that program. Awesome, awesome. If we can do that sooner rather than later. And Ms. Toland, if you can just note that. I know as we move forward in the budget

[03:31:58] timeline. Okay, thank you so much. The other piece was just on, you know, with this $15 million, I guess, you know, less than what we projected and whatnot. Dr. Reed, maybe this is an opportunity to think about We have this conversation every year, but like ROI, savings, potential areas for reconsideration of things.

[03:32:20] I really think it's a great year to do that, but I know we're further along here, and that's my time. But I really would like us to innovate here. But what, if any, thought has been given to that, and what room is there to do more? I think that efficiencies, I know we've asked each department to take a look at their department,

[03:32:45] And I think this summer, as we look at a final strategic plan and we identify what the body of work is that we're going to achieve it, then I think we can also talk about what are those things that we don't need to continue doing that are not part of achieving that.

[03:33:02] So I think we'll, by nature of having a very clear plan with clear targets, become more efficient. Thank you. Ms. Cohen and Mr. Frisch.

[03:33:18] Thanks very much. I'll try to be quick. Definitely yes to a joint board letter. I would love to throw my hat in the ring to say yes, if we can make that magic work. Also, I think it would be helpful for us, and this may be a good thing to do in either talking about the strategic plan updates that you do for the board, Dr. Reed, since I know that we don't have time for another work session.

[03:33:50] but i think it would be really important to us to know what retention and attraction strategies are being implemented because we know this is national we're never trying to say this is only fairfax county it's everybody so what are we doing that is like new and different and you know trying everything short of pulling a rabbit out of our hats to make sure um and i think including that would be telling us like how many this was the first year that we got our teachers for tomorrow are grow your own kids graduate or just graduated or are graduating how many of them came back um you know i think those kinds of things would be really really helpful for us and it's why i think

[03:34:29] you just kind of hear a repeated cadence from this board in everything not just budget related but what are we doing to keep and attract what are we doing to keep and attract and i know that's a high priority for you so maybe just in the public sphere it'd be great for us to learn that another is that the four million dollars then that was part of the air set aside i think it'd be really helpful for us and again you know maybe that comes as part and parcel when acsd comes and gives their report i leave it to people smarter than i to figure out what's the best forum for

[03:35:06] that but if we could know how that is going to be used like directly tied to the recommendations of the air report are you thinking you're going to use some of it for the inclusive preschool model are you think you know like there were so many areas that air identified four million is not going to touch it i recognize that but what is your thinking i don't want to just keep getting pushed forward and forward as part of the implementation so thank you for that question miss cohen it it's my understanding that at the end of june we're going to have the work session on the special ed enhancement plan which will include those 19 recommendations the 27th i

[03:35:43] believe and I think at that point we'll need to and maybe we need to come with several scenarios right and about which things because I think inclusive preschools certainly we have behavior supports just just a number of requests I know I haven't had a chance to fully read it but I think our septic groups and a list of recommendations as well and kind of trying to figure out how to collect all those in one place and how those align to the enhancement plan is going to be really important and you're right i think there are going to be more things uh planned than we have money to

[03:36:23] do so it's going to really be we're going to be thoughtful about what are our highest leverage uses for those funds um and i so to your point um i think we'll provide some scenarios i guess at that point. Thank you. That'd be helpful. Mr. Fresh? Thanks. I also support a joint board letter.

[03:36:48] In terms of the question around potential follow-on motions, I did send a couple draft follow-on motions to the budget chair and vice chair that I'm considering with colleagues. The two that I sent one

is around public service loan forgiveness from the Department of Education.

[03:37:05] I've had extensive conversations with the superintendent and Dr. Wilson about that and how we can incorporate into human resources an affirmative effort to get qualifying employees signed up and maintain their eligibility. We want to talk about putting more money in employees' pockets that doesn't cost us really anything at the end of the day. That's one way of doing it.

[03:37:27] The second was around test-taking skills and strategies that I'm talking about with a a colleague. I've also talked with one colleague about asking the superintendent to explore expanding our telemental health services to middle school, budgeting that out and maybe thinking through how that might happen. And then finally one around safety and security and how we might respond to the forthcoming safety and security review that we're expecting in July. All of these and I think any budget follow-on motion should include some kind

[03:38:01] of qualification around in alignment with the imminent strategic plan because we want all of this work to align with where we're going as a school division. Thank you. Okay, that I think concludes. Oh, Ms. Marin. Well, to follow on to Mr. Frisch's comments about follow-ons, yes, he and I indeed would like to bring a follow-on regarding having funds available to respond to the safety

[03:38:34] security off it but coming from the hold on from the school board flexibility reserve so we will just as an additional source for funding to respond to some of those safety and security pieces so we'll be submitting that after today's meeting for the board's consideration okay thank you um so i have been taking notes today so we'll follow up with a summary list of um some of the questions like in miss homage for example you want to ask for some very specific information so i'll

[03:39:10] have that list please stay in touch with us if you are you know it if you've got other questions or anything that you need before our vote next week um what we would like to do quickly right now is just take a quick consensus vote on if you would like us to move forward in putting together a letter from the board to our state delegation just discussing how important it is for us to have some

[03:39:41] clarity on our budget moving forward so anybody that is in favor all right looks like everyone and then the other piece we had was should we do that in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors and we will have conversations with them to determine if that's the way we want to move forward with size for heights are you okay with that if we wanted to jointly with the Board of Supervisors can I just clarify that if they decide not to sign on we will go ahead by

[03:40:14] ourselves regardless so thank you we did it around something yeah probably yeah we did one earlier this year too we did one earlier this year too yeah we will definitely work with mr. malloy on putting this together budget chair legislative liaison and i can work together on that perfect not all together but you know two at a time okay perfect thank you everyone um we are a minutes behind, so we would like to take a quick maybe eight-minute break,

[03:40:50] reconvene at 2:30, so that we can have our discussion on the strategic plan.

[03:41:24] We have one last topic this afternoon. It is on our strategic plan pillars. We had a really great, we had a really great retreat, our last retreat. We've had several retreats on our strategic plan and I'm going to let Marcy and Dustin kind of walk through the presentation but just as a reminder I think we've had nine either work sessions or retreats just as a board on the strategic plan so I really appreciate all the

board's hard work last time as we finalize our goals and measures and so we're really finalized strategic plan and today the staff the one thing we didn't get to in a lot on the retreat was the staff

[03:42:03] presenting to us the operational pillars that will hold up the goals and measures as passed by the board as developed by the community and all the

[03:42:10] instructional team. So with that, I will turn it over to you, Marcy, Dustin, and Dr. Reed, to go ahead and introduce the last bit, which is getting, introducing your operational expectations around the pillars. Dr. Reed, you need to use a microphone or it won't show up on the video. I apologize. It's not. My legs are so long. That's the low chair. That's the one that I pushed over there. I was going to say my legs are like. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I want to begin by thanking Marcy and Dustin

[03:42:58] they've been amazing throughout this process there have been many many months um i think i'll let them go through the data and when we pick up the pillars i'll pick up so um marcy if you want to go through uh slide six for me between you and dustin maybe you guys can trade off and i'll pick up at slide seven all right so there is a full packet of information that's posted um for the survey that closed last night at midnight. It's just the interim information. We need to still incorporate last night's feedback. But we have had obviously some very significant community engagement around

[03:43:36] the strategic plan. We had over 116,000 surveys submitted, and that number will, you know, go up with last night's submissions as well. A number of folks who served on our community planning teams. 4,000 plus student submissions for our principal ed student focus groups.

[03:43:58] As the chair shared, the board's dedicated a significant amount of time to the development of the strategic plan for work sessions and five retreats. So it has been a significant effort. We do want to give you just an update. Again, the survey, we provided some interim data at the may 9th retreat this was information as of the morning of the 17th the survey closed the afternoon of the 17th we were able to double the survey participation rates between when the board last saw this data and this data set so we had um over 7 000 participants for the survey so

[03:44:34] thank you to everyone who helped amplify that message in communities um so this was obviously in addition to the community forms that we had done and the use of our let's talk tool to get feedback from the community in the development of the goals and the pillars and the measures.

[03:44:53] What you're going to see on the screen now is the survey results, specifically to the four pillars for the survey window that Marcy was just referring to. The interim report that we saw on May 9th had survey responses that were either equal or slightly lower to these, so as we've doubled the input, the survey satisfaction has increased on all four of the pillars.

[03:45:16] As we move forward to the next slide, you'll see those same four pillars in the survey satisfaction results broken out by some of our key stakeholder groups throughout our division. So we're seeing that consistently high level of agreement around the wording and language of the four pillars that we have again posted as a interim data packet and as the survey closes today, we'll finalize that and it will be shared.

[03:45:43] Dustin, why don't you take this one too? This is one of my favorite slides, but I think, Dustin, you've earned the -- yeah. All right. Thank you, Dr. Reed. So we've seen some of the images on the screen before when we were talking about the beginning stages of this process with the strategic plan where we

were talking about how this plan is going to take all those arrows that you see in the first circle and have them lined up and moving them in the same direction.

[03:46:16] We think this is an important graphic to bring back for the idea of these pillars because it's going to really help us think about how these pillars are going to be a critical component for us in how we organize our work, how as a division we allow us to move together and take the goals and measures that we have identified as a community and that the superintendent and the community and the board have come together on, and now we actually begin to put this into work with these four pillars.

[03:46:46] It will be a framework for us that is going to help us go with that idea of being a system of schools to that school system. And these pillars are going to really help us articulate what we must do well to be able to accomplish the goals and measures that were developed through this strategic planning process.

[03:47:05] So I want to connect the conversations this afternoon, if we could go back one slide please. Because as we discussed our budget conversation and budget priorities, I believe it was either Ms. Cohen or Dr. Anderson that mentioned, you know, how are we going to become more efficient, and it's not on the left, but I feel like at times we've got a number of initiatives we're funding or a number of ideas or activities, and if they're not aligned, we're not going to get where we need to go. I think anybody that's been out in a boat in the middle of a body of water,

[03:47:42] you can row yourself in circles if you're not really clear about where you're headed. So, Anyhow, I just want to make sure that we connect these pillars to our budget conversation and this concept of alignment, because working together we can be more efficient and fund those highest priorities.

[03:47:59] The next slide, just want to remind the board, really, this is our last look at the strategic plan work prior to your affirmation of this on the 25th of May, which is next week. And I know, isn't it May 25th?

[03:48:15] New business next week. June 15th. Oh, I'm so excited. I can hardly stand it. I'll have to go without sleep another extra two weeks. Anyhow, oh, and George is here too. I want to thank George Becerra, who is one of our co-champions in our core planning team, George.

[03:48:31] Woo-hoo. So just so many, and Lisa Youngblood Hall is here, did the faith support, the alignment group as well. So just so many people involved in this. I want to clarify again the four pillars because that's really a research-based framework.

[03:48:49] There has been a significant meta-analysis across the country around what bodies of work must sit under goals and measurements to really effectively bring those home and enable us to achieve those outcomes.

[03:49:06] These four categories across the meta-analysis come up every time in those divisions that have made meaningful impact on achievement gap, that have been Baldridge Award winners for efficiency or Broad winners for effectiveness.

[03:49:24] These are the four bodies of work that must be done well. What happens is we take that research, those research practices, and then we here in our county, looked at our context with a variety of teams, beginning with our core planning team, to think about what is it about Fairfax County that might define these four bodies of work more clearly, and be responsive to our needs, our goals, and our measurements.

[03:49:57] So what we've had an opportunity to do is take a look at those, and I'll go ahead and walk through each of those to have an opportunity to be thoughtful about the work that has been developed as a result in capturing, if you will, the best practice strategies.

[03:50:17] So again, there are four pillars and the first one -- this is -- we're high tech here. The first pillar is responsive to teaching and learning. We had a variety of teams have an opportunity to take a look at this as well as the research to craft a statement that will define the work that is essentially operational work to support the ends or the goals that you as a board have made determinations about and the measurements that you have made determinations about around the accountability.

[03:50:55] This is the teaching and learning pillar. The next pillar, B, is the schools can't do it alone pillar. Again, this goes to partnerships. We've had a conversation during budget about the importance of community services, partnerships, our elected colleagues, and just how important those partnerships are for us to move forward.

[03:51:17] Particularly, I think as our economic times become less robust and perhaps we see fewer economic windfall opportunities, these are going to become more and more important. The third pillar is our investing in people pillar.

[03:51:34] And this is one that's so important in terms of making sure that our workforce is, you know, that we effectively recruit and retain and support our workforce. I've had several staff email and say, well, why aren't we calling it the teachers as one of our pillars. Our principals is one of our pillars or our IAs is one of our pillars. And the reality is it's not the people that a pillar is, right? The pillars are systems, best practice systems to support the work of our people. So we need to recognize that both here in Fairfax County

[03:52:13] and across our country, this work only happens with everyone working together as a team. So this This is the investing in people pillar and then the last, our fourth, is our bringing it all together pillar. And this one is the one that talks about our strategies and key actions.

[03:52:31] It prioritizes teaching and learning and focuses professional development across the system. It also is the one, I think we spent a little time recently talking about data, how we use data in real time as dashboards and how we're contemplating needs-based resource allocation, which again is in alignment with what we just talked about around an advocacy, perhaps mandate, a strategy in terms of looking at the impacts economically on our community and how we're going to be responsive and honestly, Dr. Henderson, to your point around equitable

[03:53:07] versus equal staffing, in this case in safety when we talk about size of schools. So this pillar D is around those data and resource topics. And then May 25th, new business.

[03:53:24] Just a reminder that the four areas that are new business are the goals, the measures, the equity commitments, and the pillars. You've completed the top three already, and the final plan will be voted on June 15th, and the pillars are operational.

[03:53:43] It looks like there's some shock here. I don't know. So any questions I will respond to at this time with Dustin and Marcy on four components.

[03:53:58] It's the plan. And thank you, Ms. Corbett Sanders. I didn't say that very well. Let me go back. These are the four components of the plan you're going to be voting on. If you recall, right, this is the

document that after today we will have, you've done, I mean, over 40 hours you have put into this, well over 40 hours as a board, which is an incredible commitment of time and energy.

[03:54:29] This is done this afternoon. We're really just taking the last hour to review the four pillars again, which have been Crafted in alignment with best practice. All right. Thank you so much. Starting with Mr. Frisch starting with Miss McLaughlin. Nope Can we pull up the

[03:55:02] survey slides, please? Yes, ma'am. So Dr. Reed we talked about this yesterday in the public engagement committee meeting which I chair with along with Mr. Frisch, Ms. Tolan and Dr. Anderson and what I would really like to make sure before we present this any further to the public and certainly for the board's awareness is one, we should always have the end number. What's the number? You know, it's 85% of how many. I think we talked about that it would be good to have the disaggregation of the responses, which subgroups they were coming from.

[03:55:42] I think that's really important because one of the other things is if we can go to the slide where it showed 116,000 survey responses, so that one there, we also talked about this with the Public Engagement Committee, that's a very large survey number and it's very reassuring, but I think it needs to also be disaggregated.

[03:56:09] that is across the survey so this one here is just to point out to everybody when we went out to the community and said please let us know what you think of the draft strategic plan like here we go we are set to anoint and adopt this thing so the number is saying 7,441 correct I mean that one is extremely concerning. You know, Dr. Reed, I see the numbers improved just slightly,

[03:56:42] but we only had 23% of our employees weighing it all, according to that, right? Or that's just the percentage of, no, that's just the percent of the total responses. So of the 7,400 responses we got, parents made up just over half, 51% of the total 7,400 responses. I was looking at the number going 1,700 is not 23% of the FCPS employees. So we just, I think that we talk a percentage of total responses. We should have a third column that says, you know, percent of the

[03:57:18] total population. And the reason I said this is because we need the public to understand, and I was saying this should be another slide, to tell the story. We went out to our community with how many messages and helen lloyd was talking with us through the whole meeting that she could get the analytics so we can go out to our public and say it wasn't for lack of trying we we did this much communication in advance of each of these efforts but um you know in the end uh you know

[03:57:55] i had reservations about how much this cost us to do right and so i i do just hope this is a little bit of a lessons learned for fcps as a division that people in this county work long hours have long commutes and even our employees so as a result in the end you know we'll always go out and invite them to participate but spending half a million dollars when in the end uh i'm just not sure where we ended up with that that cost component what i will say to everybody is i look

[03:58:34] forward to supporting the strategic plan because what always mattered to me in the end was the research and best practice and I think that's where we've landed and for that Dr. Reed I really appreciate that you and your administration spent an exceptional amount of time on this as did the board and our total amount of time that we did for this calendar year but I really think we have to be prepared to make sure the community understands we did our best the responses were what they were thank you and

I I also want to share that when you see that staff number that's the staff number that responded the second

[03:59:14] time to the second iteration of the draft of the plan because we did hold staff meetings in every school and department there were initial surveys that staff filled out that had a much higher end so there were no I guess what I'm sharing is there were multiple and probably what we should do to your point is put together all of those like the numbers who attended the town halls and who attended because that is far this again is one snapshot though to your point it would be nice to have a higher response rate.

[03:59:49] I always say it's important to have the data collectively in one spot. So people aren't going to remember what we told them in prior presentations so we should a chart for every you know every public engagement we did on this thing and each one captures it yep fair point next is dr anderson thank you um a couple of questions one i definitely want to echo what miss mclaughlin just shared it would be really a good idea to have the end the population rather than the number of respondents because it gives us a sense of how much did fairfax county

[04:00:29] speak to us speaking of fairfax county speaking to us i'm always super interested in how much mason district is speaking to us so i as i shared it last time no surprise i would love to have this data broken out by pyramids because that's how i could more easily see what my community is saying so i want to make sure that i have that secondarily i would love for you to just frame a little bit more because obviously we're having this work session because we want the public to understand we have our goals we have our measures we have the equity commitments and we have the pillars which are largely the operational piece.

[04:01:05] How should the public treat that component? Because I think there's an accountability piece that's embedded in the equipment, in the equity commitments, in the measures and the goals. How should the public at large interact with the pillars? That's a great question.

[04:01:22] I think it's a glimpse for the public into the operational buckets, if you will, that we are strategizing our key strategies. In other words, each of those four pillars will have three distinct strategies which will include a champion from the department that will be responsible for that strategy that will be managed at the senior leadership level to make sure that those -- each pillar is successfully built and supported so that those sit under the successful attainment of the measures and goals.

[04:02:01] The public likely is going to interact the least with pillars because they're the most operational of the four categories that we're discussing. I think the public will be most interested in the goals and measures and equity commitments.

[04:02:17] The pillars will be those things that are really operational expectations and we'll We'll be reporting on those, I believe, on a regular cadence of some sort next year. So the public will hear Pillar 1, or actually probably Pillar 4, financial planning, right, as we look at an operational expectation around finance.

[04:02:42] And they'll know that's part of Pillar 4. But that's really going to be operational work for the division leadership. So the second piece of that question is, as you mentioned, that there will be some regular reporting work of the strategies that sit under the pillars how do you expect for the board to interact with the pillars at this point and then at those venture at those moments so I believe that there

and I don't know if you can pull it up or see if you have a slide that has the key strategies but the key strategies will be how the pillars are explained and if we can

[04:03:18] bring it up, I'll show it to you. I believe it's my hope that the board will interact with those in a public meeting where we do because our operational expectations will connect with these key strategies and therefore be on a regular cadence and calendared for board review. So the board will have an opportunity to look at the progress, for example, on data driven decision making, or on needs based resource allocation, or on technology transition and innovation.

[04:03:55] So those will come to the board in a cadence that will be crosswalk to a pillar, but a key strategy action that senior leadership is responsible for leading. Okay. So that brings me back to I think what I believe is my final question.

[04:04:12] The equity commitments are kind of a lens by which we're going to both do the work that comes through the pillars. If we are looking for staff who are going to be champions of each of the pillars, which really speaks to their work, connect the dots for me in terms of how that is aligned to the measures.

[04:04:36] If we don't do the pillars well, we won't move the measures. In other words, we have to handle the work of the pillars well, or the measures aren't going to move in the direction we expect them to move. So when you provide this regular report for the board to engage with, will it be very clear in terms of the pillar is connected to this measure, which is attached to this goal?

[04:04:59] Yes. Which is keeping track of this equity commitment? Absolutely. Okay. It won't be possible to be any more clear. We'll be that clear. Is this ours right now? Does it have the same titles of the pillars?

[04:05:15] What is that one? Are you sure? I knew I saw that somewhere. So this is an example. This is a draft of the key strategies. So if you look at, for example, Pillar B, Bottom Right, that's that Vibrant Homeschool and Community Partnerships.

[04:05:33] It's under the Schools Can't Do It Alone Best Research. The three areas we talked about there would be elevated student voice and leadership, equitable and transparent two-way communication, and culture of trust and shared responsibility. So there'll be a cabinet level champion for each of those key strategy areas that their work comes back to the cabinet table every week and that work will be shared with the board as the effectiveness of that pillar. So is there another ring for the measures of goals? There is

[04:06:07] but at the risk of getting into too deep in the weeds today it's more of a ray that comes out right because this sits in a context of a school and then of a division and then a county. I think I think that's what I was trying to get to. I'm trying to see the relationships because at the end of the day, we want to evaluate the goals.

[04:06:26] Correct. How we're doing that is through the measures, but we're also paying attention to these other significant components. Right. But outlining what the relationship looks like, I think, is important. Right. And if there's to be a graphic that can be shared not just with the board, but also with the public, I think that would be beneficial. Yeah, this, the key strategy map is essentially for us internally to benchmark our work to get these measures moving, because we can't, they're not going to move themselves, and these pillars are critical, and there will be people assigned to each of those 12 areas, and they'll have teams that make sure that happens.

[04:07:00] Perfect, and again, just kind of moving forward to the reporting components, just so we can have clarity in terms of where everything lives, because then we'll end up, all of our conversation, trying to figure out what fits where. If you could just articulate that at the onset, I think it will be great. Thank you.

[04:07:16] Thank you. On June 20th, I believe, we're having a governance work session. The governance committee stated yesterday that they could not attend the June 20th policy governance and ed equity work session, so we'll be looking to reschedule that if we can.

[04:07:34] During that work session, I think there will be an opportunity to really clarify those connections. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Anderson. Ms. Corbett Sanders? Thank you, and I apologize, but I do have to leave early today, so I'm butting in line.

[04:07:52] I did want to kind of set some context, because I do very much appreciate the extensive amount of work that has gone into the strategic plan and the multiple times and efforts to engage not only community members, but our staff, our students, and I don't think that there's a real appreciation and understanding of how many different touch points there were.

[04:08:16] So I would suggest that what we're talking about is less than 1% of an annual budget that we've spent on a strategic plan that is going to hopefully set the system up for success over a five-year period.

[04:08:34] It might be very helpful as we talk about our communications about how we got here is to be able to benchmark how much we spent versus what a major organization normally does on strategic planning. As somebody who has done a few of them, I don't think that level is significant, is significantly different than other organizations. But I really wanted to put this in context of the pillars and how the, why we're talking about pillars. And I think in some ways we've misnomered it because what we're talking about is the pillars are the foundation of the

[04:09:11] work in which we are going to engage. And those foundational structures allow us to measure the effect, overall effectiveness of the operations. Therefore, how we are going to measure your effectiveness, Dr. Reed. They also, each of those pillars allows a structure and the foundation for more effectively engaging with between your organization and this board so that we are more effective and more focused.

[04:09:45] And I fully expect we will be replacing some of the placards up there. And then the third aspect is that those pillars really provide the structure or the foundation in which we will more effectively engage with our community.

[04:10:02] So, if we take that as this is, you know, the pillars really are the cornerstones of our strategic plan is how I look at it. And you usually have to have four separate cornerstones to build a strong structure. I think it's going to be very important to develop a communications plan, which identifies many of the things that my colleague, Ms. McLaughlin, mentioned, which is it is critical that we talk about how you know what we did how many touch points how how we engage the

[04:10:38] public what we what we did what we didn't do and then how that allowed us to build this framework which is our strategic plan and then a look towards the future as to how the strategic plan will govern will guide or influence our budgeting process will guide or influence the way we have our annual calendar of work thank you miss corbett sanders your time is up but if you anybody has responses i i yeah i think you captured it i think there other divisions have

[04:11:14] called them the building blocks the you're absolutely correct it is a foundation so it was well described i do think what i'm also hearing is we need to craft a bit of a executive summary of the process that captures all of the interactions again that's a theme a little bit isn't it that the work is not as transparent as it could be so that's that's that's great feedback thank you thank you miss Bukarski yeah thank you I actually building off of what miss Corbett Sanders said I wanted

[04:11:49] to suggest the same thing especially as we're looking at you know voting for this that would be a great time to do that and I actually think the effort and the outreach has been amazing and you know I know that takes a lot of work a lot of coordination and most of the things that people will never see and at the end we only have so much control we can only give people the opportunity to come to come out and participate if they so wish but just the work I think of the core teams

[04:12:28] and the time and the detailed information that they got really is amazing. So I wanna say thank you for that. We did it in a year, I know that was a big push. I mean, you're new, still trying to work through closing academic gaps, et cetera.

[04:12:49] But this is an exciting new beginning, I think, for FCPS at a perfect time. And I've heard a lot of positive feedback from the people that were involved in the process and from students, actually, that were involved in the process, which is very satisfying, I think, to hear and wanted to share with you.

[04:13:11] So thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Bukarski. Ms. Cohen. Thank you. You know, I think just in regard to the survey responses, concerns from the second piece, the 7,000 people, you know, I think especially for this, you know, there's been, and I mean, this is a very loving way, like 800 touches about the strategic plan. And I asked my husband, like, did you respond to this second? Because we kept getting the notification. And he's like, no.

[04:13:45] And I said, well, why? It's really important. And he said, because I'm fine with it. And so I also want us to be careful, like, by the end of this, I almost think it's a little bit like, like Yelp, like you respond if you hate it and you respond if you love it if you think that it's something that you're fine with being the backbone of how we're going to build this and you've had all of this input all the way along to be involved in any number of these planning committees to do the survey any number of times to you know give your feedback at the different group open meetings

[04:14:25] that we've had i mean at some point you feel like your input has been received and if you see it reflected i don't know how likely you are i think the other piece and i know we're working really really hard as a division i'm really proud of this board from day one has been the commitment to try to build back trust with the community that what they said in surveys was actually going to be listened to and and we were going to do something with it and that's going to take a long time you know i feel like this is the first opportunity that i've really seen which is not just talking

[04:15:04] at we've been talking with we keep changing because as a result of the input um and abra and i had the opportunity to get to be on the faith community meeting and the intersection of of how many people on that were faith leaders and parents were faith you know members of different faith communities and staff and you know so I'm also not sure we often talk about people and kind of segment them in ways but we are a lot of things I work for FCPS and I'm a parent of two kids in and I used to be staff in a different capacity like so I'm not sure we're ever capturing like

[04:15:44] the full picture we talk about this with kids all the time they're not always or often like one thing and not the other so I just want us to be mindful of like this this was a practice of what we preach about we want to talk to you and we want to hear you and we want to do something with it but it's not going to be overnight that we build this trust back with the community so I think this was a great start but I'm not I'm not shocked by the second round of survey responses. Thank you. Thank you

[04:16:18] Miss Cohen. Next is Miss Tolan. I can't believe we're here after all these meetings, but it's super exciting. I mean, yesterday in PEC, we were starting to look at what colors should be on the chart. So we're getting down to the nitty gritty. So, and people that I've talked to that have been involved in the process on the core planning team, for example, you know, I think they started out and were kind of like, what are we doing? And like Ms. Cohen was saying, we had so

[04:16:56] many different types of people that came to the table, and people struggled with that a little bit in the beginning. But, you know, as we move forward through the process, those same people are like, whoa, that actually really worked, and I felt like I was heard, and, you know, the product is something that i'm happy with and i can work with um so it is super exciting um the exciting part is yet to come as we actually try to implement this and move forward so that brings me to a couple comments i wanted to make about the pillars just so people understand where this language came from for the

[04:17:31] pillars this was just put together by the instructional team and i was very fortunate to participate on that team so as dr reed was explaining earlier you know these are operational So these were put together by operational people.

[04:17:46] But again, a wide variety of people, school-based, central office, a couple school board members, a lot of different types of, all different subject areas, all different disciplines, CTE, et cetera, et cetera.

[04:18:02] So those are the people that put this together, and those are the people that are really gonna actually have to hit the ground and do this. so i'm actually really happy that that is how these came about and people were very careful to think about the three different areas that you know we haven't really talked about but this is what our teaching practices across the top this is what leaders will do more at the school level or maybe central office and then um the organizational practices really is more geared even towards central office and leadership team, and what kinds of constructs need to be in place

[04:18:42] for those above levels to be successful. So there's a lot on this piece of paper right here. And, you know, like I said, the people that need to do this work are the people that put it together. So I feel pretty good about that. Yeah, thank you. I think we talked about the center part of this plan was going to be students and the work in the classroom and everything everyone else does every department every staff member educator board member that our focus was on supporting that teaching and learning that instructional core and that's what this is based on i think

[04:19:20] we were going to pull that list up of the document you were speaking from because not everyone had it in front of them if we could expand that just a scooch please laura if you're the one driving this. These are those practices that sit under the pillars. And as Ms. Tolan was commenting, this was what the instructional team put together, sort of the instructional, the teaching practices, the leadership practices, and then the organizational practices. Yeah, we've circulated this. And it's just, again, there's a tight alignment between these pillars, our practices, our

[04:19:58] key strategies the measurements and goals and that's what makes this plan I think different from many because it's really based on best practice research I just had one question going back to that like the chart the circle and you've got these four different pillars and then it's divided into three different areas I'm just curious what you've seen with you know your previous districts or what you're kind of thinking about as we move forward with this do you anticipate reorganization to meet these or you know trying to work with

[04:20:36] organization that we have I think right now we're looking at when we think about aligning department work and what were the overlaps and the gaps because right now I think I haven't really started that conversation with cabinet yet about overlaps and gaps but if we're going to truly be in efficient we can't have multiple departments doing the same thing and then no department doing some things, right?

[04:21:06] And it's that I think Marcy's done a nice job of framing something called portfolio management, where if we have a task, how do we make sure that the work of that task is actually assigned, monitored, measured, and then acted on, right? So I think in a system this size, the opportunity for overlap and gap is even larger so part of our challenge as a senior leadership team is going to be making sure we have the right structure so that we don't have overlaps which are not efficient or gaps which we're going to miss important bodies of work that makes sense

[04:21:44] and just to comment too i know that the cost of it has come up i have been involved in other strategic planning efforts and this one by far exceeds um other efforts i've been involved in in the numbers of meetings the numbers of people that have been reached and that's expensive it's people's time going out and planning all of these and attending them and being there and um it it costs money so i think that um you know if we implement this correctly it's going to be money very well spent correct and we will um it's also there was a significant amount of data

[04:22:22] production uh that was done in real time multiple times and in fact i think we learned a lot about the type of data that we've been using and there were several times we realized the data didn't include all of our students in ways that um it should so we learned lessons through this but there was a significant amount of data produced um as well as a as a part of this process no exactly

[04:22:48] Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Sizemore-Hyser. Thank you. And I'm actually really happy to pick up on that piece because that was one thing I think was a really great lesson. Ms. Dernat-Koufax and I as chair and vice chair got to participate in the core planning team. And I believe it was four, maybe five full day meetings on the core planning. And I know other board members participated on other teams as well. Or I think all board members had the opportunity to participate. Six. Thank you. Wow. They all kind of blended together. Six full day meetings. But in addition to our 40 hours of board meetings, and I know all board members had the chance to participate on one of the

[04:23:24] teams throughout the process. So it was really great to not just have our own time to work on it but to be able to participate with the community in different ways on different teams. So I just think that was a really good lesson learned that's going to really help us in the implementation of our strategic plan is looking at how we have been collecting data and maybe where there's opportunities, right? And I really like that our strategic plan was first grounded in the data of where are we now right that kind of started the conversations of where are we now to use that along with the conversations that all of these you know

community members and staff and board members and leadership team brought to sort of the as i think miss marion

[04:24:03] often calls the street data right the anecdotal street data where we are now and the you know data that you brought just to where we are now so i think that was really really helpful in this process and I agree this has been a very robust process and I really appreciate all of your leadership in that and I wanted to kind of sort of circle back to what Dr. Anderson said is of how do these all interrelate together and what's the board's role and I think that really is that policy governance work I know we talked about it when we had that first retreat or maybe the second retreat when we talked about you know committing to this strategic plan and we mentioned policy governance and how we could embed operational expectations that tied strongly to the pillars and strategy map

[04:24:42] with that regular cadence so I'm looking forward to hopefully being able to do that work going forward so that when when you are implementing this strategic plan the board and the public knows these are the key strategies here's the operational expectation that's in our governance manual that ties to that and here's when the board and the public are going to hear a report on where are we on this operational expectation and this treaty plan so it's not just a plan that we have it looks great but we have a steady cadence of oversight of the implementation of the plan so I'm excited about that next piece. And I'm just grateful for all my colleagues for all their hard time and thought. I'm grateful for the community and the opportunity to bring all the voices in the

[04:25:20] community together to give input to the plan as well as to our staff and especially our students. I just, I have to say in some of the team meetings, the students were so wise in what they said and very passionate, but just very thoughtful as well. So that bodes to our instructional staff and our

[04:25:40] we're doing a great job, but thank you to all of you. I look forward to bringing this, and I agree with the executive summary of, I think, Ms. McLaughlin, a really good point of, let's talk about all the work we've done and the engagement we've done and the process we've done in getting us here. So thank you. I see my time is up, but just I want to thank you all. Thank you, Mr. Becerra, as well, for being part of that planning team.

[04:26:02] Thank you. We also have several other members of the planning team, and Leslie in the back and Amanda here. Alicia, of course, who did all of our logistics.

[04:26:19] Thank you all. Thank you all. Yes. So let's do that again. All right. Thank you. Thank you for that nice round of applause.

[04:26:40] I just followed it. It was easy. So I do want to say, as someone whose previous career was in marketing and communications and developing strategic plans, the touches of this were outstanding.

[04:26:56] The amount of people, the outreach, and that does contribute to a cost of making this successful. Dr. Ivey, you and I were on the portrait of a graduate, and that was a stellar piece of outreach that we had done. But I will say, even though that is something we completely believe in and completely adopt it, the outreach was not quite as great.

[04:27:18] It was not quite as robust. You may speak to that, yes. I totally agree. And I think it was because we had so many different teams and groups working with just the intentionality of making sure that we had diverse perspectives on each team And also the time factor, the all-day, you know, meetings that we

had multiple occasions and realizing that if we needed more time, we took the time to add the additional meetings.

[04:27:57] And I'm really proud, too, of this work, and I think it's really an example of our engagement to come. And I can hear it when people are planning meetings. They're asking, you know, what other voices do we need and how do we engage in a deeper manner?

[04:28:16] And definitely are all of the languages covered and what, you know, and methods of reaching out. it's not perfect it's a work in progress but there's we've definitely learned from this experience absolutely i think the key was um bringing the the different and diverse voices together and as we sat on the planning at the core planning team we saw that a lot particularly um you know in the beginning where there was a lot of passion and you know the other notable piece sitting on the core planning team was there was no afternoon slump you came back and that room was

[04:28:56] just as full as it was in the morning and people were ready to go and you know we had plenty of oreos and coke and uh coca-cola and uh you know so i but but i am thankful for for the dedication um you know even at my particular table it was it was outstanding the engagement the involvement So, you know, really, it was a collective body.

[04:29:22] So thank again, all of you who have done that. I did a little bit of notes before we do go backs, 'cause I won't have one. But I think agreeing with the executive summary, making certain that's there, even in the one today, the appendix has a lot of good data, further analysis, and you just said you stopped that today at noon, right?

[04:29:44] So there may be further breakdowns on that. i think um you know i think you heard loud and clear uh dr reed the totality of the engagement the totality of the meetings needs to be included in there um you can't say it enough uh as well as an oversight of the process um and um also there was a call and perhaps this would be in an appendix broken down by pyramid so i i'm not certain if by june 15th you should be able to get that data correct yes ma'am all right wonderful so that's all i heard i think if anyone else has outstanding

[04:30:22] information that they want seen or talked about before we take our vote on june 15 please um you know email dr reed or rajna and i as the chair and vice chair and we'll make sure we get that and um that is all i have so thank you so much and as i said i think it's i know megan has a go back i was just finishing my last 20 seconds so thank you so much so it's always kind of difficult to end up being the one who just keeps saying okay but so uh you know

[04:30:58] again on the glows absolutely where we landed and every effort that this division put forward to engage is to be applauded i think from what i've heard from rasha and tammy that the core planning team is where there was just this incredible depth of work and investment. I did attend one of the family planning meetings, and I was concerned with what I saw. The meeting I was at, only 23 out of, you know, 37 parents were there. I mean, so we wanted so much to have a family planning

[04:31:35] meeting, and 23 were there, and it was just very loose. Just a lot of sort of interesting conversation happening but not really driven and directed so uh i think there would be some benefit when i looked around and saw 23 family members there but we had like 13 to 15 staff you know you have to just think about the staff time to doing that and so maybe that helps us to just understand uh you know the core planning team had our various stakeholders but they were people who really were

[04:32:11] realizing i'm going to invest a lot in this um the community meetings what concerned me was there was volumes and volumes i mean like what looked like 50 pages of raw data raw data is not going to help the community give us any meaningful feedback it needs to have been you know broken down and analyzed in advance and then when we you know had performance facts there what i would have wanted from a consultant, and always my expectation of consultant is that they did the analysis in in front. They would say, "Here's what we found in this data analysis. Now let us

[04:32:49] know what aren't we seeing in the data that maybe you can help us to fill this in." But it was like speed dating, to sit down and go, "Okay, look at these 10 pages of data and what do you think it's telling us about where priorities need to be?" And I'm thinking, I know this after 12 years and I couldn't do it that fast.

[04:33:07] So I only say this because I love the school division. I want us to continuously improve and learn in our deep investments. It doesn't take away from the close of today. But I do want to also measure this, that I think there are things we can learn as we continue this deep investment in partnership with our community.

[04:33:29] Thank you. No other hands. I thank you all for your time. Remember the vote on this is June 15th, but please reach out to Dr. Reed or Rachana myself if you need further questions or clarity on what you would like to see on that day. So you are ready to vote and move this project forward. Thank you all. This session is adjourned. Thank you, everybody.

