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Fairfax County School Board Swearing-In Ceremony, Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Date	Wednesday, December 13, 2023
Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	41m (video)

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

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:21] - Good evening, thank you for being here for this special evening. Please stand for the presentation of the colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of the National Anthem by the Falls Church High School Chorus, Jazz Guards,

[00:00:37] under the direction of Dr. C.J. Redden-Liotta.

[00:03:19] Please be seated.

[00:05:28] Many thanks to the Falls Church High School Chorus and their director, Dr. C.J. Redden-Leoda.

[00:05:52] Also, a huge thank you to Cadet Lieutenant Gabriel Maldonado Mercado, Color Guard Commander, Cadet Commander Kayla Doty, Cadet Master Chief Ashley Arce Santos, and Cadet Senior Chief Stephen Cardona Mea.

[00:06:13] They are under the command of Captain Jim O'Keefe, USCG, retired, for the presentation of the colors. As you walked in this evening, you most likely heard the very talented Falls Church High School School Jazz Guards singing, and the West Potomac High School Orchestra String Quartet, who will also play for the entertainment at this evening's reception.

[00:06:41] We're very proud of our students. Let's give them all a round of applause. Good evening. My name is Elaine Tolan. I'm the chair of the Fairfax County Public School Board.

[00:06:58] On behalf of the current school board, we welcome our school board member elects, family, and community members to our swearing-in ceremony for our 2024-2029 Fairfax County School Board.

[00:07:14] I remember the excitement when I was in your place four years ago. I'd been involved with SCPS in various capacities for almost 20 years and had spent almost 10 of those as an employee. I thought generally I had a sense of what awaited me being a school board member.

[00:07:35] Boy, was I wrong. If you think your campaign was time-consuming, contentious, or full of surprises, you ain't seen nothing yet. Of course, our first term was marked by a global pandemic when everything we all knew, as usual, disappeared.

[00:07:56] You are coming to FCPS while the district is making daily strides to rebuild all that was disrupted. We have a still relatively new superintendent, Dr. Reed, who you'll hear from a little bit later, and a new strategic plan that needs to be implemented.

[00:08:12] We have gotten started and are already making headway, and I'm hopeful that you will continue this forward trajectory. I would just like to take a few minutes to impart a few tidbits I have gained during my time on the board and by being a teacher, a parent of two grown boys, and growing up in the Midwest.

[00:08:32] One, kids are the smartest people you will ever encounter. Do not underestimate them. Also, high school journalists ask the hardest questions, but they can be your best advocates.

[00:08:59] Walking a mile in someone else's shoes goes a long way. Spend time with students, bus drivers, social workers, teachers, curriculum specialists, on and on. You will be shocked how hard they work, and they will tell you like it is, and you need to know that.

[00:09:23] There are usually more than two sides to every story. The hardest conversations are the ones you most need to have. You may need seven votes to move something forward, but you need 12 conversations to understand multiple sides of the issue.

[00:09:47] Every issue is far more complicated than you can even imagine, so listen. Always save room for a cookie, especially if they're from the Davis Career Center, catering program, do yoga, or whatever it is that makes you whole.

[00:10:07] You cannot take care of everyone else if you are exhausted. And the best thing to remember, when you wonder why you are doing this job, just visit a school. In closing, I would like to say that our board did some incredible work while dealing with a worldwide pandemic and moving forward from that.

[00:10:32] Did we get everything done that we hoped for? No. Is everything perfect here in FCPS? No. Is there more work to do? Oh yes. And we are relying on you to take up the reins of this leading school system that others in Virginia and across the country look to for innovation and best practices with our students at the center of everything we do. Godspeed.

[00:11:01] at this time I'd like to recognize some attendees thank you for those of you that are family members of current school board members and those who are family members of the new school board members it really takes the support of a family to do this kind of work to the current members families we thank you for your support over the past years and to the families that are new to this experience we thank you as your support will be critical as our friends here

[00:11:39] serve on the board over the next years there are a number of members here tonight from our leadership team. Could our leadership team members please stand to be recognized? Each member of this leadership team works very closely with the school board and we see ourselves as one team working hard to move our school system forward and to serve each of our 181,659 students.

[00:12:14] The education of Virginia school-aged children is a foundation upon which the economic, social, and intellectual capital of our state is built and sustained. Locally elected school boards play an instrumental role in our communities, for they are charged with the governance of our public school systems.

[00:12:33] Our young people and our public schools are our community's most precious resource, so the stewardship of our great schools is very important. We are thankful for each of you, the public servants, who will be sworn in this evening.

[00:12:48] At this time, I would like to introduce our division superintendent, Dr. Michelle Reed, for remarks and to emcee the ceremony for this evening.

[00:13:10] Thank you, Ms. Tolan, and good evening, everyone. What an amazing evening it is. I'm thrilled to be here tonight as we gather for the swearing-in ceremony of the Fairfax County School Board.

[00:13:25] As you know, the work we are undertaking together, I think, is the most important work happening in the country at this time, and in particular, in the Commonwealth at this time. As Ms. Toland began, the education of Virginia's children is the foundation upon which the economic, social, and intellectual capital of our state and our nation is built and sustained on.

[00:13:49] Locally elected school boards play an instrumental role in our communities, for they are charged with the governance of our public school systems, which is really the stewardship of our future. I can't think of a more important role at this time in our country than the stewardship of our young people and the shaping of our future.

[00:14:10] The decisions we make impact many hundreds of thousands of lives, and here in Fairfax, because so many communities look to Fairfax County, I would argue it's millions of lives across the country and those around the globe where our graduates find spaces to do amazing things each and every day, all of which start in our classrooms here in Fairfax County and led and governed by policies set by our elected board of directors the reach and the arc of this work is mighty fred rogers um and i couldn't find a cardigan to throw on this evening but

[00:14:48] fred rogers says that it's easy to say it's not my child not my community not my world not my problem well here in fcps these are our children these families they are our families this community is our community and our wonderful young people some of whom you saw earlier this evening and some will be playing music later this evening our young people in our public schools again our community's most precious resource so the stewardship of our great schools is critically important today more than ever we're thankful for each of the public servants who will be sworn in

[00:15:27] this evening and it goes without saying we're also thankful for those who've put in so many hours over the last four years as well to shape the direction that we're headed. Just as within our schools, we have board members from different walks of life, each with different voices, experiences, perspectives, and ideas.

[00:15:46] But together, we are united in meeting the needs of each and every one of our students and our school division. As you know, this is an especially exciting time to be in Fairfax County, especially for Fairfax County School Board because of our new and incredibly exciting strategic plan right I mean it's just come on now staff come on now staff all right this work together is going to focus a continued focus on excellence equity and opportunity for each and every student from our very youngest

[00:16:22] learners who need the foundational skills the curiosity just that sheer joy of learning in order to propel them to success throughout their academic careers. We have to remind our students to stay curious just a little longer, and to do that we as community members have to stay curious just a little longer. Our intrepid graduates need that drive and that innovation to navigate, to adapt, and to innovate in a global community with careers that have not yet been defined and don't yet exist what an amazing time to be part of education and part of a

[00:17:00] community that cares so deeply we have amazing students doing incredible things big and small each and every day and that's no accident because here in Fairfax County we have amazing educators school leaders support staff second to none we have community partnerships and volunteers we have a deep care for our young people in our schools our job is to equip these educators with the support, the resources, the tools they need to do their best work, get out of their way, and let them do their best work.

[00:17:34] Our families, our community, our business leaders are invaluable partners. They help us prepare students as ethical members of this global community, and in helping to shape these young lives, they will lead us into the future, which is our division value significantly.

[00:17:52] I think one of the things that we think about when we think of resources, we often think of finances and i'm going to propose tonight that maybe our largest and most valuable resources are the trust and partnerships we have to have to continue to lead this work trust between us and our students our families our staff and our communities that trust is not something we can take for granted it's built over time and unfortunately can be destroyed overnight it's something we have to work at and earn each and every day through our actions it's something that has to happen and be borne out at each and every school board meeting,

[00:18:30] work session, forum, vote, conversation. Our work continues to be in that collective spirit of collaboration, transparency, and innovation. And I hope you're as excited to get this work going as I am.

[00:18:45] I bound out of bed early to be a part of the work that we're doing, and I know our staff does each and every day as well. At this time, I feel like we have a fabulous team. We have our staff, our newly elected leaders, our community members and families that support, and this will continue to cement the place for Fairfax County as that division on a hill for this country.

[00:19:08] So I can't wait to get to work, or continue the work, in helping our young people into bigger, brighter futures. So, I think let the evening events commence, and let's begin with our swearing in ceremony this evening. Thank you very much.

[00:19:30] I'm back. So, I think, I know, I'll just reintroduce myself. Does that work, Karen? Okay. This evening, the newly elected Fairfax County School Board will take the oath of office one member at a time.

[00:19:47] The oath will be administered by Fairfax County Circuit Court Judge, the Honorable Robert J. Smith, who is accompanied this evening by his wife, Dorothy C. Smith, if we could give them a hand,

please. Thank you, Judge Smith.

[00:20:06] At this time, would you please step to the microphone to administer the oath?

[00:20:19] - That microphone. - I don't get to know what to do to offer this. - It's just a suggestion, but in concession. You never know.

[00:20:36] - This microphone? - That microphone. - Oh, we didn't rehearse, you can probably tell. Who's first? - So, we will now begin the swearing in with Dr. Riccardi Anderson, Mason Magisterial District.

[00:20:53] Dr. Anderson.

[00:21:15] - Say your name. - I, Riccardi Anderson, Riccardi J. Anderson. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States.

[00:21:33] - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. - And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - As the Mason Magisterial District Member.

[00:21:50] - As the Mason Magisterial District Member. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability. - So help me God. - So help me God. - Congratulations. - I think you're supposed to sign for it.

[00:22:10] - We go over to sign, yeah. - I think you're supposed to walk to the left side lectern to sign. - Sign over there. - Planned out. You signed first.

[00:22:26] - Congratulations, Dr. Anderson.

[00:22:54] You have the swearing in of Sandy B. Anderson, Springfield Magisterial District.

[00:23:11] - I've done it hundreds of times. Well, thank you. Repeat after me, please. I, state your name. I, Sandy B. Anderson.

[00:23:26] Do solemnly swear. Do solemnly swear. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And that I will faithfully and impartially. That I will faithfully and impartially.

[00:23:41] Discharge all the duties incumbent upon me. Discharge all the duties incumbent upon me. As the Springfield Magisterial District Member. As the Springfield Magisterial District Member. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability.

[00:23:57] - So help me. - So help me. - Congratulations. - Thank you so much. - I'm just running out of ink.

[00:24:21] - Congratulations, Miss Anderson. Now we'll have the swearing in of Seema Dixit, Sully Magisterial District.

[00:24:45] - To mention, back in November when we voted, my wife and I went to the poll, and Miss Dixit came up to me and said I was running for the, she was running for the school board. I thought, "Maybe I'll

see you in December." so here we are to repeat after me I state your name I see magic suit do solemnly swear to solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution that I will support the Constitution of the United States of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Constitution of Commonwealth of Virginia and that I will faithfully and impartially and I'll faithfully and partially discharge all the duties incumbent upon me discharge

[00:25:21] all the duties incumbent upon me as the sully magisterial district member as a - To the Sully Magistrial District Member. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability. - So help me God. - So help me God. - Congratulations.

[00:25:59] - Congratulations, Ms. Dixit. I have the swearing in of Mateo Dunn, Mount Vernon Magisterial District.

[00:26:24] - To me, I, state your name. - I, Mateo Dunn. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[00:26:40] - And that I will faithfully and impartially. - And I will faithfully and impartially. - Discharge all the duties incumbent upon me. - Discharge all the duties incumbent upon me. - As the Mount Vernon Magisterial District Member. - As the Mount Vernon Magisterial District Member. - To the Fairfax County School Board.

[00:26:55] - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability. - So help me God. - So help me God. - Congratulations.

[00:27:28] - Congratulations, Mr. Dunn. Now we'll have the swearing in of Carl Frisch, Providence Magisterial District.

[00:28:19] - Providence Magisterial District member. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability. - Congratulations.

[00:28:44] - World, you know that. - Congratulations, Mr. Frisch.

[00:29:06] Now we'll have the swearing-in of Robin Leidy, Drainsville Magisterial District.

[00:29:23] - State your name. - Leidy. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And I will faithfully and impartially discharge. And I will faithfully and impartially discharge.

[00:29:40] All the duties incumbent upon me. All the duties incumbent upon me. As the Drainsville, as the Drainsville Magisterial District Member. As the Drainsville Magisterial Member. To the Fairfax County School Board. To the Fairfax County School Board. According to the best of my ability. According to the best of my ability.

[00:29:56] So help me God. So help me God. Congratulations. Thank you.

[00:30:22] Congratulations, Miss Lady. Now we'll have the swearing in of Kyle McDaniel at-large member.

[00:31:23] - According to the best of my ability. - According to the best of my ability. - So help me God. - So help me God. - Congratulations.

[00:31:48] - Congratulations, Mr. McDaniel. We'll have the swearing in of Ryan McElveen, at-large member.

[00:32:14] - Say that to me, I state your name. - I, Ryan L. McElveen. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And that I will faithfully and impartially.

[00:32:29] - And that I will faithfully and impartially. Discharge all the duties incumbent upon me. Discharge all of the duties incumbent upon me. As an at-large member to the Fairfax County School Board. As an at-large member to the Fairfax County School Board. According to the best of my ability. According to the best of my ability.

[00:32:44] So help me God. So help me God. Congratulations.

[00:33:07] Congratulations, Mr. McElveen. Now we'll have the swearing in of Melanie Marin, Hunter Mill Magisterial District.

[00:33:28] If you'll repeat after me, please. I, state your name. I, Melanie K. Marin. Do solemnly swear. Do solemnly swear. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[00:33:44] And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. All the duties incumbent upon me. All the duties incumbent upon me. As the Hunter-Mill Magisterial District Member. As the Hunter-Mill Magisterial District Member. To the Fairfax County School Board. To the Fairfax County School Board.

[00:34:00] According to the best of my ability. according to the best of my ability. - Congratulations.

[00:34:31] - Congratulations, Ms. Marin. Now we'll have the swearing in of Ilyang Moon, at-large member.

[00:34:53] - May I please, I state your name. - I, Ilyang Moon. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - I will support the Constitution of the United States. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge.

[00:35:09] - And I will faithfully and impartially discharge. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - As an at-large member to the Fairfax County School Board. - As a at-large member to the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. - According to best of my ability. - So help me God. - So help me God.

[00:35:24] - Okay, congratulations.

[00:35:41] - Congratulations, Mr. Moon.

[00:35:58] Now we'll have the swearing in of Marcia St. John Cunning, Franconia Magisterial District.

[00:36:18] - I state your name. - Marcia C. St. John Cunning. - Do solemnly swear. - Do solemnly swear. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - That I will support the Constitution of the United States. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. - And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[00:36:34] - And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. - And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - All the duties incumbent upon me. - As the Franconi Magisterial District member. - As the Franconi Magisterial member. - To the Fairfax County School Board.

[00:36:51] - To the Fairfax County School Board. - According to the best of my ability. according to the best of my ability. So help me God. So help me God. Congratulations.

[00:37:41] Congratulations, Ms. St. John Cunning. Now we'll have the swearing in of Rachna Sizemoreheiser, Braddock Magisterial District.

[00:38:08] Please, I state your name. I Rachna Sizemoreheiser. Do solemnly swear. Do solemnly swear. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. That I will support the Constitution of the United States. And the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge.

[00:38:25] And that I will faithfully and impartially discharge. All the duties incumbent upon me. All the duties incumbent upon me. As the Braddock Magisterial District Member. As the Braddock Magisterial District Member. To the Fairfax County School Board. To the Fairfax County School Board. According to the best of my ability. According to the best of my ability.

[00:38:41] Congratulations. Thank you.

[00:39:11] Congratulations, Ms. Sizemore Heiser.

[00:39:27] You did it. I think that's it, yes. - Thank you, your honor, appreciate that. So I would like to at this time also recognize our outgoing board members who have attended this evening.

[00:39:43] I'd like to recognize our student board member who is actually also here this evening, Rita Kareem. Rita, would you please stand so we could recognize you? While I know that we're going to be recognizing our outgoing board members, our current members that are here tomorrow evening, we'd like to recognize that they are here with us this evening, Tammy Derenak-Koufax, Karen Corbett-Sanders, Karen Keyes-Gamara,

[00:40:23] and Elaine Tolan. So I wanna offer my congratulations to all of our school board members. We are grateful for your service and your willingness to serve as public servants. We're looking forward to working with each of you in the coming years, and this does conclude this evening's ceremony.

[00:40:45] We thank all of you, each of you, for being here this evening. Showing up matters, and we appreciate that. So thank you very much for being here. We will be taking photos with the board members and their families and request that they stay in the auditorium.

[00:41:00] Everyone else is invited to join us in the cafeteria for a reception and I hear there's food. So thank you again all for coming. We really appreciate you being here this evening.

[00:41:25] Good job, you're so sparkly.



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