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Fairfax County School Board Meeting, Thursday, December 14, 2023

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNXGV5qt7kY
- 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.

[00:05:50] This December 14th, 2023 regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board will now come to order. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence and a performance of the National Anthem by the Glasgow Middle School Band Wind Ensemble, under the direction of Andrew Sharrock and Tammy Freeman.

[00:06:14] My Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:07:00] Thank you, Glasgow Middle School.

[00:08:15] Agenda Item 3.04, Announcements. I would like to take a moment to welcome Mr. Ilrong Moon, school board member elect.

[00:08:35] Sandy Anderson, member elect for the Springfield District, is also with us tonight. If you would like to review a copy of the agenda and any agenda item that is being discussed tonight, that information may be found at the back of the auditorium or on our website at fcps.edu slash school board slash board docs.

[00:08:59] Tonight's meeting is being broadcast on channel 99 and live streamed on the website at fcps.edu/tv/ch99. As a reminder to all school board members, in accordance with our vote on September

28th, all sponsors of proclamations will have two minutes to provide comments, while all other board members will have one minute each.

[00:09:23] We will invite all those here in support of the JROTC wing naming to come up after the proclamation for a picture we will then consider the proclamations for all outgoing school board members agenda item 3.05 JROTC wing at Mount Vernon High School naming I call in Miss Corbett Sanders for a proclamation if you don't mind holding on one second madam chair I'm looking

[00:09:54] for this script I apologize hold on one moment madam clerk do you mind sending me the link to

[00:10:59] the script, please. I just re-sent it. Pardon me? It was just re-sent. Okay, thank you. I appreciate that. And to the members of the audience, I apologize. I should have had this pulled up. Whereas the Marine Corps' Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp, MJROTC, at Mount Vernon High School began its illustrious journey in the fall of 1995, introducing generations of students to discipline, leadership, camaraderie, service, and whereas the

[00:11:52] First torchbearers and stalwarts of this program, Colonel Walter de Haust as the Senior Marine Instructor and First Sergeant Willie Medley as the Marine Instructor have dedicated cumulative decades of their lives to the fostering of these ideals.

[00:12:10] And whereas under their nurturing guidance and unparalleled dedication, the program has flourished enrolling in an average of 140 to 160 committed cadets annually from 1995 to 2015. And whereas Colonel DeHaus has not only been an influential figure in the MCJROTC, but also contributed significantly to Mount Vernon High School sports, serving as an assistant football coach for 15 years and stepping up to coach the girls' JV lacrosse team during its time of need.

[00:12:44] And whereas First Sergeant Medley, with his unwavering spirit, took on the mantle of coaching both boys and girls cross country, proving that commitment knows no bounds, and whereas the MCJROTC has consistently showcased its caliber, from hosting and competing in numerous drill meets across the region to fostering a competitive marksmanship team,

[00:13:07] And whereas the cadets have been provided invaluable experiences from a week-long orientation trips that have shaped careers to unique opportunities like helicopter rides facilitated by the HMVX1 and whereas the ethos of the community service was deeply ingrained in every cadet, be it through food drives, support for the George Washington Mount Vernon estate, or honoring the memory of our nation's fallen, at Arlington National Cemetery alongside luminaries like General Colin Powell and General Norman Schwarzkopf.

[00:13:43] And whereas this commitment to community and tradition shone brightly as the unit's color guard presented colors at every Mount Vernon High School home football game and supported various local ceremonies, reinforcing the importance of community engagement and patriotic duty.

[00:14:00] And, whereas the MCJROTC was recognized multiple times as a naval honor school shining as one of the top units in the region, a testament to the hard work of the instructors and the cadets, now therefore be it resolved in recognition of their unparalleled commitment, unwavering dedication, and the legacy they have imprinted upon Mount Vernon High School and its community, it is proclaimed that the JROTC Wing at Mount Vernon High School be named the Colonel Walter

[00:14:33] DeHoust and First Sergeant Willie Medley JROTC Wing. Let this serve as a lasting tribute to their tireless dedication and the lasting impact they have made on countless young lives. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Ms. Darnett-Koufax. Ms. Corbett-Sanders, would you like to speak to proclamation yes thank you madam chair six of the eight branches of the uniform services maintain a junior reserve officers training corps organized into various units there are a total of 3 275

[00:15:08] units across the united states eight high schools in fairfax county offer these programs under the career and technical education umbrella they prepare our students with leadership time management discipline, teamwork, collaboration and character development skills, as well as being physically fit students.

[00:15:29] Students graduating from these programs are looked at favorably on their college admissions and scholarship opportunities. They enter the military at a higher enlisted rank. For example, a student competing four years as an enlisted will enter as an E3 and with With two years as an E-2, without any JROTC experiences, our enlistees enter as an E-1.

[00:15:55] Established in 1995, Mount Vernon High School's program has a long history of service to the community. The program at Mount Vernon is especially important in light of the proximity of the school to both Fort Belvoir and the Marine Base, Quantico. We know that participation in these programs is often a motivating factor in our students pursuing careers in the services. Established with the leadership of Colonel DeHaus and Sergeant Medley, thousands of students benefited from their leadership in the classroom, in the community, and on the sports fields. Personally, the presence of our Mount Vernon color guard at the Mount

[00:16:32] Vernon estate and before our annual town hall has always made me stand a bit taller with pride. It is my great honor to present this proclamation tonight, and thank you, Colonel DeHaus and Sergeant Medley for your years of service to our country and to our community. Thank you. Mr. Koufax, would you like to speak to your second? Yes, just briefly, ma'am. Thank you, Ms. Corbett Sanders,

[00:17:06] for bringing this forward. I am honored to second this and to recognize Colonel de Haust and First Sergeant Melody, who have, as you said, made lasting impacts on so many of our students at Mount Vernon High School. Thank you both for your service to our young people and to our country.

[00:17:26] Seeing no other board members that would like to speak I will call for the vote all those in favor. Ms. Sriracha Sizemirheiser, Ms. Cowan, Ms. Omeish, Ms. Marin, Ms. Giesgemarra, Mr. Frisch, Ms. Tolan, Ms. Bukarski, Ms. Jonah Koufax, Ms. McLaughlin, Dr. Anderson, and Karen Corbett-Sanders. That vote is unanimous. Thank you.

[00:17:58] At this point I would like to invite my fellow school board members and those here in support of the JROTC wing at Mount Vernon High School Naming to please gather

[00:18:09] in front of the dais for a photo. Agenda item 3.06 to 3.13. Outgoing school board members

[00:21:41] proclamations. I ask for unanimous consent that we suspend the rules such that one for tonight's proclamations recognizing outgoing school board members we limit debate for each proclamation so that the mover is allowed to speak for two minutes the seconder is allowed to speak for two minutes the outgoing school board member being recognized is allowed to speak for three minutes and no further speeches shall be given with respect to the proclamation all proclamations recognizing outgoing school board members will be voted on together as one

[00:22:19] after they have been moved seconded and spoken to and three that we will not hold board matters later this evening. Seeing no dissent, we will move on. After reading the proclamations for all outgoing school board members, the board would like to invite those in support of the proclamation to join us for a photo. Proclamation honoring Ms. Laura Jane Cohen. I call on Mr. Frisch for

[00:22:54] our proclamation. Thank you. Whereas Laura Jane Cohen was elected as the Springfield District Representative to the Fairfax County School Board and served with distinction and honor as a member of the board for four years since January 2020 and whereas she skillfully served on numerous school board standing committees including comprehensive planning development governance public engagement and audit and ably served as chair of the comprehensive planning development governance and audit committees in addition to serving as the board state and federal legislative liaisons and liaison to the facilities planning advisory committee advisory committee for students with disabilities school health advisory committee Fairfax County Planning Commission and educate

[00:23:33] Fairfax and whereas Ms. Cohen tirelessly advocated for inclusive safe and welcoming spaces for marginalized students and staff in particular those from the LGBTQIA plus community and those of all faiths and abilities and equitable access to education for all students and actively participated in the development of and support of the Fairfax County Public Schools 2023 2030 strategic plan focusing on excellence equity and opportunity in education for all students and whereas she sought to prioritize staff and student safety recognizing that firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States and an increasing threat to those

[00:24:12] in our schools and worked passionately to increase secure gun storage awareness in Fairfax County Public Schools community including the development of a new policy for gun-free schools buildings and property zones and continued her prioritization of safety during the COVID-19 pandemic despite threats and whereas ms cohen prioritized the needs of students and families through responsive communication and action to address their concerns including efforts to relieve the overcrowding at centerville and chantilly high schools through the future western high school support the teaching of our true american history and support our safe routes to schools in addition to those of staff actively working to address staff support higher wages collective

[00:24:51] bargaining retention recruitment and staffing shortages and proudly recognizing the outstanding achievements of students and staff. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Laura Jane Cohen for her outstanding service and dedication to the Fairfax County School Board, our students, staff, families, and community members. Is there a second? Second. Mr. Frisch, would you like to speak to your proclamation? Yes. Laura Jane Cohen is a force of nature, and I have been incredibly fortunate to

[00:25:27] her not only a colleague these past four years, but also a dear friend. In fact, until I became chair, one of the only things I asked our new board chairs each year was to make sure that Laura Jane and I sat next to each other up here at the dais. We first met at a Democratic committee meeting in 2018, and I will admit my first impression of her was that she was demure, even quiet. Boy, was I wrong. She is my favorite kind of person, as smart as she is funny. And as far as personalities go that is that combination is a unicorn. We have worked quite closely together

[00:26:05] and it has been a joy to see her in action. She has been incredibly effective at moving critical policies forward on this board from gun violence prevention to equity and inclusivity for our LGBTQIA

plus students and staff. We've lobbied legislators together in Richmond on behalf of our school system and it will not surprise you to learn that she has never failed to speak her mind, correct misinformation, and insist that our friends in the General Assembly do right by public schools throughout the Commonwealth.

[00:26:35] I have complete confidence that she will be a tenacious champion and advocate for our schools when she joins the House of Delegates on January 1st. Our loss will be our gain. - Ms. Bukarski, would you like to speak to your second?

[00:26:52] - Of course, I am so happy to bring this resolution honoring my colleague and friend, Laura Jane Cohen. The resolution spoke of her accomplishments on the board, but I wanna take this time to talk about Laura Jane LJ as we know her, the person.

[00:27:11] We had the opportunity to get to know each other five years ago as we campaigned, and I quickly realized that this was someone who would become a partner in this work. During this 2019 school board campaign, I learned about Laura Jane's drive, passion, and relentless work ethic.

[00:27:31] These qualities were evident as we worked alongside each other on the board as well. Laura Jane has a huge heart and she wears it on her sleeve. She feels big and she isn't afraid to show that to others. And there have oftentimes been tears, lots and lots of tears.

[00:27:51] She has a strong sense of fairness and love for others, particularly of our young people. She is the first to think about those students who don't always have a voice and whose needs are so great. She didn't just advocate for them, however, she volunteered, she worked with them during her time on the board as well.

[00:28:08] Her love for children and dedication to them is unwavering. Laura Jane, what others saw here and on camera was a snippet of the person you are. They don't know about the sleepless nights, long, long nights you and I spent on the phone discussing the difficult decisions we had to make, picking them apart because the stakes were so very high.

[00:28:28] the self-reflection, the empathy, the desire to do right by our kids and staff that you agonized over. Your great humor and super fun personality that always helped entertain us during some of these very, very long meetings. Somebody should do something about that.

[00:28:45] Laura Jane, you were attacked in the most ugly and personal ways while on this board, but you always took the high road. You were dragged through a public emotional campaign to overturn your democratic election and punish you because of your desire to keep kids and staff safe.

[00:29:01] It was perhaps in this situation where some of your greatest qualities became evident. You are strong and that may have been a bit of a surprise, I think even to you, but not to the rest of us. You harnessed the strength and decided to run for the General Assembly because in your heart you are motivated by that desire to help people, all people, but especially to help those and fight for those who need it the most.

[00:29:28] It is this passion and strong moral conviction that allowed you to accomplish so much here, and I cannot wait to see what you will do in the years ahead. Best of all, I am excited that you and I will leave this board much in the same way we came to it, friends, colleagues, and sharing that deep passion to help make the places we passed through just a little bit better than they were before us.

[00:29:51] Thank you for everything you've done, for the support you've given me, and in the words of great Dr. Seuss, remember one of the lessons learned here. Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. And always remember, LJ, the greater the storm, the bigger your rainbow shines.

[00:30:17] - Ms. Cowan, would you like to speak to this proclamation? I guess it is appropriate that, sorry. No, I'm leaving just like I started, right?

[00:30:37] Thank you. This is a little bit like getting to be at your own funeral. It's really nice because I assume then I won't be able to hear all the nice things that you all say about me. So I would like to start, of course, by thanking my family and friends who snuck in here and surprised me.

[00:31:06] Seth, Finn, and Lucas, and my mom, who gave so much more than they bargained for when we started out on this journey. I'd also like to thank the world's most amazing sidekick, Stephanie Sheridan, who not only keeps the trains running on time, she makes sure every single email gets answered, and she even makes sure I show up to meetings wearing the right color, and is dogged in her fight to make sure our students and staff are heard, seen and treated fairly.

[00:31:41] Stephanie, you have become family to me and I'm praying you'll still take my phone calls when I'm in Richmond. I also want to thank the superintendent, all of our staff, everybody up on the dais up there, and especially region 4 and 5 teams, all the incredible principals who so wonderfully serve our Springfield kids, all of the groups who have been so supportive over the years, FCPS Pride, FEA, FCFT, and the

[00:32:18] JCRC. And lastly, I'd like to thank my colleagues. Since we took the oath of office four years ago, two of us have lost our dads, one of us lost our brother. We had one kid start kindergarten, Three kids graduate from high school and one brother.

[00:32:38] We navigated a global pandemic, hired a superintendent, protected trans kids, shepherded collective bargaining, adopted a new strategic plan, got rid of some pretty lousy school names, and ensured our staff got well-deserved and much-needed raises all four years of our term.

[00:33:02] In return, we were called groomers, pedophiles, got death threats, had rallies against us, two of us even got to navigate Virginia's recall statute intimately.

[00:33:19] But I'm proud that not only did we survive, we thrived. It hasn't always been pretty. It certainly hasn't been easy, but I firmly believe that we left FCPS better than we found it.

[00:33:35] And I leave the Springfield District in the more than capable hands of the amazing Sandy Anderson. Four years ago, when I took the oath of office, I placed my hand on a copy of Shel Silverstein's book, Where the Sidewalk Ends, that was given to me by my parents on my third birthday.

[00:34:03] And I did that because when I was a teacher, I read the poem, listened to the Mus'n'ts, to my students at the beginning of every year. And when I was standing right over there, repeating the words, I wanted a physical reminder of the kids that I was taking the oath to serve.

[00:34:26] And as I leave and head to the General Assembly, sorry, there's no whirl in which you're shutting me up. As I leave and head to the General Assembly, I'd like to leave our amazing FCPS students with the same words. Listen to the mustn's, child.

[00:34:43] Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, and then listen close to me. Anything can happen child, anything can be.

[00:34:59] Thank you so much to all of you who have made this such an amazing journey. Amanda, Toby, everybody, I will carry you in my heart. And I am so thankful to everybody who's staying on and working to serve this incredible school system.

[00:35:17] And my still one kid left in FCPS, so you guys better do a really good job. So thank you so much, thank you to everybody.

[00:35:34] - Ms. Cohen, we'd like to present to you these gifts and appreciation for your four years of service.

[00:36:02] - I call on Dr. Anderson for a proclamation. - Whereas as third generation Fairfax and second generation FCPS, Abra Omeish was elected by a diverse student-led movement as the youngest woman and first Arab and hijab wearing Muslim woman elected in Virginia history, as well as the first Libyan elected in US history and the youngest in Fairfax.

[00:36:35] And whereas, Omesh served on audit, public engagement, governance, comprehensive planning development, board committees, and served as a liaison to human resources, minority student achievement, Title I, student health advisory committees.

[00:36:53] She also fought as FCPS's liaison to federal legislators and the joint board's capital improvement program committee, planning commission city school board educate fairfax affordable housing advisory council and whereas misome championed equity and demanded higher excellence standards and academics challenged the status quo called for more compassionate and rigorous policy making and modeled the practice of courageous conversations in pursuit of authentic belonging

[00:37:29] She reimagined how stakeholders are seen by uplifting marginalized voices, speaking truth when inconvenient, and employing targeted universalism in many efforts, including when she secured school-based inclusive and sensory spaces, demanded expanded access to advanced academics, instigated efforts to increase student data categories, led the board's effort to to recognize religious and cultural observances; raised visibility for local heritage groups

[00:38:04] and native tribes; facilitated through compromised and expedited timeline to end restraint and seclusion; restored EL summer school and adopted middle school minimum and opt-out screening and TJ admissions; laid groundwork towards vegetarian, halal, and kosher school meals; health screening requirements for marginalized individuals, refined FCPS' truth policy rollout, secured senior leadership support of MSAOC, strengthened student rights in the discipline

[00:38:38] proceedings, spotlighted severe shortages in language and assistive device interpretation, and initiated name changes for Confederate symbols. And whereas Ms. Soumesh represented FCPS locally and nationally. She is a tireless responsive fighter for her constituents, centering students and understanding family needs like when she engaged thousands in twice weekly live sessions during COVID, providing the most up-to-date school and health information in multiple languages when answers were lacking. Ms. Somesh worked closely with student representatives from her

[00:39:17] first day, passing a forum on student voice. She amplified student advocacy when securing a historical tool for student reporting of staff-based identity discrimination, as well as successfully

delivering on free telemental health resources for every high schooler. She championed living wages and rights for our most vulnerable, demanding transportation and custodial staff to be heard during collective bargaining, calling attention to family liaison pay, and atomizing unproductive staffing ratios of counselors, social workers, psychologists, other support

[00:39:56] personnel, and whereas Ms. O'Mesh led as a resource steward anticipating needs during COVID to initiate an iterative ESSER funds oversight and audit process, successfully driving the county to expand public school funding without lowering its bond rating, encouraging environmental initiatives like recycling and solar panels, demanding transparency for internal audits, and insisting that the board develop both a needs-based assessment process and ROI review as essential components of the annual budget cycle. Now therefore, let it be

[00:40:34] resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Abra Omeish for her outstanding service and dedication to our county's students, staff, and community. Is there a second? I was second. Dr. Anderson, would you like to speak to your proclamation? Yes, I would. I've had the pleasure of working with Ms. Omeish for the past

[00:41:08] four years on this board, and I am pleased to present her proclamation this evening. As you heard in the proclamation, Miss Omeish is representative of many firsts. She's the first Arab and hijab-wearing Muslim woman elected to office in Virginia history. It is both an accomplishment and a pain point, as Arab and Muslim individuals make up 12 to 15 percent of the population of Northern Virginia. I think we are all in agreement that representation matters,

[00:41:43] Because many of us are painfully aware that when one does not have a seat at the table, one is generally on the menu. In 2019, a 24-year-old Abra Omesh asserted herself, gained support of Fairfax County voters, and sat at the table.

[00:42:03] She demonstrated to us, particularly to the youth in our community, that their inspirations for belonging, for being seen and being heard on a large scale, was not only possible, but attainable.

[00:42:21] Ms. Omej has been particularly impactful to the students and families in my community in the Mason District, which is home to the largest populations of Arab residents in Fairfax County. Her presence planted the seed in the minds of many young and Muslim and hijab-wearing girls that they, too, can sit here and be part of the body that makes decisions that impact over 180,000 students and their families.

[00:42:49] They see in her the opportunity to be leaders in our system. And school board member Omej blazed that trail. While Ms. Omej has served as the source of pride and hope for her community and for our young people, she regularly raises her voice to champion for the underserved and marginalized individuals and groups in our community.

[00:43:12] Ms. Omej has always impressed me as a passionate advocate, determined to elevate the voices of those who are typically not heard in our systems. Her strong and steadfast recognition of those who are not necessarily past the microphone extends beyond this dais. It shows up in her regular interactions. You all may not know this, but she knows the name of every individual who keeps the trains running here, our custodians, our security detail. I have watched her call them by name each and every meeting for the past four years. As one of the youngest members of the school board,

[00:43:51] Ms. Omish has shown time and time again determination, grit, tenacity. She has been tireless in her efforts and has been successful in championing many initiatives such as the mental health support

for students, communication access for families, especially those for whom English is not their first language. In her four years on this board, Ms. Somesh has shown an unwavering commitment to equity. Most importantly, she commits to those equitable practices and values

[00:44:24] even when they are unpopular. She has never shown that she is afraid to stand alone. I hope to continue to honor her service by picking up the mantle and pushing our system to be clear and transparent in our decision-making and utilizing processes that communicates what we prioritize and how we elevate the issues to affirm inclusivity of all communities and stakeholders.

[00:44:53] Abra, I wish you the very best in the next step of your journey. Thank you for your service. Ms. Tolan, would you like to speak to your second?

[00:45:09] Yes, I would. That was a hard act to follow, though, with Dr. Anderson. Ms. Amesh, we first met when you were a high school student advocate at Woodson High School. Even then, you were trying to improve the environment of your school for the betterment of students and staff.

[00:45:26] I remember also one of our very first meetings of our school board when we were asked as a team-building exercise to talk about something that made us insecure working on this team. you mentioned that you were a bit nervous being the youngest on the board and then you seemed a bit surprised when I said well I was a bit nervous about being the oldest person on the board. I think together we realized that there were always many perspectives some of them unexpected and that we have to acknowledge and listen to all of them. You fought for additional positions in our schools to

[00:46:03] support our families and our students that do not speak English or that may be new to the traditional American school system. You made me really value our parent liaisons and their job and showed me led me to work more closely with them on programming and outreach to our community and that has enriched my time on the board. I have always valued your respect and appreciation for students and the incredible work that they can do to improve their communities. We have shared the continued advocacy for listening to student voices and for encouraging students to work with

[00:46:39] their administration to make our school district a friendlier and more inclusive space we advocated together for more counselors more social workers and psychologists to support our students and staff as we dealt with the blow of a global pandemic your steadfast plea to provide mental health services to our students in a way that was easily accessible to them led to the tele-mental health services we now have available to all of our high school students and i'm sure many lives are better with this service available i so appreciate the work you and laura jane cohen did on the joint cip

[00:47:16] task force you had real results bringing additional dollars to us for facility maintenance and construction and this is so badly needed in many of my drainsville schools best of luck to you in your new endeavor as an attorney and a board member with the girl scouts of america i know you have many adventures ahead and will continue to challenge the status quo miss amesh would you would you like to speak to the proclamation?

[00:47:53] - Good evening, everybody. I'm humbled by my colleagues. Thank you for your remarks. Let me start in the tradition of my faith to ask for forgiveness for any shortcomings I have made towards any of you. During or before my term, I am but human and seek to be better.

[00:48:08] And to show thanks and gratitude to all those who have been a part of this journey and work. Superintendent, senior leadership, central office staff, assistants, my personal staff aide, Amara Ahmed,

teachers, custodians, principals, students, parents, bus drivers, food and nutrition workers, and all those through whom I've been made better.

[00:48:26] Friends, family, and most importantly, to our creator. Any successes we celebrate tonight are only by God, and we are honored that God privileged us to be agents in any part of this. And I'll shout out my husband whose birthday it is, but he's choosing to celebrate it with me today.

[00:48:44] My first time stepping into one of these meetings was to give a speech to the school board about opportunity gaps and the need for free tutoring for kids. More than a decade later, I came back to this room to take my oath on the Qur'an for the first time in our county's history. In some ways, it's fair to say I'm among FCPS's wildest dreams.

[00:49:02] A kid who sat in its classrooms, partook in its clubs, made friends in its halls, and when seeing its challenges, took them as opportunities to build better. That passion for fairness led me to run and serve in student government and advisory committees. I grew up among peers from every walk of life, and I imbibed FCPS's values of fairness, meritocracy, hard work.

[00:49:23] I believed that if we did our part, nothing would stop us from our dreams. And aided by many blessings, I went on to one of our nation's most competitive universities, only to choose coming back to serve the system that I love. A school system that I hope to raise my kids in one day.

[00:49:38] A system I still and will always love. But as relationships go, they come with their heartache and can be complicated. No longer a child, I wasn't prepared to find that in some ways, the adults I looked up to when I was in school weren't necessarily prepared to show me all the love back.

[00:49:55] Be it ageism, anti-Arab bigotry, an industry of millions fueling anti-Muslim hatred that continues to plague our system today as it plagued me, or just plain old unfairness. My heart still holds some of those aches, and the hearts of many in our system do too.

[00:50:11] And so I will continue to dream, like FCPS taught me, and I'll continue to look to the future. I wish for FCPS that we will graduate from where we are today to find a place of peace and togetherness that is real, that is led by a board whose members don't walk away from the dais or out of this room when colleagues are speaking because they disagree or see the world differently, but instead model for the community how to have difficult but honest, sophisticated, good-faith conversations that prove there is enough space here for all of us. We cannot build a fake peace and togetherness by silencing the voices that we disagree with on this board. We must have authentic and meaningful conversations that respect

[00:50:48] and tolerate difference. It's not divisive that we speak our truths so that we may honor our diversity and confront our wounds, but it is honest and necessary to build a better future. It says I respect you enough to know that we can sit together in the contradictions of our worldviews and that we can find solutions in pragmatic ways that may never be everything for anyone but that are most things for everyone. It is an honesty that says I believe against the odds that we can and so I take the uncomfortable risk so that we will because it is through that our love of FCPS that we must wade through the difficulty of disagreement

[00:51:26] and rise above our egos or whatever it might be to face the challenge. Let us lift up the voice, the voices of those who have been silenced through fair and inclusive processes, for real. Let us crave a curiosity that says, I am made better by the challenges your ideas pose to me.

[00:51:44] That is, after all, the journey of education. Across all identities, we'll not eliminate our differences, but we can be enriched by them. Let us start by being honest, authentic, and bold. fairfax county public schools it has been my honor while i cannot say that all my efforts were wise or all my judgments correct i can say that empowered by the lord and all that all that the dreams i have had for this community have inspired i have been sincere and i have done my

[00:52:15] best may god bless you fcps for many many more years to come mr mish we present you these gifts and appreciation for your four years of service on the board now we have a proclamation honoring

[00:52:54] Miss Stella Pekarski. I call a Miss Laura Jane Cowan for a proclamation. Whereas Stella Pekarski was elected as the Sully District Representative to the Fairfax County School Board and served with integrity and distinction as a member of the board for four years since January 2020, and whereas Miss Pekarski quickly embraced her pivotal role on the school board in 2020, assuming the responsibilities of the board's vice chair in her inaugural year and skillfully serving as chair of board in 21 2021 through 2022 definitely navigating fairfax county public schools through the myriad

[00:53:33] challenges presented by a global pandemic while orchestrating a successful nationwide search for a new superintendent for the school division and she played instrumental roles as the vice chair of the budget committee as a member of the public engagement committee audit comprehensive planning development and governance committees and as board liaison to skipped fairfax county's successful children and youth policy team advanced academic programs advisory committee and committee community criminal justice commission collaborating with colleagues and staff to effectively advance the missions of these committees and whereas miss pokarski brought

[00:54:10] to the board her strong worth work ethic her training as a dedicated english for speakers of other languages teacher her willingness to listen to dissenting voices and analyze analyze issues through the lens of coalition building her passion for initiating policies that create opportunity and access for all our students to be successful and invaluable perspectives and experiences as a daughter of greek immigrants former esol student passionate education advocate and a devoted mother and whereas miss pokarski recognized the pivotal role of an exceptional

[00:54:46] public education for all ardently championed and advanced inclusive comprehensive curriculum With a special emphasis on ESOL services and world language offerings and her strong advocacy spanned diverse initiatives, including eliminating opportunity gaps in reading, establishing middle school recess, shaping a healthier food and nutrition policy, advocating for later middle school start times, promoting educational equity, fostering enhanced outdoor experiential learning opportunities through Get to Green, ensuring equitable access to and participation in STEM and computer science.

[00:55:22] education and establishing an artificial intelligence slash emerging technology strategy for the division and whereas Miss Bukarski remained resolute in advancing transparency and fiscal responsibility fostering enduring collaboration between the Board of Supervisors and the school board and whereas Miss Bukarski served her community with dedication and distinction hosting town hall meetings open office hours and engaging with students, parents, parent-teacher associations, school leadership, and staff throughout the school year to ensure that every voice resonated, every school

[00:55:58] received unwavering support, and every single student received the individualized support and attention they needed in a caring culture. Now therefore be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends not only its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Stella Pekarski for her

outstanding service and dedication to the Fairfax County School Board and to our students and community members, but also heartfelt congratulations and best wishes on her well-deserved new position as the senator-elect for Virginia District 36.

[00:56:30] Is there a second? I will second. Ms. Cohen, would you like to speak to your proclamation? Yes, thank you. I was a little overwhelmed with the responsibility of trying to sum up Stella Pekarski in two minutes.

[00:56:47] From the first time I met her, I knew that we were going to make good trouble together. As a former ESOL teacher and English language learner herself, a PTA president, fierce community advocate, and proud mom of six FCPS kiddos, Stella walked into this role knowing where FCPS was letting our kids down. From day one, she championed behind the scenes and on the front lines of every big thing we have done. She has been a peace negotiator, a consensus builder, a herder of cats,

[00:57:24] And she somehow, through all of that and a global pandemic, always managed to stay calm. Stella can always see five steps ahead of whatever is about to happen. She understands not only the fiscal implications, the political implications, and what these things would really mean for our actual students by each individual kiddo.

[00:57:52] She always could somehow find some way to bring this board together, which I imagine her chairs before and since would probably tell all of you that it's an awfully hard thing to do. I am incredibly grateful that she's been on this school board.

[00:58:14] She is nothing short of a genius. She is an incredibly accomplished musician, an advocate with more wins than I can count, yet she comes across as the most humble public servant that I have ever known. I'm so grateful that she's going to be fighting for all of our kids in Richmond and every family in the Commonwealth will be better for it It's been my honor to serve with her and I feel so lucky to get to start the next part of our journey together

[00:58:45] Ms. Tyserheiser, would you like to speak to your second? Yes, I would and Not only did I have the distinct honor and incredible honor of serving with Stella on this board I had even greater honor of serving as vice chair when Stella was chair and as Laura Jane said anyone who knows Stella knows her awesomeness cannot be summed up in two minutes or even two hours and They also know that Stella hates people talking about her So I'm sorry, but here I go

[00:59:24] It has been such an honor to serve with my dear friend the number of late-night hours-long Conversations trying to figure out everything and when you say Stella can stay calm it's because we had all those late-night hour conversation where There was a lot of whirling dervishes between the two of us going on But somehow when she comes into this space or into the spaces with her colleagues or with staff She just exudes this calm humor where everything is funny But in a way that disarms people around her and brings people together

[01:00:01] It is one of the most amazing things I've seen because she's so smart and she's so thoughtful and yet she's so non-threatening to people that she brings people together even when they're the furthest apart and having gone through superintendent search with Stella I can say I've seen that firsthand when she became vice chair in the as with an outgoing superintendent bringing students into the school system dealing with the angst what that was coming out of kovid you never saw her lose her cool when

[01:00:38] we got together as chair and vice chair it was my honor to learn from her about how to navigate personalities how to build consensus and really watching her practical problem-solving approach to everything she did when Stella speaks people listen they listen because she's wise they listen because she has a way of delivering tough words with gentleness and wisdom that you can't not listen to her even when you really don't want to and she has this really great way of of synthesizing and empathizing,

[01:01:18] of being intelligent and having a big heart all in the same sentence, and that is a unicorn. She's been flexible, she's been results-oriented, she served her district well. And I used to joke with her that we made a mistake as to when we were chair and vice chair, because the year my son graduated, she was chair, and so her signature is on his diploma, and the year her daughter graduated, I was chair, so my signature is on her daughter's diploma.

[01:01:44] But I will say that was probably the best mistake ever, because it is, people who know me know I love my kids, and I would want no one else's signature on my son's diploma than Stella's. I will miss serving with you next year, and I don't cry, sorry, Laura Jane.

[01:02:02] I will miss bouncing things off you. I will miss hearing your wisdom. I will miss going, ah, Stella, help me! And you're saying, just be quiet, stop talking. But most of all, I'll miss the incredible great work you've done for our school board and our school system, and I'm not sure what I'm gonna do without you next year.

[01:02:24] Thank you for everything you've done, and we are such a better place because you were here. - Ms. Pekarski, would you like to speak to this pack of nations? - Well, that's amazing, thank you.

[01:02:42] I don't know that I have any other words to say to express my gratitude for your comments. I know, I know. I'm finding some words though. Wait, I've got some more. I actually just wanna spend some time Really recognizing those people that have helped me be successful the last four years.

[01:03:04] And first of all, of course, my family, my husband and my kids who never held it against me when I missed events and when I worked late and I worked a lot and I worked all the time, as my kids said, and my service here really was their service.

[01:03:21] And to the incredible staff aide that I have, Shaheen, You are the absolute best. I appreciate you taking the time to write this proclamation and to honor me, even though you knew I didn't want to do it.

[01:03:36] But you are empathetic and smart and so hardworking. You served our constituents incredibly well, relentless in helping them solve their issues. To our board clerks and staff, our Auditor General and staff, you are the magic behind the curtain.

[01:03:55] To our incredible student representatives, your voice is powerful. Continue to use it for good. My service and work here on this board is also because of yours. To FCPS staff, to our wonderful LT members, my three regional superintendents, the principals, teachers, staff, security, the custodians here, to everyone who makes this the best, best place to be.

[01:04:23] We are a great system because of you. You work hard, you are underpaid, and you're undervalued. And you were challenged these last four years in ways we have never experienced before in public education. But your commitment to our kids did not waver. I thank you for that.

[01:04:38] And my service here is also because of yours. And to my fellow board members, we have been through significant challenges, agreements, and many, many disagreements. We shared the same goals,

but did not always want to take the same path forward.

[01:04:55] You all challenged me in ways that have made me a better listener, collaborator, and hopefully problem solver and leader. I think this board, the COVID board, as we were dubbed, has been unique in more ways than one. We navigated that worldwide pandemic when most people put their hands up and said, "Good luck, glad it's not us."

[01:05:14] We worked through some difficult conversations on race and diversity through book bans, culture wars, and the political weaponization of public education. We were demeaned, ridiculed, threatened, and our family members were harassed. The answers are always easy when you're not the one making them.

[01:05:33] And it's always, always easier to tear things down than it is to build them up. But despite this, we focused on the right things, our kids, all of them. Those who come easily along with us and those who require so much to make it to the finish line.

[01:05:49] Those who feel seen and those who have often felt forgotten. We focused on closing achievement and opportunity gaps to all programs and schools, on academically and emotionally supporting kids during and after the pandemic, and ensuring our teachers and staff are compensated more fairly for their work.

[01:06:08] Having packed in so much work during these last four years, it only makes sense that so many of us are moving on to new endeavors. And I cannot wait to see where everyone lands and the good work you will do there. And my service here has most definitely been because of you and yours.

[01:06:26] To my constituents in the Sully District, you humbled me with the trust you placed in me to make decisions for your most precious parts of your life, your children. It will now be an honor to represent you in the Virginia State Senate.

[01:06:43] I will continue to fight for our kids in the community that has given me and my family so much. and Dr. Reed, as chair during your entry into FCPS, I had the opportunity to get to know you early on. You bring the greatest qualities one could ask for in a leader. You're principled, you have a strong sense of integrity, you're visionary, hardworking, and empathetic.

[01:07:03] You have the ability to bring out the very best of people in this system, and consequently, and most importantly, the very best of our children. You are the right leader at this right time, and I hope the new board works in partnership with you, and your very capable LT team to take this division to the next level because our kids are worth it.

[01:07:24] Hiring you was one of the best decisions I made on this board. As a public school system, we are blessed to have our children during their most formative years. And while academic achievement is the reason we exist, it is not the math worksheet our kids will remember when they leave here.

[01:07:41] It's the experiences, their teachers, their friends, and how we all made them feel. While some in our community have criticized this board for our emphasis on supporting our kids for the unique, diverse people they are, there is nothing more important.

[01:07:57] Our kids want to be seen, appreciated, and valued. And for some, school is the only place where that will happen. And as I say goodbye, know that I'll continue to do everything I possibly can to

make sure every child in this county can succeed and enjoy the promise of the best, highest quality public education possible.

[01:08:20] Thank you. - Ms. Pekarski, we'd like to present to you these gifts and appreciation for your four years of service.

[01:08:51] - Agenda item 3.09, proclamation honoring Ms. Elaine Tolan. I call on Ms. Cohen for a proclamation. - You guys gave the most tongue-tied human being tonight, a lot of work. Whereas Elaine Tolan was elected as the Janesville District Representative to the Fairfax County School Board and has served with distinction as a member of the board for four years since january 2020 and whereas ms toland's dedication to her drainsville schools and community led her to learn how her schools upheld the promise to meet all students unique needs through school visits and shadowing

[01:09:27] students and staff to improve her understanding of their individual experiences she met with principals, staff, community groups, students, and PTAs, PTSAs, PTOs to create connections and collaborations between each other and our schools to forge strong scaffolds of family supports during the pandemic and after FCPS returned to school. She worked to include community members in FCPS decisions and whereas during her tenure she served as the chair of the board, she also served as chair and vice chair of budget, served as an integral member of audit, FPAC,

[01:10:04] public engagement, and comprehensive planning and development committees, and was a liaison to the Fairfax County Park Authority and successful children and youth policy team, where she again promoted collaborative efforts with FCPS. She consistently used her business background to assist the district in taking strategic views in planning and facilities management.

[01:10:25] Along with Mr. Frisch, she was an FCPS member of the Joint Environmental Task Force, JET. And, whereas on JET, she advocated for alignment of institutional policies and practices to set aggressive goals across waste, transportation, workforce, and energy practices.

[01:10:43] Energy group goals passed by both Fairfax County and FCPS to proactively address environmental sustainability and climate change to benefit the greater Fairfax County community. and whereas Ms. Tolan brought to the board as a career educator her expertise with over 30 years in science education, environmental education, and environmental management. Her time as a science and outdoor education resource teacher and the program manager of the Get to Green program helped guide her advocacy for strong outdoor learning advances, environmental education, and

[01:11:18] expanded Get to Green impacts for all schools. As a longtime STEM educator, she promoted STEM resources for all students as a way to engage students learning English, students in special education and others. She was a consistent advocate for advanced academic programming for every student. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Elaine Tolan for her outstanding service and dedication to the Fairfax County School Board and to our students and community members. Is there a second? Second. Ms. Cohen, we

[01:11:57] like to speak to your proclamation? Well, how lucky am I to get to present the farewell resolution for Elaine. From the minute Elaine joined this board, she brought her passion for teaching, her passion for all things science and the environment, and her own love of learning. At her core, Elaine is the consummate student. She started this term by visiting every school, meeting with every community, even

putting on her backpack and going back to school, navigating the halls of our high schools to see what our students' days are really like.

[01:12:34] No one knows their constituents better than Elaine. No one works harder to serve them than Elaine. It is a crime for our entire FCPS community that a few bad actors devoted their lives to making this job as hard as possible for you.

[01:12:52] Even in the face of so much hatred and just ugly, she always kept her smile. And her passion for our students and staff has never dimmed. a gift to all of us that we have gotten to steal four years of her incredible career in the service of our schools and families. I've been so grateful for her friendship and the time she has given sorry I couldn't let it go for the time she has given to our system and our board. We're so grateful

[01:13:29] for you. Ms. Amesh would you like to speak to your second? Yeah I'm both thrilled and honored to be celebrating my friend Elaine tonight there are several things I want to elevate and funny that you actually touched on a number of them but I was gonna say I first met you as a student when you were working on get to green and and rather than belaboring that I will say every time you notice an eco initiative at one of our schools whether it be recycling composting outdoor classrooms know that Elaine's fingerprints are somewhere in the vision building the planning the implementation of that work well before she even joined our board and a fun fact about her she actually started off

[01:14:05] running for the Soil and Water District Board four years ago, but boy did she rise to the occasion in answering the call, the service for our system and our kids. I think she'd had a lot more peace of mind had she chosen that. But in any case, it's no surprise that she brought her expertise and did so well representing with Mr. Frisch on the Joint Environmental Task Force, pushing our system to commit to bold green goals.

[01:14:32] And these are only a few of Elaine's laudable accomplishments for our board. It's a little funny that she both started and ended her term with a boundary adjustment. And those are never easy to lead. Elaine ultimately did the right thing to expand opportunity in our community.

[01:14:48] When coordinating these transitions, she bent over backwards to meet repeatedly with community groups and show care and empathy to those who were concerned. And while it's hard to make everyone happy, she did what many wouldn't by taking the time to offer dignity through answers and support even for those who weren't, it wasn't going to work out for. She similarly communicated with colleagues, and by that I mean all colleagues, not just seven, to ensure everyone was heard in advance of decisions. As one senior administrator put it, her willingness to engage in open dialogue, listen attentively, and work seamlessly with others has strengthened the bonds in our community and contributed significantly to

[01:15:24] our collective success. On another note, Elaine was impressively in touch with the realities and needs of our students. You said the old part myself. I was actually considering it and I was like, the young person can't say that. But I have enjoyed hearing stories about the symposiums or that conference or the various events that you've been to, hearing from our young impressive leaders, as much as I've enjoyed hearing about your stories shadowing students in the Drainsville District and being a student yourself. She looked to students for the leadership. Ms. Tolan looked to students for the leadership they are capable of and has proven a rare respect for student agency that FCPS stood to benefit from.

[01:16:01] In the words of a McLean student, Ms. Tolan is a humble and soft-spoken community figure who seeks to better Drainsville and FCPS for all. And in the words of a senior administrator, Ms. Tolan leads with heart and is gracious in her interactions with students, staff, and families.

[01:16:17] Her student-focused leadership will be missed. Finally, as one colleague, Elaine kept my faith in how public servants can and ought to be. To this board member right here and to all those I've observed her engage with, she was a human being before she was a politician. Not only did she show care and generosity for my own personal and professional life through gestures and advice, Elaine stayed curious through the discomfort and understood her view of the world wasn't the only one. She was intentional about doing things in a way that was thoughtful and honored our differences, and we've only grown stronger through honesty and candor together in tougher times. I will never forget, Elaine,

[01:16:53] that you were the sole member to stand with me when people of my faith were being mischaracterized from this dais. As one school leader put it, "She is the kind of board member who inspires you to be better. She's kind and caring, and those who've been lucky enough to work with her will miss her presence." And this all doesn't even begin to touch on Elaine's adventurous spirit, which has come with fun stories, awe-inspiring photos, an inspiration for me and many others. With all of this and more that could be said, it is no surprise Elaine is the exception, who came to lead our board through unanimous support because of her good faith this

[01:17:28] year. As another senior administrator said, Elaine is a beacon of inspiration. Her service and positive impact as a school board member will be remembered for years to come. I've always thought our unassuming friendship to be an inspiring story for this county of how good faith can bridge all divides.

[01:17:45] And I'm so grateful to have experienced the opportunity to work with you and to be your friend, Elaine. Congratulations on an admirable four years. I wish you much enjoyment, lots of rest, and peace during the wonderful chapter you have ahead. Ms. Tolan, would you like to speak to this proclamation? I guess so. It has truly been my honor to represent my constituents and to work with my board colleagues, Dr. Reed and FCPS staff over the last four years. And I thank my colleagues for having the confidence in me to chair this

[01:18:24] group for the past six months. We have navigated a global pandemic and dealt with culture wars and unprecedented attacks on public education. We have weathered it all and I am proud of the work that we have accomplished. We stood firm and are protecting and enhancing the lives and education of our most precious resource, our children. Together we have done hard work. We have hired a new superintendent with creative energy and tenacity to lead our school district. We finalized a new strategic plan for a district and began the hard work of implementing it. We increased supports

[01:19:02] for advanced academics for all students, raised teacher salaries, dealt with capacity issues in our schools, audited special education and safety and security across our district, and increased key personnel to deal with student mental health. And also the Virginia electric school bus fleet just hit the 1 million mile mark and this is just a bit of what we did. I look back on my time in the school board and realize how much I have learned about education and more importantly how much I have learned about myself. I see how

[01:19:38] many new people I have met, and how many deeper relationships I have forged with people and families across the county, and how many people I have met for whom education is a calling. There are a few people that I owe my survival to. My staff aide, confidant, and friend Wendy Billeter. What am I

going to do without talking to you five times a day? My husband Jim, who listened to story after story after story and always stood ready with a plate of food, a glass

[01:20:17] of wine, or a hike in the woods. My regional assistant superintendents and their staffs. Douglas Tyson, Region 1, who made me laugh through thick and thin at any time of the day or night. Megan Roman and Fabio Zuluaga, Region 2. We rolled up our sleeves and attacked boundary changes and severe facility deficits. Becky Banning, Region 5. After going over data on my one Region 5 school, we would have wide-ranging and in-depth discussions on

[01:20:55] thorny issues like staff morale, hiring of special education teachers, etc. And my principals. We celebrated the highest achievements of our students and staff and we shared the grief and the loss that sometimes comes with our work. I will miss you. Sloan and Noelle, Marty, ISD colleagues for many years, and to the leadership team, thank you for your friendship and your guidance. I have worked in education for much of my career,

[01:21:32] and I'm excited to continue my dedication to this work and my work to improve and protect our environment. I am excited to figure out the best way to do this, but I am sure it will be in a way where I can work more closely with our young people and bolster them in their pursuits and priorities. They truly give me hope. Until we meet again, happy holidays and please continue your support of our Fairfax County Public Schools and our new school board. They have our very important

[01:22:04] work to continue. Ms. Toland, we'd like to present to you these gifts in appreciation for your four

[01:22:19] years of service. Right, now we have a proclamation honoring Ms. Karen Keyes-Gamara. I call in Ms.

[01:22:48] Corbett Sanders for a proclamation. Thank you, Madam Chair. Whereas Karen Keyes-Gamara was elected in a special election in 2017 as an at-large representative to the Fairfax County School Board and re-elected in 2019, receiving the most votes of any school board member in the history of Fairfax County elections, has served with distinction as a member of the board for six years. And whereas Ms. Keyes-Gamara served on and chaired multiple board committees, including human resources, audit, and comprehensive planning and development, where she worked with colleagues

[01:23:26] to expand the duties of the Auditor General to conduct a three-year review of special education programs and codified opportunities for public participation in facilities planning and decisions through the creation of the engagement process for capital projects. And whereas she skillfully worked to understand and advocate for the needs of students, families, and community members by serving as the school board's liaison to the Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee, Title I Parent Advisory Council, Fairfax Planning Commission, and the Educate Fairfax. And whereas despite working as a practicing attorney who serves as a guardian ad litem, Ms. Keyes-Gamara

[01:24:06] frequently visited classrooms, read with students, attended athletic events, art performances, community gatherings, and celebrations, while also devoting a significant amount of time advocating for children and families most impacted by some of the county's most pressing problems including domestic violence abuse and neglect substance abuse meant and mental health concerns and whereas miss keys Camara consistently worked to develop solutions and expand opportunities for all students including revising the child abuse policy to ensure prompt reports of inappropriate behavior in schools addressing

[01:24:43] discipline disparities, sponsoring a forum that prompted a review of the advanced academics program to improve equitable access, spotlighting the unique needs of and services for military families, ensuring multilingual access to the FCPS course catalog, sponsoring the renaming of the Dr. Larry Bussey Family and Community Library, and enthusiastically leading efforts to establish the John R. Lewis Leadership Program, which focuses on leadership development, civics, and promoting public service opportunities for our students.

[01:25:16] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Karen Keys-Gamara for her outstanding service and dedication to the Fairfax County School Board and to our students and community members. Is there a second? I will second.

[01:25:46] Ms. Cora Sanders, would you like to speak to your proclamation? Yes. Many of you have seen Karen memes, and I, for one, have had a difficult time understanding them. My colleagues know that if I don't know something, I research it.

[01:26:04] And in researching what a Karen is, I came across this definition. A Karen is when an unstoppable force encounters an immovable object.

[01:26:19] This definition clearly defines my dear friend Karen Keyes-Gamara's approach to governance. Defending her clients as a guardian ad litem, and what we can expect from her in Richmond. Karen is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

[01:26:36] She is what we in the South like to call a steel magnolia. Velvety soft and beautiful to look at, while capable of withstanding hurricane force winds and tidal surges. After the tides have receded, the beautiful magnolia stands upright and continues to amaze all those that see it.

[01:26:59] Karen is an amazing family person. Her love for her family is sine qua non. She tirelessly cared for her father after her mother passed away. She travels across the country a couple of times a year to visit her nieces and her brother.

[01:27:14] And for over 35 years, Antoine has been at her side. The two of them have a commitment to improving the lives of all those they love and the communities in which they reside. Antoine, thank you for sharing Karen with us these past six years. Many of you may not know that Karen and I became friends before either of us was elected to office to the school board. I encouraged her to run in a special election for the vacated at-large seat in 2017. She began the blue wave in Fairfax, and I have been lucky to serve with her and collaborate on important issues

[01:27:52] affecting our students in Mount Vernon and across the county. Notably, these have included the special education audit, curriculum on substance abuse, reforms to the SR&R, and much more. Karen, your work in these areas, as well as the establishment of the Lewis Leadership Academy, have left an indelible mark on our county for generations to come.

[01:28:17] Finally, I believe that Martin Luther King must have had Karen in mind when he said, Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.

[01:28:34] You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. Karen has that soul generated by love, and it is my honor to speak to you tonight. Ms. Marin, would you like to speak to your second?

[01:28:55] Sure would. Ms. Karen Kiesgemar is a relentless champion for children, for education, and for justice. My introductions to these characteristics of Ms. Kees-Gumar came when I asked to meet with her soon after she was elected in 2017 to discuss the social studies curriculum and content being taught in FCPS.

[01:29:14] We discussed the need for more truthful teaching of students so that they could delve into the facilitated study of the complicated and too often brutal history of Virginia and the United States. From the start, I saw how Karen was focused on education. Ms. Kees-Gumar is a champion for children.

[01:29:31] When I was elected to join her on the school board a few years later, I saw the legal scholarship and practice that Ms. Keys-Gamara brings as a lens to her school board work. I learned from Ms. Keys-Gamara how to read and analyze the complicated student discipline cases that at times come before the board.

[01:29:46] Particularly I learned about the patterns from childhood trauma and abuse that can lead to behaviors that can occur in our schools, children showing their need for help. This greatly helped me in my approach to these most serious discipline decisions that will change the lives of children and families. Finally, Ms. Kiesgamara is a defender and promoter of justice.

[01:30:04] Whether it has been speaking out about black lives mattering, or working to bring true equity in providing education opportunities to all kids, such as the John R. Lewis Leadership Program, her quest for justice has now led her to the Virginia General Assembly. I know that she is ready to do the work to embody her personal vision to serve children, protect and elevate education, and bring justice to all in Fairfax and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[01:30:28] Thank you Karen Kiesgamara for your service to our school division and community. - Ms. Keyes Gamara, would you like to speak to this proclamation? - Yes, I'll try to stay in that time limit.

[01:30:46] Before I talk a little bit about my journey, I wanna thank my husband for being here. My kids couldn't be here, but... And I also wanna thank someone who has really become a friend. And I'm gonna call out my very shy aide, Nelda Brown, who kept me laughing through a whole lot always reminded me of a little girl little black girl magic I really love it thank you so back in 2017 I had no idea what I was about to experience within 45 days I was asked to second the motion

[01:31:25] to change the name of Justice High School and back then it was a little different we were just entering the cultural cultural wars and I wasn't quite sure I was up to the task but our community supported me during that period I had a couple of people knock on my doors to bring me information and they were sure I hadn't read, and I had a few uncomfortable meetings.

[01:31:48] But we also had partners right here on this board who through their actions said, we're going to get through this. We are a team. Team building has always been a part of my focus, and while I haven't always agreed with everyone on this board, we never lost that focus.

[01:32:06] I'm grateful that so many of my colleagues have remained focused as well. We've been through a whole lot together, whether it was understanding that these names on our schools don't represent who we really are or understanding that we had to improve in order to serve our diverse communities we learned to push a little harder together we had to push through the middle of covid we didn't see that coming despite it all it was the teamwork that prevailed and i always had someone or a group of people whether in the community or on this board that was willing to say thank you we're with you

[01:32:44] Even in the darkest days, the prayers of many, encouragement of so many of you, sustained me. You have been constructively critical. You have been forgiving. You have been kind in many ways. And though oftentimes and many times I had to see in the midst of what seemed like smoke or darkness, I was okay.

[01:33:05] As long as I remained focused on achieving equitable access to education, I could see. I could see love. I could see care. and I could see compassion. These kept me going in the last year.

[01:33:21] Actually, this past year brought a really tough decision. Irrespective of what I have experienced on this board, I was fiercely dedicated to the issues facing this community. And that dedication is largely due to all of you.

[01:33:39] When I faced the decision on whether I would serve on another term, I had to do some soul searching, talk to some people who love me, and realize that the experiences I've had here really made me fall in love with public education.

[01:33:54] It was my husband and a few of my neighbors and people here that said, "Why not?" It was really hard to decide to leave. I want you to know how difficult that decision was. But I decided it was because I cared, because we all love this community, because you have kindly put your trust in me, that I had to move forward and fight for public education at another level.

[01:34:22] So for those of you who have disagreed with me, thank you. Even in your criticism, I never disregarded what you had to say, not for one second. And for all of you who are always on Team Karen and put your trust in me and your faith in me, I say thank you to you too, because I could not have done it without any of you.

[01:34:46] I'm almost done. To the leadership team who had to watch it all, I say I'm sorry, and thank you. It couldn't have been fun all the time, but I hope that you know that every ounce of my being has been dedicated to fighting for what I believe we all believe is right.

[01:35:06] In these six years, I have sought to honor the voters' trust. I haven't been perfect, but my heart has never changed. Thank you for putting up with me. Thank you for supporting me. Thank you for arguing with me. Thank you for getting angry with me.

[01:35:23] And thank you for fighting with me for this system, because our kids and our community are so very worth it. Until we meet again, good night. Ms. Keyes-Gamara, we'd like to present to you these gifts in appreciation of your six-plus years of service.

[01:36:02] And we have a proclamation honoring Ms. Karen Corbett-Sanders.

[01:36:20] I call on Ms. Serena Koufax for a proclamation. Thank you, Madam Chair. Whereas Karen Corbett Sanders has been a valuable member of the Fairfax County School Board, being elected as the Mount Vernon District Representative and served with distinction and honor as a member of the board for eight years since January 2016, and whereas she has served in several leadership positions during her time on the board, serving two terms as board chair from 2018 to '19, and then again in 2019 to '20, one term as Vice Chair in 2017 to 2018, and during her tenure had the pleasure

[01:36:59] of being the Chair of the Governance Committee, the Chair of the Budget Committee, the State Legislative Liaison, and the Federal Legislative Liaison twice. And whereas Ms. Corbett Sanders has been passionate about equity and building strong collaboration with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to

better serve county residents, as evidenced through her work to establish the Joint Environmental Task Force with then Fairfax County Board of Supervisor Chair, Sharon Boliva.

[01:37:28] She was also instrumental in creating a task force to research, develop, and achieve funding for 16 high school stadium bathroom structures. And whereas, she also sought to better the lives of students through her regional work, serving as the Chair of the Northeastern Region of the Virginia State Board Association from 2021 until the present.

[01:37:49] Ms. Corbett Sanders was honored as a regional elected for school board elected leaders by George Mason University in 2022. And whereas Ms. Corbett Sanders has pushed to improve the educational excellence delivered by Fairfax County Public Schools and played a key role in the development of gun safety curriculum, the opioid and substance abuse curriculum, and the bystander awareness curriculum.

[01:38:14] She and Ms. Keys-Gamara also collaborated bring together to bring about the special education audit with the final report being released in 2022 and whereas she has a unique depth of knowledge of fcps's annual operating budget and championed the importance of tying it to the strategic plan this enabled her to be a highly effective voice for operational effectiveness and efficiencies and whereas miss corbett sanders was deeply committed to robust school board oversight and effective stewardship for FCPS operations.

[01:38:49] This included the hiring of two superintendents and the management of three. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Karen Corbett Sanders for her outstanding service and dedication to the Fairfax County School Board and our students, staff, families, and community members.

[01:39:14] Is there a second? Second. Second. Got it, got it, got it. Ms. Jana Koufax, would you like to speak to your proclamation? Yes, ma'am, I would. Karen, it is my pleasure to bring forth this proclamation honoring you, my partner in all things Mount Vernon and Franconia, and my dear friend. Karen,

[01:39:49] you and I met several years prior to being elected to our board position. You were one of the chairs of the Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Council, and I was a new member. I was excited to be part of such a dynamic group of educators, but I was so impressed, and it quickly became evident how hardworking, committed, and what a driven leader you were. I was so impressed with Karen's meeting, managing, and interpersonal skills as a volunteer chair for this committee.

[01:40:18] Fast forward four years, and I had just completed my first term on the school board, and the Mount Vernon district seat became open. I take a bit of credit as one of the people who convinced Karen to run for this office. Karen has since profusely thanked me many times for suggesting this opportunity to her.

[01:40:42] And she used adjectives she claims, or should I say swears, that she rarely used prior to meeting me. In meetings, Karen has often referred to herself as a nerd or a geek, but I prefer to describe her as a detail-oriented, accountable, and efficient.

[01:41:00] Karen, you have a great business mind, but more importantly, you have a compassionate and caring heart. Neither of us could have imagined the horrible devastation that a global pandemic effected on our world, but I am grateful to have navigated with you as your vice chair when you served as the chair.

[01:41:20] And even when we disagreed, we worked diligently to keep our partnership strong as we tried to model solid leadership. Together with our colleagues, we needed to work to keep our families healthy and safe. I thank you for all that we shared during this most difficult time on so many levels.

[01:41:41] Representing the Mount Vernon and Franconia districts, Karen and I both championed for equity long before it became countywide priorities. We have seen progress and there is much more to do. And I know Karen will continue her leadership role somehow in the community where she was born grew up and raised her beautiful family with her husband daniel karen it has been a privilege and an honor to serve with you i am thrilled to have expanded your vocabulary a bit i am honored to call you my friends i thank you for your partnership and

[01:42:17] service this board for the past eight years miss keys camaro would you like to speak to your second Yes, it is my pleasure to second this proclamation on behalf of the board and in honor of my colleague and friend.

[01:42:37] Now, Karen has already explained that she helped to convince me to run for the board and I, too, have thanked her appropriately. She has always looked toward building a team of diverse voices on this board because she's all about team building and she never backs away from disagreement.

[01:42:58] We have not always agreed, but it is easy to lead with her as she will listen and respond with compassion. She also works to understand the viewpoint of others and is willing to learn and grow. She attempts to understand the experience of others and that is truly, that is a true hallmark of her leadership.

[01:43:20] And this is the quality of her leadership that has led me to consider Karen Corbett Sanders as my partner and one of our partners in progress. From reducing harsh discipline outcomes to addressing opioid addictions to responding to restraint and seclusion and examining SPED services, we have been able to dig into meaty issues to evoke change.

[01:43:45] I'm grateful that I entered this board when she was chair. Her leadership meant that I had an opportunity to learn the FCPS processes and find my place while working on our common goals of equitable access to education.

[01:44:00] I'm also grateful for her willingness to see the vision of the John Lewis Leadership Academy. We faced this option in the middle of COVID and for some it just wasn't the right time. But her leadership also meant having a vision for the future.

[01:44:17] It helped her to understand that we must not only protect our students and our staff from sickness but we must be focused on improving programming and access to opportunity. She was always building for the future. The focus of always building was never lost on her and for that, I believe that this board and our community should be grateful.

[01:44:40] I want to thank Karen Corbett Sanders for being that kind of leader and most of all for being a friend in our leadership journey. Ms. Corbett Sanders, would you like to speak to this proclamation?

[01:44:59] Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Winston Churchill once said that we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. I am so appreciative of the opportunity to serve my community and this board for the past eight years. I want to thank my husband, Daniel, and our daughters whom have listened and supported me through my tenure at FCPS, changing family plans often to accommodate the crazy schedule of a school board member. I am blessed by the friendships made and the ability to

[01:45:38] contribute back to the community that has given me so much. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for working with me on behalf of the students, families, and staff of the Mount Vernon Magisterial District. Together we have worked on policy issues, curriculum, compensation, improved our facilities, and address the individual needs of constituents. I appreciate the superintendent, her staff, and the regional assistant superintendents and principals for partnering with me to achieve great things for our community. Now to our

[01:46:14] parents and students thank you for sharing your successes in the classrooms playing fields in the visual and performing arts with me I enjoyed attending events and cheering our children on and I will continue to do so after January 1 especially I appreciate your willingness to share your concerns and thoughts on how we FCPS can do better this open line of communications has allowed me to better serve you and I appreciate it now to my colleagues for past several years school boards have been on the front pages of newspapers

[01:46:49] because of culture war wars book bans and much more and as we look to the future I know those of you staying on this board will fight fearlessly for all of our children to be seen heard included for and included for who they are and provided the supports they need to achieve their potential we have lived in interesting times and I hope for more calmness in the future. To paraphrase the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, words on leadership when the hard-fought

[01:47:24] successes come to fruition, I hope you know that the board is best when people barely know the board exists. When the work is done, the aim is fulfilled and they will say we did it ourselves. For those of you leaving the board and will represent us in Richmond. Please don't forget your roots on this board. We know that you will fight for our public schools and our children. I know each of you are servant leaders in your own right and exemplify the words of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Let each of you look not only to his own interests

[01:48:01] but also to the interests of others. I expect that you will be amongst our most effective legislators in Richmond. Umbrar, congratulations on your accomplishments as you begin your career in law. In the words of Dr. Seuss, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting. So get on your way. Be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact. And remember that life's a great balancing act. And will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed. 98 and

[01:48:34] three quarters percent guaranteed. You'll move mountains. Elaine, you've had the incredible task of leading this board in its final six months we've been bookends to this board's tenure and i appreciate your soft powered kind leadership it's not always easy but you carry out the task of hurting with grace diplomacy and kindness as i have the honor of being able to speak to my friend tammy later this evening i will take the opportunity to speak to my friend megan Megan, you are one of the most passionate, thoughtful, and caring people I know.

[01:49:14] Your analytical skills are powerful, and I appreciate your advocacy to look at data, best practices, and make decisions in the most transparent manner possible. You have represented the Braddock District with grace, wisdom, and pragmatism.

[01:49:31] I know that you will be missed. You have a heart of gold and incredible integrity. You always look for the good in people, and I know that, Jim, your mom, and your boys are looking forward to spending more time with you. I'm honored to have been able to serve with each of you, and I hope that we, too, can get together in the future.

[01:49:51] Thank you. Mrs. Corbett Sanders, we'd like to present to you these gifts in appreciation for your eight years of service.

[01:50:04] All right. We have a proclamation honoring Ms. Tamara Derenak-Koufax.

[01:50:38] I call Ms. McLaughlin for a proclamation. I'm thinking of Tom Hanks right now. There's no crying in baseball. So I'm gonna hopefully try to channel that one. Whereas Tamara Darnett-Koufax has served with integrity and distinction as the Franconia District Representative to the Fairfax County School Board since January 2012, serving three consecutive terms.

[01:51:05] Ms. Darnett-Koufax was elected to serve as the School Board Vice Chair in 2013, 2019, and 2022, and school board chair in 2014. And whereas Ms. Darina Koufax served on and often chaired numerous committees, including audit, budget, governance, public engagement, served as the board liaison for both national and state legislative.

[01:51:28] She passionately advocated for Fairfax County Public School students and families by serving as the board's liaison to the Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee, Comprehensive Planning Development Committee, Facilities Planning Advisory Council, Human Resources Advisory Council, and Fairfax County School Board's successful children and youth policy team, always collaborating with colleagues and staff to effectively advance the mission of these committees. And whereas her compassion and leadership was instrumental in creating FCPS's portrait of a graduate and the first FCPS strategic plan, establishing the

[01:52:06] Office of the Auditor General, hiring three new superintendents and managing the performance of five, protecting LGBTQIA+ students and staff through the school board's non-discriminational policy work, robustly advocating for fully funded budgets to support those who are at the heart of our system, our teachers, administrators, and staff.

[01:52:29] And whereas Ms. Darnak-Koufax is recognized for her relentless commitment to ensure equity of all program offerings and experiences for every child in FCPS, enhancing curriculum for ESOL students, she courageously fought for the changing of the name of Robert E. Lee High School after civil rights activist representative and congressman John R. Lewis as a better representation of our values of inclusion and equity, expanding advanced academic programs, reforming student discipline processes, advocating for improved physical, mental, and academic health for our students to include instituting later high school start times, healthier food

[01:53:08] options starting a summer meals program, more recess for elementary school students, and the addition of new recess in middle school, and her unwavering support for all performing and fine arts. And whereas Ms. Dernak-Kovac has been a strong advocate for early childhood education that included adding over 35 pre-K classrooms and the future development of a standalone pre-K site that will potentially allow up to 400 pre-k early head start and special education students to gain that critical start for our youngest learners.

[01:53:45] Therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Tamara Daragon at Koufax for her valuable contributions and dedicated service to the school board, to Fairfax County Public Schools, and to the children families and citizens of Fairfax County is there a second second miss McLaughlin would you like to speak to your proclamation with great honor

[01:54:21] when Tammy they first met on the board she was instantly adored for her beauty her grace her magnetic smile her endless positivity and her universal kindness so much so that one of our board members dubbed her quote mrs. fields cookies. Little did I or many colleagues, staff, and community members realize that the stealth warrior she truly is. I credit her steel town Pennsylvania roots and her family values for instilling within her a fierce determination and

[01:54:57] an endless desire to help all children thrive. She also swears like a sailor. That's all right because it makes her a kindred spirit to me and Laura Jane Cohen.

[01:55:15] I didn't say what the swear words were. As captured in her proclamation, Tammy has held extensive leadership roles these past 12 years because of her incredible integrity and her collaborative temperament.

[01:55:33] Countless teachers, principals, and central office staff have easily turned to her over the years to share their thoughts and concerns because of her remarkable traits. From an early age, I was always inspired by Ralph Walder Emerson's beautiful poem called Success.

[01:55:54] Little did I know that I would meet someone like Tammy, who embodies the heart of what it says, particularly in to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a deemed social condition, to know that one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

[01:56:16] This is to have succeeded. After 12 years, Tammy has given more to our county than most will ever fully understand. She never sought a political life, but rather an enduring desire to help Fairfax County children, families, and employees.

[01:56:34] And her selflessness is to be deeply admired. On a more personal note, she has become a sister to me. A confidant, a therapist for sure, and a lifelong friend.

[01:56:50] To her husband, Alan, I'm an identical twin. I've watched my husband have to share me at times with that twin. And I wanna thank you from the bottom of my heart for sharing Tammy with me for many, many late nights, long weekends.

[01:57:08] You have been a saint, and I have been deeply grateful for it. To you, Tammy, it has been such an incredible honor to serve with you. You truly have succeeded in this service that you have given to our county, and I join this county in thanking you for all that you have done to make it a better place.

[01:57:32] You are deeply loved, and you will be deeply missed. - Ms. Kovach-Sanders, would you like to speak to your second?

[01:57:50] - Ms. Derenak Kovacs, I know your friends call you Tammy, and I'm honored to be your friend for over 20 years. We initially met as colleagues on the gifted and talented, soon to be renamed, Advanced Academic Advisory Committee.

[01:58:08] Your work on that committee, and subsequently on this board is captured in the words of Oprah Winfrey. When you choose the paradigm of service, looking at life through that paradigm, it turns everything you do from a job into a gift.

[01:58:28] Your wisdom, humor, and dedication is a gift to the Franconia community and to Fairfax County. For as long as I have known you, you have been a fierce advocate for children's causes, education, and the performing arts.

[01:58:43] I remember our earliest conversations discussing the importance of educating the whole child before it became the standard parlance of today. Together with Alan, thank you, Alan, you've raised two amazing children, Matthew and Hallie.

[01:59:02] Fairfax County can be proud of these two graduates, whom are now both successful in the performing arts and journalism and filmmaking in their own right. They were able to achieve this because of the love, support, and countless hours of carpooling and being a stage mom and a booster parent.

[01:59:22] I know many of us can identify with that. It has been an honor to serve with you as we address the needs of Hayfield, Lewis, Edison, West Potomac, and the Mount Vernon pyramids. While you have been a tireless advocate for the needs of our children living in poverty, our English language learners, advanced academics and early childhood education you have also been tireless in your focus on ensuring that we approach our work responsibly transparently and with integrity recognizing

[01:59:57] the importance of understanding how inequities impact our children and schools you were appointed as one of the original members of the skipped you and megan work diligently with the board of supervisors to craft and adopt the One Fairfax policy and provide more program offerings to our children in need. You have long stood up for our LGBTQIA youth, and as the chair, you stood up when Fairfax led Virginia in changing our policies to recognize sexuality and gender identity in our

[02:00:30] non-discrimination policy. That was a night many of us will never forget. As vice chair, you helped me navigate the challenges of onboarding eight new board members, a global pandemic, a cyber attack, and a few other things. Thank you for your partnership and grace under pressure. You have fought tirelessly and even traveled to Texas to investigate best practices in education for our English language learners. I still smile at the stories of you living your own planes, trains,

[02:01:04] and automobiles adventure with Ryan, Pat Hines and others on that fateful trip that was impacted by bad weather. You have played a major part in hiring three superintendents and working with five. You touched the hearts of so many of us when you brought attention to childhood cancers and gun violence to this board and the previous one. I know you have been a fierce advocate for stronger gun control laws and increased investments in health care. Thank you. Tammy when I joined the board you warned me that this work was hard and that it would make me

[02:01:39] laugh, curse, and cry. I vowed that would not happen. You were so right though and I'm glad to have been able to have shared those moments when I did all three and lean on your shoulder during those difficult times. Dear friend I wish you well and look forward to seeing where the next phase of your life takes you. Oh my goodness thank

[02:02:15] you Megan. Thank you Karen. For your kind words tonight, your collegiality, your dedicated work on behalf of everyone who attends and works for FCPS, but most importantly for your friendship and support throughout our board terms. Friends are a true gift and you are real gifts to me.

[02:02:37] Proclamations are written to extol the body of work of the honoree, but I want to say nothing that was written about me or anything that was said about me tonight can happen without the collective teamwork of everyone of our board of all of you staff members over there our superintendent and all staff from leadership team down to our bus drivers our custodial workers our office staffs

[02:03:09] i thank you all as my tenure ends i'm reflecting on what an honor it has been to work with so many distinguished board colleagues and educational professionals together we have chased met we have

faced many challenges but thankfully we have celebrated many achievements and milestones and thanks to you ladies many more than i even remember today while i was writing my comments thank you so much i wish i could speak to everyone individually to know how you have positively

[02:03:42] impacted me and i appreciate what each and every one of you have done thank you so much you thank you to all you have dedicated yourselves to educating enriching the lives of fcps children and to our teachers who are the heart of our system i thank you from the bottom of my heart my kids have had an amazing time here at fcps because of your dedication and love and thank you too to our students and our student reps your voices are valued and always so impressive

[02:04:18] i will single out one colleague one who has kept me whole during this term miss cheryl austin my senior eaa cheryl is the ultimate professional who knows what i need to be successful often before i can even discern what that might be cheryl i cannot thank you enough for your kindness your loyalty, your professionalism, your grace under pressure. You are an exceptional assistant, an amazing human, and a beautiful friend. I will miss you talking to you every day so much.

[02:04:55] And to my friends and my family who have provided your unwavering support and listening ears throughout my public service journey, I thank you. I could not have done it. I could have not survived without you. Some of you are here in this audience right now. To my husband Alan, my son Matthew, and my daughter Hallie, thank you for your hugs and your love, as Elaine said, for providing me food for survival. It's extremely important as a family unit for support. Twelve years ago I was asked by community leaders to run for this position. I thought I'd submit a resume.

[02:05:34] I had to run a campaign. I did not have an agenda. I was not sure what being a politician meant I just wanted to give back to my community. My daughter and my son were thriving. My daughter was in elementary school. She's a college graduate now. And the Fairfax County public school system provided many amazing opportunities for their intellectual and personal growth. But as my colleagues noted, we saw disparities throughout the county and I wanted to ensure of equity of program offerings for every child in FCPS. And that's why when I was

[02:06:11] asked to run I did. The love of the community was instilled with from in me by my parents a long time ago. They were first and second generation immigrants who understood that the way to get ahead is through an excellent education. That was the key to success. That's what my father told me all the time. I was the first in my family to go to college. I graduated with a degree in political science and business from Penn State and the words and ideals of my parents still guide me today.

[02:06:43] I appreciate what you have, help those in need, and always work to make things better. I hope that I have succeeded in a small way here in Fairfax County to help make their words true. As I complete this chapter, I am filled with humility and pride.

[02:07:03] As so many of you have touched my life in a positive way, I thank you from the bottom of my heart to all those who have supported me and have given me this opportunity to serve. Ms. Derenak-Koufax, we'd like to present to you these gifts in appreciation for your 12 years of service.

[02:07:32] Gifts are beautiful. Thank you so much.

[02:08:02] I know who you are, Madam Clerk, and your team of wonderful women. And now we speak about another wonderful woman, Ms. McLaughlin. Are you going to call on me? I'm sorry. I'm supposed to be called on.

[02:08:20] I'm so excited to talk about Megan. We're on a roll. Ms. Derenak-Koufax, do you have a proclamation? I do miss. I do miss stolen and thank you for calling on me I respect your role as chair very much. Whereas Megan O'Brien McLaughlin has served the Braddock District representative to the fair as the Braddock District representative to the Fairfax County School Board with unwavering passion and principal determination since January 2012 serving three consecutive terms

[02:08:56] and where Miss McLaughlin served on all six school board subcommittees including chair of audit, budget, governance, and public engagement, and was the board's liaison to several citizen advisory committees, including human relations, for which she championed its creation. Furthermore, she served as a founding member and the longest serving elected official for 10 years on SCIFT, the joint FCPS county government successful children and youth policy team. During her service, the one Fairfax policy which is dedicated to racial and social equity was created and adopted along

[02:09:34] with improving access to pre-k reducing discipline disparities creating community schools and improving mental health high school graduation rates and college and career outcomes and whereas Ms. McLaughlin worked tirelessly over the years to work across the aisle to serve our broader community by championing a more collaborative relationship with the Board of Supervisors as reflected in her service on the County Sports Tourism Task Force, the Synthetic Turf Task Force, the 2015 EpiAid Task Force on Youth Suicide, and liaison to the Fairfax

[02:10:14] County Athletic Council, ensuring more equitable athletic facilities and the construction of 16 stadium bathroom facilities and whereas Ms. McLaughlin was a relentless champion for restorative justice, student discipline reforms, improving grading practices, healthier start times, suicide prevention practices, and student mental health and well-being, funding more social workers and psychologists, providing healthier, higher quality food for students,

[02:10:51] developing FCPS first strategic plan and portrait of a graduate. Additionally, she successfully advocated for placing school nurses in all health clinics, helped guide the system through the historic 2020 pandemic while urging for the return to in-person instruction based on science and promoted the creation of community schools to reduce achievement and opportunity gaps.

[02:11:18] And whereas Ms. McLaughlin was a relentless voice for greater transparency and accountability by advocating for the creation of the Office of the Auditor General to serve more effective independent oversight, the COVID closure, spring distance learning investigation, and the Ombudsman Office to improve pathways for families and employees to raise concern.

[02:11:41] And whereas Ms. McLaughlin was instrumental in hiring three superintendents and managing the work of five continuously lobbying for research-based data-driven decisions to aid continuous improvement and advocating for collective pay and benefits reduce reducing teacher workloads and urging better fiscal and operational stewardship and whereas miss mclaughlin extensively partnered with her colleagues and community members to rename wt woodson high school due to fairfax county and and Virginia's history of segregation and to elevate the contributions of native Virginian,

[02:12:19] Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the father of black history, such that all stakeholders can be inspired while also preserving the Woodson Pyramid's enduring 60 plus years reputation for academic excellence and a highly engaged community.

[02:12:36] Now therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County School Board extends its highest commendation and deepest appreciation to Megan McLaughlin for her 12 years of leadership, dedication, and service to the school board, Fairfax County Public Schools, and the students and families of Fairfax County.

[02:13:05] - Is there a second? - Second. - Thank you, Ms. Gerna Koufax. Would you like to speak to your proclamation? - Absolutely. I am honored to speak and add robust intersectional data this proclamation that can be measured by best practice standards to honor my colleague and dear friend, Megan McLaughlin. Megan, as Riccardi and I were discussing, has many self-descriptive titles of her career and life experiences during her tenure on the board. These include the fact that

[02:13:45] she has been a social worker, a college admissions officer, that her dear husband Jim is a lawyer, that she is a proud mother of three boys and she has often shared with us that it is her irish heritage that we can all thank for her passion i warned her i was going to roast her a little bit megan's desire to do well for all who are part of our system has sometimes been overshadowed by this passion but through the 12 years we have served together i have learned that megan is all

[02:14:21] heart. A relentless champion with a desire to make things the best that they can be for our children and in our entire system. Aristotle once said that educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all. Meghan truly lives by this motto. I first heard Meghan speak prior to being elected about the need to evaluate FCPS's grading policies. Her comments were impressive, powerful, and of course, eventually delivered common sense results.

[02:14:56] I looked so forward to serving with this articulate, confident woman. But in the beginning, perhaps because of different styles or different reasons, or maybe I was Mrs. Fields, as she called, who didn't always see eye to eye. However, through the years, we worked together.

[02:15:14] We communicated. We collaborated. A mutual respect and a deep, caring friendship grew. Megan has been a driven, disciplined board member who has accomplished much as is outlined in her proclamation.

[02:15:32] Megan has tenacity, and she is willing to have those tough conversations to bring people together for the benefit of FCPS. I so admire that. She uses her analytical skills to problem-solve and will keep working to find the best answer.

[02:15:51] She is detail-oriented, and I am envious of her ability to give flawless, extemporaneous speeches. Megan, I am privileged to have served with you, to have been mistaken for you more times than I can count, and to have come through these 12 years with battle scars.

[02:16:15] And we have come through these 12 years with some battle scars. still I'm calling you honorable the honorable Megan McLaughlin at least for 17 more days and then simply my dear sweet kind friends I thank you for your partnership and as you said your sisterhood and service on this board thank you. Ms. Eismerheiser would you like to speak to your second? I would love to although that's gonna be a difficult act to follow so before I

[02:16:51] start about Megan I did want to collaborate that Mr. Neckofax really us we're like a sailor and she has a mug to prove it and it was an honor to serve with her as my vice chair so now Megan many don't know that Megan I share a special bond as the two Bay Area Californians back-to-back representing

Braddock district but even more so we share a bond of friendship for well over a decade I first met Megan when she was running for the school board as someone

[02:17:31] who was a passionate special education advocate I reached out to Megan as my soon-to-be magisterial member to share my thoughts and my concerns I didn't know Megan I didn't really know her background I didn't even really know why you ran for school board to be perfectly honest I just knew that I hope to have an ally and a supporter and Megan sat with me for hours with her notebook frantically taking notes with her heart on her sleeve and her desire to help and you could see it in her eyes and you could see it in her smile and

[02:18:09] you can hear it on her voice which said this is not right and this is not right and I don't like that this is not right and I'm gonna fix it and it wasn't just me that she did that with she over the years she listened and she helped me she listened and helped several families from the Woodson Pyramid who became part of decoding dyslexia and helped them to advocate and help shepherd their advocacy as well to ensure that FCPS not only embedded best practices for dyslexia. Because at that time, and I remember this as a parent, FCPS wouldn't even use the word dyslexia. And she helped this organization not only embed best practices, but hire a dyslexia

[02:18:48] specialist. So I'm really honored to know Megan, not just as a colleague, and I've been honored to be a colleague with her, but as somebody who really wants to champion those who don't have a voice and wants to listen for people who need a champion for their voice. So it's been my honor to know you for that long it's my honor to know that a fellow californian has been representing us on the board she's been enthusiastically and ably representing braddock district for 12 years when i would go door knocking this last time so many people oh megan she's great oh megan she's

[02:19:24] awesome wait a second are you running against megan right and the love that people in this district have for her and the work she's done and the passion she's shown was incredible she's lent her expertise to all school board committees guided five superintendents and her passion for restorative justice for giving kids a second chance for recognizing student mental wellness and the need for school nurses and her consistent focus on data accountability not just by adding the auditor general but in every work session and every report we get it's always megan i can count on to say wait a second these numbers don't make sense wait a second my

[02:20:04] husband's a lawyer and I understand. Sorry, I had to work that in. But honestly, she doesn't need her husband to be a lawyer because Megan is so smart and so quick to read and analyze something that she would have been an excellent lawyer herself. So I appreciate everything you've brought to this board. I appreciate the passion, the heart, the focus on mental wellness. But your legacy as a board member that I'm honored to be able to take over the seat that you are currently holding is

[02:20:40] watching you have difficult conversations and an Irish passionate conversations in a work session where you may not see eye to eye with somebody else in that work session and watching you at the end of that work session walk up to that person with whom you just had a very difficult conversation and spend incredible amount of time trying to understand their perspective and that is the hallmark of an incredible leader so I hope to be able to continue that and have those difficult conversations I hope to be able to continue your tireless advocacy for the

[02:21:14] Braddock district and I'm really glad you're just a phone call away and I'm really really glad to have gotten to be able to serve with you after watching you fight so hard for those who need it thank you

Megan for all your hard work and your big heart miss McLaughlin would you like to speak to this proclamation briefly since I see how late it is and I want to first thank every member of the audience both on TV and out here in the public for your

[02:21:50] grace and patience as we send off eight of us this is unusual and I hope what you are witnessing tonight is that while the Fairfax County voters brought 12 very different very distinct leaders to this table there's not a doubt in my mind that all 12 of us as different as we are and the efforts we put forward together to get to know and work alongside one another the love the passion, the care, and concern all 11 of you have brought in this shared time together.

[02:22:28] I will carry that in my heart forever. Really, really appreciate all that you sacrifice and that your families and your loved ones sacrifice for what you do. And it's been an honor and a privilege to represent the Braddock District for the last 12 years. And I will say, we talk about school boards getting a bad rap. At times I feel like our community gets a bad rap. People have honestly asked me if I'm leaving because they say school boards get beat up on all the time. And so I just

[02:23:03] want to say to the community out there that I am deeply grateful for the tremendous faith and respect and support and trust that I've been given by our families, our employees, and the residents of Fairfax County I cannot thank you enough for giving me the opportunity to be a voice of change and for you placing that trust in me from the very beginning my singular goal was simply the same that it is today to help FCPS fulfill its mission to be a premier school system where all students can

[02:23:40] reach their full potential yes I've consistently championed the need for data-driven decisions and stronger accountability and greater transparency and robust community engagement. But I firmly believe from day one that these actions are paramount for us to build and sustain public trust in our school system as well as our ability to successfully serve our students and families and employees who trust us so much. As noted in the proclamation, I also work very hard at promoting continuous improvement and that is often involved

[02:24:18] asking many, many tough questions. So much so that I was frequently encouraged to find my social worker voice and use a little less of my Irish voice. And balancing this dueling dynamic within me is not always easy. And for those on the receiving end, I venture they would say the same.

[02:24:41] However, my endless passion has always come from a place of profound care and concern. And so, as noted to Dr. Reed, to my fellow school board members, to countless FCPS leadership team and staff, and to county officials, I truly want to thank you for always presuming positive intent with me and for your willingness to partner with me in hopes of bringing about positive change.

[02:25:11] Most importantly, I would not be here sitting with you tonight if it were not for the incredible support of my amazing husband of over 30 years, Jim McLaughlin. He, along with my three boys, never once complained about the 12 years of me serving long nights, long days, and often weekends as well.

[02:25:34] They knew that my desire was to ensure that what I hoped to give to my own family, I could give to our county and our community. Jim, I want to thank you so much for being my coach, my therapist, my cheerleader, and yes, my legal advisor from the very start to the very finish.

[02:26:00] Trust me, I know my colleagues who've served with me, imagine 30 plus years with me. Yeah, he's had his work cut out. But your incredible love and support has made you the best life partner I could ever ask for.

[02:26:20] And I am also grateful to my parents and my twin sister, who taught me from the earliest of age how important it is to care deeply about the world and to speak up and speak out against that injustice. I also want to give a special shout out to my amazing staff aide, Donna Nelson Schneider.

[02:26:42] I would not have been able to give all that I have to the Braddock District these past four years without your tireless passion, energy, support, and doggedness to get the information to and from our community, and they were so blessed that you were there with me by my side. I'm so grateful to you, and I look forward to our continued friendship over the years. While there are a number of important operational matters that will still need to be improved upon in the years to come. I do carry with me great hope about FCPS. I know that our schools

[02:27:21] continue to provide rigorous instruction from highly dedicated and talented teachers and staff and our schools strive every day to bring a safe caring and inclusive learning environment for our students. And so in closing I do want to say to my colleagues in particular Rachna thank you for giving me the peace of mind knowing that you are going to continue the tradition of outstanding Braddock leadership with that same passion, caring, concern, and the support that you've given me as a fellow

[02:27:55] colleague all these years. To Ms. Darna Koufax, I really look forward to you and I maybe kicking back, perhaps raising a glass of wine, watching our colleagues who will be serving here into the late-night hours and knowing that we have done our time and we passed the mantle and we will absolutely be wishing without question this board, our superintendent, its leadership team and the 28,000 people who serve tirelessly every day to make this a better school system

[02:28:34] that they will feel our gratitude and support out in the community as private citizens. you again everyone for all you've given me over the years it's been the journey and the joy of a lifetime thank you miss McLaughlin we'd like to present to you

[02:28:58] these gifts and appreciation for your 12 years of service madam chair may I please make a comment of course oh okay thank you I would like to extend my

[02:29:35] gratitude to all school board members for their continuous dedication their contributions significantly significantly impact our county's welfare and to those transitioning I extend my best wishes for your future endeavors and express gratitude for your years of service. Tonight I want to express my deep appreciation for Miss Omish's invaluable support as she has helped me immensely. A crucial aspect of amplifying student voices lies in the ability to confidently speak up, a lesson Miss Omish has helped me grasp. I vividly recall her outreach when first elected, ensuring I felt equipped and understood my responsibilities,

[02:30:13] facilitating a seamless transition. Her support extends far beyond my experience. Past student representatives like Kimberly Boateng have echoed sentiments of immense gratitude for Ms. O'Mesha's continuous support. Kimberly attested to Ms. O'Mesha's steadfast presence, describing her as a reliable ally throughout challenging times, notably during the pandemic. She highlighted the significance of having a relatable figure, particularly as a younger person of color, to seek guidance from. One of Ms. Omash's most admirable traits is her resilience. Regardless of the situation, be it the late hours or the level of

[02:30:51] support, she continuously champions the well-being of our students and relentlessly advocates for the enhancement of our public education system. Her resilience is one of many qualities that sets her

apart. She doesn't quit. And that's what makes her an exceptional leader, advocate, and a supportive figure just like an older sister. It's a lesson for new leaders. Even in tough times or with unfriendly faces, standing your ground matters. Ms. Omeche embodies genuine leadership and shows how vital it is to represent our school community effectively. Ms. Omeche's dedication to the school board has

[02:31:28] undoubtedly left a long-lasting mark, setting a high standard for advocacy and leaving a legacy of commitment to the betterment of our educational landscape. Thank you, Ms. Omeish, for all your hard work, and I hope one day we cross paths again. Thank you so much for surprising me with the lovely words.

[02:31:53] Thank you. Thank you to each of the members. I'm sorry. I'm being choked up, too. Thank you for each of the members on our board for your service. It has been a pleasure to surround the board with you.

[02:32:09] I will now call for the vote for the eight proclamations recognizing all of the outgoing school board members all those in favor and that is unanimous at this point i would like to give a special thank you to the clerks of the board i'm christina setlow kevin jackson and tara petrovich for organizing all of the board

[02:32:38] transition events over the past few weeks at this time i would like to invite those here in support of the proclamation honoring miss megan mclaughlin to please join the board for a photo

[02:33:02] okay so we're inviting actually everybody up who wants to be a part of the photo and we're

[02:33:56] going to do one large photo so if everybody could join us school board members we want to do one

[02:38:54] with the leadership team and school board member all right we'll just take a five minute break

[02:44:55] and then we'll start the meeting okay board members please take your seats all right as

[02:54:35] our board members are getting seated and we're getting ready to start I would like to extend a deep appreciation to our community participation folks that have been sitting here for hours and waiting um we usually have proclamations before a meeting but this was an exceptional one so community participation the next order of business is community participation we welcome all community members who are here and those who signed up to speak this evening community members can sign up to provide comments at school board regular business meetings and

[02:55:14] public hearings on the school board's website at regular business meetings speakers may address any school related issue except those that have been scheduled for public hearings such as the capital improvement program budget and boundaries comments targeting criticizing or attacking individual students are not permitted during public meetings complaints regarding school based employees should be directed to the appropriate school principal or other school officials speakers should not use personally identifiable information in connection with an individual student or school-based employee additionally speakers should be respectful

[02:55:50] and observe proper decorum in their statements avoiding profanity inappropriate gestures shouting and comments that run counter to the spirit and letter of the school division's non-discrimination policy which protects students and staff from discrimination based on age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.

[02:56:16] Speakers must limit their remarks to no more than two minutes, direct their comments to the school board, and should remain at the podium until concluding their remarks. Additionally, only the speaker may stand at the podium. They may not be joined by others. Speaker substitutions are not permitted. A speaker may not yield their time to another individual. At the conclusion of two minutes the microphone or video will be turned off. School board members will be listening but not responding. We ask audience members to be respectful of one another. Shouting and outbursts

[02:56:51] will not be tolerated. Audience members should hold their applause until the conclusion of a speaker's remarks and remain at their seats including when video recording or taking photos. We are grateful to those who have come to speak to us today and thank you for your cooperation. I do understand we have a switch a little bit of a switch with some of the people because of a request by our

[02:57:16] student speaker. Madam Clerk please call the first speaker. Chloe Kim. Good evening school board.

[02:57:32] I'm a student from Oakton High School. Last year there was a record high of close to 8,000 pedestrian deaths due to automobiles. As you know two years ago a member of two members from my community in Oakton High School were killed by another student in my community as well as an event that happened in McLean High School just a couple weeks ago we must put measures in place so that schools and roads around them are safe despite proximity to these incidents schools have done nothing in response and have stopped talking about the incidents altogether even students cease to remember the detrimental effects of these incidents we came to the school board today to ask for most more robust drivers education programs that centers around the responsibilities of student drivers as well as the

[02:58:11] educational programs that they get involved with we urge the school board to remediate the current program and also include pedestrian safety education we urge the school to remediate the current program while remaining sensitive to current events that have occurred as well as addressing educational shortcomings have resulted in the tragedies that we see daily in our own school we collaborated with the school administration to add a PSA video to the driver's education program and gave students opportunities to try out impairment goggles that gave them first real-hand experience about the experience of being visually impaired while under the influence. We also implemented newsletters and opportunities for us to share information

[02:58:49] on how these impairments affect student drivers. We continue to spread awareness through school-wide newsletters as well as through PSTD nights that we have seen at meetings and through our own presentations. However, this is a county-wide issue that needs to be addressed. As the school board, it is the responsibility of each and every member to ensure that students have safe access to their education and the FCPS creates student drivers that understand that driving is a privilege and that there are grave consequences to reckless driving.

[02:59:16] Thank you and good night. Kyra Vakwaja. Sandra Hawk.

[02:59:45] Good evening. My name is Sandy Hoke. For the past 25 years, my husband Rich and I have lived in the Woodson community, which is where we met Megan. It is our privilege to stand in front of the school board to thank Megan for her 12 remarkable years of dedication, service, and sacrifice to the Braddock District and to Fairfax County as a whole.

[03:00:07] Before joining the school board Megan was already advocating for students in 2008 as the president of fair grade Megan met tirelessly with students parents communities and school the school board and county officials to discuss the inequity of the FCPS grading system. Her dynamic approach to gathering and presenting data inspired an entire county to stand up and demand change. Megan knew that modernizing the grading policy would allow our students to compete equally with students across the nation.

[03:00:37] She was right. The new grading policy opened doors and changed its future for thousands of FCPS students. As our Braddock District School Board member, she's faced many challenges, including a variety of deficits, boundary redistricting, vetting multiple superintendents, serving on the artificial turf task force that has already turfed 15 fields, and, of course, navigating unprecedented school closures and reopenings during the pandemic.

[03:01:05] However, for many of us, Megan's legacy will be her unwavering commitment to provide effective resources for student safety, mental health, and suicide prevention. After witnessing the devastating impact that antiquated protocols had on students and their families, she was instrumental in reforming FCPS's student disciplinary policies to include parent notification and participation.

[03:01:32] She worked to fund more psychologists and nurses in health clinics. also fought for later start times to ensure our kids were at their mental and physical peak during the school day as a county we owe megan a huge debt of gratitude for the positive impact that she's had on our children's education and their futures she's given her blood sweat and tears and her whole heart to make our community better we'd also like to thank jim and their three sons

[03:01:58] jim connor thank you debbie kilpatrick good evening i'm debbie kilpatrick a proud resident

[03:02:38] of sully district and i serve as the vice president of outreach with the fairfax county council pta as the largest council pta in the state we represent 170 ptas with close to 40 000 members who volunteer to support organize inform and advocate for our schools and communities i remember the excitement at the beginning of your term with innovative plans and goals that

[03:03:17] each of you had for the school division but then the pandemic happened and difficult decisions had to be made during extraordinary challenges but you made those decisions and you kept the health safety of our students and staff at the center of those decisions your school board term has been unlike any other term during our lifetime so think about

[03:03:54] that while it's been a challenging few years with many lessons learned please know that your efforts to meet the needs of students their families and staff are very much appreciated. PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children and you have supported PTA's

[03:04:26] mission during your term. On behalf of the Fairfax County Council PTA Executive Board, we want to thank each of you for your dedicated service during this term with the presentation of FCC PTA's awarded distinction the award Daniel Sanders good evening school board members Dr. Reed and school

[03:05:04] system staff I've for the most part kept my own council for the last eight years that ends tonight school board members who are continuing their public service by moving to higher office thank you for your service here and we wish you the well as you go to do the people's business in Richmond incoming school board members congratulations on your election or return to office the serious work of servant

leadership begins in january you will need perseverance wisdom low blood pressure and above all a focus on academic social and emotional success of fairfax county students your constituents want to feel heard for you to be deliberate in your responses and

[03:05:42] statements or for you to do what you promise dr reid all the best in adjusting to six new bosses and six experienced ones on this board of equals in what promises to be a very challenging budget year departing school board members thank you for your incredible service as a school board widower of eight years you have my respect it takes an incredible number of hours dedicated to constituent services volumes of reading lots of follow-up and compassion and meetings meetings and more meetings to my wife and favorite school board member you told me that your time on the school board is

[03:06:17] both the most challenging and the most rewarding work of your career i would agree you handled the pressure with grace care and intellect navigating a pandemic innovating employment opportunities during a government shutdown closing the achievement gap expanding purple star school recognition and forging an incredibly strong relationship with fort belvore revising contracting policies establishing the jet with the board of supervisors visors working as a team with your fellow mount vernon electeds and all of these sacrifices were worthwhile from what you've brought to the citizens of Fairfax County. After eight years of school board, we no longer have

[03:06:55] house rules at home. We have Robert's rules. I look forward to being able to talk about something other than school board without first asking for a point of privilege. Robert Rigby. Hello, I am Robert, an employee of yours. I've been speaking in this auditorium for 24 years. I want to thank

[03:07:33] y'all hugely for the rest and sacrifices you've made for LGBTQIA plus student staff and families. I will run out of time in my list a queer black alumnus of 20 years told me to say Thank you from his heart to the school board for changing the name of his school He was very glad to learn that he can now get a new diploma with justice instead of Jeb Stewart on it You've all become heroes to me even if I may not always show it. Um, here's a further partial list

[03:08:06] Um, let's see. Updates to non-discrimination policy 1450 in 2014 and 15, especially on that scariest of nights in May 2015. Saving LGBTQIA+ student clubs from forcefully outing students in multiple years. Family life education lessons about gender identity and sexual orientation, and fighting and winning the resulting lawsuit. LGBTQIA+ history month, an amicus brief in in Grimm v Gloucester and helping Gavin Grimm himself come and speak at a high school of hours.

[03:08:45] Effortly updates in subsequent years, notably 2000, oh good lord, 2018 when we expanded teaching about life-saving HIV prevention medicines known as pre-exposure prophylaxis and the life-saving words sex assigned at birth, oh that was number 10, overseeing development of a seminal regulation 2603 that brought FCPS up to national and international standards, the best in Virginia, and of course, standing by our books about queer, disabled, black, Asian, immigrant, Latin, Latino, women, girls, and be religious and non-religious people.

[03:09:23] Thank you. Vanessa Hall. My name is Vanessa Hall. I'm an alum of and have two children at FCPS, and I've been your constant companion for nearly four years. Anyone who took office at the beginning of 2020 did not know what they signed up for, especially school boards. Even in the best of times, school boards deal with decades of underfunding, haphazard management, and a myriad of issues that no school or board

[03:10:01] can be expected to solve. You have to do all of this while supporting education, a large community, and working with 11 strangers sometimes. So, on behalf of Ford Public Education and our community, I wanted to say thank you for taking on this Herculean task for the last four years. First of all, you kept our families safe during a once in a century pandemic. In the meantime, yet you still have accomplished so much more. You expanded TJ admissions, improved access to mental health support for all students, elevated the voices and needs of our disabled community while making classrooms more welcoming and bolstering special education

[03:10:41] You renamed Woodson, thank you, electric buses to combat climate change and move us into the 21st century. You kept books in libraries and classrooms. I can't even believe I have to thank you for that, but thank you. You made equity a centerpiece of education efforts so that students receive the support and opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

[03:11:03] You hired Dr. Reed, thank you so much. You involve diverse voices, books, teachers, and curricula so that each student is more likely to feel seen, welcome, and included. You also have shown immense support for our LGBTQIA community from almost all of you, and I really appreciate that.

[03:11:21] I could go on and on, but we only have two minutes, which is another improvement. Do I always agree with you? No. Nevertheless, I appreciate your commitment to listening and communicating with the community, even when people say unkind, untrue, and frankly dreadful things. for the last time, I'd like to thank you for listening. Cooper Jessup. Distinguished board

[03:11:55] members, fellow parents, thank you for allowing me some time to speak. I am the parent of three Woodson Pyramid students right now, and I am here today to address a letter I received about my child's data being deliberately handed to a parent. I have since found out that this same parent has been handed data that she was not entitled to at least two different occasions and was given full access to my students' records by a paralegal and an IT guy. We have all found out that we did not

[03:12:30] do enough or learn enough about our past mistakes the first time this happened, and lo and behold, it happened a second time. Our data governance practices and policies have failed. Our teachers and our school admin teams worked too hard to have something like this tarnishing their reputation.

[03:12:53] My questions for the board are, who was in the room with authority to release my students' data when it was handed to this individual? It certainly wasn't a paralegal and an IT guy. And who has been held accountable so this doesn't happen again and again?

[03:13:15] It was either done by someone with gross incompetence or a bad actor. Neither is acceptable. We need real change in the leadership and data governance space. We are one of the finest school districts in the country. Let's make this a teachable moment.

[03:13:30] and learn from our mistake not repeat it again i would like to close with a quote from george w bush fool me once shame on you fool me you can't fool me again i still don't know what he meant when he said that but i know that they shouldn't fool us again either let's make some changes and let's try to get this right now please let's fix our practices thank you for the time

[03:13:58] carl krueger mr krueger is virtual hi good evening can you hear me yes yeah uh this past Wednesday I got a very alarming letter for me that my the data relating to my son's IEP system was released to another parent along with 35,000 other Fairfax County Public School students past and present.

FCPS was aware of this for more than a month but never bothered to reach out to parents about this incident in the county-wide announcement. The 800 number in the letter was sent to an

[03:14:34] Experian employee who I talked to at length and do nothing more than I did based on what was was provided in the letter. The Experian representative also told me that was highly unusual and was given no information about a resolution to the data breach that she could share with concerned parents calling in like myself. When I called the Fairfax County Public School Student Superintendent's Office, I spoke with someone who had no more information than the Experian employee. I have a lot of questions like Mr. Jessup, who will be held accountable for this data breach? How could one individual so easily obtain records for 35,000 students at Fairfax

[03:15:09] county public schools why weren't parents notified about this incident in a more timely manner and even though 35 students and families were impacted in this incident how many more have had their data leaked and fairfax county doesn't know about it what are you doing to the privacy of our children and i'll close with this where the outgoing board members know that the last word you hear from the community in your last board meeting is sham on you failing to protect our children's privacy

[03:15:38] maya nofel hi my name is maya nofel i'm a student at lake braddock high school and i'm here today to to share an incident that occurred at my school over a month ago.

[03:16:06] I am a proud Palestinian American, and with the ongoing genocide happening in my country, I decided to show my culture to the world by wearing my kofia on my head. As you can see, I'm wearing one this evening. On November 8th, I entered school wearing this kofia, which represents Palestinian culture.

[03:16:25] As I entered class, my algebra teacher questioned me and asked, "What's with the hat?" I responded that it wasn't a hat. As she mentioned, she doesn't allow hats in her classroom. In further attempt to get me to remove my kofiyah, she started to question if it was religious.

[03:16:40] Even after I explained that it was cultural and not religious, she neglected my explanation and she said that she didn't realize that I was that type of person. I asked what she meant by those words, that type of person, to which she replied, a Muslim.

[03:16:56] She went on to say she didn't realize that my parents raised me that way, as she ignored the fact that the kofiyah has no religious significance, as I had already explained to her, she continued to attach it to Islam while questioning my religious association.

[03:17:12] Such ignorant and sly comments made me feel deeply uncomfortable. Her comments weren't just deeply offensive, but it was embarrassing and humiliating to deal with her ignorance in front of my entire class. This teacher has also made many other disturbing and racist comments during past classes, which made my fellow peers and I very uncomfortable.

[03:17:33] those comments were reported they were deemed as irrelevant we demand that these kinds of hateful words be taken seriously a simple i'm sorry and the restorative justice process is not going to cut it thank you noah noful good evening my name is noah and i'm speaking to you today as a palestinian american and on behalf of my younger sister maya who just shared her experience over

[03:18:10] the past several weeks our family has been corresponding with lake braddock high school's administration regarding the incident that occurred in which my sister was met with extremely inappropriate and discriminatory speech from her teacher during class rather than taking action against

the teacher my sister was put into a predicament to either change classes or be placed into an online course like Braddock chose to protect this teacher and neglect her degrading remarks rather than address the itch rather than address the issue with any kind of disciplinary action since students witness statements were lost as As what was dictated and what was verbally stated did not match and was never recovered, no actions have been taken to resolve the matter.

[03:18:50] No actions have been taken to ensure that students are able to learn in a safe environment that isn't coerced by prejudiced educators. Additionally, no apologies whatsoever have been received. It's a shame that this teacher is allowed to continue as normal, while my sister and other students must bear the burden of her ignorant rhetoric.

[03:19:10] As I speak to you today, we are petitioning fellow FCPS residents demanding that the FCPS Board and Superintendent Dr. Reed take action. We are asking for the removal of the teacher from the school system. No teacher should be speaking to students in such a degrading manner.

[03:19:25] We ask that this teacher be terminated from FCPS. We also implore the school board to condemn the teacher's hateful rhetoric toward the Palestinian and Muslim communities. Finally, we ask that the administration of Lake Braddock offer an apology for dismissing the teacher's actions and for overlooking our grievances.

[03:19:43] We hope those listening share our concerns and that the superintendent and FCPS board acts accordingly. - Thank you. - Omar Abbas.

[03:20:10] - Good evening, everyone. I just want to thank everyone for their public service. For those of you who are going to continue and stay on the school board. And for those of you who are going to do different things, I want to thank all of you and to celebrate all of your contributions. But specifically, as the husband of school board, Abra Ramesh, I want to celebrate her and her accomplishments on this board As the proud husband of Abrar, I speak on behalf of our whole family when I say that we're so proud of what you have done, not just on the school board, but in life.

[03:20:45] We love you very much. You've been an inspiration for all of us, the gem of our family, our pride that we always so happily boast about whenever we can. And living side by side with you, seeing your work ethic, the seriousness with which you took, your public service commitments, we all knew that you are destined for greatness.

[03:21:07] And I've said this before, I'll continue to say this time and time again, I'm always astounded at your ability to speak extemporaneously. I remember once you were invited to a national conference, and you weren't just a side speaker, you were one of the main speakers. And as the date came closer, I wondered, when would you start preparing? And the more you delayed, the more nervous I got. And I started to have this gut-wrenching feeling in my stomach. And when the day came of the conference, you still hadn't prepared anything and so as we drove together I was shivering from anxiety and you were playing

[03:21:45] with your phone and during that car ride you became so laser focused so focused that you actually forgot I was driving you forgot that I was even there but you focused in those 10 minutes to write bullet points for a speech that you would perform that was so great that people would come afterwards saying that this was the best speech they've ever heard and it's not just your speaking ability that makes you so unique it's the fact that you take your principles seriously you're

[03:22:14] always ready to say what abara idrisi hello everyone let's address the elephant in the room

[03:22:50] yes we have the same name uh i'm also here to address her on her final day and uh i'll start with an anecdote of the first time i heard about abrar is when people congratulated me on winning the position for a board of fairfax thank you uh however i don't think i could do nearly as much as she has done for us as a community um and what she has done to represent our interests, Fairfax County School Board, and for the younger generation to be a first

[03:23:22] in many aspects, I'll go ahead and read a statement from, although she has impacted me, she has impacted many students in Fairfax County School Board, and I'll read a statement from Khaira who couldn't, who had to leave because it was getting late.

[03:23:48] You can't be what you can't see. As a fellow Muslim woman who proudly wears the hijab, Khaira, a class of 2021 ISN grad, cannot express enough how much Abrar's presence and leadership meant to her personality and has helped shape her into the person she is today.

[03:24:06] And as someone who is her age peer, I feel similarly and as much as I am very proud of her accomplishments and very proud of the things she has done and to be inclusive of everyone and to represent everyone equally although she we value her very much and would love her attention more than anything but she has stayed just and true to the equity and diversity she always championed and while she is had is a first in many things I hope

[03:24:42] she is one of many because we would love to see more individuals that could represent us on the board and that that would our voices continue to be echoed in many public spaces thank you very much madam chair that's our last public speaker thank you now we have student representative matters I call on miss Kareem thank you madam chair and good evening everyone recently the

[03:25:21] superintendent advisory council has recently established five distinct committees aligning with objectives outlined in our strategic plan these committees focus on critical areas such as student attendance standardization of grading managing student workload fostering inclusivity for all and enhancing access to college and career opportunities our latest meeting involved delegates collaborating with different subject matter experts and respective committees i aim to invite school board members to engage in these discussions and our end of year proposal as it's paramount that we involve all stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and inclusive decision-making. During the meeting, I also

[03:25:59] received significant feedback regarding school safety. Students expressed heightened concerns specifically emphasizing the necessity for more frequent lockdown drills. Considering the unfortunate frequency of incidents, it's evident that the current two lockdown drills per year might not adequately prepare students for potential threats. While we conduct one fire drill monthly, the limited frequency of lockdown drills doesn't match the urgency and importance of preparing students for various safety scenarios. Therefore, increasing the number of lockdown drills becomes

[03:26:33] imperative to enhance the readiness and response in critical situations. Another common theme was surrounding school infrastructure. A study from the California Policy Lab illuminates the profound impact that upgraded school facilities have on student progress. The study examining millions of students pre- and post-transition to renovated schools, showcase tangible improvements, moderated rises in test scores, increased attendance rates, and improved academic performance, aligning seamlessly

with our strategic objectives. These findings highlight the pivotal role that refurbishing our schools play in enhancing educational outcomes. Focusing on our educational

[03:27:13] infrastructure not only nurtures conducive learning environments, but also directly supports our strategic plan. By undertaking these renovations, we lay the foundation for a ripple effect, fostering enriched learning experiences and ultimately guiding our schools towards higher academic attainment.

[03:27:31] Finally, as for technology youth empowerment, a STEM initiative led by the SEALs, I'm thrilled to share some upcoming initiatives. Over winter break, a STEM-focused camp covering physics, anatomy, and engineering is scheduled to take place at Fairfax Regional Library taught by Woodson and Justice High School students.

[03:27:48] Looking ahead to 2024 in January, a team of students from Robinson Secondary will lead sessions on chemistry and electricity at Laurel Ridge Elementary School. And additionally, students from Chantilly High School will spearhead teaching sessions on computer science and engineering at Brookfield Elementary.

[03:28:08] These initiatives reflect ambition in our students when it comes to empowering our youth. Lastly, to the school board, even though I've only been here for six months, Your dedication and efforts have made a lasting impact on students. And for that, we will forever be grateful. Thank you. Superintendent Matters, I call in Dr. Reed.

[03:28:32] Thank you, Madam Chair. As the term of this school board comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every school board member for their hard work and dedication with special appreciation and recognition for our eight departing board members.

[03:28:50] Although we've only worked together for the past year and a half, I greatly value and appreciate your experience wisdom, dedication, and years of service that you've brought to this important work. Each of you have always brought valuable perspectives as representatives of our community, and you're also motivated to ensure all of our schools provide all of our students with a high-quality education that supports the success of each and every student.

[03:29:16] I also want to personally thank you for your partnership and efforts as we work together over many months to develop our strategic plan that will guide FCPS through 2030. As you know this plan serves as our North Star as we continue the transformative journey in our commitment to excellence, equity, and opportunity so that each and every student reaches their greatest potential. As you put in many full-time hours to this part-time position, we genuinely appreciate your service to our students, staff, and our community.

[03:29:49] It is the mountaintop educational experiences we provide and the reputation of our schools that brings so many families to live in fairfax county for those who are remaining on the school board i look forward to our continued collaboration as we work together as a division toward continuous improvement in meeting the needs and supporting our students staff and families together all things are possible thank you thank you dr reid now we'll hear our strategic plan goal one baseline report

[03:30:26] presentation. I call on Dr. Reed. So good evening, Madam Chair, reminder that the board did have an opportunity to spend quite a little bit of time reviewing goal one this past Tuesday. I don't know about you, but this past Tuesday feels like a month ago. Okay, does anyone else feel that way

[03:31:05] tonight? Anyhow, it was an exciting opportunity. And I just want to again, props to staff for putting together such an outstanding report that really addressed, I think, key areas in Goal 1. So if we could go to the next slide, please.

[03:31:24] One of the things that was really important as we think about providing Goal 1 data was that we want to really think about where students start their education in FCPS. And this actually occurs at various points, not always just at the beginning of the academic experience but it also is an opportunity to think about pre-k experiences as well as the associated achievement by third grade in our language process for English learners and I want to remind those who are watching excitedly to learn more about goal one that the full report is posted on board docs for your reading pleasure.

[03:32:01] I want to remind our community and our board that we do have five goals and this evening the strong start pre k-12 is really what we're speaking about the four pillars of course are ways in which we're going to be enabled to achieve the success of these goals the measurement specifically that we're looking at as a priority for year one is the availability of pre-k programs and in particular inclusive pre-k to meet community needs and i will say this morning i I had a chance to be at Halley Elementary School and visited the Hornets at Halley Elementary

[03:32:39] School and really warmed my heart. The preschool gathering this morning where they had all of their preschool classes together for a musical morning, which they do every Thursday, it was really heartwarming. And then I had an opportunity to represent all of you as a board and have a hero moment is I was able to identify and locate the gingerbread people for the kindergarten classes there.

[03:33:07] Apparently they had been off hiding around the building. So we were able to provide a safe way home for our gingerbread persons for kindergarten. And I will say the excitement on the young people's faces was it made my week. So anyhow again the importance of pre-k experiences.

[03:33:26] this is a key focus was we talk about closing achievement gaps we know those gaps close most quickly with our youngest learners so we're just really committed to that work and i heard that spoken many times as we honored our retiring board members that this has been and will continue to be a priority for us in fairfax county we also know that pre-k has significant links to graduation it's not simply about pre-k it's about the ability for students to successfully traverse their educational experience.

[03:34:01] One of the things we looked at was some significant data, and we did see, for example, that 78% of our students with a pre-K experience met expectations for all kindergarten readiness, whereas only 48% of our students met those same standards when they didn't have pre-K opportunities.

[03:34:20] So we know that's significant. Again, our third grade reading SOL pass rates where students with a pre-K experience had a 74% pass rate compared to our reading levels of students without a pre-K experience that were at 45%.

[03:34:36] So we know that pre-K experiences matter in terms of student achievement. Again, looking at the baseline years, we're looking at several different types of pre-K experiences. again reviewing our baseline years is that the data and I you know I don't need to read it to you but it is data that we can improve upon and it provides us opportunities moving forward to set some clear targets in the previous slide we shared that 20% of our kindergartners received their pre-k through FCPS and

[03:35:13] what we do know is that students accessing these programs did meet specific criteria to enroll and again this is looking at poverty level or specialized criteria around students experiencing

homelessness or who perhaps are in foster homes it's really important that as we think about early childhood that we make room and space for each and every one of our students to have that experience so at this point let's take a look at some of our baseline data for pre-k 3 and our associated performances in grades K through three again these were data points that we took a long look at on

[03:35:49] Tuesday but for our public again we did look at two key metrics this year with regard to kindergarten readiness and those were the percent of students who entered with experiences and the percent who met the grade level experiences in the fall so as we look at this there's another data point in terms of the percent of students who entered with pre-k experiences and as we look at our student groups I apologize I turned one extra page if we could go back one page

[03:36:23] please thank you as we look across that we see gaps in participation again for several of our student groups which we again are focused very specifically on when we look at the location of our county as you know we have a large county and our staff created a map which essentially put experiences by location and in this case the very darker blue had has more the percentages of students that have no preschool experience and the lighter blue have students that have

[03:37:01] more opportunities to access preschool experience so again we looked and spoke about on Tuesday actually having raw numbers of data because the percentage of a smaller whole number is fewer students. So staff are working on that and we should have something in the next couple weeks as we look at that by a true end.

[03:37:20] Again, looking at the intersectionality data, looking at socioeconomic data and particularly our economically disadvantaged students and our students with disabilities as well as language it just shows a different level of data analysis and let's look at our next slide opportunity gaps again I think there's some meaty data here that creates some real opportunities and

[03:37:55] again this in terms of the plans that our team is pulling together we'll be addressing these students very strategically. One of the things that we've talked a little bit about is the importance of increasing classroom space across the county and making sure that classroom space is actually close to our students' homes. This VDOE special education inclusion data, the state target in 21-22 is 24.9 percent. We're not there yet. We're at 17.93 percent.

[03:38:28] So, again, we have work to do in this area and will continue work in this area. So kindergarten readiness, we can see as we've broken it out by demographic groups and continue to think about when we review this baseline data, the overall percentage of kindergarten students total was 71% who demonstrated readiness, but there are gaps that are significant for some of our students.

[03:38:59] So we have work to do in those areas as well. The kindergarten readiness data we looked at as well with intersectionality and again noted that 52% of our students with disabilities did demonstrate kindergarten readiness. However, we saw some lower scores and percentages around intersectionality data within the student group.

[03:39:24] Examples of current division-wide work, again, we've continued setting aside some monies in the budget. We do appreciate that we have some recent state or commonwealth-wide announcements, at least committing to understanding the importance of early childhood.

[03:39:42] But even so, the state only provides about 50% of the funds needed to serve pre-K students even when they're providing the funds, and again, it's only provided for students that meet state income

eligibility provisions. So it is requiring a commitment and investment by our county.

[03:39:59] This work has been primarily developed and worked through with the skipped committee, which several of you have been on, and I know staff also participate in. So examples of work that's under consideration, these are three models of which we're going to be building out likely several other models, but this is an area where we're starting, and we're also currently looking at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education report that just came out for other support strategies and ideas.

[03:40:34] So language progress for English learners. Again, we looked at two accountability metrics in particular. Again, those percentage of students who were English learners that met the state standard around English proficiency and the percent that met the state standard of English and And made expected growth around that.

[03:40:58] So these are areas in particular that provide us again some significant opportunities for strategic planning and work. The baseline data again towards English language proficiency indicates of all 40% 45% of all English learners met the state standard standard.

[03:41:18] Our English learners with IEPs had meaningfully lower performance at 34%. So that intersectionality data is critical to take a look at. Again our ESOL office continues to work with all schools implementing the divisions programming model by providing targeted professional development and consultation to support progress of our long term English language learners as well as using data tools to monitor student progress.

[03:41:49] And we are in the fall planning or actually the spring planning to adopt a basal resource to support consistent English language development instruction for all students in those primary grades. And I think one of the interesting data points that Rich Polio brought to leadership team recently is that we now have 88% of our teachers that work with our multilingual students.

[03:42:14] So we really are well beyond, I think, the need to make sure that all staff and all teachers have up to date culturally responsive high leverage instructional strategies as we have an increasing number of multilingual students conclusions.

[03:42:36] So as we finish this baseline report with their several conclusions and implications that foreshadow our work ahead. We know that pre-k access is associated with higher performance. We know younger children close gaps more quickly and we also know that there are large numbers of income eligible students who are not applying either to be in pre-k programs so there's a reason that we're going to have to look at barriers whether they're language transportation distance we have some key data points to work with and another key finding is that to increase inclusion

[03:43:14] opportunities we're going to need to expand delivery options in both existing as well as new classrooms we continue to look around the county for spaces within current schools or perhaps to modernize buildings that we own and just looking at all types of creative options for that and at this point that we just want to recognize that the strategic work is going to take several years and we're excited to launch this and look forward to seeing results soon so thank you madam

[03:43:47] chair thank you dr reed okay i guess we are on to our next agenda item action item fiscal year 2024 mid-year budget review i call in dr anderson for a motion i move that the school board approve revenue and expenditure changes reflected in the fy 2024 mid-year budget review as detailed in the

[03:44:23] agenda item is there a second second dr anderson would you like to speak to your motion just briefly at the last meeting we had the opportunity to have this presentation and school board members were able to ask questions regarding the budget review and I believe that staff heard our concerns and our questions and now we need to make sure that we can allocate those expenditures as noted by Ms. Burden. Ms. Carver Sanders would you like to speak to your second? I think Dr. Anderson has

[03:45:00] addressed it. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. McLaughlin would you like to speak to the budget review?

[03:45:16] I would briefly. My colleagues you may remember at our business meeting 10 days ago I had expressed concern that we have heard from our schools that there are a number of facilities that are in need of repairs and upgrades and that I had asked Dr. Reed if she and her team might look at the $3 million that we're going to be carried over to the FY25 beginning balance and what might we do to really look out for the needs of facilities. We know that there's a backlog in major maintenance

[03:45:53] and certainly that our CIP is not covering our facilities needs as well and so Dr. Reed I just wanted to check to see if your team had had any discussion on that. We're looking at that in the the context of a number of other project possibilities although I also believe that our facilities team did have an opportunity to take a look at some things too I know we have a number of athletic Q topics I also spoke to any how I spoke to our team we don't have a final answer yet but we are working on

[03:46:30] what what would be able to be mitigated and also recognize the need of creating a facility queue that's outside the traditional renovation and remodel queue, but we are looking at the possibility of what we could do with that.

[03:46:47] I appreciate your honesty, Dr. Reed. You know, I'll just tell you, my colleagues, that one of the things that I found difficult with this mid-year budget proposal is that there's, I believe, several million dollars that are being targeted and to spend on some projects and one of the things that I think some of us is right some of us have wrestled with over the years is that these decisions sort of arrive at the board a little bit of a vacuum and without our input that I'm seeing and then we tell our community that we don't

[03:47:27] have money to fund the needs that are coming directly from our schools and And oftentimes we're telling our boosters who provide millions of dollars a year to our schools that FCPS doesn't have the money and that they need to go raise more money in order to make these improvements.

[03:47:47] So I guess, Dr. Rhee, what I would say is that I know you're very committed to our schools. You're very committed to facilities, and you're very committed to, in particular, athletics. But I would just say that I felt that this was a missed opportunity. And as I'm leaving the board, I do hope that you and the next board will have an opportunity to really, I think, puts some more focus and attention on the backlog on facilities and maintenance I really don't want to see them to continue to be overlooked in what I think is ends up being a very direct level impact

[03:48:26] on our students so thank you colleagues with some mesh yeah thank you and I appreciate Ms. McLaughlin taking the moment even though it is our last meeting to raise an important piece I guess maybe it would help to just understand some of the rationale specifically I mean when I see like um elementary school security cameras and background checks and whatnot if someone can just elaborate i guess on how this list came to be and why it was prioritized this way so one of the things we didn't receive um or received our security grant was less than we expected i believe

[03:49:06] mr vaccarello so what we're trying to do because we're still behind in our vestibule installation IS TRY TO PROVIDE SECURITY CAMERAS OUT OF ONE-TIME FUNDS BECAUSE WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR SOME OF THE GAP IN THE GRANT MONEY. MR. RECKERELL, CAN YOU COMMENT ON THAT, PLEASE?

[03:49:27] THANK YOU, DR. REED. SO, YES, THE COPS GRANT THAT WE PUT IN FOR, WE WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL IN THAT GRANT BEING APPROVED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, BY DOJ. THERE WERE EIGHT SCHOOLS, EIGHT OR NINE SCHOOLS THAT WERE NOT APPROVED. WHAT WE DID WAS WE CONTINUED THAT LIST INTO THIS request and ask those schools were all rated and ranked based upon the grant guidelines and also we distributed that as best we could with the other grant applications by region so we we felt like since those schools did not get picked up with the grant it was fair since they were already scored and ranked and ranked that they would be the schools we would submit a total of nine schools

[03:50:07] with the mid-year funds thank you Mr. Vaccarello and I can also indicate that the background checks missomish the reason we moved the 436 000 here was to accelerate that process so we could get all of the background checks done rather than rotate and wait another year for another group of staff we just felt like it was that important and again they're one-time monies at this point so i think um mr smith that enables us to accelerate background checks you just quickly comment on that for me please yes it enables us to accelerate background

[03:50:44] checks we have a project plan where we were looking at doing this over a multiple multiple years and by having additional dollars we can apply the staff and the dollars so that we can work with our state police to get these background checks done more quickly okay I mean it's a significant amount of money I guess what was the trade-off what were other things that were

[03:51:10] considered, if any. On this list, I would say that there weren't necessarily trade-offs because a lot of times they're one-time dollars. So, you know, in a mid-year, we're not going to talk about hiring people or positions. It's really trying to address some of the larger concerns. We're still working through our OCR dollars as well, which are not reflected here, but making sure as we close out all the reimbursements.

[03:51:43] So that's a separate piece. It's still in the budget, but we want to make sure that we've addressed that But in this case these were pretty much the topics But we moved Yeah, these were the topics. I don't know that there were trade-offs at this point. Okay I mean it is reassuring to see that none of them are recurring if I'm reading this correctly, but Yeah, I do think that there's room to be more intentional Just like we prioritize when we discuss the budget year-round

[03:52:14] I think this is another place to do that and I guess there always is a trade-off, right, Dr. Reed, like I even in hearing the student today, like what are we doing to enhance pedestrian safety around schools like that's a money thing too. And so I'm hopeful that we can continue to be thoughtful. I know you all have been thoughtful, but especially on that equity piece and thinking of how we assign urgency to various items, what we've thought of, what we've what people have talked to us about and what we haven't thought of or digged up. Right. So thank you. Thank you.

[03:52:48] I would like to take an opportunity to speak. With two Drainsville schools experiencing parking lot break-ins to staff cars in the last few weeks, I see the need for these exterior cameras and how they can

be useful even in broad daylight. In addition, my Chesterbrook Elementary parents have been advocating for security cameras at their school.

[03:53:09] I understand that the fiscal year 24 mid-year budget funds have been allocated for specific elementary schools, And one of mine actually with a break-in is on the list of nine schools. I understand that the only other large sum of money available in this mid-year budget is going toward background checks, another important safety and security initiative that we've talked about here.

[03:53:32] And then we always have competing priorities. In the last several weeks in particular, I've advocated with senior leadership and with Dr. Reed, and I'm saying again tonight that permanent exterior cameras at all of our elementary schools is important and hope to get more specifics on when all schools might actually get those cameras it is my hope that future budget reviews can look to even further expedite this process or as Ms. McLaughlin pointed out you know there is our pockets of money that we should be looking at and you know

[03:54:06] really weighing this heavily in this the process of looking at competing priorities and just thank for having the list of these nine schools at least um included in this mid-year review all right i do not see other board members that would like to speak um so i will call on the vote on the motion which is on the screen all those in favor there's corbett sanders dr anderson

[03:54:44] miss pukarsky mr kofak karen kieskamara and smirin mariovin okay um rochester heiser and Laura Dane Cohen okay those um opposed those abstaining Miss Mirren and Miss Amache oh I'm sorry Miss McLaughlin my mistake the other M named my mistake thank you Miss McLaughlin

[03:55:20] abstaining and Miss Amache abstaining okay that motion passes um okay action item strategic goal one baseline report strong start pre-k through 12. I call on Miss Bukarski for a motion oh okay ALL RIGHT I KNOW IT'S FINE I MOVE THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD APPROVE THE GOAL ONE BASELINE REPORT

[03:55:55] AS A DIVISION STARTING POINT FOR THE WORK TOWARD ACHIEVING THE GOALS IN OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 THROUGH 2030 IS THERE A SECOND SECOND MS PAKERSKI WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOUR MOTION YEAH BRIEFLY WE WENT AHEAD AND HAD THE PRESENTATION TONIGHT WE HAD A GREAT WORK SESSION ON THIS baseline report on Tuesday, and I hope that everyone can support this.

[03:56:24] I think Dr. Reid and her team did a great job talking about where we are right now in terms of providing pre-K experiences to our children, where we want to be and what we are doing in order to expand these offerings as well as serving our ESOL students.

[03:56:44] So I will hope you can support. Ms. Amesh, would you like to speak to your second? Briefly, I do want to thank staff for their work on it. We did have a robust conversation. You know, obviously, early education and advocacy around funding for that is going to continue to be a major priority.

[03:57:02] It's been in conversations we've had with the county. It's been conversations we've had with the state. I know some of my colleagues will be taking that up as well and have been already in various ways. So that's just something to flag. I also want to thank Dr. Reid, I know you all mentioned the data to be updated on the map that came up from quite a few people.

[03:57:22] So Ms. Neal, thank you for following up on that and hopefully that will come soon as well. And then finally, yeah, some of what was glaring perhaps was just perhaps what appeared to be the systemic injustices around our responsiveness to certain populations, specifically our English learners but more broadly you know our Hispanic population and others with what the data has shown us and the lack of responsiveness over the years so I really look forward to more intentionality around that in the future board I hope someone takes that up I know some of my colleagues will be passionate about that moving forward and then the piece that was flagged the

[03:58:00] continued conversations necessary with some of those families I think you know I'll be eager to hear about some intentionality around that that hopefully comes before we identify the solutions in the next one. But grateful for all the work that's been put into it. Dr. Anderson.

[03:58:19] Yes, briefly. I do want to thank you for that conversation. And one of the things that I wanted to highlight here is that I think there's a commitment to increasing our seats for early childhood. But I do want to raise that we cannot do it currently in the system that we have.

[03:58:37] We do know that some of the efforts that we have currently have had some adverse effects to our current school programs. As I shared earlier on Tuesday, at Wayanoke Elementary School, the entire fifth grade is now in trailers.

[03:58:53] And I raise this because I think it's really important for us to raise the conversations with the Board of Supervisors for us to diversify revenue in Fairfax County so that we can actualize this effort. If we were to have something like a meals tax that was earmarked for early education, early childhood education and renovation, that could also speed up that cycle with that constant stream.

[03:59:19] So I really wanted to uplift that in this conversation and to ensure that we are having those continuous discussions with our counterparts in the school on the board of supervisors, because it currently is a decision that they can make. Thank you.

[03:59:37] Ms. Seiser-Haiser. just briefly and this is this is difficult I will say because I very much want to support your work in this area and I very much support expanding pre-k it is I'm very much behind that and then very much behind the baseline that we have in this report and growing it from there so I don't want my vote which will be no today to be taken for not supporting the goal of pre-k but I'm bluntly I found the answers on inclusive preschool wholly unacceptable and the

[04:00:12] One of the biggest reasons I found the answer that inclusive preschool wholly unacceptable was a statement that we really aren't looking at the preschool autism class for inclusion right now because it's a multi-age class. And if students with disabilities can be in multi-age classes, I do not understand why the general education peer can't be in there with them.

[04:00:32] That doesn't make any sense to me. In elementary school, we have multi-age self-contained students with disabilities in classes, sometimes first through sixth grade. And we expect those teachers to be able to educate all of those grades. Well and the best teacher in the world and these teachers are amazing and they do their best. We are setting them up for an impossible task. And yet it's OK to say this is fine for our special ed kids. God we can't put a general kid in there with

[04:01:04] them. I can't vote for this. Mr. Kofax. Thank you. As I spoke briefly at the like spoke extensively but I will speak briefly here tonight I am really excited to see something that so many of us has worked on

for so many years to have this come to fruition with the making certain we have adequate pre-k experiences

[04:01:38] for our youngest learners so then when they come to our system they are ready to learn and we can as Dr. Reed talked about, have extensive successes for longer without the need for remediation with less behavioral issues and so many things that quality pre-K experience allows. As I said during the work session and repeat it many times for every dollar we spend on pre-K, somewhere between seven and fifteen dollars are saved within the system and i do want again recognize miss o'neill

[04:02:16] and dr presidio and your entire team for the hard work that you did and the excellent presentation you gave to us as i stated in the work session it was one of the most thorough presentations i had seen since i have been on the board and we have had a lot of these but this one talked about everything that we needed to know in order to move forward in a robust fashion and why we need to do that. So thank you all and I will be supporting it. Ms. McLaughlin. Yes Dr. Reed I just I know we spoke at the work session but I wanted to publicly share for those who may watch tonight's

[04:02:55] business meeting that I greatly appreciate the leadership that you have shown and encouraging and bringing out the best in your team on this one. It's absolutely one of the best reports I've seen in my tenure as we really tackle these goal one reports in a meaningful way I really look forward to watching you and the next board tackle the importance of intersectional data related to this work but I did want to just publicly convey my appreciation to

[04:03:33] you and everyone on their work on this one it gives me great hope for the system. Okay seeing no other board members that would like to speak I will call for the vote on the motion which is on the screen. All those in favor. Ms.

[04:03:54] Corbett Sanders, Dr. Anderson, Ms. McLaughlin, Mr. Anna Koufax, Mr. Karski, Ms. Tolan, Mr. Frisch, Ms. Karen Kies-Gamara, Ms. Marin, all those opposed. Ms. Amache, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Rentsch-Heiser, anyone abstaining? Ms. Sutlow, can you call for the vote please?

[04:04:17] that would be nine yeses three nos the motion passes thank you okay we are on to our next action item amending policy 2418 I call on Miss McLaughlin for a motion thank you madam chair I move that the school board approve the amendment to policy 2418 to include that high school credit-bearing classes will utilize the hundred-point letter grade scale with pluses and minuses and to make the technical changes as noted. Is there a second? Second. Ms. McLaughlin would you like to

[04:04:55] speak to your motion? Very much so. First of all I want to thank all of my colleagues for your engagement in our conversation on this one. As we discussed this is really more of an administrative amendment to this policy. Two years ago Ms. Corbett Sanders brought to our attention that one of our high schools was using a four-point grading scale and not the 100-point grading scale that had been passed by the 2009 school board which is over 15 years ago. So

[04:05:31] whereas we thought that that decision by the board had been honored and continued, it came as a surprise. We then, Ms. Corbett Sanders and I, had multiple meetings with former Superintendent Dr. Brabrand, Chief Academic Officer Sloan Presidio, and discussed how this was the case.

[04:05:53] And one of the things that was shared with us is that the 2009 decision, of which a countywide advocacy led to get that changed, had no idea that when the board didn't put it into a specific policy language, then it was viewed as not under the board's authority to control for future changes.

[04:06:14] So when Dr. Reed came to the helm as our leader, we shared with her this problem and the concern. Dr. Reed then reviewed our grading practices along with the grading scale.

[04:06:30] And in July notified the board that upon her review that we would be notifying the school division that in fact the 2009 decision and our practices to date would be continuing. those who were there was a few handful using the four point grading scale but that it was expected by fall 24 all Fairfax County high schools would be using this for credit bearing classes. So I then have been in touch with Dr. Reed when she made that final determination. I asked her her support or her views if we should put this in codified into the school board

[04:07:09] policy. So this would not happen again for a lack of understanding, and Dr. Reed expressed her support for that. So that is where I began my conversations with my colleagues. Again, this is not changing anything we've done.

[04:07:24] And I fully support that this board embark on a more robust policy. But 24/18, the grading policy called Promotion, Retention, Grading, and Graduation Requirements does talk about reporting grades and progress on our students.

[04:07:44] There is a single section, Section 5, that is two sentences, and it mirrors what Dr. Reed sent to our board in July. I believe that any future board should continue to carry the authority that has been understood since 2009, that if any changes are to happen, then it should come to the board and in a public manner for public discussion.

[04:08:12] I am aware that there is at least one board member who's concerned that this doesn't follow our practices. And I would again say that at any point in time through Robert's rules, any board member can bring any motion. This was publicly noticed on December 4th as new business.

[04:08:30] The language was posted. And it is literally verbatim what our superintendent already affirmed of a 15 year practice we've had in place. So this is not changing anything. This is not holding our teachers, our community, and our students out of any decision and conversation.

[04:08:49] She simply affirmed something we've already been doing. And I'll finally note that it took our community 30 years from a Washington Post story in 1978 to Washington Post story in 2008 to ensure we had a standard grading scale in our high schools so that our students can compete a national stage. My colleagues I very much hope you will approve this administrative codification of what Dr. Greed already affirmed and our families can count on that until any future decisions

[04:09:23] are going to come before the board through the superintendent. Thank you. Ms. Corbett-Sanders would you like to speak to your second. Yes thank you Madam Chair. It's an honor to speak to this second tonight as many of you know and as ms mclaughlin has cited the issues associated with the single grading policy being consistently implemented across the county has been something that i have raised for the past few years and it's something that was raised in the early knots because when you don't have a consistent policy then what happens is you have kids who

[04:10:00] within a building or moving from one side of the county to another side of the county are faced with different grading policies. And that is not fair to those students. It's not fair to students who are competing to get into specialized programs. It's not fair to students who are competing to get into universities. And so I learned that the grading scale that most of us thought were was in effect in 2009 going forward was not being consistently

[04:10:34] implemented when at a PTA meeting at West Potomac in the fall of 2021 a new grading approach was put forth and subsequently we met with the community members and Miss Clemenco actually joined me in that meeting and then we subsequently brought that information back to this board table on a number of different occasions. And I was pleased last summer when Dr. Reed actually sent out a communication across the system saying we are going to consistently apply

[04:11:11] a grading scale. And so what we're doing tonight is codifying that policy to ensure that one Fairfax means no matter where you are in Fairfax County you will have consistency in grading.

[04:11:28] So I hope everybody will support this policy. And I apologize that we're addressing this so late into the evening. Thank you. Ms. Marron? Yes. Dr. Reed, can you describe how this item came to be and your thoughts on this change?

[04:11:52] I will share my understanding of how this item came to be. I was speaking with Ms. McLaughlin in, I want to say, the last couple of months about Ms. McLaughlin asked about my perspective on codifying the grading policy, the single grading scale.

[04:12:15] And I had worked-- actually, it was last spring, I think. Last spring, we commissioned a grading committee that Dr. Presidio has been facilitating and actually is meeting again this year. But we hit last spring, we separated the grading scale from grading practices.

[04:12:38] And so one of the things that I heard from the beginning coming into the division was the need for one grading scale. And currently, the majority of the schools are on a 100-point grading scale, the majority of the high schools.

[04:12:53] Also, one of the things I shared with Dr. Presidio and the committee last spring was that we wanted to make sure we had a grading scale at high school or for credit-bearing courses that most would match post-secondary grading scales that students will experience.

[04:13:12] So I made the decision at that point that we were going to have one grading scale based on feedback from the board as well as just good practice in terms of equitable access and opportunity across the division. Given that the majority was at a 10 point scale or 100 point scale, and in general post secondary education is at a 10 point or 100 point scale, that's the scale that was selected.

[04:13:36] Those schools that had a four point grading scale we determined would benefit from this year of transition. So the fall of 24, and I believe all of this is captured on our website, the fall of 24 schools then will have one grading scale for credit-bearing courses so codifying that really was codifying within policy what had already been sent out to all principals and staff that take care of credit-bearing courses having said that

[04:14:11] there's still discussion going on about what would equitable grading practices be that might sit underneath the grading scale. So this does not address that topic. That's something that still, I think, requires quite a little bit more discussion.

[04:14:29] But the scale is a finite decision, and that, again, we're transitioning, and next year it should be the 100-point scale. So that's my response. Thank you. And I'd like to ask Dr. Reed if you inform principals about this forthcoming board vote tonight to change the grading policy.

[04:14:49] I did not inform principals because it's not a change to the direction that I provided them last spring. It's the same direction that they were provided last spring. I did speak to several members of the

HSPA Executive Board and affirmed that for them once they became aware that it was an item this evening. This policy is under the purview of the Office of Special Services.

[04:15:20] As such, can someone on behalf of OSS share how that office was involved since per regulation 1102 procedures for maintenance of directive that office is responsible for writing, reviewing, revising and coordinating directives, including use of the directive coordination sheet SB 100?

[04:15:39] I can't comment on SB 100, the coordinating sheet. What I can say is that the I'm sorry, which office again? This policy is under the Office of Special Services. Okay, which is in ISD instructional services, which is under Dr. Presidio's supervision.

[04:15:57] So last spring when we made this decision, this was a committee that Dr. Presidio was chairing and is still chairing actually as a committee this year. So that office was indeed part of the conversation around the grading scale.

[04:16:13] But no confirmation of the actual process per regulation was followed. Well, the process for the regulation, I believe, was followed because the department responsible for it was leading the conversation regarding that the actual form you're referring to.

[04:16:30] I'd have to go back and check. I'm not sure I'm familiar with E.B. I'm sorry. That's fine. No, that's OK. Thank you. OK. It's S.B. 100, but that's OK. You mentioned the grading task force, and I'm wondering if Dr. Presidio can answer to where the final report from that body with its recommendations is.

[04:16:48] I don't believe it's ever been presented to the board. I don't believe they've had a final report because they're still meeting this year they had an interim report but it did not include a shift or a change in the direction around the grading scale there were several other items around the 50% rule the rolling grade book and I'm certainly dr. Presidio if you'd like to speak to those recommendations please sorry I was having a hard time getting that operational I don't think I would

[04:17:25] really add much I mean I think as dr. Reid stated the committee's work has been focused on grading practices not the grading scale dr. Reid gave us a pretty clear charge at the beginning of that committee work in terms of what we'd be looking at and that the grading scale would be something that would be looked at administratively okay thank you there are discrepancies and how the grading scale is stated in the proposed policy change language and what has been established by the superintendent as stated on the web page titled grading scale earlier this year so these are as follows the webpage states that the superintendent's identification of an F letter grade is equivalent to 50 to 63

[04:18:05] yet the proposed language on the table shows an F equivalent to 50 to 59 it was made a comment was made earlier that these are identical and yet they are not similarly the superintendent's identification on the web page shows no D minus a D as a 64 to 66 and a D plus as a 67 to 69 and yet the proposed language has a D minus of 60 to 62 D of 63 to 66 and a D plus the same as a superintendents of 67 to 69 I believe these errors are evidence that the

[04:18:41] decision is being unnecessarily rushed we must not rush this critical decision to codify language changes integrating policy a question I have for dr. Reed is what is the effective date of this policy this policy change again it's a not a change in the practice that I shared with principals and it would be the fall of 24 that which I believe the website was current that the 23/24 year is a transition year in the fall of 24 all credit bearing courses would be on a

[04:19:19] hundred point scale you're correct that your language on the website does state that but the proposed language in this change does not so the proposed language the red line does not give a date of implementation per regulation 1102 procedures for maintenance of directives the school board office will assign an effective date to regulations and notices upon board approval updated policies will be published on the fcps website given no implementation date in the proposed changes it seems the de facto implementation of this grading

[04:19:49] policy is immediately can you please respond to that dr reed i'm not sure what you're asking me to respond to when does this policy go into effect because the date is not listed on the proposed changes and by our regulation the school board office assigns an effective date and if there's no implementation date the de facto practice has been that it is implementation immediately so we're currently implementing the transition year and the 100 point scale will not be an option for transition in the fall of 24 so it becomes required in 24 whereas it's

[04:20:28] currently in transition so i um i think it's a lot of policies don't have a transition or a bridging time, but we really wanted to make sure that those schools and those staff that had set up their grading practices to be a four point scale had time to transition.

[04:20:45] Dr. Reed, I understand that, but the change in the policy does not state what you have directed, which is that it go into effect school year 2425. This motion may be procedurally correct, but it's not in the spirit or norms of transparent public policy making with this board. Until now, a specific grading scale has existed in the superintendent's authority under regulation.

[04:21:07] your lane as you type the proposed changes moves the matter into policy which is the board's lane semantically change amend whatever it is it is a change to policy the board has a right and a duty to have a full and public discussion we have paused the board from action of matters of less importance to schedule for thoughtful and dialogue my review of events is there has been one public work session about grading and that was on november 15 2022 beginning as far back as 2021 i have requested that the grading policy undergo review by the school board and furthermore as

[04:21:42] governance chair i have spoken publicly and in governance to my intention to seek board consensus to bring this to the full intention of the new board of for work in 2024. as was said earlier this evening it is essential that this board always seek data-driven decisions stronger accountability stronger transparency and robust community engagement accepting the scale because it's been in place since 2009 is not good enough for our students if we are preparing our kids for careers don't exist why would the board set as policy a grading scale from 2009 14 years ago when the technology that was just appearing in smartphones is now informing how we are teaching

[04:22:20] and learning i asked the maker of the motion why it is best for students to make this change tonight miss keys cabara oh you would like okay miss mclaughlin i'll repeat my question i asked the the maker of the motion why it is best for students to make this change tonight?

[04:22:48] It's best for students, teachers, and families to make this change tonight because what we heard from our chief academic officer and our former superintendent is that when the school board in 2009, with its authority, directed the superintendent to adopt the 10-point grading scale, the 100-point scale that we're talking about here tonight, the board made that decision.

[04:23:17] but the board didn't realize in that 2009 vote that they hadn't put it into a policy. They directed it to happen, but it was considered under the board's authority because as someone who lived through it, Superintendent Jack Dale at the time didn't want it, and the board made a direction and said, you will do this after a years-long study and 125-page report. This is not an antiquated grading scale. It is the one we've been using for 15 years, and more importantly, what Dr. Reed said, it's the same one that's used across the nation at our colleges and universities.

[04:23:53] This is in best interest for our high school kids to have the consistency across the division. All we're doing is codifying what Dr. Reed already reviewed and agreed serves our kids best. So we're not changing anything on our students or our families.

[04:24:09] I spoke with every single one of the board members. And what I was concerned about is not only we do this for the kids, but the board's role is to ensure that any changes are happening should happen in public and the changes of the four-point grading didn't happen in public families and kids were showing up at various high schools where principals were doing it so this is actually a way to ensure that going forward if anyone wants to move off the 10-point scale as a division it will be done through the discussion with the superintendent the board and the public our teachers

[04:24:46] stakeholders but otherwise we're not changing what we've already been doing I want to be clear that I have experienced our board be very particular about language being correct in a policy this proposed language does not state an implementation date some principals are asking if this means it will be implemented on January 1 it is unclear and it is evidence that this decision is being rushed I would love to have it excuse me excuse me I would love to have a robust discussion about our grading scale and practices I have a folder of

[04:25:23] emails from the last year I have had robust conversations in the last 48 hours with principals and parents people want to provide input on this matter and there is no reason that it needs to be decided right now after we've celebrated our outgoing members there is no reason it needs to be tonight for the betterment of our students experience. Thank you Ms. Marin. Ms. Keese-Gamara. Dr. Reed I'm sure you've enjoyed this discussion with respect to trying to look at the differences between our regulations and etc and I've certainly

[04:26:02] talked to my colleagues. Is it your position that codifying or putting this language in a policy is appropriate at this time I support codifying the language that is the expectation of the principals at this time this evening if we adopt this policy tonight would there be further

[04:26:38] communication from you regarding this action to our staff to understand when the implementation would be etc yes there would I've I mean I've already spoken to several principals to indicate that we're not shifting from the transition the 23-24 year is a transition year the expectation would be that the fall of 24 just as they've previously understood we're moving to one grading scale for credit bearing courses that 10.100 point grading scale and I would given the conversations

[04:27:17] that have occurred over the last several days I would need to send out obviously another communication Thank you. Yes ma'am. Thank you Dr. Anderson. Thank you. I'll be brief because I think Ms.

[04:27:35] Keyes-Gamara also tackled a couple of my questions. One of the things that I wanted to put on the table is when Mr. Frisch and I brought the trust policy a couple of years ago to the board we passed it

several months in advance to its effective date and so I think the question is a valid one to talk about when this will be effective because there have been some schools that have been provided with some additional well now six months um to be in compliance with the directives that

[04:28:07] you provided to them last spring would that be accurate dr reed okay um would what specifically be accurate it is accurate to say i provided direction last spring and it is accurate that I expect the transition to continue and then we would begin the required single grading scale in the fall of 24 right yes so then could we perhaps have the same disclaimer that we had with the trust

[04:28:46] policy when it was put in place with that it would be effective in the fall because we passed that policy mr frisch was it july it was june but it was not going to be effective until the fall after we've given opportunity for schools to gain their signage to have all of the trainings that were involved and so the accountability began in the fall so i'm asking if we could do something similar here just to be in alignment with what you've already articulated like a disclaimer

[04:29:22] on the policy that this would not be live till 924. I can't remember the language but it was something of it was something of that of that effect. Maybe Mr. Frisch could speak to it. I'm just going to move on. I just wanted to offer that as an opportunity. The other thing that I wanted to raise I understand Miss Marin's statements and wanting to have a fulsome conversation and i think there's still opportunity to do that because mr i'm sorry dr presidio when are we

[04:29:54] expecting to have the report of the grading um work group that is that has been convened for the past now year or so well this is the second year that we've been meeting in the first year the committee did um have some recommendations but the the work needed to continue this particular year so we're currently meeting on a monthly cadence um with the anticipation of bringing forward some new recommendations uh to dr reed probably in april or may i'm so sorry i missed that one probably

[04:30:32] april or may so in april and may you're expecting that the committee will conclude its work and at that point should the board expect a comprehensive discussion about their findings i mean we certainly would be happy to do that it's just however the board would like to receive that information in a public presentation or a report we're happy to deliver that however the board would would prefer okay so if I may suggest because this is still within the timetable if I may suggest miss Marin that that we make a request that the workgroups findings be provided to the board in the work

[04:31:11] session to allow it to then make further assessment further adjustments to this policy maybe it's another policy prior to anything being effective in the next school year. I struggle with some of this because the directive has already been laid out by the superintendent. So many schools have already transitioned. There's just a handful remaining.

[04:31:32] Is that accurate? I don't. I think they're in the process of transitioning. Dr. Presidio, in terms of the four-point grading scale, were there? I believe there were four, but there were some teachers in other buildings that were using the four-point scale as well. So some individual teachers or teams and other schools might have been using it as well.

[04:32:00] So then now we've achieved consistency in the buildings that already had, I hate to keep using the term transitioning, to the 100-point scale, but there's a handful of schools that are still working to make that happen for next year. In terms of school-wide, we had four school-wide schools, I think Dr. Presidio, last year that were using the four-point scale. I think what he's also saying is that we have departments or

classes probably sprinkled across schools but they're not necessarily school-wide of four-point scale and what we said last spring is rather than have more schools move if we're going to have

[04:32:39] a single scale and it's going to be a 10 point 100 point scale let's not keep moving down the road to moving

