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Fairfax County School Board Forum, Tuesday, October 7, 2025

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Place Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length 9m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0ktqVQfMW8>
 - 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 2026-10-29. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] Okay, we're gonna go ahead and kick things off in our forum topic today. Mr. Frisch, would you like to take it away? - Sure. All right, I've spoken to just about everybody on the board, save for one or two.

[00:00:19] And in last spring, I read an article about how Prince William County Public Schools was pursuing a project labor agreement pilot for its next new high school. I think it's their 14th high school.

[00:00:34] Isn't that cute? 14 high schools. I'm kidding. And so it set me on a rabbit hole of research to dig into PLAs and what their potential benefits are. You know, this happens in a backdrop of on occasion, the board is asked to approve one or \$2 million contract supplements for construction projects in our school division when there are work stoppages or other issues that pop up that extend the cost of a construction project.

[00:01:08] And so as I researched PLAs, I also discovered that Fairfax County is doing a PLA pilot for the Akatink pump station. The initial Fairfax County engineer estimate was about 90 some million dollars for that project.

[00:01:23] The PLA contract as granted is in the 70s. And so as I researched, I found that PLAs are essentially pre-hire agreements that ensure uniform wage and benefit standards.

[00:01:40] They promote workplace stability. They support local hiring. They strengthen apprenticeship opportunities. They increase access to small, women-owned, minority-owned and veteran-owned businesses. And they ensure no strike and no lockout clauses that guarantee labor peace to safeguard taxpayer investments in projects, construction projects.

[00:02:05] And so I think at a time when our economy and workforce are being tested by outside forces, hostile to the stability of our regional economy, this proposal represents an opportunity for Fairfax County Public Schools to build a stronger, more resilient community and safeguard taxpayer dollars in the process.

[00:02:24] With the pilot, we're making sure that our capital investments deliver high-quality facilities on time and on budget while opening doors for local workers to succeed in the construction trades. And I think that doubles down on our commitment to excellence, equity, and accountability.

[00:02:41] In essence, it's in action. And so the two big points I want to stress in the research that I did, which is available in the forum topic, I found some peer-reviewed academic papers about the saliency of PLAs.

[00:02:57] And they found a couple things. One, the cost of a project is driven primarily by the complexity of the project and not by the existence of a PLA. In very large studies of schools in California, in Massachusetts, and elsewhere, they found that PLAs do not increase the cost of construction projects.

[00:03:17] Additionally, they looked at the question of whether it impacts the number of people bidding to work on a contract and found similarly it does not have an impact. What they also found is that there is some case to be made for the idea that they could save resources by promoting workforce stability on a project so you're not leading to unnecessary delays in the life of a project.

[00:03:42] So what this forum topic requests is that the board direct the superintendent as part of the capital improvement program to select an upcoming capital project. This would be something that's not currently under contract, and develop a PLA pilot for that project, and this would be part of the CIP that the board votes on.

[00:04:07] So we're not voting on the PLA itself today, we're voting on directing the superintendent to develop a proposal for one on a future upcoming capital project that's not currently been contracted. And so I look forward to the discussion, happy to answer any questions colleagues may have about the subject.

[00:04:27] - Mr. Moon. - Thank you for bringing this. Oh, by the way, if anybody's wondering about why I'm wearing this, yesterday was Harvest Moon Festival, and many Koreans do celebrate, and many Asians, Asian families do.

[00:04:43] And many of us do actually wear a costume, and this is a modernized Korean costume. And since I have it, why not? The Harvest Moon Festival is like a Thanksgiving.

[00:04:59] Families and members in the community celebrate whatever that might have happened over the course of a year. In every occasion you can find reasons to celebrate and be thankful. So I'm thankful for all that has happened since the last year. With that note in mind I'm thankful that my colleague is bringing this proposal. Some of the questions that I had in my conversation with Mr.

[00:05:26] Fresh included exactly exactly what's going to be included in as a part of if you're issuing RFP then are we going to be dictating certain amount of salary and benefits and part of the proposal from our

future developers on any construction project etc and i would love to see that from super in then as and i will support this request i'm going to go ahead and take a quick turn um could you speak a little bit more about what this might do and i think i heard it already

[00:06:05] but i just want to reiterate what would this do to keep jobs local so there are a number of stipulate mr moon spoke to this kind of briefly there are a number of stipulations that could find their way into a pla one of those is hiring locally um and i think that's important when you consider that the money that we're getting for these projects is locally like if the state wants to give us a big chunk of change maybe we can have a different conversation but you know when we finally get a when we do get a proposal back from the superintendent as part of the cip i'm hopeful that one of those stipulations for our proposed pilot would be hiring locally because

[00:06:45] it invests in local workers and by the way the long-term benefit of that is that you're creating a stable construction trades workforce locally which makes it even more likely that future projects will stay on schedule I also hope to see some of our fake kids eventually on on that project so on this project so that would be particularly awesome miss Sizemore Heiser thank you and I just want to first thank mr. Frisch for bringing this forward I know you and I have talked about this a few times and I'm really excited to support this forum topic I mean project labor agreements can have so much benefits not just as my colleague mentioned to the local economy

[00:07:22] but to the quality of the work that is being done and we want to make sure our children are in high quality schools where the facilities are excellent so they can focus on their education. It actually can save costs by having efficient work and preventing costly work stoppages or other issues. They are often ensuring a consistent supply of skilled labor who feel respected on the job and more likely to do a good job and finish on time and on budget. And there's nothing more important than making sure our kids have quality facilities and giving back to the local economy is great. One of the things I'd

[00:07:56] love to see as we go forward with this is a workforce development program that partners with some of our schools and our Academy programs working to allow our students to have apprenticeships or internships on work sites which then gives them opportunities to experience you know a different trade or different and find a career path that they may end up pursuing. So I think this is

[00:08:20] beneficial, not just for our local economy, it's not just the right thing to do for the workers, it's going to lead to higher quality without impacting costs in our projects and facilities, but also can provide a pipeline for apprenticeships and job opportunities for our students. So I think this is a win-win and I'm happy to support it. Thank you. The desired outcome is at the top of page four of the document that was presented for today. So seeing no others, we're going to go ahead and take a consensus on board action here that would be directing the superintendent to bring back information.

[00:08:51] related to a pla pilot so all those in favor miss anderson we need somebody to move in somebody to second i'm sorry all right i move that in alignment with executive limitation five financial planning six financial administration seven asset protection and ten facilities and transportation that the school board direct the superintendent to prepare a project labor agreement pilot for an upcoming capital project the proposed pla pilot should be brought forward for board consideration as part of the fairfax county public schools 27 to 31 capital improvement program

[00:09:23] Thank you, Mr. Fresh. Is there a second? Second. Thank you, Ms. Seismarheiser. All those in favor? That's unanimous for all board members present. Thank you. Thanks. We are going to take just a

few minutes. We will start exactly at 1030 to kick off the first portion of the work session today. Thank you.



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