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Fairfax County School Board Public Engagement Committee Meeting, Tuesday, November 17, 2026

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Place	Fairfax County School Board, Virginia
Length	1h 58m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivHFf1hNFQ8
- 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 2026-11-18. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:10:43] ready three no no you're good we're going for SEMA too but yeah all right three two all right this November 17th regular meeting of the Fairfax County School Board Public Engagement Committee will now come to order the first item is approval of minutes we will now vote to approve the minutes of the September 1 2026 meeting of the Public Engagement Committee give folks a good to course a chance to put up on the screen and see folks in a question oh no worries it's very brief. Is there a motion to approve the minutes? I move that we approve the

[00:11:19] minutes from the September 1st meeting. Is there a second? Mr. McElveen? Any of all those? Would you like to speak to your first? Will you speak to your second? All those in favor? All right, unanimous. Second item. Is Robert Pattinson the right fit for change? I'm just kidding. Next item, student engagement. We will now discuss student engagement and our student representative. I think Newt Shostek, the current student representative to the school board for joining us today. So I'll just, as he gets set up here, I know he and I have talked a couple discussions and I think the underlying issue is just around what

[00:11:57] student engagement looks like, both formally and informally. I know there's several different bodies where we interact with them. We're going to talk after this item about the student leadership program, so separately, but first Mr. Shostak is going to kind of give an overview of what we currently do

and some ideas and questions around ways to make that better so all right thank you Tom I I just again want to extend my gratitude to you for for giving me this opportunity when I was running for this position this is kind of exactly what I had in mind that I would be doing so I am very grateful for

[00:12:34] that and so yeah I'll just get into it obviously there's there's there's three broad proposals that I that I want to sort of get into today the first one being and this has been proposed on the public engagement committee previously but I think that it's a very important idea and I would be strongly in favor of it it is to add a second student representative to the school board there have been many different ideas for how this could be done the method that I would endorse for this would be having a geographic boundary so having two distinct districts. I'm thinking an upper district for the northern sort of

[00:13:11] western parts of Erics County and then a different district for this southern eastern parts of the county that sort of evenly splits the high school enrollment between the two. So that is that is my broad suggestion there. I know there are logistics issues, particularly with having two student reps attending every meeting. Obviously the idea would not be that they attend every meeting but from my perspective I see it as you know when we have a school board meeting of 12 school board members that represent you know adults from across the county far and wide the benefit to them all being at the meeting

[00:13:49] at the same time is representation they represent people from their district or at large or just you know the the constituents who elected them and I think the benefit of having at least granting the two student reps the opportunity if we were to you know approve of this to attend the same meeting is that you would have you would be able to have if you know if there's a sort of meeting say where you have a proposal or a motion or whatever that affects you know two distinct parts of the county that you are getting that representation from the students that you are not sort of having one part of the county responsible you know once student rep that's responsible for say

[00:14:28] you know if we had like boundary changes for example and you had the student rep that was you know at that board meeting was not a part where you know the the boundary changes were going or if say you had boundary changes that were going on some of the northern part of the county some of the southern part of the county and the only person you had to represent the students interest there was from the northern part of the county I think where we would be you know losing something there I think also with this that what this sort of proposal as it is you know when you think about it we have 180,000 students in this county and I know you know the city of Alexandria they have three student reps I'll have to check on on you know how that works exactly with how

[00:15:08] they attend meetings I know they're like appointed by the board so it's a it's a completely different process but when we're thinking about and I know you know the whole thing with the dais that obviously needs to be worked out in that sense I think we would really benefit from trying our hardest look into the best way logistically for how we would go about getting two student reps not just alternating and you know trying to take the burden off each other but if there's a meeting that you know two student reps really have strong opinions about they should be able to vocalize that and I think the other thing here is when you have just one student and 12 school board members as someone that is

[00:15:47] on the dais like in my position right now I am naturally limited by what's realistic in terms of how much I can speak and so I will only be speaking you know if we pretend that all the board members speak even like equally I'll be speaking you know 1/13 of the time and that's 1/13 of student you know voice getting in into the the board meetings and so what board members that are you know adults and voting

members have the advantage of is that they can you know choose a couple things to speak on and not have to speak the entire board meeting because there are 11 other board members that are representing the

[00:16:23] interests of the adults in this county whereas me as a student it's just me and so I think if you allow two students to to and I think there's some creative solution here that we could find for two sooner reps to be to do at least have the opportunity to be at the board meeting at the same time that burden is gone and they could speak and and you know be able to represent those parts of the county so that's that's proposal one I think maybe take a moment to for comments on that from from people if anyone wants to speak on that so we will save the clerks an effort and we won't have a timer but if folks just mind putting their hands up but they're placard up so we'll start with Miss

[00:16:56] Anderson well we'll save you there and generally I am supportive of having two student representatives I do think that splitting the county for interest north south east west however we want to do it I am generally okay with that I do think there are some logistics that are related to just trying to figure out how get two people in at the meeting I do just want to clarify though that I don't just represent the adults like I understand that oftentimes I hear from the adults but I fully and completely am trying to represent the students just as much yeah so we're spending a huge amount of time trying to talk to students

[00:17:36] trying to hear from students and so I understand that we're limited the same way you are as to just the sheer volume of kids and so we want to make sure that we don't negate the opportunity for student voice I do think that there are some creative solutions that we can come up with we're just gonna have to figure out what they are so yeah thank you but it's an interesting idea to have I do not think that the intention was to have originally when we discussed it the intention was not to have both students present at the meeting but I under I hear your points and I would be willing to to talk about what the alternatives

[00:18:13] are I would like to ask the clerks if there are some other aspects that we just want to generally keep in mind as we go forward with the conversation the number one is going to be budget right because we do offer transportation to the student reps if they need it if their parents can't get them to the meeting and so if we have to have a student uber depending on where they live in the county and depending on the time of day they're coming that can start to add up so we just need to keep that in mind if we are broadening it I

[00:18:48] think the other one would be it would be helpful if we're having to then to make sure that the board members are also helping to provide guidance to the student rep the deputy clerks help me and doing it with our student rep right now but the more student reps you would have obviously we would want to make sure that they have equal attention and so it would we may need the board members to help provide some of that guidance as well take your turn real quick so I know when we looked at this a couple years ago I wasn't on the board

[00:19:27] you're on the board but I understand that some school divisions don't have any student reps have one and then some have several I know Alexandria it looks like has three the massive city has a couple I think Prince William County has as a two and then an alternate can you talk a little bit about how other school divisions do it and do they rotate do they join at the same time that sort of stuff yeah good question so from from my understanding I've done in terms of how it's you know it's done in other you know school divisions I've done some minimal research on this I think the big one I've done because I've actually spoken with a student rep from the city of Alexandria on on his sort of

[00:20:07] experience there and so they there's an application process with the board and So I think that's definitely not a direction we want to be going in, not that that's even on the conversation here. But they have three student reps with five board members. So obviously, their adult to student board member ratio is a lot closer than it is on our board.

[00:20:27] And it's hard to make comparisons here, because they're such a small division. But to have three student reps from a jurisdiction of only one high school, I think that gives us the precedent to say, hey, maybe we can try to see what we can do about a second one for a county of 30 high schools.

[00:20:45] So that's how it's done in the city of Alexandria. I'm actually in-- I've spoken to some of the other student reps. I know there's a couple-- I think Washington County, Virginia-- this is kind of a very random one out there. They have it where they actually have like 20 student reps, which is-- I think that's obviously kind of a bit too much.

[00:21:07] But they have-- it's like two per high school, or four per high school, or something. It's two seniors and two juniors from every high school, and they're chosen by the principal. So I think where we excel here, at least from the knowledge that I've gathered and the people I've talked to about this, is that Fairfax is one of the few jurisdictions-- not the only, but one of the few in the state that actually have any sort of electoral process that's democratic for choosing me.

[00:21:35] And so I think that's what we really should be expanding on. And that sort of goes into the other proposals that I have. But that's sort of the gist of how it works in other school missions. In my head, I was wondering how the-- I was almost a little skeptical of the geographic breakdown. But the way you explained it makes sense.

[00:21:51] And I could see having North-South having regions 1 through 3 and 4, 5, 6, something like that, maybe. Can you talk a little bit about the current process to elect the student rep and how all that works? And then my presumption would be if we were to bring out a second person, it would be the same process?

[00:22:11] Or what are your thoughts on that? Yeah, so essentially, the current process for electing the student rep is-- I will say it's a bit convoluted. Like, it could probably be improved a bit. So how it works right now, it involves delegates from the Student Advisory Council.

[00:22:27] There are three rounds of elections. And so the first round of the election occurs virtually. And how it works is if you are an interested candidate, there's no qualifications. And you could be in any grade in high school. You submit a recorded video.

[00:22:45] The video can only be up to 30 seconds long. And then you also submit a written statement where you're answering several questions that have been asked. It's like a Google Form sort of thing. And then what happens is your form responses ahead of time are submitted to SAC delegates for them to look at.

[00:23:01] And how many of them actually do, I'll have to do a bit of a snap poll later when it comes to election season and see what that sort of looks like. But what I do know is-- and then after that, you have the actual virtual primary election, where all of your videos are played back to back.

[00:23:22] And they then, I think, vote for-- it's sort of like block voting, which is you have 15 or so votes-- or there's 15 slots, I should say, for that advance.

[00:23:37] And you have like seven votes. And then you just get to vote for like seven candidates. And then the top 15 advance to a general election, which occurs in person a few weeks later. And at that election, there's another round of voting that narrows it down to the top three, which is with a similar system.

[00:23:57] And then finally, it goes from the top three to just one. Now, in my election, there were a couple of people tied in the first round. So instead of 15, it was 18. And then instead of three, it was four. And then after that-- so it's a very long process. I think if we were to do a geographic division and we wanted to keep that same system, we could.

[00:24:16] We would just have it so instead of all of the SAC delegates electing one student rep, you have the SAC delegates representing the high schools from the Southern District electing the one for the Southern District for student rep and the ones from Northern electing the North. And that would be the simplest way to just keep that. We could also use this as an opportunity to see what we can do to potentially improve that election system if we would like.

[00:24:38] I think it was overall-- I mean, obviously, I'm biased because it got me elected, but at the same time, I think there could definitely be some improvements. I mean, first of all, there were only-- like there's 100 delegates to suit advisory council.

[00:24:56] There are only about like 30 that ended up showing up for the general election. So it's pretty symbolic of how presidential turnout and what their election turnout is in the US. But I think that we could definitely do something to make that process a bit more streamlined as well. I appreciate it.

[00:25:12] Mr. McAbee. So I'm grateful to chair and student representative and everyone who's bringing this forward after many years of discussion. And I'm eager to move this forward. And I think there's sentiment from others on the board well that we move this forward and I I do think ultimately the the the question comes down to this which is how it's done I would just for ease like to maintain the SAC process newt I know you've brought forward other ideas in terms of reforming student governance more broadly and I think that can be used

[00:25:51] in the future but I think the most more urgent thing now is just to get this implemented and you know I'm I'm relatively agnostic I don't know if that's a thing but on the idea of dividing the county and any which way when I was originally thinking about this I was just thinking that we would take the top two vote-getters and we would you know ultimately put trust in the hands of the students to make sure that that you know it was able to capture as many demographics as many constituencies geographies as possible

[00:26:29] so ultimately that would be the by far the easiest thing to do which is maintain the process as it is and just take the top two vote getters but if that does not work I'm open to other configurations if I if I could just briefly just say sorry if I could just say my sort of the reason that I am sort of choosing the or would prefer the geographic division here is because the the I think if you accept the top two vote-getters what's likely going to happen is you're going to lack the sort of increased representation that you would be gaining from having a second student rep in the first place I mean before I was elected to the board we had a lot of student representatives from

[00:27:07] SoCo a lot from TJ I think a lot of when you look at the opportunities in the county there's a lot of there's and there's a lot of sort of opportunities that students from schools like McClain and Langley that that you just don't see that same level of sort of like opportunities that you would that you know what at

Edison or Lewis or Hayfield and so I think the the benefit of the geographic districts would be that you are ensuring that that part of the county is getting a representative rather than going years potentially

[00:27:40] without one which is what was the case was with me. Other questions? Ms. Anderson? I'm looking at the region maps it would kind of make sense for it to be one two and five and then four six and three because that's almost the line and it would also make sure that your pyramids instead of creating some other line it would also create pyramids that are aligned and so it that's what I would advocate for is that if we're going to draw a distinction having it be north south makes makes the most sense it also makes the most sense in terms of drive

[00:28:17] time for the students involved related to visiting schools and going to events and things like that so I think keeping them a little bit closer to home in some of those areas is helpful just to make sure that they have the opportunity to represent so that would be my advocacy and I'm I'm good with moving a motion forward within us to bring something to the full board that we would have to student so I move that we have two student reps one that covers regions one

[00:28:49] two and five and one that covers four or I'm sorry three four and six to be elected using the same process that we currently have until we can come up with something good motion on table is there a second second in this formulation I I mean, I'm OK with it.

[00:29:20] But in this formulation, I think we need to think about, to Newt's point, particularly TJ and Langley, which I think are the two that have had the most. So in this situation, I believe TJ would fall in the South County.

[00:29:36] It's-- it would-- oh, region two. Yeah, if-- and yeah, if I could cut it here, I-- am I, excuse my map? OK, good. OK, thank you. So just, I actually did create a map, unfortunately. I can't show that.

[00:29:51] But the map had basically what you were saying. I don't know if it was exactly perfectly on district lines, but it was on pyramid lines. And it made it so it was a perfect north and south cut that was roughly along those districts.

[00:30:07] And it did have TJ in the north as well, with McLean and Langley and stuff. So that, I think, is a fine way to do it. The only thing is, I think Annandale would be in the second district. No? Yeah, they would be in the second, and so the way that my map worked is it had them in the southern one, and so that allowed it to be half-f.

[00:30:31] Yeah, yeah. Because it's the easiest way for us to see. I just think it's the easiest way for us to keep track of which, instead of giving us one more weird situation on top of everything else, I think that this is the cleanest way because it uses the existing boundaries we already have set for margins.

[00:30:51] Yeah, no, that's fair. I could get behind that. Ms. Dix, did you have any questions? I saw you put your hand up for the -- I don't want to put your hands up. Sorry. So is the plan then to clarify in between the meetings about whether the two reps would be alternating or at the same time, or do we have a consensus on that?

[00:31:16] I think moving forward with the expectation that we're going to have two is the right step. I also think going back to SAC and figuring out -- or going back to SAC and figuring out when they need this decision so that they can adjust their process is going to be part of it so I would recommend that we would hold off at winners our next meeting Janet yeah oh okay so it's just around the corner then so that's

actually a good what we could do is collect some information over the next two months come back January 5th and then that should be enough time for us to get back with sack in order for them to adjust their process to include two and then we would be able to answer some potentially some of those questions

[00:31:55] and bring forward a proposal related to how they would be integrated and maybe even redline the governance manual to include and I think that there's a in the policy the policy already needed to be updated and so it was on my list of ones that we had been needing to work on would you be able to speak to the governance chair about getting that on government I absolutely can talk to the governance chair or I could talk to the governance chair about whether or not Pat could just redo that particular policy and then we could move it from here so I'm sure she would be on board with that okay cool sorry any other questions about the comments on the motion guide I you know we'll have to

[00:32:34] talk with Craig Perrier about you know how this is integrated into the sack process the election pro the SEC election process but I think I would support newt's proposal and that you maintain the current structure of the election and just have the southern districts vote for the southern representative and northern represent northern districts vote for the northern representative yeah yes and I I will also say to that actually the list of proposals that I have tonight I have actually put that in a sort of like feedback survey that I'm trying to get out to the Student Advisory Council so

[00:33:12] that I can get sort of that data and I've reached out to to Perry about that and and he will hopefully be putting that up soon for them to fill out could I sort of move forward with my... Any other comments or questions on the motion? Oh, right.

[00:33:27] Yes. Okay, and Clarence, you're clear on the motion language. Do you need to restate it or we're good? Maybe. Where is it? Hold on. I move that we have two student representatives, one covering regions 1, 2, and 5, and one covering 4, 6, and 3 using the same system as voting as we currently have. All right, I'll call the vote. All those in favor? All right. Opposed? Abstentions?

[00:33:56] unanimous for those board members present all right continue we'll keep talking about student representation and if you can't do just share a little bit about background about what the current layout is just for for those new members of the board sitting here okay awesome yeah so so the next part of this I have just a couple more proposals that really have to do with the student Advisory Council it's obviously there are some things you get to figure out in terms of because you know this is for dr. Reed and for the purposes of the superintendent and you know also with Perry and stuff like that just figuring out how that would work with them and what they would be open to in terms of

[00:34:33] reform but from my perspective and from the perspective of students including those on the Student Advisory Council that elected me and I my my big second proposal right now is because the way that the actually I'll backtrack a little bit I'm getting ahead of myself the way that the Student Advisory Council currently works is that you have four delegates from every high school and two from alternative high schools so that would be Bryant and Mountain View if I'm not mistaken the delegates from every high school are chosen by and I think it's regulation 1703 point five each high school and secondary school shall

[00:35:09] develop procedures for the selection of SAC delegates and then it followed by that it says all students who will be in grades 9 10 11 and 12 during the following school year are eligible to be elected to serve on SAC I think this sort of regulation, what this has done is it has created a body that is not necessarily as democratic as it could be. And when the purpose of the SAC and the policy that created it was to establish a Student Advisory Council that quote will provide opportunity for valid student

involvement in the operation of the school division based on democratic principles and procedures, that we have kind of that the way that this process kind of currently works has kind of

[00:35:47] failed on that account. Because right now the way that Student Advisory Council delegates are elected in most of the county, so this is at Hayfield, this is at West Potomac, this is at Lewis, this is at Edison, I'm pretty sure it's at a lot of schools. I know Chantilly and South County, they have popular elections, but in these other schools that I just mentioned, it is a very secretive and sort of inaccessible process to being put on the Student Advisory Council. I know at Hayfield how it works is you have to first be a part of the leadership class, the SGA class, which you have to apply for. Applications for that are not

[00:36:23] made known to students, and then they just kind of close without anyone saying anything. And I remember that because one time I saw that in my course request and I put it on, and my counselor's like, "Nope, applications for that are already gone." And I'm like, "What applications? No one told us about that." And then so after that, you then are in the leadership class. If you want to be an SEC delegate, you have to then be, you know, chosen by this leadership sponsor.

[00:36:47] so at the end of the day this is not like these students are not representing their peers they're representing the teachers and sponsors that chose them and the ones that accepted their application to be in a leadership program to begin with and we just think about like electoral accountability in that way and so my my second big proposal here would be to find a way to mandate popular elections for Student Advisory Council delegates countywide that's that's that's a big suggestion I think this would sort of strip away the current barriers that exist in delegates being chosen with these sort of secretive processes, it would also greatly benefit not just the Student Advisory

[00:37:23] Council, but the student body itself. Delegates would be far more accountable. They would be more effective. They'd also be more approachable. If they were elected at every school, people would know them. People would feel comfortable reaching out to them more. The process would be more transparent. And I think it would be a much greater service to our students if this body that is invested and so much authority in how they deal with Dr. Reid and the staff that if they were actually elected by students countywide.

[00:37:53] OK, I'll open up for questions on the-- Mr. McAveen. Newt, I think this is a great suggestion, because I think we need to promote direct democracy whenever we can.

[00:38:13] This kind of indirect system where you elect a group that then elects another group akin to the electoral college. I don't know what the best analogy is. But it's just not right that some students face more barriers to others than being elected to these positions.

[00:38:36] One other thing for consideration, not for today, but maybe at a later date, is the fact that while with the SAC, every school has four representatives. There are other aspects of the student leadership structure that differ by school.

[00:38:58] And I think some centralization of that could be helpful in that I know, for example, some schools will have 20 class officers, while others will have four.

[00:39:14] Some schools, as you said, it's like SCC is selected out of those class officers others. It's through a class, you know, a class-based system So I think the more it can be the structure can be centralized and then Each individual school implements that the better Mr. Anderson, I guess my biggest question is it was I am under the impression that that the SAC is not a school board Function it is run by the superintendent

[00:39:50] And so I think that we could open up a conversation to have with the superintendent related to how the structure could be implemented But this is her committee of students to give her a student voice And so I think I also think she inherited the system that she currently has From just the way it's been done for a long time And so I think that the first step would be to have a conversation with dr. Reed to determine whether or not she also sees a need to provide this direction to principals so I just I know I hear what you're saying because I know that sometimes the kids that end up in the leadership class are the kids that actually were took an interest or knew

[00:40:28] somebody else that was in it in eighth grade and so they were able to get kind of headed ahead of the curve and so and it happens in very different ways in different schools so I do understand that that's going on I think having some consistency I would want her to have an opportunity to talk with principals to determine if there's a reason why anybody does it in a particular way or whether or not they have a preference because I would hate to have this be one more thing that we're dictating unless we really needed to so we need to figure out like how that maybe it's something that could be done as part of SGA elections and that way it's already an election that's occurring at the school and you just create you know you pick your representatives if you're doing it

[00:41:08] that way and you're doing four it makes the most sense to have one per class Just saying But that's one thing that we would want to consider moving forward So I think that the start of this conversation needs to be talking to dr. Reed about how she wants to do that Or whether or not she sees the need to have a change I'll take a turn. I'm reading through the regulations 1703 here And the way I read is the student body of each traditional high school and secondary in FCPS will select prior to the end of the school you're a sac delegation of four delegates so the student body should be selecting it

[00:41:43] um some i'm wondering like what the uh uh yeah no it's uh regulation 17 or 3.5 the there oh yeah yeah it's in policy the policy itself um yes which is also anything but the policy itself does not outline the process for other chosen it just says that it should be democratic as its purpose um which i mean is i mean that can be left up to interpretation but yeah I do think obviously a conversation with Dr. Reed is necessary here as it is her Student Advisory Council I think that that that does also kind of feed

[00:42:20] into what my my third let's go and final proposal is so I think we could just move on that's okay so my question is why is the SAC is doing the recommendation for school board representative, student representative, not SCA.

[00:42:44] The SCA or? The leadership cohort? The SLDP. Okay, let's not even go with that acronym. I meant to say the general body of the school instead of doing, because I understand that we cannot change the policy or the regulation, what doctor, you can change the policy of regulation what superintendent student committee is but school board representative is for the school board we can actually totally do our own process to elect the school board representative am I right yeah this so

[00:43:22] yeah if I could just chime in here so this was about more so how student advisory council delegates are chosen by themselves the election of the student rep and the school board stuff ties in more with my third proposal is this is sort of just on the Student Advisory Council in isolation.

[00:43:39] This is just saying that right now the way that the Student Advisory Council operates as sort of the sole countywide student convening body is anti-democratic because it's not being elected. So my sort of push here was just we should try to come up with a plan or just open up the idea of having elections countywide in all of our schools for this position in isolation.

[00:44:05] That's exactly what I'm trying to say. It should be elected by the student body itself and not go through this appointed few people voting in-- The student-- you're saying the student rep should be elected by the whole county.

[00:44:23] Yes. So that-- yeah, I guess I could see the idea there. It was the-- sort of my position on that is just it would be kind of tricky in terms of, like, how would I-- like, if I was running a campaign, student rep how would I sort of go over like across I think it's that kind of then makes it a battle of like turnout I mean which is to be fair is kind of what our elections are now but I meant to say is if you talk about democratic business has to be election of some sort virtually or do it this way so as we already said there's two students represented from two different regions

[00:44:59] yeah so the two not pyramids I think three pyramids each so student in those schools can vote for like one of their person and the other half of the remaining can vote for their person that is actually the how we get voted in as school board members so well yes but at the same time like as as a student you are not you know on like the campaign trail the same way that a board member would be like you would have to like if as a student you're you know in school and I think most of the voting students are not going to know about the people running from outside their school, they're probably going to be a lot more inclined to vote

[00:45:37] from people specifically from their school. And so I think the margins on that would kind of get a little bit iffy in terms of like, if you just get your own school to vote for you, and if you're the only person running from your school, I think by default with like, if you had, say, one school that where you had a bunch of people running, and another school where you just had one person running from that school, then if you're combining that into one election, the school that has a bunch of people running, it's probably none of them are going to get elected because the vote's going to be split between all of them whereas the school that has one that one person running they're probably gonna get their person up and I think that can open the door for some potential inequity and and and in that sense and so I think by

[00:46:16] keeping the process the same which I think is the you know that are at least in principle the same of having it elected by delegates that that are from across the county that you can more easily reach I think that's what we're sort of keeping and I think in in part of that I think we do the election process should probably be improved a bit so that students that are running can have better access to those delegates ahead of time because I think that would be the benefit of that but I think going to a whole countywide election for the student rep I would be or not kind of but you know countywide for the two student reps if that if we do end up moving forward with that would probably

[00:46:52] be logistically and electorally a bit too tricky so I just don't want to say that some government I did a search on national level like how different districts are doing and there are in some county there's a direct election by secondary students it does happen in some school just how large are the school districts because I think that might be getting lost probably our size I don't know and so LA LA County which is you know quite big they have superintendent directed appointment process and then Miami-Dade County which

[00:47:30] is again big numbers elected by association of student government presidents so most of them are elected by regional student delegate or student advisory councils most of them yeah which is what our current process is correct but it is just to be saying that student elections are possible as somebody is also doing it it's not impossible yeah I just from I it seems like LA also chooses theirs by a superintendent

Student Advisory Council it does not seem like they're directly elected by students from what I know it's not I'm not talking about it was I think as Montgomery County in Maryland

[00:48:10] it's our size right yeah they have 58,000 I will also say with in Montgomery County because I know that's in Maryland the Maryland's entire process is different a lot of has to do with state law because I know that they're there they actually are student members of the board they're not student reps to the board they can vote on the board they also can attend closed session and access those materials so I think that probably demands a bit of a

[00:48:50] probably a bit of a different process yes I think and I'm in like you know me personally I would love if I could vote and I would love if I could attend closed which you probably would tell me I do not want to attend closed but from my perspective of just you know wanting to be in sort of that that space I would obviously in an ideal world love if the the student rep was chosen by you know students representing the entire just students you know directly but I think right now we're probably not in a place where that could be you know like reasonable okay I have a feeling that you're gonna move us along I'm gonna bust

[00:49:29] out the timer. No no no and I agree but it was funny that you just described the electoral process like really like why it's such a big deal in terms of trying to get elected across the county so I fully and completely understand and I think that if we work towards with the superintendent to determine a more consistent way that the SAC reps are chosen from each school I think that we would get closer to that is kind of a happy medium between the between all of it sounds good okay all right I'll can I continue yeah all right cool so this is this is definitely the biggie as if what we haven't been talking about already is

[00:50:05] the biggie but this kind of touches on what what miss Anderson was saying earlier about how this what we're currently talking about was student advisory council to the superintendent my final proposal on this has a lot of overlap with with what I was proposing on the leadership program last year because I still believe that that is something we should move forward with is is having a Student Advisory Council, or rather a Student Senate or General Assembly, or whatever you want to call it, that is to the school board, that collaborates directly with the school board.

[00:50:33] And the way that this would function is that-- and actually, just to go back on what the SAC currently is and how it works-- is that it is a valuable tool for informing the superintendent, for informing Dr. Reed currently. But it does not encompass what actual and proper student self-governance would be and advocacy from students.

[00:50:53] right now the students are not setting their own agendas they're not saying their own priorities they are not sort of directing what they want to do in this chamber and I think when you combine that with the fact that they're not directly elected by students that it sort of serves a niche that is specific towards you know the superintendent which is fine and I'm not and I'm not trying to say that that's that that's a bad goal or piece it's just it is not sufficient in what the other tasks we've given it and I've now attended a couple of Student Advisory Council meetings.

[00:51:25] And so I know some of the stuff that they do is they'll report on the monthly meetings they have with principals and stuff like that. And I think that when now they're given these tasks of actual representation and representing students' issues, then we get into a murky area where it's like we're trying to stretch the bounds of what it can do without actually expanding its authority and its capacity to be that chamber.

[00:51:49] And so what I would suggest and propose is that we create a student senate or general assembly or just an SAC to the school board that has a structure similar to the SAC in terms of delegates. You can have four from each high school, and that's fine.

[00:52:06] But first of all, they would be elected countywide. I think the other thing that we would have here is you would have magisterial district representatives that are chosen by student assembly or senate members in each magisterial district. And I think this sort of ties into the idea for doubling the leadership program.

[00:52:25] I think if we just had this, this would not necessarily be necessary. And the idea here is that this assembly would be able to set its own agenda. It would be able to send their matter seal representatives to work with the board. It would elect a speaker. It would be able to vote on resolutions that it could then work with the board on implementing, not necessarily binding, but things of that nature.

[00:52:49] And I think that while this can sound kind of out there, I understand that. And I understand that logistically, this could definitely be tricky. I think we have the infrastructure there. We have a student advisory council that convenes every month at schools. You could sort of parallel that for an assembly session if you wanted to.

[00:53:06] I know there could potentially be some staffing concerns too. I think this could work well if you just had teachers the same way that teachers work with and to support the SEC, if you just had that with this general assembly to the school board. And then how I'm imagining this would go is you have an assembly session.

[00:53:23] They could set their own resolutions. They'll vote on a resolution. It could be on a hot button issue. And then those representatives from each magisterial district could then work with board members on being like, hey, this is what I'm hearing from the students in these districts. They could then also work with the student rep on sort of getting a cohesive message there.

[00:53:43] And the one thing I really want to stress here, especially this out of all the three proposals, is that I think this has the greatest capacity for really significant and long-term change in our county. And I cannot stress that enough, because from what I see in the schools every day, I know there is a drive from our students to get more involved, to be active in this government level.

[00:54:06] I think this would be a great way to sort of encourage that. And not just that, but almost mandate it. And I think this has the great potential to not just reduce student say, because there's a lot of-- I think right now, one of the big issues that I'm hearing from students is there's a sort of existence of student disillusionment in our county in some ways.

[00:54:29] And I think this has the proposal to not just reduce that-- not just to reduce that, but to also encourage civic engagement as the ability to help serve us in a more direct way to inform the board of issues. If you're talking about boundary changes, talking about a whitelist pilot, talking about whatever, and you have direct magistral representatives that just passed a resolution that are going to work with you on this sort of thing, you are getting a very direct and accountable and structured form of student input that I think is invaluable.

[00:55:00] And I think this would be a great way, and not necessarily one that would require a lot of it. And I might be naive in saying that, but I think it would not require the hugest change in infrastructure

and resources that we might think it would. I think there are a lot of creative ways that we could get this done.

[00:55:16] And so that's sort of the gist of it. I think in an ideal world as well-- obviously, this is further down the line. But I think if you could also sort of use this in conjunction with the Student Advisory Council, you could have Student Advisory Council delegates chosen from this assembly. Because I think right now there's 100 delegates to Student Advisory Council.

[00:55:34] For the purposes of informing superintendent, that might not be fully necessary. And I think what you could have here is say one assembly member from each school could be chosen to be that delegate for Dr. Reed. And that could sort of act as like the Student Advisory Council within the assembly to Dr. Reed.

[00:55:50] And the broader organization would be working with the school board. So that's the big proposal. There's a lot of other stuff with it that I could answer if people have questions about. And obviously, I know this is kind of out there. But I think it would be very valuable for not just students, but for the board as well.

[00:56:06] I appreciate it. I'm sure who had their placard up first, but do Ms. Anderson. OK, so I'm definitely interested in the idea gaining ways to consistently get more student voice so a hundred percent behind that for me the next logical step rather than us do any work here is we need to determine whether or not how the board feels about it moving forward and so I think that we've gone a little bit out of order here rather than pack bring something forward to the board I think it makes the most sense for actually us to work on a forum topic with you that you can come in and present to the board

[00:56:43] about what it is that you're trying to do and then we will take an informal consensus as to whether or not we move it forward at this time so that would be my advocacy just to determine whether or not there's a path forward because I don't want us to go down a path that we don't have support for and so this is one of those things it's a pretty big move I think I would see that this would take in my opinion this would take the place of the student leadership program I do not think it could be done in addition we simply do not have enough staff in our office to staff something like that and so we would have I don't even know if we would have enough to staff in our office to be able to staff it if we did more fit into what you're talking about like it is a pretty

[00:57:22] significant hold on it's a pretty significant lift and I understand that it doesn't look like it from the front end but just logistically trying to get everybody in one space is a lot so I just I like the idea I liked it when I heard it last year at the leadership I just want to get more board conversation to determine whether or not there's a path that the board would support yeah yeah just yeah no you know absolutely and I appreciate you for for you know addressing that part of it I I will say and obviously I am not nearly as informed of the staffing logistics part and I and I understand that fully the

[00:58:02] sort of idea here is it would you obviously in terms of replacing it would necessarily like yes staffing issues in terms of coordination communication that would definitely be a huge part but in terms of the general convening of the you know assembly in sessions like that it would the idea is it would use the same infrastructure that the SAC currently uses in terms of like meetings and being run and stuff like that I'll take a turn real quick so one of the pieces that I really like from this and I should acknowledge as well so so mr.

[00:58:33] Shostak and I did work on a presentation and it was on me to not have gotten it finalized and posted today so he but I think this is a helpful discussion and I really like the idea of taking this as a potential forum topic because I think the interplay between the Student Advisory Council and this and the General Assembly is worth a bigger discussion especially with Dr. Reed at the table because how many members are on around the Student Advisory Council right now yeah roughly Andrew and I'm curious if that's benefiting her if she would prefer to have like a smaller group of say 15 or 20 but then have this big robust group that's doing things like you mentioned resolutions and things like that which I think could be really informative so I like the idea of

[00:59:12] a form topic we can talk about that and bring forward and refine this a bit there and but and obviously I love the idea of student representation and then formalizing this a bit too so anybody else all right well I appreciate you taking the time to share all these and we made some good forward progress and of course we'll follow up on the form topic you're welcome to stick around if you wanted and we're going to talk about the next item is the student leadership development program which I know you are intimately familiar with as well yes I will stick around for that thank you again for the opportunity I

[00:59:49] hope to work on this further I'm glad that I hope we all got something out of this it's very helpful yeah thank you I just want to quickly I just want to quickly thanks Mr. Shostak to come you know bring this all new ideas and you're really passionate about what you're doing and thinking over the students and that is why that is so important to have the student voice and the student at the table so you're doing what you're required to do and you enjoy what you're doing so it's good to hear from you yes thank you all right agenda item 1.0

[01:00:29] for student leadership programs we will now move on to discussing the Fairfax County School Board student leadership development program I think the clerks to the school board Christina Setlow for being here today to help us with the discussion do you want to talk us through kind of what the current layout of the program is some of the ideas that have come around for this so mr.

[01:00:50] Shostak that's a good segue into what we're going to talk so this program we are actually right now in the process of applications for this year we have close to 400 applications for only 12 spots so we've actually been having a conversation in my office along with feedback that we've gotten from newt since he was in the program about how we can achieve what we're trying to get at so that we can have the student voice the goal of the program right now we've

[01:01:26] taken a step back this year to kind of try to level set one of the things that I had talked to the former deputy clerk about doing with the program was figuring out how we could bring more leadership to the kids and teaching them more about the leadership but we need to try to figure out how to do that within the context of allowing them to balance what they everything was school so that's one of the considerations the other is the large feedback we've heard from not just newt but many of the students is that they want to be more involved in

[01:02:00] the actions of the school board and/or giving the school board feedback so they I think what they were envisioning and what we've heard from students that they were envisioning from the program is actually more akin to what Newt just described with his third proposal so I would say in terms of where we are with the program what we're doing this year is we are doing our normal orientation And we are going to have our mock forum in the mock work section later on in the year.

[01:02:32] But we are asking board members to meet with the students for them to-- for board members to actually be the ones helping drive this year the development of the mock forum ideas. Because I think one of the things the students struggled with was trying to understand, how do I take this very large idea that I have and effectuate it and argue for my position point.

[01:02:58] And what they're looking for is the feedback on how board members actually do that in their day-to-day work. So that is one of the things that we are building out. I think one of the problems we run into with it is, like I said earlier, the balance and getting the students what they want.

[01:03:20] So if we could find a way for them to be more involved. But to the point that Ms. Anderson made, I don't think my office can support both. We wouldn't be able to do like a Student Senate and the SLDP.

[01:03:38] It would make more sense, especially given how many students have applied in the last two years, that we would do more something akin to what Newt brought up. Also, right now, the SLDP is limited to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

[01:03:57] And we've had seniors that applied. They aren't eligible, but they did apply. And there's clearly interest. I think, especially when you're a junior, right, you may be overwhelmed. But this might be something you want to do your senior year.

[01:04:12] And depending on whether you know about it or not, I think it would make more sense if you had greater opportunity. Which means you need more years and more representation with it. One of the things that we would need to consider if we are is the SLDP is completely voluntary.

[01:04:34] Student rep is paid. So that is one thing we would need to figure out if we are trying to combine or replace is if any of the Senate, if this would be more like SLDP and that it would be completely voluntary because we would not have the budget for it to be something that's paid like the student rep.

[01:04:56] So that is one thing to think about. um so those are the main things and main points that we've been we were actually I literally just said to the deputy clerks yesterday how do we develop this program to get more to what newt was talking about so all right we'll start with mr. McAveen yes so at this point you know I don't want to

[01:05:36] complain it come conflate it with the students in it just to speak about this program I mean there's I think there's strong interest among board members and expanding this to two members per board and I hope we can use our conversation to talk about that today my question for the clerk team is that since we have not progressed in choosing representatives yet is there still space to expand it to two members per board member this year I would want to take that back to board members before I would say for us to do that especially because this year what

[01:06:15] we're asking for board members is much more involvement we would need to make sure that board members have the bandwidth so if we were going to expand it I would want to direct it from the board that okay rather than yeah I think that that's something yeah I mean you you may have heard rumblings of a direct motion coming from the board to this effect so I think that direction could be on the horizon but obviously I think it would need to be prior toward prior to the selection process and my feeling about it is that if board members are going to take the time to interact with their students you know they can do that

[01:06:53] the bulk of that with with both of their people at the same time there would be you know marginally additional time to talk with each individually about whatever proposals they want to bring forward but I think the overall time in terms of interaction with students wouldn't be that much more so my only only other concern from it with it again would be budgetary so looking at the numbers on what we spend on just in meals alone for it we would need it to which we don't currently have in the budget right now would be another three

[01:07:31] to five thousand dollars so that is that's a lot to me because I think we would just be ordering a few more pizzas for each engagement right well so if you take into consideration orientation and completion for instance completion ceremony both orientation and completion we feed not just the kids we feed their families and their parents so and completion tends to so those two are bigger mock forum and mock work session we do usually just do pizza but I will

[01:08:07] say as we have more students and a more diverse student population we have to be more cognizant of the dietary needs that we have and so we've had students need halal food options or vegan food options gluten-free it just makes it a little bit harder to do things that are just like pizza we've had to go move away from pizza more because of the need to have a more diverse food option and more diverse food options mean more money so that would be my my largest concerned actually would be budgetary is I would just I would have to work with

[01:08:45] the school board chair to ensure that we could find the funds this year okay thank you miss Anderson I think that my concern at this point is that if we know we want to make this a different program I would hate to expand it this year and then completely change it next year so if we looked at this year as kind of a status quo as a as a bridge and then determined whether or not there's urgency to create something larger then I'd see that this year was just kind of a bridge year into something different the concern is is that going next year and I

[01:09:23] don't know how this was previously done on the board but going into the next election I have no idea like how that works because in theory they probably should be selected by the sitting board member and then and then like served by but looking at the general assembly kind of model or the student assembly however we want to call it or one of the things that I'm wondering is whether or not that makes sense in the same way because our timeline is going to be off for that type of endeavor because it wouldn't make sense to only run that program for four or five months it would make more sense for it to run the full

[01:10:00] school year just brief research that I was doing while I was sitting here it It looks like most school districts that have this type of General Assembly, they're actually using the SEA model that's already being done, because those are general elections at each school.

[01:10:18] And so it would make sense to me that you would have sitting members, or you could have a member that was voted in during that process. And that, again, is something that could start at the beginning of next year and then be passed off after the election. So I would advocate for let's leave things the way they are this year with the changes that have already brought forward just the the minor adjustment with the schedule and then let's look at what this could potentially be for following following on and that way we can see I don't know that we're going to be able to get to the full the full vision but I do think that we could probably get to a happy medium that everybody was able to compromise on

[01:10:56] mr. Shostak thank you yeah so I agree with miss Anderson here I think and I I actually, even if this was not a transitional period, I don't think I would particularly be in favor of expanding the size of leadership program.

[01:11:14] And I say this because, coincidentally, I actually met with a lot of my cohort from last year over the weekend. And in doing so, I was just trying to sort of get a gauge for what we liked in the program and what we wanted to change. And so I met with roughly half of the cohort that we had from last year, which I thought was relatively good turnout, considering it's only 12 people.

[01:11:35] I did take a few notes I think one of the big things that we did agree on is that we did not think the program would benefit from the size of the cohort being doubled and I think obviously the staffing and the resource issues are one thing that need to be considered and I think that sort of contributes to that sort of idea but the other stuff that you have to think about too is when you're you know in the the forum topic at the end and the work session everything if you had 24 people that were a part of that I mean that would drag on that would I mean first of all that would drag on second of all I think it'd be a lot harder for a level of individual attention and care to be put into those

[01:12:11] forum topics I think the leadership program also significantly benefits from being a small cohort of people and if you expanded it to 24 it would be more like a school classroom and I think that that also the effect of diluting some student voice there and in terms of you know how you represent your district how you work with your board members specifically especially considering the idea that board members are going to be more involved this year you know if when I was working with missing John Cunning on the leadership program I think I it would have been a significantly different and perhaps less and involved

[01:12:47] an informative experience if I was if that sort of time and attention was you know shared between two people and I said I think part of this and especially when you also think about the dynamic between the court members and the way that we sort of built connections with each other over the year that that would that could have been potentially a bit lost on if there were 24 people so I think even even by itself I think the 12 is a good size and I think the other the last benefit here is that it in the opportunity that we have with a sort of structure that that perfectly mirrors the structure of the school board is one that we would be compromising if we doubled the size so I think there's

[01:13:25] there's especially since we're you know if we're gonna change it up a bit there potentially some opportunities there with how it's you know it's perfectly what the board is that if you doubled it there potentially be some some stuff lost there but yeah the rest of the the stuff that we had considered and take notes on we we liked the mock forum and the work session we were a bit we we wanted some changes to I think the the main stuff was with the cohort meetings and the service project that those are the the main things that we want to change I think particularly the service project we wanted to be more focused on

[01:14:01] civic engagement about representing issues one of the ideas that we had was representatives from each district would sort of sit down with students from from each each of their districts or you know reach out to people in their schools some other way and talk about you know some ongoing issue that they decided as a cohort I think it like sort of mirrors what was what went on last year where at the beginning of the cohort you would sort of decide like that you know what project you would do would be like what topic and then you would work with students and sort of create some some sort of proposal and or consensus to send off to the board. So there's that and then just the ideas basically

[01:14:39] we talked about right now with the the cohort meetings to be more focused on board meetings and working with school board members. So that was the that was the gist of it. I appreciate that I'll just take a brief turn before we go to our next topic. So I like the idea of examining this as part of that potential forum topic on student representation because I like the idea of students working on an individual idea and then running it down to get it to actually effect change but I also like the idea of having a broader assembly where you could be more responsive to the issues of the day and so forth so we can talk

[01:15:17] later about working on that clean that form topic so any other comments questions okay and then without objection I'd like just to skip ahead to 1.06 since we've got staff here to present to that all right nobody Jack great so our next item is under engagement with underrepresented communities and I know mistakes that this is something that you were passionate about and brought up at our last meeting and so I asked miss young blood hall from our leadership team to come present a little bit about the work that you all are doing but at the moment and maybe we tend to talk about some

[01:15:54] ideas where the board can help support this kind of work so I will hand it off to you all. Thank you very much. Again, I'm Lisa Youngblood Hall, Chief Experience and Engagement Officer. I also have with me the Executive Director of Communications, Beth Vizioli. So I just want to start by sharing what the offices are within the Chief Experience and Engagement Office. They are communications led by Beth Vizioli. We have community relations which is led by

[01:16:28] the director Angie Aldave that includes intercultural community engagement and business and community partnerships educate Fairfax sort of has a dual reporting role partially to me that is our foundation family and school partnerships that is an office that does a lot with our community the Family resource center, early literacy programs, hippie, family information, phone lines, just a lot of direct communication with our communities and

[01:17:07] specifically our underserved communities. The office of the ombuds and then student registration, obviously a lot of face-to-face. A lot of these teams I would say are some of the first faces that families see, especially families who are just coming into the division or even into the country you know these are families that both help them at the beginning and throughout their time here in FCPSS is everyone but I'd like our I like our team to take credit for it so

[01:17:43] what I'd like to do right now is start with communications and Beth Vizioli is going to share what communications is doing now sort of what their their goals or what what it is they do now what their work is now and as it relates to our underserved communities as well thanks this is just a little bit more detail about the office of communications not going to speak to all the things on there but those are the different platforms that we control and own and our real focus is on creating communications plans and messaging that

[01:18:22] is meaningful and impactful to families we take accessibility into account and language as well in the messaging that we create and then we work very closely with our office of community relations and family school partnerships the folks that do the handshakes to make sure that the information and materials that we've provided are useful the content is you know what is impactful to our underserved communities in ways that we can continue to improve and develop those a recent example would be working with the AAP program with Kirsten Maloney and her team to review the way that they present their content on our

[01:19:02] website the ways that they do outreach to families making sure that we're giving them tips and tricks and feedbacks on making their content meaningful and accessible to families another example would be the way that we recently updated the newsletters and I think all the school board members would have experienced that as well where we have those links so that a person who is clicking to have a newsletter in another language gets the full experience and not just a text format so that's another example we recently had a focus group in our senior leadership team and had families give us some feedback on ways

[01:19:41] that they felt we could be more engaging and one of those was to create a whatsapp channel and that is something that we've done we're up to about 2100 subscribers and that is with a very soft launch we haven't done a ton of direct engagement on the whatsapp so I feel like in just a short time that's a pretty good run of folks that we have in there one of the things that we're also talking with community relations about is revisiting some focus groups about three years ago community relations did some focus groups with families to get some feedback on the ways that they engage with us more on the things that

[01:20:20] we control in communications with technology and other tools and obviously in those past three years technology has changed tremendously the ways that people can engage to get things translated has improved significantly so we really need to go back to our families and find out the ways that they experience translations and other things YouTube now has voice translation for videos, so we're working very closely, again, with community relations to find the best ways that we can utilize that tool, how it's growing, how it's expanding.

[01:20:56] Because in the past, we would have had to create seven different versions of every video that we make, seven different flyers of every flyer that we create. And we just really need to make sure that with the resources that we have that we're looking at that technology. And we also are understanding how families use their phones and other things to help them translate so that we're creating things that work for those tools that they use.

[01:21:19] So that's going to be a big project that we're going to undertake. We're also in the process of working to basically cull our website. We have an extraordinary amount of content on our website. And knowing now that there are a lot of AI and other things that use our website by scrubbing it for information, we've got to really keep it tight and concise as to what's on there.

[01:21:43] So we're going to really put a hard line on content that hasn't been updated in the past couple of years and really just eliminating it so that what we're creating is something that is meaningful, again, to the communities that may have accessibility issues, language issues, which is, again, sort of the area that we work deepest in.

[01:22:04] But we're here to partner with our folks in community relations and family and school partnerships to make sure that we're doing everything we can to support that work when they're out in the community engaging with families so it's a quick summary of our work okay and then I'm going to continue on with family and school partnerships this is a another team that really works directly with families and if we're talking from underserved communities specifically with underserved communities we have the

[01:22:42] Family Resource Center that is a that is a center that works with families on any number of areas from talking families through IEPs you know which is that's just another layer of information because they can get that information everywhere or I'm sorry from from Dr. Sloan-Presidio's office as

well so talking through IEPs talking through different providing information that they need to help their students be more successful the Family Academy is a web

[01:23:21] page that we have on the FCPS website and that is a place that we really are trying to call as much information as we can so if families need something quickly at a glance they can find different resources and support there and that's proven and it's also a place where a lot of the webinars and a lot of of the the outreach through the family and school partnerships office and other offices across the division. It's a place where they can families can find the calendar and understand where they can actually engage with us. It's and it's

[01:23:58] not always I think when we were in COVID actually before my time here a lot of of things happened online and you know they moved online and and what the department all of the departments are trying to do right now is make sure that we're moving into the communities meeting families where they are and that is really important so the Family Academy actually allows for families to find that information so that they can understand what's coming to their region what's coming to schools near them so that they can engage on that level the

[01:24:38] volunteer FCPS that is a I just want to get the numbers here because I want to be I want to be accurate we had more than 30,796 almost 31,000 active volunteers in 25 26 school year and recorded almost 243,000 opportunities volunteer hours that that were worked and so we're grateful to our community one of the things that one of the reasons that this was developed was

[01:25:13] to expand opportunities for our broader community just to make sure that families were not just I don't know it was expanding the opportunities to make sure families that that the same people weren't weren't being picked and overworked I guess at this you know all the time for volunteer opportunities so creating hopefully as we continue to move forward creating opportunities where even if a family is not able to come during the day and volunteer during the school day if they're not able to come to a volunteer opportunity in the evenings

[01:25:51] that there are opportunities you know from the classroom to the PTA where they're able to do some type of work to contribute from home. Whatever it might be, we're hoping there are volunteer opportunities out there. Home instruction for parents of preschool youngsters, Hippie, last year we served 642 children of about 580 families. Home languages were 29 home languages throughout that hippie program and we also served students with identified

[01:26:28] disabilities that were 52 there were 107 getting to know FCPS family orientations we think this is really important because anyone whether they're coming from the division next door or coming from another country whatever it might be every division works a little bit differently and to be able to to get that extra information that they need to help their student be successful in FCPS is important so we were able to do that and I'm just that was so almost 400

[01:27:04] families the languages that were supported were English Korean Spanish and Arabic we always ask if there is a need for language translation on many occasions when we do community engagement where we'll talk about that in a minute we just naturally also have interpreters on hand because that's really important you don't know who's going to show up not every one actually RSVP so a lot of work coming out of family and school partnerships and we might also talk about the two-way communications with let's talk that is

[01:27:42] something that is available division-wide and it's a way that that families are able to connect directly with their schools with their teachers as long as that did I say I'm sorry I'm sorry talking points I apologize let's talk is another tool that we're using to make sure our families are able to connect directly with the the department that is is that they're seeking

[01:28:13] information from or they may have a concern so community relations we had the intercultural engagement team that is a team that's focused a lot on our underserved communities making sure that we are reaching our communities where they are and that might involve I'm just going to move a little quickly so you all have time to answer or ask questions so that that involves getting out into the communities that involves working with our community partners the

[01:28:47] partners that are trusted partners in the community and building those relationships both with the partners and with our community members they you will it's breaking down barriers so when we're thinking about the office of community community relations we're thinking about supporting the superintendent with the family vision group the family vision group when we when we talk about having having different groups of people from different lived experiences different schools etc there this is what we we

[01:29:27] look for and we try to remove any barriers that they might have in making these meetings to the family vision group meeting with the superintendent getting the information that is important to student success not just their own students but students across their schools and it's a it's it's a very diverse group that that has been attending these meetings that that has been they've been assigned or recruited to attend these meetings business and community partnerships very strategic partnerships everywhere from the school

[01:30:04] level partnerships to division level partnerships where the support of many different schools and trying to make sure that we are looking at schools that aren't are not just in one part of the county or that are that are may already be getting their needs met but looking at schools that maybe need the extra support so they do some of that work in collaboration with educate Fairfax as well it's a it's a little bit of a partnership educate Fairfax helps with building the partnerships and relationships and also financial

[01:30:44] donations and if there's a possibility for partnerships or expanding partnerships then that's what business and community partnerships does we also make effective and efficient use of our language services department and you know Beth spoke a little bit about how we're looking at how we can we can more deeply engage with our our communities and this when we talk about underserved we're not just talking about language access either so we are we're very aware of that but we're looking at how we can more deeply engage our communities in

[01:31:23] addition to our news you choose newsletter there's one in Spanish language there's one in Korean language and we also have our social media as well, which is just continuing to grow for our Spanish language community and our Korean community at this point. What we're seeing is that there's greater engagement, not just that folks are reading or clicking, they're actually engaging and having conversations,

[01:31:57] And that has grown over the past couple of years because there's been some targeted outreach. In addition, community relations is the number of families whose language, their native language is not English, has grown in the division.

[01:32:17] And it has actually, the numbers have moved around. So one of the things we're doing is trying to gather, we're probably going to get it in the next week or so. we're gathering information on the top languages the top languages have changed a little bit once we have that information we are actually going to community relations is actually going to work on forming focus groups to understand what the different communities need in terms of communications how they actually prefer to communicate and then video and

[01:32:51] multimedia Beth again spoke a little bit about that I think one of my there's the YouTube communities channel and that's for for other languages but I think one of my favorite and most impactful videos that was done was the fentanyl video with the foster family that was not just in English but we were able to use a tool and this was this was two years ago at this point we were able to use a tool to have it translated into Spanish and one or two other languages and it

[01:33:27] actually took on the tone of the people who were speaking. So Mr. and Mrs. Foster and Dr. Reed you know it was a conversation and I think it was really meaningful not to just have that video available for the community events that we put on to raise awareness but to actually share that that video with our broader community and we just I mentioned the new partnership framework we are doing more than just our high-level partnerships that are reaching

[01:34:03] many many students many schools we're actually looking at strategic partnerships from the school level on up and we're tracking that in a better way to make sure that that the schools that need the support are receiving the support and that continues to grow that work continues to grow trying to think if I I don't think I have anything else that we can we need to review at this time if

[01:34:33] you all have any questions miss Anderson I just want to say thank you I know you guys are a small but mighty team that is working really hard on a lot of different fronts and I just don't want anyone to think that that attention to detail and focus goes unnoticed I know that you guys are doing everything that you can to get information out to as many of our families as as we can I think you're working also hard on building that trust that is part of the communication process and so I just really want to commend you and your team for everything that they're doing to try to

[01:35:11] keep our families up to date and I know we'll continue adding the whatsapp channel I think was a great Matt move I think that as many of those that we can do to meet people where they already are is the great step. So I really appreciate the effort. I also wanted to say this is really great job and so far the progress and you said like new channels and communication tools and have been developed in last few years two years and

[01:35:43] I think we did over reliance on on like internet or communication and COVID all the meetings were zoom I think people are really looking forward to like in-person connections now it is like we can put webinars but when you invite people in the room it just changes the whole dynamics right so I feel the first place where parents feel welcome in the school is the main office and that happened to me and I'm gonna say that you know my kids went to Bull Run and the Bull Run staff welcomed

[01:36:17] me I was new new mother new in the country and they way they welcome me I instantly bonded with the with the school and then become the relationship with the PTA start so I think the way the main office PTA can welcome the families as like obviously we don't PTA is not one of the staff for FCPS but I I think it is unsaid work this community doing what PTA does for us and what our school office staff does for us.

[01:36:51] So I'm very thankful for them. So that's the reason I'm here today. And I will say this is because not that I wanted to be here. It is because the community made me so like they gave me so much. And I feel like now is my turn to give back.

[01:37:08] But I did want to ask something. There are language barriers, and you recognize them. We have more than 200 languages spoken FCPS. You know, we cannot speak all the languages. So how do you interact with a student coming in or families who do not speak English at all and could be Pashto and Arabic and, I don't know, other countries?

[01:37:33] How do you immediately get to a translator if somebody reaches out? Well, we have a number of different ways and it depends on where they're where they are, right? Whether they reach a school first or they reach our welcome center we have we have interpreters at the welcome centers And if those interpreters are not they don't speak the language that's that's required of the parent or the family There there's online translation. There are there's a translation line

[01:38:10] that can be called usually when there is someone who comes to the registration center, basically, or the school. An appointment has been made already, and so they would have a translator ready and available.

[01:38:26] I'll give you another example. The elementary conferences that happen toward the beginning of the year, it is a whole process, a whole production, to make sure that all of the schools, all of the conferences that need interpreters are covered.

[01:38:45] And that may be any number of ways. Again, it could be our own interpreters. It could be interpreters that we've contracted with. But we try to make sure that everyone is covered. We usually handle it.

[01:39:02] And at the very least, there are tools on our phones. there are, I think is it talking points, you can talk back and forth, and it automatically translates. So there are many different tools that can be used in addition to the in-person.

[01:39:19] Oh, great. The other thing I place off where you meet the community members of faith organization, place of worship. And I know because of the staff, again, shortage of staff, or should limited staff, you cannot be everywhere.

[01:39:36] But does some time FCPS staff goes to like temples, like when they do community events with the Indian community, or for say, for example, with different community ethnic groups going to mosque, and also Korean festivals, and others, Chinese events, like that type?

[01:39:57] So yes. I think we can look at that. And staff, yes. I know that there are staff who support Dr. Reed's faith leaders group that meets several times a year in addition yes there are staff members who try to get out into the community and and you know whether they are any type of event activities etc they do try to get out into the community and there it's a very small staff and just trying to figure out how to do how to do both we've

[01:40:32] had some rather large initiatives over the past couple of years right with with the boundaries with so many other things that are happening you know school openings you know the CIP just many different things we would like to do more this team would like to do more but it there is limited capacity

and they try to do the best I do know that both the community relations team goes out as well as teams from family and school partnerships you know with the faith

[01:41:08] leaders I we could probably do more I know that was probably one of the first things I did when I came here we went to synagogues and mosques and you know were able to visit and kind of listen to the families you know in those in in their spaces as well which was important and I know you physically you cannot be everywhere with all the other work going on but I guess we you can we can do surrogacy like we can go on your behalf like I can be you know in some temples and bring the material with me and and just put a table like I'm just

[01:41:45] an example of like how are not just you or your staff but other people in FCPS system I know so many people would love to do that too so that's something you know I would like to offer some time well thank you we will take you up on that thank you just just a couple questions first you talked a little bit about the volunteer Fairfax situation what is the current status of the

[01:42:22] enrollments and is there going to be another push to get people enrolled volunteer FCPS yeah that's a very good question so the current status is I'll get the numbers I think they are very similar to last year schools have have the school points of contact have gone through sort of an updated reminder training and I will double check to see if there's another push that hasn't happened yet okay so that's that's different than the 31,000 figure you

[01:42:59] quoted that's from that's from the 25 26 school year okay okay got it second I mean you you talked a bit about how how challenging it is to get interpreters at all of these events and everything what is your sense of the overtime that's going on in the office in your office like for people having to go out into community and put in put in that additional time. I can let me let me get back to you on that. Okay. Okay. Thanks. I'll take a turn. So I appreciate this

[01:43:37] work and one of the things that I I heard and sticks with me is that schools don't belong to kids, they don't belong to principals, they don't belong to school board members, they belong to the community, right? And so it really speaks just how important your work is and especially looking through a study recently of all the most effectual kind of educational interventions you can do and a lot of those rely on good public engagement so I appreciate the work you're doing can you talk a bit about about it's clear how widespread your work is do you or have you recently reviewed some of that to see if there's tools that aren't as effective as others and maybe reprioritizing resources and

[01:44:14] so forth recognizing that a lot of times there's small communities that get reached by that one intervention that you do and that's very important so I So I don't want to put you in a bad spot, but I'm curious as far as... Well, I will start with one that we're looking at, and it is a very small dollar amount.

[01:44:34] But the tool that I spoke of with the fosters, we're actually about to review that next week, if not later this week, to see if that's necessary because now there's so much maybe more effective and free AI, even through YouTube, et cetera, that we're looking at that.

[01:44:56] Our language services is doing the same thing. I think there's something to be said for in-person, in-person language interpretation. And so just, you know, community relations does this, and Beth's team works directly with community relations, just making sure that we have the human aspect and we understand that that there are humans working on this and you know one way or the other and then AI you know double checks or vice versa we go through an AI tool and

[01:45:33] then we have humans actually actually check because that's there's always room for error with AI but I know Beth we've taught we've talked about other communications tools and where there are possibilities where there are redundancies that we should really be looking at I don't know if you want to address that yeah I you know there's studies out there research I don't know if those are the right words but of parents saying they're being over communicated to right like we've heard that a million times and some of that is

[01:46:08] an overload of information but also some of that is an overload of the places where the information comes from so one school might use Schoology to communicate with parents another school might use talking points there are things that we don't even know because some schools are able to procure their own apps to do different things that we might not know that they're using them for so one of the things that we're trying to commit to is figuring out the ways that we can take the tools that we have because to a degree we have some control over them and to a degree we don't in terms of the tools that you

[01:46:48] know again schools choose to use in the way that they communicate with families I'm a parent of a high school student and I've got whatsapp for the sports team and I get a Schoology email I get an e-notify email and that's fine but what we're trying to focus on is the ways that we can try to figure out how to tell people or parents or families or students what's the most important thing in that moment so we're gonna sit down and look at our newsletters and our website and other things like how can we have a parent open something and say what do I need to do right now absolutely you can read these great

[01:47:24] stories you can explore but if I pop this open and we see that in some like New York Times they do digests and things how come we open and say like what do I have to do right now and so it's we're trying to figure out the ways to better use the tools would we like to distill them down and so that we can tell parents this is the one way you hear this thing this is the one way you hear this thing yes but that's a harder yeah so we're gonna look at the ways that we can do it so again a parent can say what do I what do I have to do right now because I'm a parent and I get that like I need to know what I need to do today

[01:48:01] yeah that's the most important thing is sign those permission slips my gosh I empathize because every time it's a new team it's a new app and it's just and then they go back to the old app and it's a lot so and I appreciate that the the work FCPS has done to combine everything into one single app and that you know use that so I know there's been a lot of work involved in recent partnerships you talked about it I've heard from different places that some schools work in building their own community partnerships so if you've you know if I own an HVAC company I don't own an HVAC company but if I did own an HVAC company and I wanted to you know partner with local schools or have kids

[01:48:40] from the local classes come in and I'm thinking this is how my brother actually got his start in his career is that his shop teacher was friends with a guy who owned his own plumbing company and so how much of that is driven by schools or how empowered our schools do that versus standardized or targeted through FCPS and I realize I'm talking about a couple different things here but I recognize the importance of standardizing things and having certain layers but I also recognize that schools need to have flexibility to build those community partners as they see fit.

[01:49:11] Can you talk a little bit about how you view that, the role of front office versus schools? - Yes, so that is part of us redoing the framework in that more schools, schools have been doing this for years, right?

[01:49:31] And we absolutely don't want to stop schools from building their own partnerships. However, we do need to be made aware of partnerships, right? We need to know who is in the schools, what businesses are in the schools, whether they've gone through the, you know, volunteer process, whether, you know, all the things that need to happen.

[01:49:55] With the new framework has come a template for schools to use so that they at least have been, they're making sure they're asking the right questions, that they're, you know, there's awareness around it at the division level.

[01:50:11] And yes, there are many division-wide, I shouldn't say division-wide, division-level partnerships where if we see opportunities, sometimes we have partners or potential partners come to us and say, this is the thing we want to do.

[01:50:27] How can we implement something? Can we work with you? And so the partnership team kind of works with and tries to understand what the needs are of the schools, and then they're building the relationship and the partnership that way. If it's at the school level, again, it's important that the schools help us to understand what partnerships they have.

[01:50:51] Sometimes it's just a matter of, it could be a new principal, it could be anything, making sure that all the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed. I appreciate that. Okay, and I did have a constituent who owned an HVAC company who reached out and was like, I'm having trouble getting connected with that.

[01:51:08] So I appreciate that. With a school or with a division? I'd have to go back and look and see. It was several months ago. Well, have them reach out. It's good to know. And I know we talked a little bit about, I've talked to Dr. Reed about this with some of the nutrition programs as well, because I know we've had several amazing community groups that have offered weekend meal service, and where we've kind of struggled is coordinating that amongst other locations throughout the county as well.

[01:51:34] And so you've got four or five different sources, and none of them are the primary source for coordinating that. So you might have one school that will have two or three different nonprofits that are offering to donate food in one school, potentially with a greater need, with nobody stepping up. So I know we'll continue those kind of conversations.

[01:51:50] I can actually share that Angie Aldave, the director of community relations, I believe Dr. LaHuffman Jackson from Family School Partnerships and some others here in the division are working with the county and with community partners to sort of build out a bit of a database, understanding the needs of our schools so that we can better understand how we can help the schools and how community partners can come in and help serve the schools.

[01:52:20] - And FCPS Fairfax County Collaboration. I love to hear it. So, okay, well, any other final comments or thoughts before we-- - No, unless you have other thoughts or anything you would like to discuss?

[01:52:37] I wanted to ask about the WhatsApp channel. I know Dr. Reid mentioned that it was used to reach some communities which use more WhatsApp immigrant communities. How was the success of that? How was it coming along?

[01:52:52] So I'll let Beth answer. She mentioned that in SLT we had families come and meet with us. And one of the things they said was-- And I have learned this, too, from connecting with families. We use

WhatsApp. That is the easiest way for us to communicate.

[01:53:10] And so from that senior leadership team meeting, SLT, came a pilot with WhatsApp, and Beth's team working with IT and others helped set it up. There's actually two different streams of WhatsApp that's going on right now.

[01:53:27] One is the WhatsApp chat that you can see on our website. It's on the registration section of our website, but you can ask that anything you want. We have the channel, but the channel is restrictive. It's not a two-way platform.

[01:53:45] We don't have the capability to do that because there's a limit to the number of people that can be in the chat. So we have a channel, which is one way. So it's not exactly, I think, what folks were looking for that they see at their schools.

[01:54:00] The feedback that we got was this is the way that we talk back and forth about things. We can't do that, but we do have the one-way channel. And we have about 2,000 folks that are subscribed to that channel right now. And that's with very limited outreach.

[01:54:17] So I feel like that's a pretty good number. But I would have to go back to IT find out how many people are using the actual chat that is AI it's agentic as they say to ask questions and get information whereas the channel that we use is one way does that make sense okay all right well thank you both for making the time to come today and we've got five minutes left we'll cover our last agenda item 1.04 and this 1.05 this follows up from discussion at the last

[01:54:55] board meeting we're talking about community advisory committee handbook updates and trainings and I will hand off to my colleague miss ancient so I have a gaggle of Boy Scouts that are waiting for me to come talk to them in a few minutes so I'm gonna I'm gonna be really fast and I'm gonna recommend that we bring this back for a longer discussion in January but I did want to let you guys know that I I updated a little bit the the I know that it wasn't this makeup of the committee but the bottom two documents those are more ready to go these were both these were all kind of generated from AI and then

[01:55:32] tweaked just a little bit but using that document that we've already created right so the operating manual for community advisory committees and the idea here is that this will give us just a quick way to make sure that everybody knows what the staff requirements are and then what the board requirements are so that if you get put into a position where you are a board liaison to a particular committee here are the expectations for you and then the last document there is what I would recommend as at least a starting framework for the for the training that I'm hoping that we're going to be able to create

[01:56:08] for our community advisory committee members so if we can just all come ready to talk about that particularly that training outline then it would be pretty easy to and what I'm hoping that I can do before the next one is at least get the first module done just to give a little bit of information about what that could look like just quick videos and things like that I'm hoping that I can get the overall time down to 60 minutes total and it would really serve as like a reference point so if somebody had a question and I've already been received access to the system that would be the one that we would be making the

[01:56:47] training available in so mistakes it so I want to say thank you to Sandy you've done this is amazing because I served on HRC 10 years ago and the learning curve is really steep like you're just like pointed to a committee and you just show up to the first meeting and you're like what and especially if you're new my member like a new and there are a lot of people who come again and again right repeated

years then you're like I don't want to sound like I don't know anything but I also don't know anything so it's it's kind of hard and so this

[01:57:26] will prepare people to get get some training before they come in so I think it's it's smart it's very good work they should have done ten years ago thanks any other comments I just said yeah this is this is really great and one of the things that folks are okay with that is I heard a lot of feedback from at the last committee briefings in the spring about different committee members and committee chairs getting chances to collaborate with each other as well so this might be one thing we bring up with them to get some feedback but this at a glance is really great stuff and I echo my colleagues sentiment that I wish I had this when I first started so this is great

[01:58:06] all right no further discussion the November 2017 2026 meeting of the Fairfax County School Board Public Engagement Committee is adjourned at 6:27 p.m. the next meeting of the Public Engagement Committee will be held on On January 5th, 2027 at 4.30 p.m.

[01:58:26] Thank you all. Have a great night.



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