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Hanover County School Board Meeting, Tuesday, October 14, 2025

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Place Hanover County School Board, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (CivicClerk): <https://hanovercova.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1507/media>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-24. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:06] Madam Chair, I would like to make a motion to go into closed meeting per code of Virginia section 2.2-3711A1 personnel review recommendations of the superintendent for resignations, appointments, transfers, assignments, promotions, terminations, salary adjustments, and leaves of absence for teachers and other employees.

[00:00:37] section 2.2-3711A2 student disciplinary matters discussion of other matters that would involve the disclosure of information contained in a scholastic record. Thank you Mr. Coleman. I have a motion on the table. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you Dr. Schroff. Is there any discussion?

[00:00:59] Okay all in favor say aye. Aye. All opposed? Okay we are now in closed session. All right good

[01:50:44] evening. Okay, so we are going to go ahead and come back into open session. So I need a motion to return to open session. Yes, Madam Chair, I would like to make a motion to return to open session. Thank you, Mr. Coleman. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Dr. Shroff. Any discussion?

[01:51:05] Okay, seeing no discussion. Those in favor, say aye. Aye. Those opposed? Motion passes. We are now to open session now we need a certification of closed session yes madam chair i'd like to make a motion to certify our closed meeting the board will certify the following whereas the hanover county school board has convened closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the virginia freedom of information act

[01:51:38] And whereas Section 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this school board that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law, now therefore be it resolved that the Hanover County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the executive meeting to which this certification applies, And only such public business matters, as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting, were heard, discussed, or considered.

[01:52:17] Thank you, Mr. Coleman. I have a motion to certify the closed session. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Dr. Shelp. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed?

[01:52:33] Okay, motion passes. Now we are going to have a moment of silence. So please join me in a moment of silence for the recent passing of Megan Michelle Fisher. Megan was the mother of a Beaverdam Elementary School student who tragically lost her life in a car accident that occurred in the Beaverdam area.

[01:52:56] Our thoughts and prayers are with Megan's family and friends, all who were injured and affected by this accident, and the entire Beaverdam Elementary School community. Thank you.

[01:53:16] Okay, now we are going to go into the invocation and then the Pledge of Allegiance. And the Pledge of Allegiance is going to be given by Calvin Billeter, Thunder McKinley, and Ross Nicholas.

[01:53:32] And these are current fifth graders. They were fourth grade SEA officers at Cool Spring Elementary School during the 2024-25 years. so all right we'll just have y'all come up as soon as we're done with the invocation dear lord we ask that you grant us with the wisdom and the clarity needed to make sound decisions that will benefit our students and community please illuminate the path before us so that we may

[01:54:08] see clearly the way that leads to positive outcomes for all involved guide our discussions and deliberations with unwavering clarity and understanding so that we may fulfill our responsibilities with excellence. Help us set aside our differences and focus on the greater good of our students and community. May collaboration and respect be the cornerstone of our interactions, fostering a spirit of cooperation and understanding among us. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve our community in this capacity. We are grateful for your guidance and insight in this

[01:54:42] important work, and we trust in your divine wisdom to lead us. Amen. Wonderful. Thank you so much.

[01:55:19] okay um now we need to approve the meeting minutes do i have a motion to approve the meeting minutes held i move to approve the minutes for the recently held meetings thank you dr shelp um having a motion on the floor do i have a second second second thank you thank you mr coleman um i have a motion and a second do i have any discussion okay seeing none um all those in favor say aye aye all those opposed the motion passes um next we have recognition and announce and announcements

[01:55:57] so we will start with our recognition the chris whitley show and we're going to all join um down in the front that is correct dr pennycuff that's correct thank you madam chair school board members dr pennycuff it is always a pleasure to bring forth the great news and accomplishments of our students and staff and as you noted i will wait for all of you to get to the front for our first

[01:56:19] one great so our first recognition of the night goes to a valued member of Hanover's human resources team who helped Hanover County to be recognized by Aetna Healthcare with the 2025 making a difference platinum level workplace well-being award which is the highest level of distinction this award recognizes a strong commitment to providing workplace well-being resources programs

[01:56:58] and support for employees our workplace wellness program offers resources to help employees and their families create and maintain active lifestyles protect their mental well-being get the health care they need when they need it and much more to compete for this award evidence of our wellness strategy and design communications organizational engagement and program implementation were evaluated congratulations goes goes to air wellness coordinator haley sakar please

[01:57:26] come forward to be recognized okay tonight's final recognitions go to the recipients of the

[01:58:36] the Virginia School Boards Association School Board Academy Awards. The VSBA School Board Academy offers a comprehensive program of orientation and education specifically designed for our local school boards. Hanrake County School Board members have demonstrated a sincere commitment to participate in education and training workshops and seminars to enhance effective school board governance and are recognized annually for their commitment to a rigorous regimen of training provided through the VSBA.

[01:59:04] The Academy Awards are earned by accumulating credits over a two-year period, in this case from 2023 to 2025. Please join me in recognizing this year's recipients. First, Mr. Bob Seifert, Certificate of Recognition. And next, Mr. Ryan Martin, Certificate of Recognition.

[01:59:29] And finally, Dr. Lisa Penicuff, Certificate of Distinction with a pin. Congratulations to all. And Madam Chair, that concludes my portion of the recognitions.

[01:59:46] Thank you, Mr. Whitley. we are going to go into board announcements do i have any board announcements i'll make one i'd just like to shout out to the oak knoll middle school chess club uh miss aiken the librarian started the club two years ago and just recently they had their first meeting this year and had 50 plus members and four parent coaches so just a huge uh shout out to them and the parents who uh who are making a difference so thanks to them thank you mr seifert anybody else have any

[02:00:22] announcements on this side no madam chair just uh october's national principals month uh where we honor and celebrate our amazing principals for the their exceptional leadership uh dedication and vision they bring to their schools every day the school board extends its deepest appreciation to all of the principals for their tireless efforts in advancing the mission of our schools thank you dr schoeff um anybody else have any announcements okay um we are going to move on out of announcements on to approval of consent agenda. I've lost my agenda. Madam Chair, I move to approve the consent

[02:01:02] agenda as presented. Thank you, Dr. Shrove. I have a motion. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Martin. I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed? Motion passes. Okay, now we are going to our instructional highlight.

[02:01:36] developed in 2023 and will last until 2029. Just as a reminder to our community, our mission is that we are a student-centered school community committed to excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership, and our vision is empowering competent, productive, lifelong learners.

[02:02:02] We have six belief statements that you can see here. This guides our work daily, but also more importantly when we are coming back to you with updates to make sure that we are centering the work as the board wishes. The first goal of four surrounds our high-quality instruction, to provide high-quality and relevant instruction that prepares students to be life-ready, productive individuals.

[02:02:29] Under that, we have Objective 1, which is enabling all students to demonstrate annual measurable growth in literacy and numeracy through targeted and responsive instruction. When the results come out from the state shortly, we will be able to share with you some of the measurements and metrics that the state provides around both literacy and numeracy.

[02:02:53] We want to make sure that our comprehensive plan is aligned with the state's priorities as well. We also recognize that literacy and numeracy are the cornerstones for our students to be able to make an amazing life for themselves outside of our K-12 educational system. Within the literacy instruction, as we brought to you last year, there have been many changes as we shift into the science of reading and adopt all of the provisions of the Virginia Literacy Act. We adopted new instructional materials last year, HMH, and our teachers began the heavy lift of using those

[02:03:28] materials with our students. In numeracy instruction mathematics, we also had new standards to attend to this past year. And again, our curriculum specialists, but more importantly, I just have to shout out our elementary teachers who dealt with both literacy and math changes in the same year. They are true heroes and workhorses and just amazing educators. We're so grateful to have them.

[02:03:54] Throughout the division, we've been working on an instructional design model to ensure that the way that we approach learning and teaching is consistent throughout the division. What this does is it aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and provides a pathway for teachers to know what order to do things, how to have conversations with their colleagues in order to best create the classroom experience for our students. As you can see, at this point, the state has released pass rates for math, reading, science, and social studies. I've given you a two-year view. We will

[02:04:31] get more detailed information from the state within the next few weeks, and we will be prepared to go through that information with you at the November work session. Our second objective is to maximize career preparation opportunities for all students.

[02:04:47] When we come to your next meeting, we will talk more about the three E's, but that is education, enlistment, and employment. And so enrolling in post-secondary, enlisting in the military, or finding a job.

[02:05:03] Those are the three pieces that we're keeping our eye on with our seniors as they depart from us every year. We have made considerable efforts around that and will show you the fruits of those efforts when the state results are released. We continue to have very strong career counseling from middle school and high school.

[02:05:22] As you can see, the graduating class of 2025 continues to earn advanced diplomas at a highest rate out of any of the diplomas that we have offered here in the division. and then if you look at our post-graduation plans as self-reported by our graduating seniors last spring, you can see how they have embraced the idea of enrollment, enlistment, or entering into the workforce. Our third objective is to really focus in on the experiences as driven

[02:05:58] by our learners. What are their skills? What are their interests? How can we parlay those into successful careers down the road. Again, the shift to the three E's really does tie to our advanced studies opportunities, which is including, as you saw last month, an expansion of our dual enrollment opportunities projected for the next year. And then we've also spent some time working on our middle school activities and athletics to make sure that that group of students has what they need to be able to launch into their high school experience, but also to take care of their physical and emotional needs as they are middle schoolers, which is a tough time in every

[02:06:37] student's life. I'm going to turn it over for goal two over to Terry Stone. Thank you, Jen. Good evening. So goal two is prioritize and allocate operational fiscal resources to meet the unique and complex needs of students, employees, families, and schools. And basically that's our budget process. So the objective one is looking at our non-instructional support functions, which includes financial planning and monitoring. That is our annual budget process, our audit. We receive a

[02:07:13] clean audit this year. Our student activity fund audit we'll be bringing to you in the next month or two. The auditors told us looked better than ever this year. Our facility and capital planning, That's our capital improvement plan, our five-year plan that we develop each year.

[02:07:30] And then we have 10-year plans where we look out and work with the county regarding needs that are out beyond that five years. Safety and compliance, that is ongoing with their drills, their assessments. They are in our schools every day ensuring the safety and compliance.

[02:07:48] Transportation and logistics, that's running every day. We're getting our students where they need to be. Each year at the beginning of the school year, though, we're rerouting and we're looking at ridership and what changes do we need to make throughout the year. Technology, we have that five-year technology plan and also a 10-year technology plan that we update each year as part of our budget process.

[02:08:11] And then nutrition services, again, our ongoing operations. today. Just today, we had opportunity for kids to come in and taste some new recipes at Atlee High School and provide us with feedback. So we're always looking for ways to improve our offerings in the cafeteria. Objective two is looking at our teaching and learning, aligning those resources with teaching and learning. Again, budget process, again, that's my area of expertise. But looking at our current year budget, we know there were great efforts made

[02:08:48] in this year's budget to raise the teacher pay plan. So that certainly supported teaching and learning. Also the addition to the trade school. We finished up the vet tech center. There's a lot going on in this area under capital and operational. Enrollment and facility capacity. As I mentioned earlier you all just completed the heavy lift on that with with our with that those efforts with our elementary boundary adjustment so we will continuously look at our enrollment compare it

[02:09:21] to our capacity and ensuring that we are remaining aligned and if there's a need to make changes or to discuss things then we're going to stay on top of that and look at it each year so next steps we We will continue to manage our ongoing capital instruction.

[02:09:39] As you know, we currently have three new schools underway in some process. We're going to hear about that in a later agenda item. We will work with our funding partner, the county, to continue to develop our long-term capital plans and kind of perfect them each year, continue to monitor enrollment, facility capacity, and then also transportation utilization and bus replacement.

[02:10:03] So next we have goal three. Goal 3 of the Comprehensive Plan is to attract, develop, and retain a high-quality student-focused workforce through mutual trust, open communication, and support.

[02:10:21] Objective 1, to prioritize innovative recruitment efforts to attract optimal talent. Last year, through our annual job family review, HCPS provided a substantial investment of \$6.5 million in lifting the teacher salary scale, with the average teacher salary increase was about 8.5%.

[02:10:41] Additionally, a \$1,200 bonus was provided to all full-time staff in June of 2025. Recruitment event participation doubled last year, adding more community engagement events and local job fairs in addition to college and university events.

[02:10:57] We also strengthen programs for the community and support staff aspiring to teach, like I Might Want to Teach events, PATH, and I Teach, as well as continuous engagement with Teachers for Tomorrow program to support and connect with high school students pursuing education as a profession.

[02:11:16] Objective two, provide each employee with engaging high-quality professional learning to build capacity and promote professionalism. Under Dr. Stephen Castle's leadership, HCPS ensures every employee receives engaging high-quality professional learning. The division continues to support all teachers each year with the Unified Professional Learning Conference. Over the course of three days, more than 1,600 participants learned from their colleagues who share expertise and offer strategies to overcome

[02:11:50] challenges through any one of the 423 sessions that were offered over the three days in July. The division also continues to support cohorts such as PATH, where in the last three and a half year, the program has successfully placed well-prepared teachers in 112 classrooms across the division. A leadership cohort launched in 2025 and a reading specialist cohort began in 2024.

[02:12:18] All of these tuition for the cohort members is covered and for the fees are covered by Hanover County Public Schools. Needless to say, the professional learning environment in Hanover is thriving. Goal three, to retain qualified employees.

[02:12:37] In partnership with our communications team, we highlight and promote staff with initiatives like Hanover Strong, Brag on a Bus Driver, and Why I Teach. We value employee feedback through year-round exit interviews to understand employee attrition and receive continuous feedback from our classified and teacher advisory committees.

[02:12:55] We prioritize employees' health and wellness in partnership with Marathon Health. We've expanded employee access to local affordable health care options by adding additional medical staff at our Marathon Health Clinic and including behavioral health clinicians in a pharmacy option as well.

[02:13:17] The next steps for goal three, as we move into the 25-26 school year, human resources will continue building on our efforts to attract, develop, and retain high-quality workforce. Our next steps will include annually reviewing our job family compensation to ensure regional competitiveness, partner with our benefits consultants, and provide employees education on their benefits and preferences on their benefits. Prioritize growing our own strategies like Teachers for Tomorrow, PATH, and iTeach to actively build a robust teacher pipeline from within the Hanover community.

[02:13:55] We will also focus on strengthening staff recognition, employee feedback, and promoting employee health and wellness. These efforts will guide our work in the coming year as we continue to

support and invest in our employees. And back to Mrs. Greif for goal four. All right, goal for is our climate and community goal, identify, design, and implement systems that support a positive educational climate and community. So we do this in a number of ways.

[02:14:26] Our first objective is about student and employee wellness, and Ms. Parker, Dr. Parker, excuse me, reviewed some of that related to our staff. And then we also have steps that we take within the classrooms of our schools, our school counseling office, looking for opportunities to provide interventions for students and teach them expectations and ways to be a part of our school community in a very positive way.

[02:14:53] As you can imagine, we are looking at student discipline and school, let's try that again, student behavior, school discipline, as one of our tools to really get our arms around how to create those positive environments for our students.

[02:15:11] We've been working on a kindness campaign this year to be a balance for some of the changes that we're also making in our discipline focus and making sure that our teachers and our students are aware of expectations and targeting some of the behaviors that seem to be rising a little bit in our schools, making sure that we are looking at appropriate ways to both discipline and teach our students the expectations.

[02:15:38] Objective three is to strengthen our family engagement. We certainly could not do that without Mr. Whitley's team. They have rolled out our new platform, ParentSquare, which allows for both broad communication and targeted communication in a way that is proving to be highly effective.

[02:15:54] We continue to promote our school-based and our division-wide events to draw in our public, not just our parents, but the community at large. And then we also have family engagement specialists working with our attendance support. So part of our outreach is to make sure that our students do attend school on a regular basis.

[02:16:13] That is the best formula for making sure that they have the foundation that they need to be successful in our schools. And then objective four is to look for partnerships that link our community to our students. We do that in a number of ways, one of which is expanding our work-based learning opportunities.

[02:16:32] I believe that we are stronger now than we have ever been in this area, and that we continue to find new opportunities for that. When you look at our vet tech program that has just gotten up and running, the expansion that's coming with our Trade Center wing, we are finding opportunities to get students involved with career pathways that they will then be able to partner inside our own community as well to be able to thrive and maybe stay a little bit closer to home once they graduate.

[02:17:02] And so we continue to work through that with some of our advisory boards, our CTE advisory board, our gifted and talented advisory board, SEAC. All of them bring stakeholders together to provide perspectives for you to use. Our goal for next steps, continually temperature gauging with our stakeholders in a wide variety of places.

[02:17:26] That's with our teachers, with our community members, with our students themselves. Looking at how we can even expand some of the relationships, looking at the partnerships that we have with perhaps HEF, who are very supportive of the classroom teachers' adventures and often fund some things that we can't necessarily do at the division level.

[02:17:46] And we continue to look for our school counselors to support the wellness of our students so that they can best access their education and their academic pathways. And at this point, we will be happy to take any questions that the board might have. Do we have any questions? Yes, Mr. Seidler. Ms. Graf, I think I might have heard that a slight uptick in discipline issues. Can you say where that is, if I heard that right? Elementary, middle?

[02:18:12] Yeah, I think that you will get a discipline report coming up quarterly in November, so we don't have data yet from this year. But what we were doing last year is really looking at the trends that we saw. And as the board had requested last year, we started providing that quarterly disciplined, um, report. And we were able to see some of the areas where we needed to do a little bit more work. Um, RB9 being one of those, and those are racial slurs or slurs related to identity was an area that we really wanted to target. That was part of the reason that we started working on the kindness campaign as well. We continue to have students, um, be involved with vaping and we want

[02:18:50] to make sure that we are providing enough supports for, um, students who have perhaps some addictions to nicotine and other substances that they might be using in vapes and really addressing that from a health perspective as well as from a disciplinary perspective. So we've been able to look at the trends through the quarterly reports and then be more proactive in identifying strategies that we can use throughout the division. This question is for Dr. Parker. The PATH program. I'm always curious as to the backgrounds, the most common background of the person that gets involved in

[02:19:29] the program is it you know what's what what are they current what what were they currently doing and I don't know why I'm just always kind of interested in that the candidates really come from a variety of backgrounds some have had work with younger children perhaps in daycare settings or in like camps parks and rec but often they're people from everywhere we've had CEOs of major corporations and join our path program to individuals that are working in the private sector or Capital One and have just decided that they have found a calling with being within our schools in our classrooms and we're providing the

[02:20:06] support for them to be able to enter those classrooms I think that's a great that's a great program thank you yeah thank you anybody else I do thank you very much I do want to echo Ms. Greif sentiment about the primary teachers and their challenges that they had last year so we are in a very feedback rich environment and I think the principals and Miss Greif's team and Dr. Fisher all were experiencing a feedback rich environment last year from our teachers and I think it showed the collaboration of our team to really work together to

[02:20:45] get more of you know get get on track and a very streamlined and the success was just amazing the outcome was the huge success and the students really benefited from that so i echo the sentiment and i say thank you to the team and um and especially the teachers and the administrators for taking that feedback and and you know turning it into solutions um it's exciting to see all this come to life so um very excited about the future for handover county public schools um anything else from anybody to on this okay so we are going to

[02:21:20] um move on to washington henry elementary school new construction so we have um let's see mr bauer coming up yes where's your coffee uh madam chair uh school board dr pennycuff uh thank you all for having me um so for the next three or four hours we're going to go through the uh um so uh tonight we're going to do a kind of a brief overview and show a video um of where we are with rendering wise

[02:21:58] for the project. So that's hopefully all of our technology works. So project wise we are wrapping up construction documents. We're going to be heading here in November to be putting the project out for a bit. So we're wrapping up just kind of the final piece of this puzzle. The construction documents are the documents that we give to the contractor to actually build the building.

[02:22:18] So for those who have, by the way, is anybody driven by Beaver Dam or Battlefield Park recently? Super exciting, isn't it? The buildings look amazing and so very soon we'll be doing the exact same thing to Washington Henry. So we're going to be going out to bid and our goal is to start construction. When I say start construction, it doesn't mean moving dirt, but start construction here before the end of the school year. I'm sorry, the end of the calendar year. So the idea is that when the weather is appropriate that the contractor will actually start to move dirt, putting up fence and things like that. The goal is to have the project completed for the fall of '27. So what that means is we really need to be done by June of '27.

[02:22:56] That gives us an entire month to be able to move furniture in, to move the teachers from the current space over. We're going to be demolishing the building and then have everything ready to go and buttoned up for that start of school. So as you're familiar with the site, it is broken into two different parcels.

[02:23:15] So what's interesting is on your right hand side, that was actually the original school site that had the building that I believe the portion of the foundation is there. And then the school that we're all familiar with is on the left-hand parcel. So this is our version that has been approved through the cup.

[02:23:34] And we are 99% approved through the county process as far as land development goes. What's interesting about this, and one thing that we received a lot of positive feedback is, is the extremely long car drop-off. So this, and I do mean extremely long.

[02:23:53] So this is more than double with the amount of cars. And every time we tell the neighbors, they're like, you're kidding, right? This is amazing. So this should definitely be an improvement. We are entering, there's going to be a left-hand turn lane. We're entering off of Shady Grove. I see the large drop-off and then exiting off onto Man Drive.

[02:24:10] Buses will exit and enter off of Man Drive. So we're trying to maximize the site, keeping in mind that the new building is going to be constructed in the back part of the site that's right there right now while the building is operational. And then once the new building is operational, we move into it, and then we demolish the existing building for the parking lot and the playground area.

[02:24:32] So the building should look familiar because this is a modified prototype of Ashland, Beaver Dam, and Battlefield with a Main Street concept. On the left-hand side are your two two-story classroom wings. On the right, starting from bottom to top, is your admin, your gymnasium, your music area, and then your cafeteria, followed by the kitchen.

[02:24:49] Second floor is also Main Street. On your left-hand side is your media center and your art, along with first and second and third grade, respectively, going from bottom to top. These are the elevations that were approved in the cup.

[02:25:05] We sincerely love the county cup process because what it does is it encourages us to come up with a design super early in the process as far as the elevations. These were the elevations that we

presented to both the planning commission and to the county supervisors, receiving a lot of praise during that process.

[02:25:23] Again, while I get to be the one standing here, everybody who was involved in the process, the whole leadership team, was involved in the development of this elevation, which I believe everybody's super pleased with. So this is the rendering of the front of the building, which you see a lot of the characteristics of the courthouse.

[02:25:43] So again, trying to keep those arches, the reddish brick, and then the large windows going over top where the media center is. Now, the video's next, and cross my fingers this is all gonna work out great. So what I'm gonna do is, the video goes super fast, so I'm gonna try to pause it as we go and cross our fingers that it works out just well. So we're gonna start at the front entrance, and what we're gonna do is we're gonna walk through the front door into the secure vestibule. On the right-hand side you're gonna see the reception area. Again, lots of visibility for the

[02:26:18] receptionist to see the vestibule and the front door. It didn't work, okay. It's okay, we're just gonna, now it's mad at me. Okay, so I'm just not to touch the button. So as we get through the front door and through the secure vestibule, on the left-hand side, you're going to see the beginning of the wall of history. So the idea is you're going to have display cases, the brick. We're going to try to capture as much of the brick from the existing building as possible to bring it into the building, both at the the wall of history and then at the arches all throughout the building. On the left-hand side, you can see one of the five

[02:26:53] co-lab rooms. Again, these are spaces that the students can do small and large group. The slide, which is the most popular with the students again reflecting of the house system as we keep going down main street on the right hand side of your gym you see the music area the the final collaboration lab on this floor which is two we're going to head into the cafeteria now what's unique about this building from the others is that currently they have the the stage is located in the dining room and they wanted to keep that that intimateness of the dining room and the stage and that's what what we're doing here also. So in the other buildings, the stage is off of the, look up in

[02:27:31] the window, want to point up the window up top there, because we're going to get back to that when we get to the second floor. But the, so the stage in this one is going to be off of the, is off of the cafeteria, not off of the gymnasium. Now we're going to do is we're going to head upstairs. Now, so we have two of the collabs downstairs. We have three upstairs, a large big open area with the folding partitions to be able to close each of these spaces off. As we get to top as you look to the left not saying that we that we stole anything from Scotchtown but there's a lot of characteristics of Scotchtown that are into the and we'll get back to this in a moment

[02:28:07] so here on your left hand side you see the three collabs these have the floating partitions that allow these to be closed off or to create one big open space going back to that window that we saw in the cafeteria what you can see is now you can look down to that space we couldn't quite see all the stage so if you look to the right you see the the um you see a tv there that tv is kind of a camera. So if you're sitting up there you're going to be able to view the the camera and what's happening on the stage on that TV. So heading back to the the main heart of Main Street on the second floor again there's there's a reflection of Scotchtown that we have in the in the reading room which is there that leads you down the you can go down the the slide from this location. There's

[02:28:47] a small reading room on this each of the buildings are unique and that was our unique piece again with Washington Henry we want to kind of treat have as much of that Patrick Henry love in the space as we went through the building. Now we're going to head to the media center, their library. Again, you see those arches, that commonality. The goal is to try to reuse as much of the existing brick from the building as possible. You see the media center, everything's height appropriate. I always appreciate that. We're going to head back out.

[02:29:15] What we're going to do is we're going to hang a right and we're going to go down the stairs. I may have given this once or twice before it is just saying. So now we're going to do is we're going to hit the bottom of the steps. On your left-hand side, you're going to see that initial wall of history. It'll have the building plaque, some images, ability for artifacts to be placed in the display cases. And what we're going to do is we're going to head to right. We're going to go through your gymnasium. The gym is still your largest amount of students and staff can go into this space, over 800. You can see we have bleachers, a full basketball court, lots of natural daylight in all the spaces. We're going to pop out through that door and we're going to take a

[02:29:55] look at the outside. We're going to do a little bit of running here and turn around. And what we're going to do is now we're going to take off. We're going to fly. So what we see below us right now is the parent drop-off and to our back is Shady Grove. Okay, so this is the elevation you're going to see from Shady Grove. Going from left to right is the admin and then the gymnasium, your music, your cafeteria. One thing that's important is that all the mechanical units on the ground and on the rooftop are screened per ordinance. You can see the loading dock and now as we kind of move around the building now you see is the kindergarten the first and second grade playgrounds uh the two two

[02:30:32] store the two-story classroom wing we're gonna head over top of the uh of the bus loading area and unloading um in the center here is that um is that secure uh student learning area the outdoor space uh where where teachers can can bring students out one thing i want to point out is that that same bus area is is going to be spaced every day for student play so four square you know that's a hard surface play area uh we're gonna we're over top of the three four or five playground and what we're gonna do is we're gonna land and we're gonna speed up time five four three two one and we're going to go from daytime to nighttime and please keep in mind that you all have access

[02:31:11] to this video so you can do it in a much slower version um so i don't i don't want to say that i have a favorite one so far um but this is one of my favorite ones that we've been able to do it's uh the building has a lot of fantastic characteristics we're really pleased on the history that we're able to pull in still making it a fun elementary school still honoring the house system with the The colors, lots of natural daylight in the space.

[02:31:37] And again, our goal is to try to pull as much. As you're going through the space, if you may not have noticed all the murals on the walls, again, part of our goal is to pull as much of that history of the students. And again, if we can't actually remove the mural, our goal is to scan it in, just like we're doing at Beaver Dam and Battlefield.

[02:31:53] Our goal is to scan it, to be able to do a vinyl graphic of it to make sure we're pulling that history. We don't want this awful, to go from the beautiful building that Washington Henry is, all the character we don't want to go into this austere non-fund space we want to pull that history in but as you see we have plenty of walls to create new history so um that's any any questions thoughts comments

anybody have any questions for mr bauer yeah yes yeah i might have a little bias to this project um as three kids that go to school there um will uh the first of all the longer drop

[02:32:29] off line thank you oh my god i can't tell you thank you um will there be impacts to the drop off during construction? Actually, what we've been able to do is we're just doing a little bit of a turn on it, so you'll still be entering the same spot. It's going to be about 30 feet closer to the building, but it should not have a shorter distance or any other real impact. The other positive is that we've been able to move the construction entrances down further, so there really should be little to no impact between the construction activity and the parent drop-off. So we try to make it as minimal and as invasive as we possibly could. And then the what are we doing for recess

[02:33:06] while it's under construction? That's a really hard-hitting question. So the recess is the the overall green space is going to be reduced a bit. The playgrounds we don't really see too much impact on the playground. We are ordering swings so we're going to have additional swings. So there is going to be there is going to be a little bit of a change but it should not be as such a significant impact um that your children would come home and say josh didn't do a good job um so we are for for someone who needed recess time i really appreciate you know to make sure that we have that so so there's a there's less overall green space but we're going to have a very similar

[02:33:42] amount of climbing um and overall play area excellent thank you great job looks looks awesome I just have one comment. We are often talking about what we can do for the Virginia 250. So I think that everyone will always remember that we got Washington Henry with its Scotchtown treehouse during the Virginia 250. Very excited.

[02:34:06] Yes, I think it's very exciting. And I actually could see a mural, maybe a 250 mural or something on one of those walls that encompasses the history of Hanover County. It's lovely. Nice work. It is very exciting. I think it's probably one of my most exciting ones too. Although it's not in the historic Henry District, it looks very historic and I like it. So thank you, Mr. Bauer. Appreciate It any other questions for mr. Yeah, just yeah, I think wonderful also and I actually went to Washington Henry for a year So and a history major so really appreciate it

[02:34:45] And bringing in Scotchtown that that's awesome. How about Washington anything you're able to bring in George Washington? And that's a great question. So we're working on that in the murals So that that is going to be all throughout so what you're seeing in the video up where the video We have to create the model for the video outside of the construction documents So there's only so much we could fund but we are working on some of the murals that are going to be incorporating Washington into that into that piece Okay. Yeah, super. Thank you. All right. Any other questions for mr. Bauer? All right. Thank you very much

[02:35:19] Thank you so much. Have a great night. Okay, and now we have miss Hahn coming up for some proposed revised policies Thank you madam chair these in front of you are here for first read We do not need you to take any action on them But as is custom for our division, we present them to you, give you an opportunity to review them, receive any feedback that's needed, and then we will ask for you to adopt them at the next meeting.

[02:35:50] What you have in front of you is mostly the result of a lot of the legislation that we've seen coming through, both about opioids, about school safety, about communication with parents, more so

trying to address some of the things that are happening in the schools as opposed to just responding to them.

[02:36:16] so what I've got for you is just kind of a brief little blurb about each one. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have or talk more about any of them that you have an interest in or want more information on. Okay, thank you. Do we have any questions, comments for Ms. Hahn? Okay, seeing none. Thank you very much. Thank you. And we are going to move on to the Hanover County Public

[02:36:45] Schools Division Gifted Plan. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Penneacoff, senior staff. I'm Andrea Herndon and I'm here to give you an overview of our local gifted plan.

[02:37:09] I would like to acknowledge the support that we've had as a gifted advisory from Mr. Seifert last year and Dr. Schroff this year. And this is a five-year process. So the last time that the gifted plan was reviewed was in 2020. I want to always have the opportunity to give you a snapshot at gifted education in Hanover County. We have a little over 2,200 identified gifted learners in kindergarten through 12th grade. We have 18 gifted teachers.

[02:37:45] We are very proud to be staffed with one gifted teacher at every one of our elementary schools and middle schools. We have 740 of our gifted learners in elementary school and a little over 1500 at the secondary level. At the high school, we have the support of eight high school coordinators, which includes four IB coordinators and four advanced studies coordinators.

[02:38:10] Our division philosophy for gifted education is that we believe students have many unique interests and talents and strengths and that gifted students need opportunities to interact with all students, to interact with other gifted students and the opportunities that allow them to pursue their interests and reach their greatest potential. And that work is driven through our local gifted plan.

[02:38:34] This is codified in the Code of Virginia and we receive the template from the Virginia Department of Education. So you can see that each comprehensive plan for each division in the Commonwealth includes the philosophy, goals and objectives, how we screen, refer, and identify gifted learners, how we communicate to families, our continuum of services, what our curriculum looks like, our professional development, and how we review our effectiveness.

[02:39:08] The fantastic news is that in 2020, when we submitted our gifted plan to the Virginia Department of Education, it received high marks and strong feedback. We have a very detailed plan. I'm very proud that it's the plan that I inherited when I came into this position.

[02:39:25] So we have a great starting point. We review it every five years in this process. And so far this year, our Gifted Advisory Committee has reviewed the plan in its new 2631 draft, the Gifted Advanced Studies Instructional Team, the Instructional Leadership Team, the Superintendent, and now tonight.

[02:39:49] the school board. So like I said, we came at this with a very amazing, strong plan. So we were not in a situation where we needed to make a lot of changes. So we only had to make really one substantive change. And then we were able to clarify and codify some of the practices that have evolved over time with our team. The only change in our practice is in Hanover. We are one of the few divisions that recognize giftedness in the visual and performing arts. Previously we began

[02:40:24] that identification process in fifth grade. We have found over time and specifically working with our curriculum specialists in the visual and performing arts that moving that process to sixth grade is

really to the advantage of students. If you think about what art and music looks like in elementary school compared to your experience as a middle schooler part of the identification process is to complete a portfolio of your artwork or to do an adjudication or audition for the performing arts and we found that when students have more dedicated time to their art and music

[02:41:01] electives as they do in middle school there is a much stronger identification rate so moving that from 5th grade into 6th grade with the identification beginning then. And really our data reflected that most of our students were being identified in the visual and performing arts specifically in middle school, most often than not in 8th grade because we do offer an accelerated art pathway for gifted learners in high school.

[02:41:28] Some other changes, we have increased the language regarding our professional learning to include language that moves beyond just gifted education, where we typically think of K-8, but also talk about advanced coursework.

[02:41:43] Ms. Greif talked about how advanced coursework is both part of our comprehensive plan and as we look towards the 3E accreditation. So we wanted to capture how we have that continuum from elementary all the way through high school with advanced coursework.

[02:41:59] We provided more structured family and community engagement Through the hard work of our gifted advisory committee, we've revised recently in the past five years of this plan, we've revised the forward-facing division website regarding gifted education, and we've also implemented family webinars.

[02:42:20] So if you love hearing me talk, you can come twice annually. I try to recruit other people, so it's not just me talking. I feel like it's my gifted podcast, but twice a year in the winter and the spring, we do webinar for families. We've also provided clear evaluation procedures. Starting last year, we wanted to capture a change we've made in practice where we're sending home the gifted identification worksheet so that parents can see the data that surrounds their child before that was something that parents could access through request. And we felt it was important to lead with that

[02:42:57] and share that information out of the gate. And then the last change is we have a very thriving gifted advisory committee. We have a fairly robust membership. We have over 20 members. So we wanted to align the language in our gifted advisory plan to correlate with what was in our bylaws and reflect our recent increased engagement in gifted advisory. So those five things are really the only changes that have been made to the plan from 2020. Our plan is now making its way to the Department of Education where it will then be sent to a team of gifted

[02:43:36] professionals who will go through the technical review process with what we have and provide feedback and I will share that feedback with you at the time that we receive it it's a great collaborative process myself and three gifted teachers will provide technical reviews for other divisions in the county so that's the update to the local division local division gifted plan and And I have an announcement that, don't forget, the Education Expo.

[02:44:05] It's Tuesday at Patrick Henry at 530. So it is geared towards students in 5th through 10th grade to learn about all secondary advanced coursework opportunities. So if you'd like more information, reach out to me directly or see your gifted teacher or your high school coordinator for more information.

[02:44:23] Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Herndon. And thank you. I'm sure everybody's thanking you for that plug. They are. Hold on just a second. Do we have any questions for Dr. Herndon? I would just like to

say what an amazing program I think you run, and I appreciate that. Thank you, and I appreciate the support that you gave us last year as part of the advisory.

[02:44:43] Thank you very much. And when will we hear from the state's suggestions? Will you do another update? Yes, I'll do another update when that happens. Generally, it will be either in the spring or summer, depending on how many divisions are going through the review. They break the state up over the course of the five-year rotation.

[02:45:00] Okay. Thank you very much. You're welcome. all right so it looks like it's public comment time and we have two public comment sections one is general public comment and the second one is going to be our fiscal year 27 budget public comment and i'm going to turn it over to mr coleman yes procedures for public comment the school board conducts the public comment segment of its meetings to receive information from the general public on matters related to hanover county public schools per board policy the total

[02:45:40] time allotted for the public comment will not exceed 60 minutes speakers who wish to address the board school board are requested to follow these guidelines as each speaker is recognized by the chairperson the speaker is asked to clearly state the speaker's name magisterial district and the subject of the speaker's remarks speakers are asked to address their comments to the board and not to the audience the board requests that the audience refrain from responding to speakers comments with applause or other audible expressions of approval or disapproval speakers are allotted three minutes to address the board each speaker's elapsed time will appear on the screen speakers

[02:46:17] will also receive notification from the chairperson when time has expired although the board does not permit the use of slideshows or other projected materials during this segment speakers are invited to provide printed copies of such materials to the board the board requests any person with a complaint about a school division employee to first address the concern to the division superintendent in accordance with board policy. Comments targeting, criticizing, or attacking individual students are not permitted during this segment, and speakers should refrain from using personally identifiable information in connection with an individual student. Speakers should be

[02:46:55] aware that while the board allows speaker to address any matter within the board's purview, Speakers may be held legally responsible if they make statements that violate the legal rights of others, including threatening or defamatory statements made against staff, members, students, or parents.

[02:47:10] The board expresses its appreciation for the public input and cooperation during this segment of the meeting. First up will be Matt Kreitz. Did I say that correctly?

[02:47:26] And then next up is Angela Kreitz. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Pennycuff.

[02:47:53] My name is Matt Kreitz. This is my wife, Angie. and this is our son Charlie. He is a sixth grader at Chickahominy Middle School and down there between us is his service dog Wendy. We live in the Ashland District and we are here this evening to bring your attention to ongoing challenges that Charlie has had as well as our family regarding the denial of access of his service dog within Hanover County Public Schools. Wendy is a fully trained service dog provided to Charlie through Canine Companions, one of the oldest

[02:48:29] and most respected service dog organizations in the country. She is not a pet, but is a highly trained working dog that assists Charlie with essential daily tasks related to his disabilities. Wendy's presence is not optional. It is fundamental to Charlie's ability to access his education on an equal basis with his peers. Because of Charlie's age, maturity, and disabilities, he cannot handle Wendy independently. When we acquired Wendy from Canine Companions, we underwent a rigorous two-week training program, which is a requirement of all service dog handlers, that Angie and I successfully

[02:49:06] passed. We passed a public access test administered by Assistance Dog International, the worldwide gold standard. Passing the ADI public access test is a requirement for ADI accredited organizations and it helps confirm a team's readiness for public interactions. Notice I said Angie and I passed the public access test. Not Charlie. He's not old enough yet, nor does he have the cognitive ability to even take the training class or attempt a test.

[02:49:38] Our hope is that one day, within a few years, Charlie will be able to independently handle Wendy, but until then, we are required to act as what's called a facilitated team. A facilitated team means the recipient, the service dog, and a trained facilitator.

[02:49:55] In this case, either myself or Angie or any other adult that successfully passes the training program must be present in all public settings, including schools. This model is also known as a three-unit team. It is very well recognized worldwide. It's supported in Virginia law, and it's also acknowledged in HCPS policy. So my time is now almost up, so I will let Angie pick up our story from here. Thank you. If you want to hold just one sec, make sure we get you three minutes. Yes, sir. No reset. There we go. Thank you.

[02:50:35] Unfortunately, Hanover County Public Schools has denied Wendy access in this facilitated capacity. The district has made it clear that they are only permitting Wendy inside the school if Charlie is the sole handler. This directly contradicts the terms of our certification.

[02:50:52] It violates our contract, creates a significant safety risk, and effectively denies Charlie the use of his service dog at school. What is especially troubling is that HCPS made this decision without collaborating with us or posing any alternative options.

[02:51:09] by denying a facilitator hcps is in effect denying the service dog itself since the facilitator is required at all times for public access this denial violates both federal law and virginia code which explicitly permits third-party handlers for service dogs over the past several months we have taken multiple steps to work with school administration to resolve this matter Despite these good-faith attempts, our requests have been consistently denied, with the school citing concerns about fundamental alteration of the program as justification for excluding Wendy.

[02:51:48] This position is inconsistent with the requirements of both the Americans with Disabilities Act and Virginia state law. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has also issued several rulings and decisions which explicitly support the presence of a third-party handler in the classroom.

[02:52:07] These laws and rulings all affirm the right of the individuals with the disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in public settings, including schools, and include the presence of a facilitator. These definitions are clearly established in Virginia state law.

[02:52:25] Charlie is supposed to be present in school to learn, and Wendy's role is to enable him to do exactly that. Denying Wendy's access has placed unnecessary burdens on Charlie, undermining both his

educational experience and his emotional well-being.

[02:52:41] So far this school year, Charlie's mental health, physical health, and emotional health have all suffered immensely. We are willing to answer any questions or concerns the school board may have, and we We want to collaborate together to ensure all the district's concerns are addressed.

[02:53:00] We respectfully ask the school board to review the matter and take corrective action to ensure that Charlie is the same access to education as every other Hanover County student and hopeful the board will recognize the importance of complying with the federal and state law, but even more importantly, the moral obligation to support a child's right to learn when he needs assistance and is required. Thank you for your time and we hope to collaboratively work towards the resolution. Thank you. So we do have some

[02:53:34] documents to provide to the board and then Charlie also has some cards. Wendy has her own trading cards that he would like each one of you to have so I will leave those here. Thank you all. Thank you. Sorry, next up is Kathleen Metcalf And following Kathleen is Amber, forgive me, Angel, the double L threw me off, sorry.

[02:54:04] Good evening, I'm Kathleen and I'm from Chickahominy District and I want to thank you all this evening for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am here on behalf of my neighborhood, Atlee Manor, to request an amendment be made to keep my neighborhood with only five elementary school children districted to Cold Spring.

[02:54:27] The primary purpose of redistricting the neighborhoods is to reduce overcrowding and strain on Cool Spring Elementary due to rapid development and expansion of homes in the last decade plus. That's very clear. I have copies for you all today because I received, via my FOIA request, made to your office this summer, the neighborhood assessment data collected by MGT, which in fact shows that there are only five elementary school students living in Atlee Manor.

[02:54:54] Of these five children, they come from three homes. Two of the five children are autistic and work with special needs services since kindergarten. As I'm sure many of you are aware, they truly require stability in their environment to support their progress.

[02:55:12] The other three children only account for a single student in their grades. So one in five, one in fourth, and one in third grade. So effectively, these children will move, be in a construction zone, and never even see the inside of the new school.

[02:55:27] because they will move to Chickahominy before school year 2027. So I'm asking the members of the school board to please reflect on and re-evaluate the decision made to permanently redistrict this small neighborhood that factually does not contribute to overcrowding.

[02:55:43] I think we can agree that redistricting a neighborhood with five students will not alleviate the overcrowding issues at Cool Spring Elementary and does not address the sole purpose of redistricting. I hope that we can agree that it will cause a huge burden on these five children by unnecessarily disrupting their learning environment, separating them from the entire bulk of their known classmates and teachers since kindergarten, and by expecting these young children to adapt positively and successfully to all the change while putting them in a construction zone.

[02:56:14] I hope that we can agree that redistricting a neighborhood with five students is also an unnecessary burden on three homes, three families, six parents. We're forcing them to attend a school

three miles away when their current school is less than one mile from their front doors.

[02:56:34] If the board can agree that this data is meaningful, then please make a correction for Attlee Manor. If the data does not sway the board, then I simply ask for the bare minimum of fairness to be deployed and to include Attlee Manor's five children in waivers and delays that are being afforded to the Giles community.

[02:56:51] For if it was determined that Cool Spring can continue to accommodate the strain of 151 elementary school students living in the Giles, there's no reason that five children in Atlee Manor should be excluded from the same benefit of time and stability. Please reconsider and keep Atlee Manor at Cool Spring. Thank you very much.

[02:57:11] Thank you. Amber Angel, and following Amber is Ken Angel. Hello, members of the school board. I appreciate you taking your time to let us talk and voice our concerns.

[02:57:27] My name is Amber Angel, and I am in the Chickahominy District. More specifically, I live in the Craney Island neighborhood. I am here again to ask that you please reconsider and unify the redistricting timeline of Craney Island, Atlee Manor, and Giles neighborhoods. Under the current proposal, these communities would be redistricted at different times, forcing many students to endure multiple school transitions in consecutive years.

[02:57:49] This approach would create unnecessary disruption and emotional strain for children who deserve consistency and stability in their education. A recent census that our neighborhood did of elementary students in Craney Island shows that the number of students affected by redistricting is too small to justify separating the process into multiple phases.

[02:58:06] In most grades, only one student per class would be redistricted. In the current third grade, however, several sections would not transfer a student at all. Similarly, the Atlee Manor neighborhood includes only five students. The current plan burdens a small number of students while providing no meaningful relief to Cool Spring Elementary.

[02:58:27] There is study after study that finds that after a student moves schools the following year, they are found to have lower academic outcomes, particularly in math and language arts. When you have multiple school changes, it compounds the issues and some students do not recover.

[02:58:43] It also leads to social dysregulation and some studies say that the effects can last for years. I also would like us to recognize the impact that this is going to have on the students of Washington Henry. They are going to have to go through two transitions as well, with two consecutive years of drastic changes to the student body of their school.

[02:59:00] A way to help this is to preserve social networks for our children. However, our neighborhood is small to begin with, and it is shrinking. Since the decision was made to have our neighborhood move first, three families have moved out. With this, I feel a strong need to tell you a story, a conversation that I had with my six-year-old.

[02:59:19] My daughter came home from school upset. I asked her what was wrong, and she said that one of her friends had told her that her mom said that she could not be her friend anymore because she was changing schools. While I don't think that is exactly what the child's mother said to her, that is the message she took from it.

[02:59:35] I am sure that mom just wants her daughter to find friends that would be at Cool Spring with her. Lucy and I talked about it a little more, but then she asked who else in my class is moving with me, and I had to tell her, no one. In this process of gathering information and preparing to speak today, most people told me it isn't worth trying.

[02:59:54] But I have to remind you who these students are. You see them at the softball field. You see them at swim meets. You have smiled at them in the grocery store. They're not just numbers. They're students. Please consider the redistricting and make it a unified move all at once.

[03:00:11] Thank you. Thank you. Ken Angel, and then following Ken is Ms. Kristen Holti. All right, good evening. My name is Ken Angel. I'm from the Chickahominy District, and I'm a local physician living in the Cranny Island neighborhood with two children attending Cool Spring Elementary.

[03:00:33] I want to thank the board for your time and for the thoughtful work that you've done to address the current overcrowding at Cool Spring. However, I'd like to share some serious concerns about the proposal to move our small neighborhood to Washington Henry Elementary one year before the majority of the larger redistricting takes place. While I completely understand the need to manage capacity, the data and the human impact suggest that this early move would create more challenges than it resolves.

[03:00:56] First, the numbers themselves don't ally with the intended goals. According to the projections, 83 students from our neighborhood would transfer to Washington Henry in 2026, but after thoroughly surveying every household in the neighborhood, my wife and I have found that the realistic number is closer to 54 to 60 students.

[03:01:12] Meanwhile, Washington Henry is expected to lose over 200 students the same year, producing its population from 355 to roughly 179. That's effectively cutting the school in half for an entire academic year, placing a very small group of transferring students into a much smaller transitional environment.

[03:01:30] This move would barely impact overcrowding at Cool Spring while creating an unnecessary year of instability for dozens of children. Second, safety and supervision will be diminished. At Cool Spring last year, 119 fathers and father figures volunteered in the watchdog program, helping to patrol hallways, assist with traffic, and maintain a strong sense of security and involvement throughout the day. Those volunteers come from a student population of 860. If our students are moved to a school with fewer than 200 students, that safety net shrinks dramatically. The level of daily visibility and support that our kids currently enjoy simply wouldn't exist during

[03:02:07] that interim year. Third, community programs and resources will be weakened. Events like the Boosterthon, which raised nearly \$59,000 last year, depend on a large and engaged school community, moving a small subset of families early dilutes that shared effort, producing both the participation and the funding available to support teachers, materials, and student activities at both schools.

[03:02:29] And finally, the Gifted and Talented program. Our child and many others benefit tremendously from the gte environment a setting built around challenge collaboration and a consistent peer group moving our neighborhood early risks eliminating that cohort and removing access to specialized instruction and materials these programs strive on stable numbers in a sense of community both of which would be disrupted by an isolated one-year transfer if all redistributed schools move together in 2027 these students and teachers can begin fresh as a full and balanced group with the necessary resources and programming intact 25 seconds in short moving our small

[03:03:06] small neighborhood ahead of the larger redistricting would isolate students, reduce safety and community support, fragment key programs, and do little to address overcrowding. The most reasonable and compassionate solution is to postpone our neighborhood's transfer until 2027 when we and the adjacent Giles neighborhood can move together. That approach preserves community, stability, and opportunity for every student involved. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Dr. Agel. Ms. Hulte, following Ms. Hulte is Carrie Lindley. Good evening, Chair Welch, Vice Chair Coleman,

[03:03:45] school board administration and public. I am Kristen Holti of the Cold Harbor District. I know you have a whole lot on your plate right now, but I know you'll do the best you can at evaluating all of the situations that have been presented to you tonight. I am here to put the children first and to protect them. The children's safety and education should be the primary. The reason we have the school board is that, you know, we have this free speech so that you know what is going on in the community which i think is wonderful please continue to stand for the children and put them as

[03:04:23] the priority um i think it's important to keep the students you know keep them centered and thank you for letting me speak to you tonight thank you miss old carrie lindley and after carrie miss pat hunter jordan not here tonight okay good good evening not ready okay um i'm carrie lindley from the Ashland District. Banned Books Week ended on Saturday, so tonight I wanted to take the opportunity to remind you that, sadly, Hanover County ranks first in Virginia for school library

[03:05:02] book removals. In July, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission reported to the Governor and General Assembly that Hanover had removed a total of 125 titles. The overwhelming majority of Virginia's districts have removed zero titles. Tonight, I would like to share a short passage from The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo, which is one of the books removed in November 2023. For background, The Poet X won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature and the Michael L. Prince Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. It is an acclaimed

[03:05:38] work of literature for teens. The book's protagonist is a high school student in Harlem who is dealing with unwanted attention from boys and pressure from her mother to conform to her cultural and religious identity. She experiences the growing pains of trying to figure out how she can be a writer, girlfriend, daughter, Dominican American, and Catholic.

[03:05:58] The aspects of the book deemed sexually explicit were the passages where she discusses being objectified by boys and deciding not to have sex with her boyfriend. I don't understand why we would want to discourage our high schoolers from receiving those messages. The passage begins by quoting Psalm 119, verse 130. Quote, the unfolding of your words gives light. It gives understanding to the simple. I was raised in a home of prayers and silence, and although Jesus preaches love, I didn't always feel loved. The weird thing about the Bible is that almost everything in it is a

[03:06:38] metaphor. So it seems to me that when the Bible describes church as a place where two or more people discuss God, they don't mean just the cathedral-like churches. I don't know what, who, or where God is. But if everything is a metaphor, I think he or she is a comparison to us. I think we are all like or as God. I think when we get together and talk about ourselves, about being human, we're also talking about God. So that's also church, right? I know this might seem blasphemous, but my priest tells me it's okay to ask questions even if they seem bizarre. And so I love this quote because even though it's not about poetry, it is about poetry. It's about any of the words

[03:07:17] that bring us together and how we can form a home in them. I don't know if I'll ever be as religious as my mother. I only know that learning to believe in the power of my own words has been the most freeing experience of my life. It has brought me the most light. And isn't that what a poem is? A lantern glowing in the dark. Board, your actions extinguished many lanterns glowing in the dark, but I hope one day you will decide to reignite them. It is never too late to right a

[03:07:48] strong. Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Lakeisha Carmine. And lastly, Mark Killenstead. Good evening, members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Lakeisha Carmine for the Mechanicsville District. I'm here to advocate for the dedication special education teachers assigned to each specialty program at the Hanover Center of Trades and Technology. The Hanover Center is built on the belief that vocational training is just as valuable

[03:08:26] as university preparation. Our students are gaining skills that can lead directly to careers and independence. However, for our special education population, the rigor of even vocational coursework can be a barrier without the right support in place. Right now, support is limited.

[03:08:46] A special education teacher may push in for a few minutes each day, but this is not enough. Students with learning challenges, autism, ADHD, or sensory needs often require ongoing support to access their curriculum, apply accommodations consistently, and practice skills in real time.

[03:09:05] Without that, we risk setting them up for frustration instead of success. I want to share an example. My niece is 17. She is deaf, has cochlear implants, autism, and learning challenges. She is enrolled in a culinary program at the center. She is bright, motivated, and capable of thriving in this trade, but she struggles with her accommodations, aren't consistently provided, and when she doesn't have the same availability, she understands her needs. If there is a dedicated special education teacher embedded in culinary,

[03:09:40] excuse me, embedded in culinary, someone who could work with her and the instructions daily, she would not just get by, she would thrive. And my niece is not alone. Students on functional curricula, those who may never pursue higher education but who are master, I'm sorry, who can master valuable vocational skills would greatly benefit from a kind of dedication support. Trade school programs offer them real-world employable skills that can make the difference between lifelong dependents or meaningful independence. The funding for the special education staff is

[03:10:18] already there. The issue is not the lack of resources but how the resources are allocated. By assigning one special education teacher per specialty program, we can ensure quality, consistency, and real opportunity for the most vulnerable students.

[03:10:34] This is not just about compliance with IEPs. It's about giving every student at the Hanover Center a fair chance to succeed, contribute, and build a future. 25 seconds. Thank you for your time. Thank you. Next up, Mark Killingstad.

[03:11:01] Good evening. Mark Killingstad, Chickahama District. First, I would like to publicly protest the rehiring of Coach Sieber as the Atlee swim coach. She quit two years ago under a cloud of unfair bias as it related to year-round swimmers on her team.

[03:11:16] It was so bad that the swimmers even saw it and commented about her favoritism or in some cases... Madam Chair, I'm going to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the rules of public

comment and specific complaints about staff members is not permitted in this setting, but can absolutely be directed to Dr. Pennycuff at a later time.

[03:11:41] So if I identify her as the swim coach like I did previously or two years ago when we were having this problem before she quit, is that acceptable? Not now that you've already named her. Well, she's named herself when she sent out an email. Thank you, sir. Be in touch.

[03:12:03] Can I reference a conversation with a member of the board, or is that not allowed as well? Sir, being from your district, I would love to talk to you tomorrow if we could do that and all the details. We've had a conversation, and the issues of the conversation have not been addressed.

[03:12:21] So that's another reason why I'm here. Okay, I'll leave you out of it. If you want to restart the clock, sir, thank you. Next, I had a conversation before the start of the school year about the lack of enforcement of the Student Code of Conduct.

[03:12:39] I explained that the code was selectively enforced, and that creates a problem. I explained that I intended to entertain you with a performance art by wearing various student outfits that I have observed while addressing the board, but was asked not to. As I recall, it was so that my actions would not detract from the topic, and I should simply just send an email.

[03:13:04] Why should I send you an email when I have told you about the problem in person multiple times throughout the years? Are you questioning my integrity or just being inept? I now believe I should no longer waste my time addressing the board and instead just tell the superintendent that the administrators and the teachers are failing to do their jobs.

[03:13:27] I gave you the opportunity to fix the issue of either holding school administrators accountable or rewrite the student code of conduct. Now it's on to the superintendent. We'll be in touch. I provided pictures which were taken outside the commons at Atlee High School this morning as a basic example of some of the violations I have witnessed.

[03:13:48] Everything from footwear to basic attire, both boys and girls, which are in direct violation of the top paragraph of page 3, student code of conduct. skirts, dresses, jumpers, and shorts must comply or completely cover the pelvic area and extend to the mid-tie at all times, including while students are standing, sitting, or engaging in physical activity. Two, clothing should not expose the student's midriff, chest, or private areas at any time. Three, sleeveless garments must have two-inch straps and not exposed undergarments, spaghetti straps, tube tops, halter tops, camis, tank tops may be worn under the tops of the blouses, and yoga

[03:14:25] pants and leggings must be worn with tops over them to hide the pelvic area. To be clear, This has nothing to do with the type or lack of clothing the students are wearing. It is specifically about the lack or selective enforcement of the Student Code of Conduct. I didn't get those pictures sent off to Ms. Brown in time for you guys to have them.

[03:14:43] She has them. She's already said that she will forward this information to you tomorrow so you can see that for yourself. Also, please look into the ADA requirements for service dogs. As a dog trainer, I train service dogs, and there are many people out there. I'm not saying that somebody has misrepresented, but there are many that represent misrepresent an animal as a service animal That is not. Thank you for your thank you. Okay, in our next Public comment section is for fiscal year 27 budget Public comment and we have no public commenters

[03:15:22] So thank you for your public comment and we are going to move on to our action agenda and the first The first on the action agenda is going to be consideration of proposed revised policies. So do I have a motion?

[03:15:41] Madam Chair, I move to approve proposed revised policies 3-3.15, 5-2.4, 5-2.7, 5-6.2, and 7-6.1. Thank you, Mr. Martin.

[03:15:57] I have a motion on the table. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Dr. Schroff. Is there any discussion? Seeing none. those in favor say aye aye all those opposed motion passes next we have consideration of new course proposals for 26-27 school year do i have a motion on the table madam chair i move to approve the new courses as presented they are auto entrepreneurship data science and environmental science thank you mr seifert i have a motion on the table do i have a second second thank you dr

[03:16:32] Shrove um is there any discussion seeing none um all those in favor say aye aye all those opposed the motion passes next we have the adoption of the vsba bullying prevention month resolution and do i need to read the resolution before okay and i before we make a motion i need to read the resolution okay whereas school bullying has become an increasingly significant problem in the united states and virginia and whereas nearly 20 of the youth in the united states are

[03:17:09] estimated to be involved in bullying each year either as a bully or as a victim and whereas an estimated 10 of elementary schools 15 of high schools and 28 of middle schools reported the occurrence of bullying at school at least once a week and whereas bullying can take many forms including verbal physical and electronic and can happen in many places both on and off school grounds and whereas it is important for virginia parents students teachers and school administrators to be aware of bullying and to encourage discussion of the problem as a school community

[03:17:44] and whereas the vsba has developed sample policies to encourage positive behaviors and to eliminate bullying behaviors now therefore the hanover county school board recognizes the month of october 2025 as vsba bullying prevent bullying prevention month with the intention that the issue of bullying and its prevention be discussed in hanover's schools and classrooms and do i have a motion i move to adopt the hanover county school board proclamation designating the month of october

[03:18:18] 2025 as bullying prevention month um thank you miss lynn do i have a second second um thank you dr strofe i have a motion and a second um is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor say aye all those opposed motion passes thank you and we are now finished with our action agenda and we will move on to fiscal status reports you a fiscal status report you have in your packet you also have your facility usage report is there any discussion or comments on those okay seeing none we will move on

[03:18:58] to calendar of board related events and I'm going to turn that over to dr. penny cuff do you want to talk about the calendar events coming up yes thank you our next regular school board meeting will be on tuesday november 11th and it will be at the central office john m gandy building because they do have this room reserved for another meeting we also have some budget meetings that are coming up and first we will have a work session coming up in november and we will get that scheduled as soon as the Board of Supervisors is able to get their date to us.

[03:19:36] We have our annual school visits October 29th, December 11th, and December 12th, so please put those on your calendars. We also have the Hanover Chamber State of the County Breakfast on

November 5th at the Hanover Tavern, and the VSBA Annual Convention November 19th through 21 for those of you who are able to go. Also, please put the December 18th Hanover Education Foundation Excellence in Education Gala on your calendars. So those are the highlights. There are some

[03:20:10] additional dates that are a little further out. For those of you who are interested in those, if you would go ahead and put those on your calendar so they will be in your plans. Additionally, the schedule of topics for the next school board meeting we will come back to the proposed policies that you saw tonight for information and discussion we will have our draft calendar for next school year ready for you to review we will also have our legislative agenda for first read and we will

[03:20:43] have an update on middle school athletics wonderful thank you very much um madam chair i have a motion. All right a motion to enter closed session if you're ready for that. Yes thank you. There's a motion on the table to have a second. Second. Okay yeah let me read the. Got it sorry. I'm sorry madam chair. I'd like to make a motion to enter closed session in accordance with code of Virginia section 2.2-3711 a to a student disciplinary matter. Thank you. Now I have a motion to go into closed

[03:21:23] session do I have a second second thank you is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor aye aye all those opposed thank you we are now in closed

[03:21:36] session we're returning to open session right now and we are gonna have a motion

[04:13:48] to yeah motion to come back into open session I'd like to make a motion to return back to open session thank you miss second second thank you dr. Shroff All um, I have a motion in a second and is there any discussion? Okay seeing none all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed say nay Motion passes. We are now in open session. Can we get a certification of closed session, please? I would like to make a motion to certify the

[04:14:25] certify the closed meeting the board will certify the following whereas the Hanover County School Board has convened closed meeting on this date Pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and whereas section 2.2 - 3712 D of the code of Virginia requires a certification by this school board that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law now Therefore be it resolved that the Hanover County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each members knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by virginia law were discussed in the executive meeting to which the certification applies and

[04:15:04] Only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard discussed or considered Thank you. Mr. Coleman. I have a motion on the floor. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you. Dr. Shelp. I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion? Seeing none all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed motion passes Now we have Madam chair, I move to adjourn the October Karen do you have a motion for us?

[04:15:39] Lynn a motion to approve the recommendation of the student disciplinary matter as discussed in closed session Thank You miss Lynn. I have a motion on the table to have a second second. Thank you. Dr. Schroff I couldn't tell where it was coming from I have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor say aye All those opposed, motion passes.

[04:16:03] Now, Mr. Martin, can you go? Madam Chair, I move to adjourn the October 2025 school board meeting. Thank you, Mr. Martin. I have a motion on the table. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Dr.

Shrove. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye.

[04:16:19] All those opposed, we are now adjourned.



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