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Hanover County School Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 8, 2026

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[00:00:03] All right. Good evening. Welcome, everybody. We are going to call the meeting back into open session. So do I have a motion for open session? Madam Chair, I move to return to open session. Thank you, Mr. Seifert. Second. Do I have a second? Thank you, Dr. Shrove, for the second.

[00:00:20] Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed? Aye. thank you uh we are now back in open session i before you make the certification um in accordance with policy 1-6.9 electronic participation in meetings from remote locations mr coleman will participate by phone from a residence due to sick leave all right um dr

[00:00:56] schroff do we have certification of closed meeting mission yes ma'am certification of closed meeting the board will certify the following whereas the hanover county school board has convened closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmation recorded voted and in accordance with the provisions of the virginia freedom of information act and whereas section 2.23712d of the code of virginia requires certification by the school board that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with virginia law now therefore be it resolved that the hanover county

[00:01:31] 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 the certification applies and two only such business matters as were identified

in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard discussed or considered thank you dr schroff um for the motion do i have a second thank you miss lynn uh is there any discussion

[00:02:05] seeing none all those in favor say aye aye all those opposed all those opposed okay i'm sorry greg gets a little or uh mr coleman there's a little delay sorry um uh the motion passes okay so next we are going to have our invocation done by dr schroff and then we have um beaver dam elementary school students that will say um will start us in our pledge of allegiance and if y'all just want to come on up front when we start the pledge of allegiance and start we'll we look

[00:02:41] forward to that okay if you will stand as you're able please let us pray heavenly father you come we come before you tonight with grateful hearts thankful for the opportunity to serve our students our families our teachers and our community give us wisdom as we make decisions that will affect the lives and futures of so many young people. Help us to listen carefully, speak thoughtfully, and always remember that behind every policy, every number, and every decision is a child who deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. Give strength to our teachers, administrators,

[00:03:21] counselors, staff, and bus drivers who pour so much of themselves into our schools each day. Give encouragement to parents and families who work tirelessly to support their children. Father, remind each of us on this board that we are here to serve our community. Help us approach our work with humility, compassion, integrity, and a commitment to do what is best for children.

[00:03:41] When difficult decisions face us, give us courage. When we disagree, give us respect. When the path forward is unclear, give us wisdom. And we are tempted to forget why we are here. Bring us back to the faces and the futures of the students we have been entrusted to serve.

[00:03:59] Bless our schools, protect our children, and guide our community. May everything be done tonight be worthy of the trust that has been placed in us. In your name we pray. Amen. Okay, Ms. Libby Smith is in grade five. Is that correct?

[00:04:21] Okay, welcome. Thank you so much for being here. And we are ready when you are. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:04:42] Thank you so much. Thank you. You did a wonderful job. We appreciate you being here.

[00:04:58] Okay, so next we need an approval of our minutes. Do I have a motion for minutes? I move to approve the minutes from the recently held meetings. Thank you, Dr. Schelp. Do I have a second?

[00:05:14] Second. Thank you, Dr. Schroff. Is there any discussion? Okay, all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed, the motion passes. Next, we have our superintendent, Dr. Penny Cuff, is going to give us a report on the 26-27 school opening.

[00:05:42] Good evening. Each September, I have the opportunity to provide our school board with an update on the opening of the new school year.

[00:06:03] I am pleased to share that we have had a strong and successful start, marked by optimism, positive energy, and a deep commitment to the success of every student. From the return of our teachers and staff, to convocation and the ribbon cuttings, to welcoming our students back into the classrooms, there has been a wonderful sense of excitement and happiness across Hanover County Public Schools.

[00:06:29] This evening, I will share some important data and information about the opening of school with you. The first few weeks have been filled with moments that remind us why we do this work. Students making new friends, teachers inspiring curiosity and a love for learning, and even our high school students returning to their elementary schools to welcome our younger students on the very first day.

[00:06:56] Those moments reflect something that is at the heart of our school division. Care. We care very deeply about our students, our families, and one another, and the community that we are privileged to be able to serve. I am incredibly proud of what I have already seen this school year and grateful to everyone who helped make our opening so smooth, successful, and joyful.

[00:07:22] Let's take a look at our successful start and the strong foundation that it provides for the school year ahead. We are honored to welcome and serve approximately 16,540 students in preschool through 12th grade.

[00:07:40] Each of these students represents a unique story, and it is our privilege to help them learn, grow, and to reach their full potential. These students have access to a high-quality education here in Hanover, and I will share more on that later.

[00:07:57] Our elementary schools provide more than 1,700 minutes of instruction every week, and our middle school students attend more than 15,000 combined blocks every day. Finally, our high school teachers instruct more than 2,000 classes.

[00:08:16] Behind each of these numbers are countless opportunities every day for our students to learn, to discover new interests, to ignite new passions, and to prepare for their futures. Of course, a successful day extends well beyond the classroom.

[00:08:35] In the first week of school, our school nutrition team served approximately 30,760 meals. Here in Hanover, we like to say we are the largest restaurant in Hanover County. Our amazing bus drivers travel 9,500 miles a day.

[00:08:55] That's nearly the equivalent of driving from Hanover to Los Angeles and back twice each day. On social media, the smiles that mark the joy of returning to school have been viewed more than 3.6 million times during the back-to-school season, and our division's primary communication platform, ParentSquare, is reaching nearly all of our families automatically.

[00:09:20] Finally, I am very proud to share that we are currently recruiting for only one teacher vacancy. This is a tremendous accomplishment and a reflection of our continued efforts to retain, to support, and to recruit exceptional educators.

[00:09:39] It is also a testament to the incredible work done by our human resources staff in conjunction with our building administrators to keep our classrooms fully staffed. At a time when school divisions across the Commonwealth and country continue to face staffing challenges, we are incredibly grateful to have talented teachers in place across all of our schools, ready to serve our students each and every day.

[00:10:07] As you know, Hanover County is a very special place to be, and it is because of the amazing people who give so much of themselves to our students, our schools, and to our community. Thank you to our faculty, our staff, our families, and our community partners for all that you do to make Hanover a place where students can flourish.

[00:10:29] Please join me in giving a round of applause for all those who contribute to our school division success and our long-standing tradition of excellence. Some are right here behind me. Thank you.

[00:10:49] It is because of this hard work and dedication that our SOL results, again, demonstrate the strength of our schools. This year, our students outperformed the state pass rate in reading, math, science, and history.

[00:11:05] Their performance on the standards of learning tests place us among the highest performing school divisions in the Commonwealth. We again lead the Metro Richmond region area in all content areas, and our pass rate of 82% in math is tied for among the highest of the 15 largest school divisions.

[00:11:26] By exceeding the state pass rates by at least five percentage points in each area, we are continuing to demonstrate that our schools achieve at the highest level academically. As I shared during this year's convocation, this high achievement is part of our story.

[00:11:44] And it is written by all who support our amazing students. By our teachers who ignite the love of learning. By our bus drivers who are often the first smile our students see each morning. Our cafeteria teams who serve with kindness.

[00:12:00] And our custodians who take great pride in caring for our schools. Our administrators who lead with purpose. And our support staff whose dedication helps every child in every school succeed. Every member of the Hanover County's public schools team plays an important role in this life-changing work for our children.

[00:12:20] While we celebrate our successes, we also readily acknowledge that our work is never done. I want to assure you that our principals and their school teams, along with the Central Office Instructional Leadership Team, are already working diligently to conduct a thorough analysis of student performance data to identify areas of strengths and opportunities.

[00:12:44] for growth that will further inform our schools and divisions' continuous improvement planning. We await the release of accreditation ratings and our Class of 2026 graduation rate, which we expect in early October. We will continue to keep you updated as that information is made available, and a comprehensive presentation will be shared with you at a school board meeting this fall.

[00:13:10] As I shared with you last school year, our kindness and anti-bullying efforts in the 25-26 school year highlighted the fact that we know kindness creates the foundation for safe, supportive, and thriving schools. While academic growth and achievement remain at the heart of our mission, we are excited to continue this important work that is making a profound impact on the lives of many.

[00:13:37] As we continue the important work of preparing every student for success, we will remain thoughtful and intentional about how we support instruction and how high quality technology can best be used to enhance the learning experience.

[00:13:53] We also recognize that navigating an increasingly digital world extends beyond the classroom. And we look forward to providing additional resources and support to help our parents and families Reinforce healthy, responsible, and safe digital habits beyond our school walls.

[00:14:12] Finally, this is an exciting time for school construction in our county, with the opening of new schools and many new projects underway. Specifically, the construction of the replacement of Washington

Henry Elementary School continues, and the school remains on track to open for the 2027-2028 school year.

[00:14:33] Also set to open next year is the expansion of the Hanover Center for Trades and Technology, which will grow our current cosmetology program while adding diesel equipment technology and welding to the Hanover Center for Trades and Technology's highly regarded offerings.

[00:14:51] We began this school year by celebrating two major milestones in this continued investment in our schools, including the ribbon-cutting and opening of the new Battlefield Park Elementary School and the new Beaver Dam Elementary School. At both schools, we joyfully cut the ribbon along with you.

[00:15:09] Hundreds of students, our families, faculty and staff, members of the Board of Supervisors, state legislators, community members, county and school division officials, and other distinguished guests. As those of you who were present can attest, it was a great joy to see the happiness of all those who were present, including the students and staff as though both cut the ribbon and toured the new building.

[00:15:37] For those of you who haven't had the chance to visit yet, we look forward to showing you the state-of-the-art facilities this fall on our school tours. The opening of Battlefield Park and Beaver Dam Elementary are two wonderful examples of the excitement that is present across our county with the start of this new school year.

[00:15:56] We are very proud of how our schools have welcomed our students and families back with such enthusiasm, warmth and joy. To further illustrate this, please enjoy this brief look at the start of what we know

[00:16:10] will be another outstanding year for Hanover County Public Schools. 26-2027 story starts now.

[00:17:14] The world. The school year. We are so grateful to our students, our families, our faculty and staff,

[00:18:08] and our community for the joy and the positive energy that they bring to our schools each and every day. It has been a great and energetic start to this school year, and we are looking forward to much continued success. And finally, we would like to thank each of you for being part of Team Hanover.

[00:18:26] Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Pennycuff. That was wonderful. Do we have any questions or comments for Dr. Pennycuff? Thank you. Well, I have two. So congratulations again to you and to the team.

[00:18:46] only one vacancy that is amazing and also um everything that was in this it's really great but just a little comment and this is um terry did not ask me to say this or excuse me the stone but washington henry elementary school you said we're on track are we on budget too on track and on budget those are our two favorite questions yeah thank you she always reminds me we have a ways to go but yes we're on track and on budget those are the two questions we start with in every

[00:19:15] meeting yes thank you very much thank you okay so now we are gonna move on to board member and now the mic's live thank you now we're gonna move on to board announcements do we have any board announcements yes miss Lynn I've got two okay Patrick Henry High School alum Evan Hughes is the new voice of the Virginia Tech men's basketball program. Evan was recently promoted to the role of Director of

[00:19:55] Broadcasting for Virginia Tech Sports Network. He hosts Virginia Tech football's pre-game and post-game show, as well as contributing to game broadcasts from the sidelines. And, this was big in my

house, seniors across the county gathered during the first week of school to watch the sunrise together, kicking off the start of their senior year with fellowship and a lifelong memory.

[00:20:19] At the end of the year, seniors will get together to watch the sunset at their time in our schools comes to an end, which will be very bittersweet in the Lynn household this year. Thank you, Ms. Lynn. I know that senior sunrise and sunset is very special, especially when you have a senior.

[00:20:39] It's a really cool tradition they do. Do I have any more? Yes, Dr. Schroeder? Yeah, I just want to say something that sort of goes along with Dr. Penningup's presentation is the convocation. As part of the school year start, each school across the division, everybody came together and watched. It was a virtual convocation. And the theme was celebration of stories, the Hanover years. And then the ending was the best is when Mr. Whitley played the recorder. Did you bring that tonight? Did you bring it tonight? We are very impressed

[00:21:15] with your skills especially from fourth grade okay thank you Dr. Schroff do we have any other yes Mr. Seifert yes ma'am thank you I've got quite a few I'll try to be quick but Atlee high school student athletes welcome students and they just just would have been such a cool thing when I was a little kid to have seen the you know the big high school athletes coming and welcoming the kids but student athletes from Atlee high school helped WELCOME THE YOUNGER KIDS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THE SPECIAL GUESTS HELP MAKE THE FIRST DAY OF

[00:21:48] SCHOOL EXTRA EXCITING. AND I CAN JUST IMAGINE HOW EXCITED THEY WERE TO SEE OUR SCHOLAR ATHLETES DO THAT. SO GREAT JOB THERE TO ATLEY. AND THEN ALSO ASHTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. MRS. WALLACE. HOPEFULLY SHE'S COACHING A SPORT OUT THERE SOMEWHERE FOR US. BECAUSE SHE IS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR. ALLIE WALLACE AND HER TEAM WON THE WORLD ULTIMATE DISC championship in ireland pretty impressive and she herself posted 15 goals and 14 assists in her team's championship run so not just a member of that championship team but sounds like a pretty

[00:22:23] key person her team won on saturday august 22nd she traveled back to the u.s on sunday and was in school serving students on the 24th so but yeah that's amazing and uh third thing i've heard some YOU KNOW, NOTHING BUT GREAT FEEDBACK ON OUR NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM.

[00:22:42] I'VE TALKED TO SOME ADMINISTRATORS, PRINCIPALS, PARENTS AND JUST SUPER GREAT FEEDBACK THERE. SO JUST CAN'T THANK DR. PENNIKOFF, THE ADMINISTRATORS, BRITTANY MOORE IN ATHLETICS, THE PRINCIPALS, THE COACHES, TO GET THAT OFF THE GROUND, YOU KNOW, FIRST SEASON DOING IT.

[00:22:58] I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR MORE AND I CAN'T WAIT TO GO TO A MEET. SO THANK YOU SO MUCH, EVERYONE, FOR MAKING THAT HAPPEN. AND THEN THE TWO OPENINGS AT BATTLEFIELD AND BEAVERDAM, just like the convocation i just can't get over how professional we do things here in hanover county those were amazing uh ceremonies and i just can't say enough how impressed i was with them so thank you thank you mr seifert um let's see and mr martin thank you madam chair i have a few um first is about house sorting for those who don't know the house sorting is a way elementary schools

[00:23:36] divide kids into basically teams to promote school community, teamwork, recognize positive behavior, create competition, and provide mentorships. One of my favorite things about it with three

elementary school kids is seeing the older kids team up with the younger kids, especially kindergartners or newer kids that might be a little, you know, uneasy about a new environment.

[00:23:58] And to see all those ceremonies, a lot of that was on Facebook through the county and the individual schools was really cool to see. It's not just for the students, newer teachers, administrators. Miss A at Washington Henry, it was a big deal on which house she was going to end up in.

[00:24:14] My fourth grader got the same house as Miss A, so she thinks they're going to rig it this year with the principal in charge. Mechanicsville High School, this was really exciting, opened a new weight room. Joined by members of the General Assembly, Board of Supervisors, School Board, and other distinguished guests, Mechanicsville High cut the ribbon on August 21st to the school's new weight room.

[00:24:36] It is incredible if you get a chance to see it. It is a culmination of a partnership between community members, board members, and school administration. In addition to cutting the ribbon on the new weight room, the school also gave new staff members the opportunity to participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their classrooms and offices, making a new chapter for them.

[00:24:55] Sources say it might be why the Mustangs are 2-0 in football for the first time. I don't know if there's a correlation, but they are 2-0 on that side of town for the first time in a long time. Go Mustangs. Lastly, I say this probably at some point in every school year. I want to publicly thank the Sheriff's Office for everything they do for our schools.

[00:25:14] We have a couple partners in the back making sure we're protected. We appreciate you guys for being here. But Sheriff's 6 Office, I know, works closely with Dr. Pennycuff. Not only are the SROs amazing bedrocks of our schools, but the work they do with traffic and enhancing our safety around our schools day in and day out is just incredible and uh we're very grateful for that so thank you thank you mr martin um so we have no um chris whitley and co um show today unfortunately but i do have a message and bear with me because it's taken me

[00:25:48] i haven't gotten through this without a little tear um so as we begin thank you that's what i was asking for earlier. As we begin a new school year, I want to take a moment to welcome our students, parents, and families, teachers, administrators, support staff, bus drivers, cafeteria teams, custodians, counselors, coaches, volunteers, and everyone who makes Hanover County Public Schools such a special place to learn, grow, and serve. There's something exciting about

[00:26:25] the beginning of a school year. It has always felt like there is a sense of possibility in the air to me. New classrooms, new teachers, new friends, new goals, new challenges, and for many of our students entirely new beginnings. As your school board chair I am incredibly proud of the work that takes place across our school division every day but I also speak to you today as a parent. As a matter of fact the majority of your school board has children in Hanover County Public Schools. I'm the parent

[00:27:01] of four children who have been part of Hanover County Public Schools. Two have graduated from Hanover Schools and two are currently enrolled. So I have experienced our schools from both sides of the dais. From the perspective of a parent watching children grow and find their way and from the perspective of someone who has the privilege and responsibility of helping lead our school division. And what I know more now than ever is our schools are about much more than

[00:27:37] academics. They're about relationships. They're about discovering who you are and what you are capable of becoming. I'm still trying to figure that out. They are about learning how to overcome

disappointment, how to celebrate successes, how to work hard, and how to get back up when you get knocked off your horse. To our teachers and staff, thank you. Thank you for showing up every day with patience, dedication, and belief in our students. Thank you for the countless hours that happen behind the scenes, the lesson planning, classroom preparation, and all the little things that most

[00:28:17] people never see. You are shaping lives and your impact often reaches much farther than you will ever know. To our parents and families, thank you too. We are our children's first teachers and their greatest advocates. We celebrate their accomplishments, worry about their challenges, encourage them when they want to give up, and get them back on that horse.

[00:28:45] And to our students, this year is yours. Set goals. Dream big. Try something new. Ask questions. please make mistakes and learn from them find something that challenge you and don't be afraid to struggle a little because growth rarely happens in the comfort zone one of the messages i hope we can carry with us this school year is progress over perfection you don't have to have everything figured out on the first day of school you don't have to be the best in the classroom on the field

[00:29:21] or on the stage you simply need to keep moving forward be a little better today than you were yesterday. Be kind. Help someone else. And when an opportunity comes your way, have the courage to take it. I love a little quote from Dolly Parton that says, find out who you are and do it on purpose. What a powerful message for a new school year. Students, I hope this year is a year of discovering who you are. Not someone, not who someone else expects you to be, but who you are

[00:29:55] becoming. Discovering your interests, your talents, what motivates you. Discover what makes you want to work a little harder and then pursue it with purpose. Dali Parton also said, you'll never do a whole lot unless you're brave enough to try. There will be opportunities this year that may feel uncomfortable. Try anyways. Anyway, there will be challenges that seem bigger than you expected. Face them. There will be moments when you fail. Learn from them. And there will be moments when you surprise yourself with what you can accomplish. Don't let fear of not being perfect

[00:30:34] keep you from making progress. As a school board, all responsibility is to make sure every student has the opportunity to discover their potential and the support they need to pursue it. We will continue to focus on achievement, growth, opportunity, and preparing our students for the future.

[00:30:52] We will celebrate our progress while also recognizing that there is always more work to be done. To our students, families, teachers, administrators, support staff, and the entire Hanover community, thank you for the trust you place in our schools and staff and in our school board.

[00:31:14] Let's make it a great year and let's make it count. From our family to yours, welcome back, Hanover. All right. So thank you all very much for bearing with me with that one. We are going to move on to the consent agenda.

[00:31:33] And do we have a motion for the consent agenda? Yes, Madam Chair. I move to approve the consent agenda as presented. Thank you, Mr. Martin. Thank you, Dr. Shroff. Is there any discussion? Okay. Seeing none. All those in favor, say aye.

[00:31:49] Aye. All those opposed. Okay. Next up, we have our instructional highlight. with Dr. Castle, and we have UPLC Unified Professional Learning Conference that he's going to talk to us about. Welcome. Good evening, Madam Chairman, members of the board, Dr. Penny Cuff. I'm here to present to you the

UPLC in Review, our 2026 conference that took place in July of this year, where we are creating that culture of side-by-side learning to empower

[00:32:23] educators and scale student success division-wide. So first thing first, before I get into the presentation, I want to go back in time a little bit to Malcolm Gladwell. Do y'all remember Gladwell and the tipping point? That was like a big deal right before Jim Collins was coming out with all of his good to great stuff. Malcolm Gladwell said there's three laws, there are three things here.

[00:32:44] One is the law of the few. Most of y'all won't remember that law, except you'll remember this thing. You might have heard it in church or somewhere else, where 80% of the work gets done by 20% of the people, right? So getting a few really high quality people really dialed into your work can really make a big difference and build that momentum and moving us forward.

[00:33:02] Stickiness, how well does the message stick to your brain and remember it and how well do you remember it? So are we creating stickiness? I think Dr. Schulte mentioned that a couple of presentations ago. And then the last thing is context. What is our context for learning?

[00:33:18] Is it great? Is it inspiring? Those little bitty things, are we getting some of those little things right that create that high-quality learning that we're looking for. So I want you to keep him in mind. Remember a few things. See if it sticks in your head after I get through the presentation. So overall, here we go.

[00:33:34] The conference was pretty amazing this year. I felt like we kind of really, really hit our stride this year. Had a lot of amazing sessions. The first thing is that we had a very collaborative audience. 0.1% of our sessions or people there were really learning side by side, our leaders and our teachers in a combined audience.

[00:33:56] They were learning together. The sessions were designed to reach both of them at the same time. Co-led learning. They weren't doing those things in isolation. They were teaming up and having two presenters. Often it was a school leader or a division leader or a local area school-wide expert that was leading with someone else at the division level and really creating a high quality learning experience and so when we have learning and presentations with teachers alongside their leaders it really creates this powerful moment of learning for everyone else it also is building capacity for those teachers who might have been a little apprehensive about getting up in front of their peers or in front of an audience some of

[00:34:33] them had never presented before and are a little bit worried and so it's really helpful when your colleague says hey i'll do this with you and they come alongside each other and work together to give the information. So this hands-on leadership working side-by-side with our teachers and partners in the classroom really makes a big difference for those that are there at the conference. Comparing what we do now to what used to be back in the day. Back in the day, it was a very sort of siloed, very specific to a content area or a grade level kind of a presentation. It was often done because of a top-down mandate. You must do blank and they would go do it. And then there are isolated sparks of learning for certain groups of people

[00:35:11] that were receiving it. Today, things are a lot different. We are unified, as it was described earlier, side-by-side learning with each other. We're exchanging ideas and getting information. We're building upon each other. I'm sparking something in you, and then you give me a question to spark something in me, and we keep building based on those ideas. And finally, all of this is interconnected. We

can see this part of our division leadership, our comprehensive plan that comes down to our comprehensive school plans leading us into department and grade level and specific content area planning that goes right on down the line making those connections right into

[00:35:47] the hands of our students and the experiences that they're having in the classroom. So all this real magic happens when we learn together. Here's what it meant for us. There were 764 unique educators at the event this year 764 is over half of our educators 52.2 percent what was the percentage it took to get 80 percent of the work done very good dr schroff all right so i got one person where it stuck great so i didn't see any hands going up all right so more than half of our division was together and they're learning in their summer hours a lot of people aren't giving

[00:36:27] up their free time over the summer over half of our educators are willing to do that and i think they don't do that unless these sessions are very valuable and meaningful to them. We're also getting a lot of active engagement. We got a lot of feedback on our forms. The forms are not required. We know that if you want to get your points and you want to get some hours in and credit for that, yeah, you got to give your feedback on the forms. But we got a lot of that too just because. Over the three days, 6,605 total session feedback pieces of information were gathered and then it ended up in a total of 8,544 points being awarded toward license renewal.

[00:37:04] That's a lot of points and a lot of people getting some stuff moving forward to their 27 on average each year you want to get to get to your 270 over 10 years. Lots more on that if you want to talk about for another hour but we don't have that time tonight so there's just a lot of points awarded just to know that. So what does it look like as far as going across the subject areas?

[00:37:26] A lot of our subject areas were represented, and I would say all of them were in some kind of way, because if you take that top number, general education instructional practice, 39.5% of our sessions covered good-for-anybody kind of content areas. Great instructional practice, how do we engage with students, how do we work with them in a meaningful way.

[00:37:44] But then you can also see some of our key areas of focus. Those align very nicely where we see some of the highest needs for improvement in our school division. We are working to make our schools and our student experience the best that it can possibly be in some of the areas where it's needed the most.

[00:38:03] So you can see all the places where we had focus. I want to draw some particular attention to special education and assistive technology. Assistive technology this year was something we hadn't seen a whole lot of in the past, so that was a huge step forward for us. And then a lot over there on the bottom right-hand corner of this slide where it's academic rigor and behavior, all of those things impacting what the overall quality of the educational experience is for our students.

[00:38:29] Division-wide reach, again, oops, went the wrong way. So there's the chart for you. For those of you that want to the bar graph, there it is. Okay, I'll give you two more seconds. And moving along.

[00:38:45] Also, division-wide reach when it comes to grade-level distribution. We didn't focus on early or late or middle or any of the grades in particular. We got them all. And if you look how they're all kind of distributed nicely in the top one, again, is everyone. Any of the K through 12 educators are going to get a meaningful experience if you come to those sessions.

[00:39:06] 78% of them are good for anybody. And then also you can see the other ones broken out accordingly. And, of course, I do have another bar graph for you in case you like pretty pictures. There it is. So again, a nice widespread, great variety in both content areas and in grade level areas.

[00:39:26] And so again, going back to my boy Malcolm, we're trying to reach that critical mass and get this momentum built. And when we have common themes, common vocabulary, a common understanding, we're all marching to the same beat to try to accomplish the same thing.

[00:39:41] We're going to create that momentum we're looking for. And we're trying to build this high quality experience. What we're ultimately going to land on is this division-wide sustainability where teachers and leaders have capacity to build best practice of instruction.

[00:39:58] They can do the things themselves. We also know that's true with our students. When we're teaching them how to do the things with the skills that we want them to have, they're building their own sustainability. So the last thing for the instructional piece is that ultimately we're trying to build into what is high impact for our students.

[00:40:18] I've got four areas highlighted here in this little pretty graphic, and I'll move into them a little bit more specifically in the next slide, where you can see what we are focusing on for each of these areas. Within literacy, we're really focusing on what we've been doing with phonics, with a balanced literacy approach, but more into the phonemic awareness side of things now, which we've been doing for a long time.

[00:40:38] You can see the specific pieces. If you want to know what some of those acronyms mean, I can go into those, but basically it's high-quality learning experiences for our students. The WIDA test has been around a long time for our English language learners.

[00:40:55] WIDA stands for World Class Instructional Design and Assessment. That was a new one for me. I had to look that one up. And then we go into EBLI, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction. UFLY is our big-time University of Florida literacy initiative that we focused on a few years ago.

[00:41:12] We're seeing great results in our early elementary students and moving on up through the continuum. Rigor for math has been in our key area of focus for quite a while. We continue to build upon that using those high engaging strategies with students, making them think for themselves and knowing that making a mistake is a good way to learn what not to do and how to move forward and ask more questions about what to do.

[00:41:38] Real science inquiry, we want those four question strategies. What are the things that I have in place available? What are the impacts here? The next question would be, well, what is it that I'm trying to study and what is its behavior or how does it act? Then you're looking at what those things were in the first question saying, what happens when I change the heat, the light, the water or something like that?

[00:41:59] What does it do? How does it impact? And the last thing we're going to ask is, how do I study this and measure it? Those are the kind of scientific inquiry questions that we're trying to push forward with our students and make them think for themselves, ask their own questions, and come up with some of their own design principles so they can study it and really work for it in the lab.

[00:42:19] No longer are we trying to give them this recipe for the lab experience. We want them to create their own experience and lab experiments where they can explore on their own. And then again, lastly, is

the behavior piece where we're trying to really be proactive, give students ways that they can display great behavior and move past any of the potential issues they might have. So trying to build that on the front end. The last thing is that this doesn't stop. The best professional learning is ongoing. And for us, it continued throughout the

[00:42:55] summer. Right after UPLC, or actually before UPLC, we had our leadership day on that Monday. Then we had three days of UPLC. Then we followed this with PATH. 24 new provisionally licensed teachers came to us. Three general education, 13 special education. They all had a full week of immersion, figuring everything else from how to set up your classroom to design lessons, how to make sure that you're meeting all the specific developmental needs of your students as well as the instructional needs and putting all that together. And this is now going to be followed by ongoing monthly professional learning for this group of teachers. We have three cohorts running all at the same time

[00:43:34] right now. Also, our new faculty academy this year, this is where you want to have a golf score. The lower the number, the better, as Dr. Parker would say. We want to have to not recruit and hire many more people, so getting below three digits this year was kind of cool. I think it's the first year that I've experienced that in a long, long time. Only 94 people were invited to this NFA because That's all we had.

[00:43:57] The New Faculty Academy pulled in all of those new teachers and gave them our foundation and learning of what the Hanover Way is, but not only just what the Hanover Way is, but what does it mean to be a Mustang? What does it mean to be an Eagle? All of those special things within our schools that we have as well.

[00:44:14] And so the last thing is, where are we going next? What's next on the horizon for professional learning in Hanover County? I am always the dreamer in the group. I'm the person who's going to come up with a vision and an idea, and then I'm going to get told no three times, but that fourth time, watch out, because it's going to be special, it's going to be different, it's going to be something crazy and imaginative, and it's going to make a difference for the lives of our teachers and students.

[00:44:41] And so that's where we're headed next. We're always looking to enhance, to improve. We're doing after action and looking at how things went and how we can make it a little bit better each year. This year, my big thing was the letters, which is why I put them on here. We had these nice, huge, three-and-a-half-foot-tall, sparkling letters.

[00:44:58] Those lights changed colors, and some of them flashed, and some of them stayed the same. It was a lot of fun putting those up on the stage. And then, finally, where are we going to go to do it? I'm incredibly excited, as is my colleague just over my right shoulder. She's not quite as tall as me, but, man, she's powerful. As Dr. Fisher and I are going to be moving to a new home really soon.

[00:45:18] She's making faces behind me. So, we're going to be going to our new Center for Professional Learning, and we are incredibly excited about what this is going to offer, an amazing learning place. Remember what we talked about with context with Malcolm Gladwell. This context is going to reset the stage for all of us and create a really powerful learning environment for all of our teachers, which in turn will translate into our classrooms for our students.

[00:45:41] So, that is it for UPLC and Review, and I will take any questions if you have them. Thank you, Dr. Kessel, for that. very um robust and very entertaining presentation it i can tell you're very passionate about this and i thank you because i think it's you know training and um and staying staying on top of our

you know professional learning is huge and i've always been a firm believer in that that you stop you let the hand off of it or the finger off of it and that's when things don't look so pretty

[00:46:16] anymore. So thank you so much. Do we have any comments or questions for Dr. Kessel? Will you be holding your UPLC in the new facility? Well, I would love that. The size is not going to be where we need it to be that holds that many people. So we will continue to have it at one of our high schools. We might look at some satellite kind of sessions. We're thinking about new faculty academy next year when we only have to hire 40 new teachers right dr. parker yeah we only have to hire 40 new teachers we very likely will have something like that in the cpl so

[00:46:55] as much as we can possibly put in that building we're going to we're going to pack it we're going to use it constantly great um and keep it rolling so we might even explore something like you know use the building for part of the day and then steal over to ashland elementary and borrow a few of their rooms for a minute you know to create this localized experience right in the same place but not quite everyone's going to fit in that building for something like UPLC so okay it'll still be in high school well thank you very much no more questions okay thank you thank you appreciate

[00:47:25] it Dr. Castle okay so I think we have Ms. Hahn up next in our information and discussion thank you Madam Chair you have in front of you four policies that have been updated they are here for you for first read. That means no action is needed. I'm here to answer questions about any of them. Not a whole lot of significant or heavy substantive updates. One of the things that you may have noticed is that we have been cleaning up policies fairly routinely. And so as we go through them,

[00:48:04] we will bring them to you. And so some of them are based on law changes, while some of them are going to be just simply cleaning up things that maybe haven't been touched in a while. Thank you very much. Do we have any questions or comments? Okay. Thank you, Ms. Hahn. And we have Dr. Sherry Beth Fisher coming to talk to us about the new course proposals. Thank you. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Penninga, senior staff. Tonight you received a report on

[00:48:39] our school opening and I am now here to talk with you about next year because believe it or not we are already planning for next year. So as this school year is getting underway we are really thinking about the courses that we want to offer as we move into the 27-28 school year and we have some slides that we're going to share with you here in just a minute. You will notice that the courses that we are going to be sharing with you tonight are really seeking to expand both our

[00:49:15] advanced studies offerings as well as our trades and technology offerings. So I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Andrea Herndon who is going to talk with us a little bit about the advanced studies offerings and then Justin Roerink will also be coming up to talk about trades and technology

[00:49:37] course offerings. I'm going to delay for just a moment. I'm here for it. You're here for it. I got it. I got it. I got Justin. We're good for it. We can do this. So good evening, Madam Chair, members of the school board, Dr. Penninghoff and senior staff. Justin and I are going to introduce some courses, new course proposals this afternoon, this evening. So what I'm going to share is not new. We've talked about it kind of the past several months.

[00:50:07] First, we are proposing the advanced studies seminar. Advanced studies seminar was an idea that kind of grew from two places. The first, we had the seeds of that planted by our gifted advisory over

the years as an opportunity for students to interact in higher level thinking and learning skills and prepare for future advanced coursework.

[00:50:33] And as we are working to right-size IB, this is a great opportunity for 9th and 10th graders to take the course and learn about all of the different opportunities to find their challenge, like Ms. Wells spoke about this afternoon. And so we're excited to bring that on board.

[00:50:51] And then also as part of our right-sizing of IB, you remember we are looking as how can we support advanced studies and maintain that level of rigor and access to courses in all four high schools. IB changes and evolves and one of those first courses that we're bringing forward this year is AP business and personal finance so that will serve as a compliment to IB economics we are excited about this course actually some students came and spoke to Justin and I last year about the possibility of expanding advanced placement into more of the business and CTL realm and so

[00:51:31] this course will meet the EPF guidelines and one of the things we like about it from a logistics point is that many different types of teachers may teach this class similar to the economic and personal finance that is currently in high schools so those are the two courses we're bringing forward from advanced studies gifted seminar and I'm sorry advanced studies seminar and business with finance and advanced placement.

[00:52:01] And Justin is going to come up and talk about what is happening in the world of CTE and workforce development. Thank you very much. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Penicuff and senior staff. I'm excited to be able to bring six new courses up before you all.

[00:52:18] And this is all in relation to the expansion at the Hanover Center for Trades and Technology, which we are excited for opening up next school year. And so the first course that we're going to be bringing for you is Diesel Equipment Technology 1. And in this course, this is going to provide basically basic instruction, sorry, and general maintenance of medium and heavy-duty diesel trucks and equipment.

[00:52:41] We're also going to bring before you Diesel Equipment Technology 2. Basically, it's going to expand on what they're learning in Diesel Equipment Technology 1 and help them further be able to apply that learning in the classroom and lab that we'll have on campus to be able to apply the theory and maintain operation of diesel engines, brakes, suspension, steering, and beyond.

[00:53:02] We also are looking to bring a new course called Fixed Operations. And what Fixed Operations is, is that it actually provides instruction on the revenue generating departments of a dealership outside of vehicle sales. This would include parts service and collision repair.

[00:53:19] And then in this same diesel equipment area, we're looking to bring to you all diesel entrepreneurship. So last year we brought automotive entrepreneurship as a, in the second year when they come back for, you know, the second time year they're at the trade school and taking automotive technology three, they could also take the diesel entrepreneurship. And so, oops, looks like we got this. I'm going to move ahead now. And everything we've been talking about is right there in front of you. And so diesel entrepreneurship would be the other course. And I'll be able to show you in a moment on a slide how these are going to weave together. The next two courses,

[00:53:58] are welding one and two. So in welding one, students are going to be taught different types of cutting and electrical arc welding processes. And then they're going to expand on that as they move into

the welding two curriculum, where they get into thermal cutting, shielded metal arc welding, gas metal, flux core, and gas tungsten arcs welding. Say that fast. And they have nice acronyms up there for all that too and so they're going to get a great opportunity to in this one year three block program to get into this in depth and hit these different skills so how is that going

[00:54:35] to look in the student schedule oops let me go back here sorry so a student that comes to the trade school as part of the diesel equipment program this brand new program starting next fall if they enter our diesel program they'll take a three block course where two of the blocks would be Diesel Equipment Technology I, and then their third block would be Fixed Operations.

[00:54:56] So that's what they would do in year one. Should they return the following year, they would take Diesel Equipment Technology II, which is a two block course, and then they would have a choice of either taking Diesel Entrepreneurship or potentially going out as part of an internship in a Diesel Equipment Internship for that final block a day.

[00:55:14] This is similar to what we're doing with Automotive in the year one, though it's slightly different in terms of how the state cordons the different credits for these, but in the second year they have the final block to potentially be able to either take the entrepreneurship course or go out in the internship. In both years, a student will be able to take this as three of their blocks out of their eight.

[00:55:34] And then in welding, that would be a one-year three-block course where they would take welding one and welding two. This is very similar to what we currently do with carpentry, electricity, and HVAC, where it's a one-year program. So the great thing is they can do this as a junior or a senior but if they do this as a junior then that opens up some flexibility as a senior they might be able to go out for a three block or potentially all day internship and actually go out to work in the field during that senior and be able to apply the learning that they've gotten as they've been in the program and the great thing about both these programs is that they really are a continuation sorry of the pathway that they're able to start at each of our high schools in our ag programs

[00:56:12] with wonderful agriculture programs at each of our high schools and so in that students can take introduction to ag power systems in that you have some engines you also have welding they can continue that to agricultural fabrication or ag power systems ag power is more of your tractor engines and beyond and even gets into some diesel and then with our ag fabrication that is welding and so they're getting into that contact sorry that content and those are one block courses so this just continues that path and a more intensive program helps prepare them for industry if they're wanting to go into a career related to these program areas so we're really excited about these new courses that are going to be available to students as part of the Hanover

[00:56:50] Center for Trades and Technology, and we're excited to bring them for you for your review. And so at this time, I wanted to be able to open up for any questions you may have for Dr. Herndon and I. Thank you, Mr. Rorink and Dr. Herndon. Do we have any questions?

[00:57:07] Yes, Mr. Seidrich. A question for Dr. Herndon. The AP business really sounds great to me. More practical applications, like for a kid, say, who didn't want to go to college, But wanted to start their own business. Is that a good course for them? Yes, and there's also Because this is one of the newer courses built By College Board it also focuses on a lot of project-based learning and real-world simulations So I had the opportunity to go through one of the units in a mini simulation Which was based on the Bombas socks

if you're familiar you get the socks and how they give away socks and so it's embedding real-world connections that kids know about and

[00:57:46] then also sharing ways they can apply that to so many students that Justin and I talked to you about how their business they have those business ideas and how they can come up with a business plan and then implement that as well yeah it just sounds great for yeah even if you didn't want to go to college but if you did I know there's a lot of interest among our graduates and business schools And they're very competitive so to be able to have that you know on your resume or transcript sounds great And and I just totally think we're moving in the right directions with the trades courses

[00:58:20] Just just great stuff there. And so yeah, it's wonderful. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Seifert Do we have any other comments questions? So I do have a question for you So we offer so much to our students and so I think that can be overwhelming for parents and students So how do we, and I'm sure there's a simple, I'm sure y'all do it really, really well, and I'm sure there's a simple answer, but how do we get, how do we narrow that down for our children to be able to pick?

[00:58:51] So I can share that Justin and I and our colleague Ben Saunders work collectively each year to bring the Education Expo to Hanover where people can see everything in action and talk to kids. One of the things I think that when we talk with kids and families is that sometimes students and parents have a different understanding of what's happening.

[00:59:16] So we're excited about the new course with the Advanced Studies Seminar because what we're hearing from parents and students is there's so many things I don't really understand the nuanced differences between them and so we're hopeful that in a ninth and tenth grade we can work with kids to kind of in that seminar talk through like this is what dual enrollment is this is the benefits this is what a dual enrollment class feels like here's a simulation of an IB theory of knowledge class and we're very fortunate for our career counselors and school counselors who are giving a lot of that information to students and then Justin Ben and I really try to bridge that together at the Education

[00:59:55] Expo and then through a lot of the communications that we share with families recently dr. Penny cuff and I've been talking a lot about dual enrollment and how do we make some of those messages clear to families and a more unified across the division about what we're offering in CT what we're offering in advanced studies that's simple and straightforward and this is what it's about and here's who can help you kind of figure out. The great thing is because we have so many things so many of our Hanover students are participating in some of all of it so Justin and I share

[01:00:31] students we have AP students and IB students and dual enrollment students so it makes me happy that kids are finding a place to kind of try new things and investigate but we are continually working on how do we get everyone on the same page of here's what we offer here's what the benefit is and here's how you can access it great thank you very much because it is very overwhelming as a parent but I'm sure it is as a student too so thank you so much thank you all for a presentation okay

[01:01:06] and we have miss stone coming to talk to us about health insurance and open enrollment update yes thank you madam chair board members and dr penny cuff it is that time of year again we're starting to look at what our premiums will look like for the next calendar year and also what assumptions we should make for developing the fiscal year 2028 budget so for the health insurance update we have a shared committee with the county the jail library and schools that includes finance and human resource personnel. And we all work together to receive the data

[01:01:46] regarding our self-insurance fund, the health care costs that we're seeing. We work with our consultants that make recommendations. And from there, we begin to develop what the next year will look like. Looking at this year, this calendar year, our claims experience is almost eight percent over the current year projection. However, what we have to point out is that the current year includes use of nine million dollars of fund balance and interest revenue. And it's just not sustainable for us to continue to rely upon that level of fund balance or fund balance

[01:02:22] is decreasing in that fund. So we have to begin to look at what adjustments do we make moving forward to really as a result of these increasing health care costs and rx costs so looking forward we hope to begin to standardize our employer contribution for all plans i will share with you that now the contribution amount differs by plan also in developing next year's budget our assumption will be a 10 increase for the employer contribution and then when we look at the plans

[01:02:56] the will have differing increases based upon the plan the premium plan based upon the cost we're seeing for that plan we're recommending an increase of 16% the standard plan 7% and for the CDHP where we really are seeing the best cost controls employee only no change and then 7% for the other tiers with all of that said, even for next year, we're looking at a deficit, a fund balance deficit of about \$2.4

[01:03:30] million. But we are easing away from that use of \$9 million to an amount that is more sustainable. So I talked about the fact that our contribution differs by plan. And if we look at the first column here, that includes our employer contribution in the current year. And you can see for the premium employee only we're contributing \$1,168 as compared to for standard \$859 per month and then CDHP \$718 a month. So moving forward and this will be a phased approach over

[01:04:07] several years we'd like to align that contribution so that it's similar regardless of the plan. We show in the second column our current employee contributions by plan and by tier and then the proposed employer increase by month by plan so you can see that 10 increase what that will amount to for per month per employee that participates then we have the employee share the proposed increase for the employee share by plan and tier and then what that looks like on a bi-monthly per pay period dollar amount.

[01:04:46] So you see a greater increase for the premium plan. That is reflecting the fact that the costs are greater there and also the fact that currently we're making a greater employer contribution. And again, over a phased approach, we would start to align the contribution so that it's similar regardless of the plan.

[01:05:07] With that in mind, sometimes we hear from employees that I received a four percent pay increase however my insurance went up seven percent we just want to note that the pay increase is based upon a higher number so our teacher with one year of experience bachelor's level received an annual pay increase of two thousand two four two thousand two hundred forty eight dollars where a 15 year with master's experience it was two thousand seventy \$6. Below that is the annualized increase for the employee only tier for all of our plans and so

[01:05:43] while the percentages sometimes sound like very big numbers and when you look at them on an annualized amount they seem a little more reasonable. As we go through this process we understand that some employees may decide well I'm going to move away from that premium plan because it's becoming too costly and so we demonstrate here the savings that if someone who's currently on the premium plan decided to move to the standard plan or the CDHP that last column there represents the monthly savings that they would see by moving to those other plans we also ask that our employees as part

[01:06:23] of our upcoming enrollment open enrollment meetings we'll start to talk about how can our employees help to manage cost not just for us or the plan, but also for themselves. And so we will encourage them to use the Marathon Health Clinic, which is at a new location in Mechanicsville, the Minute Clinic, we have Teladoc, the Aetna Nurse Line. We have a lot of options there to determine what is the appropriate level of care.

[01:06:51] We encourage preventative care, get that annual physical, address issues as they arise, And then also encourage to compare costs on the Aetna website. If there is some type of procedure you need, you can go out there and compare the cost.

[01:07:07] So this is the dates of all the open enrollment meetings. We will have in-person meetings. In the recent years, they have not been that well attended. We really want to encourage our employees to attend these meetings, learn more about the different plans, and we think that will help them maybe to make better choices moving forward.

[01:07:27] so i would be happy to take any questions thank you ms stone um do we have any questions on um health insurance or open enrollment uh yes yeah i'm probably going to repeat some things from earlier but that wasn't streamed so bear with me um the the where can you comment on where the county is in terms of the life cycle of the current agreement and you know potentially going to market and getting a better more competitive situation sure so currently aetna is our administrator for our plans so they process all of our claims but part of

[01:08:03] that is that they negotiate the discounts with the medical providers and sometimes our X we are going into year five of a five-year contract so that means during the next calendar year we will issue a request for proposals and we will receive we will hear from other vendors what they have to offer and go through a negotiation process. Not sure who we will end up with, but this is the last year of our contract. So regardless of what is decided when the contract expires, do you think that these increases are coming or, you know, the market is the market? I think we're hearing it

[01:08:41] across the nation. I think we're hearing it from our peers. So while maybe there are some savings that we could capture, you know, in certain places, I don't know that they will be material or significant. In the end, we're self-insured, so they're processing our claims. And so we are currently in a trend where we have higher than normal, the name just escaped me, the word, but our claims for one individual for one event, high cost claims, thank you, that exceed \$250,000. For

[01:09:18] those we are reinsured and in the last 18 months we have seen a higher quantity of those than um than we typically see okay so i'm repeating myself again from earlier but you know i counted at least a dozen opportunities for people to get um engaged in this process to ask questions and make the right choice for their family and and i can't stress enough to anybody who's listening or may listen And that, you know, use this opportunity to learn the choices that are out there because they're very important that the dollars matter, especially today with the price of food and gas, where they are.

[01:09:54] I know this is significant. So, you know, just I would I would urge our people to take their time and figure out what's the best plan for them, because once you're in it, you can't change it for a year unless you have a life changing event. And it's complicated and it's it's intimidating. And so we encourage you to attend the meetings and then if you need a one-on-one with our benefits person in HR I'm sure we can set that up. But you know, it's the average person cannot pick up this Information and quickly make a decision necessarily. So we want to offer that additional education. Thank you. Sure. Thank you. Mr.

[01:10:30] Martin Do we have any other questions or comments? No? Okay. Thank you All right. Next up, we have Dr. Staley giving us an update on our advisory committees. Good evening, Madam Chair, school board members, and Dr. Penninghoff. It's my pleasure to provide a summary of the advisory committee work and recommendations from the 25-26 school year.

[01:10:58] Thank you for your continued support of and participation in these committees. Thank you as well to our committee chairs, our members, our staff liaisons for their time, their expertise, commitment to this important work so what are our committees we have five the career and technical education advisory committee the gifted advisory committee the school health advisory board the special education advisory committee and the community involvement team which includes family life each advisory committee plays an essential role in supporting our continuous improvement

[01:11:37] efforts and advancing the priorities outlined in the comprehensive plan through their expertise collaboration and recommendations, these committees provide valuable perspectives that inform decision-making, strengthen practices, and help ensure that the needs of our students, families, teachers, and leaders remain at the forefront of our work. The structure and purpose of our committees are consistent. Each committee includes a chair, committee members, a staff liaison, and a school board

[01:12:14] representative. Throughout the year, committees convene to review data, engage with activities and guest speakers. They develop recommendations and identify appropriate actions and action steps. These steps may include reviewing existing practices, developing or refining practices, or submitting budget requests. It is important to emphasize that all committee work is grounded in and aligned with the goals and the priorities established in our comprehensive plan.

[01:12:48] I will now provide an overview of each committee. The work of the CTE Advisory Committee included reviewing and updating the current information technology pathway, exploring future programming, and identifying potential dual enrollment opportunities.

[01:13:10] Recommendations emphasize continuing these efforts to strengthen and expand CTE opportunities for our students. The gifted advisory recommendations focus on expanding access to gifted learners, strengthening secondary-level support, and increasing teacher expertise.

[01:13:32] These goals align with the 21-26 gifted plan. The emphasis airs on identification, professional learning, and differentiated instruction for gifted learners.

[01:13:47] The School Health Advisory Board focused on evaluating all areas of school health and and will continue to do so in alignment with the current guidance from the Virginia Department of Health and the Center of Disease Control and Prevention.

[01:14:03] This work will be supported through updates from each area of school health, consideration of emerging concerns, and presentation from subject matter experts and guest speakers. The focus of the Special Education Advisory Committee resulted in recommendations designed to strengthen transition planning, expand student-led IEP practices, address the use of long-term suspensions among students with disabilities, and ensure consistent access to positive behavioral interventions and supports,

[01:14:40] training, as well as resources across the division. The community involvement team focus areas including promoting healthy relationships and enhancing communication with families.

[01:14:56] Recommendations include providing ongoing professional learning, aligned with current trends, offering digital opt-out forms for families, and providing virtual parent sessions to increase access and engagement. I should have put a Dolly Parton quote there. I just realized that.

[01:15:17] The work of our advisory committees demonstrates the power of collaboration and teamwork. On behalf of the ILS team, many who are here today, we extend our sincere appreciation to our committee chairs, our members, the staff liaison, and our school board representatives for their knowledge, thoughtful engagement, and continued commitment to this important work.

[01:15:44] I'm glad to answer questions you may have, and again, we have folks here that can answer some of those questions as well. Thank you, Dr. Staley. And we just updated our commitments to all the committees as well. You might have already said that. I was trying to find the list and I can't find the list. But I think we all should know. Thank you. Do we have any questions about this? All right. Thank you, Dr. Staley.

[01:16:14] thank you so much so next up we have public comment madam chair procedures for public comment the school board conducts the public segment of its meeting to receive information from the general public on matters related to hanover county public schools per board policy the total time allotted for public comment will not exceed 60 minutes speakers who wish to address the school board are requested to follow these guidelines as each speaker is recognized by the chairperson the The speaker is asked to clearly state the speaker's name, magistral district, and the

[01:16:52] 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 speaker's comments with applause or other audible expressions of approval or disapproval.

[01:17:08] Speakers are allotted three minutes to address the board. Each speaker's elapsed time will appear on the screen. Speakers 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.

[01:17:29] 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 aware that while the board allows speakers 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

[01:18:05] defamatory statements made against staff members, students, or parents. The board expresses this appreciation for the public's input and cooperation during this segment of the meeting. And we have three speakers tonight, and I'm going to try to say this correctly, Shannon Skirdla.

[01:18:26] Did I get it? All right. They spilled it out for me, in fairness. It is exactly how it is on there. My name is Shannon Skirdla. I'm in the Henry District, and I'm speaking tonight about communication through the county. Okay? Good evening. My name Shannon Skirdla, I have been a parent in Hanover County Schools for 11 years, with nine years more still ahead of me. I care deeply about our community,

our children, and our schools, which is why I am here tonight. This spring, I had reached out to Dr. Pennykopf, Ms. Welsh, and others

[01:19:02] in concerns that I hoped would lead to conversations about transparency and communication between our school and the families that they serve. In the morning of May 14th, a police chase had ended on Polgreen Road, followed by a foot chase. As a precaution, Polgreen Elementary was placed on a lockdown. I want to be clear that the teachers and administration did exactly what they were trained to do. They acted quickly, followed protocol, and protected our children, and I am incredibly grateful for them. But parents were never informed. There are numerous Parent Square messages on Polgreen Elementary that day, yet nothing telling us that our children had been

[01:19:38] placed in a lockdown because of law enforcement situation outside of the school. I didn't learn what had happened until my nine-year-old got off the bus. I contacted the principal and eventually spoke with a member of Mr. Whitley's team. I felt my concerns had been heard, and I hoped that it would lead to better communication going forward. But it was also left on me that there was a concern that I struggle with. The lack of communication felt intentional. It felt like if something is not positive or flattering, the preference is to stay as little as possible, let it go unnoticed, and move on until people forget about it.

[01:20:12] Unfortunately, recent events have added validity to that concern. On September 3rd, a Hanover High School teacher was arrested with allegations involving a possible solicitation of a child and sending sexually explicit images. This was a teacher that my child had all last year.

[01:20:27] And I found out on Facebook, not from the school, not from the county, not from Principal Reese, ParentSquare email or text, from Facebook. Even more concerning is that HCPS did release a statement involving the arrest to news outlets, but parents did not receive that statement directly.

[01:20:46] Five days later, we still have nothing. So you may, I'm asking myself why. These are just two significant communication issues my family has experienced in four months, which leads me to ask what else has gone uncommunicated, minimalized, or simply swept aside.

[01:21:03] I also know that I am not the only parent who feels this way. Whether or not parents come to speak or not, this is a conversation happening throughout the community, which is why I felt strongly that these concerns needed to be put on the record. This isn't about wanting details. It's about transparency, communication, and trust.

[01:21:19] We teach our children to tell the truth even when it's uncomfortable. We teach them to take responsibility, communicate, own their mistakes, and make things right. So why aren't we holding our school and leaders to model the same standards? I am asking the board to establish clear expectations for communication with families about significant safety incidents and serious situations involving schools or employees where the circumstances could reasonably affect students.

[01:21:47] Whatever the current policy and procedure is, is not enough. We trust you with our children every day. This trust requires more than physical safety. It requires transparency. It requires communication. And it requires us as adults to model the very things that we asked of our children. Thank you so much for your time.

[01:22:04] Thank you. Our second speaker is Ms. Kristen Holti. Good evening, Chair Walsh, co-chair Dr. Shroff, school board, Dr. Pennecuff, administration, and the public.

[01:22:26] I am Kristen Holti of the Cold Harbor District. We are very fortunate to live in Hanover County. I am proud to have lived in Hanover County since 2004. Hanover County is unique and special, And Hanover County Public Schools provides such an excellent education.

[01:22:48] No county is perfect. When you look at Northern Virginia, you can see they are having major issues with keeping their kids safe. I just wanted to say, please continue to protect the children and make their safety a priority.

[01:23:06] And I'm just very proud to live in Hanover County. And I do like the mission statement, inspire, empower, and lead. And like I said, no county is perfect. This is just the beginning of the school year. And I still think Hanover County is the best county in Virginia.

[01:23:25] Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Hulte. And last, McLean Wilson. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Penny Cuff.

[01:23:40] My name is McLean Wilson, and I am from the Mechanicsville District. I am a proud graduate of Washington Henry Elementary School and Atlee High School. And I have been a substitute teacher in Hanover County since 2019. As a substitute, I have taught in 14 different schools in the county, and so I understand and can appreciate what works and doesn't work, particularly in elementary school classrooms.

[01:24:03] I'd like to share with you a few thoughts I have about the new school buildings that are being built in our county in that light. What works are sinks in every classroom. I am constantly wanting to wash my hands and wanting to teach students good hygiene practices as well. Sinks are needed for cleaning up messes and doing science experiments.

[01:24:22] I was an instructional assistant in a classroom the other day, and the teacher had to step out of the room to fill up beakers with water for an experiment. Had I not been there to watch her class, she would have had to call for assistance in order to complete her lesson. What works are classrooms with ample space. A classroom should be able to comfortably fit a class rug, classroom library, teacher table, and around the room workspaces for students. Classrooms are calmer when everyone feels like they have their own space, when you can run a small group lesson in a corner without being right on top of students doing independent work. Classrooms that are cramped

[01:24:58] become noisy much more easily and tend to escalate negative behaviors. What works is a school layout where younger students have minimal distance to travel during the school day. Hallway transitions are hard, especially for our younger students. Having to go up and down the stairs is even harder.

[01:25:16] Having to cross a road or go to a playground that is not enclosed creates a hassle for our teachers and a safety risk for students. Easy school navigation is a must, particularly for our younger learners. So while I enjoyed the big windows and clean hallways during the Battlefield Park Elementary School open house, I was disappointed by the lack of sinks in all of the classrooms, by the small classroom size that leaves little space for collaborative learning, and placing first and second grade students on the second floor where they will have to navigate the stairs eight times a day. This is the third school built in Hanover with basically the same

[01:25:52] floor plan. Washington Henry will be the fourth. And I wonder, were administrators, teachers, and students ask for feedback on Ashland Elementary School before the new buildings were built? Is there

a plan to get as much feedback as possible about the four new buildings before the new Mechanicsville Elementary and Pearson's Corner Elementary Schools are built? These buildings are huge investments. They are meant to last in our county for decades and generations. Will we slow down to see if they are actually meeting the needs of our teachers and students? Will we commit to

[01:26:27] getting as much objective feedback on the current buildings so that the future buildings can be the best they can be a cookie cutter layout may be cheaper and easier in the short term but if it is not meeting the needs of our teachers and students we will pay the cost in the long run thank you for your time sure okay all right thank you so much to our public commenters and we are moving on to our action agenda. So first up, we have consideration of proposed policies. So I think

[01:27:07] we have Ms. Hahn joining us to lead us in that. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. What you have in front of you are two policies that I brought before you at our last meeting. They are on the agenda for approval. There have not been any changes since the last time that you saw them.

[01:27:27] i'm happy to answer any questions that you may have but otherwise i would ask that these be approved so we can update them in our policy manual okay um thank you miss hon do we have any questions all right do i have a motion madam chair i move to approve the proposed revised policies 1-6.8 citizen participation 6-1.1 education philosophy as presented second

[01:27:58] Thank you Mr. Seifert and Dr. Shroff for the second. Is there any discussion? Okay all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed? The motion passes. Thank you Ms. Hahn. Okay and next up we have Ms. Stone for the consideration of the budget calendar for FY 2028.

[01:28:22] yes good evening again this is this budget proposed budget calendar was presented last month it follows our typical process and it does have all the dates listed there for planned school board meetings and I'd be happy to take any questions do we have any questions all right thank you miss stone do we have a motion I move to adopt the FY 2028 budget calendar thank you miss

[01:28:50] Lynn, do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Martin. Do we have any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. All those opposed? Okay, the motion passes. Next we have the consideration of the calendar adjustment and we have. Hi, good evening. I'm so sorry. It's okay. I'm excited to be the last one. Yes, thank you. So I bring to you, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Penny Cuff, a proposal for your consideration regarding an adjustment that's possible to the 2627 calendar. The reason for this

[01:29:28] is House Bill 1957 mandated that the standards of learning were to be given in the last 10 days of school for students in the grades 7 through 12. In late July of this year, the timeline was amended so early release days do not count as a part of that testing window. What we are asking for your consideration is a proposal that Thursday, June 3rd, be changed to an early release day. This would allow our students to have a more separate SOL testing window from their exam window. Our

[01:30:03] secondary students would be able to complete their SOL tests, retakes, retests earlier in the eight days before Memorial Day, and then that would allow a bigger separation for the exam week and allow for teachers to be able to do that administrative work and give some students eligibility to get exam exemptions. I'm happy to take any questions about this proposal.

[01:30:30] Okay, do we have any questions for Ms. Lessett? I do. I have a quick one and it might not be for you. Why does the state care when we test kids? It's not, that's not a question for me. If you're asking...

Who here can answer that? I just have to know. I do think that it was in an effort to increase um productivity during the last few weeks of school okay in some divisions if sol testing occurred in april perhaps those last few weeks of school weren't as productive as they would have been that's my opinion fair enough i can move that thank you thank you miss lusset um

[01:31:08] and for your answer um so if we don't have any further questions do i have a motion who has it I'll take it. I'll move to approve. What is the motion? Calendar adjustment. Calendar adjustment as presented. Second. Thank you. Punchy. Thank you, Mr. Martin and Dr. Schroff. And thank you, Ms. Lessa. Where are we? Do we have any discussion? Okay. Seeing none. All those in

[01:31:48] favor, say aye. Aye. All those opposed. Wonderful. Thank you. So for materials for your review you have your fiscal status report you have your facilities uses report you have your purple sheet with calendar of board related events you also have received a lot i think um miss brown has been working um over time on sending us calendar invites so you should have received all those i'm sure once this uh since we've since we have voted in our budget calendar

[01:32:24] you will receive those if you haven't already um and dr pennycuff schedule or do you want to highlight any board events yes thank you tomorrow i will have the opportunity to share our back to school presentation with the board of supervisors at two o'clock so if you're able to join us we would love to have those of you who are available then i believe that you have all been invited to Hanover High School's 911 Memorial Stair Climb on Friday at 4 30 if you're available. Also Atlee is

[01:33:01] having two events that day as well and you received an email about that if you're able to come to either one of those. I believe they're at 9 30 and 11. On September 15th is our first cross-country meet at Pole Green Park. We'd like to invite those of you who are interested to also plan to come and see that. That is one of our learning meets, so it'll be the first one that the students go through, so it will really be an opportunity for them to learn how the meets will

[01:33:32] go from there forward. On October the 6th, we have our Education Expo that Dr. Herndon and Mr. Rowink told you about, and I believe that our students start coming at fifth grade. Is that correct so fifth grade yes and so if you have a third or fourth grader and you want to start coming to see what the opportunities are some you know you have many opportunities to hear from the students who have chosen different paths to see what might be the best for you then our annual

[01:34:09] school visits start and on October the 8th and so we will look forward to visiting the schools soon. So those are the only dates that I wanted to be sure to highlight. But on October 13th is our next regular school board meeting. Thank you, Dr. Penny Cuff. We have lots of opportunity to get on your calendar. So the schedule of, so Dr. Penny Cuff, this is for you too, the schedule of topics for our next school board meeting? Yes, thank you. We will have the work session topic

[01:34:45] of physical fitness and an update on cross country at our next school board work session. Also, for information sessions, we'll have an update on right at school. We will have a public comment period to kick off the FY28 budget season. We will have action on the new course proposals that you heard this evening and on the policies that Dr. and Mrs. Hahn went over with us tonight during information and discussion we're also planning our next instructional highlight which

[01:35:19] will include information on dual enrollment and how that what the um what the positives are for each ip ib ab a i'm sorry ap ib and dual enrollment so thank you thank you dr penicuff hold on mr

Martin's um we have we have Dr. Shrove has a comment I just want to say publicly um it's my teacher my favorite teacher's birthday today Miss Bailey she's 89 so I just want to say happy birthday to her oh happy birthday Miss Bailey thank you okay now you can thank you madam chair

[01:35:59] I move to adjourn our September 8th of 2026 meeting with multiple emojis at the end second thank you Mr. Martin and Dr. Shrove is there any discussion seeing none all those in favor say aye all those opposed he's still there okay meeting adjourned thank y'all



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