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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, March 28, 2024

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[00:00:00] y'all got quiet without the gavel even well done i wish as a classroom teacher that happened more easily well welcome this evening to the march 28 2024 monthly school board meeting uh the first item on the agenda is the approval of a of the agenda is there a motion i moved that the school board approved the agenda for today's meeting moved by mr young is there a second second seconded by Ms. Kinsella. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The agenda

[00:00:32] is approved. Next, I would like to introduce some special visitors we have. We have a state senator in the room. I like to recognize State Senator Van Valkenburg and thank him for being here this evening, as well as we have some VCU graduate students in the Master of Social Work program who are observing our meeting and we welcome them as well as to all of our stakeholders here this evening um miss coy i'll turn it over to you wonderful thank you good evening and welcome to all of our guests and visitors this evening we're going to start our meeting as we always do

[00:01:11] with the pledge of allegiance and so i'd like to invite our students from ridge elementary school to make their way on up our students from ridge are accompanied by their principal rebecca roper and they'll be leading us after that pledge we will have our moment of silence and those that are able to stand we invite you to continue standing while we partake in that moment of silence thank you good evening um

here we have with us today um our house leaders at ridge we have a house system and so this is four of the five of our house leaders so we have Tallulah Farnham

[00:01:46] who is our ComScene house leader Addison Kroll who is our Pompero house leader Madeline Thog is our Chinook House Leader and Michaela Rowley is our Lotus House Leader so thank you all

[00:02:43] for our performance highlight we are joined this evening by the students at Criacus Middle School and so we will invite them to come on up all right good evening madam chair members of the board colleagues and guests my name is Christopher Mosley I am the education specialist for performing arts as we celebrate music in our schools month it is my pleasure to introduce our performance

[00:03:22] highlight this evening the Cuyacuson Middle School select course under the direction of Miss Jordan Satterfield. Miss Satterfield is in her third year as a music educator at Cuyacuson and has done a phenomenal job growing our music program. Students will be performing two selections: Letter from a Girl to the World by Andrea Ramsey and Why We Sing by Greg Gilpin. Tonight we also have an attendees their proud principal, Mr. Robert Stevens. We ask that you please stand to be

[00:03:57] recognized at this time. Thank you so much. Also, I wanted to point out that we have a guest accompanist as well, Mr. Jacob Duvall, who is the chorus director at Garwin High School.

[00:04:18] All right, and let's hear from the chorus. A wonderful performance. Thank you again to our

[00:12:44] students at Coyacuson and our house leaders from Ridge for joining us this evening. We're going to transition from our student performances to our student recognitions. Dr. Hughes. Good evening Vice

[00:13:23] Chair Shea. I can't even talk following that lovely presentation. It was so lovely. Members of the board, Mrs. Coy, and to our audience. Tonight I'm pleased to recognize the We the People student teams for the board and the audience awareness we the people the citizen and the constitution is a teaching approach for elementary middle and high school students covering the history and principles of constitutional democracy in the united states we the people culminates with a simulated congressional hearing where students testify before a panel of judges

[00:14:00] acting as members of congress. It is an ideal approach to teaching and learning that aligns with our Destination 2025 strategic plan as it creates authentic environments for students to showcase their learning. In addition to state competitions across the country, every spring the center hosts the We the People national finals and national invitational for high school and middle school students in Washington DC. We are proud tonight to welcome and honor the Freeman We the People team, who is supported by teacher and coach, Mr.

[00:14:37] Rob Peck, and also the Glenn Allen team, who is supported by teacher and coach and state senator, Skyler Van Balkenburg. Recently, these teams won first and second place respectively in the We the People state competition to secure both Virginia spots in the national finals on April 13th and 15th.

[00:15:00] We are so proud of their efforts and their accomplishments and know they will represent HCPS very well as they move forward.

[00:15:07] At this time, I'd like to invite the Freeman team to come forward.

[00:15:56] Let's give the Freeman team one more round of applause.

[00:16:03] And now I'd like to invite the Glenn Allen We The People team to come forward.

[00:17:13] Congratulations once again to both teams. At this time, I'd like to turn the presentation over to Mike Califatis, who will celebrate our Youth Art Month winners.

[00:17:36] Madam Chair, members of the school board, Ms. Coy, colleagues, guests, and student artists. My name is Mike Califatis, and I'm honored to be the art specialist for Henrico County Schools. First thing I'd like to do is thank the parents, teachers, and administrators who have joined us today to celebrate Youth Art Month. Youth Art Month is a nationwide and annual observance that is held each March to emphasize the value of art education for all children and to encourage public support for quality art programs. From special events, activities, contests, and

[00:18:10] opportunities, Youth Art Month is a celebration of the power that art brings. The framed pieces you see here today at Newbridge and on display at Central Office will be exhibited through the 2024 through 2025 school year. Every teacher was asked to pick one piece from each school represents their students for the year. This is a tremendous honor. At this time, our school board and Ms. Coy would like to recognize all students who have joined us here today to accept their awards. I'd like to invite our elementary student artists to line up to my right.

[00:18:49] Please have your certificate in hand, and if I mispronounce your name, I apologize. With a name like Califatus, I completely understand. So if my elementary winners could line on up. I don't know if y'all understand. We usually just have the students, yeah.

[00:19:09] You're from Pemberton, right? Nice to meet you. We're just there.

[00:19:18] Kennedy Garland, Raleigh Mott, Carson Hale, Karen Nguyen, Charlotte Rittenhouse, Raleigh Gibson, Abigail Bradshaw, William Brookshire Hilton.

[00:21:14] I'd like to invite our middle school student artists to line up to my right. Please have your certificate in hand.

[00:21:27] Kate Walton, Kensington Oust, Vicki Yang, Mia Henningen, I'd like to invite our high school student artists to line up to my right.

[00:23:09] Please have your certificate in hand.

[00:23:25] Christina Isom, if there was anybody here that we did not announce, please come up to me before we finish to receive your certificate.

[00:23:53] We had a reception beforehand, so we were able to see most of the student artists were able to meet out with us at central office and they got to see their work. I'd also like to recognize three pieces that were selected to go beyond our school board display.

[00:24:11] The Virginia School Board Association has a regional contest each year in March to select the work that will hang in the state superintendent's office. This year, the pieces that were chosen to recognize Henrico at the regional contest were Kennedy Garland from Shorepump Elementary School, teacher Nancy DeNice, Kayla Nguyen from Brooklyn Middle School, teacher Elizabeth Goleman, and Journey Marlo from Henrico High School Center for the Arts teacher, Stu Harnsberger.

[00:24:45] Congratulations to Kayla on earning third place for the Southside region at the middle school level. And if she is here, could she please stand up? I saw her earlier, aw. Well, we congratulate all student

winners.

[00:25:02] And I'd also like to take a moment to recognize our students' achievement in the Greater Richmond Area Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards competition. Henrico County Public Schools had more student winners the visual arts than any other school division in the region. On February 17th, all student winners were recognized at Dogwood Middle School by the regional sponsor of the Visual Arts Center in Richmond. We had 57 gold key winners, 93 silver key winners, 138 honorable mention winners, four gold key portfolio winners, four silver key portfolio winners, and three honorable mention

[00:25:37] portfolio winners. These students will all be moving forward to the national competition. this is a tremendous achievement congratulations go out to all of our student winners families and their art teachers thank you so much thank you mr califatis and congratulations to all of our student artists that concludes our student recognitions we'll now transition to the recognitions of celebrations happening in march thank you so much ms coy our first recognition is of youth to continue with our youth art month theme youth art month celebrates the value of art

[00:26:17] education and its importance to young artists of all interests and abilities. In 1961, the Council of Art Education established Children's Art Month to advocate for quality art programs in school divisions across the country. And Ms. Kinsella will read our proclamation. Proclamation, Youth Art Month, March 2024. Whereas art education provides significant educational benefits to all students and whereas art education develops students creative potential and improves problem solving

[00:26:53] and critical thinking skills and whereas art education sparks sensitivity to beauty order and other expressive qualities and also gives students a deeper understanding of multicultural values and beliefs and whereas the residents of virginia have joined state and National Art Associations in supporting the students and teachers of our community, many of whom are artists themselves. Now, therefore, be proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognize March 2024 as Youth Art Month. Recognized by the

[00:27:31] School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 28th day of March 2024. Vice Chair Shea. Thank you so much Ms. Kinsella. The purpose of Music in Our Schools Month is to raise awareness of the importance of music education for all children and to remind citizens that school is where all children should have access to music. Music in Our School Month is an opportunity for music teachers to bring their music programs through the attention of the school and the community and display the value that school music brings to students of all ages. Mr. Young will

[00:28:05] read our population whereas music education is part of a well-rounded learning experience for every student and helps shape the way they understand themselves and the world around them and whereas the national association of music merchants foundation has named henrico county public schools a national leader in music education for 24 consecutive years and whereas national music in our schools month is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways our students access and engage with music in our schools. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that

[00:28:40] the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognize March 2024 as Music in Our Schools Month, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 28th day of March 2024. Thank you, Mr. Young. Women's History Month is a dedicated month to reflect the contributions of women and serves as an opportunity to learn about women's leaders and activists and to celebrate the worldwide contributions of women. Mr. Uream will read our proclamation.

[00:29:10] Whereas women around the world have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of nations and communities in countless ways, and whereas American women of every race, class, and ethnic background served as early leaders in the forefront of every major progressive social change movement in the United States, and whereas women continue to excel as business leaders, politicians, civil servants, members of the military, and heads of other career, community, and family organizations, and whereas women including Pocahontas, Marie

[00:29:44] Curie, Rosa Parks, Florence Nightingale, and Sandra Day O'Connor were trailblazers who made significant contributions to history and our world. And whereas Henrico County Public Schools and the Henrico community are home to outstanding female role models who continue to shape and make history in their own right, now therefore be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes March 2024 as Women's History Month and encourage our citizens to celebrate strong women who strengthen our families, schools, and the greater community, recognized by the School

[00:30:20] Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 28th day of March 2024. Thank you, Mr. Irving. Nutrition Month is the annual campaign established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

[00:30:37] During the month of March, everyone is invited to learn about making informed food choices and developing helpful eating and physical activity habits. I will read our proclamation. Whereas food is the substance by which life is sustained and whereas the type, quality, and amount of food that individuals consume each day plays a vital role in their overall health and physical fitness and whereas there is a need for continuing nutrition education and a wide-scale effort to enhance healthy eating practices now for now therefore be it proclaimed

[00:31:16] that the school board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes March 2024 as National Nutrition Month recognized by the school board of Henrico County Public Schools this 28th day of March 2024. Miss Koi that concludes our proclamations for March. Thank you, Vice Chair Shea. The next item on the agenda is the Henrico Highlights. This month we make a virtual visit to Hungry Creek Middle School where students are demonstrating creativity, collaboration, and quality character as part of a hands-on lesson in democracy. Let's take a look.

[00:31:51] Welcome to the first annual point session 319-2024. Be it enacted by the Congress of Hungry Creek Middle School. Hungry Creek Middle School. Section 1. For the purpose of this bill. Section 2. The purpose of this bill. Upon passage of this bill.

[00:32:08] The purpose of this bill is. Upon passage of this bill, students will. I'm going to accept this bill. We really have been trying to come up with a way to get them actively involved in the civic process. It's really hard to do when they're 11 years old so with the new principal coming in and just happened to be around the time that we were starting our legislative branch and how a bill becomes a law we were like wait a minute what if we took this idea of making a bill into a law and actually let them try and make a change here at their own school.

[00:32:46] These questions are all about the branches of government. And so, we spoke to Beth Terrier, she was 100% on board and she thought the idea was wonderful. The kids thought it was such a good idea and they really threw themselves into it. We were thinking about what would affect our school the most, which would help us.

[00:33:03] My friend Jackson's idea, he came up with the idea a little bit and we were thinking on it. We shared a bunch of ideas and we decided that this one would work the best because we could all agree on it. We're lucky enough that we only have two 6th grade social studies teachers, so that made it perfect to divide my class up and call my class the Senate.

[00:33:22] The other 6th grade social studies teacher, Mrs. Jewell, her classes were the House of Representatives. And so they followed the whole procedure. They wrote their bills, we presented them to our class floor, we went into committees, the committees debated. This is really only going to help girls. It's not going to help any boys in this school at all.

[00:33:43] The boys get enough help. This bill needs to happen because HCMS needs more students to try harder. Actually a vitamin D. Well, it's a pro. It's a pro. It is a pro. Vitamin D. The bills that made it out of committee then were presented back to the floor of the Senate, so my classes, and then they voted.

[00:34:03] And any of the bills that passed both committee and the floor in my house were then sent over to Mrs. Jules' class, and then the same thing happened with her bills, and then the process started over. like it's kind of I don't really know how to explain it it was kind of like half-and-half though but we ended up winning for I think it was like 70% to 30% we sent our bill to the House of Representatives and they covered it on there and yeah I guess it went through good enough to add snack lives to Hunger Creek Middle School be enacted by the Congress of Hunger

[00:34:40] The purpose of this bill is to give all students a way to fill up their water bottle. Upon passage of this bill, changes to the classes, electives, and staff work with yes follows. Section 1: For the purpose of this bill, the following definition shall apply: a regular scheduled period in the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers.

[00:35:05] It was quite a thing being nervous. it felt like i was like actually you know um in the con in the congress and uh watching president terrier uh you know sign our bill so i am gonna um ask for you to change one piece of this however other than that one piece we will i will accept this pass this bill i am bounded by the courses that the county has approved and so study hall unfortunately is not on the list of county approved

[00:35:43] electives so for that reason i have to veto this bill i think the kids really took to heart the advice that they were given which was really think about things that wouldn't just benefit you yourself or maybe just your friend group but really think about things that would benefit everyone at hungry and the kids really took that to heart so we have five rules of things that are now going to be able to be changes that everyone at hungry creek is going to be able to enjoy i gladly accept this bill hats off to miss harrier the new principal at hungry creek for embracing

[00:36:21] this creative learning activity and the ideas of her students research shows that students who have a sense of belonging and who are engaged in their learning have better attendance and are more successful at in school we are so fortunate to have so many phenomenal principals and leaders across this school division. Tonight I'm honored to lift up two as the heart of Henrico. Principal John Marshall at Freeman High School and Principal Jennifer Roden from Cackley Elementary were recently honored as an REB award winner and runner-up, respectively. As you will see in tonight's video, both are courageous, caring leaders who are continuously asking and acting

[00:37:00] on what is best for students. Dr. Marshall, you have been named by the Community Foundation the 2024 REB Distinguished Educational Leader.

[00:37:27] Congratulations. Well done, John. I'm thankful for your leadership, proud of all you've accomplished and look forward to seeing your plans become great opportunities for the Freeman family.

[00:37:44] Go Mavs. You totally surprised me.

[00:38:05] Well, we are so pleased to inform you that the REB Foundation, in support of the Community Foundation, has selected you as a runner-up for the 2024 REB Distinguished Educational Leadership Award.

[00:38:21] Congratulations. Thank you. Bravo to you on behalf of the New Yorkville School Board. Congratulations to you. What outstanding leaders! Mr. Marshall and Ms. Rodin will join us at the April School Board meeting for individual recognitions by the board. Madam Vice Chair, that concludes

[00:38:58] our highlights for the evening. Thank you so much. Next on our agenda is the reading of the mission statement. Ms. Kinsella, will you please read our mission statement? Certainly. Camarico County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence, will actively engage our students in diverse educational, social, and civic learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens.

[00:39:24] Thank you, Ms. Kinsella. The next item on the agenda is public forum. This is the time where citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division. have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board. Speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else.

[00:39:45] We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and school affiliation, if applicable, and the subject of your remarks before speaking. After stating your name, please place the number you were given in the cart near the podium. Speakers must present their remarks to the school board, not the audience, and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk. The use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order. To assist you in tracking your time, there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen. I will also indicate when your time

[00:40:22] has expired. The school board is here today to hear from you. We will not be responding to speakers' concerns or questions during the public forum. However, a Henrico staff member will follow up with the speakers. Stakeholders have also had the opportunities to submit written comments through an online form in advance of the meeting. Those comments were shared with the school board members prior to the meeting and are posted in board docs. Equal consideration and attendance and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments. We appreciate your attendance

[00:40:57] here this evening and for providing your input. The first speaker is speaker number one. Is speaker number one here. The next speaker is speaker number two. Good evening school board my name is Monica Hutchinson and I am the president for Henrico County NAACP. I want to first say thank you to Dr. Monica Manns for all that she has done over the years. Since she's been here there has been a culture shift

[00:41:36] within Henrico County Public Schools. A shift towards embracing our diversity and working towards being inclusive of all of our students including religious inclusivity she has fought for our students teachers and families while also being the voice of the community the voice that so many of us needed and still need HCPS to hear on a consistent basis while Henrico schools is losing the director of diversity equity and opportunity the community is losing our trusted voice and representation behind closed doors on a daily basis which is

[00:42:12] why regarding the search for her replacement, a few things that I am asking for is for Henrico NAACP to have a seat at the table to help with the process of finding and selecting the next director of DEO. To increase the rate of pay, this position is underpaid. This is the lowest paid director position and it's just not okay. To include Dr. Manns in the recruitment and hiring process of finding her replacement. No one knows this position better than she does as she built the foundation from the very beginning. The community trusts Dr. Manns. Including her in the entire process will go a long way with building good faith and trust in the community

[00:42:51] that her replacement is the best choice. I am asking for a hard commitment that the next director of equity, diversity, and opportunity will be valued for the work that they will do and the reassurances that they will provide the community. Please understand, if it wasn't for Dr. Manns, Henrico's schools would have had many more complaints and/or protests, negative attention and more.

[00:43:15] What she has provided the community is invaluable, and from the outside looking in, it doesn't seem like she or her work was always valued, as it should have been. Our youth today deal with a lot, and the issues that they face do not end when they get to school.

[00:43:34] And we have to be prepared to meet our students where they are. We need more innovative methods, more community involvement, more community investments in the schools, conflict resolution, peer mediation, and credible messengers in the schools as just a few possible solutions.

[00:43:50] Some solutions will require Henrico Schools to build new partnerships in the community, especially the eastern part of the county, to help our students excel. And having a strong DEO director that has the trust of the community would help to accomplish this.

[00:44:05] overcome the challenges facing our youth, but it will require addressing some uncomfortable truths around racial and economic justice and listening to all of our students. Dr. Manns was great at this and our next DEO will have to be as well. At a time when some are attempting to erase our history and identity, our students and families deserve to know that there is someone in a position of leadership who just gets it. Thank you. So thank you. And as always, Henrico NAACP is ready to roll up our sleeves and help in any way that we can. Thank you. Thanks so much. And if you'll just put

[00:44:39] your number in the basket. Thank you so much. I appreciate it. Speaker number three. Yes, my name is Frank Callahan. I'm the educational chairperson of the Henrico NAACP and working with Monica very closely. And basically, Tuesday, Monica and I were at the supervisors meeting where they talked about their budget and we made comments there. And I guess my presentation today is going to deal with questions that I'm presenting to the board dealing with the school district's budget and I'll start

[00:45:16] out with a series of them. Number one is when you're doing the budget have you looked seriously now at the recent just within the last three or four weeks the U.S. Department of Education's report on 38 page report on special education and that how that is going to change the school district the

other thing is that the uh just recently again just within the last uh two months uh the u.s department of education has cited 12 buildings school buildings in the county that are that have problems with special education and this is again by the u.s department of

[00:45:53] education and the uh the state has added two other buildings to it for a total of 14 and i'm wondering if in your analysis of the budget if you're including the problems that they have showed the other one is something dear to me is special education and i'm wondering if you are looking at the yearly report that is entitled the commonwealth of virginia public school ffy report which is which the school district sends to the federal government each year because in this constantly there are problems with special education and minorities. And it constantly

[00:46:32] is shown in this area. So the other thing is that I'm looking at is, from your own statistics, the dropout rate. And Enrico County has above average dropout rate than the state. If you look at it between 2012 and 2021, in every one of those years, the dropout rate was higher than the state average. And then when you look at just what's happened in the last two years, in 2022, 509

[00:47:04] students dropped out of school. Out of that, over 400 were minority students. In 2023, 11.5% of special needs students dropped out of school. And these statistics are, again, taken from the Department of Education and on their dropout rate.

[00:47:24] So that is something, and with all of this in mind, I just want to say that the goal, reinforce what Monica said, the goal of the NAACP is that every student of every color receives quality public education. This also means fair discipline, equitable resources, eliminating racial disparity, and the suspension and expulsion of students.

[00:47:46] We are looking forward to great results of this partnership with the Henrico School District. That is a quote from September 17th, 2013 from the NAACP. - Thank you so much. Appreciate it. - Thank you.

[00:48:01] - Speaker number four. - My name is Jordan Karam. I have a student, Ivy, who attends Pocahontas Middle School. She's faced bullying at that school regularly for years.

[00:48:18] Since Hawk Ball, and thanks to your intervention, the teachers have improved significantly at Pocahontas. But what has not improved are the actions and attitudes of the administrators, specifically Ms. Hunt and Mr. McCauley. After a recent altercation at the school, my daughter was verbally abused. She was called a C and a B in front of the whole school, in front of Ms.

[00:48:37] Hoskins and everything. Ivy was honest about her part in that altercation. Her bully was not. So the result was my daughter was punished for her honesty by being suspended for two days. The bullies, as far as I can tell, were rewarded for their dishonesty. They faced no consequences. According to Hunt and McCauley, this was an isolated incident. It doesn't count as bullying, because in order to be bullying, it has to be happening consistently for months.

[00:48:59] When I pointed out it had happened for months, and Ivy had been telling their teachers about it, the teachers she trusts, the fact that Ms. Hunt was unaware of this was the problem, she disagreed. From their point of view, if they are not told, then they are powerless to do anything. Their being ignorant of the things happening in their school is an acceptable end state, because for Hunt and Macauley, ignorance of the problem is just as good as there being no problem at all.

[00:49:22] When my child was in ISS and declined to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, She was threatened, as if by a mob boss for Mr. Glenn, who said, sure it would be a shame if you got another week of suspension for failing to do what I told you to do. Now, we were told the situation was handled. Handling it did not include talking to Ivy.

[00:49:39] Ivy was never told that what was done to her was wrong. She wasn't told how things would change. In fact, it wasn't until I talked to Dr. Champ that this closure was given. Hunt and Macaulay were content to have Ivy wandering the halls, her rights having been trampled, never knowing that anything had been done, not even acknowledging the harm that was done to her.

[00:49:56] This pattern sends a clear message to the students at Pocahontas. To the victims, you cannot trust us, the administrators, and we do not care about the harm you are experiencing. To the bullies, never fear. You're fine. Now, I've already brought all this to the attention of Dr. Champ, and I have to say that she has always been a staunch ally to the victims at Pocahontas.

[00:50:13] She's responsive, empathetic, decisive. I have 100% confidence in her abilities and her desire to solve this problem. But what I fear is that Dr. Champ is only one person, and she has a whole fleet of middle schools to take care of. And so I want to be certain she gets the support she needs from this body to finally force Hunt and Macaulay to stop with the endless stream of excuses, to take responsibility for what happens at their school, and to look for solutions.

[00:50:37] It doesn't have to be this way. I've had a student at Pocahontas for nine years running. That school used to be a place where bullying was taken seriously, where the victims were empathized with and protected, and where students could learn in a safe environment. And I hope, with the continued efforts of Dr. Champ and this body, that we can deal with the administrators who have allowed the school to deteriorate to the place where it is today.

[00:50:58] I want them held accountable. It's too late for my daughter. She leaves in June, but hopefully it won't be too late for the next generation of Hawks. Thank you. Speaker number five. Hello, good evening. My name is Richard Tucker. My daughter, Emma, also goes to Pocahontas and I want to speak on that same incident. I agree with everything that was just said and I want to amplify that as well. This incident with the C word being used towards our children has been building all year this isn't something new these young men have been taunting these girls all year long

[00:51:35] throwing food at them ordering them to move in the cafeteria a chair i'm sorry a table was removed in the cafeteria my daughter says around december and ever since then this situation has been building we could have brought the table back in december that would have solved the problem i told principal macaulay that i told principal hunt that they both pushed back on me and said no no there's plenty of seats i said clearly not because your solution since last tuesday when this incident happened has been to add back a table and apparently that seems to have solved the problem this could have been done months ago this is an ongoing problem macaulay and hunt both talked to

[00:52:12] me in their office last week they told me they had no idea such misbehavior was happening they had no idea that food was being thrown in their cafeteria and these insults were being given and these girls were being ordered to move it's their job to know it's their job to protect children these public areas of their school. I know that two of the young people who were verbally assaulted last week have avoided the cafeteria for long periods over the course of this year. One of them ate in the bathroom,

another ate with a trusted teacher. This is not a safe and protected learning environment and that's because of the administration. I am also aware of a separate incident involving an

[00:52:52] autistic student who has been harassed repeatedly. He was punched on school grounds when he responded with a word he shouldn't have said and all not in his defense a word he shouldn't have said he was suspended for two days the student who punched him was not punished over the summer a female student created a social media page i'm not sure if it's instagram or facebook i haven't seen it i don't differentiate between the two she used that page to mock him repeatedly she put up pictures of him pictures that were taken clearly on school grounds when the parents went to the administration with complaints. They were met with stonewalling. The girl has not been

[00:53:27] punished. The young man is continuing to struggle. Finally, I want to praise the teachers at Pocahontas. My daughter's been there now for three years, has two months to go. She's had an excellent education. She sees that the teachers maintain order. They teach their classes. The administration is not doing the same thing. It's not supporting the students in the public areas. It's not supporting the students in the cafeteria I want my daughter went to try to join Ivy in in school suspension she texted me I went to be with Ivy in in school suspension they told me I have to go to class Mrs. Hunt told her she had to go to class I feel so helpless I feel they're not listening to me

[00:54:03] and that my word doesn't matter and I feel bad for Ivy most of all please listen to my daughter listen to us make some changes you've done it before with this administration you can do it again. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number six, Madam Chairman,

[00:54:43] members of the board, Dr. Cashwell, all school board employees in the Henrico school community. My name is Bill Pike, retired educator. This evening I'm representing the Henrico retired school personnel Association. I have the privilege of serving as their parliamentarian. Yes, running a school system is tough work, but keeping order in one of their board meetings might be more challenging. Neither Robert and his rules of order, nor I have a chance against these resilient women seriously on behalf of the association we want to thank you for the

[00:55:16] guidance you have given us the last two years we also want to thank nancy jones altin braun and rita bostic for their patience and assistance in working with us founded in 1991 our association works to keep all retired school system employees informed about benefits including how legislation impacts benefits and we monitor the everyday challenges faced by the school system. At our annual spring meeting, our membership awards scholarships for students and teachers. Additionally,

[00:55:53] our members seek opportunities to volunteer with nonprofits who support Henrico County Schools. Each spring, we appreciate the opportunity to have a presence at the annual retirement luncheon. and while we know this ask is a long shot we respectfully request to have a one-minute spot on the program for years education researchers have confirmed the positive impact on student learning when the teacher is able to build a cooperative working relationship with students the same holds

[00:56:28] true for our association we have a better opportunity to connect with retirees when they see one of our leaders at the podium gently extending a personal invitation to join us. Thanks for listening. Thanks for supporting our students. Get some rest during spring break.

[00:56:48] Be safe. Thank you. Speaker number seven. Good evening, Madam Chair and members of the school board. My name is Nora Lesko and I am a social studies teacher and the HEA building rep at

Godwin High School. I'd like to speak to you tonight on the topic of pay for HCPS employees and more specifically about my concerns for the support staff and faculty who've been left out of the recent step raise and that was awarded to teachers, licensed instructional staff and bus drivers.

[00:57:22] I find it troubling that in the midst of the recent Women's History Month proclamation, women in support staff roles across the country were left out of the recent step raise and in light of the deserved recognition of HCPS students engaging in project-based learning on the topic of democracy, HCPS employees continue to be denied a democratic voice in our terms of employment.

[00:57:40] On March 13th, HCPS employees received news that all full-time HCPS staff would be rewarded a 4.8% pay raise as part of the budget process for the 2025 fiscal year, and I quote, as part of the budget proposal, licensed instructional staff and bus drivers would receive a step increase in addition to the across-the-board raise.

[00:57:58] I'm grateful that the school board has made the decision to acknowledge the critical role that all employees have in the success of our students and to make such an acknowledgement in a material, tangible way. However, I am greatly disappointed at the failure of the school board to also recognize the staff who formed the backbone of Henrico County Public Schools.

[00:58:15] The decision to leave out from this step raise instructional assistants, school security officers, front office staff and bookkeepers, nutrition staff, custodial and maintenance staff and supervisors and alternative education staff is severely misguided. It is no exaggeration to say that without these employees, our schools would have to shut down.

[00:58:32] To understand how unfair this decision is to thousands of Henrico employees, I'd like to paint a picture of the role of alternative education technician or in-school suspension coordinator. There are only about 23 people serving in this role in Henrico County. These school employees have for years been overlooked, neither receiving step raises nor position raises until only very recently.

[00:58:50] Alternative ed teachers work daily with students who demonstrate chronic and severe behavioral challenges, and they do this on their own without support. In some Henrico schools, teacher alternative placement policies allow teachers to send disruptive students to the alternative ed teacher in order for the gen ed teacher to be able to successfully instruct the rest of their students.

[00:59:06] But the role looks different from school to school and job duties and expectations are relatively obscure. Additionally, employees in this position sign letters of employment and so are not afforded the job security which signing a contract would provide. Despite these injustices, these teachers come in each and every day and they build relationships with our students.

[00:59:22] They also fill the role of psychiatrist and social worker, mother and father, career and guidance counselor, motivational speaker and administrator. These are the people who get our students to do their work when no one else can. And yet these crucial staff have been left out of your recent budget proposal, as of all the support staff who make up the foundation of our school system.

[00:59:38] Whether this was deliberate or not, or an oversight, really doesn't matter to me. But I will say HCPS faculty and staff will not be divided. We cheer for our colleagues when they are rewarded for their hard work, but we also see when our coworkers are seemingly forgotten or hung out to dry. On behalf of the HEA, we demand an approach to compensation and pay raises that is transparent, equitable, and that

rewards length of service, one that honors the critical role that all our staff have in the success of all of our students.

[01:00:02] For the record, I believe this is why HCPS employees must be afforded our right to collectively bargain, to ensure that all employees have a voice the seat at the table thank you thank you speaker number eight good evening good evening school board members community leaders parents students and stakeholders in the interest of students and families of henrico county public schools my name is l francis brown and i am the secretary of the

[01:00:38] henrico branch in acp i stand this evening in support of dr monica man's director of equity diversity and opportunity for Henrico schools. It has been my distinct pleasure to know of the great works of Dr. Monica Manns in her capacity as director of EDO.

[01:00:59] Dr. Manns was introduced to the Henrico branch in ACP during several community engagement events following her appointment in 2018. It has been my understanding Dr. Mann's position was created to address the widespread community outrage in response to a racially charged incident in a Henrico middle school, as well as the debacle involving a cartoon denoting racial inequity in a manner suitable for a student population. Since that time, Dr. Mann has worked tirelessly

[01:01:34] to respond to the growing social and demographic changes in Henrico by hosting social gatherings and establishing relationships among diverse communities. Over the last five years, the Henrico Branch NAACP has appreciated Dr. Mann's efforts to amplify the voices of the underserved communities and facilitate safe spaces where families and other stakeholders can be seen, their concerns heard, and everyone's perspective is respected.

[01:02:07] More recently, Dr. Mann has led dialogue to ensure equity, cultural responsiveness, and access to the wide range of activities and services provided to all students and their families, notwithstanding their school's magisterial district.

[01:02:24] It is apparent Dr. Mann's professionalism and interpersonal skills have proven beneficial to this district. The absence of her influence will have far-reaching impact when she exits her position in Henrico.

[01:02:40] On behalf of the Henrico branch NAACP, we contend HCPS must preserve the position of Director of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity. As Dr. Mann's service, authority and guidance is unmatched, the branch is concerned that this position might be diluted or at worst terminated.

[01:03:01] branch will continue to monitor the executive search for successor closely and at a later time make a formal request to participate in the final selection process hcps families community leaders as well as our branch has found confidence in dr mann's advocacy interest and investment in the diverse communities represented within our district we look forward to this level of confidence thank thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. And I do have copies for. Oh, wonderful. Our clerk here,

[01:03:36] Ms. Burton, will take those copies for us. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number nine. I'm waiting for the timer. Ms. Burton does all the things, so we're going to give her just a second.

[01:04:05] We appreciate her so much. Good evening. My name is Marlene Sherlock, and my family lives in the Fairfield Districts. We're zoned for Brooklyn schools and attend high school in the Three CHOP district. Wasn't sure what I was going to talk about tonight, but thought I'd say a few words on what has

recently been a hot topic in your written public forum comments, which is collective bargaining for teachers and staff. Most were merely generic or parroted comments on their support. I stand here this evening as a parent, taxpayer, and longtime public employee myself

[01:04:39] to say I am against public servant unions or bargaining, and it's not just me. Studies are beginning to show that districts or divisions with collective bargaining have higher costs, but no better and sometimes even worse outcomes for students. Think about if you really want to saddle our county with paying more and getting less. Our own county chairman of the Board of Supervisors has called you out on the absolutely stark contrast in academic performance between East and West End schools and has asked you to come up with a solution using the funds

[01:05:16] they already provide you. Another supervisor flagged the additional hundreds of millions of dollars over the past decade they've sent your way. So don't think it'll be easy to ask for more money in the future because of some collective bargaining agreement you voluntarily might bring on yourselves. That said, I'll stand here and tell you till I'm blue or red in the face and that should cover the Democrats and the Republicans and hence my purple shirt tonight. Our teachers need help. When in last year's school climate survey, over 85 percent of Henrico teachers said they were

[01:05:54] burned out, you need to listen. They're the ones constantly told to do more with less. There's more demand from the general assembly and central office, yet less support from administration, and yes, us parents too. They're not doctors or nurses or behavioral therapists. They're supposed to be teachers of math and science and English, and the climate in their classroom sometimes borders on barely controlled chaos because you don't give them many real tools to ensure even basic decorum. When they need terms like runners, pullers, and throwers, we're doing

[01:06:30] something wrong. So as you roll into reviewing the student code of conduct, take a good hard look at what you're doing. If you can't or won't enforce something like the dress code, don't bother. In my last few seconds, I'll take a moment to give a shout out to the Tucker JROTC cadets representing our county, state, and the entire southeast region in the Marine Corps National Drill Championships on April 10th. Go Tigers. Oorah. Thank you. That concludes our public forum.

[01:07:11] The next item on the agenda is the approval of consent items. Are there any requests from school board members that an item be separated for discussion and or individual action? Hearing none. Is there a motion? I move that the school board accept, adopt, approve, and or award items 9.01 through 9.07 on the consent agenda as presented. Moved by Ms. Kinsella. Is there a second?

[01:07:43] Second. Seconded by Mr. Young. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The motion carries and the consent agenda for items 9.01 through 9.07 have been approved. The next item on the agenda is unfinished business.

[01:08:02] Colleagues, do you have any unfinished business this evening? Hearing none, the next item on the agenda is new business, and we are going to look at some committee reports.

[01:08:18] So first up on our committee report is Ms. Kinsella. - Thank you so much, Vice Chair Shea. It's my pleasure to bring an update tonight about the Multilingual Advisory Committee. We last met on March 20th.

[01:08:36] The exercise that we spent time doing, I don't know if you've seen it in the binder, online on social media, the division has been sharing quite a bit about formulating our next strategic plan. We are

almost to destination 2025.

[01:08:53] So the multilingual family committee spent the entire meeting talking about core values and what was important to the group this for the next strategic plan i'll keep it simple by just summing up saying our next meeting is going to be may 22nd 2024 and then next it's my pleasure to bring you an update from our business advisory committee this committee is composed of hcps staff stakeholders and business

[01:09:25] partners we also did the strategic plan exercise led by dr hinton and then we discussed summer camps for this summer for our students. We discussed the mega career sale, which was just this week on March 26th. And let me just highlight that event with some numbers. It was called a career mega sale. There were 250 adults from the public that attended, 152 high school students,

[01:10:00] 100 plus business people, 25 members of our CTE team, four HCPS directors supported the event, and two school board members showed up for support. The focus of the event was to offer a place for the community to come and learn about local businesses who are actually hiring and to apply for jobs.

[01:10:22] Not only were community members in attendance, but each high school brought seniors who are also looking for employment after graduation or for part-time work while they're in college. After this event, the team sent out a business survey.

[01:10:38] 100% of the businesses said the event was helpful or very helpful. At least 88% said they met several potential employees with 13% saying they met 10 or more people they wanted to hire.

[01:10:54] And then the other event we discussed is Signing Day. Signing Day is going to be April the 24th, 2024. And then our next meeting date will be April 9th, 2024.

[01:11:09] Madam Vice Chair, that's all I have. - Thank you, Ms. Kinsella. Next up we have Mr. Young. - Thank you, Madam Vice Chair. The Equity and Diversity Committee also went through strategic planning as well this week.

[01:11:25] Well, I'm sorry, a couple of weeks ago. But the main focus of the Equity and Diversity of Asbury Committee is focusing on enhancing equitable access for underrepresented students gifted education programs and specialty centers working to ensure fair opportunities for all learners to thrive and excel and i'm pleased to say that they will be here in a couple months to present board recommendations to all of us i have nothing else madam vice chair thank you mr young and not to leave out mr irving yep thank you madam vice chair um i i'm reporting back on the henrico education foundation i i am honored to be able to get to take place uh take part in their

[01:12:04] meetings. We got to meet at the wonderful new Hermitage Age Center. I just have to say that it is truly awesome to have a public space like that that is so beautiful and welcoming and I think just an amazing place for our students. We got to hear from the culinary arts instructor there about the hydroponic horticulture grant, project grant that she received and the wonderful things that they're doing with that to grow hydroponic fruits and veggies in the building. Then we got to engage in the strategic planning process with the strategic plan coming due in 2025

[01:12:40] and just kind of planning out our thoughts of what members of the Henrico Education Foundation thought we should be focusing on for the future. I report that our next meeting is going to be May 16th. It's going to be an initial budget presentation. It's going to be at Libby Mill Library. And then we

also have the Henrico Education Foundation's fourth annual excellence and career celebration on April 11th, and I'm sure that'll be a wonderful event.

[01:13:10] Thank you so much. And just to piggyback on, all three of my colleagues this evening brought up the strategic plan, and so I'm going to off the cuff just hum a bar about that. We're coming to the end of our Destination 2025 strategic plan, and we are working on launching our new strategic plan. A really important part of that is stakeholder feedback, and so as you've heard a lot of our committees have been engaging in the preliminary work for this but it's also so important to have the voice of our

[01:13:44] current students and our parents and our staff members in this strategic plan it truly drives the direction of our division you'll notice during our work sessions that the presentations that staff make that we really dive into they all loop back to our strategic plan and the direction for our division.

[01:14:07] Ms. Kinsella and I actually served on helping develop the current strategic plan before we were even board members, but if you want your voice heard and we want your voice heard, there's an application out right now to serve on the steering committee for the new strategic plan, as well as there will be a lot of subcommittees that will help inform the steering committee. So there's a lot of opportunity for stakeholder feedback. That's why we put out our climate survey about a month earlier this year than we typically did, because we wanted to use

[01:14:43] that feedback in the creation of our new strategic plan as well. So just all of our stakeholders, I encourage you to look for that link that has been sent out in our family communications. But But being a part of the strategic plan really is being a part of the direction of Henrico County Public Schools.

[01:15:05] And I'll stop there. Anything else to add, colleagues, before we wrap? All right. The last item on the agenda is the announcement of meeting dates. The school board's next meetings will be on Thursday, April 18, 2024, with a work session at 3:00 PM, a public hearing to solicit input related to a resolution on the conveyance of surplus real property at 7850 Carousel Lane at 6:00 PM, and a monthly meeting at 6:30 PM.

[01:15:40] Meeting times may be adjusted as needed. Have a safe and wonderful spring break. That's from Ms. Kinsella and all of us. And this meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank you so much.



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