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Henrico County School Board Work Session, Thursday, April 18, 2024

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[00:00:11] - Good afternoon. We have a robust and enriching agenda ahead of us today. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell, the leadership team, and all individuals involved in the preparation for today's work session.

[00:00:28] Colleagues, I'm looking forward to collaborating and learning and making meaningful progress together. The first item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Is there a motion? - I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting.

[00:00:44] - Thank you, is there a second? - Second. - All in favor say aye. - Aye. - Any opposed? The agenda is approved. The next item on the agenda is closed session. Is there a motion to go into closed session?

[00:01:04] - I move that the school board go into closed session for the discussion of matters covered under items A1 and A-7 of section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended pertaining to the assignment, appointment, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific school board employees,

[00:01:30] and the consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation of a civil nature involving Henrico County Public Schools, staff, and students pursuant to Section 2.2-3711A7 of the Code of Virginia

because consultation in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating and litigating position of the school board.

[00:01:55] Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. Is there a second? Second. All in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. We will now go into closed session. We will reconvene the work session at the conclusion of our closed meeting.

[00:02:15] All right. We have returned. We will now certify closed session. Is there a motion to certify closed session? I move that the school board, certified by a recorded vote, that to the best of each school board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

[00:02:46] Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Is there a second? Second. All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Closed session has been certified. Madam Superintendent. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board, guests. Good afternoon. Our first item is an opportunity to review the fiscal year 2025 annual financial plan. We've reached an outstanding milestone in the budget process. I think it seems like just moments ago, but January. We were talking about the budget for the first time. It's traveled a number of miles, made great progress

[00:03:24] between both the Board of Supervisors, the school board, and tremendous advocacy for our employees. I would like to recognize Brandon Hinton, who's joined us from general government. Mr. Wack will take us through a quick review of where we are as we're seeking final approval of the budget at our monthly meeting.

[00:03:42] Thank you, Dr. Gashwell. Good afternoon, Madam Chair and board members. We have now reached the conclusion of the fiscal year 2025 budget process following the initial approval of the superintendent's recommended budget and last week's adoption of the countywide budget by the Board of Supervisors. Briefly, the budget that is now before the school board includes all the initiatives that were incorporated into the superintendent's recommended budget that you approved February 22nd following a public hearing.

[00:04:08] With last year's adoption of the countywide fiscal year 2025 budget, about \$29 million was added across all of our operating funds to provide salary increases for our employees and cover first year implementation of Henrico Cares as well as electricity rate increases that had compounded in recent years.

[00:04:24] When focusing on our total general fund budget, it is increasing by about \$53.7 million compared to the current year, supported by approximately \$28.8 million in additional state revenue and \$24.9 million more in local funds. Thanks to your ongoing advocacy, additional funds are being provided to support enhanced planning time at our elementary schools.

[00:04:46] The Board of Supervisors generously set aside approximately \$4.54 million, part of which will be used to add 10 pre-K teachers to provide art, music, and physical education instruction. HCPS will also add 73 full-time positions, which will provide classroom support and flexibility for master scheduling and extended planning, among other benefits, to students and staff.

[00:05:08] In highlighting some of the major additions to our general fund budget in fiscal year 2025, we can note the budget provides for first-year implementation of Henrico Cares, supporting mental health

and wellness through the addition of five school counseling positions and several wraparound supports for students, staff, and families.

[00:05:27] We are also adding a new 10th Opportunity School next year at Highland Springs Elementary. Ten new positions are being included next school year for expanded opportunities at our ACE centers. We are adding four positions at the Center for Innovation at John Rolfe Middle School.

[00:05:45] And recurring funding is being included in our general fund budget for over 200 positions. And that includes school security officers, English language learner teachers, reading specialists, school counselors, and other positions. We also have several significant items that support our strategic goal related to recruiting, retaining, and rewarding our employees.

[00:06:04] We are grateful for the region-leading 4.8% wage increase for all returning HCPS employees. And with the extra step being granted to our licensed professional instructional staff, the majority of our employees will be seeing a 7.2% raise. Our starting pay for bus drivers is increasing to \$25 per hour in July, and that's higher than our neighboring school divisions.

[00:06:26] Our extended responsibility pay, including opportunity school stipends, is increasing by 7.2%. And the budget for employee health benefits is increasing, with the employer picking up all the increases for calendar year 2024. The governor made a number of line-item budget vetoes to the fiscal year 2025 conference budget approved by the House and the Senate.

[00:06:48] In order to provide some context for the board, we can note that the fiscal year 2025 budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors is supported by \$382.75 million in state aid for education, while the governor's initial budget proposal would provide about \$5.15 million more in state aid than that.

[00:07:05] And the conference budget approved by the General Assembly would provide \$25.14 million more than our adopted budget. We have seen a special session on the state budget has been scheduled for May 13th and a vote on May 15th.

[00:07:21] Once the state budget is finalized, we'll need the Virginia Department of Education to revisit how much state aid will be due to each school division. That will likely land somewhere between the governor's initial proposal and the conference budget. In summary, the fiscal year 2025 adopted budget reflects the following notable changes from the current year.

[00:07:40] Our general fund budget is increasing by about \$53.7 million, or 8.3%, compared to fiscal year 2024 adopted, and that includes funding for salary increases for teachers and staff. Our debt service budget, associated with previously approved capital project debt, is increasing by 12.9%.

[00:07:57] The school nutrition fund is increasing by about 19.6%, and that's primarily due to the planned use of accumulated reserves. And our state and federal special revenue funds are decreasing by 2.6%, with many positions shifting from our ESSER grants to the general fund.

[00:08:14] Overall, the operating budget from all funds is growing by about 7.7%. These two pie charts illustrate the major revenue categories of our general fund budget. We can see that the state share is remaining about the same next year at 54.3%, with local funds making up nearly all of the rest of our revenues.

[00:08:32] And these pie charts illustrate the major spending categories of our general fund budget. And we can see that instruction remains the lion's share of our expenditures budget at about 75% in fiscal year

2025. That concludes an overview of the fiscal year 2025 adopted budget, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

[00:08:54] Thank you, Mr. Wacken, your team for their work. Also, a big thank you, Mr. Hinton, for your team and all the work. Another thank you to our partners at Henrico County Government of their commitment to education in our communities.

[00:09:13] With the approved budget, we are poised for major improvements and to move forward with innovation. So to continue this conversation, I'm going to commence to my left with Mr. Irving for any questions or comments.

[00:09:31] yeah so i i don't have any questions but i would just again like to fake our colleagues on the board of supervisors and the general government for you know their commitment to our our school system i think it's the best thing that henrico does and why so many people live here um and i look forward to a continued partnership moving forward and just thank everybody for their time thank you mr young yeah no questions today um mr wack thank you for your team and your time and getting this done and great job thank you sir mrs shea i have no questions there we go no questions

[00:10:06] um though i do want to just go back to slide number three briefly and highlight this because this is real exciting and since the last time we talked about the budget which is this additional investment with the partnership with the board of supervisors to expand planning in the master's schedule for elementary school. This is a game changer when we look at how we're making additional investments to really meet the needs of our staff, but also we know then that pay us off dividends with our students. And so for me, this is definitely like a headliner slide about being able to expand

[00:10:45] elementary planning time. It's such a big win for our elementary staff. And so thank you. And thank to the uh our counterparts on the other side for um working together to make this happen thank you mrs shea mrs kinsella um yes really more of a comment and a question i'll just how uh chime in and support what mrs shea said um this board we often have to prioritize the fact that uh priorities over here for our employees and our students and money does not grow on trees though i wish it did

[00:11:21] So this elementary planning really is a game changer, and it doesn't just provide for it, it expands for it, so I want to highlight that. And then I want to ask the question, because folks out in the public will realize that yesterday the budget wasn't signed off on, that in May there's more coming, right, with the conference budget, but that doesn't mean more money for Henrico Schools, correct?

[00:11:48] because this will be a question that Dr. Cashwell and board members receive. This does not mean that there will be more money and additional items added, or does it? So once, as I mentioned at the slide, we still need to see where the state budget lands.

[00:12:05] It may end up providing more state aid than is already included in our adopted budget, so that could lead to an amendment in the future, but by default, no, nothing would be changing. We are fortunate in that our general government counterparts have established our budget with enough local funds and the confidence level that the state aid is going to be there where we can finalize things, where the General Assembly, again, is meeting again on May 13th.

[00:12:30] And they're almost starting from scratch. So hopefully it'll end up to the good for us. Great. So we could do even better. But if the budget doesn't land on the higher side, we are fine because of our local aid. Correct. Correct. Yes. I just want to make sure my understanding is correct.

[00:12:46] And for those listening or who may watch this meeting back. And then if you could just answer one thing, we often on the school side and with our government counterparts throughout the year consider ourselves to be responsive and nimble in regrading positions.

[00:13:07] That can be done throughout the year, correct? Because we've done quite a bit of that in the past three to four years, have we not? We have. What we importantly call desk audit process, where we would look at our individual job classifications and revisit them to make sure they're current with the market.

[00:13:27] For example, the bus driver classification received two upgrades leading into this next July. That will be a third upgrade over the course of years, and our starting pay will be at \$25, where it was only \$19 an hour as recently as at the end of February.

[00:13:45] Well, I appreciate you highlighting the desk audit because the bus driver increases were because of the economic adjustment, right? And then the 7.2 that was not across the board, can you just highlight why that was?

[00:14:01] Since the board has received a lot of feedback about that, that was for critical shortage areas, correct? Yes, so in terms of the Unified Pay Plan, on the general government side, public safety employees received an additional step that other general government employees did not.

[00:14:18] And on the school side, the plan was to target additional compensation funding towards our licensed instructional staff. Thank you so much for the clarity. Madam Chair, that's all I have. Thank you. And again, I'll close with a great big thank you to all the stakeholders involved in making this happen.

[00:14:39] this is a significant win. It's also a triumph of, I would say, collaboration. It's a testament to working together to make something happen. And whether we saw it ahead of time or not, it all came together. And taking a look at extended or additional planning time came from educators and staff and it's important to us that we continue to listen learn and make

[00:15:18] impossible possible and that that happened with this budget so very grateful thank you again Dr. Cashwell yes thank you Mr. Wack and again this item will be on our monthly meeting agenda for your approval. I echo the same gratitude and thanks to budget teams, both the general government and school side, and both boards. I want to thank you for your continued investment in Henrico County Public Schools. All right, the next item we have is an opportunity to once more

[00:15:52] review our proposed 2025-2026 school calendar. We've reviewed this previously. We're seeking final approval again at our monthly meeting just wanted to review it one more time again so that there's no confusion this is not for the next school year but the 2025-26 school year calendar mrs coy correct good afternoon chair atkins dr cashwell and members of the board as you heard today we are requesting your approval of the 25 26 calendar since your first review in march we have continued calibrating with our regional counterparts we have also reviewed the

[00:16:30] proposal again through the lens of the VHSL calendar their 2526 calendar has since been finalized as well and the two do not create any unforeseen issues I'll just note it's helpful that we have them both now so that we can calibrate well in advance for any any VHSL activities so the proposal does not contain any substantive changes uh since that first review and we're seeking your approval this afternoon all right thank you mrs coy i will start with mr young for comments

[00:17:08] no comments but i did want to ask about the staggered start is that still a is that still a go as we discussed last time the proposal was for a staggered start conversation to continue we had that proposal this past year from the committee that was the first time we laid out a specific proposal for hcps we got good intel but thought that we needed additional conversation particularly with our teachers about how that plays out in schools and classrooms so that is not part of the 2526 proposal but we anticipate doing additional conversations if that's the will

[00:17:45] of the board to continue exploring it okay no further questions thank you mr young mrs shea no really specific comments on this calendar um i think we covered it all last time um i i do to echo what ms kansas said last time i do really appreciate the specificity for our uh teacher work days as to what's uh in personal professional learning and what has uh flexibility with the with our work days um and i don't know if we've gone back and added that to the pdfs of the last

[00:18:21] calendars i didn't get a chance to pull them all up we have yes oh you're so great miss coy ahead of me well you're already making my dreams come true before i ask so that's all for me thank you mrs shea mrs kinsella i'll just um echo what mrs shea uh supported that i've already supported and just being responsive to our employees that actually asked for some uh clarity around what was professional learning day in person in their building versus which days um would they would have choice whether to be in the building or at home and um even though this is public facing i

[00:18:59] know we don't normally go into that much detail um i really do appreciate it being here so that teachers or employees always know where to look so thank you very much you're welcome thank you mrs kinsella mr irving i had no questions because mr young beat me to my question about the staggered start time uh that's good to know uh hopefully we continue with those conversations and yeah this looks good to me thank you so much dr cashwell thank you sorry uh next item is an

[00:19:34] opportunity to review a proposed new policy this is p7-09-008 english learners it was developed by staff and the policy committee to create a single concise and transparent policy and regulation on the identification and services for ELL students in our school system and it of course uses the state's definition of English language learners aligns with state and federal law and of course reflects our current practices and then you can see from the information in board docs there is a corresponding regulation proposed as part of this and attached as reference and Mrs. Coy is

[00:20:13] Happy to answer any questions you may have. And again, we'd be seeking your approval at our June 6th meeting, given the length of time policies are out for public comment. Mrs. Coy? Nothing further. Oh, yeah. She's here to answer questions. I should say Madam Chair, rather.

[00:20:29] No worries. At this time, we will commence to my right with Mrs. Kinsella. At this time, I just want to thank the policy committee on which Marcy and I, Mrs. Shea and I serve that we've spent quite a bit of time creating this policy and also sitting on the Multilingual Family Committee. I'm just grateful that this new policy exists. Are there any new

[00:21:02] ways in which we're going to try to share this out with families so that they realize it's out there for public comment before board approval? Any new ways outside of being online, perhaps ParentSquare, the binder, things of that nature, anything different? Is it going to be at the Welcome Center for Families? We could certainly explore that. Yeah, we'll look into that. Okay, thank you. Madam Chair, that's all I have. Thank you. Mrs. Shea. No, I just, I appreciate,

[00:21:36] I had the privilege of watching this policy be created and evolved, but I appreciate, particularly in the regulation piece of the policy, how it really lists a lot of our resources there for families that they may not be aware of.

[00:21:57] It has information about registration and the Welcome Center and all of those things. And so a well-written regulation to go along with the policy here just is great. So thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Mr. Irving.

[00:22:14] I have no questions, but I do think this is a win for our English learner families. And I'm proud of the work that we're doing on it. Thank you. And Mr. Young. No questions. Thank you so much and the team for the policy.

[00:22:29] also thank you to Mrs. Shea and Mrs. Kinsella and all the stakeholders that are a part of that committee. As I looked at this policy, I started thinking about the social determinants of health. And for those that may not be familiar with that, there's five sort of domains or categories.

[00:22:52] They are economic stability, health care access, social and community context, environment, and education access and quality. And education is a big component. And the longer I read through this policy, it spoke to me about equity.

[00:23:12] And, you know, a couple of years ago, I introduced and or asked for consideration for an education equity policy. Last month, I also reintroduced it mid-March to my colleagues to take a look at education policy, education equity.

[00:23:39] And so this continues to remind me of that. Dr. Cashwell and colleagues, I'm going to ask again to take a look at exploring education equity. This is a wonderful example and reminder of how we get to equity in education.

[00:24:01] I look forward to continued discussion on entertaining any potential future policies related to educational equity. I'll look to you and the board for further direction there. Thank you so much. Thank you. All right. Thank you.

[00:24:17] The next item we have is an opportunity to review our annual special education Title 6B plan for 2024-25. You may recall that each year we submit to the State Board of Education our plan for Part B flow-through.

[00:24:36] It's a mouthful. Boy, you're going to have a fun presentation through applications to serve our children with disabilities within our jurisdiction. And so we are bringing that plan forward for your information now at our monthly meeting. And I mean at our work session and at our monthly meeting would, of course, be seeking your approval of those plans.

[00:24:53] so i will now turn it over to our presenters okay thank you good afternoon i'm chair atkins members of the board and dr cashwell my name is leslie hughes and i'm the chief learning officer for henrico county public schools today i'm pleased to introduce dr katie smith who will share the henrico county public schools annual plan for the use of special education federal funds known as title 6b i'll turn it over to katie thank you special education services for students with disabilities are funded through three different funding streams. We receive federal funds in the form of the Title VI B grants as well as state and local

[00:25:32] dollars. And so the majority of the funding to support students is funded through local funding sources only and the 17% of the total funds which we're here to discuss today are those specifically which come from this federal grant. Title VI B grant is provided in two separate allocations. The The 6/11 funds are intended to support school-aged children.

[00:25:57] Since the state has not provided allocations for the 24/25 school year, the plan that we will provide to the Virginia Department of Education and we are outlining today reflects level funding from the 23/24 school year. The majority of grant funds that we receive will be used to provide salary and benefits for current employees.

[00:26:14] These positions include 84 special education teachers, 52 instructional assistants, additionally Finally, 26 elementary department chair stipends, two speech-language pathologists, one BLISS teacher, four adapted PE teachers, and two secondary compliance coordinators are also paid out of the salary and grants line.

[00:26:34] There are no new positions being funded for the 24-25 school year. All of the positions that I just mentioned will fund existing positions. We do withhold a portion of grant funds to support contract services. Specifically, we use grant funds to pay for contractive-related service providers, such as speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and nursing services across the district and to support additional independent approved educational evaluations.

[00:27:02] Another portion of grant funds are used to purchase materials and supplies such as educational assessments or curriculum resources to support specially designed instruction. The materials and supplies line item also provides a large portion of our assistive technology and communications devices for students who require those services.

[00:27:20] The other charges category that you see on the screen reflects the administrative costs which are associated with the grant. Each year, our finance department receives a formula which is provided by the state to determine the amount of administrative costs which can be charged to the grant for reimbursement. The 619 portion of the federal grant is specifically allocated to support our early childhood special education programs.

[00:27:43] As in the school age grant, the majority of funds are used to provide salary and benefits for three early childhood special education teachers. We do allocate a small portion of the Title 6B-619 grant funds for materials and supplies to support early childhood special education programming, and these funds help support a curriculum and instructional materials for next year. Three additional requirements of the annual plan include proportionate set-aside, maintenance of effort, and local and regional jails. All school districts are required to keep account of those students with disabilities who are parentally placed in private schools or who are homeschooled. School divisions are required to set aside funding

[00:28:22] based on a formula provided by the Virginia Department of Education for individualized service plans for those students who choose to access those services. These plans can provide up to 36 hours of speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or other related services per year. Additionally, up to four hours of consultation can be provided annually between the case manager and school personnel or case manager and parent maintenance of effort requires school divisions to spend at least the same amount of state and local funds for the current school year on the delivery of special education services that were spent the previous year as you can see henrico will spend a combined amount of fourteen thousand twenty eight dollars on students with

[00:29:01] disabilities for the 24 25 school year in addition in July of 2023 we renewed our memorandum of understanding with the county sheriff to provide funding to support one special education teacher for people accessing educational services while detained thank you for your time and attention this afternoon as we discuss the plan for using the title 6b federal grant funds i'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time well firstly i did not get the memo on the wardrobe

[00:29:34] we've heard that a lot today not planned it looks great i will start to my right with Mrs. Shea thanks so much thanks for y'all's work on this and i know obviously it goes without saying but this is not comprehensive of all of the work that your department does it's just very specific to these grant funds yes um just one question about contract services um you shared that these are for contract services for things like speech and OT and those sorts of things um is there a delineation as to why we're using contract services versus some of our in-house

[00:30:12] employees? Is it staffing? Is it? So it can be a combination of both. So two parts. One, yes, for positions that we can't fill in-house, we do contract positions to fill those vacancies, but then also those same funds are used when we may have a student that may be a parentally placed student in a private school, and we may be contracting a provider to go to that school versus taking a provider from our school and providing services or leaving a Henrico school to go to a private school and provide services there. So it works both ways. Thank you. That's

[00:30:44] all. You're welcome. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Mrs. Kinsella. Again, I'm going to echo Mrs. Shea's remarks because filling out the grants is exhausting and I'm very detail-oriented and And I appreciate it.

[00:31:03] I'm just going to highlight, and if my colleague Mr. Irving wants to follow up, that this was presented to the Special Education Advisory Committee recently. So I thank you for that, so that information is not only being shared here with the board, but it's also being shared back with the public, specifically that very important committee.

[00:31:26] Just thank you both for all the work that you do supporting our students. That's all, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella, and thank you for the segue, Mr. Irving. As Ms. Kinsella highlighted, we did receive this presentation during our SEAC meeting, and it was great and provided a lot of information that I wasn't aware of coming into it, and I just thank you all for the work that you do, and that's all.

[00:31:52] Thank you. Mr. Young? No questions, but definitely thank you, Dr. Smith, Dr. Hughes, for the presentation. Thank you. Thank you. know that there is always room for improvement with all abilities, I would like to say. And one question I had was around how do we or what mechanisms do we use for ongoing review of our plan? Oh, for the specifically for the federal funds? Yeah. So we work or I work, I shouldn't

[00:32:26] say it's a we, it's an I. I work really closely with John Wack's team to make sure that we are keeping track we have a very detailed process where we keep track to the by the 15-minute increment of students we serve in our parentally placed schools so we can make sure requesting reimbursement members of his team and myself we talk monthly sometimes weekly in terms of the reimbursement for funds to make sure that they're going exactly where we said that they would go we work with HR as well to make sure when we onboard new positions that the people are aware and then the principals also signed the certification forms that 100 of the person's time was actually spent serving students with disabilities so there's a lot there's a lot of

[00:33:06] tracking that goes involved to make sure that how we present the plan to the state is exactly how it's carried out both because it's what's best for kids but also for auditing purposes that we might have thank you for sharing that it's an intense process i am summing it up in one sentence but i I recognize the effort, and I wanted an opportunity for you to share that effort as well.

[00:33:29] Another ask that I have is if you could give a small overview of your team. Sure. Centrally, so myself and then I call her my right arm, knee, elbow, everything, Assistant Director Tiffany Young.

[00:33:46] She's fantastic. From there, we have a team of specialists that work directly to support everything from reading needs to each one of our schools in addition to home instruction that's also something that's under my purview that sometimes people don't recognize we have a specialist that oversees home instruction and then we have coordinators both our specialists and our coordinators all participate in meetings to help parents and students and schools as well and that pretty much sums up the group and you were able to sum it up just as quickly but it

[00:34:19] certainly doesn't speak to the volume of work or effort and i think you and your team under the leadership or with the leadership i should say of of dr hughes the magnitude of it is unreal thank you and it's definitely with her leadership absolutely so thank you so much for the presentation dr cashwell thank you thank you both for the presentation and again for the board i I will be seeking your approval of this annual plan at our monthly meeting this evening.

[00:34:49] The next item we're bringing forth for your review and discussion is our proposed 2024-2025 Code of Student Conduct. You'll recall that this comes forth annually for review, edits are responsive to any state or federal changes, anything regulatory, internal needs to change the code based on implementation challenges, and so on.

[00:35:12] Dr. Will Noel is going to take us through that presentation, and then we'll have an opportunity to engage in any questions and discussion. This is not something for which we're seeking your approval at this meeting or next. We'll be looking for a June approval to take this into effect for the next school year, and again would welcome any discussion related to the proposed changes.

[00:35:35] A tremendous amount of work goes into this effort annually, as well as the implementation of the code all year long and supporting our schools with that. And so Dr. Noel is an outstanding resource to us in our school division, certainly a subject matter expert.

[00:35:50] So I will turn it over to him now for our annual review of the changes that have been proposed and why they're being proposed. - Thank you. Madam Chairman, members of the board, Dr. Cashwell, this afternoon I'll be sharing with you the first reading of the proposed changes to the 2024-2025 Code of Student Conduct.

[00:36:09] Before we get into the actual proposed changes, I would like to share some annual considerations. Each year we consider the following: changes to the state and federal guidelines, implementation challenges, regional alignment, and new factors such as generative AI affecting the educational environment.

[00:36:29] In the red line version of the 2024-2025 Code of Student Conduct, you will find all proposed changes. For this presentation, you will hear about the more substantive proposals. The following proposals changes for the next year's code are related to the four substantive topics: student activities contract, technology and internet, alternative placement of students, and self-defense definition.

[00:36:56] Although there are no proposed changes to cell phones, it's been a hot topic of conversation with various groups of HCPS stakeholders. Each year we listen to the voices of the students, staff, and parents, guardians, including the Student Advisory Committee, Teacher Advisory Committee, and Policy Committee as we prepare for changes to the upcoming code.

[00:37:17] This year was no different, and over the last few months, I've been discussing the Code of Student Conduct with various advisory committees to ensure their perspectives are reflected in today's presentation. The first proposed change is to the student activities contract.

[00:37:32] To be aligned with HCPS policy with our regional partners related to VHSL, the following proposals will be made. Currently, the code states, I understand if I use, possess alcohol, tobacco products, and or drugs as defined in the Henrico County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct on or off school property, the penalty for use or possession will affect my participation in student activities as follows.

[00:37:59] We propose removing off school property from the code. The Code of Student Conduct does not have jurisdiction if a student consumes alcohol or smokes a vape at home or in the community. Because of that, the proposal is to add the following phrase, or at off-campus school-sponsored activity.

[00:38:20] In an effort to make this less punitive and more disciplined, the proposal is to change the word penalty to consequence. The next proposed changes to the student activities contract are related to consequences for students' first, second, and third violation of this contract.

[00:38:38] The contract currently reads as follows. Again, to be aligned with our regional partners regarding VHSL consequences, you can see the proposed changes here. Lastly, the contract states, I may be required to complete the alcohol and drug awareness intervention program.

[00:38:59] The proposal is to change that sentence to, I am mandated to complete the alcohol and drug awareness intervention program before I'm eligible to return to VHSL activities. The next change is related to technology and the internet. This proposed change has to do with the actual title.

[00:39:18] We propose changing it from technology and the internet to student acceptable use of technology. A great deal of thought and collaboration went into the proposed changes in this section. For time's sake, proposed changes in this section can be reviewed on pages 11 through 15 in the red line version of the 2425 Code of Student Conduct.

[00:39:38] Up next, alternative placement of students. The proposal is to add the following language to the Code of Student Conduct and to the Code of Student Conduct's acknowledgement page. Students who returned to HCPS from an expulsion are not guaranteed to return to their comprehensive zone school, the superintendent/designee will determine appropriate school placement.

[00:40:01] Placement factors will include the needs of the returning student and of the overall community impacted by the offense, including victims. The last proposed change to the 24/25 Code of Student Conduct has to do with the definition of self-defense.

[00:40:16] In discipline hearings, I sometimes hear parents or guardians say, my child was simply defending themselves when their actions did not meet the model guidance definition of self-defense. Because of that, the proposal is to add the following definition. Self-defense, any person claiming self-defense must A, be without fault in provoking or bringing on the fight or incident.

[00:40:37] B, have reasonably feared under the circumstances as existed at the time that there was imminent risk or physical harm. And C, have used no more force than reasonably necessary to prevent the threatened. In addition, self-defense does not constitute a valid defense against possession of a use or weapon on school property at school-sponsored activities.

[00:41:02] That concludes this year's proposed changes. However, we believe it is important to mention the following regarding current cell phone policy. Our policy has been carefully crafted and received affirmation from various stakeholder groups. Current guidelines for cell phone usage in schools are comprehensive and designed to ensure the conducive learning environment.

[00:41:23] They outline clear guidelines for when and how cell phones can be used during school hours. We've heard advocacy on both sides. Our current cell phone policy for elementary school students is cell phones are required to be out of visible sight, silenced, or in airplane mode during scheduled class time unless used for instructional purposes with the teacher's permission.

[00:41:44] When students are attending instructionally related school activities, cell phones and electronic devices should not be used. When students are released from these sessions, cell phone and electronic device usage is allowed. And lastly, cell phones and electronic devices may be used when students are attending non-instructional after-school activities events as long as the cell phone or electronic device is not distracting.

[00:42:10] Similarly, for high school students, our policy says, in accordance with Henrico County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct Policy, the school division will strictly enforce a ban on cell phone usage during scheduled class time. Cell phones are required to be out of visible sight, silenced, or in airplane mode during scheduled class time.

[00:42:32] We are committed to assisting and supporting schools with consistently implementing the cell phone policy within the Code of Student Conduct. Here are a couple of examples of our efforts for effective implementation. Our support extends to sharing guidance, resources, and best practices from within HCPS and professional learning for school leaders and consistent implementation of current range of consequences via the Day of Positive School Climate and Outreach.

[00:42:58] Next, we will look at some of the results from the 2022-2023 HCPS survey. Survey data on the Code of Student Conduct versus implementation shows a challenge with consistent implementation. 89% of students know what will happen if they break a rule.

[00:43:17] 87% of families report that their school, their student school, talks to them about the consequences of breaking rules. And 61% of staff agree that rules for behavior are applied consistently. Updating documents, providing training for administrators, and holding school assemblies can all contribute to ensuring clarity and consistency in implementing the Code of Student Conduct across schools.

[00:43:40] These measures can help align everyone's understanding and approach to behavioral expectations, hopefully leading to a more cohesive and effective implementation. Again, board members, I provided a red-lined version of the complete 24-25 code for you to review at your leisure.

[00:43:55] These proposed changes were the topic of conversations when I met with the different school-related committees. Upon final approval by the board, these changes will be shared with administrators at the annual day of positive school climbing outreach and with students at school assemblies. And before I

close, we will have the Code of Student Conduct available online, translated into the five most common languages.

[00:44:17] Other languages will be made available upon request, and hard copies of the Code of Student Conduct will be provided at all of our comprehensive schools and alternative schools. Thank you, and I will answer any questions that you may have. Thank you, Dr. Noel, for sharing this presentation. Before turning the floor over to my colleagues, I'd like to start with if you could just give a high-level overview of your office, of the disciplinary office and the number of resources within that office.

[00:44:51] Well, right now it's my administrative assistant, Ms. Cannon, and my senior coordinator of school conduct. There were three-person offices. Thank you. I think it's important just so that we all understand the resources that you have within your office to do this incredible work.

[00:45:17] Thank you. I will start with Mrs. Kinsella. Thank you, Chair Atkins. I'm going to follow up right away on your question to Dr. Noel about resources in his office. Dr. Noel, I guess to further clarify, your office would sound understaffed.

[00:45:38] However, how should I say this? Throughout, across the division, all of our leadership teams are working together to support PBIS, for example, behavior in our schools, student code of conduct.

[00:45:58] Or correct me if I'm wrong. Or do you feel like you're on an island with an office of three? I just want to clarify what it looks like across the division before it comes to your office. Well, we work closely with Dr. Rucker's staff and PBIS, so no, we're not on an island.

[00:46:17] I think that we do well with collaboration. You know, unfortunately, I don't know if you remember, we lost my secretary due to COVID. And right now, we had a four-person team, now down to three. But we do, and we rely on each other at central office to make the work.

[00:46:34] And I have a great relationship with our building principals at every level, and we work closely to make sure that we're providing the right thing for the child while keeping in mind what's going on in the school. If I might add a point of clarity, and I don't want to interrupt the flow, our school administrators are responsible for implementing the student code of conduct, not Dr. Noel, though Dr. Noel would support them should they have any questions or if they are appealed and that process is handled through your office.

[00:47:02] So the team in implementing this is also the entire school-based administrative teams. And he does the training and a tremendous job of supporting that. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. Thank you so much for that. And again, I'm sorry about the loss of our team member in your office.

[00:47:19] Thank you. Okay. I almost don't know where to begin because when I actually, I didn't just look at the recommended changes. I actually looked at some other things. Because every time I read it, whether as a board member or as a mom, going over with my children before we return to school, before we sign it, I seem to see new things.

[00:47:40] So I'm going to start out on page seven of the hard copy of the Student Code of Conduct, where it mentions rights and responsibilities of HCPS employees. And I'm going to reference bullet point number three, communicating concerns, suggestions, and complaints to appropriate HCPS administration or central office without fear of intimidation, reprisal, retaliation, etc.

[00:48:11] I just want to highlight this. It is in the student code of conduct, and I appreciate it there as we're talking about folks' rights, whether they're employees, students, parents. I would ask Dr. Cashwell to consider elevating this or highlighting this message in other places.

[00:48:32] While the board does not respond live to in-person public comment or your team follows up to a written public comment that the board receives, the board has received quite a bit of feedback asking for this right to be highlighted.

[00:48:52] and here it is. And here it has been for quite some time on page seven of the Student Code of Conduct. So if you would consider working with the board and the leadership team and elevating this message for our employees, I would greatly appreciate that. Next item, dress code on page eight of the Student Code of Conduct. I've already received some feedback and questions regarding the recommended elimination of cut-off jeans, cut-off sweatpants, or torn, ripped, slashed

[00:49:30] clothing that reveals undergarments or body parts excluded by other parts of this code. I would just like to highlight that this is recommended because, as we've heard from students before in current trending fashion items and made adjustments to code, this one is coming both from families and students, because if you've shopped recently, you see quite a bit of fashion that perhaps could be cut off jeans, cut off sweatpants, torn ripped slash clothing.

[00:50:03] It's very fashionable these days. But as I say that, I would also like to highlight for some of the folks that may listen back that bullet point number three, we are not eliminating unacceptable attire for school that could be distracting. Highlighting bullet point three that is remaining, clothing must reach the tip of the thumb when hands placed at the sides, arms straight with palms flat.

[00:50:34] That remains. So I just wanted to go on the record clarifying that we are not eliminating that bullet point, but we are listening to student voice and other stakeholder voice there. Do, if I may ask, what are, how do our students feel about consequences, for example, for dress code? Where does that fall? Because I know you came to a superintendent student advisory committee on which I sit. And I know the students felt like they shared feedback, some even saying that

[00:51:13] it was less of a priority, especially with all of the other priorities that our students face and our administrators. Do we want our administrators being a dress code police? Do the students feel that some students are wearing what they have to school?

[00:51:31] Or did they feel like safety? I remember safety being a consideration, bullying, other topics being more of a consideration for our students. Could you just share a little bit about that? I agree. We rarely hear things now about the dress code ever since we've removed the very subjective language from it a couple of years back.

[00:51:50] That was definitely gender-specific. Kind of removed that to make it what it is today. And then never would it come to my office hearing for something with dress code and I really don't hear complaints from families about it like like we did you know a few years back so thankful for you guys for the changes that you allowed um but certainly there are other things uh when I met with the student advisor community most of the students were like well no we don't really have that issue there are other things that that are going on that we would like to address and we talked about those as well okay thank you for that and if I if I may um I know we've adopted um certain slogans

[00:52:30] in terms of for safety. If you hear something, right, hear something, say something, see something, say something. I'm just going to go back to my time in Henrico County Public Schools and quote my principal, if in doubt, leave it out when it comes to the dress code. I think that worked well back then and it could work well now too. But that's not all I have. In terms of student activities changes. We are making these changes for student activities for what reason? To be more aligned with

[00:53:08] our area partners. Okay, with our area partners. And then the mandated drug awareness change, that's to be in alignment as well. Each of the changes under this section are to be in alignment with partners, regional partners. Yes, and to have this contract to have a bit more teeth, if you will, when it comes to students, getting them, if they're using drugs, we really want them to be a part of the drug awareness program, not that it's an option for them. Okay. And then for clarity, I'm going to ask you this, because I think board members will hear this. Oftentimes,

[00:53:41] when it comes to athletics or activities, we hear about exceptions being made. Do we feel like this will help us with exceptions regarding tryouts or whatever the exception may be made for, or maybe we should just talk about exceptions separately? I would think so. And I know one of these things, I was speaking with someone earlier about this, and I don't want anyone to think that we're becoming lax when it comes to our athletes, because a student who's not an athlete who does something to violate the student activities contract, nothing will happen to them. You know,

[00:54:21] we don't have the jurisdiction to do anything at home but if it's a student who's an athlete and they do this then we are able to use the code with this regard as far as the exceptions i don't think that we would be doing that with this okay well thank you and with the mandated training if a if a student has to complete it they would have to complete it this is just me verifying prior to being able to try out right to yeah if they've done something because there are different um different times a violation may occur right during the during the season before practice starts

[00:54:59] they would have to do it before they could do any vhs if the season is already underway and this happens then they would have to do it before they're allowed to come back thank you so much i know um stakeholders in my district will want to know those specific answers as we as we talk about this um and i'm not done um let's see uh as we get to cell phones um we've had the policy i think i hear this often we've had the policy um it's just been a level uh the degree of how folks feel it's enforced correct right and i think that um you mentioned the word

[00:55:38] quite a few times during the presentation and i'm appreciative consistency is the key consistent implementation. And our administrators and our educators are on board with cell phone policy enforcement, correct? Yes. Because it is a barrier to instruction as well as the bullying, harassment, the social mental health, right, that we all read about and care about.

[00:56:09] I would just like to know, is it just understood in our buildings? Some of our students have medical conditions, which they need access to their phones for medical conditions, that won't change in any way, correct?

[00:56:28] Right. You're right. Yeah, as long as it's not being used during instructional time, if it's an emergency situation, then we understand that, but certainly not for any social reasons, which should you be on your phone during instructional time? Because for some students, for example, students who have medical apps on their phones, i'll use diabetes as an example they need to have their volume on or have it

closer to them and they can't be that far away from from their phone right like i just want to make sure that as we're going to be consistent and enforce this policy um that student students with medical

[00:57:04] challenges will be covered um and let me see lastly the board will not vote on this until June 6th, am I correct? Yes, ma'am. That's how we proposed that timeline, certainly up to the board's deliberations, but that's our proposal. And then is it my understanding that, I know you started out saying how some of the changes come to be in this policy, but we're going to use

[00:57:36] what, Superintendent Student Advisory Committee again, email, the public may contact board members email, phone, in person, public comment, written public comment. We're going to share it via the binder. All of our normal channels of communication, or do we see a different type of communication? Because some of these changes, there are a lot of them. Once the changes are final and voted on, they're proposed today, we certainly would do our due diligence and are always looking to, you know, I think Dr. Noel pointed to the slide where we survey each year, how well do you

[00:58:15] know the student code of conduct are you made aware of it what do parents think what do students think what are staff thinking about how it's shared and so while there's a strong agreement around awareness particularly from teachers or rather from staff no rather from our parents and students regarding understanding the rules and the consequences we'd love that to be a hundred percent so we're always looking for ways to increase that messaging with our students we'll certainly lean into our student advisory group on that front as well because sometimes you know well certainly schools are holding their assemblies and making things clear the you know having the document both in hardcopy digitally

[00:58:53] multiple languages but I think it'll be interesting to hear from our students about what resonates to them what are they paying attention to as we're really thinking about messaging that would be effective particularly because a lot of this relies on students themselves knowing it and understanding it deeply not just the adults serving them so I think we've certainly can keep push on pushing on that a bit and look for continued ways to enhance implementation I think that's there's plenty of room to do things differently there and then what I would what I was referencing I appreciate that piece of the

[00:59:29] communication feedback. But I was, let me clarify, I was talking about between now and the time the board votes. Oh, to comment on it, I apologize. Yes, how are we going to? I'm sorry, well, both matter. Well, certainly, yes, certainly, yes, we can make sure, we can continue besides the usual avenues, which with any policy as it's being considered and before it's approved by the board, that window of time in which the public can comment. We can certainly lean into some messaging there. And I did want to note, not to go backwards, but to your question, which was a good one about students who may have a medical need likely they've worked with their building administrator and school nurse and have a school health plan on

[01:00:07] file so I would just say you know as we continue to look towards ensuring enforcement of reasons a student might need to access their phones for a phone for medical reasons a medical app I would encourage that students and families work with their administrator and their school nurse to make sure that that's documented and certainly would be accounted for right well thank you and then i would say just lastly i would encourage as we um highlight this cell phone policy that has been in place um that we encourage um our students i would like for our students

[01:00:41] instead of being a phone police you know i think that self-regulation is a life skill right i agree so i'll close with that thank you so much dr noel thank you madam chair thank you mrs kinsella Mr. Irving.

Yeah. So before, before I talk about sevens, I do want to talk about some of the positive, very positive changes in here. I think, you know, the, the changes to the student activities contract, I think that's remarkably welcome. The previous one was overly punitive and though not often enforced, I would say even having it on the books, I think was something that

[01:01:21] wasn't actually solving any problems. And so I think the changes, especially with the recommended and mandated drug education courses afterwards is vital. I think the timelines for returning to any activity, because this is not, people think that this is just, you think of like a football player or something, but this could be band or chorus or any afterschool activity debate, speech debate.

[01:01:44] So I think that's a vitally necessary change and I'm glad to see that it's been recommended. The technology changes, those were quite extensive and I think much needed as a high school teacher. I see the need to be constantly adapting to these things and being proactive rather than seeing a problem arise and then trying to have to have an ad hoc fix in the moment.

[01:02:07] So I like the intent and the purposefulness that we're taking on that front. It is a lot. I'm not going to pretend that I know what all of it means in practice, but I trust that the folks who put it together did so in a thoughtful manner.

[01:02:23] So I think that's absolutely needed, especially with the generative AI, seeing, I was just having a conversation with a foreign language teacher today who said that it's rampant within that subject area in terms of writing, you know, material. And it becomes a constant battle of students trying to get an answer rather than actually learning the material and understanding why they need to be doing what they're doing.

[01:02:46] And I think that's an overall focus that we have to have generally within education is instead of being results oriented about, oh, I got the correct answer. well why did you get the correct answer and what are the processes and how are you learning from mistakes and so i think hopefully these technology changes will help make that type of mindset shift something that students have to consider um thank you i do think that it is concerning that 61 percent of staff agree that rules for behavior are being consistently applied while that is a majority that is um you know concerning i would say that only 61 percent think that rules are being consistently

[01:03:23] applied and I think that's a big focus for me is making sure that when you go into a building across the school district that you know that the rules are going to be enforced as they are and that everybody is going to be treated as equals because when you don't I think it creates a lot of perverse situations between students between staff and it's in between parents as well and I think that's not it's not ideal and it makes the work environment tougher as a teacher where you think, well, even if I enforce this and I'm not backed up, then I've been completely undermined. And I think that makes the job harder. As for cell phones, though, I, you know,

[01:04:01] one second, I do know that we do have a rule. I think, though, that people think that we don't have a cell phone ban does speak volumes. Because while we do have a ban, the perception that we don't is very strong within buildings. And I think, you know, in some buildings, rules may be enforced and other buildings aren't. So for me, I always think back to when I was a high schooler and I had a TI-86 calculator. And I remember on those calculators, you could play programmable games and that would be distracting when I was in class. And while the calculator was a great tool

[01:04:37] and definitely necessary for schools, I was not supposed to be playing games on my calculator. Now, I'd like us to imagine that if there was a calculator that was introduced, but had more fun games, and you could play dozens of these engrossing games, and you could also send messages secretly to all your friends and have access to an enormous library of television shows, movies, multiple streams of short-form videos algorithmically selected to appeal to me and be distracting? What if this calculator also caused me to get less sleep, less exercise, spend less time with others, all while lowering my self-consciousness, my self-esteem, and increasing

[01:05:15] my depression and anxiety? We don't have to imagine this though. We have these devices and their smartphones, even though I don't think they're even really a phone anymore. They're very much just a computer. I think part of our job as schools is to teach students, but it's also to make them learn, because I think one of the innately difficult jobs of being a teacher is that you do have to teach something to a bunch of people who have no desire to actually learn that thing oftentimes. And while I don't think we as schools can fix all the societal problems that happen with phones, I do think that recognizing that they are a massive distraction to the thing

[01:05:51] that we do, which is I hope students learn and become better people, makes obviously extremely difficult from a school management standpoint. Study after study shows the positive effects of phone bans, you know, higher levels of conscientiousness for folks that don't have their phones, more thoughtfulness, more consideration of the course material. There's been multiple studies that say that even having a mobile phone nearby with notifications coming through is enough to result in students losing their attention on the task at hand for up to 20 minutes, and it takes 20 minutes to refocus in. Removing smartphones from school in Belgium, Spain, and the United

[01:06:29] Kingdom was found to improve learning outcomes, according to a study cited by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. And this mostly helps the students who are most vulnerable, or students who have the hardest time at school. Those are the ones who can get distracted the most by these devices. And I think, you know, we always have students that can maybe listen to lyrical music while they're doing work. And that's not these students, but those students are few and far between. And I don't think we can craft implementation around, you know, our highest succeeding kids all the time. It has to be what's best for the broader array of students. And while

[01:07:08] we do have a school ban, a phone ban, and a lot of districts do, the issue is not the rules. It's the implementation and enforcement. Currently, when it falls solely on teachers, it's great if your administrators back you up. I'm in a building now where my administrators back me up, but I've been in schools where that has not been the case. And that's why I think we need a policy that's in place on top of the ban that prevents the kids from even having the ability to break the rules.

[01:07:34] Because I think part of the code of conduct is we don't want to issue out punishments if we don't have to and accountability. I think if you can create circumstances under which the kids aren't even able to break the rules. That's the best thing, because then we're not dealing with referrals. We're not having to deal with phone calls home. We're not having to deal with punishment. We can actually spend the time doing the thing that we want to do, which is to educate the kids.

[01:07:56] I think, you know, I note the concerns about medical conditions. And like Dr. Cashwell said, we have implementations and effects that help solve those problems. My brother's a diabetic. He had to have his phone on him. It's very easy to have a school medical plan where you can keep it in your backpack.

And for parents who want contact with their students, because I completely understand that as a parent myself, we do have one-to-one devices. You can be on your child's Schoology classroom. You could, I believe, message them through the app. We could also, I imagine, set up parent squares so that you can have communication with your child if you need to in case of emergency. Or you can do what my parents did with me and they called the school

[01:08:35] building and I had to go to the front office and talk to them on the phone. I think there's plenty of contentious debate around social media and kids but whatever other problems it may cause this stuff is just obviously distracting like the phones are just obviously distracting the point of apps is to promote engagement and use and they literally make billions of dollars creating apps that will keep your attention constantly and I think the point of school is to not be scrolling on these social media apps so I would absolutely love us to explore implementation that is even across buildings to ensure that the kids just don't even have the temptation to want to be on

[01:09:09] phones because they can be they're gauging with their classmates um places that have banned phones fully in terms of you know not having giving the kids access to the phones have seen a reduction in fights a reduction in skipping a reduction in drug deals in bathrooms a reduction in um you know safety concerns of letting other kids into buildings and I think it would just be um very positive for our communities and for our schools thank you thank you thank you Mr. Irving as we

[01:09:42] flow through this topic because it is an important one and it's one at top of mind and Mrs. Kinsella I'm going to go back to you if needed or desired I think it would also I just want to let my colleagues know as we dive into this conversation for this one we don't have to wait until everybody speaks because this is a lot of discussion. So if colleagues, if there's

[01:10:17] something that Mrs. Kinsella has shared that you have a question on or Mr. Irving has had a question on, I think it's prudent that this turns more into a conversation instead of after everyone speaks then we try to dive all in and remember what everyone has shared. So I just wanted to offer that to each of you if you feel the need to respond to another colleague and I will be sure to keep us in order. All right, Mr. Young. All right, Dr. Noel, thank you for the presentation

[01:10:55] and just based on what you just said, Madam Chair, I will stick to cell phones. I guess my first question is, has there been any investigation or research into potential cost for the school board to procure items such as lockable pouches or bags for cell phones?

[01:11:14] I'm not aware of that. We've looked into that, but it's certainly something that we can do. All right. How do we make sure that all of our schools are enforcing the code of conduct equitably when it pertains to the cell phones?

[01:11:30] Obviously, the policy hasn't changed. So what I'm looking for is what will look different next year. Now that we're now talking about cell phones, even though it hasn't changed in the code of conduct. And again, because of the attention that's been given to it, it will absolutely be stressed at the positive school climate outreach.

[01:11:49] I work with Dr. Fibrell, Dr. Champ, who will be working with their building level principals to make sure that this is being equitably enforced across all schools. That will be the expectation in every school. And if I might, I just want to add to what Dr. Noel said, as I think it speaks to your question, you

know, what really even ahead of this moment in time, this topic has come up quite a bit and there's been advocacy on both sides from our own staff and students.

[01:12:21] So this is something we've been thinking deeply about coming into this school year. We work to really enforce and remind students of what this rule is, specifically around cell phones. I think we saw some improvements. I think the challenges became in anything, the implementation and schools approaching it differently.

[01:12:42] I know Dr. Farrell has worked closely, specifically with our high school principals, on lifting up examples of where things have gone well. So principals have tried various strategies within their building, they're talking to one another about what has worked well, what hasn't worked well. Some have tried some scenarios with pouches, individual teachers, our PTAs purchasing them.

[01:13:03] So I think they're understanding the pros and cons of what enforcement can look like, what's reasonable, what doesn't add extra work on staff and counteracting some of the benefits you might think they would bring, but allows for the ultimate goal of, again, removing that distraction from students so that the instructional environment is maintained throughout the day.

[01:13:25] And then understanding that, you know, while there is teacher discretion, if there's a reason the cell phone may contribute positively to an activity, that they have the freedom to do that where the device would be accessible. So I think it's balancing those things, you know, and I think a lot of learning has taken place this year within our own high schools and amongst colleagues talking about what's worked well.

[01:13:48] I think several of our high schools have had success with some strategies implemented either at the beginning of the year or mid-year. that learning continues. And I think, you know, while certainly we would support and Dr. Noel is going to train our school administrators, I think it's also allowing them as a group at the high school, middle school, and elementary level to make sure that they understand from one another what's worked well and hasn't in their buildings. You know, that's the best case scenario. I can certainly look at what other school systems have done, and we continue to do that. Getting some of those data points looking at places that may use the pouches or other systems and

[01:14:26] we can provide that for consideration but among the most valuable learning I think is our own administrators and teachers and the experiences they've had as they've been grappling with this all year and they have been grappling with it I want to own that it is a challenge it is complex and we are not the only school system wrestling with this and so you know I do stay in touch with other systems who have looked at doing different things and in the challenges those might bring forward so we're really trying to deeply understand those but ultimately land in a place where we can have consistency across the level with the best plans to enforce and ultimately

[01:15:05] like you said we don't want to be in a punitive place you know we want it to be the default that learning is happening and students aren't distracted by phones yes thank you all right thank you dr cashwell i guess my main point was um just being consistent across the board from school to school i think that's the main thing that i can take away from this um can we move to the student activity contract i do have a couple questions um regarding that i do love the change especially being a coach um that we're not as punitive um for these but i i do want to

[01:15:38] ask you um about the removal of the off school property that's just a legal thing that beyond our scope well it's similar mr young to when we had um bus stops we removed that language a couple years ago where it says the code of student conduct has jurisdiction door-to-door and we got rid of that because if a student leaves school drives to the mall does something at the mall we don't have jurisdiction over that so that's why we removed that part door-to-door now it suggests at the bus stop so in a similar vein we removed the part about off school property because

[01:16:18] if the student is at home doing something that doesn't warrant a reassignment there's really nothing that code student conduct can do to hold that student accountable unless it is a school sponsored activity so that is noted here yes and what about if a student is has a i guess arrested or something like that with law enforcement.

[01:16:40] Does this now come into play if it's drug use or alcohol use? I guess it should come into use at that point. And there are certain other criminal offenses that students can do off campus, away from everything, that the Code of Student Conduct can't act.

[01:16:57] If it's a criminal offense that's under state code 16.1260G, I have the authority to reassign students in that regard. Very impressed with your ability to recall that code. I think I saved it quite a bit. I think I opened with subject matter experts.

[01:17:13] So I think that's been underscored here. And I believe that's all of my questions in regards to that. I do want to jump to maybe just briefly to the dress code. Where are we at with enforcement of the dress code?

[01:17:29] I still see pajamas daily. I still see our young ladies with midriff cutoff shirts on. Where are we at when it comes to enforcement of our dress code? I think we're right where we are with cell phones. It's just a consistent implementation of it. I think that possibly some schools may get lax with it. I don't want to say we've got bigger fish to fry, but if that's not a major concern, maybe someone might turn a blind eye to it. But if we're going to be consistent across the board, I think we really have to enforce it as it is written.

[01:17:59] OK, perfect. And my last thing is, can we move to self-defense? I just had a question about the last line. I'll wait for her to get to it. I'll read it real quick. Self-defense does not constitute a valid defense against possession or use of a weapon on school property or at any school sponsored activity. Is this stating that if I potentially had some sort of weapon, knife, gun, if I use that in self-defense, that that does not now constitute self-defense?

[01:18:29] And is that weapon, because a weapon could be a pen, if I use it in that sort of instance, are we specifying weapon as a gun or a knife, or are we specifying anything that we use, a table, a chair? I would have to get that definite answer.

[01:18:47] I believe this is intended to mean possession of a weapon. In other words, it does not negate consequences for possessing a weapon. yeah whether there may be self-defense because i've had situations possessing that weapon yeah i've had situations where students have had mace and used it and the family will say well there was it was self-defense well now you cannot have that it's clearly spelled out that you cannot have that on school property and say it's self-defense right no more questions thank you thank you all right mrs shay thank you so much um i have things on quite a smattering of topics but

[01:19:24] But as you were discussing, Dr. Muella, and as the board is discussing, for me, the theme that has bubbled up is consistency, right? And I think when we look at our code of conduct, that's what we're

trying to create is consistency amongst all of our buildings, with all of our leaders, with all of our students in terms of enforcement.

[01:19:45] And so I'll just kind of hit things in the order I have written down. While we're on this self-defense policy, I have gotten quite a bit of really in the last 24, 48 hours of constituents reaching out in support of this for a lot of various different reasons, some with personal experience with it and just kind of a resounding support for adding this in.

[01:20:16] And I so much support that last sentence there and clarifying that weapons, firearms have no place on any of our property. You can't call it self-defense. Our schools should not have firearms or weapons on them regardless.

[01:20:35] And so I think that's really important to continue to elevate and spell out. so I appreciate that addition there, as well as being real intentional about defining what self-defense is. I think that's important in our inclusion, so thank you. I agree. Thank you.

[01:20:52] When we look at the cell phones, well, let's go back to that. With the VHSL policy, Mr. Young, I think the criminal charges, I think that's an amazing point that you bring up, And so I don't know if we want to add that language in there to be specific, because you said, you know, perhaps that could impact this, even if it wasn't on school property.

[01:21:18] Is that what? Let me back up. Did I understand Mr. Young's question correctly, that if criminal charges are brought for the use of drugs or alcohol outside of school, that could still impact their school participation?

[01:21:35] It may impact their attendance in school, which would not be related to this particular part of the code, but ultimately impact their ability to participate in a VHSL activity. Okay, how about that? There are specific violations of the criminal code that are intertwined with student code of conduct and that can be punishable for those violations of the law.

[01:21:58] I don't believe that drug use generally, that those are specified. And so off-campus drug use generally, even if there's a criminal charge, may not be connected. But we're happy to look into that. Yeah, some criminal charges may result in an issue related to you being able to attend school.

[01:22:20] In that case, it would. So I hope that's making sense. Well, and also the clarity around, just for the public, around this doesn't negate changing some of these, the days of the suspension. this doesn't negate that the student will still be responsible for all of the consequences that any other student would be in terms of the code of conduct. So this is not reducing any of the consequences within the code of conduct. This is specifically looking at participation activities.

[01:22:54] And then just further specificity here, when we look at, it says VHSL team participation and extracurricular activities. So I'm looking for specificity here as to whether this only applies to VHSL extracurricular activities like forensics and debate or all extracurricular activities, which would include band, chorus, theater, all of those things.

[01:23:20] I would imagine without knowing 100%, it's just strictly to those that are VHSL, whichever events or activities fall under that. Which is band and a lot of the other things. Is band and chorus VHSL? Yeah, that's a large umbrella. Yes, it is. It is. But we can provide some clarity here before we look at this again in June.

[01:23:39] Yeah. And, you know, perhaps do we want to include all activities or do we want to keep it just VHSL? So anyway, just we'll take a look and get back to you. OK, thank you. And then with dress code, I think really consistent, you know, as we've said before, consistency of enforcement.

[01:23:59] But also, I think there's a misunderstanding, and I don't know if it's in part of staff or students or both, as to what the dress code actually says. Because it has evolved quite a bit over the past couple years.

[01:24:15] I still hear students say, oh, we have to have a strap length of two fingers width or three fingers width. I don't see that in the dress code. If it's not in the dress code, if it's not in there, then it's not policy. Right. So things that we used to enforce but are no longer in the dress code, I think there's still a lot of muddiness around, for as much as we've tried to, I think there's still muddiness around what the dress code actually says in addition to the consistency of enforcement.

[01:24:45] And the way I read the dress code, it seems pretty clear. So I don't know where that disconnect is. to go back to that that was what i was talking about that that subjective language and in the gender specific language that that's the complaints you got this dress code piece is against female students right um so that was the impetus for changing it to get rid of some of the things that were definitely um gender specific yeah i remember yeah i remember taking that language out and i think to mrs jay's point and as dr noel is saying we spent a lot of time in previous years removing that language and updating the dress code and based on that feedback related to things that

[01:25:24] might feel that they were targeting individuals by gender or other reasons too. So I mean really I know the time the board spent on getting it updated and as Mrs. Shea is saying there seems to be at times students aren't fully aware of what the current dress code is and we have run into some cases where schools actually distributed older versions of the dress code.

[01:25:48] So we worked this year again to make sure there was consistency on that. But I do think this speaks to what we are all identifying as this underlying challenge that I need to work with the team to really dig in and solve. And that's making sure students first and foremost understand what the rules and expectations are, and then around the expectations for enforcing those with administrators school to school and looking for that consistency.

[01:26:16] I think we have a lot of work to do there. I believe we are up to the challenge. I think we have a team who, you know, we started down that road this school year. We've learned a lot. I think there's a lot more we can do and will do to make sure that, you know, particularly as we're hearing this priority from all board members, I mean, I'm hearing consistent themes around I don't think there's any disagreement on the distraction that cell phones bring to the classroom the frustration teachers feel if they don't feel supported in implementing the code and so you know there's a there's plenty of work to be done there and I think you know that's

[01:26:51] something we can really lean into even as simple as making sure the correct dress code is being advertised to students and before it's even being enforced so point well taken yeah I think there's certainly a challenge in the inertial effects of prior knowledge, prior experience, you know, prior rules and, you know, just making sure we're all on the same page with that. And then, you know, when we look at the cell phone policy, one suggestion I do have is to be explicit about

[01:27:25] smartwatches, particularly for the elementary level. I know we have electronic devices in there, But being kind of specific about the smart watches, I've heard quite a bit of feedback about the distraction they're causing in classes, students kind of calling their parents from their watch and that sort of thing.

[01:27:43] And so making sure we're explicit in that to give, again, well, as Mr. Irving said, we're hoping to prevent it before it happens, right? So to spell it out explicitly for parents, but then also to give our staff the ability to say, well, it's right here in the code of conduct.

[01:28:00] this is an explicit expectation. Would it be something as simple as cell phones, electronic devices, and then parentheses, smartwatches? Yeah. Including smartwatches. Smartwatches with cellular service. I think we need to spend some time defining that so that we aren't. Yeah. Gotcha. Thank you. And, you know, I think the real question that we're all talking about, I think as a board, like you said, Dr. Cashwell, we're all agreeing we don't want students to use, well, we haven't gotten Ms. Atkins yet, but we don't want our students using cell phones during class. And so, the real question is, what are those barriers to implementation?

[01:28:37] And Dr. Cashwell, if there is something you need from us as a board to support you on to be able to implement that, we're here. But that is your lane with your staff to say, here's how, you know, here's how we want to effectively implement that. I love that we're looking at best practices within hcps and dr farrell's working with the principals i know some of our schools have had some quite successful focuses this year on when you walk into every single class in the school it looks the same and this is what happens with your cell phone to you know even down to when they have a

[01:29:11] fire drill being able to grab the device on the way out the door so if there was a true emergency students would have it to communicate with parents and etc so i think there are a lot of good things happening in our county with it it's to dr cashwell's point and to your point on you know how do we create that that standard for all um and and what can we look at i know um pouches were brought up um one of our schools has done a small scale pilot of that um and uh there is some real challenges kind of getting students in the door we have weapon scanners this is one more layer

[01:29:49] you know kind of we gotta almost we want our students in our building so sometimes we have to you know pick our battles as to everything happening logistically I'm getting them in the door but really again looking at the barriers to implementation we had some students share with us at student government day about how streaming music helps them in class but they can't do that through their school laptop and so that's why they like to have their cell phone you know that's not to be the case for all students but are there some of those barriers that we can leave other ways you

[01:30:24] know is there a music streaming platform i'm you know just throwing these things out but um not as a directive but as you know we hear some of these barriers how can we overcome them do you want to jump in with that and then i'll no i just wanted to add while you're actually mentioning you know you mentioned the smart watch and then dr cashwell chimed in with cellular service i was thinking about the earbuds i would like to add that into the conversation as well um because a lot of our right i don't know dr cashwell looks like you have something to say i mean i i think i said this was a really complex topic and it is and you're bringing up really good points that we are

[01:31:03] always wrestling with so um you know our students are asked often to provide earbuds or headphones to be able to engage in the items on their device so that they if they have read aloud features

or any of those things that it's not distracting the student next to them so there are instructional reasons we're using a lot of technology and so this is where it becomes complicated to untangle and i think at the end of the day if we can stick to what i'm hearing is the underpinning desire that students not be distracted from instruction uh to the degree which a personal cell phone or

[01:31:40] personal cellular device is distracting how uh we're very clear about what that looks like as a distraction and enforcing that in the classroom if i if i may then remove that um and then just and then just highlight once again self-regulation is so important to me for our students because because that is a life skill, and hearing everyone having gotten to Ms. Atkins, but I think the phrase I really love is consistency amidst building autonomy. When you're a division as large as we are, this is definitely something that we want to be consistent on. Back to you,

[01:32:16] Ms. Shea. All right, I'm going to wrap it up soon. I'll move on from cellular devices from that. Actually, the topic that I've gotten the most student feedback on this year is not cell phones, and it is not dress code for the first time.

[01:32:35] It is bathroom vandalism. And how the bathroom vandalism, which many times causes the bathroom to be closed because then the plumbing fixtures don't work, and how that impacts broadly the school.

[01:32:55] And so I know we have vandalism in our code of conduct in terms of the definition. We also have one line of vandalism in terms of what S barcodes it falls under. But I don't know if there's more that are building.

[01:33:12] Again, what are the barriers to implementation? How can we help building level leaders, Dr. Keshul and your team? How can we help try to eradicate some of the bathroom vandalism? I don't, I think it's gonna have to be a multi-pronged solution.

[01:33:29] Some of it may be discipline. Some of it is gonna be school culture. Some of it may be technology with e-hall pass or whatever else. I think there's multi-pronged. But if there's part of the student code of conduct that we need to elevate consequences in order to help with that, I just wanted to bring that forward, you know, along with the vaping in the bathroom.

[01:33:50] But often those vapes then end up in the toilet and then the toilet doesn't work. I've learned so much about bathrooms at Project Maverick. I ended up stopping by after all the advocacy I've received all year about it at every bathroom project to hear what their suggestions were.

[01:34:09] And I just frankly asked the students, I was like, why do you think people do this? Like, help me understand. That doesn't sound like a fun idea to me. And all of them said, we don't know, which I found interesting. So, and then there's the very last piece, because as Mr. Young and Mr. Irving pointed out, the technology piece, why we didn't go through it because it is very robust and very long, it's very important and looking at AI and the proper usage and ethical usage and how we're gonna approach that as a school division.

[01:34:48] And so I encourage our stakeholders to look at the red line at it because this is really important. This is like looking at the kind of next where education is headed. And just want to thank the whole team, especially Ms. Tara Tovac, for working on this and bringing it to policy committee and vetting it through our principals.

[01:35:10] Like this has gone through a lot of layers and it's super important. So thank you. Thank you. And now I'm going to really stop. thank you colleagues a lot has been shared are there any follow-up before i sort of dive into several different spaces i might just add another subject matter expert has noted that headphones are addressed which would be i guess earbuds as well and boy technology changes faster than you can think of the right terminology describe it as a headphone and earbud and is a cell phone a watch

[01:35:44] a smartphone so anyway that is addressed and I think really we're talking about cellular devices and or associated things so I just wanted to note that thank you for the clarity. Sure so I will start with the self-defense slide if we could move to that thank you so could you delve into the definition of reasonable fear particularly in the context of perceiving a threat I'm interested

[01:36:16] in understanding the criteria for determining whether one would have a reasonably feared situation considering the circumstances at the time. So if you could shed light on the thought process behind employing this specific terminology of reasonable fear versus credible fear.

[01:36:39] Well, I'll start before I turn over to Ms. Watkins. I would imagine reasonably feared is What would a reasonable person at the time feel as far as a threat level is concerned versus credible?

[01:36:56] It would be hard to understand a credible fear. I mean, that's another relative term. What's credible to me may not be credible to you. But it's why I could chime in and help. Sure. So when we're talking about reasonable person standards, we're generally talking about if you put someone else similarly situated in that position, would they feel the same way?

[01:37:18] So if I have a extreme fear of dogs and I'm outside and my reaction is to run inside, most people do not have a phobia of dogs. And so the reasonable person outside would not necessarily run right into the building.

[01:37:33] So we're talking about another student in that same situation with all of the general factors at play. Would they also have felt the same way is generally how you the idea of reasonable person. So I'm putting myself in the space of when I think of all abilities.

[01:37:52] If I am an individual that lacked the ability to verbally speak, my response might be different from a person hearing, even though the situation is the same.

[01:38:08] So reasonable fear wouldn't apply in that scenario because I would assume, and maybe I should not assume, I almost can be factual, but I won't do that. There's been cases that were presented where an individual that may have a disability would respond differently from a person that perhaps had that ability. So if we're going to use reasonable fear, I would love to have a better understanding of that because different people will respond. So if you have two, and I'm just going to use hearing as an example, two

[01:38:44] individuals that are hearing hear the fire alarm and let's say get into an altercation. I'm just making this up. But if you have a hearing and a deaf individual, the deaf individual may not hear the alarm in the fight breakout and may respond differently. So I'm really just searching for a better understanding. So by the time that case gets to whomever is going to have the discernment to research it, I'm really trying to understand when you look at a lens of all abilities what

[01:39:20] reasonable fear means. I think I understand part of your question in trying to, and maybe I'm taking a bit of liberty here, but for our students with disabilities, the IDEA does give them protection. So if they are being disciplined for more than 10 days or their conduct is a pattern that equates to 10 days a manifestation determination review hearing would be held and it would be determined whether their actions were caused or related to their disability and so that would be built in and I think that's maybe what you're getting at. That's exactly where I'm headed because

[01:39:54] the language here for consideration when we think about all abilities it may be worth a footnote just to come up with the right legal language and that's why I mentioned credible versus reasonable But if we keep reasonable, please consider a footnote with the lens of exceptional students.

[01:40:17] And I might say, Ms. Atkins, if I may, I'm imagining, so Dr. Noel, that you were hoping to help parents understand that when they come into a discipline hearing for serious conduct, so one student has engaged in a physical altercation with another and the parent says it was self-defense.

[01:40:34] Right. Trying to help parents understand what exactly are we thinking of when we say, when we hear them say self-defense, we're thinking something along the lines of this. They're thinking something else often, and so trying to give some universal language is his goal here.

[01:40:50] I don't know that it's going to, that this definition is necessarily going to be used in a way other than to level the playing field in order to have that conversation. Yeah, you're absolutely right. We'll definitely take a look at the language, and we can engage in some further discussion of the phraseology here, given the goal of this.

[01:41:09] Or maybe also consider just a simple maybe list of definitions may be warranted as you go through this. There's so many different ways to look at it.

[01:41:25] But if the goal is understanding and leveling the playing field, you also want to start with making sure you understand what the words mean. So it may be worth looking into some level of a list of definitions here.

[01:41:41] All right. Let me get to the next one. So my next thought here is on page six of the Code of Conduct. It's not highlighted in your presentation, but it's around rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians, something that continuously pops up for me, whether it's with employees or parents, is specifically around the responsibility of parents.

[01:42:11] it's very troubling for me to be an example and see examples of how we want to behave. But there are individuals, parents or guardians, coming in, threatening, cursing, using abusive language, and that is equally distracting in an office hallway or classroom.

[01:42:36] So when I look at the code of conduct, I am wondering if there is a way that we could be more intentional. The specific line says, let's see, I'm trying to find it for you in the code of conduct. I can't find it here, but there is a bullet that addresses, you know, being polite.

[01:43:01] Let me find it so that I'm accurate for you. All right, so I'm here, and it says this is the bullet, And I just would like for us to be more intentional and refine it.

[01:43:20] Under parents, guardians, responsibilities include, but are not limited to, being polite and courteous to staff, other parents, guardians, and students at all times. I think we can be a bit more intentional here. And I'm not going to sit here and try to figure out what that language is.

[01:43:41] but I just think it's crucial to maintain consistency in expectations. And it's challenging for any individual in the school building who is asking children to be respectful while a parent or guardian is being disrespectful. So again, the request is to look at the language for that bullet and be more intentional about consequences when adults come into the building with less desirable behaviors. And colleagues, as I go through this, just jump on in if you have any thoughts.

[01:44:19] The next one is on attendance. That is not in your presentation. I'm going to pause and thank you because some of what we've shared has not been in your presentation, but we know we're talking to the expert and we want to take full advantage in this moment.

[01:44:36] So regarding attendance, I'm curious about the mechanisms that we use to ensure accuracy and efficiency regarding our processes and reporting. So Dr. Caswell, this is more for you and then I'm going to tie it to the policy.

[01:44:54] Could you elaborate on the protocol for handling instances of when a student arrives at school, Usually attendance is completed at the top of the hour. However, if a student comes in tardy, the attendance record has already been submitted as absent.

[01:45:10] Can you help me understand how that's corrected or the audit process to ensure that the reporting is accurate? Sure, and I don't want to misspeak here. I'm not the subject matter expert, but I do know that it's not always in real time, right?

[01:45:29] So, for example, an absence may be marked, and it's later marked excused, rather as a parent notice come in. You may be marked absent, then you arrive tardy, and then those changes are made and audited at each building. There is a process for that.

[01:45:45] At the secondary level specifically, there is an attendance point person who's working through that with students. It could be a late bus has come in, but the student was initially marked absent. and then that would be corrected again once it was verified by an administrator so um you know there is a period of time where it it i guess if this is what you're asking it may technically be inaccurate in other words the person's it says absent the person comes in tardy it's been switched or it needs verification um throughout the school day that's what the attendance folks are working to

[01:46:23] finalize. And then they're looking for that to be, again, confirmed by the parent or guardian that that's the legitimate reason or whatever it might be in submitting absence notes. We usually give a period of time. One of the nice additions, I know, getting those things to be more real time.

[01:46:42] When we introduced ParentSquare, one of the things administrators were really looking for was when the absent notification goes that morning or that moment, that class period that a student is not present, the parent can respond and submit absent notes in a more timely manner, so trying to close those loops faster, but sometimes it's a phone call, it's a note, you know, that we're waiting on in order to verify specific reasons for absences, if I'm answering the question you asked. You have, so before I get to the truancy policy, I wanted to ensure that I clearly understood some of the auditing processes that happen.

[01:47:20] So the truancy statement in our policy says that parents have a 24-hour window for justifiable reasons to share them, as you notate it. But I also understand that attendance, as you just articulated, is taken at the top of the hour, usually in a class.

[01:47:43] Well, unless the auditing process is taking place swiftly, that does not give enough time for a parent to adequately correct the attendance. I can find the specific policy that we have related to students' truancy, but it says that parents have a 24-hour window, and I just don't feel that's adequate.

[01:48:10] Is this reflected in the Student Code of Conduct? Student Code of Conduct, yes. Let me find the page, page 30. I could tell they were trying to find the page, and I wanted to make sure we're... Page 30, in the Code of Student Conduct. Let me try to get to it.

[01:48:28] So it says, all student absences are considered unexcused unless the parent guardian either calls the school or sends a written note to provide a justifiable reason for the absence within 24 hours of the absence.

[01:48:49] We would still collect it after 24 hours. and I think that's what they're seeking, too. Sorry. Oh, no, that's all right. Did you find it? Did you get it? Letter C, truancy. Are we good? I apologize. I should have paused.

[01:49:05] There we go. We're good? Okay. So I really was just trying to understand that to ensure that, one, we're being equitable, and then, two, to make sure that we also are being fair in making sure that we know that the practices are different.

[01:49:25] If your school has an attendance officer, and let me just turn to you, Dr. Cashwell, does each school have an attendance officer? No, there is an attendance point person in each school. There's someone responsible for recording attendance and making sure parents are notified.

[01:49:43] Correct. So, you know, so I'm just going to reinforce again to take a look at that, do whatever research is necessary. There are loopholes that I believe impact our reporting on attendance.

[01:49:59] And I think if we go back and really look at the process and how we audit, there is not an attendance officer at every school. So someone else is a point person. So I absolutely agree with your statement, Dr. Castro.

[01:50:14] But that point person has another responsibility usually. Is that correct? Oh, is that point person only focused on attendance? We have folks who are dedicated to maintaining attendance, yes. But that's not an attendance officer. That's not the same as an attendance officer. Attendance officer is going to intervene when there's an attendance issue.

[01:50:33] So there's a documented issue that needs to be resolved related to a student's attendance. Correct. And that's not what we have in every school. That's correct. Okay. Yes. So I will go back to the original statement. There is not an attendance officer in every school that specifically looks at this.

[01:50:50] So for reporting purposes, I am hopeful that we take a deeper look because it might just be that there are some students, when you look at the quarterly report that parents get that tells you your grades and how many tardies and how many absences, there may be an opportunity for a correction that reflects a better view of that child's tardies or absences.

[01:51:20] So I'm simply asking to take a look at that truancy policy as well as do a deeper dive into the reporting. - We'll absolutely take a look. We want our records to be the most up-to-date and attendance is a tremendous focus across our schools and making sure that we're communicating with students and families in a timely manner to provide us with reasons related to absences, but most importantly, to come to school.

[01:51:45] - That's right. And then next, I have one more topic before I get to sharing thoughts on the cell phone policy. And that's if you could share a little bit how restorative practices and community services are used when there's an infraction or incident.

[01:52:03] Well, certainly at the building level, I encourage, and someone earlier mentioned that suspension should be a last resort. Certainly, we would want to put things in place, intervention supports to help students meet our behavioral expectations. If it's a situation at school that doesn't warrant coming for long-term suspension, then certainly I would go with some sort of restorative practice, sit down with the students and try to mend that broken relationship.

[01:52:29] I'm all about that. Unfortunately, there are situations that occur in our buildings that restorative practices won't work at that point. But if it's something that the code allows to be handled at the building level, I would absolutely go with restorative practices and try to keep the student in school and somehow make that using PBS or whatever other efforts to make that acceptable behavior the norm. Thank you. And do we use community service at all as a consequence? I don't believe we do. I would like for us to explore that. Perhaps there are times

[01:53:08] where there is an incident where we could use the tool of community service to teach the lesson, if you will. And then now I'm going to endeavor to be very clear about thoughts around cell phones.

[01:53:24] I've received written feedback through the mail from students and parents and all other communication that you could fathom. I would first recommend that elementary be broken out from middle, just two distinctly different ages and mindsets. So to put elementary and middle school together with the same policy I think that's something you might want to either reconsider or take a deeper look at yes ma'am so I'll start with elementary school I'll be very clear I think that a ban of no cell phones from

[01:54:03] children in the building at the elementary age should be accepted period that's just when it comes to elementary schools kids and understanding the mental health deeply that age group having a cell phone to me is unacceptable in elementary school and based off feedback from doing my own surveys within the community having a kindergartner in a class with a cell phone just doesn't make sense so they just shouldn't be admitted into the

[01:54:42] the building, or perhaps use a pouch at the elementary level. When it comes to middle, I'm amenable to what you have here. But I think that prevention is the key. And consistency is the key. And in order to prevent, sometimes you have to be strict. And I think for me, We have this policy, Ms. Ginsella shared, we've had this policy and I'm hoping to learn what

[01:55:19] consistency looks like over the next month or so before this comes back for review. What does it look like in practice? It is not the same across districts, it's not the same across schools, it's not the same across classrooms within the building and it poses such contention.

[01:55:38] So I want to really better understand what the practice of implementation looks like. And hopefully there's a few models and those models will be replicated throughout the county.

[01:55:54] The other part is around, so in high school, I'm fine with what's here and presented for middle and high school. It's just the elementary I'm starkly not aligned with.

[01:56:09] it comes to training, can you help me understand what the training looks like within Henrico County? Well, typically every year after the board has approved the code, we have the positive school climate, used to be called Day of Discipline, where we go over all of the changes to the Code of Student Conduct. Part of that day is broken up into scenarios where we practice on whatever SBAR codes or whatever the case may be have been changed. And I can envision, since the theme this year is definitely consistent implementation there will be a number of examples of this is what we expect to be done in every henrico county elementary middle and high school

[01:56:48] in regards to and i'll just say your cell phones the the policy is there the policy is well written easy to understand but if it's not consistently implemented across the board in every classroom as you said that's where the problem lies we don't want a situation where you have one teacher say well you know i'm the cool teacher you don't have to worry about that we want everybody doing it the right way and i often say that those teachers who who say i'm the cool teacher you're undermining those other teachers who are working hard to implement it so we want to make sure it becomes the norm in our school this is the expectation set in this school when it comes to cell phones there will be no if ands or buts we want to implement it this way

[01:57:28] if the student is not doing it of course you want to warn them first and then if not then then there are other consequences that will follow. Are you doing all the training? My office, as well as principals, will be invited. Different departments at central office will be presenting at the Day of Positive School Climate and Outreach.

[01:57:46] But, you know, we certainly have a couple of schools that are piloting some things that I really like, and I'll ask them as well to be a part of it. Fantastic. Because the quality of the training is key as well, and I was asking if you were doing it because I think you're stellar.

[01:58:03] at this subject matter. But I also know you're one human being, and you're an office of three. And I, Dr. Cashwell, you know, we have great collaborative efforts throughout Henrico County.

[01:58:18] Yes, we do. But no matter how collaborative you can be with the changes that we are proposing here, I firmly believe another person or some level of resource is necessary.

[01:58:35] So I'm asking to really take a look at the team that you have. And I would like an understanding of how we can help training move faster and how we can ensure that it's quality training because the experts that we have are three.

[01:58:56] and the division is large these topics are why absolutely want to make sure that we have the right resources in place and i can continue to work with will to see what those might need need i i want to point out there are other administrators sitting right behind him who are typically a part of that training so for example dr farrell would be a part of working with dr noel uh jennifer rucker who's not here dr rucker um you know and her pbis team so they partner together to put that day on but certainly i want to make sure the right resources are at hand and that all of our departments and teams who come together have the supports they need

[01:59:34] whether that's in-house or leveraging any external experts as well we will certainly make sure we're well prepared for that day that quality of the training and the number of individuals coming forward to provide that it's important in all that we do and certainly Ms. Atkins, as Dr. Caswell said, I'm not up

there the whole day training. My part is maybe an hour, and then we have other staff members come up and present their part. Thank you for sharing that.

[01:59:59] It's definitely a collaborative effort, yes. Because it does trouble me quite a bit on all the changes that we've seen, and I do feel at ease knowing a little bit more about what, not just the training, but the quality of it, and that it's not just a day, but it's very well thought out on how that training, and that's where quality comes in, because if it's just a day, it's just gonna be tough to retain, but I'm pleased to hear that it's more than that, and there's more people involved in that, and there's an intense plan, and it's not just one point in time learning opportunity.

[02:00:35] - I do think what we can enhance, and as I'm listening to you talk about this, so training is one part of it, it's the support throughout the year, and when I'm thinking about our directors, see our one of our elementary directors here Scott Thorpe of course you know we have dia champ working with our middle schools and then of course working with dr. Noel as well meeting with principals periodically they have monthly principal meetings and talking about what's going well what's not where are their challenges with the implementation because you know the best training in the world and you get back into your building amongst a million priorities and things happening and you know that it's our administrators have a lot on their

[02:01:12] plates and we want to make sure we're supporting them in the implementation throughout the year. So I think absolutely the training, what does that process for revisiting it and supporting it all year look like on a regular basis. And so we have a number of staff dedicated to that work, supporting principals, supporting PBIS, supporting the implementation of the code, but the way we're coordinating together and frequently to support our schools and principals will be important and we'll really think carefully about what that looks like going into the new school year.

[02:01:41] thank you for that because i think that is key in consistency and you know learning never stops and this technology will not either it will consistently change it will be used in a myriad of ways that we cannot imagine today but if we have a solid uh strategy around training and the quality of it right now we're playing catch up but i do believe we can get ahead of it so that's all i have and colleagues i've said a lot if there's any response to that i'll open the floor now

[02:02:12] before moving on all right thank you dr noel thank you all right certainly appreciate the board's comments feedback on a multitude of areas throughout the code and please know we've taken notes we've taken them to heart on all areas and look forward to continuing that discussion to make sure that we're implementing the student code of conduct as you intend it you know that's the board's document you'll be voting on that in June and we want to make sure implementation matches your expectations so more to come on that the

[02:02:49] next presentation we have a number of presenters I think making their way up is related to the next education workforce update this is not an action item for the board it's simply informational I know the board shares my priority around making sure that our educational environments are best designed to make sure we're meeting educator needs and also the needs of our students and you know one of a while ago I had an opportunity during a professional learning experience as part of one of the organizations I belong to we often get to see innovative things happening in other districts and we're

[02:03:25] always looking at making sure Henrico is leading the way and being open-minded to ways to enhance the educator experience leaning into educator autonomy, leaning into professionalism, and also

ultimately enhancing the student experience and meeting student needs. So I had the opportunity to encounter some schools who were part of the next education workforce in Mesa, Arizona, hearing from the educators. I think one of the teachers said, and I wish I could have recorded it with my cell phone, which I didn't have out because I was enthralled in the school visit, I would do this job for free. Now, I don't know that I've ever

[02:04:03] heard something like that uttered but she really had my attention and the point being they were really innovating different ways to provide instruction to students that were fulfilling not just to the educator but having better results with students and if you can do those two things at once my interest was piqued I brought some information back to our team who are always looking to do that in the classroom and thought this was something we ought to begin thinking about because certainly matched the goals uh related to challenges we were trying to solve so without further ado i will turn it over i think dr hughes is going to kick us off and mr thorpe

[02:04:41] will take the presentation from there to talk about and really just bring you up to date on what we've been doing as we've been pushing and innovating in this space um and you know it's too exciting not to share so here we are here we are that's right and please note that uh mr thorpe followed fashion advice as well with the blue.

[02:05:01] So good afternoon Chair Atkins, members of the board and Dr. Cashwell. As Dr. Cashwell said this afternoon, Mr. Thorpe and I are happy to provide you with an update on our school division's work with the Next Education Workforce. In this presentation, the board will learn about what the Next Education Workforce is, the why behind the concept, and how we are beginning to implement this concept in our schools, particularly this year in two of our elementary schools.

[02:05:28] Our school division's efforts with Next Education Workforce is intended to broaden deeper learning and personalized experiences for our students, which align to our strategic goals and objectives for learner-centered, life-ready experiences, as well as to meet the needs of our teachers.

[02:05:43] And now I'll turn it over to Scott Thorpe, one of our directors of elementary education, who will share more about the Next Education Workforce. Thank you, Dr. Hughes. As you know, in Ryko County Schools is a thriving community of diverse learners. However, with ongoing staffing shortages, we continue to face challenges in terms of leveraging staff time and expertise, as well as expanding life-ready learning.

[02:06:08] Not surprisingly, as school division leaders were focusing on these topics, they also came up in meetings with the Teacher Advisory Committee as an opportunity for growth. With that critical input, we knew that we needed to think outside the box and try something new.

[02:06:25] That's something new, includes Next Education Workforce. The Next Education Workforce was developed by Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College in response to the reality that traditional school programming doesn't work for all students, and teachers are leaving our profession.

[02:06:45] Their mission is to deliver meaningful and equitable learning outcomes, and we need to redesign the profession, the workplace, and how we prepare people for both. HCPS leaders cannot agree more. In response to the challenges, the Next Education Workforce partners with schools to better ensure deeper learning opportunities and to support teachers with focusing their work around areas of strength and interest.

[02:07:14] The school division became affiliated with the Next Education Workforce in 2021-2022. And in the past two years, the school division has learned how to implement Next Education Workforce models.

[02:07:31] In 2023-2024, select grades at Harvey Elementary School and Colonial Trail Elementary School are piloting these models. At each of these schools, there is an investment in leader and teacher expertise and experiences to drive learning, planning, and implementing of personalized learning in our schools.

[02:07:49] At the district level, we have committed to reflecting and connecting on how implementation can be supported and to championing the process at these two schools. There is no one-size-fits-all model in Next Education workforce models.

[02:08:09] The diverse assets and needs of each school inform the thinking and implementation of each model. However, all Next Education workforce models share several common elements, including school-based elements and team-based elements.

[02:08:25] In the select grade-level teams at Harvey and Colonial Trail, each teacher has engaged in teacher team training in the summer of 2023 in all of the elements. In the first pilot year, school leaders have empowered teacher teams with the autonomy needed to make decisions about daily schedules, learning spaces, and design learning experiences.

[02:08:48] Additionally, leaders have ensured that the school schedules are designed so that grade-level teams share the same students at the same time. Piloting teacher teams have been provided with daily protected planning time in the school schedule, and on some days, this planning time is extended for the design of deeper learning experiences.

[02:09:09] This slide outlines the team-based elements within the Next Education workforce. In year one, our piloting schools have leaned into the intentional grouping and regrouping of students based on students' needs and interests, with an emphasis on group assignments based on teachers' content expertise and the relationships with students.

[02:09:31] Furthermore, students are sharing multiple learning spaces within one room or multiple rooms according to learning task and need, and students are moving across these spaces throughout the school day. Let's hear from students and teachers from Harvey and Colonial Trail about how the implementation of this model has impacted their teaching and learning experience.

[02:09:55] We have great educators at Colonial Trail and we have great students at Colonial Trail and a great community that surrounds us. And even then, we noticed that our teachers were struggling with their ability to feel like they're really making an impact and getting as deep in the instruction as they would like to get.

[02:10:14] And so we started looking around and we came across Arizona State University's NextEd workforce. J-Rom, what did you write for your Chapter 2 summary? We have started this program where we are no longer responsible for only our classroom of 23, 24 students.

[02:10:33] We're now sharing our students with multiple teachers across our grade level so that we aren't just responsible for those students and doing every single thing for each of those students. have a good session too, okay, if you're in mind.

[02:10:49] - Throughout the day, students rotate around to different sessions, so each of us are responsible for teaching a different content area. I teach science and social studies and writing. One of my teammates

teaches math, and then another teammate teaches reading and phonics. And so the students move throughout our classrooms each day.

[02:11:06] They have about three sessions. - I specialize in math, so I teach math three times a day. But when I teach it, it's a mix of three different home rooms. so the kids are kind of grouped strategically. So the ones that maybe need to be pushed are kind of grouped in a similar session, so I have more time to enrich that.

[02:11:24] And then kids who might need a little bit more support are typically grouped together so that when I'm teaching a lesson, I can kind of cater that same math lesson that I'm teaching, but to meet their needs in a better way. - Have a seat on the rug. - Now I have 69 students instead of just my 23.

[02:11:44] And so now I get to teach all of the second grade in reading and phonics instead of just my home room class. It's not scary to have to deal with that many students because we are only working with them for a certain portion of the day. So I'm teaching science and social studies. I get to focus on that one subject area and make sure that all the students that I'm responsible for are really strong in that content area.

[02:12:06] But then I don't have to worry about, oh, are they also learning the standards they need to know for math? Am I also worried about, you know, what's going on with their reading? I'm really focused on just that specific content area and that gives me an opportunity to kind of enhance my knowledge and better my instruction for those students with that one subject.

[02:12:26] If a kid is struggling, there's two other teachers who can say like, hey, maybe this is what I'm doing in my classroom or like, yes, I also see that and we can brainstorm together because they like fully know that child. And so, it's kind of, you have more, but it's a shared responsibility, so it doesn't feel as overwhelming.

[02:12:43] We talk about this a lot at Colonial Trail, but you can't really make a connection all the time with all 23-year students. So, sometimes having other adults that they get to see, that they trust, that they know, want them to be successful academically and socially, it gives them another adult to, you know, build that strong connection with.

[02:13:02] Teachers, they teach me in different ways, and that's, like, unique, and that's why I like it. So we kind of got to decide how we wanted to structure the program, how we wanted to divide the subjects, like which subjects we thought would go best together. And then we got to say, like, no one said, hey, Ms. Duncan, you need to teach math. I kind of got to say, hey, I feel pretty comfortable with the math content. I would feel good planning that. And I don't plan it by myself. There's another person on my team who they're like in their own den. So their own set of three and we plan together.

[02:13:36] so it's still not me planning by myself there's still someone else there's a lot to process at first just it's a big like we had to just relearn so much of how to be a teacher and how to do this so it was nerve-racking at first but it's turned out to be really really beneficial for both the students and the teachers Zoe you got that one correct can you please tell us how you know what cultivated forests mean?

[02:14:03] Greatest at least let's see what you got let's see what you got Did you escape one? Yeah, I'm sorry. Great. Great. Good job. Our school was selected as maybe being a possibility to have a pilot of Next Education Workforce. And looking at what our staff, what we were doing, our community, what we were doing and innovation, thought that maybe this would be a good fit for us.

[02:14:27] Also looking at the staff retention rates that we have and looking at how can we make this model our own. own so it's not the model it's a model with fourth and fifth we're looking at our teachers and we were seeing where were their strengths what did they enjoy teaching and in looking at our data we felt we needed to revamp so around December we revamped and we then went to two teacher teams so they were then teaming and all teachers then began teaching their own reading and then we had other teachers that came in and taught on the other content areas. With

[02:15:05] that we also did a whole push-in model where we had our Title I reading teacher, Title I math teachers, SPED support, we had Next Education Workforce IA. All of these people as well as interventionists would push into the classrooms during their allotted time and help support in the instruction of our boys and girls and remediation.

[02:15:30] I think it allows you an opportunity to think beyond what we normally do day to day. I think that it gives you an opportunity to look at what are your teacher's strengths, to look at how your children specifically need to learn and listening to their voices of how they want to learn and giving them opportunities to choose.

[02:15:54] We don't have to do other den meeting stuff, but just like as a whole group. Well, it's important for us to have a say and really fully understand what we want it to look like. It was important for all six second grade teachers to be on the same page for what we wanted this to look like and how we wanted our days to flow. Really the planning and like the getting ready for the day piece is just so much less stressful. Not that there's like less expectation on you but it just feels like you can kind of do your piece like to the best of your ability.

[02:16:23] We already know now. It's actually been really awesome to get to learn and you know get to know more of the students on our grade level and gives them an opportunity to have relationships with more adults in the building as well. It really makes the day go by easier and flow much better for from a teacher perspective. I think it's been you know kind of a load off of our shoulders to not have to know that we're responsible for every single subject. I wouldn't say it's like perfect but you know there's definitely less responsibilities that I feel like are always on my to-do list. Everything's gonna get taught everyone's we're gonna remain on pace but we also want to hear how can our children best

[02:17:01] learn and giving them those opportunities to make those decisions as well at the division level we have continued to support schools implementing next education workforce models we have prompted school teams to imagine how teaching and learning differently would impact students and teachers throughout the school day and throughout this process the focus on the why behind the shift in thinking and practice has remained the norm moreover we have arranged for our piloting teachers and leaders to learn the elements of Next Education Workforce and think through what deeper learning will look like for students at their school.

[02:17:42] And this support for our piloting schools extends to prioritize the process of collectively planning lessons and units over a traditional planning product or lesson plan document. In doing so, central support staff from the Department of School Leadership, Teaching and Learning, and Professional Learning and Leadership has worked directly with piloting teacher teams at times this year. And we have also connected the teacher teams across Harvey and Colonial Trail Elementary schools to share their process and progress with implementing these models. Our central support team members visit Colonial Trail and Harvey at least monthly

[02:18:19] to monitor and support their work. And lastly, this central support team meets quarterly with the principals of Harvey Elementary and Colonial Trail Elementary schools. And while we have almost six weeks of school remaining, we have been thinking about and planning to measure the impact of implementing Next Education workforce models in our pilot schools. Among the ways that we aim to assess the significance of these models include levels of satisfaction with teachers and teams implementing these team-based and school-based models, alternate student measures, and rates of

[02:18:55] teacher turnover in teams implementing the models. And in terms of where we go from here, we definitely plan to offer opportunities for elementary school leaders to learn more about teaming models through the leaders and teams at Harvey and Colonial Trail Elementary Schools, and to support the expansion of Next Education Workforce models in interested schools, guide these schools with staffing challenges to utilize teaming models, and consider how these models could impact teaching and learning in our secondary schools. Thank you for this opportunity to update you about our initial implementation with next education workforce and we would be happy to entertain any questions that

[02:19:35] you may have all right it's good seeing you mr thorpe hadn't seen you in a while uh i will go ahead and open the floor with mrs sherry all right thank you so much i really appreciate this presentation um this is really exciting um when we look at you know i think a couple meetings ago, I said, Hemrico doesn't just do things different. We do it better. But this falls in another thing that falls into that category about trying to think, taking a step back from

[02:20:12] how we've always done things and how for the last couple of decades in general, elementary school nationally has been structured, right? Take a step back and say, can we do things different systematically. Can we change the system? Can we change the structure to do things different, to do things better? And it sounds like it's been pretty successful. It'll be interesting to see, as you said, those metrics that y'all are going to be looking at measuring in the next six weeks.

[02:20:46] Some things that really jumped out to me during the presentation is the idea of sustainability. we know that the education workforce as a whole there's not sustainability there's more people leaving that are coming in but just also looking at individual teacher turnover inner teacher individual teacher burnout people coming into this thinking it's a career and then deciding maybe this was just a season of my life i'll continue a career somewhere else and how do we create sustainability within the teaching profession. We've done that with career ladders,

[02:21:25] we've done that with some other things, but the idea of sustainability here of looking at, you know, I heard our teachers say it was less of a lift on them, that there is less on their plates. I heard protected planning, I heard a lot about autonomy to design what they need and what their students need. And that all contributes to both work-life balance, which is important for sustainability for all of us in our careers, but also professional satisfaction, which I think is really

[02:22:04] important. And so, you know, a small, a quick little anecdote, a very seasoned third grade teacher we have this year volunteered to move to fourth grade when there was a an opening and I was thinking why would you do that right like you figured it out like you have this special sauce like it's almost like breathing through the grades almost as natural to you as breathing and she said I just felt like I was becoming stale and I knew it was going to be more work and more of a lift

[02:22:39] to move grades, but I want to stay fresh for my students and I want to stay growing as a teacher. And this kind of reminds me of that, right? Ways for our educators to stay fresh for themselves, but it also

benefits our students. And so no specific questions for me at this time.

[02:23:02] Maybe they'll be a pop-up as my colleagues are thinking, I'm just really excited that we're looking outside the box and we're looking at ways on how do we improve teacher experience because that also can improve student outcome you know and as we just approved the budget that extra investment into extended teacher planning time and those sorts of things for elementary I think all these pieces work in tandem and Henrico on how to think outside the box on improving overall

[02:23:37] experience and getting creative to find solutions. So thank you. And shout out to Mr. Schott's been there. Shout out to our Colonial Trail Principal. Thanks for being here. Thanks for all your work and allowing your team to take this on and say, yeah, I'll try something new. Let's go. So you're always very enthusiastic there and great to see you. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. Thank you so much

[02:24:11] for this presentation. I have a first question. What grades does this apply to? I heard some second grade. I heard fourth and fifth. What grades? Yes. At Colonial Trail Elementary School, the piloting grade levels were grade two and grade three. And at Harvey Elementary School, the piloting grade levels are grade four and grade five. But I do want to be clear. When I first saw this, it was in a high school, actually, not an elementary school. And there are implications pre-K through 12 about, and I think, Mrs. Shea, your comments really pointed well to what this is.

[02:24:44] It's about rethinking a system, right? So traditional models, whatever they may be at the elementary or the high school level, and really redesigning the system in ways you might not think of easily. You know, when you think about some of the structures like bell schedules or one teacher to 25 students versus the idea of leveraging staff expertise across a group of students and grouping students differently and that's really what this work leans into and it can be you know that you're leaning into any number of those elements we saw in one of the early slides there were a lot of circles there so it isn't one model I think Tanya Holmes one of the

[02:25:22] principals said that Harvey's principal it's not about a model put into her school it's about leveraging a different way of thinking customizing it empowering the staff voice and student voice to create a system that better meets need. So it's certainly applicable across the board. That was a long answer to your short question. This is Gonsalva. Well, that's interesting when I think about it at the secondary level. But if you stay around in education long enough, you realize that really nothing's really new. And even though it's reimaged, because this reminds me so much

[02:25:57] of I have high school kids. And I'm thinking of when we used to, that's been done, at least was done at one of our elementary school in my district where teachers taught it was like an English social studies right it was team teaching already and I do want to point out this is far beyond teaming but yeah it does agree that the concept is not new yeah no it's not a new concept but I think what is new is that you might have teachers so for example in traditional teaming I was planning math, you were planning science, social studies, the idea of leveraging across a

[02:26:36] building or even across a grade level. And so I think what we see in our pilot is they were leaning on teaming here, but even at Harvey, they began to change in December the way that looked, who was responsible for what, who you might be planning with. You might be a fourth grade teacher in some of these models working alongside a third grade teacher. You might, you know, for example, your homeroom, probably switched with another homeroom in traditional models of teaming, but this might

blend kids who have the same need from two different homerooms to go with the teacher at different times. So to your point, yes, I think nothing's new, but in the structural way that

[02:27:11] the school day is set up, it is quite different and quite new in that teachers are often guiding what it might look like versus a model being implemented at the division level and put down. It's teachers being able to talk about what meets their need at the school level and the grade level.

[02:27:28] So I think it builds on that. I won't disagree with you there as far as teacher voice, which is extremely important. But I know my mom retired in 2000, and she team taught from Henrico schools at Montrevet Elementary. So I'm excited about reimagining.

[02:27:45] I think the most exciting part for me outside of the outcomes for our students is the enthusiasm of our employees. And what I keep thinking about when I listen to in this role, I think the thing when I look at turnover and I think about retention, it's not about the money, but yet it is about the money.

[02:28:06] It's about when folks leave and they leave education. I really try to focus in on that. And I think how can this, the exciting piece of this for me really is how can we transform education, which is what we do, but yet make it more life balance to what you said, Mrs. Shea, right? Where teachers aren't working so much after hours, all these after hour meetings all of the things that this board and prior boards have heard so the teacher voice

[02:28:42] component of this is is very exciting to me so now I'm going to ask does our planning time money the the board is hopefully going to approve this evening how does that play into this model or does it impact this model if a school does not choose it you still benefit from the additional expanded planning time at the elementary level?

[02:29:05] Dr. Cashwell, or team? No, no, we were both looking to answer. Go ahead. Thank you. So at Harvey and Colonial Trail Elementary Schools this year, they used the resources in their building, including the human resources and also the flexible thinking. And certainly as we work to expand this, our schools will be implementing team-based models and school-based models, using the resources in their building, and certainly the additional instructional assistance would would help with that okay so um and then the students are they

[02:29:43] grouped in their home room differently or part of the team teaching is because i know i grew up listening to my mom talk about that too so that part really appeals to me um and and not a one size fits all classroom for students that need different levels right it really does help us meet needs. Can you talk to me about that? I can. And so in terms of every student has a homeroom, but yet as they're moving around the classrooms throughout the day, they may not move around as a homeroom based on needs, based on interests, where they are within the unit of

[02:30:22] study. They may be flexing to rooms that relate to a chosen topic or a way that they're looking to apply their learning, whether it's a speech or whether it's a slide deck. So it's not one size fits all.

[02:30:41] It's not every group floats around like a traditional teaming model. And then, I guess, at different schools, what would it look like in the staffing model? Is this where central office staff supports? Because we have additional resources, of course, in our opportunity schools, right?

[02:30:59] So all of the extra supports pushing in, I got that. But what does it look like, for example, at a non-opportunity school without the additional layers? Is that where central office staff comes in and supports?

[02:31:15] Help me understand that. And first of all, we'll go back to some of the content we talked about in terms of helping to understand the why behind this. That the shift in thinking and this unlearning from our traditional one teacher, one class can really benefit the educators in the building, the educator, the educator teams, the staff as a whole. And by doing so, we can take care of take care of students. And then and then imagining what that learning could look like. And then based on the needs in that building, and it's not going to be the same across all buildings, but based on the needs in that building, then working with that

[02:31:53] that admin working with the teacher teams based on and the leadership team thinking about how we can implement any of these elements to help improve the student experience and the teacher experience so so when I see on the slide it says support expansion and interested schools so again we've talked so much I think the theme of today is consistency right that word came to mind um when I saw that up on this slide like consistency amidst building level autonomy What does that look like in terms of, because I can just, immediately I start thinking about equity.

[02:32:28] What does that look like across our division when you have folks opting in or opting out? Right? What is that, what are we thinking there? Yeah, I think, you know, you certainly, you know, whenever you're looking at changing a structure or doing something new, as much as we know this is really hitting the mark on helping us solve for challenges, we want to make sure there's deep understanding and buy-in at the building level, right? You don't want to add a lift to educators without educators understanding it or understanding this is something new or first for our school. So it's really important, you know, beginning this kind

[02:33:04] of deep systems change because it kind of goes far beyond the team. And while there are familiar elements, there are some pieces, particularly when you look at some of the secondary models that look different. School just looks different. The way you're serving students looks and feels different that there's an opportunity to have sort of our own teams and our own schools begin to do the work learn what it's like and then share that with others so while we begin at the elementary we'll begin looking at the middle and high school level and gaining interest from our building leaders and teachers who might be interested in trying this and then letting it spread from there

[02:33:41] and so you know the pilot schools have gained a lot this year and the two principals will really serve as leaders along with Mr. Thorpe and the other elementary directors, which is tremendous in their own learning community with their colleagues, to talk about what worked well.

[02:33:56] I've already been in buildings this school year. This is how fast this spreads. And while they're not pilot schools, I can count four or five elementary schools who tell me, ah, we were hearing about this work all year and we've already done X or we've done Y. I've got teachers who are rethinking the way they plan, who are rethinking the way they serve kids.

[02:34:15] So it's allowing, I think, freedom for autonomy, to your point. And that is a balance, Mrs. Kinsella, right? We want to make sure the standard of instruction is high for our students. We're meeting the standards and goals and that we're supporting our educators, but that we're looking at things differently in service of that.

[02:34:33] And these are two schools who dug deep to look at it differently and then are sharing that learning. and the more schools begin to implement various parts and pieces of this that will just continue that learning across our schools so that our teachers feel empowered to innovate and and approach the challenge differently in service of their students well i appreciate you um just mentioning the pieces and parts right you may not have to jump jump in on the entire concept immediately but the pieces and parts and this is something that i think um just you and your

[02:35:09] team and the board and prior board has done a great job in terms of listening. I know a lot of times we board members, we can't respond, you know, a public comment to everyone appropriately or written comment, right? But this is truly listening. It is listening. It's like this needs education needs to, with what we do for our students, it needs to transform with where we are now as to staffing, as to joy, right? I mean, employees and how they feel matter. So

[02:35:45] I'm just super excited about this because I've been every time through so many conversations with Dr. Cashwell, I'm constantly thinking so many of our employees, or maybe not so many, but some that have left us or just have shared feedback say private sector, private sector, well education of course is public sector but how can we make you know the work-life balance better for for all of our employees and this is really i'm checking a lot of boxes um as stated by actual

[02:36:19] employees that participated in it so thank you for the study i look forward to how this will expand and evolve i think it's going to be a game changer thank you so much chair atkins mr young all right thank you for your presentation um couple questions couple comments i love that it's innovative i love that we are reimagining the classroom um so one of my questions i guess a bunch of them were just answered with the second and third and then fourth and fifth um but my i guess my initial question is what are we hoping to gain out of this

[02:36:56] like what is the end result that you two are looking for at the end of this school year um when we start getting that feedback okay well i think first and foremost as many of your colleagues has said we're looking for teacher and student satisfaction right when you think back to our challenge and really trying to recruit and retain our teachers we want to make sure that we're providing a workplace for them where they feel that joy and they want to come to work every day and they have a purpose and i think we've seen that so far although we we have data collected in some small ways but not large scale yet but i think we we really want to see the impact for our

[02:37:32] deeper learning our personalized learning we want to make sure that our students individual needs are being met and then we want to make sure that we're in service of our teachers that we know are working hard for us and i would add and then scale that up across other schools right learn where are we hitting the mark in this where can we dig a little deeper and then share that and scale that across our school so that all can benefit from an innovative approach yeah and i love the collaboration especially amongst teachers i understand our kids uh anxiety when they are getting ready to get the new teacher for the next year and knowing that you have all teachers now

[02:38:10] so we are eliminating that that sort of barrier there of knowing who's going to be a teacher um but i just would like to employ us that i love the fact that we're paddling these programs i would have loved it more if we would have seen this at our opportunity schools and our um schools that are accredited with conditions i just think that such a positive program could go immediately into those schools and sort of help out but um all of my colleagues have already echoed all my questions i think it's amazing what we're

doing um reimagining the classroom so thank you thank you thank you mr irving thank you uh both for the presentation and

[02:38:48] i i want to couch all of my questions and the fact that i like this and i think that this is great um so they're all should be taken through that lens uh the first question is how are the schools chosen well we were we were very intentional as we we said during the presentation in richmond county uh diverse diverse county a lot of diverse needs a lot of amazing strengths it's a very big big county we were very intentional to choose two schools that were really different from each other and And also had leaders that were very interested and had risk-tolerant cultures.

[02:39:27] And Harvey and Colonial Trail were amongst those schools. Makes perfect sense to me. What are the costs of partnering with Arizona State University on this? There's no ongoing cost to participate in this.

[02:39:45] And a lot of the work that we've done with other school divisions, of course, has been free. some of the professional development that we engaged in at the beginning to really make sure that we were up to speed came with a small cost that we were able to pay for, but out of our professional learning funds, but overall zero.

[02:40:03] Okay. Um, and I, and I, I'm glad that Ms. Kinsella asked the question because I was thinking to myself and I didn't want to be too reductive, but I was like, this sounds an awful lot like middle school to me and not that that's a bad thing at all. And I want to say that, again, my, my comments are couched in that I like this and I think this is a good thing.

[02:40:21] but it did sound like that, but having the clarification on how it's different in different ways is useful and makes that seem like maybe this is something that also could trickle up levels as well. My last question is more philosophical. What if when we get the results back, there is no impact on students, but we find that it, you know, marginally helps retain teachers. Would we want to continue to do this? Because I, you know, education is very difficult from a data perspective where things are so we want to quantify everything in this world

[02:41:00] but so many things like the usefulness of things can't always be quantified in numbers and i think that i'm just interested from a philosophical level if we just do this and the kids are in the exact same place but maybe you know it marginally helps retain staff and makes them at least feel more valued i'm just curious what would be the future intent of it i think we continue digging digging through data including including measurable data whether it's attendance data behavior data at the elementary level progress and diagnostic results in reading and math

[02:41:35] but also i think we we would really need to work hard to measure some of these life-ready components and and the the six c's and the students demonstrations of the six c's throughout the the units of study with our with our piloting schools we we would really want to be go through through that data very carefully to make certain whether it's making an impact or not. And then if it isn't, we'd really have to go back and ask why. And that would inform our next steps of implementation and expansion. Yes, because I think that a thing can be good in and of itself

[02:42:08] without having to produce some sort of outcome. And I think maybe the effects of this wouldn't even be known until later on because maybe it has knock-on effects where this type of process of learning makes you better prepared for middle and high school where it is more differentiated and we can't even

know this for years and so i think yeah it's important to keep these things in context and not just remove something just because it doesn't immediately correct you know thank you absolutely and i do want to point out and of course we we kept the presentation at a high level but i think there's some more information i can share with the full board that

[02:42:45] I think help you see the bigger picture here in regards to what it can be as far as a K-12 shift in systems thinking. But I mean, to your point, and one of the reasons, you know, ASU is a research-backed university doing this. There's been years of research on teacher prep programs and implementation in school systems before they started sharing that this is something effective.

[02:43:09] So, I think there is research that supports this effort, and then nationally, organizations, you know, the AASA and others are saying, oh, hey, here's something that, you know, we're seeing strong results from. So, that's a starting point.

[02:43:26] To your point, you know, when I think of the challenge Mr. Thorpe laid out on the early slide, like expanding deeper learning experience for students and meeting the needs of our teachers and staff, those are really the outcomes we want to measure first and foremost. We certainly wouldn't want to see negative impacts like student achievement going down drastically or teacher retention rates trending the wrong way.

[02:43:46] I think absent those two things, we're really looking to answer the challenge at hand. And, you know, that specifically, a lot of that is anecdotal. And it's qualitative data points, not necessarily student achievement points.

[02:44:02] And I think we heard some of the testimonials just from our first year that support were trending in that direction. thank you thank you mr irving i only have a few uh suggestions and one question mr irving i was really aligned with trying to understand this election process and you responded to that question and in your response one of them was around risk tolerant cultures can you talk a

[02:44:37] little bit more about that to ensure for the public and anyone else we understand what that means we we have many schools that are that embrace change quickly and so let me say that differently chair atkins um colonial trail and harvey um embraced embrace change quickly and those were that's one of the reasons why those two schools were selected one of the reasons but there's nothing holding back others from joining in i want to make that clear we we also did not want to force upon schools who may have been managing a number of other efforts or change or staffing challenges

[02:45:16] and staffing challenges really being one speaking to your opportunity schools piece you know if you're still trying to get a team of fourth grade teachers and you may have some vacancies it'd be a hard thing to pull off so as we're stabilizing those schools and then looking at some of these models I think complement them really well but there's nothing you know to say that moving forward that we're limiting the participation but you know we certainly didn't want to force it upon schools who weren't ready willing and interested I think that those schools to have such a culture of allowing their teachers voice and so they you know didn't lock their teachers in they asked their teachers along the way is this working what do we need to do is this

[02:45:56] working what do we need to do so that teacher voice was incredible and I think you just can't speak enough about that in both of the schools that are in the pilot this year but to Mr. Thorpe's point we have all schools that are probably poised and ready to jump in now that they've heard about and I did ask

that question because sometimes in the selection process it's not easily identified what's a good candidate and when you try to measure culture or empowerment or embracing change

[02:46:31] there are three areas that I think in school divisions that probably aren't measured enough to even understand it and so it's organic you either know the culture of the school you can explain it but it's not documented often in black and white so I just wanted to give both of you an opportunity to elaborate on that. I do think this particular initiative is a great opportunity to do that. This election process, I would imagine there was a significant portion of this because of those two things. And because we know that, this might be a great time to memorialize those learnings in

[02:47:11] the space of culture and embracement. I don't prefer saying risk tolerant, but I'll just say embracing change. So that's just something for you to consider because you have a wonderful opportunity to document it and show others what it looks like measured. The other question I have is what is the time frame in which you'll have the results from your assessments? As soon as our school year is completed, we'll take a look at some of the measures that we're looking to use to assess effectiveness, whether it's teacher turnover, alternate student measures, teacher

[02:47:50] satisfaction. We expect that to be June, July. Thank you. I just wanted to kind of have a tickler for sort of checking in on it. And then the last part, which is interesting, as you are doing your assessments, I'm curious on what a new teacher would feel about this process. So perhaps that's something that you can put into your research to really take that segment that out purposefully to understand their perception. Yes and I believe although I would have to confirm with Mr. Thorpe

[02:48:27] I think one of the teachers at Colonial Trail is a newer teacher when we were able to go out and talk she talked about that experience of being newer and learning in a different way and how that really helped her by planning and collaborating with her grade levels so you know much and really getting to know students and different strategies so she gave us good kudos. I would imagine as a new teacher it's a fantastic way to become seasoned yes because you're organically paired with a mentor I mean however you want to say it but as a new teacher you are authentically paired

[02:49:05] not just forced because you have all these things in common with your planning time your curriculum the way in which you teach and so I'm just very curious but I tend to agree for a new teacher this would be amazing and I think it's something to watch. Unless there are other comments we're going to move on. Thank you so much. Thank you. We look forward to keeping you posted on really I will say just the leaning into innovative models and structures to better support our staff and students. We're grateful for the two teams who have participated this year the way they're sharing

[02:49:42] that learning across the school system and next last but not least in the lineup of presentations is really one of the highlights of every school year certainly for me and I know for the school board and for our two new board members you are in for a treat as you know as the school system leans in deeply to our commitment to equity and you can start making your way to the podium while I'm leaning in while we're leaning deeply into our equity work we know and that this is not the

[02:50:17] kind of work that happens from the top down you know it's something that requires the involvement and commitment of our students in our schools their voice in this work matters and understanding the equity issues that are unique to each school building our equity ambassador program is a key part of that and so each year we are thrilled to have our equity ambassadors come from each school and share the project they have worked on within their school community as they've been leaning into

issues of equity that are specific to their school communities and further our goals as a school system and our commitment to this work as it's outlined in our strategic plan so they are

[02:50:58] the guests we have today and i think they're kind of lined up around the corner from each school so you can't see we do have our students here but without further ado we're going to turn it over uh to our folks from the edo office who are going to kick us off introduce themselves and then our students from each school welcome thanks good afternoon esteemed members of the school board and superintendent cashwell my name is kyle mccallum i serve as an education specialist in our office of equity diversity and opportunity within this capacity i support our equity ambassadors program which is a platform aimed at fostering discussions among students from schools across our district on pertinent issues impacting our schools and community additionally we empower

[02:51:37] our students with the requisite knowledge and leadership skills to spearhead initiatives promoting equity diversity and inclusivity within their school communities the equity ambassador program stands as a pivotal component of our division strategic plan aligning closely with our commitment to equity and opportunity as well as safety and wellness eligibility for participation extends to all high school students following the completion of our application process Annually, we witness a robust response from students district-wide, with hundreds expressing interest in joining our program. We are keen on leveraging this momentum to further enhance our contributions within HCPS. I'm pleased to introduce Tiffany Dabney, our student voice

[02:52:17] coordinator within our office. As part of her role, she empowers our student leaders through supporting our Equity Ambassador field trips and running our Equity Ambassador Executive Committee leadership training series. She will now provide insight into the compelling presentations that our students have prepared for your consideration today thank you good afternoon esteemed school board members and superintendent cashwell the equity ambassadors program serves as a vital platform for our students to voice their experiences and perspectives regarding equity

[02:52:53] challenges within their high schools it provides a safe environment where students can openly identify issues share viewpoints and lead initiatives aligned with our division strategic objectives this year our focus has been on fostering critical thinking skills among students to facilitate meaningful changes promoting belonging and systemic improvements within their school environments as part of our 2023-2024 quarterly meeting themes we have structured sessions to address key areas session one was introduction to critical thinking

[02:53:27] Session two was volunteerism. Session three was our community of care. Session four was our cultural awareness field day and equity rodeo. Now let's turn our attention to the impactful events sponsored by our equity ambassadors across Henrico County. Each school group is required to organize at least two events or activities directly addressing issues of equity or inclusivity to maintain their equity ambassador charter through qualitative student feedback and quantitative data gathered district-wide groups have identified specific areas of

[02:54:04] concern our programs executive committee members will provide brief descriptions of these activities and the rationale behind their decisions to implement them during this academic school year the Academy of Virginia Randolph is not pictured in our presentation however we extend our gratitude to them for their participation in the inequity ambassadors program this school year now let's welcome Glenallen high school to share their contributions and kick off our student presentations thank you good

afternoon my name is Katherine Ritter and I represent Glenallen high school at Glenallen our first event was in

[02:54:43] partnership with RVA hand up of Chesterfield we partnered with them to provide basic necessities to our students population through a donation drive it was our way of fostering community and inclusion in our school Our second event is a culture week which is taking place this week.

[02:55:02] Tonight is our big event, a cultural night representing students of Glenallen High School. We are working with Multicultural Club and have invited other clubs as well as groups of students to have their own table in our commons. Students will be able to share their culture, religion, and other identities with others in an informative and fun environment.

[02:55:21] We have had a theme every day this week leading up to our big event tonight. Some of the things that we have done are hung flags of different countries and discuss traditional garb and its importance. We find this to be an important event at Glen Island High School because it showcases the vast diversity of our school community.

[02:55:41] Next, I would like to welcome Highland Springs High School. Good afternoon. My name is Odalis Flores, and I represent Highland Springs High School.

[02:55:58] This year, we really focused on the aspect of critical thinking and how we can think outside of the norm to engage our student population. We offered three events this year. our Native American Heritage Lecture, our AP Fair, and lastly, our Culture Week.

[02:56:14] For our Native American Heritage Lecture, we brought in Bailey Martin, who was able to shed light to the history of Native American culture through storytelling and lived experiences. This was insightful by not only providing us with information, but also displaying untruth within the community.

[02:56:37] Our second event was an AP Fair. This was held in February. We found this to be important because our school has the highest demographic of African-American student, yet the lowest percentage of students enrolled in AP courses. Therefore, we wanted to shed light on the AP courses held at Highland Springs High School as we give insight as what the classes entail and take some of the ground guard out of signing up for these classes.

[02:57:04] Our third event, which was not pictured in the slides, was a culture week. The event's main focus was to celebrate and educate students on different cultures and traditions around the world. Our activities included flag making, face painting, having a Tradition Aware Day, providing food from different cultures, celebrating school culture, which all had their own days to execute.

[02:57:35] Next, I would like to welcome Godwin High School. Good afternoon. My name is Ankita Mundo, and I represent Godwin High School. This year, the Godwin Equity Ambassadors decided that our goal would be to help create a space in our school where flags representing our student body's various ethnicities and identities would be displayed.

[02:57:59] We chose this project after various discussions both within our group and with our fellow students, specifically because we noticed that a sentiment that emerged among our peers, that cultural backgrounds were not discussed or highlighted as much as we wanted them to be at our school.

[02:58:16] In fact, conversations regarding ethnicity were seldom had within our student body. We saw displaying flags in a prominent location as a way to spark dialogue and create a sense of belonging, to say

that we're here and here to stay, and that our identities deserve to be in the spotlight.

[02:58:36] In implementing this project, we put out a survey to students and asking which ethnic backgrounds they had, as the data the school had available through PowerSchool did not account for multi-ethnic identities. Using this information, we worked to ensure the flags would represent our student body.

[02:58:55] The flags are currently being delivered, so the image you see on the slide is a reference image of what we will aim for the space to look like. We are very excited about this project and have also been planning a cultural night in tandem, which will be later this month. Thank you for your time. Next, I would like to welcome Tucker High School.

[02:59:18] - Good afternoon, my name is Nazifa Chowdhury and I represent JR Tucker High School. The Equity Ambassadors at Tucker worked on numerous events, all centered around one of three themes: initiative to better aid students new to the school, events fostering cultural competence within our staff, and fairs that served as community-wide celebrations of culture.

[02:59:41] Our first event was focused on aiding students new to the school. For this, we filmed tours complete with comprehensive voiceovers and multilingual captions, facilitating accessibility and inclusivity for diverse audience.

[02:59:58] We continued this project by enlisting assistance of our students to extend personalized in-person tours, ensuring newcomers seamlessly familiarize themselves with Tucker's facilities and classroom locations.

[03:00:15] For our second event, we hosted an ice cream social hoping to foster a sense of community to upcoming students and existing students.

[03:00:30] Additionally, we hope to encourage these positive interactions in a sociable environment. Lastly, we are hosting our annual culture fair featuring food trucks, culture exhibits, a fashion showcase, and more, highlighting global traditions and customs.

[03:00:46] This event will be open to not only Tucker Schools, but also the entire community. Next, I would like to welcome Deep Run High School.

[03:01:02] - Good afternoon, my name is Yithika. - And I'm Mentala, and we represent Deep Run High School. Our Equity Ambassadors chapter has provided a plethora of activities to our community of students. One of the first events we created is Inclusivity Week, hosted with our club members and where we celebrated minority communities.

[03:01:23] This year, we learned that our school is now a minority-majority school, where cultural minority groups make up more than 50% of our school population of our student and staffs. To celebrate this, we highlighted religious groups, ethnic languages, cultural groups, mental and physical ability communities, and the LGBTQ community.

[03:01:42] Our goal for this event was to help students recognize and appreciate the various identities that they might share with other students and teachers at our school. Our second event this year was our Culture Day, with over 500 guests attending. This event allowed students to showcase their heritage and culture through various activities including stations, a fashion show, a talent show, and food.

[03:02:06] There was a total of five stations, which were Hawaiian art, henna art, languages games, African waist beats, and a photo booth. The stations included an element from each continent around the world. As for the fashion show, students wore their cultural clothing and walked down a red carpet to highlight their roots.

[03:02:25] The talent show had singing and dancing acts related to the students' countries of origin. In addition to all these performances, guests were able to taste a diverse amount of spices and recipes from all around the world. We applied for a grant from Henrico Education Foundation and were able to obtain additional funding to make this event come to life.

[03:02:45] We had multiple volunteers from our PTSO and immense support from our administration and teachers. Thank you for your time. Next, I would like to welcome Henrico High School. Good afternoon. I am not a student at Henrico High School, but I am a proud school counselor and a proud graduate of Henrico High School, and I'm stepping in for our students today.

[03:03:12] This year, we held two events at Henrico. The first was the Shade of Blackness panel, which was done to showcase the beauty that lies within the different hues of blackness. We also thought that it was important to dispel negative tropes that oftentimes live within our community.

[03:03:29] Our second event was the Henrico High School Caring Closet, which was created to foster a sense of community and support within the school while empowering students to be able to focus on what is most important, and that is the educational process.

[03:03:45] Through this, we were able to promote equity and inclusion by addressing and understanding that not everyone has the basic necessities. This helped us to foster an environment of empathy and strengthen relational bonds within our school community.

[03:04:01] Next, I would like to welcome Douglas Freeman High School. - Good afternoon, my name is Christian Washington. - My name is Sarah Vera. - And we represent Douglas Freeman High School. This year, Sarah and I pondered the question, how can Epcot Ambassadors positively affect our school community?

[03:04:21] Through careful consideration, we identified the five key social determinants of health, integral to our school's community and well-being, leading us to adopt the theme, Your Health Matters. Our conversation was an overarching theme to ensure every individual within our school ecosystem felt valued, supported, introspective of their status or role inside of our school.

[03:04:44] Through this event, we emerged our flagship event, Emerging Leaders, a platform featuring esteemed professionals from diverse industries including Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan and the Bank of America's Senior Vice President of HR, Mike Rosser. This panel discussion centered on leadership, experiences, and the potential for young leaders like ourselves to do more in our community and to affect positive change within our community.

[03:05:08] For students, Emerging Leaders provided invaluable networking opportunities and insights into our post-high school endeavors. In order to further serve our community, Freeman's Equity Ambassadors partnered with the Takahoe YMCA. Christian and I have burned a position, partnered with the YMCA on their Mission Equity and Inclusion Board, serving as Board of Directors. Through this position, Christian and I have consulted with the YMCA to provide insights into what teens want and need regarding mental health and physical well-being. This has especially helped with their goal this

[03:05:48] year, which was to improve mental health surrounding teens. An example of the work we have done was after much brainstorming and qualitative data collected. These past couple months, we officially established free teens-only Pilates classes at the Tuckahoe YMCA. Christian and I have also consulted alongside the board regarding their monthly programs, targeted specifically towards kids and teenagers.

[03:06:11] We discussed what kind of activities and experiences teens would be receptive to, participate, and perhaps even learn in. We are currently working on a joint venture between the YMCA and Freeman Equity Ambassadors called World Refugee Day, where we will celebrate refugees in our area, provide them with any information they might not already have, and share their culture, thus making them feel closer to home, and showing them that Henrico will always support them.

[03:06:39] Next, I would like to welcome Hermitage High School. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Katherine Atre, and I represent Hermitage High School. We kicked off to the year with a fantastic Literacy Night, where Hermitage students and families from Henrico County had the opportunity to get an up-close and personal experience on our Equity Ambassador Group.

[03:07:04] During this event, we offered free books, along with engaging activities for families, students, and staff. Our Literacy Night has been proven to be an impactful event for our school community by offering a safe educational environment for our diverse student population, while encouraging everyone to participate and engage in games that provide educational resources on all the different ethnicities that attend our school.

[03:07:26] Our second event is taking place this week in lieu of the completion of Ramadan. Since Hermitage is home to a very diverse group of students, specifically Muslim students, we have planned a massive cultural night and fashion show to showcase the Muslim culture and spread light on our religion.

[03:07:43] Next, I would like to welcome the Henrico Virtual Academy. Our Henrico Virtual Academy student had to step out, so I'm gonna step in for them and read what they have here on their slide.

[03:08:00] So this year, our goal was to build some existing events that we have had and add to some new ones. Our first event was our Friends Fest, which we do in lieu of a Valentine's Day dance. Because our school environment is virtual, it is always nice when we can create opportunities for us all to meet as a school community, which is why we created this annual event.

[03:08:20] To make this event inclusive, we polled our middle schoolers to see what kind of things would like to do and combined it into our Friend Fest 2024. We had gym games, dancing, a movie screening, crafting, a meditation in quiet area, tarot card readings, caricature drawings, Mario Kart competitions, and more. This event was completely free to our students thanks to the Equity and Diversity Office, outside donations, and being very creative. We thought it important to also not enforce a fancy dress code to ensure that all of our students felt welcome to participate. Our second event, though not pictured, was our student-led teacher cultural

[03:08:59] sensitivity training. Our goal for this was for our teachers and administrators to gain a better understanding of why students choose to attend Henrico Virtual Academy and how to better serve them. One of the biggest disconnects within our school is the lack of understanding and lived experience our teachers don't have, which we feel makes it hard for them to empathize with us.

[03:09:21] Because of this, we structured a training to educate them on how to better serve us and create better learning environments. Our plan is to compile a list of student speakers and anonymous quotes

from students that wish to share their reasons for attending Henrico Virtual Academy and how Henrico Virtual Academy could better serve those needs.

[03:09:41] Last but not least, I would like to introduce our speaker from Verina High School. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Noah Cypress and I represent Verona High School. This year we have been focused on bringing light to many facets of diversity through our diverse student population. Our first event of the year was a Winter Wonderland where our Equity Ambassadors set out to improve overall knowledge of our school by celebrating all of the many holidays we represent. Our event was called Winter

[03:10:21] Wonderland. During this event our goal was to again increase the knowledge of our students by providing them with interactive activities and educational lessons to expand their understanding of how others celebrate during the holidays. Our second event which is not pictured though will take place May 10th and this is our Varina Olympics which aims to bridge the gap between our disabled and non-disabled students now at this time i would like to ask miss daphne back to the

[03:10:56] podium as we close on behalf of the department of equity diversity and opportunity and our illustrious equity ambassador executive committee i would like to say thank you all so much for your time and attention this afternoon if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask i was going to offer an opportunity for equity ambassadors to come forward again just to be around the podium as our school board members respond to your outstanding presentations.

[03:11:32] Amazing. Well done. And what a gift that we're receiving. It's been a very productive time. And so having you here really is a gift.

[03:11:48] Your presence is the present. And it's so amazing to just look into each of your faces here. I think that you're just a beautiful ripple of what this world is and needs. and um i'm going to pause and allow my colleagues to speak because they're probably saying to themselves alicia is going to get emotional so i will go ahead and turn the floor over and start with mr young all right thank you all for the presentation um i mean i'm amazed you all are

[03:12:24] finding solutions to problems at your individual schools and you're providing exclusivity for everyone there i mean i don't think y'all understand the lives that y'all are impacting some students don't have places to turn and don't have people to talk to you guys are providing that for them and i just i just can't say it loud enough how proud i am of you all you all are leaders you make me want to go back to high school and do things differently and that's what it's about is kind of moving the culture forward and things forward so i'm just so thankful um for all of y'all for providing that sense of belonging for so many students and i'm guessing these are

[03:13:03] high schools i mean even the virtual academy just getting together it's huge because you don't get to see each other i know they didn't present today but i mean all of you all are just finding solutions to problems and just keep up the good work um as a schoolboy member i am so proud of y'all thank you mr irving yeah i thank y'all so much i as a high school teacher myself i know how easy it is to not be involved in things and i think a lot of people oftentimes choose the easy route but wanting to do good things for your fellow classmates even if they maybe in the

[03:13:37] moment don't appreciate it as hard and so i want to commend you on doing the hard thing and doing the thing that you know will be what's best for your your classmates and your school and will hopefully continue on past you and so i thank you and i encourage you to continue this type of

contribution as you move forward into your lives after high school. I would be remiss if, you know, you didn't continue to do it because this is a future group of leaders and I appreciate it.

[03:14:10] Mrs. Kinsella. I just, I just can't even with you. I mean, the future, I say this every time I'm around the students, I say two things. Our future is so bright. And then number two is all we ever need to do is ask the students so just thank you I tell you you responded to an equity and opportunity item that the board was presented with last June during our community feedback and it was about being culturally responsive boy you guys really showed up and I'm just going to

[03:14:48] highlight some of the things that I think one of the most amazing things I heard and I was like wow. You're exactly right. And we probably ought to invite you to more meetings to really get feedback from you as a specific group of stakeholders bringing on, representing all of our schools and just bringing feedback because one of our friends, I just wrote down difficult conversations, right? Difficult conversations. We often say difficult conversations are difficult

[03:15:22] difficult for a myriad of reasons, but they must be had. So just bravo for that. And then just some of the other things you're solving for. I mean, you found funding, you've resolved inclusivity, you're spreading inclusivity and belonging in your schools, the difficult conversations really.

[03:15:41] And it's interesting, humanity. Someone said the word humanity, or at least it came to mind while you were presenting. That's as we work on the strategic plan, our next one, after 2025, humanity is coming up a lot. And I hope, has the strategic plan visited equity ambassadors yet?

[03:16:02] Yes. Has it been? Yes. Okay. They didn't maybe know to call it that. Okay. Yes. At our last equity ambassadors meeting, Derek came and did a focus group with all of our equity ambassadors, And they spent about an hour giving lots of great feedback. Well, I would love to see detailed feedback, really, because after what you brought this afternoon, I don't want to monopolize just so much praise.

[03:16:25] And, you know, seeing the flags, because we do represent over 100 countries, right? Like, we just we come from everywhere. And it's important that that we're seen, heard and valued, right? Not just our employees, but everyone.

[03:16:41] Everyone wants to come to school in Henrico schools. Everyone wants to come to work in Henrico schools, right? That we really are a great place to be. And you guys really are leading the way. So thank you. And I'm sorry I'm going to miss the Glen Allen High School cultural night this evening, but I'm going to be here.

[03:16:58] I hope you're going to make it. I hope you're going to. Yeah, Catherine, I hope you're going to make it back in time. So anyway, thank you so much, really, Chair Atkins. Ms. Sher. So great to see all of y'all. Thank you for being here.

[03:17:15] Just, you're so articulate, so inspiring, so solutions-oriented. So I appreciate all of y'all being here. Akita, if there is a celebration when the flags come in and y'all put them up, I'd love to come and help y'all celebrate.

[03:17:31] I think so perceptive of y'all to realize that Power School doesn't reflect everything. And so I love that. Great to see Christian and Sarah again from Freeman. We've gotten to see each other.

[03:17:48] And they shouted out when I was at their culture night. They're like, if you think this is great, you have to go to Tucker. And they said that Tucker's culture night is like next level. So do we know the

date of Tucker's culture night? Yes, it's next week, Sunday, April 28th from 1 to 5 p.m.

[03:18:11] It will be held in the Tucker Commons. right there we go now everyone knows Sunday April 28th from 1 to 5. But thank you all for being here and you know just to highlight I know a lot of the work that y'all presented last year and the year before is still ongoing in your schools and so what y'all are sharing today are new initiatives for your school but things like Freeman's AP Fair continues that y'all started and at all of your schools. The initiatives that y'all started have taken root. They've become part of your school culture, and these are additional layers. So thank you for all of the investment that y'all have made.

[03:18:50] Many of y'all have made for years. Many of y'all are just starting to make. It is a joy to have y'all here. It is a joy to see the fruits of your labor. You really are where the best solutions come from. So thanks for giving us a little glimpse into that. And I'll close. I wrote a small statement.

[03:19:08] I was not sure if I was going to change it or say it at all, but I am going to say it and just read it to you. Your courage to embrace ownership and decision-making, whether it's for yourself, your school, or the wider community, is inspiring.

[03:19:31] Each bold step you take, it will strengthen your confidence and the ones that are watching you. You are always being watched. And it's a beautiful thing to be watched because of greatness, because that's what you are.

[03:19:50] You are the example of courage for those who lack courage. But the more that they see you, the more courageous they will become. You are exceptional, and I love you.

[03:20:06] Thank you so much for being here. Dr. Cashwell. That called for applause. So I will just again echo the sentiments you've heard from our board members, how incredibly impressive your presentation was and how moved we are by the work you're doing and the commitment that you have to this work is everlasting.

[03:20:29] I mean, it is true change that you're a part of shaping and helping make Henrico County a better place. So there's not enough things to go around for that work. But before we conclude, and we've certainly thanked the students for your tremendous energy, I want to thank Tiffany and Kyle from the Department of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity for your work in leading our young people, our equity ambassadors, and the many other ways you lead and serve in equity work across our school system. We value you so much. And the fruits of your labor with the equity ambassador was just something to see today. So thank you so much. We

[03:21:08] really appreciate you being here. I know it is long past the school day being over and you were very generous in being here to share with us. Thank you. And at this time, we're going to take

[03:21:37] a brief recess. Good evening. We are going to reconvene at this time. The next item on the agenda is the public hearing to solicit input related to a resolution for the conveyance of

[03:22:09] surplus property 4.78 plus acres at Mount Vernon Adult Education Center located at 7850 Carousel Lane. Today's public hearing is for the sole purpose of soliciting the public's input related to this resolution and the board will be voting on the resolution at today's meeting. Some citizens may have signed up in advance with the school board clerk. We will follow that list first and

[03:22:42] then allow anyone else who wishes to speak to do so after we have completed the list. We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and neighborhood or school affiliation if applicable. Speakers must present their remarks to the school board not the audience and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk. Once you have finished speaking if you did not sign up in advance we ask that you write your name and contact information

[03:23:19] on the sign-in form located on the podium. Okay any use of profanity or inappropriate language will be ruled out of order. Speakers are allotted three minutes to address the school board.

[03:23:38] To assist you in tracking your time to address the school board, there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen. I will also indicate when your time has expired. The school board is here today to hear from you.

[03:23:57] We will not be responding to speakers, but we will carefully consider your comments. We appreciate your attendance here this evening and for providing your input. If there are any individuals in the audience that wish to speak, would you please approach the podium?

[03:24:22] And I'll just say it a second time to ensure everyone has heard me. If there are any individuals in the audience that wish to speak, please, about the property, yes please come to the podium seeing none and hearing none please let the record indicate we

[03:24:53] did not have any speakers on this topic the next item is unfinished business colleagues i invite you to address any outstanding matters at this time hearing none we will proceed to the next agenda item which is new business board members do you have any new business moving on to the last item on our agenda which is the announcement of the meeting dates

[03:25:25] the next meeting is today at 6 30 p.m right here in the new bridge auditorium thank you for attentively attentively listening this concludes our meeting



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