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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, September 26, 2024

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[00:00:01] good afternoon today is september 26 2024 welcome to the henrico county school board meeting also this meeting is being live streamed on the hcps website the first item on our agenda is the approval of the agenda is there a motion i move that the school board approve the agenda for tonight's meeting thank you mrs kinsella is there a second second all in favor say aye aye any opposed

[00:00:40] the eyes have it the agenda is approved also this is a moment where we recognize our visitors on behalf of the school board we warmly welcome our visitors and express our sincere gratitude for your presence today your involvement is invaluable to the progress of our schools and the broader community also we have delegate bowling with us this evening thank you so much

[00:01:14] for being here dr cashwell thank you chair atkins members of the board and to our visitors good evening we'll begin our meeting as we always do with the pledge of allegiance which will be followed by a moment of silence and we are so pleased this evening to have students from our henrico virtual academy with us to lead us in the pledge of allegiance their principal gary marshall will come forward to the podium with the students to introduce them and then they'll lead us in the pledge once he's introduced them so mr marshall would you please come forward

[00:01:44] along with your students and mr marshall if you would introduce them and then i'll have the group stand it'd be my pleasure and thank you all for inviting us here today i'm gary marshall principal of Henrico Virtual Academy, and I have with me Michelle Mayer. She teaches kindergarten and first grade with us, and we have some students here, including Grayson Mayer. We have Alexia

[00:02:21] and Alex Wilson. We have Miles Porter. We have Sondra Requino-Guzman, Truth Saunders Green, and Ailey and Avery Webb. Welcome, students. If everyone would please stand for the Pledge of

[00:02:39] allegiance. You did a beautiful job and we'll now pause if you would remain standing for a moment of

[00:03:18] silence. And that concludes our moment of silence and as we're taking a seat how about a big round of applause for our students from the virtual academy. And as they're making their way to the seats we're going to make our way down front for our performance highlight which is going to feature

[00:03:47] the freeman high school drum line all right good evening madam chair members of the board dr cashwell colleagues and guests my name is christopher mosley i am the education specialist for performing arts it is my pleasure to introduce for our performance highlight this evening the

[00:04:24] douglas freeman high school drama line under the direction of mr rob blankenship mr blankenship is in his 24th year of teaching and his 19th year as director at freeman high school he's a member of of the National Association for Music Education, the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association, the Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity, and the Virginia Music Educators Association.

[00:04:50] I would be remiss if I didn't share that Mr. Blankenship is an active and upcoming composer. His piece entitled "From Sand to Sky" will be performed this year at the Midwest International Band Clinic in Chicago, Illinois, by the Vandercook College of Music. That's impressive.

[00:05:12] And so the Freeman High School Band is an eight-time Virginia honor band with a long-standing tradition of excellence, and they have won numerous awards and accolades over the years. So if you could help me welcome the Freeman Drumline for our performance. Thank you.

[00:05:26] What an incredible performance. Thank you again to our Freeman High School Drumline. They've

[00:10:00] exited but another round of applause and it brings us such joy when our students share their time and talent so as our students who led us in the pledge and our performers are leaving we want to thank them again and their families for allowing them to be with us this evening to kick off our meeting our next item is going to be our recognitions for the virginia high school league 5a state

[00:10:29] champions. Madam Chair, members of the school board, Dr. Cashwell, colleagues and guests. My name is Rick Lilly. I'm the education specialist for student activities here in Henrico County Public Schools. And tonight we are honored to be here to recognize our 2024 spring state

[00:11:04] championship teams continuing Henrico's tradition of athletic excellence in the state of Virginia. What makes this recognition tonight very, very special is the fact that both the girls lacrosse and the girls' tennis teams clinched their fourth consecutive VHSL State Championship.

[00:11:21] And I'll repeat, fourth consecutive VHSL State Championship, marking a historic moment for the Douglas Freeman High School and Henrico County Public Schools. So at this time, I will ask the

members of the Freeman lacrosse and tennis team, you both can come up at the same time.

[00:11:47] You all can do it here. We're going to do this together since they both have met this historic moment. okay freeman girls lacrosse head coach christina d'angelo athletes present are laney gilman molly bannister elo watts and emerson woodley we would like to congratulate coach d'angelo and these members on a fantastic and historic season they finished the regular season 12 and 2 they had

[00:12:25] four players earn first team all state and they had nine players win all region honors they capped the season with the class 5a state championship and the overall team gpa is a 4.3 displaying academic excellence as well as excellence on the tennis court with six all metro players as identified by the richmond times dispatch and a particularly distinct honor coach d'angelo was named as the coach of the year by u.s lacrosse so a big round of applause for the lacrosse team

[00:12:59] next we would like to please pass that down to lacrosse folks next we would like to recognize coach larry parpart and assistant coach courtney griner along with members of the 2023-24 douglas freeman girls tennis team caroline verterie the team finished with a 19 and 2 record they won their fourth consecutive region 5c championship in a really amazing match if anybody was there

[00:13:37] it was really just intense and came down to the to the last minute was just fantastic energy in the you know in the in the courts and and there in the school so and after a quarterfinal and semifinal state victories they advanced to the state team finals where they defeated Great Bridge five to two to win their fourth consecutive class five state team championship and their overall team GPA like the girls lacrosse team is a 4.1 displaying academic excellence as well as excellence on the tennis courts. In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each team member, the Douglas Freeman girls lacrosse and girls tennis team and their coaches,

[00:14:15] families, and supporters. These achievements are a reflection of the unwavering support and dedication of the entire Freeman family. And as Dr. Marshall always says, go Mavs.

[00:14:31] Then you shake your hands with that. All right, one more round of applause, please.

[00:15:31] We're going to continue celebrating and recognition by acknowledging heritage through our proclamations.

[00:15:48] Mr. Young, would you please do the honors? Proclamation Czech, Italian, and Polish Heritage Month, October 2024. Whereas the Czech, Italian, and Polish community stand as diverse representations of historic and cultural contributions with local, national, and global impact.

[00:16:06] And whereas vital contributions to the field of science and engineering, industry, entrepreneurship, the fine performing and culinary arts, civil service, and politics have been made possible by Czech, Italian, and Polish Americans. And whereas citizens are encouraged to participate in activities that recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the cultural diversity and the significant contributions made by Czech, Italian, and Polish Americans.

[00:16:31] and whereas Henrico County Public Schools and the Henrico community recognize and embrace our vital Czech, Italian, and Polish communities that continue to shape and strengthen our schools, our county, our country, and our world. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as Czech, Italian, and Polish Heritage Month and encourages observance and celebration to the attention of our citizens.

[00:16:58] recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024. Thank you, Mr. Young. We're going to keep it going by recognizing National Principal Appreciation Month.

[00:17:13] For this acknowledgement, I yield the floor to Mrs. Kinsella. Thank you, Chair Atkins. Proclamation, National Principal Appreciation Month, October 2024. Whereas principals play a critical role in the success of students and schools, setting the academic tone and fostering a positive learning environment.

[00:17:36] And whereas principals are the driving force behind student achievement, bringing vision, dedication and determination to ensure the success of every student. And whereas principals work tirelessly to balance the needs of students, teachers, and the community. Often with little recognition, but always with a commitment to creating safe, supportive, and engaging schools. And, whereas, principals are vital leaders in education who inspire and mobilize staff and students towards shared goals and a common

[00:18:14] vision for success. And, whereas, October is designated as National Principal Appreciation month a time to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible contributions of principals across the nation now therefore let it be proclaimed that the school board of henrico county public schools recognizes october 2024 as national principal appreciation month thank you mrs kinsella we're going to keep it going by recognizing national bullying prevention month mrs shea whereas bullying

[00:18:51] is willful, aggressive, and/or unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate a person or group of people, involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, and is repeated over time, inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress, and whereas bullying presents in various forms, including verbal, physical, social bullying, as well as cyberbullying, which takes place over digital devices, and includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, or false context and/or personal or private information about someone else,

[00:19:26] causing embarrassment or humiliation, and whereas various researchers have concluded that bullying is the most common form of violence affecting millions of American children and adolescents annually, and whereas targets of bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, dropping out of school, and may may fear activities as riding the bus, going to school, interacting online, and attending community events, and whereas schools play a vital role in preventing and addressing bullying behavior, and HCPS is committed to ensuring that schools and classroom settings

[00:20:04] are safe, supportive, inclusive, and nurturing environments for all children and adults. Now therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as National Bullying Prevention Month, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. We're not done yet.

[00:20:30] Mr. Irving, would you please read the proclamation for National Youth Substance Abuse, excuse me, Substance Use Prevention Month? Sure. Whereas the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs can have significant and long-term health and academic consequences for children and adolescents. And whereas, adolescent substance use trends in Virginia strongly parallel those found at the national level, with the exception of problematic alcohol use, which is reportedly higher among Virginia youth. And whereas, schools provide an ideal setting for promoting connectiveness,

[00:21:08] enhance reliance, and educate youth on mental health and substance use topics. And whereas, HCPS dedicated, licensed, school-based mental health staff utilize a strength-based service delivery model to provide services and interventions focusing on developmental assets, risk-slash-protective factors, prevention, education, and resiliency skill building.

[00:21:33] Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as National Youth Substance Use Prevention Month. recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024.

[00:21:50] Thank you, Mr. Irving. Next month is National Farm to School Month, which recognizes schools, farms, communities, and organizations across the country that engage in food education, promote school gardens, and provide school lunches filled with healthy, local ingredients.

[00:22:09] I am honored to read the proclamation. Whereas a robust Virginia Farm to School program connects schools directly with community farmers and local food hubs and provides reliable ongoing markets to support virginia's local agricultural economy and whereas public schools in the commonwealth serve approximately 655 000 lunches daily to nourish students resulting in more than

[00:22:41] 112 million lunches served during a 180-day school year; and, whereas, there is a growing need to prioritize access to healthy foods for young people due to the critical health concerns of childhood obesity and the increasing incidence of Type 2 diabetes in children, which are both diet-related and prevalent across the Commonwealth; and, whereas, the The United States Congress has designated October as National Farm to School Month.

[00:23:17] Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as National Farm to School Month, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024.

[00:23:41] And we're not done yet. We're going to continue with proclamations and recognition. The next one is Cybersecurity Awareness. Mr. Young, would you please do the honors?

[00:24:01] Absolutely. Proclamation National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, October 2024. Whereas Henrico County Public Schools recognizes the importance of cybersecurity in protecting students, staff, and families as we navigate an increasingly digital world. And whereas Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2024-themed Secure Our World empowers all individuals with simple, effective ways to safeguard their personal and organization's data and contribute to a safer online environment.

[00:24:30] And whereas promoting key cybersecurity practices, including the use of strong password, multi-factor authentication, software updates, and the recognition and reporting of phishing, is essential in reducing cyber threats within our schools and community. And, whereas, education and ongoing awareness initiatives for staff and students play a vital role in fostering a proactive culture of cybersecurity, ensuring that all members of the Henrico County School Division are informed and vigilant in their digital interactions.

[00:25:00] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month and commits to supporting year-round cybersecurity education and awareness efforts across the division. recognized by the school board of Enrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024.

[00:25:22] - Thank you, Mr. Young. And the last item of recognition and acknowledgement is for Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. Mr. Irving, would you please read the proclamation?

[00:25:54] - Whereas according to the December 1st, 2023 child count, Enrico County Public Schools has 7,052 students a diagnosed disability and whereas specific learning disabilities are conditions that result in learning challenges in particular skill areas such as reading writing or math and whereas specific learning disabilities may include dyslexia dysgraphia and other processing disorders and whereas individuals with specific learning disabilities may receive store process retrieve or communicate certain information differently and whereas early identification and specialized

[00:26:33] instruction are key in helping individuals learn strategies and overcome their limitations. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2024 as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 26th day of September 2024. Thank you, Mr. Irving. Dr. Cashwell.

[00:26:58] Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board. The next item on our agenda is our Henrico highlights and I am proud each month to spotlight the exciting and engaging learning that is happening in schools and centers all across our division. Tonight we visit the new Middle School Center for Innovation at John Rolfe Middle School, a fun and inspiring space where students can tap into their creativity, participate in hands-on projects, and explore business and STEM careers through a special partnership with vcu's da vinci center for innovation and various local

[00:27:34] business and community groups students are learning from experienced professionals in high profile profile fields recently a representative from the carnegie foundation also stopped by the classroom take a look what are you thinking about testing i'm testing It's fantastic to have Dr. White from the Carnegie Foundation come through and see what we're doing in our classroom and the collaborative learning going on.

[00:28:04] Are you collaborative? We know that she has a passion for real-world learning and bringing in those problem-solving skills and as a former Highland Springs educator it was just great having her feedback coming through the classroom and having her support.

[00:28:21] Like before you jump in and try to solve a problem you're actually trying to figure out what the problem is I love that it's been going great we're off to a wonderful start I've already gotten to do some hands-on projects and labs through my classroom which is really the main goal is to have those students explore learning to boost that engagement they're understanding the why to their learning and then we're adding in the how so it's not just like why are we learning this miss Palmer it's like look it can go to every

[00:29:00] subject and it kind of brings it all together for them. So what's the best type of shoe for sports? The best shoe for sport? I would say New Bouncers. And I should note that like our other centers, students don't have to be zoned for Rolfe Middle School to attend and in fact the application for the next school year opens on October 7th and we anticipate a lot of interest. Families can get more information about the center

[00:29:34] and the application process on our school division website, HenricoSchools.us. Also happening next week, October 2nd, is National School Custodian Day, and I can tell you firsthand that schools simply cannot function without our amazing custodial staff.

[00:29:55] These professionals work tirelessly to keep our learning spaces clean, well-stocked, and organized, and i am so proud to honor the hcps custodians as this evening's heart of henrico we appreciate our custodians because they are such a key part of our school community they make sure that our students and staff have a safe environment to thrive in by making sure that everything is clean

[00:30:37] we want our students to walk into a building that feels clean and warm and what the research shows is that students learn best when they're in welcoming warm environments. I like to think we have probably the best custodial staff in Henrico County and that people always come into our school and talk about how clean our school is, how friendly our custodians are. They are an integral part of our team. Our custodians really do all of the behind the scenes work to make sure

[00:31:14] that our building is amazing. Sometimes we make jokes that like the floors are so shiny and clean that like you could sit down and have lunch on them all of our custodians are important and our kids do know them our kids love mr miles he builds wonderful connections with our students when he's not here they're always asking where's mr miles where's mr miles they're here before i get here and they're here after i leave as well so they're really good to us we like to make sure we take care of them as well we want to make sure that we do recognize our custodial staff for all

[00:31:53] of the hard work and dedication they put into making sure that our building is safe and clean for our students and staff and any other visitors that may come into our building. And while they deserve our gratitude and recognition every day, National Custodial Day is a special occasion that is dedicated just to them. So the next time you visit an HCPS school or center, please take a

[00:32:28] moment to say thank you to our incredible school custodians. Madam Chair, that concludes highlights for this evening. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. The next item on our agenda is the mission statement. Mrs. Kinsella. Thank you. The HCPS mission statement, Henrico County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence, will actively engage our students in diverse educational, social, and civic learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become

[00:33:03] contributing citizens. Madam Chair. Thank you. We will move forward to the public forum. This is the time when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division. Citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board. Speakers will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else. We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly

[00:33:38] state your name and school affiliation, if applicable, and the subject of your remarks before speaking. After stating your name, please place the number you were given in the cart near podium speakers must present their remarks to the school board not the audience and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk the use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order to assist you in tracking your time there is a timekeeping system

[00:34:15] displaying the elapsed time on the screen speakers will also receive a a notice from me when the time has expired the school board is here today to hear from you we will not be responding to speakers concerns or questions during the public forum however a henrico staff member will follow up with speakers stakeholders have also had the opportunity to provide written comments through an online form in advance of the meeting those comments are shared with the school board members prior to the meeting and posted in board docs equal

[00:34:53] consideration and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments to the contributors of written commentary and speakers assembled here today thank you in advance for your participation your presence expertise concerns acknowledgement of progress and engagement enhance our understanding of our community's diverse perspectives once again thank you all right speaker number one

[00:35:26] please approach the podium speaker number one speaker number two please approach the podium speaker number three speaker number four good evening everybody good evening dr cashwell chair

[00:36:02] atkins and members of the board my name is elizabeth broda and i'm a social studies teacher and department chair at Henrico High School, I also serve as the Henrico Education Association co-chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee. While I was busy teaching today and unable to attend or watch the school board work session, I know that a presentation was made to address the official request for information made in regards to collective bargaining in Virginia, employee engagement, HCPS employee feedback, and the structure of the relationship between HCPS and the general government. I printed out the final report before I left school today,

[00:36:40] and I very much look forward to reading it and watching a video of today's session. I speak on behalf of the rest of the collective bargaining committee, but also staff members across the county, when I say truly thank you to all those who put in the work to gather information for this report. I downloaded all of the appendices, all 440 pages of them, and it's clear that many staff members' efforts and many hours of work went into making and researching and writing and assembling these materials. I extend our sincere appreciation for

[00:37:17] the time, the effort, and the professionalism. I also want to thank the Board for making this request for information back in the spring. The information gathered will be vital as we venture forward in this process, and the board is taking this seriously and working carefully and patiently.

[00:37:36] Anything worth doing is worth doing well, and establishing the right of HCPS staff to negotiate their contracts is no exception. The HGA looks forward to being involved in future conversations about collective bargaining and how it will benefit students and staff across the county.

[00:37:53] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number five. Speaker number six. Good evening. My name is Marlene Sherlock, and our family lives in the Fairfield District. I'm not sure I can follow that drumline, but timing is everything, and I will march to that beat. I often come here to

[00:38:30] highlight something I think the division could be doing better, but tonight I'm here to ask you and invite you to come see something I think gets done well year after year, and I'm not alone. For the 25th year in a row, one of only two school divisions in the entire country, HCPS received an award for being a best community for music education. I know there are rules about how many of you can be in one place at the same time with or without advertising it as a public meeting, but hear me out and come hear the beautiful music that's being made in Henrico County Schools.

[00:39:04] What you heard earlier is just a prelude, if you will. Each fall, nine county high schools come together for one glorious night for a showcase to show off their skills, cheer for each other, bask in the stadium lights without their parents having to wear a t-shirt that says, what's the football team doing on the marching band drill field? This year on Monday, October 21st, the marching band showcase will take

place at Hermitage High School starting at 6 30 p.m. As always, it's open to the public, it's free, and they collect donations for the Henrico Christmas

[00:39:41] mother. Band kids are a different breed and don't always get the kudos other athletes get. They can be quirky, but I found them, as you heard, to be loud and proud and amazing. They start in the summer with 10-hour days, learn to do way more than walk and chew gum at the same time.

[00:40:00] It takes intelligence, stamina, and heart. Marching band has all of that. Study after study shows a correlation between music and academic achievement. They can clock four to six miles on a field during one halftime performance, and drummers have been shown to have heartbeats of up to 200 beats per minute, similar to that of a marathon runner. Add in the music itself, everything from Mozart to Beethoven and Dvorak to Cyndi Lauper, Rihanna, and Lynyrd Skynyrd, and you have one cross-generational,

[00:40:35] cross-cultural show. So I kindly, respectfully ask that you do what it takes to make it possible so you could all come and attend. Come see what you've invested millions of dollars in. Teachers, instruments, uniforms, facilities, and what hundreds of students spend thousands of hours learning and working on. Come be entertained. Come celebrate all of that all in one place.

[00:40:59] I'll close with a corny line my kids hate, but deep down they know is true, that life without music would be flat. Hope to see you all at Hermitage High School on Monday evening, October 21st. Thank you.

[00:41:15] Thank you. Speaker number seven.

[00:41:36] I would like to approach the clerk to give her handouts. Is that okay? Good afternoon. My name is Chantel Lewis and I am here today to comment on the communication

[00:42:14] procedures with the school board. More specifically, expectations when communicating with parents, stakeholders, and those individuals vested in the community that contact the school board members. On HCPS's website, it gives guidance as to how to contact school board members, and that includes you can contact school board members in person as we're doing now or via sending emails. Throughout the years I have communicated with the school board using both methods which

[00:42:48] has been very successful. I have used both methods to contact any school board member no matter what district they cover especially if they are involved in an activity that was held in a different district. Again, I have had no problems with communicating that with any of school board members that I have been involved with, except for a recent email reply that I received this week.

[00:43:17] And I would like to address it. I was shocked by an email response that I received by Mr. Ryan Young because I have never received a response like it from any school board member. And I have provided you with a copy of my general email with the questions I had along with his response. He did not answer any of my questions nor took the time to answer those questions. Because you're a good school board, here's what I want to do. Mr. Young, I am going to give you the opportunity to send me a

[00:43:51] professional, adequate, and complete email response without bias because I know that you are new to the school board. Further, I would hate for this to be the way that you respond to parents, stakeholders, and community partners in the future. I want to provide you with the opportunity to

readdress my email. I will resend my email in the morning. My expectation is that I will receive your response by Monday. This gives you plenty of time to find the answers to the questions that I

[00:44:28] have asked. I will also ask that you send that same email response to all of the school board members. I am looking forward to receiving the email response that I solely deserve. Thank you all and have a great afternoon. Thank you. Dr. Cashwell. Thank you. The next items are consent items and they can be taken in a block. Colleagues, is there a motion? I move. Go ahead, Mr. Irving.

[00:45:08] I move that the school board accept, adopt, approve, and or award items 9.01 through 9.08 on the consent agenda as presented. Is there a second? Second. All in favor, say aye.

[00:45:24] Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The next item on the agenda is unfinished business. We will now move forward and I will ask, are there any items for follow-up or discussion?

[00:45:45] All right, hearing none, we'll move on to new business. Colleagues, do you have any new business? Hearing none, the next agenda item are the announcements.

[00:46:02] The school board's next meeting will be a work session scheduled on Thursday, October 10th, 2024, at 3 p.m. at the New Bridge Learning Center Auditorium. The meeting time may be adjusted as needed.

[00:46:20] This meeting is adjourned.



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