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Henrico County School Board Work Session, Thursday, September 26, 2024

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[00:00:01] good afternoon welcome to the september 26 2024 school board work session dr cashwell thank you chair atkins members of the board good afternoon we'll begin the meeting with the pledge of allegiance which will be followed by a moment of silence if you'd please stand and remain stand standing after the pledge for the moment of silence i pledge allegiance to the flag of the

[00:00:30] united if you would remain standing as you're able for the moment of silence and you may be seated

[00:00:54] - Thank you, Dr. Cashwell.

[00:01:11] The next item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Is there a motion to approve the agenda? - I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting. - Is there a second? - Second. - All in favor say aye.

[00:01:26] - Aye. - Any opposed? The ayes have it. The agenda is approved. We will move along to the next agenda item. It's closed session. Is there a motion to go into closed session?

[00:01:44] I move that the school board go into closed session for the discussion of matters covered under items A1 and A2 of section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, is amended pertaining to the

assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific school board employees,

[00:02:09] and the admission or disciplinary matters or any other matters that would involve the disclosure of information contained in a scholastic record concerning individual students, including a request for religious exemption from compulsory attendance. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. Is there a second?

[00:02:29] 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. We're back.

[00:02:49] Colleagues, we will now certify closed session. Is there a motion to certify closed session? I move that the school board certify by 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, and considered in closed meeting.

[00:03:17] Thank you. Is there a second? Second. Was that? Okay. Ms. Shea. All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. Closed session has been certified. Superintendent Dr. Cashwell.

[00:03:35] Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board. for the first item i'm recommending that the school board approve the readmission of student case number 22-23-s8 and the name of the student is protected under the virginia freedom of information act thank you colleagues is there a motion i move that the school board approve the readmission of student case number 22-23-s-h with the conditions recommended by dr william Noelle. Thank you. Is there a second? Second. All in favor say aye. Any opposed? The

[00:04:11] ayes have it. The request has been approved. Thank you. For the next item I'm recommending that the school board approve the request for release from compulsory school attendance for student case number 24-25-RE-3 based on bona fide religious beliefs in the name of the students are protected under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Thank you. Colleagues, is there a motion? I move that the school board approve the request for release from compulsory attendance for student case number 24-25-RE-3 based on bona fide religious beliefs. Thank you. Is there a second? Second.

[00:04:49] All in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The request is approved. Dr. Cashwell. Thank you. Next, we're pleased to bring to you the slate of 2024-2027 members elect for our Special Education Advisory Committee.

[00:05:08] And Dr. Hughes and Katie Smith are here to provide that presentation for SEAC. Yes, thank you, Dr. Cashwell. Good afternoon, Chair Atkins, members of the board. As Dr. Cashwell said, my name is Leslie Hughes, Chief Learning Officer, and with me today is Dr. Katie Smith, Director of Exceptional Education.

[00:05:25] This afternoon, we're going to provide the board with an update on the 2024 Special Education Advisory Committee, also known as SEAC, to include the 2024-2027 recommended slate of officers for your approval, as well as the SEAC priorities for the 2024-2025 school year.

[00:05:42] At this time, I'll turn the presentation over to Dr. Smith. Thank you. In direct alignment with Destination 2025, the purpose of the Special Education Advisory Committee is to assist the Henrico County School Board and Superintendent in developing plans for improving performance of children with

disabilities, to assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, and participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan, which will be presented to the board in the spring of 2025.

[00:06:14] annually the special education advisory committee forwards a slate of membership nominees for consideration and approval by the school board per its bylaws the sea act membership is comprised of no more than 20 members currently 13 parent guardian members have submitted membership applications hcps is currently seeking additional parent representatives for the fairfield and varina districts before you is the is the recommended 2427 membership slate of parent and guardians by magisterial district on this slide you will find the the 2427 recommended

[00:06:52] membership slate of two hcps administrators and two teachers providing representation from both the elementary and the secondary levels in addition to the membership slates just shared there are a number of ex officio non-voting members including those individuals listed here this concludes the 2024-2027 membership slate recommendations for consideration and now we will shift our focus to the SEAC's goals for the upcoming year. For this school year, SEAC participants have identified three goals. Goal number one is to establish a special education

[00:07:26] PTA liaison in every HCPS school as part of SEAC's work in providing an inclusive education for students with disabilities. This supportive role will help offer support to school communities and to ensure that PTA activities and events are accessible to all students. Goal number two supports retention efforts of new special education teachers this will provide a focus for for cx outreach efforts to support new special education teachers and provide information to parents on how to collaborate and partner with parents to ensure successful parent and teacher relationships and finally goal number three focuses on the work providing to provide continuing

[00:08:03] education to families to ensure that they have the resources and knowledge best needed to meet and support their students the hcps administrative staff are poised and ready to collaborate with SEAC's new membership slate once appointed and to support and promote the goals for the 24-25 school year we are excited to support and share and exchange ideas to build trusting relationships between families and school staff looking ahead the SEAC's meeting dates times and locations are listed here as well as posted on the hcps public calendar meetings are open to the public and all are welcome and encouraged to participate in working together to meet the goals of the special

[00:08:42] education advisory committee at this time dr smith and i would like to thank the board for their ongoing support of the seac committee and we will be happy to answer any questions you have thank you for the presentation it's delightful to see the progress so far i will commence to my right with mrs gonzalo for any feedback or questions i don't have any questions at this time i just appreciate everyone's service on this committee and appreciate seeing the goals early in the year and uh look forward to it to us achieving those goals thank you thank you mrs

[00:09:19] shea thank you so much um no questions just uh two pieces of feedback um one for the new member slate um i believe ms dart lives in the tucker is part of the tuckahoe district okay um in which case i welcome her to be a representative for the vines district um so maybe we can just double check that before we approve tonight? Yes, we certainly will. It would be great. And then I'm delighted to hear that the SEAC meetings are on the public HCPS, the public calendar. I think we've all been looking for ways to publicize and make those advisory meetings more accessible to

[00:09:58] the public since they are open to the public. And I know they're on the webpage if you know where to look with all the clicks, but having them on that general calendar is really helpful and more accessible to families. So thank you for doing that. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Mr. Young. No questions.

[00:10:15] Thank you for the presentation. I love your goals for this season. So just looking forward to seeing the results of the hard work that everyone does on that committee. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Young. Mr. Irving. Thank you for the presentation, folks. I have no questions. I serve on this committee, so I'm proud to see all the parent members that would want to join. I'm especially excited to see all the three CHOP parents that want to come out and, you know, provide guidance for us as it pertains to exceptional education matters and I'm just proud of the work that's going to be done by all members of the committee. Thank you Mr. Irving.

[00:10:52] The recommended goals they're both impactful and timely and the idea of establishing a special education PTA liaison I think is brilliant. It lends itself to assist with awareness and communication and shared resources so So definitely looking forward to learning more about the responsibilities of that position, how it grows, and what other resources are going to be necessary for SEAC to continue to grow.

[00:11:26] So thank you so much for the presentation. Thank you. Dr. Cashwell? Thank you. We appreciate hearing from SEAC. And now I think all of our advisory committees have shared new slates with the board and are geared up for a great year of work and community involvement.

[00:11:45] All right, for the next item, the school board will be provided a presentation of a summary of a response to your May 2024 request for information on collective bargaining in Virginia, employee engagement in Henrico County Public Schools, and the structure of the relationship between Henrico County Public Schools and Henrico County General Government.

[00:12:07] Mrs. Coy is here to provide you an overview presentation of the work that's been done to fulfill your request for information, as well as walk you through the materials that have been provided for you. Mrs. Goy. - Wonderful, thank you. Good afternoon, Dr. Cashwell, Chair Atkins, Vice Chair Shea, and members of the board.

[00:12:27] I'm pleased to present to you this afternoon a summary of the information gathered over the last few months in response to your May request for information on three key topics. Collective bargaining in Virginia, employee engagement research and hcps employee feedback and the structure of the relationship between hcps and henrico county general government today's presentation will provide an overview of the actions taken research gathered and survey and focus groups conducted by and with hcps staff i'll share some of the highlights but the report in front of you and the appendices

[00:13:07] in your binders and attached and board docs are very comprehensive compilations of the information gathered. We'll walk through those appendices at the end of this presentation. The presentation and the corresponding report and appendices are organized by the three topics encompassed in your request. Here you can see the major components of each of those three topics. So first we examine the landscape throughout the Commonwealth as it relates to local governing bodies, and collective bargaining. We sought to document and learn from the experiences of

[00:13:47] Virginia school divisions that have pursued collective bargaining since the Virginia law changed in 2021. There are 11 school divisions that have substantively pursued or adopted collective

bargaining resolutions from whom we sought to gather more information. HCPS sent letters to all 11 requesting information. Some responded with written responses, and many graciously agreed to meet with HCPS for more detailed conversations. In the report, you will find a profile on each of these 11 divisions, themes from the conversations, and any detailed

[00:14:25] written responses that they provided. There is a wealth of information to be gleaned from our counterparts who have engaged in collective bargaining discussions so far. There was great variation in the size and structure of the divisions, the processes and timelines by which they adopted resolutions and the impacts those have had on their organizations to date.

[00:14:51] Generally speaking, outside of the costs associated with negotiated agreements, any organizational or financial impacts have been around the retention of legal counsel and or to add capacity to their human resource teams. Some have absorbed the impacts to their HR teams while others have created new positions. With regard to legal counsel, some have experienced an increase in costs associated with accessing outside counsel with bargaining expertise. And then finally, one of the things we asked about was measurable data

[00:15:28] on employee engagement, recruitment and retention, and student outcomes. Unfortunately, given how recent this work is, none of the divisions yet had any measurable data to share on those three topics. The report and the associated appendix also includes the collective bargaining resolution resolutions from all 11 divisions, charts comparing elements of those collective bargaining resolutions or CBRs.

[00:16:01] There are also charts that include and compare election procedures and items included in collective bargaining agreements for the divisions that have them. So of those 11 that we profiled, there are five that have at least one collective bargaining agreement in place.

[00:16:20] The landscape analysis also includes other information requested by the board, such as research takeaways on the impact of collective bargaining, public enrollment trends in Virginia, and information about negotiated contracts, which can also be known as the meet and confer process, which happens outside of collective bargaining.

[00:16:42] The second major area of focus was related to employee engagement and HCPS employee feedback. First, a comprehensive review of the research literature on employee engagement in public K-12 settings was conducted.

[00:16:58] That literature review is included in the report, and it was the basis of additional work around employee engagement that happened throughout the summer. To solicit and understand direct feedback from our own employees, we started with a review of a subset of results from the 2024 annual HCPS survey, which was administered back in the spring.

[00:17:21] We examined staff responses to 10 questions related to employee relationships, professional growth opportunities, and staff recognition. HCPS then created and administered a new survey to all HCPS employees that focused on staff efficacy, feedback structures, recognition efforts, and areas for improvement.

[00:17:44] Finally, we facilitated 21 successful focus groups throughout the summer, each specific to different employee types. focus groups permitted a deeper and more nuanced conversation on those same topics with a much smaller group of employees. The new survey was administered over a three-week

period and was available in both English and Spanish online and via paper copies. In total, approximately 2,200 of the 8,400 HCPS employees responded, and the breakdown by employee type is reflected in this

[00:18:22] slide. Total respondents represented about 26% of HCPS employees. The majority, as you can see, were teachers, though any HCPS employee had the opportunity to complete the survey. The complete survey analysis is in the report and includes response rates and responses to each question broken down by employee type. A complete analysis of the survey results is included, like I said in that appendix. Overall, 80% of respondents expressed satisfaction with engagement, which was

[00:19:00] defined as how committed and involved staff feel with their work, school or department, and the school division. It encompasses feelings about their jobs, their co-workers, and the overall work environment. Additionally, a majority of staff indicated that their ideas have an impact on their department or school, but that number was much lower when they considered the impact that they're having on division-level decision-making. The survey went on to ask respondents specifically about feedback structures within HCPS. While 66% noted that they're asked for their input on

[00:19:38] decisions impacting their work, and the majority believe that there is a supportive atmosphere for providing feedback, only 42% reported being aware of structured feedback opportunities. Additionally, staff requested more frequent and varied types of feedback channels.

[00:20:00] Meaningful recognition efforts are an important research-based component of employee engagement. And while staff reported feeling valued for their expertise and supported in their professional development, they consistently noted the need for additional recognition, and this was true across all employee groups.

[00:20:18] Finally, survey respondents were asked what areas of their employment with HCPS they believe needs improvement. Contractual matters were chosen by 60% of respondents who then received a series of additional questions about what within that topic they're most concerned about.

[00:20:39] Compensation rose to the top with environment and resources coming in second behind compensation. The complete survey analysis includes very detailed results about those rankings and the breakdowns by different employee groups.

[00:20:54] More than 160 participants were a part of our 21 focus groups this summer. There were 22 sessions offered, 21 were successful.

[00:21:14] And the participants really affirmed a lot of the findings from the survey and revealed additional nuance on some of the survey topics. It's good to keep in mind here, though, that they represent less than 2% of all HCPS employees.

[00:21:30] Generally speaking, professional growth and wages were the most frequently cited benefits of working for HCPS. As in the survey, participants consistently noted their ability to provide meaningful impact input to their direct supervisors, but articulated the need for additional types of recognition in an ongoing manner.

[00:21:55] In addition to some of the items that I've mentioned, like the literature review and analyses of the surveys and the focus groups the report also includes a crosswalk of research feedback and action steps this last document reflects what we learned from the research and our own employees and how that aligns with recent division level actions as well as opportunities for hcps to grow and respond to employee

concerns among other things that feedback will inform division work as it relates to our formal feedback structures and inspire new thinking as it relates to employee recognitions.

[00:22:34] The final topic for which information was requested relates to the structure of the relationship between Henrico schools and the Henrico County general government. This section of the report includes information about the structure of the school board, the board of supervisors, and Henrico's county manager form of government, which is the only one of its kind in the commonwealth.

[00:22:57] Information was compiled as it relates to shared services between the entities, including the unified pay schedule and pooled health benefits. Finally, this section includes information about the state and local responsibilities for public education funding, the taxing and appropriating authority of the Board of Supervisors, and the role of the school board in managing those funds and supervising schools within the division.

[00:23:22] That concludes my formal presentation, and I hope this overview provides a useful orientation to the work that was conducted and the materials that have been provided to you and posted for the public online as we wrap up I want to thank the many many individuals who both from within HPS and from the other divisions who took the time to provide information and feedback or supported this effort in some way so next I'll walk through the appendices of the materials provided and after that I'll be happy to answer any questions that

[00:23:58] you all might have so in the binders in front of you you will see five large tabs the first is the slide deck and the second is a report and again these are also posted publicly on board docs the report includes in that second tab includes some commonly used and defined terms driving questions on each of those three subtopics summary of action taken and guides to the associated

[00:24:30] appendices. I will note that the last section on county government is where you will find the most substance on that topic. There are a few appendices associated with that section C, but most of the meat is there in that report. Then we have three very chunky appendices. And like I said, they're organized by those same three topics. So appendix A is associated with the work related to the Virginia landscape on collective bargaining. Appendix B relates to the employee engagement

[00:25:08] and feedback. And then Appendix C has a few resources related to that structured relationship between HCPS and Henrico General Government. So for the binders in front of you, tabs 1 through 12 are Appendix A. And just running through those 12 tabs briefly, You'll find a Virginia landscape with all the different divisions as well as the local governments and actions that have been taken related to collective bargaining.

[00:25:41] Those that are highlighted in purple are the 11 divisions that were then profiled, and you'll find those profiles in A2. Then in A3, you will find the collective bargaining resolutions of those 11 school divisions.

[00:25:59] I will note that those 11 CBRs have all been adopted by their local school boards with one exception, and that is Harrisonburg City. Harrisonburg actually adopted a CBR last year.

[00:26:14] They're in the process of revising that. Their board is actively discussing this draft CBR that's been included here. So that's the only one that is not a final CBR in place.

[00:26:30] those CBRs, you'll see a tab related to the information requests from other divisions. So that includes our letter, it includes themes that were compiled from the conversations, as well as the written responses that they provided to us.

[00:26:46] The next three tabs, five, six, and seven, are some comparison charts that we pulled together based on what we learned from those divisions and looking at their CBRs. So the first one is a comparison of the election procedures.

[00:27:03] The second one is a comparison of CBAs. So of the 11 school divisions that have adopted a CBR, five have moved on to adopt a collective bargaining agreement with at least one bargaining unit.

[00:27:20] So we took items that had been included in those agreements and we noted some related action from HCPS. And then the last comparison chart is A7, and that is a comparison of topics that are eligible for negotiations as they are defined in the division CBRs, so you can see what topics might be consistent across divisions and where there might be differences.

[00:27:53] That takes us to A8, which is a response to best practices for collective bargaining, and some of the associated resources, but not all have been printed for you. We then have two kind of quick research takeaways from our DARE team about collective bargaining and student achievement and teacher retention.

[00:28:15] Again, those are the quick takeaways, but if additional information is of interest, we can certainly provide that. Tab A11 includes data from the Weldon Cooper Center at UVA. That includes articles about Virginia school enrollment projections.

[00:28:33] There are some charts there, both the Virginia projections and the Henrico projections, but that's all publicly available data and there's much more to play with in those charts online. And then finally, the last item in Appendix A is a Hanover research piece about national trends in K-12 education.

[00:28:53] So that takes us to Appendix B. Again, the Appendix B are the related resources on employee engagement. So the first thing you'll find there is the detailed literature review that the team did that really then informed a lot of the other work.

[00:29:11] The B14, the next tab, relates to those takeaways from the 2024 HCPS annual survey and the data that we pulled to provide those takeaways. B15 is everything related to the survey, including the questions and every piece of data we got out of that survey that was provided to us.

[00:29:33] and then 16 is the same for the focus groups. B17 is that crosswalk that I mentioned, and you'll see the different columns where you'll find the research on employee engagement, HCPS staff feedback on those topics, and then recent HCPS actions, and then some future considerations and opportunities.

[00:29:59] The last few resources in Appendix B are related to some of the topics that came up out of the surveys and focus groups. So that includes salary adjustment history for teachers, recruitment and retention strategies, and then some career ladder FAQs. Appendix C is the smallest immersively. It includes the code language around county manager form of government. C22 is where you'll find the regional health care cost comparison. And then C23 has a few slides. These were presented to the board back in April

[00:30:38] with the adoption of the budget but there's some highlight illustrations of the fy25 budget for quick reference and at this time i am happy to answer any questions you all might have thank you for the

presentation just for the public awareness we have received binders during our session for

[00:31:11] the board to continue to review information board members the way we'll move forward with our discussion is we're going to start with Mr. Young followed by Mrs. Shea and then after that yield the floor to Mr. Irving and then to Mrs. Kinsella so at least you know what order you're going in because I'm sure you may have some feedback or perhaps some questions and so I'll yield the floor at this time to Mr. Young. Thank You Chair Atkins. Ms. Holly Coy, thank you so much for this for

[00:31:48] hard work you put in you and your staff did an amazing job putting together these binders i know it wasn't easy um and it took up a lot of time but i just want to thank you first before we dive in into everything today but just thank you for your hard work um and thank your staff as well um i guess for those watching and even for us up here can you take us through the process of how a collective bargaining agreement will work obviously right now we're in the research phase But how does this work?

[00:32:16] It's a great question. So there is a resource in here from Stanz Anderson about local governing bodies that may complement what I'm about to share and be a more thorough resource for you. But generally, under the new law in Virginia, governing bodies, including school boards, may, if they elect to, adopt by resolution the intent to bargain collectively with their employees.

[00:32:44] This has looked a little bit different in all of the divisions that we talked to. All of them ultimately end up with a Collective Bargaining Resolution, or CBR, that's referenced with that acronym.

[00:33:00] And those CBRs generally lay out the terms by which elections can take place, whereby entities can come forward, one entity, multiple entities who want to represent different bargaining units or groups of employees within the division.

[00:33:21] Once that resolution is adopted, then that kind of frees up the opportunity for those elections to take place under the terms that are agreed to in that CBR. And once that has transpired, then generally speaking, the divisions agree to a set of rules for negotiating with that entity, and the negotiations begin. Usually, the CBRs include some information about the structure, the timeline of that process, what will happen if there is an

[00:33:54] impasse in the conversations, and how those would be negotiated. In the five divisions that have gotten there, they have then executed a collective bargaining agreement or legally binding agreement with their employees. Those agreements range from anywhere to three to five years.

[00:34:14] And typically in the Virginia examples that we looked at, the CBRs spell out the terms that can be negotiated ultimately in those CBAs. So different school boards have adopted different CBRs that kind of set up different types of agreements at the end of that process.

[00:34:38] Thank you. So if we were to enter into a collective bargaining sort of negotiation, is there anything non-negotiable? Certainly. You'll see from the CBRs, and we tried to make it easy in a chart, it is A7.

[00:34:56] That is a comparison document of topics that are eligible for negotiation. You'll see in there, there's also a column about prohibited topics. So generally speaking, all of the CBRs include some language, various forms of it, but include some language that specifically articulate the roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent that are outside of the purview of those negotiations and ultimately those CBAs.

[00:35:28] They vary by division, by board, as you can imagine. But consistently, they are limited to items that are within the scope of the school board. And so there is language to articulate that if a benefit, for example, is offered to employees, but it's not actually under the control of the school board, then that is not subject to negotiations.

[00:35:54] An easy example would be VRS benefits. Perfect. Thank you. Now, if we move to more of the, I guess, the government side and unified play plan, do we have a clear understanding of how collective bargaining and unified play plan will interact with each other? In all of the examples we looked at, there were none that have quite the same structure that we do.

[00:36:16] So I think there are some outstanding questions on that topic. Okay, so let me ask you this, because I looked through the same thing, and correct me if I'm wrong, but all of them had no impact to government side, or the government had already had some sort of code for a resolution, correct?

[00:36:34] Correct. So if we were to move forward with collective bargaining, is it safe to say that Henrico County Public Schools would be the first to do it without the government's sort of code already in place? Would you say without the government's code?

[00:36:50] Without general government sort of having a code already established. A resolution already in place. Of the divisions we talked to, some had moved forward with a collective bargaining resolution even when their locality had not pursued a resolution already.

[00:37:10] Some, the local government already had one in place, so that was mixed. Okay, awesome. And then staying on the government side, looks like county government supplements HCPS operating funds, almost \$70 million, which provides \$1,759 positions, plus an additional \$56 million for school projects. Would this be in jeopardy if we entered into a collective bargaining resolution?

[00:37:35] I don't know that I can speak to that. All right. Thank you. I'm not done yet. Sorry, colleagues, but I do have a list of questions. And this actually concerns the HEA, the Henrico Education Association. Do we know how many current employees are members of the HEA?

[00:37:59] I think that's information we could provide. Well, members, I don't know. All right. And let me move down. I want to talk sort of district specific for a second. My district has four opportunity schools. What potential effect could collective argument have on opportunity schools?

[00:38:17] I think that really remains to be seen and would be at the discretion of the board. In one conversation with another division, some of their schools operate on a slightly different structure than others in their division and their board worked through that, different contracts for example.

[00:38:37] So it would depend on what a resolution looked like and what the decisions of the board were. Okay. Would they potentially be their own collective bargaining unit? I think a lot of it's speculating about what's possible.

[00:38:55] To Mrs. Coy's point, it's unknown. I think in some of the examples you can see of what was allowable in the agreements to bargain around, if compensation and wages were, in some cases, stipends were as well. And you could consider the supplement that Opportunity School teachers are receiving as a stipend of sorts.

[00:39:15] So it would really determine the parameters the board sets on what might be negotiated and how. But ultimately, you know, when a school system is budgeting for the year, they're considering all

potential costs going to employee wages.

[00:39:31] And depending on what would be in a bargaining agreement, budgets may have to be adjusted accordingly. Okay. A couple more questions, Ms. Coy. Still sort of district-specific here, and I don't know if you have these numbers on you right now, but do we have the current retention rate for HCPS from last year to this year?

[00:39:51] I could get that for you. Okay. And I asked that, and if I can get it broken down by Magisterial District as well, that would be awesome. But what I want to know is I know that we didn't find any data or any information that sort of spoke to the correlation between retention rates and recruitment rates.

[00:40:11] But I guess my question is, does the mere presence of a resolution in place, have we had any data for retention rates or recruitment rates? Just based on a resolution being adopted, but haven't gotten to the CBA part yet, have we seen any sort of data that reflect more teachers stayed because their division had a resolution in place?

[00:40:34] No data was provided from any of the 11 divisions to that end. Okay, because, I mean, I guess the things that we spoke about, retention and recruitment, opportunity schools, and student outcomes, that's the data that I'm interested in. Do we know how long it will take for us to get this data?

[00:40:50] My understanding is that it is not yet there to share as far as a direct correlation goes. So even those divisions who were the first ones to enact resolutions and then work their way to agreements are only a year or two at most in.

[00:41:09] Okay. So we're a little ways out. Okay. On slide 12 of this presentation, I'm just curious. parent square touches about 95% plus of our parents but only 42% of staff are aware of feedback opportunities how can we create something that is just as impactful as how we communicate on parent square yeah it was a great question and has caused a lot of consideration because we feel like we communicate those opportunities a lot but clearly there's a disconnect and something for us to grow and work on I actually think parent square might be part of the solution in that regard there are some new features that you all

[00:41:46] heard about coming online, including quick polls that we can use with parents and or with staff in different ways. So we're definitely thinking creatively and I think ParentSquare will give us some new opportunities we haven't had before. Okay, feel free to answer this or not answer this, but one positive surprise, one less positive surprise that you had while working through this sort of collective. I don't know that I characterize anything as positive or negative. It was really interesting to hear from all of the different divisions. And I hope what you have in front of

[00:42:21] you as you digest it, you'll find there's a wide variety of experiences there. And they were incredibly willing to share. So if there's additional information you're seeking from them, there were many who said they'd be happy to continue the conversation. And so that was one of the things I was struck by was their willingness to share what they had learned so far and doing so generously. Ms. Coyle, you did a fantastic job gathering information. Thank you so much for your and madam chair all right mrs shea wow after mr young i'm gonna look like a dud way to go

[00:42:58] um like thank you for um all the staff's work on this request that the board made um i know it was a significant lift i know y'all spent significant time on the front end really digging into these key questions as you shared um and trying to um report back out and making us very organized binders.

Thank you. So a couple things jump out at me kind of across the various items you looked into. I think all of us up here would say that it's important

[00:43:35] for us, for our staff to have an authentic voice. And I think what we're doing is really trying to dig into what does that look like in Henrico? What is the best conduit for that in Henrico? And currently we have advisories, climate surveys. I think as a board we're very accessible.

[00:43:56] Dr. Cashwell's team is very accessible. But we also see that we have opportunities for improvement through this, particularly around showing recognition to our staff as well as showing them the impact that their feedback has made.

[00:44:15] I think one thing that we're privileged to is being able to see a little bit more under the hood of those feedback mechanisms, and we know that generally, or genuinely, our superintendent and DLT and the board really do value that feedback and really do use it as a change mechanism for the division, but I understand from some of our other staff's perspective, they don't always get to see that, or they don't always get to hear those conversations where we say, hey, this is the direction we thought we would go, but, you know, staff boots on the ground, you know, are really saying that this might be the best

[00:44:54] path, and we pivot. And so looking for opportunities on how to communicate that to them while not over-communicating, right, is always a balance, but I think our focus groups and the survey from this summer really show that as an opportunity. But overall, we see that 80% of the survey respondents are content with their level of staff engagement. Additionally, I noticed that we only had a 26%

[00:45:23] response rate over the division. And so what I infer from that as a board member is that this isn't something that is of top concern for most staff at this time. I feel like if it was, then we would have had a much higher take rate on the survey. One thing that stood out to me in the survey is that compensation rose to the top in both a strength for Henrico and rose to the top

[00:46:02] from our feedback as an area of opportunity. And so is there any insight from kind of the deeper dive y'all did in focus groups and that sort of thing that you may be able to provide some context or clarity on what seems like conflicting feedback? That's a great question. And one of drawbacks of an anonymous survey is we can't go ask all of those employees what they meant by that but um and i could look back at the focus group reports in particular to see if there's any more nuance for you but we could probably generally think about some reasons

[00:46:37] that might be top of mind for staff and for getting both those pieces of information at once we know that henrico is a regional leader when it comes to pay but we also know that there's broader angst about salaries in public education and rightfully so both in virginia and around the country so um that that could be part of it um i'll also just note in the survey so we asked about um staff engagement and satisfaction and and respondents worked their way through this survey everyone was asked to identify an area that needed improvement and so um you could articulate that

[00:47:16] you were both satisfied with staff engagement and that you were pleased with professional growth opportunities and your salary, but then when forced to choose off of a list, compensation was the top of that list for you. So I imagine there were multiple reasons for that, but unfortunately, given the anonymity of the survey, I can't ask those employees exactly what they were thinking. Thank you. I

appreciate that. Something else I've noticed as we have dug into this and had conversations as colleagues and with a lot of our staff is while there has

[00:47:54] certainly been notable interest for us to dig into this opportunity, there does not seem to be an overwhelming appetite for systemic change. HEA is the main organization that's been working within Henrico to collect support over the past year and a half. They have collected bargaining cards from all subgroups of staff. They have collected over a thousand cards from our staff.

[00:48:24] However, that represents about 12% of our staff when we look at the staff in aggregate. I did reach out to them this week to ask if they would share their membership so we could have greater clarity as to what the engagement with them is and with this topic. They declined to share their membership so I shared with them that we do have information about how many staff participate in

[00:48:56] direct deduction for their dues and so I let them know that without a number shared from them that I would use that to kind of make some inferences about engagement we have about 180 183 staff that that participate in direct deduction for membership, which is about 2% of our staff.

[00:49:23] So I have concern about making a systemic change that impacts all structures of how our division is to be run for what appears at this time to be a small minority. And I think Mr. Young already asked this question, but does the division have any beyond that number that I was able to find with direct deduction, Have they shared with y'all any membership information?

[00:49:47] - Not membership information that I'm aware of offhand. Okay, thank you. And then kind of lastly, digging into some of the observations from the divisions you shared, super helpful the way you've structured it with, both including some of the actual legal agreement documents, but also kind of the summary of how things worked.

[00:50:14] Some things that jumped out to me, the four main things were the impact on feedback mechanism, the cost, the timeline, and the wins of other divisions as compared to HIMRICO. So, as Mr. Young also dove into, one of our questions was about unintended or unanticipated effects of collective bargaining as outlined as a question in the final report.

[00:50:42] but as you shared, only a few divisions have reached or implemented CBAs, so we have limited information to go by. So I do recognize that what I have is limited information to go by, but with five divisions, we kinda gotta go with what we've been given.

[00:50:57] So feedback on negotiated topics once they're agreed upon. It's my understanding that best practice is once that we have, Once, if we agreed to a CBR, CBA, feedback on negotiation topics, best practice would be all of that to go through the agent after we have agreed to a collective bargaining agreement or resolution.

[00:51:28] Is that a reasonable? So in the CBRs that we looked at from the 11 divisions, most of them have an articulation of what topics can be negotiated. there are different levels of detail in those CBRs, as you will find. Some are very, very specific about what they mean by working conditions, for example. Others leave it more broad.

[00:51:52] In addition to the topic, some of the CBRs also speak to numbers of topic, how many can different entities select. And so those CBRs generally set out the terms of the negotiations, But usually

there are also some negotiating rules that are put in place by the two entities after an election takes place to guide that process.

[00:52:19] Does that answer your question? A little bit. Okay, a little bit. Thanks. I did notice that Arlington, for example, suspended their advisory committees once they adopted their CBA. And the necessity to do something like that really gives me concern.

[00:52:41] The feedback loop and ability for us to respond with action is paramount to what we do. For staff to feel like we are accessible as a board, to listen to their concerns and give feedback on whatever wide variety of topics they may have feedback in.

[00:52:58] And then for us to nimbly be able to take action and refer that back to Dr. Cashwell and her team are paramount to what we do as a board to be able to serve our staff and our students. You know, for example, one of the most common pieces of feedback I've gotten this year from our staff is a struggle with the new reading curriculum and just how much it is, how overwhelming and hard to digest.

[00:53:28] And we know that that's a state mandate. And we had leaned into our teachers and our reading specialists to help choose the curriculum for Kenrico to use. However, while we can't change that state mandate, I know that right at this moment, our Department of Teaching and Learning is actively looking into how to make adjustments for our elementary school teachers to give them more capacity to digest this so that they can digest and implement.

[00:53:57] And I really appreciate how we are not tied to a fixed window of action where we would be forced to achieve changes through negotiation. But our staff and our leadership can continually be taking this feedback and making adjustments to what is boots on the ground that our teachers are experiencing.

[00:54:22] The next thing that jumped out to me was the cost. For example, Loudoun County, which, again, we don't have any divisions that are the exact same size that we are that have made it to that final five or that final six.

[00:54:38] So, again, we're taking pieces from other divisions that are similar or dissimilar. So Loudoun is a little bit bigger than we are, but a comparable size. they're estimating it's going to be \$3.3 million in positions in order to facilitate the structure of this in terms of hiring more full-time staff in HR and legal. And that number particularly jumped out at me because last year we were able to invest \$3.5 million, which is roughly the same amount, in order to give more planning time to all of our elementary teachers. And so when I think

[00:55:17] about how I want to be investing those numbers, if we already have feedback mechanisms in place that we can hear from our teachers and nimbly make changes to for their benefit, I want to be investing our extra millions in things like planning time and boots on things that are going to really change boots on the ground for our teachers and our staff in the building and our students. There are quite a few divisions that have absorbed a lot of the positions, but

[00:55:47] in Appendix A4, they say that it is, they report that it's untenable and anticipate future budget impact in order to hire more staff on. So while they have not yet had a significant budget impact, they anticipate that coming.

[00:56:09] The third thing I said I noticed was the timeline. So all of these timelines are at least two to three years long. I'm concerned about freezing progress for our division as we go down this path because,

you know, from a budgetary approach, we would need to have savings of our investment in order to know what direction the bargain topics were so that we can we could meet the needs of negotiation and i want to stay full steam ahead as henrico making every investment as quickly as we

[00:56:48] can into our students and our staff just back in the spring in terms of bus driver compensation i remember miss atkins chair atkins and i sitting across from the chair and vice chair of the board Board of Supervisors, along with Ms. Coy and the County Manager, staffs have been looking at how could we adjust compensation, but in that meeting, in the course of less than an hour and back and forth, we figured out how, between our two boards, the Board of Supervisors

[00:57:22] and the School Board, how to raise bus driver pay to \$25 an hour for this year as quickly as that. Not as easy as that. I know both teams did significant lift, but we were able between our two boards to figure it out in an afternoon. And I want to be able to stay that responsive to our staff on that quick of a timeline. Additionally, Chair Nelson at their retreat from the Board of Supervisors shared that they anticipate a large tax revenue coming in, a revenue stream from

[00:57:56] data centers and some other projects unlike Henrico has seen before. And for my colleagues that were able to be there, he shared with us that for our boards to sit down, we have the ability for our two boards to sit down and make significant changes where we need to, and to think big and to think outside the box. Last thing I noted in Henrico, or in these documents, is that the wins that many of these other divisions have achieved are things we've already done in Henrico in

[00:58:32] Appendance A6, things we've done like decompression of the pay scale, parental leave with protected and expanded planning. We've had wage increases, and looking at the chart in B18, I noticed it's, according to that chart, it looks like it's 27% for teachers since three of us joined the board, as well as since 2012, over 60% for teachers and almost 50% for all staff. We are committed to investing in our staff and their compensation. There are a couple things, like one that jumped

[00:59:12] out that we haven't yet achieved is leave and hold our increments, but that's something that our board if we decided that if we heard from our employees that that was a top concern for them that's a change we could make as a school board with with a policy and these other changes that we've already achieved we could codify those changes in policy as a school board one request i do have in terms of unintended or unanticipated effects we may not be able to get this until after September 30th but since Richmond Public Schools is one of

[00:59:50] those that have made it kind of all the way to the finish line and was one of the first ones to be able to have a CBA in place I would love to see the impact for Richmond this year as they implement those things that were negotiated the impact on their FTEs how many FTEs they have this year as well as their class size so we might not be able to get that until after the september 30th report out but i would love if we could um get that information and i think that's all for me thank you you're welcome

[01:00:24] mr irving thank you for uh this presentation miss miss coy i you know i truly appreciate all the work the hard work that the staff did over the course of uh since we made this request back in may it is i think breathtaking in scope so i really do appreciate everything that went into it i know know it was probably a lot of hours. So know that I do truly appreciate that. Some things, I have some questions about process and I wanted to ask. So of the resolutions and just generally

[01:01:01] legally in Virginia, is a school board allowed to force any employees to join a union? No, sir. Is the school board allowed to force any employees to sign a card check in order to say that they would like to have an election? Is a school board allowed to force employees to vote in an election?

[01:01:22] Is a school board allowed to force our employees to even choose to do anything with a resolution? So if we were to pass a resolution, could our employees just not do anything if they were happy with how things are? They could. So I think that this is fundamentally for me about a choice.

[01:01:45] Mr. Irving, I'm going to pause for a moment. Holly, if you could voice your responses for the recording, that would be appreciated. So if you could just ask those last two questions so that we can have it recorded. Thank you. I think I asked, are we allowed to force any employees to participate in an election under a collective bargaining resolution? No. And if we were to pass a resolution, would employees be forced to participate in elections or could they just stay and do nothing and maintain what we have right now? They're not forced to participate in an election. Okay. They're not forced to do anything under this. I think that's important because for

[01:02:24] me, fundamentally, this is just about giving our employees a choice. Just like we have a choice in democracy whenever we have elections to give our input. This would just be for the employees to say, if we want to do this, we can do this. And if we don't want to do this, then we won't do this. And I think for me, you know, we say that in Henrico, we can do anything, but why, if we can do anything will be be worried about this this would just be another challenge and I think that

[01:03:02] if we value our employees and we're asking the question do they want this or not the best way to let them and let ours know is for them to choose and so I keep on going back to that in my mind as a teacher myself and thinking well I at least want to have a choice I may choose that that's something that I don't want to do but I may choose that it is something that I want to do and then in any democracy the majority makes the decision so that's i just wanted to ask those questions because i wanted to make sure that we're not going to be able to force them into doing

[01:03:39] anything and my understanding is that we are not um the survey i i mean that is a that is a huge undertaking i have taken surveys like that myself and you know i i give kudos to anybody who was able to take the time to do what i know especially in the early first three weeks of school that's a lot to ask. It's something that you get an email and you maybe just push it to the side because you're trying to get your classroom ready, especially if you're an elementary school teacher or, you know, you have so many other things that you're doing at that time. So I, you know, the 26% response rate, you know, I think I have an opposite view. I think it is speculative to say that people didn't fill it out because they're happy with their situation.

[01:04:19] I think, you know, when we see that 80% of our employees are satisfied, I don't even, you know, I was satisfied with my oatmeal this morning that I ate for breakfast, but I would have rather had pizza. So I, you know, I'm glad that people are at least satisfied. I'm glad that we can provide for them in a way that they can take care of their families. But I think, you know, we should sue for more than just being satisfied. With a 26% response rate, I think, you know, remembering back to my statistics classes, it would probably not be wise to make one decision one way or another based off of a survey with that low of a response rate.

[01:04:55] You know, I think there are things in there that we can surely take note of because people did participate, but I think when you get into lower response rates, you normally have a situation with

selection bias where you have the people who are the happiest and the people who are the most unhappy on the extremes participating, and then we kind of lose sight of everybody in the middle, and I would be remiss if we made any decisions based on just two extremes one way or another.

[01:05:22] Sorry, I'm just looking through my notes. I did notice that if you go to, I think it's, Let me look at these appendices because there's so many of them. The research takeaways on A9, some positive stuff I saw in there because I'm a person who always tries to look for the positives in things.

[01:05:45] I think it's important to be realistic and, you know, what are the factors that we operate under but also looking at and seeing what kind of good can happen out of things that we're trying to undertake. I saw that collective bargaining improves student achievement, especially our low-income black and brown students that it improves teacher retention rate especially for new teachers because it increases mentorship programs and gives them a sense of belonging within their schools that they may not have otherwise. The research does seem to suggest that it lowers classroom sizes

[01:06:20] due to more spending and I think the thing to keep in mind is as a finance person with accounting when we spend money it goes to somebody and if it goes to our employees or that's that's more income for them, and if we're spending more, that means maybe we're doing more to hire more teachers to reduce classroom size. So the research seems to suggest that all these things occur, which is, which I think are all positive things. And it also seems to correspond with higher teacher pay, which, you know, I'm, as a teacher myself, that's always a great thing. Sorry, jumping back to the

[01:06:56] survey, I saw that only 33% feel impacted, feel that their input impacts the supervision level policy, with teachers and operations staff feeling the most disconnected from that process. So that seems to suggest to me that, you know, they feel like their most immediate supervisor hears them and listens to them, like I know my assistant principals listen to me, and I'm thankful that they do, but that that ultimately doesn't transfer to anything tangible at the higher levels, especially with our classroom teachers and our operations folks.

[01:07:28] So that means that admin feel that their opinions matter, but maybe not folks who are in buildings. And so I do have another question, though.

[01:07:47] What would be an example, or is it true that the only conversations that we would not be able to have under staff under a collective bargaining agreement would be specifically the items that are covered within this collective bargaining agreement? Could you restate your question for me?

[01:08:03] Yes. Sorry. So I'm saying, say we have a collective bargaining agreement in place, like the five divisions, and in terms of us communicating with staff or, you know, central office-level staff communicating of staff? Would the only things that you would not be allowed to like just have a one-on-one conversation with be things that are included in the collective bargaining agreement itself?

[01:08:25] I think it would depend on the terms you all set forth related to the agreement. Yeah, whatever's negotiated, correct. I mean, typically it is the case that the items that are set out for negotiation are the items that you wouldn't be able to have conversations about outside of the negotiating process um you know but it's speculative for us to say what isn't isn't possible because the board and setting up those agreements would be determining what topics are and aren't allowable for sure and and the folks that negotiate the agreement itself i'm talking about the agreement not the resolution

[01:08:59] um so for example if the you know your reading program is not covered in a collective bargaining agreement and i can't think of a contract that would have a state policy though i think curriculum and working conditions are considerations in some.

[01:09:17] Sure, sure, sure. But it would all depend on what is negotiated. So if it's something that you feel very strongly shouldn't be in there, that's a conversation that would occur between the exclusive representative and the division, correct? And even before that, in the board's establishment of a CBR.

[01:09:33] So you couldn't put carve-outs in that say, these certain policies that are directed by the state that are mandates, those are items that can't be negotiated because they're outside of the board's control. Right. Most of the CBRs carve out anything that is a state or federal law. Yeah, and I noticed some said that anything that's outside of the board's control obviously can't be negotiated, and that would be such programs.

[01:09:56] You know, so I appreciate all of this. I appreciate the questions, I mean, the feedback to my questions. I appreciate all of the work. I'm very excited to dig through this binder. My wife will surely be very unhappy with me, but I guess I'll have to do it after she goes to sleep and the kids are asleep.

[01:10:14] But I'm thankful, and I'm thankful that we're having these conversations in public. I think they're needed. I think our employees deserve for us to have these conversations in public, and I'm thankful to have this opportunity. Madam Chair. Thank you.

[01:10:32] Mrs. Ginsella. Thank you so much. At this point, I mean, I just want to hold up the binder so folks can see how much information was sitting in our chair today when we arrived. though Ms. Coy gave a tremendous presentation, the board really hasn't had a chance to sift through everything that's in this binder at all.

[01:10:57] So with that being said, I'm gonna make some comments, state some concerns, and ask some questions, if that's okay. So today's conversation is about much more than collective bargaining.

[01:11:15] It's about our organizational culture, our organizational structure, valuing employee voice, and the ability as a division to remain nimble and responsive to address and fund unexpected challenges.

[01:11:35] I think all of us agree every single employee must feel seen, heard, valued, and in some way, shape, or form have a seat at the table and feel like their feedback matters. So not only does it matter, but they, as colleagues have said, and the survey said, your presentation said, that they want to understand what difference their feedback made, right?

[01:12:02] So with that being said, I do have a few concerns. Listening briefly to Mrs. Shea's summary of other divisions, I think it was, what, five of 11 that have actually gotten far enough along to give substantive feedback?

[01:12:18] To have CBAs, yes. Yeah. And some of my concerns really relate to who and what would be impacted if our structure changes. Compensation, incentive, benefit plan, buying power, right?

[01:12:34] Would they change for better or worse? We really don't know, but I doubt our buying power would get stronger. For certain, our bond rating would not if we split from the general government. Would employee jobs be at risk?

[01:12:51] I mean, the Grapevine has said that when Richmond City negotiated their agreements with 13 percent raises, that the cost was high. And again, this is Grapevine. But to Mrs. Shea's point, I'm wondering

if costs go up and the funds aren't there, would employee jobs actually be at risk?

[01:13:15] And what our class says is get larger, again, to Mrs. Shea's point. And then I started thinking about some of the special programs that this, for sure, Marcy, Alicia, and I have been a part of in our time on the board. And I worry about our funding for special programming.

[01:13:32] What would the impact be to our career ladder, our opportunity schools, to Mr. Young's point, teacher licensure, grow our own programs, and teacher residency, just to name a few. Big takeaway for me on the surveys and the focus groups.

[01:13:51] Well, for one, it was just work done in response to the board's request. Yet, as Mrs. Shea said, we receive feedback all the time. We have annual climate surveys. And there's also a history of Henrico. If you want to see what's changed over time and how we continue to pursue excellence.

[01:14:11] And that doesn't mean that we don't have room to grow and change. Please know that. But what was amazing for me about the focus group questions and the survey questions done over the summer or right at back to school was if you ask the right questions, you get the right answers.

[01:14:31] And I'm just so pleased that the team took so much time and that our employees took time to participate, regardless of the percentages of participation. Over time, we've had great participation and feedback from our employees, but I have to say the specificity of the questions asked and how you protected the anonymity of the employees who were providing the feedback, amazing, amazing.

[01:15:05] It was refreshing and very responsive to advocacy that we receive all the time, that staff would give feedback, but they fear retribution. So thank you very much for the way in which the feedback was gathered. But now I'm just going to cut right to the chase.

[01:15:21] This board doesn't have the taxing authority to fund collective bargaining. And since this would affect Henrico County government, I'm just going to say on the record, I need for my board of supervisors, Mr. Schmidt, as well as the other supervisors to receive the same information.

[01:15:40] And I'd also like to have conversations with them and receive input from them because this affects Henrico County as a whole, despite the fact that this is the school board's decision to make without the funding authority, the taxing authority. I hesitate on moving forward if we don't have the support of our general government. I just want to highlight some of the initiatives that I know I've been very proud to be a part of. First and foremost, while other localities

[01:16:15] furloughed hundreds to thousands. We furloughed zero, hear me, zero employees during the pandemic. We've made compression and pay grade adjustments. We've done longevity adjustments to honor service to Henrico. We've done safety initiatives. We offer the best and most competitive healthcare plans and we cover the cost increases when it's feasible for us to do so. I think we've covered them in the last three out of four years, if I'm not wrong. Is that correct, Ms. Coy? I believe that

[01:16:55] is correct, yes. Recently, parental leave policy, an equity policy, minimum wage increase last year to \$15 an hour, \$25 an hour for school bus drivers, unprecedented raises across the board to all employee groups as well as periodic pay adjustments for hard to staff positions.

[01:17:15] I mean, not to mention all the retain reward things we've done for our employees. I have a few recommendations just in response to feedback in general, feedback presented today.

[01:17:35] I believe one of the most significant pieces of information in this notebook for me is in Appendix A10. It's a teacher contract summary. has that has that contract summary been provided to affected employees are you referring to the presentation yes yes that presentation was made available to principals this year for their use with their employees at their discretion the recommendation came from a principal themselves that we create something that was an easy to access clear resource well the terms of the

[01:18:14] the contract are within the contract that the employee received this was a tool developed to help make it easier to understand that's feedback we have received from employees is understanding their contract and what it means and particularly related to calendar days and work days and paid days and so that was a resource we provided principals and we've also placed it in your binder for your convenience as well. So I'm just going to ask again though I hear that it was provided to principals to share did all affected employees receive that summary i can't say for certain but i don't think so because i would i would encourage for um all affected employees

[01:18:53] to receive it because i have to say i was blown away just by what i learned right it just summarized exactly how the paid holidays that there are 20 aren't there 20 in the contracts i believe there or 20. Just that alone, or just the difference in the workday. And I realize the workload and the burnout is real in education. But it was interesting to really look at the way the time is divided up. And I think our real challenge there just is to protect the unencumbered time.

[01:19:26] But one of the, this has certainly been a learning experience in that it's my understanding, And correct me if I'm wrong. Contracts can be improved outside of bargaining and still be in compliance with state code as long as we include the codified language. Correct?

[01:19:49] Correct. So the state provides parameters on contracts. The state example is in your binder and then divisions within those parameters adjust contracts. Game changer. Absolute game changer. We don't need, I mean, we could provide a lot of specificity in the contracts in response to a lot of the responses that were right in here that are important to employees. Dr. Cashwell, do you think that's possible? I mean, certainly there are parts and pieces of the contract. We do adjust annually, again, sticking with those codified requirements.

[01:20:24] So there's certainly, and we've endeavored each year, including the tool you have in your binder, make clearer the contract for our staff and that's been something they've requested and certainly some of the areas that have come up as challenges or potential room for improvement may be appropriately addressed through contract but it might otherwise be policy for example the leave someone mentioned increments in which leave are taken that for example could be handled through policy so I think maybe not all fit within the parameters of the contract But certainly there are pieces that could be adjusted, as well as policy adjustments made to be responsive to some of what we've received.

[01:21:04] However this could be done, I recommend it. I mean, our employees need more detailed language that outlines their responsibilities and protects their unencumbered time. I don't know what that looks like, but I'd like for us to work on it.

[01:21:22] Next, I would also like to, to your point about the lead time, because this came to me from some employees during my time of service, that for our contract employees, is it possible to be more flexible and offer PTO during the school year to employees that don't currently have this option?

[01:21:45] Is that a possibility, Dr. Cashwell or Ms. Coy? It depends. I think you're asking, it may be that employees aren't eligible based on the number of hours or the way in which they're employed part-time, for example, and the kinds of benefits they'd earn.

[01:22:02] I mean, these are things we could certainly look at and examine. But specifically, I'm sorry, for clarity, when our teachers, for example, take leave, they take four, eight-hour increments, and I know that's tied to finding a substitute.

[01:22:18] Certainly, that's something we could look at adjusting those increments. Yes, and then that would, for example, be handled in board policy. Okay, and then next is, there are times when budget or policy decisions have had a cause and effect disconnect that really had unintended consequences.

[01:22:38] I know recently this occurred for us with employee groups receiving more of a raise than others, even though everyone received across the board raises, right? So I'd like to recommend that we prioritize our efforts. This is a big one for me.

[01:22:54] it's a number one for me. Fix the pay scale. Can we please fix the pay scale so that it's clear and transparent and it rewards our employees? And I'd like to start by prioritizing the instructional vacancies, custodial services, IAs, and C&M employees. But I want the whole pay scale to be studied, please. And can we fix it? Are you referring to the teacher scale or a teacher pay?

[01:23:26] I'm referring to, for example, if there has been compression or, you know, when we've regraded positions, when we've been trying to be responsive and nimble, we've had unintended consequences, right, by regrading a position and then employees quit one position to go to another position.

[01:23:44] if we could just do a full analysis on that. Absolutely. And I think that it's ongoing. And so analysis is always underway. And certainly you mentioned during your time on the board, work done to alleviate compression. And as I think I mentioned from this seat at that time, that doesn't stop there. You don't fix compression and never look at it again. It requires a look every few years. And in addition to that, it's a market analysis scenario when it comes to hard-to-staff positions. You mentioned the bus driver adjustments that were made as part of a

[01:24:18] targeted market analysis last year, and then we continue to do that across employee groups, so absolutely that's ongoing work. And then I have four more, bear with me, I have four more recommendations in response to feedback in general, and some is specifically related to this to this work but could we please reevaluate back to school week for our employees I know I heard a lot in my district about the time that it took time out of the classroom and teachers just wanted

[01:24:54] to prepare for for the students and back to school and I know that getting together I know the benefits of the organization getting together but maybe if next year could go differently maybe on time. I know employees did not appreciate being late for daycare and other unintended consequences, right, of that day. I just would note that that's not an annual occurrence, and we noted it had been six years since we'd held a gathering together, and we understand that there is a trade-off with time. But certainly, no matter what the activity might be, a convocation or a

[01:25:31] training related to the new reading program, there are times teachers might need to be away from their classroom during that really um what can be a stressful time getting ready for the new year we're always working to prioritize teacher time thank you for the clarity there dr cashwell and then earlier

we talked about the um how employees feel about how their feedback is received i would like to see um more communication not necessarily in volume but more communication around the source and importance of the new initiative, for example, where is it coming from, right? Is it coming from

[01:26:08] the DOE? Is it coming from the district? If it's coming from the district, is it coming from central office? Is it coming from building leaders? Or is it coming from staff? I mean, in response to what our employees have shared back in their feedback. And then in conjunction, I believe it was Mrs.

[01:26:27] Shea, maybe, who talked about teacher advisory committees. Could we please look into building level, teacher advisory committees, school-based focus groups of some sort. This has been a meaningful experience, and I would like for us to keep learning and growing.

[01:26:47] So I don't know what the mechanism looks like, but I'm interested. And a number of our buildings do have structures for advisories. So we, you know, for example, I have the teacher advisory committee at the superintendent level. Buildings hold those, but that's certainly something we could look to standardize.

[01:27:03] And, you know, I think it does speak to some of the survey results we saw around, depending on where in the organization you sit, you know, being able to see that feedback loop realized into action may be different depending on the lens. So, certainly. And then just to close out, I just look forward to discussions and collaboration.

[01:27:23] For me, the focus is going to be on what can be eliminated, what can be improved to support our academic excellence for our students, honor employee voice and support work-life balance for all of our employees. The floor is yours, Madam Chair.

[01:27:41] - Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. Certainly, I also wanna thank all of the board for your questions, your feedback, your requests for additional information, so it makes my response very limited because most of it was covered.

[01:28:00] Also, as I process some of the presentation and some of the materials that is in this binder, I was struck by both the areas where we must grow, additional areas where we need improvement.

[01:28:18] I see successes throughout. I see challenges throughout. And I think, you know, as I reviewed it, it prompted me and what's remained at top of mind is that at least for Verina, Sanston and Highland Springs, And I don't want to speak for Fairfield, but potentially Fairfield, too, that these conversations aren't new.

[01:28:41] And I think folks need to really settle for that, settle in that, nestle in that, that some of these conversations we're having aren't new. I was in the General Assembly 11 years ago.

[01:28:58] I went back to look at my notes, and it was jaw-dropping to realize that the same things that I was advocating for in the General Assembly 11 years ago in meeting with legislators then, I had hair and everything, are the same things that I see in these results, in these outcomes.

[01:29:21] My perspective I'm going to share is different because much of the questions and responses have already been shared. I'm just going to be very clear because I think it's compelling and I think it's a time to say it that the state needs to fully fund our schools.

[01:29:44] Really, if we want the change that we seek, we all want positive changes regardless of the way in which we speak it, regardless of the data that we're reading. This board is an excellent board with an

outstanding superintendent and with experts. However, if we want to do more than move and advance, we need the funding to do it. Regardless if the mechanism comes to the Board of Supervisors, if the money comes straight to

[01:30:19] Henrico County Public Schools, it takes money. Unless we just want to continue to just keep up, unless we just want to continue just to shift and move or shuckle and jive, we want to advance.

[01:30:34] All of us up here, every single Henrico County Public School employee know that our children are worth it and that they are worth fighting for, regardless of which approach you use. But the truth is we need the money, and I'm just going to be clear and say it.

[01:30:58] Also, I'm going to touch on another area. It is grand to be known as an employer of choice and recognized as one of America's best in-state employees.

[01:31:13] It should be celebrated. It is an achievement. I understand that we are an employer of choice for some. I am also convinced that Henrico County Public Schools can become an employer of choice for all. We will. We can. We've proven several times and if COVID wasn't an example, I don't

[01:31:45] know what to give you, because it was. So indeed, while we have things to celebrate, we do have employees that have made the decision not to leave, but to stay. And perhaps it's not because we are employer of choice, but it's because they have hope. We have given this message of be a light, and I'm just going to say it's tough to be a light when perhaps you don't have light in your home.

[01:32:24] Our students go through a lot. Our employees do as well. I am compelled to say, regardless of where we land in this space, this Henrico County School Board is going to put kids first. We received a lot of information today. We're going to spend a lot of time in it. I can guarantee that. And we're

[01:33:01] to come back and we're going to figure this out we will figure this out i also want to say thank you to every single henrico county public school employee i said it before you could have gone somewhere else but you're here and that's where we want you to be we see you we hear you and we

[01:33:33] value who you are we are going to look into those mechanisms to ensure that the ideas that you share that you get a response from them the outcome is important it's just as important as the input and i'm certain that we'll figure that out as well i also want to thank you mrs coy and your team for your efforts for compiling this information in response to the board's request back in may

[01:34:12] this was not an easy task it was more than pulling data it was conversations and i'm going to be bold enough to say that you're working on work that impacts you too and to do this work and to separate so many things so that you could be authentic in it deserves a round of applause so So I would like for the board to give a round of applause right now for this effort.

[01:34:46] And so before we end this moment, I also want to make sure that if there's a board member that has a redirect or any additional, this is your time.

[01:35:02] So I see Mrs. Shea. Mrs. Shea, the floor is yours. Thank you so much. First of all, Ms. Atkins, I cannot agree more. Yes, yes, yes, we need more state funding. And I think that's part of, you know, we talked about before almost the conflicting feedback between for compensation that it's one of our best and one of our biggest areas of opportunity.

[01:35:22] We are the highest in the region in terms of compensation. We're the only ones in the region whose benefits, all of our benefit packages would be rated platinum if they were on the marketplace,

above platinum if you look at their actuarial value. I mean, regionally, we're crushing it, but if you look at the ed sector in general in terms of compensation, that's where it falls short, and we cannot move that needle significantly without the proper state-level funding.

[01:35:51] So, I cannot agree more with you on that. So, thank you for bringing that to light and part of this conversation. Ms. Coy, do you know when was the survey open? During what window?

[01:36:07] End of July until middle of August. It was three weeks total. I could get you the exact dates. Okay. July to August. It wasn't only available when teachers returned during work week. It was also available for those who wanted to engage in it while they, before those responsibilities started, they still could have done that as well.

[01:36:26] Correct. Okay. Perfect. And then also my colleague shared some information from Appendix A9. about the impact of collective bargaining on student achievement, but it left out the main two bullets that all the other information comes under, which state the relationship between collective bargaining and school districts and student achievement is decidedly mixed, was the first bullet point there. And then the next bullet, main bullet point for the entire document says

[01:37:03] research is lacking on how collective bargaining impacts student achievement, and then lists some sub-bullets from which the two positives were read but there's also two negatives that were not shared under that same bullet which says the interest of students unions and students do not always align which may depress student achievement as well as unions strive to improve member benefits which may draw resources away from more effective strategies and then goes on to list also positive outcomes so i just wanted to make sure all of that information was shared since the um since

[01:37:37] that appendix was referenced. Additionally, as Ms. Kinsella shared, really funding from our Board of Supervisors continues to be a critical piece of this puzzle. And at the end of the day, whether it's money coming from the state or money coming from our locality, we have a finite pie to spend.

[01:38:02] And most of that pie in any given year is already allocated to salaries and fixed costs that we have. It's actually a very small slice that is discretionary from year to year. So whenever we increase spending in one place, as a colleague said that increased spending should bring better outcomes for students, whenever we increase it in one place, we also have to understand that in the same breath, it decreases spending somewhere else. And so this is about picking priorities because our pie is not

[01:38:39] growing. It's about allocating the pieces of the pie to different places. And so while I wish we could increase spending to all of the places, that is just not our, that's just not the reality. And then I'll close with my redirect with, I understand, you know, Mr. Irving made some compelling statements to Ms. Coy about staff not being forced, no employee being forced to engage in this.

[01:39:14] they could do nothing. However, the impact that Ms. Kinsella talked about is still going to impact staff, whether it's positive or whether it's negative. Either way, even if they don't engage in this process, it's still going to impact them. And a change in the structure of the system and how we are going to operate would impact every employee. And so those could be positive benefits, They could be negative benefits, but I don't want to leave it on the note of everyone has the choice on whether they choose this or not.

[01:39:49] They do have the choice of whether they choose this, but they don't have the choice on whether it impacts them. Thank you. Are there any other questions, feedback, redirects at all? Hearing none, our

conversation has concluded for the moment.

[01:40:11] Thank you, Mrs. Coy. You're welcome. And Madam Chair, that concludes items from me. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. The next item on the agenda is the public forum. Citizens are invited to submit written public comments.

[01:40:32] Is that not where we are? Thank you, colleagues. That is not the next agenda item. The next agenda item is unfinished business.

[01:40:55] Colleagues, do you have any unfinished business? Hearing none, the next item is new business. Colleagues, do you have any new business? Hearing none, I will now move on to announcements.

[01:41:13] Our next meeting is today at 6.30 p.m. right here in the New Bridge Auditorium. This meeting is adjourned.



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