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Henrico County School Board Update on Employee Engagement, Thursday, March 13, 2025

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[00:00:00] The first presentation we have is an update on the division's response to employee engagement and feedback. We're pleased to be able to provide you a comprehensive update on much of the work that's been underway for quite some time, and Mrs. Holly Coy is going to kick us off.

[00:00:15] Great. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Shea, Vice Chair Irving, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell. I am pleased to bring an update to you this afternoon on the work of the division to respond to the feedback we've been gathering from employees since last summer about contracts, compensation, and their levels of engagement as HCPS employees.

[00:00:37] As a quick recap, there have been a number of inflection points in this work over the last year that have brought us to this update today. Last spring, the Board requested a comprehensive report that included information on collective bargaining in Virginia, as well as employee engagement in HCPS.

[00:00:55] the summer, staff conducted research, created and deployed a new survey for all HCPS staff, and hosted focus groups to provide the board and division leaders with a timely and multi-layered analysis. A report was then provided to the board and the public in September, and in October the board shared their budget priorities developed in response, as well as requests for other responsive

administrative actions. Today's presentation provides a progress report those requests and actions. As I noted in October, you clearly articulated spending

[00:01:31] priorities and priorities related to policies and operations. Part of that statement is included here today and today's presentation provides updates on these items. Before proceeding to the progress update, I wanted to provide a quick overview of what we heard from employees last summer, which has been the foundation of the work and the request that you all made. As you recall, we focused on three major feedback mechanisms: the 2024 HCPS Annual Survey, a Summer 2024

[00:02:06] Employee Engagement Survey, and the Summer 2024 Employee Focus Groups. Employees shared their feedback about what they most value about their employment in HCPS and areas where they see opportunities for improvement. Notably, many ranked highly their relationships with colleagues, opportunities for professional growth and wages. Others ranked contractual matters, including compensation and working conditions, along with recognition mechanisms as areas for improvement as a division. Some of the highlights from those surveys are provided here. However, I want to note that the detailed reports previously shared on each of these provide

[00:02:45] nuanced feedback by employee type, which have also guided the work. In the summer 2024 survey, employees were asked to rank areas which they would like to change, with one being their highest priority. As you saw in the last slide, 60 percent of survey respondents selected their contract as the thing they would most like to change about their employment. This graph shows how all employee groups rank different areas they would like to change. Drilling in a bit further, this graph illustrates what the survey respondents meant by contracts. Over 60 percent of the survey

[00:03:24] respondents who selected contracts as the priority area for improvement they were asked which topics within that were of the greatest concern compensation which was defined as wages salary and or pay for extra duties or coverage was the clear priority followed by benefits such as health insurance and retirement benefits leave policies planning time and work hours also receive significant attention Outside of contracts, 22% of employees cited the work environment and resources as the next highest priority area for change.

[00:04:00] This graph illustrates what respondents meant by work environment and resources in greater detail. So, based on that and the more nuanced feedback behind it that was gathered and presented by staff, the board shared their overarching budget priorities and made a request for specific administrative actions to respond to that employee feedback.

[00:04:24] At that time, the Board announced their budget priority for the coming year as raises for all staff, specific market adjustments for certain employee groups such as instructional assistants and custodial and maintenance teams. Second, you noted the capital improvement increases to support roofing, mechanical and transportation needs.

[00:04:43] And third, the expansion of the Opportunity School Model to support schools with higher rates of teacher turnover and provisionally licensed staff. Additionally, you requested internal work begin to address employee concerns as noted in the lighter blue boxes here. As HCPS leaders have dug into these topics further, we've done so in partnership with many different advisory committees, work groups, and regularly scheduled convenings of various employee groups. Some of these are long-standing groups, some have existed for a bit

[00:05:18] but were redesigned this year, and others were created new this year, but they all share common purpose in ensuring that employees from many different parts of the organization have the opportunity to surface issues and shape the solutions to shared challenges. One example of a redesigned advisory committee is the superintendent's teacher advisory committee. This year, the membership of the group was expanded with the number of representatives from each building going up to three as a maximum. And with more representation from each building, we have sought

[00:05:54] to strengthen communication flow in both directions. Additionally, this year a steering committee made up of the Teacher of the Year finalists from each magisterial district was created for the first time to guide the work of the larger group. The format of the monthly meetings has been restructured to center employee concerns and hot topics, and public meeting summaries are created by staff so that teachers can easily share back updates at their buildings.

[00:06:21] This redesign continues to be an evolving work in progress, refined and shaped by the feedback provided by teachers both on and off the committee about how it can be most effective. So where has all this input gone, and what has it turned into?

[00:06:38] First and foremost, employee input has informed the budget recommendations of the superintendent and the school board. At the board's last monthly meeting, a recommended financial plan was approved, which is directly responsive to the feedback employees provided. It prioritizes significant pay raises, invests in planning time and professional learning, and elevates staff recognition efforts in every school in the county by providing funding to each and every school for that purpose. It also transforms an existing central position to support that work and employee recognitions division-wide.

[00:07:16] Furthermore, the budget responds directly to employee requests for improved working conditions with targeted investments in staff support, including more English learner teachers, counselors, and SSOs.

[00:07:31] It includes raises for custodial and maintenance staff, which were designed to better recruit and retain our essential personnel, and our capital improvement requests reflect those building needs as well. The budget also included funds to expand the Opportunity School model, including its compensation incentives and additional staff support for Ratcliffe Elementary and Brooklyn Middle beginning in the fall of 2025. Finally, the capital improvement plan proposed this year reflects the need for increased investments in roofing, mechanical, to include HVAC, and all part of improving our physical infrastructure that is both a working environment for our staff

[00:08:09] and learning environment for our students. Additionally, one of the administrative requests was to look into automated timekeeping for HCPS employees. Staff explored numerous add-on systems and those conversations converged with a new pilot underway for redesigned staff ids in hcps it is possible that the pilot that the new staff ids may integrate with timekeeping systems but we will be evaluating that as the pilot concludes at the end of the school year as was

[00:08:44] noted earlier a great deal of feedback was provided by employees about expectations and compensation for their time so since the summer staff have been digging into this topic with various employee groups to identify more specific areas of concern and brainstorm ways in which clarity and/or change can be provided.

[00:09:03] A new working group was created on the topic and the issues have been surfaced among many of our other existing advisories and committees, namely our Teacher Advisory Committee. As a result of these conversations, staff have drafted a new document to help provide clarity on frequently cited topics called a contract addendum.

[00:09:22] This document will be attached to our continuing and probationary teacher contracts which are issued in May. The document will provide plain language clarity on things such as expectations for after-school events and a breakdown of the days and hours in a teacher's contract. Staff has also worked on proposed revisions to 14 corresponding policies, which we anticipate coming before the board for first review on March 27th. These policies touch on everything from contracts to professional learning expectations to planning time and duties.

[00:09:55] Finally, these conversations have included feedback on changes to the leave policy for our staff. Those discussions are ongoing and staff is continuing to work on some potential options for board consideration later this spring. In addition to taking action with redesigned advisories, contract addendums, and policy changes, we continuously evaluate and see feedback on how our communications can be as clear and efficient as possible.

[00:10:24] This year, we developed a new page on the website dedicated to the budget process and information about how HCPS spends its money. Additionally, we are continuing conversations with teachers about how we communicate information about the pay scale given our unique model and how we can communicate the clarity provided in the contract addendum.

[00:10:45] We also continue to use all our regular communication channels to keep our HCPS staff informed and apprised of developments. I want to close the presentation with some words from one of our employees who participated in a focus group last summer.

[00:11:02] They're always trying to grow something and make it better. We're always changing, but I know that change is trying to make it better as well. So while you've heard a progress update on specific actions and items today, the conversations are ongoing and the commitment to meaningful and impactful employee feedback is widespread as an organization.

[00:11:22] The continuous improvement mindset this employee noted one that persists in all we do at this time i'd be happy to answer any questions you may have thank you so much ms coy i will start to my right with miss kinsella thank you chair shea um i've waiting i've been waiting for this update um and and not as a board member because i've been aware of the work going on behind the scenes right but but bringing this update public um so that all of our employees hopefully will be made aware that um outside of our uh tremendous proposed budget

[00:12:02] announcement um they really haven't heard a whole lot right about um the feedback they gave um last spring summer and fall right so i'm thrilled that this is um especially sides 11 to 14 that uh details so much of the feedback and the efforts the work behind the scenes that they haven't heard about yet or so that's great that's great to me i'm not going to go into really any more detail than than i have before i every employee wants to be seen heard and valued and i think that the

[00:12:41] responses on slides 11 to 14 do that i continue to see in the public comment contract clarity i I want to negotiate my contract. And as one of our board of supervisors said, and I'm going to ask you, since you've been in these focus groups, do employees have, do they think they can actually, like in private

sector where you can negotiate when you are hired, is there an understanding that negotiate my contract doesn't mean individuals negotiating their contract?

[00:13:16] Do you think that's understood from our employee groups? I think as a general statement, yes, that's understood. There's always some variation there. But on the whole, I would say, yes, there's an understanding. And given our structure, I mean, as we discussed in the fall, that with different localities have different structures, right?

[00:13:37] The school side with their government counterparts. So given ours with the unified pay plan, I'm thrilled. Everyone on the school side gets 6% raises, as does the government side, right? And in localities where collective bargaining has moved forward, both sides generally agree on moving forward with that, whereas it would change our entire financial structure in Henrico.

[00:14:04] So I think really what this presentation demonstrates is on slides to 1114 specifically is so it captures everything outside and it doesn't change our structure that we currently have with the unified pay plan and with our government counterparts.

[00:14:22] So I'm thrilled because I know everyone on this team has worked nonstop, including the board and dialogue. since we brought this forward to, even before we asked Dr. Cashwell, we were all talking about it. So I'm just thrilled. I'm thrilled and thank the team because there's been a lot of work.

[00:14:42] And then one question, how will we monitor our success with this? Like, do we have a plan for follow-up? I mean, the, you know, the feedback is ongoing outside of, right, this, this employee engagement and employee voice. We do care about employee voice. So how will we move forward? Do we have a plan for that yet? Absolutely. I think, as I noted at the end there, this mindset that we are always growing and changing and listening and adjusting is what resonated with that particular employee. And while sometimes that change comes with bumps,

[00:15:21] that they recognize the system is continuously striving to do that. And so as we learn from these experiences this year and others that weren't even mentioned in the presentation, I think we'll carry that forward into yet another school year and beyond.

[00:15:36] As we think about the structure of advisory committees or the communication tools that we use around the contract addendum, I mean, you heard updates about the work happening so far, but that is by no means the end of the work plan. It lives on and we'll learn inevitably from what we've done this year and hopefully build on that in the future.

[00:15:57] So to be nimble and responsive, even outside of a budget cycle. Absolutely. OK, thank you so much, Chair Shea. Thank you, Ms. Kinsella. Mr. Irving? Yeah, thank you for the presentation. I greatly appreciate it. I was waiting eagerly for us to be able to present this to the public.

[00:16:15] And it was especially enlightening in response to some of the things that I had heard when I was at the strategic planning committee meeting yesterday and so I you know encourage folks to tune in to listen to what was going to be presented today and I and I hope that that is useful to them so I do want to go through a couple things because while I think that much of this is great I think that there is some clarity that needs to be illuminated on to make sure that we we have an understanding of how we want to progress I noticed that it says from the highlights from the HCPS

[00:16:51] staff summer 2024. How much weight are we giving to the engagement survey that had a 22% response rate? Are we letting that guide the entire thing or is that just a piece of the puzzle? I would say any one of the surveys, the focus groups, as well as the ongoing conversations are all different perspectives and different layers. So our HCPS annual survey last year, I think it was in the 64% range response from our employees.

[00:17:21] The summer engagement survey was a 26% from our employees. But we recognize that that does not encompass everybody. The focus groups obviously are a small number of our employees. But we continue to engage in both formal and informal structures to seek out and respond to feedback we get wherever we can.

[00:17:45] okay that's that's great to hear because i would be i think we would be remiss if we were just only using one survey um rather than an amalgamation of things and if i might add to that i think mrs koi explained it exactly that was a good launching point right to triangulate those survey sources looking at all three of those those pieces of information to gather where some starting points what are common threads we're hearing from employees about big topics and that's what got us started with this work but you know then we were able to spend time for example in TAC where you have a larger representative sample from all across the

[00:18:21] schools saying here's what we think we need to begin to work on for example with the contract addendum does this resonate does it make sense they've been a part of building that language alongside us we've brought iterations to them they've been able to weigh in what further questions do you have and I think all along the way it's fair to say there wouldn't be any one data set driving this but really that ongoing dialogue across employee groups.

[00:18:48] I appreciate that clarity. It says that staff consistently recommended improvements to feedback mechanisms and recognition efforts. So how do you think we will, how will employee feedback mechanisms not be reactive?

[00:19:04] Like how will we make sure that they are being responded to in real time how will the employees themselves know that their feedback is actually being adopted yeah again i think there are a lot of different layers to that that piece of the work certainly with formal advisories having conversations about where their feedback is what the ongoing process is on various topics whether it's contract addendums or other topics i know we've we've been really intentional about that in some of our formal advisory committees but we've also had conversations with our school leaders during leadership convenings about this very feedback we got last

[00:19:43] summer and how that translates at the building level formally and informally to ensure that everyone understands the importance of being responsive and recognizing that that may play out in lots of different ways in different places across an organization as large as ours because i think in some of my conversations with some very involved teachers they the common complaint seems to be that their, for example, TAC representatives don't actually ask them what they want them to bring with them to the committee and then don't convey the actual information from the committee back to them. And I feel like that's a huge missed opportunity. And I think in selecting

[00:20:23] these members, you would naturally want it to be people who are going to be communicative and not people who just go and then come back and don't do anything with the information because that's a feedback loop that that's missing and i think it um frustrates people who would like to take part in the

efforts but have not been able to thus far absolutely and i noted in the presentation particularly around tack listening to feedback from members both on and off the committee for that very reason that the perspectives of the those who serve on tack provides one perspective but often those in the building who may or may not be seeing those connections can help strengthen

[00:21:01] in our work in the long run with their feedback. Yeah. And I think the feedback is a necessarily difficult part in terms of like, and what am I saying at the building level, like actually doing? And I think of myself as a teacher, and I don't even know how I would ever feel like that's happening without some sort of organization that's actually ensuring that my thoughts and others' thoughts are being heard in a manner that actually commands, you know, a response to them.

[00:21:31] So I think that that's going to be a challenging thing, and I hope we're able to figure it out. But that's the part that I do worry about a lot. Going to the, if you could improve one aspect of your, sorry, yeah, one aspect of your, for those who selected contracts.

[00:21:48] So we'll go to the contract side. I'm looking, no, I'm actually not looking at that. I think that the compensation piece is obviously huge. You know, teachers on average make around 18 to 20 percent less than those who are similarly educated.

[00:22:05] So I can certainly understand why compensation is a big piece. I think that we're doing a great job keeping up. And I hope that folks are, you know, happy with the direction that we're moving on that, recognizing that there's more to do. There's more state level involvement that frankly needs to be done in the state carrying its share of its commitment.

[00:22:25] But all of that seems unsurprising to me. I do think that, you know, the benefits and leave policy, I think that some of these are tough to disaggregate from one another because a leave policy to me does feel like an employee benefit.

[00:22:41] And I think when ranking these things in the surveys, it makes it maybe somewhat difficult to know exactly what people mean on a given topic. I do want to turn to the environment and resources because I think that's maybe somewhat more interesting. People list working conditions and student behavior as their two most important factors.

[00:23:04] And for me as a teacher, I think working conditions, student behavior, and class sizes are all the same thing. Like they all feed into one another. And I think with results like this, it becomes hard to know exactly what somebody means because a working condition is the amount of kids that you have in your class.

[00:23:23] And it is the student behaviors that occur. And student behaviors that occur are influenced by your class size, which means that your teacher may not be able to give you as much time. And so I worry, you know, how we, like which one needs to be solved first and in which order.

[00:23:40] And I think it makes answering questions like this a little bit more challenging in terms of knowing exactly what people mean. But I do think that, you know, student behavior is certainly a factor and that's going to be solved differently than class sizes are going to be solved.

[00:23:56] And working conditions like AC and, you know, your ability to be able to use the restroom quickly in the middle of a day after you've been standing on your feet for three hours is going to be

different from, you know, making sure that a student had accountability for the type of behavior that they engaged in.

[00:24:12] So I think these things, it's hard to know exactly what people mean in each category. I do agree with the contract's point that they must be expanded. Language clarity, especially very plain spoken language, is extremely important, so I'm glad to hear that that's happening.

[00:24:29] I think that having every single thing defined is super important so there is no ambiguity because that is something that I hear. And I think that people who put more detail and clarity regarding other dues to sign as the last thing is more so that they don't know that there's anything else than that.

[00:24:46] Because I think when you've only taught in Virginia, well, then that's just what the contracts have always said, so you probably don't even think anything of it. But I think that people who come from another state where contracts are 50 pages, you look at that and you're thinking, how is this thing only a page and a half?

[00:25:02] So I think that's an important thing for me that I think once folks see what is spelled out, it's going to really spark something in them that I think that they maybe didn't realize previously. So I'm glad to hear that we're doing that, and I do hope that it is expansive. the planning time protections so that was that's con that that i think that's part of the con the contractual obligations i think having planning time commitments put into the contract is extremely important from my perspective and i do hope that that's a point that we'll be we'll be moving

[00:25:39] towards um i think being able to go to your contract and say this is how much time i'm supposed to have every day is is extremely important while recognizing there are situations where you can be compensated if that's encumbered upon but I think especially of my the elementary school teachers who I think even with our 83 permanent positions still are not consistently getting the con the planning time that they're supposed to have I know that that varies widely by schools and I think it needs to be explicitly stated that these are there for that purpose and that purpose only because I

[00:26:13] think when principals get leeway over how these folks can be used well then they may not actually be used for planning time and then that's unfair to some teachers at some school who don't get it because the principals use it for other things and then compared to other schools where their principals do use it exactly as they should and do provide that extra planning time because I think of my mother-in-law who was a first grade teacher for I think 31 or 32 years and you know just having to walk kids and you barely get a bathroom break and all this time and then planning time really maybe is just taking a break for like 25 minutes because you've been on your feet all

[00:26:51] day with a bunch of seven-year-olds and so i think that's that that's extremely important to me um to make sure that these positions are used the way that they are supposed to be used because if they're not used that way then we can on paper say that we're giving them 45 minutes of planning time but they're not actually getting that and that i think drives dissatisfaction um amongst our elementary school staff. The leave policy, that was, what slide was that? The leave policy, that was some of the stuff that's coming later. Oh, employee-driven contract and policy clarity.

[00:27:27] Leave policy, I think something that I would like to see is a combination of personal and sick leave insofar as we are legally, you know, by state and federal laws allowed to do that. I would like to see a combination of the two. I think that many schools already use them pretty interchangeably, and so

removing the distinction is probably maybe not in reality changing anything, but gives more leeway to the schools who are maybe not using it that way and having some fairness to how it's done across the division. I'd also like folks to be able to take hour increments.

[00:28:03] I think from a fiscal standpoint, giving teachers the ability to take an hour at the end of the day versus having to hire a sub for half a day or a full day would save money over the long term. And it just is easier to get a teacher in your department to cover during that period of time, thinking of middle school and high school, than it is to just necessarily bring in a sub, especially if it's a school where it's really hard to get subs.

[00:28:30] So I think the hour increments could be a pretty big piece that folks would appreciate. Another thing that I think is not on here that I would love to see and I would love to talk to my colleagues about is, I don't know what the name would be exactly, but I think a teacher time impact statement. So any new initiative or any new thing that we're adding to people's plates, and it wouldn't just be teachers, it would be staff. We need to calculate how much time this new thing that we're going to be adding on is going to add to their day.

[00:29:01] Because something that I heard from especially veteran teachers yesterday, and I hear all the time is what they care about when you've taught for over 15 years and what somebody who has taught for under five years cares about are very different things. And I think for especially the more veteran folks, time is just so important to them. And when we just keep on adding things and adding things and we don't take things away, we do a big disservice to them. And I think that's what drives them out more so than the pay and anything else is just feeling like I don't have enough time to do everything that doesn't encroach on my family. And so I think really actually

[00:29:41] quantifying how much time this thing is going to add is very important in considering what we're going to put on them. And if we are going to put something on them, what are we taking away as well to reduce the amount of time burden that we're putting on them? So that's something I would like to say. I don't know what we call it. It's similar to an environmental impact statement where you have to do assessments of what the environmental impact is going to be. This would be a time impact statement. And I think yesterday, the veteran versus new teachers, they have different needs. I think we're doing a ton to try to make being a new teacher easier. And we should because

[00:30:20] we need new folks coming to the profession. But I don't want us to forget about the folks who have been here a long time, like thinking of my mom, who in year 28 is thinking, I don't need to sit at this data meeting because I get a 100% pass rate on my SOLs. And so different people have different needs and I think we need to appreciate that um and and do more to work with people who are you know clearly masters of their craft and do what they're supposed to and never cause any issues um and I think and I think just you know because Mrs. Kinsella brought it up I think it's important to also separate all of this from collective bargaining because all of these

[00:30:58] things are very different these surveys that we did were not to even discuss collective bargaining The staff were never asked about it, and so these things are separate from that, so I think it's important when looking at this to recognize that this is a different thing that is being pursued than that, and it addresses different concerns that people may have.

[00:31:21] But I thank you for this, and I thank you for letting me take this time to ask questions and share thoughts. Thank you, Mr. Irving. Mr. Young? Thank you, Ms. Coy, for the presentation here today. Madison

said a lot, so I'm going to piggyback and not try to repeat, but I like a lot of things that he said. Some of the things that I picked up was I do concur with being able to take an hour here, hour there, and I often wonder why something hasn't been in place yet. So my only question is what are the challenges to being able to take an hour here or hour there at the end or beginning

[00:31:58] of the day? Happy to chime in and welcome other thoughts. So we have started talking with some of our various employee groups about this. It's something that emerged specifically in the comments last year, along with kind of this idea of combined time. And the concerns are logistical and substitute in nature. How do you find a sub? If there isn't a teacher to cover, can we provide the right supports for our students at the end of the day while providing that flexibility to our teachers? And I would say that while those have been challenges that I think has shaped the current state of policy related to leave.

[00:32:35] I don't think that there's any reason those are a hindrance in us looking at other options. And that's certainly what we're doing as we're exploring and mentioned. We'll be bringing in the spring some policy revisions for you to consider as we're working with the team to really understand what are those leave policy changes that may be made.

[00:32:54] Also taking into consideration important factors related to the logistics of running a school day program that meets the needs of our students as well. So we'll look forward to sharing some some revised policy language with you in the spring. Okay and since we only use policy, how's the automated timekeeping and pilot progressing? So we initially looked into a number of different kind of add-on software systems that other organizations use and didn't get great traction on any of the things initially explored meanwhile we're working on a pilot for staff ids kind of following the work

[00:33:33] around student ids that has previously been done there may be some options there as we dig into the pilot we're learning more and more so i think time will tell whether or not those two efforts will converge into a seamless solution on the timekeeping front and if not then we'll pivot and and look at other options that might be available to us and if you don't mind is there was there a school chosen or certain group of teachers? I can get that for you. Yes. I don't remember offhand. Okay. Thank you. We can, we can cover that at another time. Um, so around the,

[00:34:07] um, contract language and clarity, um, has this been a topic in tech? Yes. Okay. And what was the initial response from teachers outside of the survey, um, regarding the planned contract clarity improvement? Yeah. Um, I would say on the whole, always variations, but on the whole, was really enthusiastic both um with the questions that were asked just by the questions that were asked we learned a lot about where we haven't communicated well what's what's in our current contracts um i there was one particular teacher we did some small groups who said to me after we could spend hours on this topic and it wouldn't be enough so um there was definitely a sense that

[00:34:45] the the conversation needed more depth and they brought a lot of energy as well as really great just perspectives to the conversation one of the things we've learned as we've had these contract conversations you know we've we've bounced this contract addendum around um this could be a source of clarity um but i think the appetite from all of our employee groups has been more and more and more nuanced clarity is helpful and so we can't pack all of that into the addendum itself uh and so are already thinking about okay what are the other communication tools is it an faq document

[00:35:20] other things we can do to unpack that um even further given the appetite and the energy that came to the conversation speaking of you said hours and hours on that topic um is there a dashboard or

some formalized tool for tracking ongoing initiatives that maybe employees can access or even the school board can access to know what's going on in tax to mr ervin's point about maybe that information not getting back to our teachers and staff on a student on a school level I keep enthusiastically trying to chime in too, and Mrs. Coy is ready to answer the questions, but your questions related to TAC, we actually keep and publish the minutes and conversations

[00:35:57] that are held in the topics so that it's easy for liaisons to go back and share in their building, but certainly they can be accessed otherwise. So we've shared that, I believe, through the clipboard so that all staff would be able to access and see what's TAC working on just via click. And yeah, does that answer your question? You asked something else at the beginning.

[00:36:22] No, no, no, no. It answers the question. I just wanted to know if there was a tracking mechanism in place because I know a lot of topics are covered. Which ones get priority? Almost like a facilities request. And in fact, specific to TAC, when we surfaced, what do you want to use this time to talk about? I mean, we came in with some ideas that were certainly, as you said, we triangulated what we thought the hot topics would be given the the survey points and others but we asked them what are what's on your mind and we actually had them rating it as a group and so they actually drove a lot of the topics that we've covered thus far I mean they certainly concurred with the topics we

[00:37:02] brought forward related to contract addendums and and that sort of thing but for example the Virginia Literacy Act implementation cell phone practices and implementation were big topics so a lot of the you know the work that is front facing for teachers and staff going into the school year and really having time regularly at the TAC meetings to talk about what's gone well where do they need more support in a particular area we had some small group choice sessions one of them was around student behavior supports and we had behavior support teams in there to talk about that so really trying to be responsive and not

[00:37:40] just have us driving the conversation but asking our teachers to generate the topics they want to learn more about and so they've set the agenda in that way the steering committee which is a new addition this year before we even bring forward an agenda we asked them to weigh in on that's teachers from every magisterial district saying does this resonate are we capturing what you want us to talk about how did the format go last time what might you want to see different. So I think it's a work in progress and certainly hope we're doing a better job communicating more widely what these feedback loops and mechanisms look like. At the division

[00:38:18] level, I think one of the topics that's been brought up, I think by every board member in some way, is just sort of the nuance that when we talk about employee voice and feedback and challenges and recognition, there are sort of these central touch points, school system-wide touch points but then there's the building or the work site and so sometimes it's hard to extrapolate those out and I think Mr. Irving was pointing to some of the survey data and saying well what does that really mean in context of my building or workplace or in context of all of HCPS and understanding when we hear employees talking about wanting more recognition you know what does that

[00:38:55] look and feel like and how much of this is nuanced to the leader in the building and what we can do as a system and we've tried to really break apart all of those things as we're working through this feedback and we're bringing forward guidance that we're working with our building administrators on what's what does this mean for you and your leading of a building and your staff teams and what does it

mean for us centrally as we're leading and guiding the division so we spent a good bit of time with our principals at the beginning of the year unpacking these topics as well because it's really both and and where a lot of what we've talked about in this presentation is our central led efforts and things that have more of those touch

[00:39:33] points but i wouldn't want to leave out that other nuanced context as well all right thank you uh final question um almost a piggyback off of mr ervin um i don't know if i think there needs to be a monitoring system to ensure planning time is protest protected consistently across all schools And if it's not being protected, there needs to be a system set up that's very transparent that our teachers, our staff can report without fear of retaliation.

[00:40:05] And I don't know if that's a skip level where we're skipping over the principal for this, but it definitely needs to be protected because like Mr. Irvin, I'm hearing different schools are using it for different things right now. So I would love to see that. That's it, Madam Chair.

[00:40:21] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Young. Ms. Atkins. So thank you for thoughtfully presenting the presentation along with capturing the past and how we got in this moment.

[00:40:40] It's always important to put context around the data that you're providing. I did have a few thoughts and questions specifically regarding the draft contract addendum supplemental document. In the slide, it said numerous topics.

[00:40:59] Could you provide an overview of the various topics that that supplemental document will cover? So the contract addendum has evolved as we've gotten feedback from various advisories and groups and worked on it further and further. One of the things I think that is most central to the contract addendum is the first bullet you see there, the breakdown of days and hours.

[00:41:20] So within the context of a specific year's calendar, how many instructional days are there? How many paid holidays are there? How do those days in a contract that are covered in a standard contract, how are they allocated?

[00:41:36] What are our expectations and what does that look like? That includes a lot around those expectations for after-school events or activities. That time is built into contracts, but parsing out what exactly that looks like, as well as planning time protections when compensation is provided for loss planning time, similarly expectations for duties, that type of thing. So we are hopeful that as it has evolved, it's gotten stronger and I have no doubt that it will continue to evolve in future years based on the feedback

[00:42:12] we get after we try it out. Thank you for that. I would be interested in learning about what those topics are as it evolves. I do believe it's going to change because as folks become more knowledgeable then they're thinking deeper. And I think we'll get to a place where satisfaction goes up because you're able to define better what's in that addendum, whatever form that it takes. Additionally, if you could provide details, I'm also a bit concerned about the planning time. So if you could provide details on how the plan for compensating, lost planning time will be

[00:42:51] implement it yeah we can certainly provide that currently we provide guidance at the secondary level for those planning time compensations when lost but we still get a lot of questions and so that's one of those areas where additional clarity whether it's through an faq document that's teacher facing or an faq document that might be facing towards administrators answering questions or dealing with a whole building is one of the things we're looking to strengthen through this

[00:43:19] I appreciate that because I think what we may find is as we're going through this journey, we'll be able to adequately capture this moment on. But then for those folks who realize, hey, my time was lost, what about me?

[00:43:36] I want to make sure that we are thinking holistically about the entire picture and defining what is that amount of time going to be. So if you are that employee and now you're more knowledgeable and you realize, hey, I was owed that as well, making sure we put a timestamp on that as we're looking forward but not forgetting the past and those who from building to building the implementation has been different.

[00:44:02] I'm just going to say that on behalf of Alicia Atkins and understanding that the implementation has been different based upon maybe leadership, maybe whatever circumstances that may have prevented or have happened.

[00:44:18] I think we have to look at the whole picture now moving forward, but also historically as well and make sure if compensation is necessary that those folks get it. and then also I'm excited to learn more about the redesign for communication I think you said that the pilot will end at the end of this school year do we have an understanding of when we think we'll see the outcomes of the pilot itself I will turn to my colleagues I think the pilot at the schools for the staff ID badges runs through the end of the school year and so at that time we'll have

[00:44:57] more on that particular project and we'll hopefully be able to analyze how that may or may not intersect with the time keep automated timekeeping request i believe we also discussed the pay plan um there's a redesign on communication for the pay plan so i was speaking to that oh sorry so um the the conversations there are ongoing um we heard some about that with TAC as we were tackling the topic of compensation and contracts.

[00:45:26] And so some of those pay scale questions surfaced there as well. And so we committed to going back to our teachers and continuing that conversation about how we communicate all of this in totality. So that will continue throughout the spring and we'll have further updates.

[00:45:42] Okay. And so I do hear the focus on educators. I want to make sure that we are expanding beyond educators. those who want to be educators but don't have that title yet whether it's a substitute or a student that may enter into our employment are we capturing those perspectives as well absolutely there are various employee based groups and conversations for both formal and informal the mechanisms for that feedback and that conversation outstanding thank you and your team for the work here and for

[00:46:19] the work to come. Thank you. Well, actually, Mr. Irving, I want to follow up on some of your requests and asking from colleagues. I absolutely support exploring our incremental time. I think that's going to be, that's going to increase satisfaction. I think we'll also find some benefits from a division as well. The other topic you mentioned was around having a, maybe a new initiative time impact statement so forth so on i also support that as well and so just wanted to

[00:46:56] follow up on your your thoughts there mrs shea thank you so much uh miss atkins um dr cashwell uh miss coy thank you so much to you and dlt and all the team that have really taken the time to dig into these topics but not only dig into them but take the time to get authentic feedback from all types of staff doing it. I think that when we looked at things this fall and we shared what we wanted to be dug into, that was a really critical piece for us as a board. And so I know

[00:47:33] that takes longer. And I know that takes multiple iterations. And I know Dr. Cashwell and her team could have thought up changes on the spot to put into place. But we have a little bit of a longer timeline here sharing back in March as opposed to November or December because you have taken the time to authentically engage with staff all types of staff and do like you said on a lot of these things multiple iterations okay we got feedback we're gonna try a draft what do you think of that okay here's what we need to change and that takes time to do it well and we see that you know some

[00:48:11] of these are still work in progress because of that and so I just wanted to acknowledge the time and effort that it has taken and the appreciation for that and that that's truly responsive to what we're trying to do for our staff so so I wanted to acknowledge that thank you could you go back on because this goes to your script you said when you talked a little bit about feedback from the building with TAC could you I just I didn't catch all that you said about that could you perhaps just kind of repeat what you said about the feedback loops for TAC within the building I

[00:48:51] know we've talked about it some here on the dais yes absolutely so as we have been kind of in this spirit of redesigning TAC we've had conversations and will continue especially as we reach the end of the year with our TAC representatives to ask what's working what's not working but are also seeking that feedback outside of our tech representatives whether it's principals or other teachers who say that feedback loop really isn't working or i heard once but but not enough or have you thought about x y or z we are we are striving to gather that feedback as well as we

[00:49:27] think about how we continue growing as a as an advisory committee into next year and what changes will kind of bring forward based on that excellent thank you so if if there are staff within a building whether they be teachers faculty other staff staff in a building who have some of that feedback where is the best place for them to direct it so that it can get to where it needs to go is it their building um leader or is there their department leader that sort of thing yeah i i hope multiple channels are available to them whether it's their tech representatives or building leaders who can surface that. Absolutely. We are all ears from everybody in the organization. I

[00:50:05] think that goes all the way to Dr. Cashwell as well. Yeah, I think well said. And one of the things that, and I brought this up earlier, is this, you know, it depends on the nature of the issue and concern. And that's something we've been working with our TAC members on sort of parsing out. Some things are truly building level related. And while we can assist at the central level and being a liaison to problem solve at the building you know there there there may be a concern an employee has that's very real but very specific to a nuanced context that's very much building specific so that's always a great place to start and that's what we encourage our employees

[00:50:41] to do but certainly there are bigger trends or patterns that will often emerge intact by concerns that are brought up but we also know that you know even with three representatives from a building Even if they're pulling their staff and bringing forward concerns, you know, the reality is every employee is unique and their ideas, thoughts and concerns are unique to them and may not be well spoken for by a representative.

[00:51:08] So every employee should feel that they have a voice that they can leverage and use in a variety of ways across the school system, both in their building and out, whether they're a member of TAC or any of our other advisories as well. sometimes you know while representatives are one mechanism to bring forward concerns we recognize that doesn't it doesn't ever fully capture the individual employee and you

know sometimes there isn't a way for one person to speak for someone else or their unique perspective and voice and and that's not uncommon and so we continue to strive to find ways that all employees know that they are valued and heard and there are mechanisms for there to reach out and i value

[00:51:48] the times that that they do reach out to me our other staff members or connect to us i know as board members you're very available to constituents including employees and working to channel those concerns as well so we hope that employees will continue to avail themselves of of all ways to make sure their thoughts are heard i appreciate that um and you know some feedback that i've heard from some of our staff is you know as um we said a lot of this iterative process of going through things you know can take some time and you know we're really digging into these focus groups and work groups on some of the bigger structural things right that we're looking at but a gap

[00:52:27] that they are feeling is to be able to give feedback in real time for these some of these things that don't have long runways you know when when a pivot is needed within the division or within a department or within a school, and how to have a voice in that, right, and those things that have a shorter runway that I know Dr. Cashwell and DLT and all of you are always trying to think, right, when you have to make a quick decision about all the layers and that sort of thing, but how can they be a voice in that?

[00:53:05] And I know that's much more challenging for things that have a short runway, but I wanted to share that feedback of that gap. Not an easy solution, but we can do hard things. So I wanted to share that. Looking at really great comments from a lot of my colleagues that I won't speak to all, but agree with many of them. I did not realize that the TAC minutes were published on clipboard myself and so I really appreciate that I appreciate you highlighting that I appreciate that transparency and so thank you on that

[00:53:45] I also agree with hearing from my colleagues about the planning time piece I know I talked about this a little bit on the budget as we made those IAs more permanent but just making sure that our schools have the guardrails and the guidelines they need to ensure the maximum benefit for adding those those adding those to our budget um and i think that is all for me lots lots covered up here uh any redirects any follow-ups yeah i i did want to add one thing so i i wanted to thank staff for

[00:54:23] adding the the daughter the dollar figures i i had asked about this previously so i i didn't want that to go unrecognized i appreciate that that was added and it's helpful to give people context of the scale of these things um and i know that those are new additions so i didn't want to comment on that. And then my last thought was just about the three TAC representatives and something I would recommend and maybe like us to think about. So there's this concept called tripartism, which basically says that some countries make decisions based on involvement

[00:54:58] from employers, so that would be businesses, labor, and the government, all three collectively working together to come to a sort of decision so that all parts of society are representative. And I think for TAC, it might be useful to have one be principal chosen, one be the teacher of the year, which we already do, and then another one be elected by their peers.

[00:55:22] Because I think that while the teacher of the year is elected, that is necessarily usually going to be a different person than the people might represent to represent them in this specific capacity in terms of advocacy so i i would love for that to be considered and and other than that i i thank you again ms katella yeah i have a question because i know we've been talking about the leave policy the increments right four day you know four hours eight hours for some time now and hearing the one hour today is great um do we feel like we've overcome the barrier because i

[00:55:57] know that finding substitutes was the prior barrier so i just thought i'd i'd ask if we believe we've solved for x there I think there's that's still underway I don't want to get in front of the policy work unless you all have something to add as a more recent development you know when we're looking at policy and bringing forth revisions for the board's consideration we try to weigh it through all angles and of course this case teacher feedback but also administrator feedback related to the logistics of implementation in the building and what might be feasible so

[00:56:29] So certainly working through that and hope we can bring forward some revisions that might help move us forward in a positive way, but certainly don't want to get in front of policy work there. Thank you. I just knew that had been a barrier that I thought I would include in the discussion. It is a significant challenge. It's very real. I mean, I certainly understand the perspective related to the one hour of leave, but it's also very hard to secure a substitute for one hour.

[00:56:51] it would often rely on colleagues calling on another colleague, which in many cases may work out great, but in some cases we've heard from colleagues they don't appreciate another colleague calling on them. They may be asked to lose their planning time, and while we would compensate for that, we hope no one's having to lose their planning time, even if it is to cover in a significant scenario so that students can have the needed instruction. So we're weighing all angles and looking at what might be possible.

[00:57:21] Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you. Anything else, colleagues? Thank you. Thank you so much.



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