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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, April 17, 2025

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[00:00:01] good evening it is 6 30 so we are gonna um start on time it is april 17th 2025 welcome to the hamrico county school board april monthly meeting the first item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda colleagues is there a motion i move the school board approve the agenda for tonight's meeting thank you miss kinsella is there a second second second by miss atkins all those in favor say aye aye any opposed the eyes have it the agenda has been approved. I will now turn it over to the superintendent. Thank you, Madam Chair,

[00:00:37] members of the board, and good evening to all who have joined us. As we're introducing visitors from outside HCPS, I do want to note Ann Potts is present. She is with the Henrico Education Foundation, former Henrico administrator, and is serving now as their interim CEO. Welcome. We're happy to have you here. And we are thrilled to have students both from Verina Elementary School and Echo Lake who are going to lead us in the pledge and do a performance. So we're going to go ahead and start as we always do with the Pledge of Allegiance, which will be followed

[00:01:14] by a moment of silence. So I'm going to have our students from Verina Elementary School who are going to be leading us in the pledge come forward. They are joined by Ashley Song, associate principal who is going to come to the podium and introduce these three outstanding students and house leaders

from their school. And then once she's done that, we'll stand for the pledge. Good evening, everyone. I am the proud associate principal at Verina Elementary, and these are three of our wonderful house leaders. We have Tatum Edwards, Cammie Chavis, and Jaden

[00:01:50] Harris to lead us in the pledge tonight. I would now ask that everyone stand as you're able for the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. And if you would remain standing as you are able for the moment of

[00:02:26] silence, please. And that concludes our moment of silence. How about a round of applause for our students? Thank you so much. And you may be seated. And as our students who led us in the pledge are exiting, we're going to make our way down to the audience so that we can enjoy the performance

[00:02:58] highlight as the students from Echo Lake come forward. All right. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Cashwell, colleagues and guests. My name is Christopher Mosley. I am

[00:03:33] the education specialist for performing arts and it is my pleasure to introduce for our performance highlight this evening the Echo Lake fifth grade ukulele ensemble under the direction of Mrs. Erin Franklin. Ms. Franklin is in her 21st year in Henrico County and her 14th year as the music teacher at Echo Lake. She is one of our national board certified teachers since 2012 for early to middle childhood music. Her entire fifth grade began learning ukulele in late January and is having classroom performances for the families this week. These students are representatives

[00:04:11] from all four fifth grade classes at Echo Lake. Students will be performing two selections, Count On Me by Bruno Mars, and the Echo Lake School Song. Y'all remember those? Yeah. Tonight we have an attendant to their proud principal, Ms. Ellen Gonzalez. We ask that you please stand to be recognized at this time.

[00:04:33] She was already standing. And now please help me welcome the ukulele ensemble.

[00:04:43] Thank you.

[00:08:44] I want you to know how difficult that is to do.

[00:08:46] So can y'all help me give them another round of applause?

[00:10:11] - Chair, school board members, and Dr. Cashwell. Our first recognition this evening honors the work of the HCPS Student Equity Ambassadors. As a reminder, the Equity Ambassadors program includes students from each high school who engage with their classmates and one another in meaningful conversations about issues affecting their school communities.

[00:10:35] Through leadership development, cultural exchange and peer connection, students gain the tools to advocate for themselves and others. Equity ambassadors have a pivotal role in organizing events where differences are celebrated and leading discussions where all voices and points of view are valued.

[00:10:56] Let's hear from a few of our Equity Ambassadors about what that looks like at their schools. When I was a freshman, I saw a sign-up on my School G page for this Equity team, and I didn't know anything about it.

[00:11:12] I joined the club sophomore year because my older sister did it. I joined Equity Ambassadors in my ninth grade year because a lot of my seniors, upperclassmen had recommended it to me. My

teachers told me, Ms. Rainer and Ms. Masur, there's fun activities. There's a lot of information you can get.

[00:11:30] And they talked about how inclusive they were, and I liked the sound of it. A lot of clubs I didn't really feel like was me. But when I joined the Equity Ambassadors, I really felt welcome, if you know what I'm saying. It really felt more warming.

[00:11:49] I really love their message and purpose. I think it's so important for us young people to be reminded of how important it is to spread equity around our communities and like making sure that we're building that future that we all want to experience where everybody's voices are heard. And so by you guys creating those little... We packaged up a bunch of toys for kids and shipped them off. I don't know, it just, it was warm-hearted. I don't know, it made me feel a certain way, it made me feel good, it made me feel like a better person.

[00:12:21] When someone offends you... Just being part of such a large community who really just cares about not just helping people, but just looking into themselves and seeing how like their words affects others, and I think it just makes people more conscious of what they do and what they say.

[00:12:52] We're required to do two events every year, but we like to do more just because we have the time and ability to. So the projects that we have done so far have been our annual AP Course fair where we host all of the AP and dual enrollment that are offered at Freeman. We've organized a BSU collaboration where the Black Student Union we collaborate with them and volunteered a panel and then the next one is a unity day where everyone is called to the field and they partake in all different activities with people that they don't know and the groups are

[00:13:31] randomized so people can sort of socialize with people that they normally wouldn't. So one of the biggest events of the year is Culture Day and I was I was on the advertising teams and the culture day, like the fashion show and bringing the food and stuff. That's one of my favorite parts.

[00:13:48] - A couple months ago, we had an open house at the mosque, the West End Islamic Center. We brought teachers and administrators from all over the county to come and learn more about Islam from someone who's an expert in the topic. - Muhammad has only mentioned 25 times, of course, and Jesus mentioned 25 times in the Quran.

[00:14:07] - We were able to teach people from around the county about Islam so they can better adhere to the needs of Muslim students in the county. We're hosting an alumni panel for Women's History Month. We have about six to eight women coming in that graduated from Hermitage. And it's what has allowed me to have this journey of learning about myself, helping so many people along the way. You know, it's a lot of things you can get from being an Equity Ambassador. You know, you can learn a lot of life lessons. Because they're talk about that they shared like the things that makes you different person equity ambassadors has

[00:14:43] definitely helped me as a person grow as a person it's changed me because it's given me more confidence to talk about what i believe in and express myself i think in terms of like me as a person it's definitely made me a more empathetic person it feels nice because we meet with all the schools in the county so it feels like we're all talking about like the same things i want to thank all of our equity ambassadors for their leadership, their passion, and their compassion this school

[00:15:17] year. So tonight the board is pleased to recognize the following representatives from each high school. Joining us from the Academy at Virginia Randolph, Omar Lovett and Anaya Steny, and equity

champion Monica Bagby for a paint party social and Valentine's Grams and Spirit Week to promote belonging compassion and camaraderie from deep run high school mentala muhammad and fiona chan

[00:15:54] for the self-love affair event to promote self-awareness and self-respect and culture day to elevate unity and collaboration while celebrating diversity from freeman high school Sarah Varasoto and Sahana Muthukumar for the Letters of Appreciation event to express appreciation and respect for all, and the AP Course Fair to promote awareness and diverse representation in

[00:16:26] academic opportunities for all. Representing Glen Allen High School, Luke Rutkowski for financial literacy presentations aimed to teach students about financial independence and multicultural night in collaboration with the multicultural club to showcase and celebrate diversity and community representing godwin high school anaya matthew and equity champion nick designy for the culture

[00:17:02] served event to celebrate diversity through food and meaningful dialogue and the cultural arts festival a platform for students to showcase authentic narratives in an authentic voice and their languages of origin. Joining us this evening from Henrico High School, Fiona de Kuna and Krishna Agarwal for the Black History Month panel and pageant event to provide information and historical context of historically black colleges and universities and for Unity Day

[00:17:38] to elevate a sense of belonging. From Henrico Virtual Academy, Kennedy Hicks and Morgan Hicks and equity champion Emily Kunath for the Glow Up Together Friend Festival and Christmas Mother Food Drive to encourage engagement and a strong sense of community. From Hermitage High School, Carrie Dodson and equity champion Melissa Hyde for the Literacy STEM Night to welcome current

[00:18:14] and future Hermitage families into the school community and the Women's History Month alumni panel to elevate authentic narratives of resilience and success. Highland Springs High School, Erin Miller and Equity Champion Erica Armstrong-Boss for participation in the annual AP Dual Enrollment Fair to promote awareness of academic opportunities and the Makerspace Grand Opening Event to promote accessibility for all

[00:18:47] students to engage in authentic and creative expression. representing Tucker High School, Mena Dawabed, and equity champions Javaria Masrur and Melvina Roan for the mosque open house event in collaboration with the Muslim Student Association to promote awareness and the annual cultural fair and community event to promote belonging and the celebration of diversity. And last but certainly not least from Varina High School, Nazifa Prami

[00:19:27] and Awa Ba and equity champions Cheyenne Carter and Courtney Fennell for the Trans Awareness Week event and cultural and honorable mention event to promote awareness and belonging. We have several other equity ambassadors and program supporters in the audience this evening.

[00:19:49] Will you please stand to be recognized if you're joining us this evening and you work with our equity ambassadors. Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank Tiffany Dabney, our student voice coordinator. She has the privilege of working with these outstanding student leaders, and as you saw in the video, their collective efforts are so impactful. Also, I want to acknowledge Kyle McCollum, one of our educational specialists who works to support our equity champions as they support our students at the school level. As the Chief Equity, Diversity, and Opportunity Officer,

[00:20:26] my name is Tiffany Lewis, and we are so proud for the school board to recognize our equity ambassadors

[00:20:32] this evening. Thank you. Madam Chair, board members, Dr. Cashwell, good evening. We are [00:21:30] pleased to recognize multiple student athletes who are excelling in the classroom and in their various sports. We will begin this evening with the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Competitive Cheer Champions from Verona High School, including teams from throughout the Mid-Atlantic. We would like to start by recognizing the members of the team, Tasia Jackson. Tasia was also recognized as the CIAA UCDE Ultimate Cheerleader Award recipient. So MVP. Congrats.

[00:22:02] Tasia. Jamisha Wilkins, Amira Akbar, Samara Jones, Chyna Johnson, Amari Myers, and Amari Clement. We'd also like to recognize Coach Hodge and Coach Kenton. The CIAA Ultimate Cheer and Dance

[00:22:41] Experience Battle Competition took place last month in Baltimore, featuring nine high schools from throughout the Mid-Atlantic and through to Ohio. Verona High School was the only high school from Virginia invited to participate. The Blue Devils cheer team dominated the competition, taking first place.

[00:22:58] The team won a \$2,000 award, team jackets, and a huge trophy. We want to emphasize huge trophy because it really is huge. Again, we would like to recognize the coaches, and please join me in giving a big cheer to these amazing student-athletes, their coaches, and the winners of the CIAA Ultimate Cheer and Dance Experience Battle.

[00:23:17] Congratulations. Okay, next we will move on to the Virginia High School League Winter Sport State Champions.

[00:23:38] We would like to start with the student athletes from Douglas Freeman High School who are making a splash in the Group 5A Boys and Girls Swim and Dive team as the state champions. We would like to start with the Freeman Girls Swim and Dive team members. Allison Bischoff, Karina Blanco, Eva Brown, Eliana Couchet, Lane Francis, Caitlin Morrow, and Beth Stott.

[00:24:22] This is the first ever team state championship for the Freeman girls after taking second for the last two years. In addition to an outstanding team performance, Allison Bischoff won the 200 freestyle with an all-American time of 148.77.

[00:24:43] Bischoff also swam third for the 200 medley relay team, which won the state title with a time of 144-36, just .27 ahead of the second place team, Godwin, which we cheer for all Henrico schools, so congratulations to all the swimmers. Other medley team members were Lane Francis, Eliana Couchet, and Molly Sleeman.

[00:25:02] Francis and Sleeman also earned individual state titles in the 100 backstroke and 50 freestyle. Congratulations to these mighty Mavericks.

[00:25:27] All right, next we would like to recognize the boys Douglas Freeman swim and dive state champions. We will begin with the names of the athletes and then recognize the coaches. Charlie Dewarson, Jackson Holston, Nicholas Kerger, Blaine Nelson, Cole Nelson, and Tyler Rossi.

[00:26:04] The boys swim and dive team, this is their second consecutive state championship and fourth title since 2019. Of particular note, the Boys 200 medley relay team of Nathan, Zoboda, Nicholas Kerger, Charlie Dewarson, and Henry Brooks set a new state record of 132-40.

[00:26:22] The Boys 200 freestyle relay team of Brooks, Kerger, Zoboda, Caleb also took first place. And now we would like to recognize the coaches of both the Boys and Girls Freeman Swim and Dive team, Stephen Gromlin and Ryan Densley.

[00:26:41] A big round of applause.

[00:27:01] All right now we will be recognizing our individual state champions and before we leave the pool we would like to recognize two individual state champions from Godwin High School and while neither of them were able to be here due to previous commitments we would like to recognize sophomore Mia Eubank who earned top honors in the 500 freestyle with the time of 459.22 and then we would also like to recognize senior Kate Hodum who won the 200 individual medley with the time of 2:02.38 this is Hodum's second VHSL championship in the event and director of student

[00:27:36] activities Mr. Tom Nadeau is here to represent the swimmers all right staying with their individual state champions and moving on to the track we would like to recognize Mr. Jack McDonald from Deep Run High School who is assisted and chaperoned by his coach Carter Giles Jack took first place Go ahead. Jack's very fast, so we're going to move fast with Jack. Jack took first place in the VHSL

[00:28:15] Class 6 500-meter dash, lowering his school record time to 1:03.54, which ranked him second in Virginia, seventh in the nation, and 11th all-time in Virginia. And it is of note that this would be the number one time in Virginia had it not been for one other athlete who actually set the national record. So the only person in Virginia that is faster than Jack this year is the young man who actually set the national record. So that's a tremendous honor for Jack. Next, we have Widner Lilly from Douglas Freeman High School. Now, Ms. Pantalee, who is an assistant principal here from

[00:28:52] Douglas Freeman High School, she's here both to assist, but also she's being recognized as a national board certified teacher. So she'll get her congratulations here in just one second. But Widner Lilly from Douglas Freeman High School launched himself to a VHSL class five state championship title in the pole vault with a jump of 14 feet, seven inches, ranking second all time for freshmen in Virginia.

[00:29:12] Wittner also broke the VHSL Region 5C pole vault record and won the Adidas Indoor National Elite Championship and finished ranked second in the country for freshmen. So congratulations to Wittner. Not to be outdone on the track and on the pole vault pit, we would like to recognize Anna Barrow from J.R. Tucker High School.

[00:29:38] And she is being escorted by Coach Sirica. Anna also earned first place in the VHSL Class 5 girls pole vaulting event with a jump of 11 feet 6 inches. Anna also broke the VHSL Region 5C record with the season's best vault of 12 feet and one quarter of an inch, ranking her third overall in the state of Virginia, breaking her school record, and having a tremendous season in really lower, excuse me, raising the bar, literally raising the bar for female vaulters here in Henrico.

[00:30:09] Congratulations to Anna and Coach Sierka. Next we have Princess Kamara and Coach Stan Davis and Denise Patrick from Hermitage High School. Princess sprinted her way to the state championship in the 500-meter dash.

[00:30:33] She clocked a time of 1:12.55, setting a freshman state record and ranking fifth all-time in Virginia history, regardless of classification or age. So we are expecting great things out of these young and very talented freshmen. Congratulations to Princess. All right, last and certainly not least, we're going to move from the pool and the track to the wrestling mat.

[00:30:58] Our final state champion this evening comes to us from J.R. Tucker High School. Please welcome senior Andrew Wipert, his coach, Coach Mabel, Coach Kompel, and then the Director of Student

Activities, Mr. Paul Heiser. Andrew wrestled his way to the VHSL Class 5 215-pound state championship title.

[00:31:22] A master of the mat, he finished the season with an overall record of 44 wins and only two losses. Congratulations, Andrew, on your well-deserved state championship. Madam Chair, that completes our student recognitions this evening.

[00:31:40] We will now move on to staff celebrations and recognitions. Thank you all for your time. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell. On behalf of the Department of Professional Learning and Leadership, I am pleased to present more than 28 incredible HTPS staff members who have earned certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

[00:32:07] This is the teaching profession's highest mark of accomplishment. First, we have Michelle Abrams-Terry from Brooklyn Middle School. We have a few not present with us today, but we'll read their names.

[00:32:23] We have April Barlett from Greenwood Elementary, Sarah Barrow from Douglas Freeman High School, Lauren Blackburn from Henry Ward Elementary, Emily Bradley from Pinchbeck Elementary, Holly Condon from J.R. Tucker High School, Amy Connolly from Holiday Elementary.

[00:32:41] We do have with us Terry Crenshaw from HCPS Exceptional Education Department. We have Carly Earle from Greenwood Elementary, but with us here is Kimberly Evans from the Advanced Career Education Center at Highland Springs.

[00:33:05] Yael Fletcher from River's Edge Elementary School. Not able to attend was Ashley Heckle from Pinchbeck Elementary, Lauren Hewlett from Cackley Elementary, Jules Irvin Rooney from Tucker High School.

[00:33:22] We do have Kristen Roberts from Tuckahoe Elementary School. Now with us is Scott Miles from Greenwood Elementary, Sarah Oliver from Deep Run High School, and Sarah Henning-Snellings from Douglas Freeman High School.

[00:33:40] With us is Lauren White from Douglas Freeman High School and Mills Godwin High School. And finally recognized today is Marlette Williams from Anthony Mayfoot Elementary School. Earning national board certification is a rigorous process through which teachers demonstrate a deep understanding of content knowledge and mastery in the areas of differentiated instruction, teaching practices, meaningful engagement with students in their learning, and their abilities as effective and reflective practitioners. This group of newly board-certified HTPS educators

[00:34:18] is the largest of any Virginia school division this year. Nationally, just 19 divisions had more educators than earned this prestigious designation. HTPS leads such large school systems as New York City, Philadelphia, and Seattle. So please join us in congratulating

[00:34:41] this outstanding group of educators. In addition to the newly certified teachers, HCPS has 19 staff members who recently renewed their certification. The school board is pleased to recognize Sarah

[00:35:17] Blackburn from Anthony Mayfitt Elementary School. Not here is Amy Earle from Deep Run High School. We have Brittany Fennell from HCPS Exceptional Education Department. Melissa Glandon from Varina Elementary and Mayfoot Elementary, Andrew Hall from Glen Allen High School. We have a few

[00:35:55] who are not present in order. Valerie Hume from Mayberry Elementary, Teresa Katz from Godwin High School, Layla Marshall from Shady Grove Elementary, Charlotte Mason from Holman Middle School, Joshua McKeon from Mills Godwin High School, Ashley Melnachak from HTPS Division of Teaching and Learning, Dana Morris from Highland Springs High School. We do have Lindsay Pannelly from douglas freeman high school carrie m simmons from the academy at virginia randolph and finally

[00:36:34] amy stills from the academy at virginia randolph by virtue of their recertification these phenomenal educators are demonstrating their ongoing commitment to being lifelong learners with the understanding that their continuous improvement ultimately benefits henrico students please join

[00:36:55] us in congratulating and celebrating our newly recertified mbct educators teaching excellence is an ongoing theme for this evening's recognitions. Up next, we are pleased to celebrate six HCPS

[00:37:29] educators who earned the 2024 REB Award for Teaching Excellence. Please welcome Ryan Conway from Glenallen High School. Kiana Bobbitt from Highland Springs Elementary School. Elizabeth Broda from Henrico High School. Yvette Lee from Tucker High School could not be with us this evening, but Kendra Thomas from Hungry Creek Middle School is here and Jason Abrell from Freeman High School.

[00:38:08] Each year, the Community Foundation honors Richmond area teachers who have distinguished themselves through inspiring classroom instruction. This year, 85 educators were nominated for the REB award by colleagues, parents, and students. Of the 18 winners, 16 are from Henrico County.

[00:38:30] These REB award teaching excellent recipients have earned a grant of \$10,000 to \$15,000 to continue their love of learning and pursue cutting-edge study in their fields. Ryan Conway will travel to Japan, South Korea, and Singapore to investigate teacher preparatory programs and innovative effective strategies for teaching Gen Alpha students.

[00:38:55] Kiana Bobbitt will use her grant to earn a five-course certification in culturally responsive leadership from VCU and attend the K-12 Innovative Schools Summit. Liz Broda plans to travel to the Hawaiian Islands to shadow non-profit organizations and learn how cultural practices rooted in native Hawaiian principles of empowerment and belonging can build strong communities. Kendra Thomas plans to take courses in writing instruction and morphology the structure of words she will

[00:39:31] visit schools in vermont with established programs that support and teach students with dyslexia and travel to new england to research cross-curricular middle school lessons about watersheds and native american history and jason abril will expand on a senior thesis by traveling to southern france following in the footsteps of ancient cave painters and modern authors to explore the power of memory and the importance of personal essay writing. A seventh HCPS teacher, Donna Letson of Twin Hickory Elementary School, was a finalist for the REB award and will receive

[00:40:06] a \$1,000 grant. Please join me in congratulating these educators one more time. We love our REB partners. Each year the Community Foundation and the REB Foundation also recognize one school principal from richmond area school divisions for their outstanding leadership representing henrico

[00:40:42] county public schools mrs rainey neal principal of march vet elementary school rainey was awarded the 2025 reb award for distinguished educational leadership miss neal was surprised with the news a few weeks ago at a school celebration attended by her family staff members and her fans the

students. She will receive a \$10,000 cash grant and an additional \$20,000 to enhance the school's house system. The REB award grant funds will pay for a school-wide house system app, staff training,

[00:41:22] a themed hallway mural, communication tools, and my favorite, an ambassador program designed to welcome new students to the school. During the surprise announcement at the school, which included plenty of cheers and even a few tears, Mrs. Neal told students that she works very hard because she believes in each and every one of them and loves being their principal. Please join me in congratulating this very deserving REB Distinguished Leader Award recipient, Ms. Rainey Neal.

[00:42:08] our next employee recognition honors the accomplishments of the hcps librarians of the year as you may know april is school library month a time to celebrate the essential role of school librarians in transforming teaching and learning please welcome sarah young the hcps elementary school librarian of the year from knuckles farm elementary and kelly craigle the hcps secondary School Librarian of the Year from Henrico High School. Nominated and selected by their

[00:42:45] peers, these phenomenal librarians exemplify collaboration and the innovation needed to take learning to the next level. Sarah has been with HCPS for 26 years. She initially taught in the classroom for 11 years before transitioning to her current role as librarian.

[00:43:04] Kelly has dedicated the last 11 years to HCPS, first as an elementary school librarian and now as a high school librarian. We are fortunate to have dedicated and creative librarians in each of our schools. As Librarians of the Year, Ms. Young and Ms. Kregel are certainly among the best of the best.

[00:43:22] Please join me in congratulating the 2025 School Librarians of the Year.

[00:43:41] - Madam Chair, that concludes our recognitions for this evening.

[00:44:09] - What a great time celebrating so many accomplishments of our students and our staff who, Make Henrico what it is. We'll continue with our recognitions, recognizing Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Ms. Kinsella.

[00:44:26] Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Whereas more than 13% of students in Henrico County Public Schools are Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders. And whereas Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders comprise one of the fastest growing demographic groups in Virginia.

[00:44:47] And whereas, excuse me, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made and continue to make valuable contributions to the vitality of our community and bring rich cultural traditions to our schools, our county, our country and our world.

[00:45:04] Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes May 2025 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and observes it with appropriate programs and activities throughout our schools, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 17th day of April 2025.

[00:45:28] Thank you, Ms. Kinsella. Ms. Atkins? Jewish American Heritage Month, whereas the Jewish American community stands as a representation of historical and cultural impact, strength and resilience spanning across the history of the United States.

[00:45:48] and whereas Henrico County Public Schools recognizes its strength in diversity and whereas Jewish Americans have made and continue to make integral contributions to the vibrancy of our community that shape and strengthen our schools, our county, our country, and our world.

[00:46:14] Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes May 2025 as Jewish American Heritage Month and observes it with appropriate programs and activities throughout our schools, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 17th day of April 2025.

[00:46:43] Madam chair. Thank you so much Ms. Atkins. The next item on our agenda is Henrico Highlights. Thank you Madam Chair, members of the board. Tonight we are shining the spotlight on the Henrico Virtual Academy which offers students the flexibility of learning in an individualized environment while also creating opportunities for in-person experiences. HVA students participate in a mix of synchronous and asynchronous classes online following our hcps curriculum this is an excellent model for students who thrive in an independent setting to help ensure that students

[00:47:23] don't feel isolated hva also offers a number of in-person activities and traditional field trips to bring students together for shared in-person learning take a look a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Henrico virtual Academy and we are at the Metro Richmond Zoo. We are here to learn about ecosystems, food webs. Our benchmark for our literacy actually aligns with ecosystems. This is Pimpernel. He is an Eastern striped

[00:48:02] skunk and he is native to here. We've come to look at all the animals and the kids to really have a great time. We saw the hippos. I really liked seeing the baby one. I think the giraffes are definitely the favorite. They're all feeding them. They've got gross hands. It's really fun and exciting. It was like slimy and then a little preckly,

[00:48:25] so it was like a little hard. We love field trips. It really gives the kids a chance to get together and socializing and building that social peace for the kids as well. In addition to field trips, Virtual Academy students have access to VHSL extracurricular activities at their home schools

[00:49:05] and to extracurricular offerings provided through HVA. Opportunities like this help students make connections with their peers and encourage social development. Making personal connections is also an important part of this month's Heart of Henrico work. Jade Payne is a student support interventionist at Fairfield Middle School. In this role, Ms. Payne provides targeted support to students facing academic or behavioral challenges. As you will see, building trusting

[00:49:36] relationships with students is essential to that work. Take a look. So you do have more freedom but you're held at a higher responsibility for getting those things done. Jade is one of 22 student support interventionists for our division. Are you catching a lesson all the time? Yes. Okay. Which which could be small group counseling, restorative, building relationships, whatever the issue is with the child, that student support interventions can come in to provide support.

[00:50:12] - Are you prepared for the day when you get to class on time? - Yes. - Whether it's academic needs, they're falling short with their grades, or if it's behavioral needs, where they are frustrated about a situation and giving them the tools that they need to succeed. - The Malachi that you are now, do you think you'll be the same Malachi in the next school year?

[00:50:31] Well, it's funny because I've known Jade since she was a student at Verina High School when I was a school counseling director. I've always known her to be a wonderful leader. She was her class president, and then she went on to become a teacher. So we call her homegrown, and she really gets the heart of the community in which she serves at Fairfield.

[00:50:49] Who are you in control love? If you feel like you cannot control it anymore, then you come find one of us. I love it so much because I have so many different interactions with kids. and never do I have a day that's the same. Every day is different. I always say be ready so you don't have to get ready.

[00:51:07] Sometimes things don't go a course, but that's okay. You just have to pick up where things are and move forward, just being readily available. - And Ms. Payne is here with us this evening.

[00:51:25] If she would please come forward. Ms. Payne, we wanna thank you for all you do to support the students and school community at Fairfield Middle School.

[00:51:43] you and all of our student support interventionists are truly the heart of Henrico. Members of the board, Madam Chair, that completes our highlights and recognition for this evening.

[00:52:05] Thank you so much, Dr. Cashwell. The next item on our agenda is the reading of our mission statement. Mr. Irving. Henrico County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence will actively engage our students in diverse educational social and civic learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens thank you so much mr irving the next item on the agenda is public forum this is the time when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division citizens have

[00:52:42] signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board see speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else. We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and school affiliation, if applicable, and the subject of your remarks before speaking. After stating your name, please place the number you were given in the cart near the podium. Speakers must present their remarks to the school board, not to the audience, and may provide copies of their comments to the school Board Clerk. The use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of

[00:53:20] order. To assist you in tracking your time, there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen. I will also indicate when your time has expired. The School Board is here today to hear from you. We will not be responding to speakers' concerns or questions during the public forum however Enrico staff member will follow up with speakers stakeholders have also had the opportunity to provide written comments through an online forum in advance of the meeting these comments were shared with the school board members prior to the meeting and are posted in board docs

[00:53:56] equal consideration and attention are given to both written and in-person comments we appreciate your attendance here this evening and providing your input um so we will start with speaker number one all right we will move on to speaker number two good evening chair shea dr cashwell and members of the school board my name is elizabeth broda i'm a social studies teacher and department

[00:54:35] chair at henrico high school i also serve as the chair of the collective bargaining committee for the henrico education association our union here in henrico county and i'm here today to provide some context to the many public comments that have been submitted over the past two months previously the board had asked for more teacher feedback looking to hear from more hcps staff in general as well about what they were experiencing in our buildings and in our classrooms and the hea has been acting as an organizer coordinating efforts to bring the board more feedback from

[00:55:10] from across the county. In April, excuse me, in March, our prompt was to, quote, share a two-sentence story about the extra work you do, earning little or no additional compensation. You received

nearly 100 written comments from a variety of educators and county staff with a variety of experiences and ideas shared. For April, for this meeting, the HEA provided two prompts. First, quote, what is the one more thing that you have been asked to do this year that has exacerbated the

[00:55:47] difficulty of your job? Second, quote, share a time when you or a colleague have been afraid to raise a legitimate concern out of fear of retaliation. What happened and why were you reluctant to speak out? We also encourage staff to post this month anonymously to encourage as many to participate as possible when i downloaded the pdf of the written comments earlier this afternoon i saw over 40 pages of feedback have been submitted this month i hope you find these

[00:56:22] submissions useful in your daily work going forward we want to share what we experience and we ask that you continue to listen carefully and to carefully consider collective bargaining in the near future we are not just asking hea members to submit these comments these requests go out to thousands of hcps staff members so you don't have to be a union member to submit a written comment to the school board so please know that these ideas and concerns are coming from around

[00:56:55] the county not just people who call themselves union members thank you thank you so much speaker Speaker number two. Speaker number three. Good evening. My name is Marlene Sherlock and our family lives in the Fairfield District. If you've ever asked a young person how something went or

[00:57:32] was and got the answer, fine. You didn't ask the right question. Well, finally, somebody has asked HCPS staff the right question. What's one more thing you've been asked or told to do? In this month's submitted public comments, there are some 40 pages of thoughtful and at times very specific examples of extra duties required of them. And what saddens me the most is how many were perhaps uncomfortable sharing their name or even the district they live or work in. Their anonymity should not devalue their comments. Many of the same themes arose over and over, some of which you

[00:58:12] have the direct power to affect next month with the student code of conduct. It's clear that disruptive students and cell phone and technology policy abuses are constant and often daily hassles. A chaotic classroom is no learning environment for anyone. Stop being afraid of what the numbers might be if you just enforce the rules you already have in place. Why not demand of the students and their families what you're asking of teachers and staff? Other items might take a bit more time

[00:58:48] and energy, and perhaps even a major change in financial priorities. While it's true it's difficult to teach a hungry or hurt child, those things shouldn't really fall in the purview of public education. So push back. Push back to the Board of Supervisors and the General Assembly.

[00:59:05] You are not, nor should you be tasked with being the Youth Services Division of Henrico County. Your job is to teach our kids. Trim back on the wraparound services and put your money where your real mission and missionaries are in the classroom. Stop making teachers do so many things outside of school hours without extra compensation. Stop making teachers cover classes or lunchtime without giving them that time back. If you need a sub and can't get one, send someone, anyone from the central office. And maybe, just maybe, you'll get some of that real first-hand experience of what

[00:59:41] it's currently like to work under the eyes of everyone on an almost impossible task given the lack of time and tools to do it properly. Granted, I'm not in the classroom. There is no way I could do it, but I am forever grateful for the many teachers who have done so for our children.

[01:00:00] But I'm most afraid that you, and by that I mean the education administration at all levels, is driving away the good ones you already have and will be getting ones you want in the future. Listen to the teachers. Really listen to them. They are not fine. Thank you, speaker number three.

[01:00:20] this concludes our public forum for this evening um the for the next items i will uh item i'll throw it over to the superintendent thank you sorry yes i was going to say there is not a presentation but i did want to tee up that we are seeking your approval of the adopted fiscal year 26 annual financial plan as was previously presented thank you so much this is a plan that we have been reviewing since january i've been talking about publicly in many meetings met

[01:00:59] with our board of supervisors to work on it and talk and had a presentation earlier today on it so colleagues any questions comments concerns before we take a vote on the financial plan for this year hearing none is there a motion i move that the school board approve the adopted fiscal year 2026 annual financial plan is presented thank you mr irving is there a second Seconded by Ms. Kinsella. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The

[01:01:32] fiscal year 2026 annual financial plan has been adopted. The next item on the agenda is the consent agenda. This is items 10.01 through 10.56. It contains a lot of policies that we have been reviewing over the last few months, as well as the other items listed. But 52 of those items are on policies that we have been publicly reviewing. So, colleagues, are there any of those items that

[01:02:10] you would like to pull out for separate comment or discussion or action? All right, hearing none, we will keep them as a consent agenda block. Do I have a motion? I move that the school board accept, adopt, approve, and or award items 10.01 through 10.56 on the consent agenda as presented.

[01:02:38] Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. Is there a second? Second. Seconded by Mr. Irving. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The consent agenda has been approved. The next item on the agenda is unfinished business.

[01:02:56] Colleagues, do you have any unfinished business to bring forward this evening? Hearing none, the next item on the agenda is new business. Colleagues, do you have any new business to bring forth this evening? Hearing none, the final item on the agenda is the announcement of the upcoming meeting.

[01:03:15] Our next meetings will be Thursday, May 8, 2025, with a 3 p.m. work session and a 6.30 monthly meeting here in the New Bridge Learning Center Auditorium. Meeting times may be adjusted as needed.

[01:03:32] This meeting is adjourned.

