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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, May 8, 2025

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[00:03:50] - Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the May 8th monthly meeting of the Henrico School Board. We'll start this meeting off by getting an approval of the agenda. Colleagues, do I have a motion?

[00:04:06] - I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting. - Thank you, Mr. Young. Do I have a second? - Second. - Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. All those who approve, say aye. - Aye. - All those who say nay, motion is passed.

[00:04:22] Dr. Cashwell. - Thank you, members of the board, good evening. And to those who have joined us for the meeting, we're glad to have you here as well. We'll begin the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, which will be followed by a moment of silence. And we are delighted to have students from Twin Hickory Elementary School here this evening who are going to lead us in the pledge.

[00:04:42] They're joined by their principal, Erin Taylor, who's going to come to the podium and introduce the students who are going to lead us in the pledge. Would you please introduce your students? - Good evening, my name is Erin Traylor and I'm the proud principal of Twin Hickory Elementary School. And I am honored to introduce you to Mylan Gonzalez-Boss, who is a fifth grade flag safety, and she's joined by Pranitha Gudapati, and they are going to lead you in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:05:09] - If you would all please stand as you are able for the Pledge of Allegiance. - I pledge allegiance of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:05:35] - If you would please remain standing as you are able for the moment of silence. And that concludes our moment of silence.

[00:05:51] You may be seated. And how about a round of applause for our students who joined us for the pledge. Thank you so much. We're now excited to have a performance from students at Glen Lee Elementary School.

[00:06:07] So if you'll pause for a moment as members of the board and I make our way to the audience.

[00:06:23] - All right, good evening members of the board, dr cashwell colleagues and guests my name is christopher mosley i am the education specialist for performing arts and it is my pleasure to introduce for our performance highlight this evening the glenly pride drummers under the direction of mr jonathan coward mr coward is in his 10th year as a music educator he's served at glenly elementary since 2016. he proudly directs a variety of student ensembles including boom wacker battles, bucket head drummers, recorder

[00:06:58] and ukulele clubs, and the third through fifth grade choir. And what you're about to experience is the pride drum line. He has a master's degree in educational leadership and believes that meaningful education is built on a foundation of strong relationships with scholars. I think you'll see that in a moment through music mr coward works to create joyful supportive spaces where every student feels seen valued and empowered at this time we want to recognize their wonderful principal

[00:07:30] mr james gordon who's standing in the back thank you so much and now please help me welcome to the

[00:07:42] stage the pride drum line let's give the glenly drum line another round of applause madam chair

[00:12:46] school board members and Dr. Cashwell. My name is Kenya Jackson, Talent Acquisition Ambassador. For our first recognition of the evening, we are pleased to welcome nearly 40 students who are also future school teachers here in Henrico County. As part of the Teacher Scholars Program, these outstanding young men and women have each received a conditional offer of employment upon completing an accredited college teaching program and earning their teaching license and

[00:13:20] with a three-year commitment to teach in henrico students will also receive a one-time hiring bonus when they join our workforce we recently surprised the students at their high schools with the good

[00:13:34] news let's take a look my mom was a teacher so watching her interact with the little kids and

[00:14:09] seeing how they all loved her and they just wanted to be with her wanted to spend time with her just for me i was like i want to do this i want to be like my mom you have been selected for the teacher scholars and you have been selected as one of our teacher scholars the teacher scholars for the class i had a lot of good teachers in my life and i realized that bad students aren't only bad students they're students that need teachers and i realized that maybe if i want a better school

[00:14:43] environment i simply have to make a better school environment as you know this opportunity comes with a guaranteed job when you finish your schooling and when you complete your teacher

requirements for licensure and a five thousand dollar sign-on bonus with your teaching contract and we are proud i talk to my friends about it they're like oh you're set for life because you kind of have a guaranteed job after college and i like really haven't thought about it until like since graduation is coming up i'm like i really do have a set job when i graduate from college can you remind us again what type of teacher do you want to be i want to be an elementary school teacher high school history teacher math teacher middle school preschool teacher a preschool teacher

[00:15:22] in elementary and gifted if i remember yes sir yeah was it second grade second grade teacher i look forward to having you back as a biology teacher thank you thank you and congratulations definitely like having good teachers in Henrico has been like made me want to come back and like be a teacher and kind of have an impact the way that they had an impact on me a lot of happy emotions going on right now this is amazing I'm so excited oh you get lots of things there's some more come back coach

[00:16:01] baseball for me. Yeah, I love the county. I love the schools here are beautiful. I just think it's a good county to be in. So I'd love to stay here. You have been selected as one, two, three.

[00:16:26] The teacher scholars program began in 2015 to address staffing needs and the increasing demand for highly qualified teachers in critical shortage areas we are excited to induct 38 students into the program this year please welcome from verina high school sierra

[00:16:55] dameron alexis garrett anaya stevens from tucker high school kiera frizzell camilla shake yassen and not with us from tucker is nolan henderson from hermitage high school we have libby bruton

[00:17:29] josephine cook and kendall moore and not in attendance from hermitage is molly harris from henrico high school not in attendance today is starlin king from glenn allen high school in attendance today we have sean ajona andrew ellison kayla logwood lauren mccann alexis nadeau

[00:18:02] michaela simp and caitlyn shaw not in attendance from glenn allen are mave hahn abigail mcavoy and mason mckinney samuel miller let's give glenn allen a round of applause from freedman high school we have sophia shaw from deep run high school we have not in attendance today rachel

[00:18:40] minnix haley dissey and lauren nowak the ace center at hermitage high school we have olivia hathaway elise peters drew lane and emmanuel browder and finally from the ace center at Highland Springs High School. Let's please welcome Donjaye Benton, Renee Fox, Henry Horn,

[00:19:13] Deonna Johnson, Aleah King, Tyra Moss, Zyasia Thomas, and not in attendance, Ryland Fera. Congratulations to our newest teacher scholars. We thank our HR staff, principals, school counselors, teachers and of course the students families for their support throughout the selection process

[00:19:49] thanks also to our school board and dr cashwell for supporting this program please join us again in congratulating our teacher scholars we can't wait to see you back in our schools as teachers

[00:20:03] good evening madam chair and members of the board tonight i am pleased to support your

[00:21:38] recognition of one of our Henrico School's phenomenal school counselors, Morgan Meadows from Freeman High School. Morgan was recently named Virginia's 2025 Secondary School Counselor of the Year. As part of the Henrico County Public Schools Comprehensive School Counseling Program, Morgan supports the social and emotional needs of her students through individual and small group meetings. She also assists with academic and career interest planning and

[00:22:15] uses data to advocate for programs and resources to meet the specific needs of Freeman students. The Virginia School Counselor Association, VSCA, honors the exemplary work of dedicated school counseling professionals through the annual VSCA or Virginia School Counselor of the Year Award. Recipients are selected based on their efforts on behalf of students and their work to advocate their own professional growth and school counseling profession as a whole. Morgan is a VCU education and supervision doctoral student and a nationally board certified educator. She'll be joined by co-workers and colleagues from across the commonwealth,

[00:22:54] family and friends when she is presented with this award on the final day of the VSCA annual conference in October. Please join me in congratulating Morgan Meadows, Virginia's 2025 secondary school counselor of the year our final recognition this evening highlights the incredible

[00:23:31] support of three remarkable community partners in education who were recently named to the virginia school board association honor roll please welcome courtney baker and brandon robinson from the virginia chapter of the associated general contractors jacqueline morton from the IEC Chesapeake and Chris Brock Jr. from VSC Fire and Security. These individuals and the organizations they represent have been instrumental into helping Career and Technical Education

[00:24:07] students and students across Henrico County graduate with skills and opportunity to truly be life ready. The Virginia School Board Association Business Honor Roll is just one way for school divisions to recognize local businesses for their support. And Henrico, we are fortunate to have some of the best business partners, not only in Virginia, but the nation. I am proud to have nominated them for this recognition. They contribute to our school divisions in so many ways by offering

[00:24:41] internship opportunities, volunteering in the schools, sponsoring field trips. In the case of businesses being recognized tonight working directly with their students the companies also provide in-kind or financial contributions donate to scholarship programs and support extracurricular activities in short they help create lasting synergy and connections between schools students and potential future employees courtney brandon jacqueline and chris thank you

[00:25:15] Thank you for understanding the importance of CTE programs and for your unwavering support of our students. Please join me in celebrating these outstanding VSBA honor roll members. Mr. Vice Chair, this concludes our in-person recognitions for this evening.

[00:26:26] And we're going to keep the recognitions going. We have recognition of school nurse day. Mrs. Kinsella. School nurse day, May 7th, 2025. Whereas families should feel confident that their children will be cared for when they are at school.

[00:26:48] And, whereas, students today face complex and life-threatening health problems requiring care in school and the health needs of students should be safely met while in the school setting. And, whereas, school nurses understand the link between health and learning and support the educational success of children and youth by providing access to care when children's cognitive development is at its peak.

[00:27:15] And, whereas, school nurses address the home and community factors, for example, social determinants, that impact students' health. Therefore, they have served a critical role in improving public health and ensuring students' academic success for more than 100 years.

[00:27:34] And, whereas, we celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of school nurses and their efforts to meet the needs of students by improving the delivery of health care in our schools, helping students stay healthy and ready to learn. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes May 7, 2025 as School Nurse Day, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this eighth day of May, 2025. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. We'll move on to

[00:28:08] recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month. Mrs. Atkins. Mental Health Awareness Month. Whereas mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being and it is important to recognize that mental health is a critical component of learning for the over 50,000 students served by HCPS and whereas more than one in five, that's 22.1 percent, U.S. youth ages 3 to 17 have a diagnosable mental health disorder and 20% of Virginia youth reporting at

[00:28:46] least one major depressive episode in the past year with 50% of all mental health conditions beginning by age 14. Whereas one in five adults struggle to address a mental health issue in a given year and every person regardless of age race gender or background deserves access to mental health care and support and whereas early identification and effective treatment of mental

[00:29:21] health conditions can make a profound difference in the lives of children youth and families and Whereas, through Henrico Cares Action Plan, HCPS is committed to ensuring Henrico's youth and families have access to high-quality, timely mental health care services to meet their needs over time. And, whereas, Mental Health Awareness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness, educate, and celebrate the strength and resilience of youth and adults living with

[00:30:00] mental health challenges as well as the professionals and caregivers who support them now therefore let it be proclaimed that the school board of henrico county public schools recognizes may 2025 as mental health awareness month recognized by the school board of henrico county public schools this eighth day of May 2025.

[00:30:27] All right, and the next item on the agenda is our Henrico Highlights, a time when we share stories and examples of the innovative learning happening in and outside of the classroom. Tonight we are headed to L. Douglas Wilder Middle School, and as you will see, learning has its ups and downs when you put math and science skills together to build a rollercoaster.

[00:30:53] Take a look. I would attach the cardboard of your building onto this.

[00:31:10] It's enough to hold it in. So that was roller coaster engineering. This is one of the innovation courses that Geisa does. And the culmination of that was going to King's Dominion for their Coaster Mania competition. I got like this. And I put this like this. They're looking for a gravity controlled roller coaster where students can choose a theme.

[00:31:32] We did a Minecraft themed roller coaster and we named it Miner's Adventure. We wanted to do like a San Francisco based thing and we did one where we went like through a lot of like cool spots in San Francisco. So it was like really adventurous, you know. The thing is that we can't bend the wood, I'm not a wood vendor.

[00:31:50] You get an area of volume of 36 inches high and then you get like 29 inches square base. The more open the track is to look like a real roller coaster, which is kind of two rails, then the more points you get. They also give points for having some surprises in there.

[00:32:10] We were brainstorming designs in class here and then we decided to make it off-brand so that it would be funny. King Monkey vs. Lizard. The whole thing was based off of the game Minecraft. The first layer was based off of the overworld.

[00:32:26] The second layer was based off of the nether. The nether portal took a while because it kept breaking. Like every time we would try to face the box, it just kept breaking. We had to make all these individual little squares and put them together. We used tubing and put it side by side and used a marble as like the cart.

[00:32:45] So we would just release the marble from a start point, which was already up on a hill. Okay, try again. It takes a lot of, like, adjusting to every single, like, bump and, like, every single thing. We got to get it perfectly where, like, the marble, like, barely stops on it so that we have, like, just the right speed.

[00:33:03] And it was just really tough. That should work. And it's no longer going completely together. The competition, it's fun. It's stressful, too.

[00:33:20] But it's good for them to kind of stand in front of a group of judges and explain what they did. Our coaster performed amazingly well. So the marble would go down the track around all the buildings and scenery. And then towards the bottom, a building would be triggered and it would fall over the marble.

[00:33:38] But it would just barely pass it. So it would start at the top and then it would go down a slanted piece of wood that was supposed to look like on Bird Street. And then it would go down the staircase, do a loop, and then go into the building and then come up the other side and go down. and then it would go across the top of a 3D-printed Golden Gate Bridge.

[00:33:57] When we were about to get judged, it was working. The only thing when it didn't work was when we were getting judged. We were not finished with our coaster when we arrived at King's Dominion, so we were, like, working for a good two hours trying to make sure it worked. It went okay. We had one out of three of our tries that went perfectly.

[00:34:16] And then sometimes at the bottom loop, it would jump off the coaster. It was just like, why? we had tested it so many times it was running perfectly and then as soon as the genius got there it just stopped working let's just get that working before we definitely got some teamwork skills a lot of cooperating because one person's opinion isn't every person's opinion it's really hard to like come to an easy medium for all that but luckily we were able to do that those are like what i mostly gained out of it what a fun experience for everyone and i'm told that the

[00:34:55] The students stayed on track despite the twists and turns of the day at King's Dominion. The design challenge and field trip prove that learning can happen anytime, anywhere. And no one knows that better than our 2025 School Teachers of the Year.

[00:35:12] This week, the school board and some of our generous partners in education joined school administrators to honor and to celebrate our Teachers of the Year at a lovely banquet. this year's i was since this is rather teacher appreciation week it seems only fitting that our heart of henrico honoree for this evening is henrico county's 2025 teacher of the year christine sutters from hermitage high school let's see her in action i have one more announcement

[00:35:47] to make this morning, and that is that you are the Henrico Countywide Teacher of the Year for 2025. It really just feels like a win for the whole community and like a great honor to be the face of that win for Hermitage. You're going to answer the question independently first, then I will say heads together and you will, in your little group, make sure you all agree on

[00:36:23] the right answer are you with me so far okay i've been at hermitage i started in 2019 so right before the pandemic you got confident did everyone come to an agreement about them i think what makes a good teacher is a variety of things i would say relationship being a warm demander having expectations for the kids but also nurturing them as well and then i like to throw some humor in there too like the kids don't think i'm funny but i think i'm funny and that's quite enough for get me through the day. All right, group number three.

[00:36:56] This is amazing. She's due to the sheer care she puts into her assignments. Especially in my freshman year, I think she was incredibly formative in caring for the individual strengths of a student in writing. I think it matters so much coming into high school to have someone to immediately look at me. Because then I'm going to call on one person to tell me the group's answer.

[00:37:20] She is special because she knows how to help a student learn. She makes it more inclusive, and she'll help understand you without undermining you. What makes Ms. Sarah special is that she's very creative.

[00:37:37] She makes a lot of creative projects in class. The correct answer is B. I think the most challenging thing for me is to try to be more engaging than a TikTok or an Instagram reel, just to reinvent my teaching. Things that worked pre-pandemic are not working now, and so I'm constantly asking myself, how can I revamp this?

[00:37:57] How can I make this more relevant? She 100% deserves to be the teacher of the year. All the stuff she does, the work, the dedication she puts in her work, I think she deserves it. And Christine, I hope you'll come forward and accept the heart of Henrico Bag as a small token of our appreciation in for all that you do. We are so very fortunate for all that you do and all of your amazing

[00:38:33] teacher colleagues across the county do each and every day for our students. And we just cannot thank you enough. Another round of applause. And as Mr. Irving makes his way back to his seat, I also want to note, and you heard earlier in our recognitions that this is school nurses week also want to thank our incredible school nurse heroes all across the county all right that concludes this evening's highlight thank you dr cashwell um now we will

[00:39:12] engage in the reading of the hcps mission statement uh mr young hcps mission statement henrico county public schools an innovative leader in educational excellence will actively engage our students in diverse educational social and civic learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens thank you mr young the next item the agenda is the public forum this is the time when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three

[00:39:47] minutes to address the school board speakers will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else we ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and school affiliation if applicable and the subject of your remarks before speaking after stating your name please place your number that you were given in the cart

near the podium speakers must present their remarks to the school board not the audience and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk the use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order to assist you in tracking your

[00:40:24] time there's a timekeeping system displayed displaying the elapsed time on the screen i will also indicate when your time is expired the school board is here to is here today to hear from you we will not be responding to speakers concerns or questions during the public forum however a henrico staff member will follow up with speakers stakeholders have also had the opportunity to provide written comment through an online form in advance of the meeting those comments were shared with school with school board members prior to the meeting and are posted in board docs equal

[00:40:58] consideration and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments we appreciate your attendance here today this evening and for providing your input the first speaker is speaker number one hello uh good evening my name is eric huber i'm a new math teacher at elko middle school i'm here to ask a question that so far i've failed to find a suitable answer for

[00:41:35] why do we incentivize graduate degrees for our teachers in henrico county we compensate teachers with a master's degree as if they have two more years teaching experience than they do with a phd we pay as if they have four additional years teaching experience this costs the county between five and eight million dollars every year so one would suppose that people with these degrees must be excellent teachers however research shows pretty definitively that having a graduate degree has no impact whatsoever on student achievement so why are we spending approximately 100 teachers worth of salary money on this i've heard it argued that

[00:42:11] teachers who get master's degrees are demonstrating commitment to the profession however teachers with master's degrees leave the profession at a 50 higher rate than those without phds leave the leave the profession at double the rate of those with bachelor's degrees or less so the data suggests that in fact teachers with graduate degrees are less committed to the profession so we're spending five to eight million dollars a year every year trying to incentivize getting more graduate degrees but i don't see any benefit to that attracting and retaining quality teachers is extremely important we really need more teachers we need quality

[00:42:50] teachers but i fail to see how incentivizing graduate degrees helps us toward that goal so i'm going to ask again and i look forward to hopefully getting a good answer why are we incentivizing teachers to get graduate degrees? Thank you. Thank you, speaker number one. Speaker number two. My name is Griffin Schutte. I'm here representing Highland Springs High School. This

[00:43:26] is my fifth year as a high school Spanish teacher. I was invited to Highland Springs High School in 2021, and I have been there ever since. I'm here to support collective bargaining. I'm here to insist, to implore, to plead. I might even be here to beg. I'd first like to give credit where it's due, this board and its superintendent have delivered unquestionably. You've delivered material improvements for our students, our schools, and our professional staff. Thank you. How much further can we go? How much further can you take us? Collective bargaining

[00:44:05] isn't coming soon to the state of Virginia. It's here. Right next door, the Richmond Education Association and Richmond Public Schools have signed collective bargaining agreements on behalf of licensed personnel, school support professionals, custodial and facility services, and school-based office associates. Montgomery County, Prince William County, Falls Church, Arlington. School divisions are

making deals and professional talent, the professional talent we need to make our schools the best they can be, they're paying attention. School divisions around

[00:44:43] the state will need to keep up with the working conditions of these collective bargaining agreements in order to stay competitive. In denying our professionals the right to collectively bargain, we forfeit our opportunity to participate in the statewide negotiation already taking place.

[00:45:03] We could be leaders. We must be leaders. Please, seize the opportunity in front of you. Make space at your table for the professionals who work in our schools every single day. Make a space for them now so it can be there when those scholars come back and they're ready to make that three-year commitment.

[00:45:29] Respectfully, sincerely respectfully, none of you held seats on this board before 2019. How many of you will try to defend your seats in 2027? How many will succeed? To delay is to gamble. In delaying, we risk falling behind and being forced to play catch-up.

[00:45:47] We risk losing elections and suffering years-long setbacks. We have a shared mission to make Henrico schools the best they can be for the sake of our children, our community, and our future. We cannot afford to fail.

[00:46:04] I know you are with me on that. Collective bargaining is how we compete. Collective bargaining is our way forward. Please, esteemed members of the school board, authorize us to collectively bargain.

[00:46:22] Thank you for your time. Thank you, speaker number two. Speaker number three. Good afternoon.

[00:46:44] Good evening. 27 times has the U.S. Constitution been amended with the first 10 amendments being known as the Bill of Rights.

[00:47:04] passed into law September 25th, 1789, accepted on December 15th, 1791. Did you know every state would not sign on the U.S. Constitution until the Bill of Rights, which are the amendments, are included? The First Amendment reads, I quote, Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people, peaceably to assemble and to

[00:47:40] petition the government for a redress of grievances. Will you allow me my First Amendment rights? It is the law. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. In heaven, so on earth, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us of our debt as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. From thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen. Allowing the practice of the Bill of Rights through the

[00:48:16] U.S. Constitution means you are keeping the law. I would like to ask, why was I not allowed my First Amendment rights on the job? Isn't it my right to exercise my freedom of speech and not have one preferred religion over another such as atheism? I was brought here today to state my case.

[00:48:34] I'm a Jericho County graduate who returned from Maryland as an educator. While a student with in RICO, I was also a VCU University intern, an opportunity given to me by my biology teacher and the dean at the time of humanities and science. Why she chose me over my classmates, I don't know. My

mom always wanted me to go to community college. I was called into the principal's office after school hours. This is what led to the summons to the principal's office.

[00:49:01] In the morning, the principal told the assistant to go home. When the assistant came into the classroom. She said she could not hear me and stood one to two feet from me and pointed to her ears and repeated, she could not hear me. I expressed my concern by asking if she wanted prayer. She said, no. It was prayer that got me out of sickness. I do not want to mock the contents of the Bible. No, do I want others. I was raised by a minister. I make it my best effort to want others to get well.

[00:49:31] There needs to be more of God's love and care for the people. My faith is to help others. I have met privately with human resources to settle the matter. I do not know if anyone else has read their contract and did not know that the U.S. constitutional rights were being withheld in their teaching contracts. I would like to encourage you to change teaching and assisting contracts to law-abiding teaching and assisting contracts that exercise the U.S. Constitution of its Bill of Rights. The moment teaching contract discludes the exercise of the U.S.

[00:50:01] Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Thank you, speaker number three. You can leave your remarks with us um your time has expired out of respect to the other speakers i we're more than happy to take written remarks so and this is also i'm i was going to pass around my original teaching certificate but i will just give my a copy sure thank you thank you speaker number three uh speaker

[00:50:21] number four thank you speaker number four could we wait till yes thank you speaker number four

[00:51:07] good evening board members dr cashwell and community members my name is lauren galloway i reside in the three chop district and teach in the tuckahoe district three months ago was my first experience speaking to the board and it began my journey with the henrico education association i have learned a lot these past few months i have read articles i've listened to work sessions board meetings and talked to my peers i've learned who does what who agrees with this and who disagrees with that in hea's mission to have collective bargaining for all hcps employees

[00:51:43] members have spoken at board meetings talked with board members written in comments and organized last year the board said the problem with collective bargaining was that there was not enough interest from the average teacher so the hea filled this room last may to show you there was ample interest it wasn't enough this year board members continue to say they don't hear about the need and desire for collective bargaining from the people in their district have you asked them the hea has and hundreds of your employees have been writing to you each month we have been putting in the effort to make sure you hear comments from all around the county

[00:52:20] from a variety of positions have you reached out to your constituents board members say they are worried about the cost of collective bargaining about the unified pay system about you losing control and about being able to be nimble what steps have been taken to see if these obstacles can be overcome. I am noticing a pattern here. A focus area in our new strategic plan is recruit, engage, retain, and reward staff. The goal is extrapolated as all students will benefit from the support and expertise of staff who are valued as professionals, recognized for their contributions,

[00:52:55] and well compensated for their work. This goal was part of our last strategic plan as well. Let's check in with the progress for these four goals. More and more experienced staff are leaving each year you

have hundreds if not thousands of comments describing in detail why teachers and staff do not feel valued the current ways staff are recognized are outdated and ineffectual https has continued to increase compensation and for that we are glad recruit engage retain and reward https is one for four hear us https faculty and staff want collective bargaining this is how

[00:53:33] you retain teachers this is how you value your staff this is how you recognize us for contributions this is how you ensure compensation continues on the right track we have checked off your list we have jumped through your hoops what are you waiting for we want an answer i challenge the board to put collective bargaining back on the table and vote yay or nay thank you speaker number

[00:54:02] four speaker number five good evening vice chairman and members of the school board my name is jack i'm a 10th grader at henrico high school and i attend the center for the arts specialty center program i'm here to speak on the implementation of a student representative on the henrico county public school board and members of the school board i would first like to thank you for the kind messages you sent to me earlier in the day and i would also like to especially thank miss atkins for her comments during today's work session due to the wide variety of new policies

[00:54:40] being implemented in our schools such as cell phone restrictions, increased school security and much more that affect students' everyday learning experience, it is crucial that students feel represented when these decisions are made.

[00:54:55] And under the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-86.1, a local school board like Henrico County can implement a student representative in a non-voting advisory capacity. And I would also like to point out that across the Commonwealth of Virginia that from Fairfax County to Albemarle County, there are already student representatives and they're already showing significant improvement in the student body.

[00:55:24] I would hope that the schoolwork considers these implementations as it would tremendously be beneficial to the students of Henrico County, from elementary school all the way up to high school. Students deserve to have a voice at the table.

[00:55:38] you for your time and consideration. Thank you speaker number five, speaker number six. Good evening school board and Dr. Cashwell. I'm Aaron Lam, vice president of the Henrico Education Association Union and a Spanish teacher at Tucker High School. Before I begin reading my written

[00:56:17] remarks, I would like to explicitly thank Dr. Cashwell and her leadership team for taking the time every month to ask for the feedback of the Henrico County staff by way of the Henrico Education Association, that I really do appreciate. And for the rest of the school board, I have a question this evening, and that question really is simple. Why can't we negotiate our contracts?

[00:56:41] Currently, our only options are to stay or go. When we leave, HCPS loses experience, institutional knowledge, and established relationships while incurring turnover costs. If we had a say, we would stay. So again, why can't we negotiate? What is lost by giving us a voice in our schools?

[00:57:02] We dedicate our lives to our students, often working under challenging conditions, with inadequate resources unless we invest our own time and money, which we do. Eventually, many make the difficult decision to leave, even after decades of dedicated service. And I ask again, why can't we have a say in our schools?

[00:57:22] I recognize that surveys and committees offer feedback, but they are often reactive. Imagine if those of us closest to students could inform decisions proactively rather than address issues after they arise. Why can't we stand up for our students? Why can't we negotiate our contracts? And finally a slightly different topic but not entirely unconnected: our students need and deserve the chance to succeed.

[00:57:51] When we simply pass them from grade to grade in spite of knowledge gaps or skill gaps, they, the kids, feel like they can't do it. Can't do math, can't do reading, can't do school. Would it not be better for them to face the tougher material once they are ready rather than before they are ready?

[00:58:12] And look, I get it. That's gonna require some tough decisions on our part and on your part and on our community's part. It's gonna require a change in perspective among our school communities, but we can lead the way and make school a place where students can, not where they can't.

[00:58:29] We the faculty and staff know how, but we have no say. And I just don't understand. We want to work with you. So why don't you want to work with us? We show up for our kids in our future. Will you? Will you? Thank you.

[00:58:49] - Thank you, speaker number six, speaker number seven. - Good evening, Vice Chair Irving, Dr. Cashwell and members of the board.

[00:59:07] My name is Elizabeth Broda and I'm a social studies teacher and department chair over at Henrico High School. I'm speaking tonight to provide some context to this month's public comments submitted online and to share a moment of joy from my classroom today. First, this month, the HEA asked HCPS staff respond to one or both of the following prompts number one what would keep you in your profession for 10 or 20 more years number two what is something you wish people including division

[00:59:40] leadership the community your supervisor etc better understood about your job i had a very busy day at school today and i had no time to read 32 pages of public comment but i look forward to better understanding the experiences of my colleagues across the county i'm sure you do as well and i hope these comments give you clear insight into some of the reasons for our frustration but also our hopes for the future i also want to take a minute to share a moment from class today that made me smile one of the classes i teach is ap government which currently is a class full of

[01:00:19] post ap test seniors who are counting down the minutes until their final dismissal next friday In these final days with them, I like to invite guest speakers to keep things engaging and provide students with opportunities to connect their learning to real life.

[01:00:36] And my guest speaker today was our local member of the General Assembly, Delegate Destiny Levere Bowling. And among many thoughtful questions, my students asked her what was her greatest asset as an elective representative. After a pensive pause, Delegate Levere Bowling shared that her biggest, most essential asset is meeting with people and asking them what they want and what they need she said it's community events phone calls small groups emails and listening when students asked about how she deals with conflict and disagreement delegate livier bowling said that she engages an even

[01:01:13] deeper conversation she shares her reasons for her opinions and listens while others express theirs and i think it is this back and forth that has been recently missing in the discussions of collective bargaining and contract negotiations please don't shut us out please engage in deeper conversation please share your reasons for your opinions we are waiting we have been waiting and

[01:01:43] it's time to tell us where you stand and most importantly to tell us why thank you thank you speaker number seven speaker number eight speaker number eight speaker number nine speaker number nine

[01:02:09] Speaker number 10. My name is Marlene Sherlock and our family lives in the Fairfield District.

[01:02:31] Next month you'll be asked to approve next school year's student code of conduct. The most substantial change as I read it will be to the cell phone policy and I'll get to that in a moment. Briefly though I'd like you to consider two potential omissions. At the start of this school year you made a big splash about the new student IDs and how they had to be worn. I questioned then whether you actually had the authority or even policy in place to require that and suggested if you were going to do so that the code was the place for it now here we are almost at the conclusion of the school year and i'm guessing you've just given up

[01:03:09] as it's not in the proposed code nor do i hardly see any kids wearing them next and while this might seem minor it was a big deal earlier in our personal school journey Virginia state code section 22.1-274.5 specifically allows students at any level to possess and use unscented sunscreen without a note or prescription even though it is an over-the-counter drug regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Please consider adding it as an explicit exception in your definition of medication on page 48 of the proposed code. While we're on the subject of

[01:03:49] over-the-counters I'll continue to bring up the disconnect between the consequences of having a cough drop which is a drug which has a drug label on the bag versus possession of tobacco products and SBAR code BSC4 for any violation of the school board non-prescription medication policy starts with a level 3 consequence whereas a tobacco related offense SBAR code bsc5 starts with a lower level 2 consequence and would not progress to an sro notification

[01:04:24] even though it's against state law for a minor to possess tobacco or alternative nicotine products finally on cell phones there was considerable chatter during your work session last month about how such a policy might be enforced are you going to require phones and any smart watches even those with just a wi-fi connection, to be stored in a division-wide or division-provided container? Will that even be possible for a study hall with 50 or more students? And good luck doing that in the lunchroom. And without violating any privacy matters, just how is a teacher or

[01:05:02] administrator to respond to an inquiry about why another student can have their phone because of the articulated exceptions for a health concern or accommodation? I have no problem with put it away nor confiscating them and even making parents pick them up even for a first offense in fact i might be quite tempted to let y'all hang on to it for more than overnight if our kid doesn't follow the rules but you need to make sure you have your requirements straight to the administration and teachers and especially families and students get in front of it stay in front of it and be prepared for a hectic first week enforcing it good night and happy graduation to the class of 2025.

[01:05:37] thank you speaker number 10 speaker number 11 thank you to all of our speakers thank you for coming out and sharing your concerns at this time we will move to our consent agenda colleagues are there any items that we would like to separate for individual discussion or consideration

[01:06:09] I actually have an I have an item regarding let's see it's item 9.19 if the superintendent could explain um what this is as it's um a lease for an exciting new program that we have yes i i didn't find the

item uh but when you said lease i know what you're talking about so uh this is uh so that our students and actually i see mac bayton here he can even do more justice to it uh on a part who

[01:06:45] will be trained in the maintenance of uh at an apartment complex this is actually allowing them hands-on experience in a unit to be able to have that experience i have not articulated it well would you love to add to that since we happen to have you with us yes thank you um this is really exciting because we there's a huge demand for uh people in the world of apartment maintenance and this gives students and adults and this is part of our adult education program a chance to learn

[01:07:19] the skill but not just in a classroom like we do with a lot of our programs it's true hands-on so if they walk into the apartment and someone said my refrigerator is not working they know how to go about solving it or the hot water heater is not it's not only is this great for someone who's interested in the field of apartment maintenance but anyone who owns a home because it is basic maintenance for a home so great opportunity and a great job career pathway for our adults thank you mr bainton if i may it's a new program correct yes ma'am to air knowledge is the first one

[01:07:58] of anywhere like this and the uh the owners uh of the rise have been gracious to give us this apartment so our students can can really get a first-hand knowledge of this yes thank you that's all i had thank you colleagues hearing none we will take the consent agenda as a block do i have a motion i move that the school board accept adopt approve and or award items 9.01 through 9.23 on

[01:08:31] the consent agenda as presented thank you mrs atkins do i have a second second thank you mrs Kinsella all those in favor say aye all those opposed the consent agenda is approved next we will move on to unfinished business colleagues do we have any unfinished business hearing none we will move on to new business colleagues do we have any new business hearing none we will move to the announcements and adjournment the announcement of the upcoming meeting digs our

[01:09:09] next meeting will be here at newbridge auditorium on june 12th 2025 the work session will begin at 3 p.m and the monthly meeting will begin at 6 30 p.m time this may be adjusted as needed



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