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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, September 25, 2025

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[00:00:14] Good evening and welcome to the September 25th, 2025 monthly meeting of the Henrico County School Board. Colleagues, the first item of the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Do I have a motion? I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting. Moved by Mr. Young. Is there a second?

[00:00:29] Second. Seconded by Ms. Kinsella. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? The ayes have it. The approval, the agenda has been approved. Thank you, Chair Shea, members of the board. And to our visitors, good evening. We will begin our meeting as we always do with the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:00:45] and we are thrilled to have students from Harvey Elementary School join us to lead the pledge this evening. So as they make their way to the podium, I'll also introduce their very proud principal, Tanya Holmes, who will come to the podium and introduce the students who will be leading us in the pledge.

[00:01:03] Following the pledge, we'd ask that you remain standing as you're able for a brief moment of silence. - Good evening, Dr. Cashwell, school board chair, school board members, to all of our Henrico County families.

[00:01:21] I bring you greetings from Harvey Elementary. We are definitely making sure our boys and girls, they are made for greatness at Harvey, where they are Harvey heroes. They are showing each day

that they are hardworking, eager, respectful, and on time.

[00:01:39] I am excited to introduce to you all this evening. We have Dakota Tipton. We have Kayson Rawlings. We have Deonnie Hawkins. We have Ryan Bartell, we have Khadija Fafona, and we have Rylan Ross, our very proud Harvey heroes that are also our morning anchors.

[00:01:58] We also brought with us our coaches for our morning anchor team. We have Trisha Mangus, Terry Hill, and if all of our Harvey heroes would please stand.

[00:02:13] - Thank you to the Harvey team for joining us. And now if everyone would please stand so the students can lead us in the pledge. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for the one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:02:38] And if you would please remain standing as you're able for a brief moment of silence.

[00:02:51] And that concludes our moment of silence. Students from Harvey, will you please turn so we can recognize you with some more applause? Thank you so much. You may be seated. Our next item is our performance, and we're going to have Henrico High School with us.

[00:03:10] So the board members and I are gonna make our way to the audience so we can enjoy the performance. And Mr. Mosley will come forward to introduce our performers.

[00:03:27] - All right, good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Cashwell, colleagues and guests. My name is Christopher Mosley. I am the Education Specialist for Performing Arts, and it is my pleasure to introduce for our performance highlight this evening, Henrico High School Drumline under the direction of Mr. Cousins. Mr. Cousins is in his 23rd year as a music educator. This is his sixth year at Henrico High School. He's a member of our National Association for Music Ed and the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association.

[00:04:02] Henrico High School has had a long tradition of excellence and great achievements and musical accolades over the years. So before they get started, we do want to take a moment to recognize their proud principal Mrs. Karen Castillo. Rose, I know she's here with pom-poms. There she is. Please stand all right and now please help me welcome to our performance stage the Henrico High School

[00:04:29] drum line. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr. Cashwell, we would now be recognizing the

[00:10:40] Virginia High School League Spring Sports State Champions to kick things off. We would like to recognize the 6A girls soccer team state champions. Please welcome Deep Run High School led by Coach Stephen Chapman. Coach Chapman is here recognizing the team. All of the girls are actually currently practicing tonight, so they were unavailable to come and be recognized in person. So we're working towards this spring already, but having an impressive 21-1 record with 19 shutouts and allowing only three goals all year, and I'll repeat that, three goals the entire year. This

[00:11:18] marks the team's fourth regional championship in a row, totaling seven in the past eight seasons and their second state title as the VHSL 6A state champions. Other team awards of note include Team Ethics Award and the Team Academic Award. Well done, Wildcats. Congratulations, Coach Chapman.

[00:11:35] Next, we would like to recognize the student-athletes from Glen Allen, who brought home the 6A softball team state championship. We will begin by recognizing the students.

[00:11:52] Alexia Betcha, Alexa Brown, Heidi Gill, Isla Godding, Ashton Limbock, Gabby Melton, Ashton O'Neill,

[00:12:33] Maya Richardson, Libby Sean, and Kendall Winstead. And the team is joined by their coaches, Kami Brummett, Angela Sperandio, and their very proud principal, Mr. Reggie Davenport.

[00:13:15] The Glen Island team made history by capturing their first ever VHSL 6A state championship. The team traveled twice to Chesapeake and once to Stafford, earning the opportunity to compete at home for both the state semifinals and the state finals. Of particular note, team captains Jaden Tillman and Allison Vaya both earned first team All-State with Captain Maeve Hahn earning honorable mention All-State.

[00:13:37] Please join me in congratulating these Jaguars on their amazing performance this season. All right, next we would like to recognize our tennis student-athletes from Freeman High School.

[00:14:09] Please welcome me in joining the 5A Girls Tennis Team State Champions. First, we would like to recognize the student-athletes Marissa Burke, Annie Flippen, and Madison Garrick.

[00:14:38] And they are joined by Coach Larry Parpart. And I'd also like to recognize Ms. Kerrigine O'Neill. She's the Associate Principal at Freeman. She is also here in support of her daughter as a parent, so we're letting her be a parent tonight.

[00:14:54] We would like to recognize her. The Freeman Girls Tennis Team earned their fifth straight VHSL State Championship. Yes, that is fifth straight VHSL state championship and region five C championship with an impressive 20 and two record.

[00:15:09] This amazing achievement was made possible about 20 talented and committed student athletes with a cumulative GPA of 4.1. Congratulations Mavericks.

[00:15:31] For the last leg of our VHSL spring state champions, we would like to recognize the following track and field student athletes. Please welcome Anna Barrow for her region five C VHSL 5A track and field state title in the pole vault. We would also like to invite up coach Barker and coach Sirica, coaches at Tucker High School. Anna finished the season tied as the number two

[00:16:05] girl vaulter in the state of Virginia as the J.R. Tucker school record holder and was selected as first team all metro here in the central region. Congratulations Anna. Next is Whitner Lilly. We would like to invite him up to be recognized for his region 5c and vhs 5a state championship in the pole vault we would also like to invite up coach gretchen hute from the freeman track and

[00:16:40] field and cross country staff whitner finished the season as the number one freshman in virginia the number seven freshman in the united states the school record holder at douglas freeman and was selected as first team all metro here in the central region and also was an adidas all american in North Carolina. Congratulations, Whitner. Thank you, Madam Chair. That completes our VHSL

[00:17:18] Spring State Championship recognitions this evening. Thank you so much as my colleagues return back up here. Congratulations to all of our students and their coaches and our schools.

[00:17:44] What a legacy of excellence we have for our extracurriculars here in Henrico. Congratulations again. All right, moving on to some recognitions. Mr. Irving. National Czech, Italian, and Polish Heritage Month. Whereas the Czech, Italian, and Polish communities stand as diverse representations of historic

and cultural contributions with local, national, and global impacts, and whereas vital contributions to the fields of science and engineering, industry, entrepreneurship,

[00:18:23] The fine performing in culinary arts, civil service, and politics have been made possible by Czech, Italian, and Polish Americans. And whereas, citizens are encouraged to participate in activities that recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the cultural diversity and the significant contributions made by Czech, Italian, and Polish Americans.

[00:18:43] And whereas, the Henrico County Public Schools and Henrico community recognize and embrace our vital Czech, Italian, and Polish communities that continue to shape and strengthen our schools, our county, our country, and our world.

[00:18:58] Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2025 as National Czech, Italian, and Polish Heritage Month and encourages observance and celebration to the attention of our citizens.

[00:19:15] Recognized by the school board of Henrico County Public Schools this 25th day of September, 2025. Thank you, Mr. Irving. Mr. Young. National Bullying Prevention Month. Whereas bullying is willful, aggressive, and or unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate a person or a group of people involves a real or perceived imbalance of power and is repeated over time, inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress.

[00:19:43] And whereas bullying presents in various forms, including verbal, physical, social bullying, as well as cyberbullying, which takes place over digital devices and includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, or false content and or personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

[00:20:02] And whereas various researchers have concluded that bullying is the most common form of violence afflicting millions of American children and adolescents annually. And whereas targets of bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, dropping out of school, and may fear such activities as riding the school bus, going to school, interacting online, and attending community activities.

[00:20:28] And whereas school plays a vital role in preventing and addressing bullying behavior, and HCPS is committed to ensuring that its schools and classroom settings are safe, supportive, inclusive, and nurturing environments for all children and adults. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the school board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes October 2025 as National Bullying Prevention Month, recognized by the school board of Henrico County Public Schools this 25th day of September 2025.

[00:20:54] Madam Chair. Thank you so much. Dr. Cashwell, I'll turn it back over to you. Thank you. The next item on the agenda is the Henrico Highlights, a time when we showcase the phenomenal teaching, learning, and programs happening all across our schools. Tonight, we will explore how an innovative house system is helping build a dynamic and supportive culture at elementary schools.

[00:21:17] Think of it as Harry Potter meets Henrico schools. Take a look. I like that it creates a sense of community within the school across grade levels.

[00:21:35] It aligns with our core values as part of our PDIS system. What house are we, house? When I first came in and I was meeting with the new teachers, I was like, what is the one thing you don't want

Verina to lose?

[00:21:56] And every one of them said the house system. Are we excited? The house system is just an incredible opportunity for kids, adults, community partners, for everyone to feel like they belong a part of something even more intimate than just the school.

[00:22:15] We have House Ingenium, House Amare, House Civitas, and House Revelle. We have four houses. We have Adar, Isabendi, Como, and Sisú. I know I'm Pompero, so that is my house. A llama. We sort kids across all grade levels and all staff because we think it's important for everyone to feel connected here.

[00:22:45] We want fifth graders and kindergartners to know each other's names. We want our fifth graders to be leaders and role models. We are Revelle. We solve problems. - We are creative. - Because of our population from across the globe, each house is named after different winds in different locations around the world.

[00:23:04] - And so you get to get real close, not just with your classmates, but now you get to know maybe another 50 to 100 kids that you would not have typically known. And it's also huge for the adults, 'cause now the adults, instead of just being close with your grade level, now you get to be close with maybe, you know, someone that's teaching on a different floor or teaching a different content area.

[00:23:26] So now we have seen a huge impact with teacher retention, with teacher recruitment within the house system.

[00:23:46] - Well, the energy at a house sorting is unmatched. And I know this from personal experience as I have been placed in houses at several of our schools. There is an immediate energy that comes with the honor of joining a house and a strong sense of belonging, which is one of the school division's core values.

[00:24:05] It is always great to see those core values being student-focused, belonging, collaboration, innovation, and equity coming to life in our schools. And speaking of collaboration, this month's Heart of Henrico is a shining example of the positive impacts that can occur when schools and families work together to support students.

[00:24:28] Tonight, I am happy to introduce you to the Watch Dogs of Cackley Elementary School. Let's take a look and then we'll get to meet them in person.

[00:24:50] - Come check out the Watch Dogs program, which is an incredible program they offer here at Cackley for us to be involved in. - I think that's what makes it the most special, that it is dads and the dads are carving out time to be with their son or daughter and really help with the school. - You ask your kids, "How was school?"

[00:25:08] you get the typical fine but when you're a watchdog you see exactly what they're going through socially academically more insight to her day-to-day and i have more connection to her and her friends we're going to have two dads a day and you get to sign up for two days i got out of it just actually getting to see my daughter at school which i never get to do i'll be honest generally it's my wife that's more involved in the school events just with work etc and stuff like that um and it was really fun getting to interact with the teachers getting to react with my daughter getting around with my friends and actually doing stuff that i felt like was actually really helpful

[00:25:48] i am the dad of two Catholic coyotes and i am natural dad in springs class it is both a retreat and i'm more exhausted when i come home than when i'm doing my day job it really gives you an appreciation for just the hard work teachers and the administration do because the kids are full of energy and full of life and it's a wonderful chance to see what a day in the life is for the the kids in the school. Being in the classroom and seeing what the teachers go through and all the work that they put in to supporting our kids is just I mean very moving and really drives me even more to come to support every year. Oh you need some help? And it's been cool to watch a lot of

[00:26:23] these kids grow up and I mean some of them are getting as tall as me now so it's uh so it's been fun to watch and I'm excited for this year. Making a mansion. A mansion? Yes. Well thank you to the watchdogs at Cackley and our other elementary schools with similar programs. Tonight we are pleased to recognize and have come to the stage the incredible dads who are donating their time and talents to the watchdog program. As our heart of Henrico recognition, their contributions are making school communities stronger each and every day. Please welcome Councillor Allie Fultz

[00:27:02] Shackelford and Principal Jennifer Roden from Cackley Elementary School. They're also joined by top dogs Jared Sukada, Mark Baird, and Jack Harden, as well as Counselor Lauren Hewlett. Please come to be recognized as this evening's heart of Henrico. And

[00:27:38] congratulations again. We want to take a photo of our watchdog champions. Thank you for all that you do for CACLE and Henrico County Public Schools. And Madam Chair, members of the board, that concludes our highlight for this evening.

[00:28:01] Thank you so much, Dr. Cashwell. Ms. Kinsella, could you please share with us the mission statement? Yes. Enrico County Public Schools, through engagement with our families and community, equips students with the knowledge and skills to be ready for life and a successful future. Thank you so much. The next item on the agenda is public forum. This is a time when students, when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern with the school division. Citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board speakers will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else we ask that

[00:28:41] each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name after stating your name please place the number you were given in the cart near the podium speakers must present the remarks to the school board not the audience and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk if you wish to do so you may also place those in the basket with the numbers the use of obscenity of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order to assist you in tracking your time there's 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

[00:29:20] will not be responding to speakers concerns or questions during the public forum speakers have also had the opportunity to provide written comments through an online form in advance of the meeting those comments were shared with the school board members prior to the meeting and are posted in board docs equal consideration and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments we appreciate your attendance here this evening and for providing your input we have quite a few speakers this evening and so um what i'm going to do is i'm going to have when the speaker ahead of you since there are numbers and when the number ahead of you is speaking um if you'll line up behind so we can move forward um quickly so if i can have speaker

[00:29:59] one come to the come up to the microphone as well as speaker number two to queue up behind them so speakers one and two is speaker one present here this evening all right speaker two you may proceed to the microphone and speaker three may queue up behind them and you may begin when you are ready thank you so much good evening dr cashwell madam chairman members of the school board my name is Jesse Nairn and this is my son Wyatt. He's a freshman at Freeman High School. We live on the

[00:30:39] Pemberton corridor and with the current school board boundary change our zoned high school would move from Freeman to Godwin. My point to the school board this evening is the easiest decision that you can make in relation to the boundary changes that you're proposing between now and December 18th. My position is is this that if a student has started high school and is zoned to change that student be given the option to stay at the high school that they have started. While going to speak personally about my son. I'm sure his experiences at Freeman High School echo and mirror many other students throughout the county that are subject to these changes. Wyatt's on the JV football team. He plays cello in the orchestra. He's doing well in school academically and he

[00:31:18] plans to try out for indoor track in the winter and the baseball team in the spring. He's getting involved in clubs and has established and is expanding friendships. He's also now familiar with the layout of Freeman and how to navigate the building, the largest school he's ever attended. why it's not a number on a spreadsheet he's not a tick mark on a chart he's a high school student and he's a freshman at freeman his roots there are already established he is a maverick dr marshall principal at freeman speaks to the freeman family and all of his correspondence with parents why it's already a part of that family high school is different than middle school it's different than elementary school we go to high school reunions we don't go to middle school

[00:31:58] reunions and elementary school reunions the information from the school board on this issue is that traditionally rising 11th and 12th graders are allowed the option to stay in their high school if they so choose i've seen no information or history as to why this is tradition but it needs to change any current high school student should have the option to finish where they started this is especially true given the relatively small number of students that would be moved with the pending boundary change chairman shea noted at your september 11th work meeting that allowing all students the option to stay at their high school was quote quite doable and

[00:32:34] shouldn't create a capacity pinch given the current proposed boundary changes when this school board talked about boundary changes in february my son was in eighth grade my wife and i were concerned that this was going to come up again we talked to our administrators and our counselors about what we could do to get him into godwin now because we thought this change was coming our pleas fell on deaf ears he's at freeman now i don't have much time left miss atkins at the school board work meeting on september 11th you espouse my position perfectly at that meeting WHEN YOU WERE SPEAKING ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THESE BOUNDARY CHANGES AT HIGHLAND

[00:33:11] SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL YOU STATED STUDENTS CURRELY AT SPRINGER NATION STAY AT SPRINGER NATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU GRADUATE ACROSS THAT STAGE WHEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED LATER IN THAT SAME MEETING ABOUT PHASING IN STUDENTS WITH NEW PROPOSED BOUNDARIES FOR SPRINGER FOR HIGHLAND SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL YOU STATED THAT THE CHANGE STARTS WITH RISING NINTH GRADERS AND TO BE VERY CLEAR THANK YOU THAT IS A SPRINGER REMAINS A SPRINGER THANK YOU MS ATKINS YOU MAY PUT THE rest of your remarks in

the basket if you want us to to read them thank you so much thank you very much um speaker number three may step up to the microphone speaker number four if you're here you

[00:33:46] may queue up good evening school board chair vice chair members of the board dr cash oh sorry um speaker number three if you could pause um they ask if you can come a little bit closer to the microphone so our streaming can hear it thank you so much you may um can we start the time again um and you may begin again thank you good evening school board chair vice chair members of the board and dr cashwell my name is meredith parker and i'm a long time resident of gateshead neighborhood i grew up here graduated from godwin and returned in 2004 to raise my family i have a daughter who is a senior and a son who is a freshman both attending freeman high school first i want to

[00:34:24] commend you for addressing two critical issues with this redistricting effort the overcrowding at freeman high school and the less than favorable theater pattern for pemberton elementary i have supported your redistricting efforts in the past first when my children were babies and our neighborhood moved from godwin to freeman i have again supported your efforts when we face potential moves to tucker in 2020 and again i supported your efforts last year with a move back to godwin i recognize the challenges that you face timing matters my request is simple and fair do what is best for kids allow all current high school freshmen and above the choice to remain

[00:35:00] at the school they attend through a waiver process this will allow them to graduate with their peers and will create a more gradual phased in approach for redistricting my son entered freeman this year with 26 percent of his quia kus and peers surrounded by an overwhelming majority 86 percent of eighth grade class from tuckahoe middle school he knew that attending freeman would be difficult so he took the initiative to join the freeman's football off-season weightlifting program as an eighth grader which was completely outside of his comfort zone it was his way of trying to build friendships and a sense of belonging. He is now the proud member of the Mavericks JV football team, which

[00:35:38] has a record of 4-0. Overcrowding at Freeman is not a new issue. Reports from 2018 to 2019 school years showed Freeman was already over 100% capacity. In the 1920 school year, when my son was in the third grade, Henrico schools commissioned Cropper GIS to propose redistricting solutions to alleviate the overcrowding at Freeman. This board has had years to act and ultimately missed the natural transition points for my son and his grade level peers. These students should not bear the burden of the board's inaction over the last six years. I urge you to do what is best for

[00:36:14] kids. Adopt a waiver for current high school students and provide a phase-in approach that addresses overcrowding responsibly without undermining the well-being of the students who have already deeply rooted into their school communities. The numbers are small and the impact on capacity is negligible. However, the benefit to student stability, belonging, and mental health is immeasurable. Thank you. Thank you so much. Speaker number four, and as speaker number five is here,

[00:36:44] you may queue up behind. Good evening, members of board. My name is Venkat, and I am resident of Discovery Ridge, located at the very beginning of the section four of the rezoning map. I am here on behalf of our community to respectfully request that you keep Discovery Ridge zoned for Pocahontas Middle School. Firstly, fairness, impact, and growth. Discovery Ridge is fully saturated with no land of further constructions or additional housing. There are only three to four middle

[00:37:18] school-aged children in our community. Pocahontas Middle School is currently 74% occupancy. And rezoning our community will not have no meaningful impact on school balancing our

capacity, including us in the rezoning ads, disruption to the families without providing any long-term benefits to HCPS. Secondly, proximity. Pocahontas is only two miles from our homes. The proposed assignment sends our kids nearly five miles away to Kewakwison Middle School. This adds unnecessary commute time, fuel cost, and logistic burden on the

[00:37:52] families for the no clear benefits. Thirdly, community expectations. Discovery Ridge is a fairly new community, and families purchase their homes with the understanding that Pocahontas would be their middle school. This was the center to financial decision and long-term planning.

[00:38:10] To change zoning now feels like a broken promise and disrupts the routes we are just being to establish. Fourthly, safety and logistic. Pocahontas short distance makes daily travel safe and easier. Long commute to Kewakwison middle school time is in the traffic, greater exposed to risk and fewer opportunities for extracurricular curriculum or timely parental supports.

[00:38:33] Fifth, student wellness. Children strive on stability. Our students have already built friendship and connections at the Pocahontas. Uprooting them now creates emotional stress, loss of belongings, and unnecessary instability during critical years.

[00:38:50] Sixth, zoning. Our community position at the start of Section 4 makes it simple to exclude from the discovery ridge from the rezoning. In short, moving our community out of Pocahontas does nothing to help Henrico County Public Schools' capacity challenge, but it does certainly long-term harm the families who trusted the school systems when making major life and financial decisions.

[00:39:16] We respectfully urge the Board to reject or exclude Discovery Ridge from the proposal and maintain our current zoning with the Pocahontas Middle School, which is the nearest, most logical and the best choice for our kids and the families.

[00:39:32] Thank you very much. - Thank you. Do we have no speaker number five? Speaker number six? Speaker number six? Speaker number seven?

[00:39:48] And is speaker number eight here as well? Okay, so speaker number seven and then eight, you can queue up behind.

[00:40:12] - Good evening. My name is Lauren Galloway. I am a teacher in the Tuckahoe District and I reside in the Three Chop District. I'm here tonight on behalf of Skipwith Elementary and my coworkers. I had the privilege of speaking with Dr. Cashwell and her head staff yesterday. I have adjusted my remarks with those things we discussed in mind.

[00:40:31] However, I still want this issue brought to the board and the public because we have a problem and it needs fixing. I began teaching at Skipwith in August of 2021. At that time, Skipwith had around 500 students. Over the past three years, Skipwith's enrollment has increased by 20%.

[00:40:48] We now have over 600. This will be Skipwith's third year with no music room. For three grade levels, music is on a cart and pushes into the classroom, displacing teachers during their planning. The other three grades have music class on the stage, some of them during lunch, because our stage is in the cafeteria.

[00:41:07] Ms. Shea was in our building this week and saw firsthand how difficult this is. Thank you for being there, and thank you for bringing these same concerns up today at the work session. We appreciate your advocacy. We lost an additional resource room this year, art. needed another classroom for third

grade due to enrollment our principal asked for a trailer and was told to instead consolidate other grade level classes she refused and for good reason the only grade level she could consider consolidating was fourth grade but it would have increased their rosters to 28 or 29 students per class this happened last year as well fourth grade rosters

[00:41:43] grew to 29 students per class those teachers explicitly said they would quit if our principal allowed this to happen again. So we have art on a cart that pushes into all classrooms, again, displacing teachers during their planning period. ESL and SPED meet in rooms that are not meant to be classrooms. One-third of our school population receives ESL services. Up to 32 students are crammed in an old workroom with five teachers, each running a small group. Students sit back to back and are not able to move around the room once they are seated. One-fifth of our population receive sped services sped is crammed into one half of a 10-year-old trailer gifted in speech

[00:42:23] meet in tiny storage rooms behind the stage i relayed these comments to dr cashwell and she said this sounded more like a utilization issue not a capacity issue with respect it doesn't matter what we call it it's a problem that needs fixing skip with has too many students and not enough learning spaces dr cashwell and her team said they would take a closer look at skip with and I thank you for that I look forward to hearing your thoughts I am personally inviting all of you to come and see what I am talking about come to skip with look at art on the cart look at music on a cart or music on the stage during lunch watch ESL try to run groups watch sped try to run groups

[00:43:02] watch gifted watch speech it will become so clear we need more room or we need less students thank you thank you speaker number eight and if speaker number nine's here you may queue up behind thank - Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns tonight.

[00:43:20] My name is Caitlin Kalunga, and as a parent and community member, I'm concerned with the middle school changes in the redistricting proposal. A note on Mayberry, my children's school. I've heard it said before that in 2020, a group of Mayberry parents suggested this change. However, that's not quite accurate.

[00:43:36] When it was proposed to split Mayberry, a group of parents said, we don't want to leave Tuckahoe, but if you're going to move us, move us together. But again, that was years ago, and it's not a current request. Now for the current proposal, Mrs. Shea has said the reason is to align feeder patterns for community.

[00:43:51] However, with every scenario I've run, I can't see how that outweighs the negative impacts. For Mayberry and Tuckahoe, you'll be breaking apart our well-functioning community in the name of community. You said seven schools feeding into Kuyakasin is a problem, yet this plan makes seven schools feed into Tuckahoe. You said moving schools together is a priority, but this will split Davis between Kuyakasin and Tuckahoe, a change which is not made clear in the proposal as Davis is never mentioned in the Kuyakasin scenario.

[00:44:18] Freeman will drop from 75 percent of students coming from Tuckahoe to only 46 percent. How do we know this won't damage Freeman's community? For Skipwith and part of Davis, you're removing them from the brand-new building they're slated to receive and putting them in the oldest building, which will be put over capacity.

[00:44:33] When you overcrowd Tuckahoe and worsen student-teacher ratios, it will lower educational quality. A Tuckahoe teacher told me they have around 35 kids in a class due to scheduling. I can't imagine how bad it will be if it goes over 100 percent, and frankly, this shouldn't be a concern when there's no current issues with capacities across the middle schools this brings me to the equity issues after running some estimated projections using data I have accessible to me and very quickly updated before this meeting the shifts this proposal could create are troubling Pocahontas will be around 24 low-income students Cuyacusin is going to shift down to around 48 and Tucco would increase to about 65 low-income students it would also increase to about 99 to 107

[00:45:13] Capacity using the principal's current projections six of the seven elementary schools that would feed into Tuckahoe rank among the top 20 most diverse schools in Henrico with Skip within Ridge being in the top three Pocahontas would only have Carver from this list and QuiaKasin would have some of Carver and Rich this proposal takes the most diverse and some of the lowest income schools in the West End and puts them in the oldest and most crowded building even with IVC rebalancing so to wrap up my question is why are we creating these issues that don't exist why are we rushing this change before Cuyahawson construction has even started?

[00:45:47] Why was the proposal released and two of the three town halls will have been hosted before current enrollment numbers are released? Why propose such drastic changes with no measurable success or failure metrics? Why create a massive and likely expensive redistricting plan that will have to be redone to alleviate capacity?

[00:46:04] We can't measure community on paper, but we can measure the damage of overcrowded classrooms. I hope the board prioritizes children's education and ensures all students, regardless of income or background received the same treatment across Henrico schools. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number nine, no speaker number nine. Speaker number 10 may come to the microphone and speaker number 11, you may queue up behind. Good evening. My name is Allison Brown and I have two students who have attended Skipwith Elementary and Cuyacusin Middle Schools and are currently at Tucker High

[00:46:40] School. I've held leadership roles in each of those schools PTAs and PTSOs. To start, I'd like to thank the board for taking action on much-needed redistricting adjustments to ameliorate some problems facing schools I'm very thankful I don't have your job I trust that you have a better grasp on some of these vast complicated issues than I do and I'll support whatever outcomes you end up deciding are in the best interest of our county schools as a whole that said tonight I would like to express my support for both the Tucker and QuiaKusing redistricting proposals on the table the Tucker overcrowding situation is a serious issue impacting our students safe environment

[00:47:18] and ability to learn and I appreciate the board addressing it as quickly as possible I'd like to spend most of my time sharing a few of the reasons why I believe the proposed Quiaxin adjustment is a wise choice based on our family's experiences the current Quiaxin feeder pattern of sending students to three different high schools harmed students by splitting up student connections more than any other middle school which did impact our student that spent a lot of time in the gifted program and all their kids went different ways likewise Tucker is forced to assimilate five different middle school populations when all other high schools have three or fewer we were told by

[00:47:54] our counselors at both schools that these splits impeded their jobs and contributed to an error in my rising ninth graders schedule at the same time currently only a small percentage as was previously mentioned of tuckahoe middle students are split off to attend tucker while all the rest of Tuckahoe Middle students go to Freeman. Again, this is an undesirable situation. These three feeder issues would all be improved under this proposal. It also includes a geographical improvement whereby Skipwith Elementary students attend their nearest middle school, Tuckahoe, and Mayberry students attend their closest middle school, Cuiakason. This would have helped our

[00:48:30] family to be more involved in middle school activities if we did not have to factor in additional travel time it takes to drive past Tuckahoe Middle and through five additional traffic lights to reach our zone school. Our kids were always on the last bus too during the due to the farther route. Lastly, while this issue no longer directly affects my family, I do want to affirm that every student and family I have met through Skipwith and Quiochison is capable and resilient and I'm confident they will continue to bloom regardless of where you plant them, even if it's in suboptimal distances and feeder patterns.

[00:49:04] Thank you for your time. Thank you, speaker number 10. Speaker number 11 and speaker number 12 may queue up behind. Hi, everyone. Good evening. My name is Satish.

[00:49:21] So most of the concerns are discussed by my fellow resident, but I would like to discuss a few more points. I also belong to Discovery Ridge Townworms, which is located exactly behind the Discovery Ridge Church. i would like to bring few points um with great difficulty uh with the you know a lot of thought process and everything i've recently moved from northern virginia to henrico which is a key decision making for me to have a better school education for my kids and everybody i have one kid who is a middle school and i have one daughter who is going to elementary now i think the

[00:50:01] rejoining is really concerning us most of us are discussing about it but apart from the points where my fellow resident has discussed i would like to bring one more point um it's about the elementary school alignment discovery ridge we have a gate and get an elementary school which is across the street but our our kids are going to two miles away for rubic hour i just wanted to make a request to the school board to reconsider and align the school which is very near and adjacent to our homes yeah i think most of the points have been discussed by the fellow resident

[00:50:39] I think thank you very much for your time. We are representing as a community and most of our fellow residents are here. I'm just honoring all the petitions here. Thank you very much.

[00:50:51] Thank you. Speaker number 11. I'm the 11, sorry. Oh, you are 11. Thank you so much. Speaker number 12. Speaker number 12 present. Speaker number 13. Speaker number 13. Speaker number 14. Speaker number 14. Speaker number 15. Speaker number 15. Speaker number 16. Speaker number 16. Speaker number 17. Speaker number 17. Speaker number 17. Speaker number 18. Come on up.

[00:51:46] good evening my name is Emily Lancaster I teach and reside in the Tuckahoe district I began teaching at Skipwith Elementary in the fall of 2022 at that time we had 508 students at our school and as of September 23rd 2025 we have approximately 600 students and our growth does not show signs of stopping tonight I am here to address the fact that Skipwith Elementary was left out of the proposed boundary plans at the beginning of this school year teachers discussed Henrico County's

[00:52:21] journey to 2030 within this plan the school board has outlined four strategic focus areas and goals it is quite simple to break down the ways in which your goals will not be met if you do not think

about including skip with elementary and your proposed redistricting plans first academic achievement how do you expect a teacher to be able to effectively provide instruction to a class of 30 fourth graders maybe the class of 24 fifth graders where there are 10 iep and 504s will have a better job at it not to mention that at least a third of our students in these classes

[00:52:55] are um english as second language speakers second our learning environment please picture 24 fifth graders in a classroom ask yourself is that safe are they able to effectively learn in this space not to um and if you haven't caught on yet please picture your kindergartner or your fifth grader in one of these classrooms third physical social emotional and mental health do you think that two counselors can successfully carry the caseload of 600 students not to mention that we are diminishing the spaces within our school that allow students to express themselves the counseling office has

[00:53:32] been stuffed into a work room art is on a cart music is on a cart or on a stage it's starting to look like the shiny schools you love to tout are not so shiny fourth retaining and rewarding staff the easiest goal to overlook but arguably the most important i've already had staff from our school come up to me this year and state that the overcrowding will be the reason that they leave skip with after this year these are fantastic teachers that you are at risk of losing over a problem that can be fixed you have the solution tonight i challenge you to reflect on

[00:54:09] the effect that you have on your constituents we have elected you to those seats we have given you the ability to be change makers we have trusted you with the responsibility of creating a space for ourselves and our students that is not just adequate for learning but a place where they want to spend most of their days we know that you have acknowledged that there's an overcrowding problem at skipwith elementary and this is the opportunity you seek to help one of your many schools we appreciate the time you have taken to think and discuss the problem at hand however actions speak louder than your words and now is the time to act thank you thank you speaker number 18 and we will

[00:54:48] finish the evening of public comment was speaker number 19. Good evening my name is Marlene Sherlock and our family lives in the Fairfield district having watched our friends in Fairfax struggle with their own redistricting I'd like to thank you for looking inward to your own staff to prepare the analysis and proposals thank you for not wasting untold thousands of dollars on an outside

[00:55:23] consultant who would know little to nothing of our county or communities. At last week's town hall there were some requests for more information and I see you've already started to add those to your documents and again having them done in-house shows the capabilities of the HCPS staff.

[00:55:42] What you didn't talk about in laying out the timeline for the adjustments are when you might make a decision on some large policy matters such as which grades might be grandfathered and whether transportation would be provided this spring you declined to include them in your policy and kick the can just a bit you'll ultimately have to make that decision and the sooner you make it the sooner families can begin their planning i will ask again that you include the hard dollar costs for those scenarios you contemplate and specifically we'll put in a plug

[00:56:17] right now to have grandfathering and transportation decisions apply equally to all schools and and matriculation pyramids. At your work session earlier today, you mentioned you'd be reviewing the official class membership numbers in October, and I'll throw out a few more wishlist requests.

[00:56:35] Please don't just show us grade level aggregate numbers. Please tell us what actual classroom sizes are, particularly for core subjects. Tell us how many non-classroom staff members are at each school and what the counselor to student ratios are. While you're at it, October is also the time you usually look at and specifically example SOL scores and state accreditation metrics.

[00:56:59] Last year's middle school numbers were awful. And I hope you ask staff to prepare some sort of, what have we done to change and improve that? Finally, I wouldn't be me if I didn't ask you all to come check out the annual HCPS High School Band Showcase.

[00:57:18] The musical performance today was just an appetizer. One glorious night, all non-comprehensive high school bring out just their bands to entertain us, inspire us, and fill the air with their artistry and musical efforts.

[00:57:34] Like last year, it will again be at Hermitage High School on Monday, October the 6th, starting at 6:30. It's free, open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to bring a contribution to the Henrico Christmas Mother. Come hear what makes Henrico County a best community for music education the 26th year in a row. Now that's success. Hope to see you there. Thank you. Thank you so much.

[00:58:02] And that concludes our public comment. The next item on the agenda is the consent agenda. Colleagues, this is looking at items 9.01 through 9.09. Are there any of those items you would like separated out for separate discussion or consideration? Well, I have one that I would just like to comment on. I would like to just comment on item 9.04, the very long-awaited award of the construction contract for the replacement project of Kuyakusa Middle School that we are

[00:58:38] excited about. And so this keeps us right on track for our opening in the fall of 2027. So thank you to our operations team and our construction team for working through that. We've now done the design and the bid we're rolling right along all right hearing no items to take action on separately do i have a motion on the consent agenda i move the school board accept adopt approve and or award items 9.01 through 9.09 on the consent agenda as presented moved by miss kinsella is there a second

[00:59:13] second seconded by mr young all those in favor say aye aye any opposed the ayes have it the consent agenda has been approved colleagues the next item on the agenda is unfinished business any unfinished business the next item on the agenda is new business is there any new business you would like to present hearing none the final item on the agenda is the announcement of upcoming meeting dates there are a couple so I want to draw your attention to all of them on September 30th

[00:59:47] at 6:30 p.m. there will be another town hall at Highland Springs High School as well as on October 7th at 6:30 p.m. there will be an additional town hall at the East Center at Hermitage. Again as we mentioned in the work session these are the same format and the same content as the first town hall.

[01:00:08] And then on October 9th at 3 o'clock we will have our next work session here in the New Bridge auditorium the start time may be adjusted as needed this meeting is adjourned



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