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Henrico County School Board Work Session, Thursday, April 30, 2026

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[00:00:00] to welcome everyone to the April 30th, 2026 work session of the Henrico County School Board. The first item on the agenda is the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Boyd.

[00:00:15] - I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Please remain standing as you are able for a moment of silence.

[00:00:36] Thank you, you may be seated. - My colleagues will now move on the approval of the agenda? Is there a motion? 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. Shea. All those in favor say aye. Aye. The ayes have it. The agenda is approved. The next thing we will do is

[00:01:12] go into closed session. Is there a motion to go into closed session? I move that the school board go into closed session for the discussion of matters covered under items A1 of section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia 1950 as amended pertaining to the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific school board employees.

[00:01:37] Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Ms. Zatkis. All in favor say aye. Aye. The ayes have it. We will now go into closed session. We will reconvene the work session at the

conclusion of our closed meeting. All right, we are back. Colleagues, is there a motion to certify closed session. I move that the school board certify by a recorded vote that to the best of each school board member's knowledge, only public matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting

[00:02:13] requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you Mr. Young. All in favor say aye. Aye. The ayes have it.

[00:02:31] closed session has been certified dr cashwell thank you good afternoon members of the board for the first item we will provide an update about educational related legislation that was approved during the 2026 virginia general assembly session and dr board boyd and mr blackstone will provide that presentation thank you good afternoon chair irving school board members and dr cashwell mr Mr. Kim Blackstone, Government Relations Manager, will provide the 2026 legislative wrap-up a focus on legislation aligned with the board's priorities.

[00:03:08] In parallel, staff are conducting a comprehensive review of all newly enacted legislation in collaboration with the Division Council to determine any required policy updates or operational adjustments. Consistent with our established procedures, any recommended policy changes will be presented to the school board for review and action.

[00:03:27] I now turn this presentation over to Mr. Blackstown. Thank you, Dr. Boyd, and good afternoon, board members, and Dr. Cashwell. As an overview, the big-ticket items this year were not necessarily school-related, as much of the focus has been on the four proposed constitutional amendments, the biennial budget, and other highly publicized items.

[00:03:50] However, I did track over 200 bills related to our legislative agenda. About half of those didn't make it through with just over 100 getting to the governor's desk. So today I will touch on some of the bills that impact HCPS in our legislative priority areas.

[00:04:11] And just a note, this year for the first time we posted weekly updates to our legislative priority page on our website for the public to be better informed on what was happening during the session on an ongoing basis.

[00:04:29] The first few bills I'll touch on relate to the first focus area of our legislative priorities, which is also the first focus area of the Division's strategic plan, academic achievement. Key bills addressing K-12 education this session include several that impact the state's assessment system.

[00:04:47] The legislation provides additional flexibility for alternative assessments. It also implements a 100-point scale and a tight two-week testing window at the end of the school year, and the SOL will now count toward 10% of the student's final grade.

[00:05:07] Another bill eliminates the through-year growth assessments. Another allows for the score of an expedited retake of an SOL test to replace the previous score. Regarding verified credits, a pair of bills will now allow a student to substitute African American History or AP African American Studies for World History I or World Geography for purpose of satisfying the history or social studies credit requirements.

[00:05:39] Another bill provides an opportunity for students to take the SAT and PSAT next year by offering the test during the school day at the student's high school through the SAT school day program.

The next priority area is creating safe, modern, and supportive learning environments, both programmatically and via our physical facilities.

[00:06:03] Starting with student and family support, a bill intends to ensure every high school student has provided guidance and other informational materials on student financial aid applications with the goal of increasing the completion rate of those forms. Another pair of bills focuses on communication with families who are English learners to ensure they are getting access to the information and vital documents that they need.

[00:06:29] Related to building safety, separate bills passed to augment training requirements for threat assessment teams, and for school security officers regarding critical incident preparedness and response. Another bill enhances coordination with treatment facilities regarding readmitting students at high risk.

[00:06:49] And regarding physical facilities, the Commission on School Construction and Modernization, which was set to expire in July, was made permanent, and the VDOE will update the 10-year capital improvement roadmap of public school facilities in the commonwealth by this september in the priority area of comprehensive wellness a bill passed to help strengthen mental health awareness training and instruction for staff to help address the needs of youth populations that

[00:07:23] are at higher risk of experiencing these challenges a separate bill directs the school health services Committee and the VDOE to study and make recommendations on best practices for annual mental health screenings for students in grades 6 through 12. And another pair of bills expands programs that can be funded under at-risk initiatives to support both the physical and mental health of students in public schools, including the hiring of licensed nurses.

[00:07:53] In the area of recruitment and retention of staff, a bill passed to make it easier for those with real-world experience in the important field of career and technical education who want to become teachers to get credit on the salary scale for their years of experience. Another bill grants a three-year teaching license for college instructors of high school CTE or dual enrollment courses as long as they maintain employment with the college, helping school divisions fill related vacancies. Two other bills make it easier for teachers and school psychologists to get licensed

[00:08:28] in Virginia through interstate compacts if they're coming from other states. And two bills to highlight in this area are ones that create VDOE work groups to conduct a comprehensive review of the alternative licensure pathways for teachers to see how these processes can be improved, and another to review all CTE offerings to ensure they are current with workforce needs.

[00:08:55] and the final priority area is that of school board autonomy and funding a pair of bills address student diabetes care and management in schools to begin with the 28-29 school year these bills will help ensure that students remain safe particularly in an emergency situation regarding who can administer care another bill tightens the prohibition of cell phones and smart devices to now be bell to bell and yet another pair of bills requires the annual notification to parents of the

[00:09:29] importance of securely storing prescription drugs and parents legal responsibility to safely store any firearm present in the household also for middle and high school parents a new bill ensures that they are notified well in advance of course enrollment deadlines and that they are aware of the process for requesting changes to the student's course selection and finally we're still waiting for the state budget to be finalized to see what our allotment of state aid will be.

[00:10:04] So you can see that there that many new laws support your 2026 legislative priorities in the various areas representing core values that are consistent with our division strategic plan journey to 2030. And Mr. Chair that completes our presentation and with that I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you Mr. Blackstone, Dr. Boyd, uh colleagues uh start to my On my left, Mrs. Atkins, if you have comments or questions.

[00:10:35] So thank both of you for your work. I know, Ken, you were diligent in the General Assembly in trying to keep track of many things. I also appreciate the communications team for building out the legislative page so that folks can really get more specific on where we are, what has passed, what has failed, what was sponsored.

[00:10:58] think it's a critical way to show that we are also learning as we go and that's a that's progress there's much more that we can do but this is absolutely a step in the right direction so this is just kudos to say thank you and acknowledge the hard work and the innovation that it takes to continue building out the scorecard so thank you thank you very much Thank you so much. Just two quick highlights that pop out to me. Thank you

[00:11:35] for this this update and keeping us abreast of what's made it all the way through is that when we look at our academic achievement slide and we look at the coming changes to the state assessment just being as I know we will be just being really intentional on how we communicate with families about the changes particularly how students like in maybe in the middle school years who decide to opt out of an SOL how that 10% of the final grade how how all that comes into effect as well as how we may need to modify our supports for

[00:12:14] expedited retakes now that we have such a tight timeline window and then also as we there will no longer be state through year growth assessments will we be leaning more into our county benchmarks or what could that look like for monitoring of students throughout the year I mean I think that's a great example and while this is kind of a high level look at the changes that were approved the Virginia Department of Education will also provide us direction on specific implementation timelines and so forth as things move through the

[00:12:50] Board of Ed and so we're following those discussions as well and I know while the General Assembly work is through Mr. Blackstone will be tuning in and following the Virginia Department of Education on all the new developments and we'll of course as I mean the to your point communication of the multi layers of impact here really over the next few years because some things go into effect maybe one year some are years out and so forth there are drastic changes to the assessment system will be sure that we're leaning into strong communication with our families and that's a really important point thank

[00:13:27] you excellent thank you and then also just such a win with the CTE staffing some of these provisions I know a neighboring division actually approached dr. Caswell and I at a regional meeting a couple weeks ago about some of these and some of the challenges with recruitment and retention specifically around CTE. So I'm really excited about some of these wins. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Shea. Mr. Young.

[00:13:55] Thank you, Ken, for the update. Definitely kudos, like Ms. Atkins said, on the information on the webpage. You guys are doing a better job at communicating with us. We felt that this year. So I do want to thank you for, I guess, when we set up in Spoke last year, you took it, took it to heart and you worked on

it and got better at it. So I definitely want to give you kudos in front of everyone. And then Ms. Shea kind of alluded to the CTE salary credit going forward.

[00:14:21] I think that's going to help us with our recruitment and retention. And I do have a level of concern about the SOL counting 10% of the final grade. But I mean, we'll hash that out. But I would like more information as it comes down, especially for my district as well.

[00:14:39] So just wanna, I'm always been hesitant as I was following that bill on what that means for some of our students that struggle with SOLs. But overall, good budget. Can't wait to see what the numbers look like. Hopefully we get some more state aid, but thank you for the presentation.

[00:14:54] - Thank you for your kind words. - Thank you both for the presentation and all the work that's been put into following this. It is a swift process, but there's lots going on. So I appreciate it greatly. I do wanna ask a couple clarifying questions some of the things and then comment on another thing. So for the SOL changes, my understanding reading the bill itself is that some of the things that are being highlighted, except for the 100-point scale, are only for secondary or grades 8 through 12. Is that correct?

[00:15:27] Like for math? So this is not for necessarily elementary and middle school. They can do three-year testing. Yes, the slide simply highlights some of the big picture areas where there was change but doesn't give the nuance or the specifics and and you know truthfully we're still going through each of these to make sure we understand the nuance and then of course working for VDOE to understand any direction from VDOE. Yeah yeah I just wanted to highlight that so the parents of like third graders aren't thinking my kid has to take this test only in the last two weeks of school this is primarily intended for secondary students you know high school and high school equivalent SOL so I think that's

[00:16:04] worth keeping in mind. I know that personally as a teacher I'm very excited about this because I think, you know, SOL testing has already started the rest of the year. It effectively becomes not the same as it was previously and I think that for too long we've removed a bit of accountability for students in terms of oh well you can get multiple retakes on this SOL and I think that giving it weight with 10% of your grade and saying that this is effectively an end of course assessment. I'm hopefully, I think it's going to bring teachers a lot of happiness in how the school year goes so we can actually more fully get through content and are not rushing

[00:16:42] with the timeline as it is currently. And students treat it with a level of respect of like, oh, I may only get one bite at the apple this year. I really need to do this. So I'm hopeful for what it can bring for us. The salary credit for CTE teachers. I did have a question about that And I don't know if we'll have an answer, but I'm curious.

[00:17:05] How much is that? Has there been information put on what that looks like monetarily? We're still working to interpret the specifics. Okay, okay. And do we know if the state would cover this or would it have to be local? Is that more important?

[00:17:20] Again, we're still working to interpret the specifics. All right, wonderful. But this understanding that's a high interest item will keep you posted. Yes, yes, yes. And the last one, I just want to, you know, salute the General Assembly for the notification to parents. for safe storage of not only firearms, but also prescription drugs.

[00:17:38] You know, the number one one of the top killers of teens is suicide. And so these are things that we can help prevent in tandem with our mental health services here in the county. So I'm feeling very

positive about those changes, and I hope that our families take seriously the duty of care that they have for for their children and not only their children, but also other children within this county.

[00:18:00] So that's that's a very positive change. thank you again for the presentation and this is wonderful thank you thank you thank you all right the next two items are related to policy revisions recommended policy revisions for your review and those would be up for approval at the June 11th meeting this is policy p7 - 08 - 0 07 homework and p7 - 08 - 0 0 a makeup work, and both of these have been extensively worked on by both the policy

[00:18:36] committee and have been through all of our advisories for feedback a number of times, and again are here simply for your review at this point, seeking approval in June, if you have any questions. Colleagues, I'll open the floor. Does anybody have questions or comments about the policies? Chair Irving, I don't have any questions, but I did spend quite a bit of time in the policy, and I just have overall thoughts to share and so current Virginia state law is limited on how it reflects the many ways that students now learn whether it's in person virtual

[00:19:12] dual enrollment we have work-based learning internships we have a myriad of alternative programs and public education has outpaced the attendance policies that remain they're mostly tied to traditional classroom presence and that does create challenges when we're looking at excused and unexcused absences and so I really commend the policy teams and the advisory teams Mrs.

[00:19:40] Shea, Mrs. Kinsella for the work that they've done on the revisions to get the policy as best as we can to reflect where we are in schools and so the policy for me really does provide a clear purpose statement and allowing students to make up the work and families if you are interested in learning more about the definition from a state law perspective on what an excused absence is what an unexcused absence is and how that leads to chronic

[00:20:18] absenteeism, it really is dated compared to what the realities of what many families experience in schools, especially when it has to deal with an unexcused, unexpected, urgent absence. And so with that being said, I really just wanted to take a moment to give full credit to the teams that work, the advisory committees, again, for all they've done and all they will continue to to do. I am very pleased with the changes.

[00:20:51] Thank you, Ms. Atkins. A lot of thought and time have gone into both of these policies. They have gone through multiple iterations of feedback through advisories, both community advisories, but also various staff advisory groups.

[00:21:15] Particularly the homework policy, perhaps both policies, but especially the homework policy went through a public survey portion where anybody, any parents, any students, any staff could provide additional feedback because we really wanted to capture those voices.

[00:21:32] We really wanted to look at what's working and what we could tweak. And so, you know, as a board, we're specifically looking at the two policies, but I appreciate the staff also loading the new regulations into board docs for transparency.

[00:21:47] so folks can understand what the regulatory adjustments might look like as well. But I just wanted to give kudos to the significant amount of time that has been put into these, not only in a calendar-wise, over months and months and months, but also, like Ms. Atkins said, taking really intentional time to

talk to all stakeholder groups to make sure we're really reflecting best practices for our students and equipping our staff with what they need.

[00:22:19] - Thank you, Mr. Shea. Any other comments? All right, thank you, Dr. Cashwell. - Thank you. The next item is the annual review of our education fee and tuition schedules.

[00:22:35] As you can see, based on the red lines, the very minor changes and some new fees simply associated with new courses. And we're happy to answer any questions you have and again, would be seeking your approval of these at this evening's meeting.

[00:22:53] Oh, that's right, it's in May. Sorry, I was getting ahead of myself. Any questions now in advance of the May meeting? Thank you. All right, the next item is a presentation related to teaching, learning, and technology in Henrico County Public Schools.

[00:23:15] And we have three presenters for this presentation. Dr. Hughes, Mrs. Vostain, and Mr. Maddox are coming to the podium to share information.

[00:23:38] - Okay, good afternoon, Chair Ehrman, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell. As Dr. Cashwell said, I'm Leslie Hughes, the Chief Learning Officer for Henrico County Public Schools, and joining me today is Courtney Bastain, Director of Innovation, and Brian Maddox, Director of Technology. Together, we will present an overview on the teaching, learning, and technology in Henrico County Public Schools, and how this work connects to our journey to 2030.

[00:24:02] Our approach is grounded in a simple belief, technology should support strong instruction and meaningful student learning. We also recognize that there is an ongoing and important conversation, both locally and nationally, around student technology use, including laptops and screen time.

[00:24:20] We take this very seriously. So today, our goal is to provide clarity on what the current research says about technology use and screen time, what technology integration looks like in our classrooms, where we are seeing strong instructional practices, and how we continue to strengthen our approach, expectations, and consistency.

[00:24:42] As we walk through this, everyone is grounded in one focus, ensuring our students are learning, engaged, and prepared to be life ready. As always, our work starts with our division strategic plan, Journey to 2030, specifically goal one, academic achievement.

[00:25:00] Our focus is clear, designing, delivering, and assessing high quality instruction. Technology supports that work by helping students develop the skills they need to navigate, evaluate, and create in a digital world. And research is consistent on this point.

[00:25:18] Technology has the greatest impact when it strengthens instruction, not when it replaces it. In our learning environment, the focus is on creating safe, supportive, and innovative spaces for our students and staff. Technology plays a role here by ensuring students have access to the tools, resources, and environments they need to learn effectively.

[00:25:40] So as we move through this presentation, everything you'll see connects back to this: strong instruction, supported by technology, in service of student learning. At this time, I'll turn the presentation over to Courtney Mustaine, who will provide a roadmap for technology integration in Henrico County Public Schools.

[00:25:59] - Thank you, Dr. Hughes. Building on that vision, the next question becomes, what do students need to know and be able to do beyond high school? At the state level, that is defined by the profile of a Virginia graduate. One key expectation in the profile of a Virginia graduate is that students can achieve and apply academic and technical knowledge.

[00:26:20] This means students are building knowledge, creating and communicating ideas, thinking critically in problems, solving problems, using technology responsibly, and developing healthy, balanced habits. Technology is not separate from learning.

[00:26:36] It is integrated into how students build and apply knowledge and skills. In Henrico, we use the Henrico Learner Profile to bring those state expectations to life in a way that is intentional, developmentally appropriate, and balanced.

[00:26:52] It gives us a clear PK-12 progression of the knowledge and durable skills our students need for success in and beyond school. We do this through our teaching and learning framework, bringing that progression to life by integrating technology in developmentally appropriate ways across curriculum, instruction, and professional learning.

[00:27:14] In Henrico, this begins with a standards-based, aligned curriculum that defines what students need to know and be able to do. And for technology, those expectations are defined by state standards, providing clear guidance for how students use, understand, and manage technology.

[00:27:34] That guidance comes to life through the Digital Learning Integration Standards, which guide how students use technology for learning as active learners, creating, collaborating, and communicating. In Virginia, these standards are organized across grade level bands with expectations that progress over time.

[00:27:51] They help define what developmentally appropriate use looks like with a focus on purpose and balance. In the early grades, use is more teacher-guided and targeted with a strong emphasis on hands-on, non-digital learning. Over time, it becomes more independent and applied.

[00:28:09] Across all grades, technology is used to support students in building knowledge, designing solutions, and sharing ideas. Complementing this, the computer science standards focus on how students understand technology, how it works, how systems connect, and how to solve problems.

[00:28:27] In the early grades, these concepts are integrated across content areas. As students move into middle school and high school, they expand through both integrated instruction and course offerings. The goal is for students to use technology to support learning and understand how it works.

[00:28:46] In addition to digital learning and computer science, the health standards focus on how students manage technology. with an emphasis on safety, balance, and well-being. This is a critical and complex area and a growing focus in both research and work with students, families, and staff.

[00:29:05] Recent updates to Virginia Code effective July 1 require instruction on screen time, including time spent on devices and the addictive potential of that use. We are currently following the VDOE's direction for any updated standards and will update our health curriculum and programming accordingly.

[00:29:23] Ultimately, our goal remains focused on helping students build awareness, develop balance, and maintain healthy decisions. Together, these standards define how technology supports learning.

Because it is integrated, it is not measured separately. It shows up in how students think, create, and apply their learning, and in the way they develop digital habits.

[00:29:48] From standards and curriculum, we move into the instructional model. How learning is designed, delivered, and assessed, grounded in research-based best practices. Through this model, teachers make purposeful decisions based on student needs, ensuring technology is used as a tool to support effective instruction.

[00:30:07] What this looks like in practice is guided by the digital learning integration standards and current research grounded in our instructional model. Aligned to the Henrico Learner profile, this work is designed as a progression, building skills over time. In the early grades, use is limited and guided with short, purposeful experiences balanced with hands-on, non-digital learning.

[00:30:30] In grades three through five, use becomes more structured and purposeful with opportunities for research, creation, and collaboration. In middle school, use becomes more integrated with clear expectations and support. And in high school, use is more applied, supporting authentic tasks and preparation for life beyond graduation, with 92% of jobs requiring digital skills as reflected in the HCPS literature review.

[00:30:55] We know this work is ongoing, and we are using this progression along with feedback from students, families, and staff to strengthen consistency across our classrooms. Across all levels, research is clear. The impact of technology depends on how it is used.

[00:31:14] It is most effective when it is purposeful. That means it is aligned to a clear learning goal, it's appropriate for the task, it's developmentally appropriate, and it supports active learning. This is what we expect to see in our classrooms, and we will continue to evaluate to ensure the proper guardrails and checks and balances are in place to ensure consistency in the purposeful use of technology.

[00:31:39] And this starts with recognizing that not all screen time is the same. Research shows different types of use lead to very different outcomes. Active use requires hands-on creation, collaboration, problem solving, and students showing their learning.

[00:31:55] And it is linked to stronger engagement and achievement, especially when paired with student-centered strategies. At the same time, passive use, like watching videos and clicking through slides can negatively impact cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

[00:32:11] Because of this, we are committed to continuing focusing on the active use of technology. That shift toward more active purposeful use is grounded in the research shared with the board in April. That research reinforces several key ideas.

[00:32:28] Technology is most effective when used as a tool for learning, especially through active use. It supports access and inclusion, providing tools many students rely on. Development matters, especially for our youngest learners, and healthy balanced habits are essential.

[00:32:47] For years, the prevailing approach to mitigating digital risk was imposing strict universal screen time limits. However, due to a lack of supporting evidence for these thresholds, the American Academy of Pediatrics removed the universal limits. They now recommend a customized contextual approach to digital health with a new qualitative metric, the five C's of media use.

[00:33:10] This is a framework assigned to help us evaluate the intentionality rather than just minutes. The first two pillars are child and content. This means evaluating how the tool accommodates diverse learning styles and verifying that the material is evidence-based and aged appropriate.

[00:33:27] Next are calm and crowding out. Technology must never be used to regulate students' emotions, nor should it replace hands-on activities, physical movement, or face-to-face social interaction. And the final pillar, communication. There must be ongoing dialogue between educators, families, and students to monitor if digital habits remain healthy and purposeful.

[00:33:50] Bringing this all together, this is what we expect to see in our classrooms. Students are actively engaged, building knowledge, creating and demonstrating their learning, collaborating and communicating, and solving problems. Teachers design and guide that learning, making intentional decisions based on the goal and the needs of our learners.

[00:34:09] And technology is used as a tool to support that work, not replace it. The digital learning experience in elementary is teacher directed and guided. In the early grades, students engage in short, structured activities that build foundational skills. Students use a range of teacher selected digital tools organized by purpose. This includes adaptive programs for targeted individualized practice, typically 15 to 20 minutes, one to two times per week. These tools adjust to student needs and provide teachers with data to guide instruction.

[00:34:45] Students also use content resources such as instructional videos, readings, and digital learning platforms to support understanding and engagement. All tools are intentionally selected by the teacher and aligned to the learning goal and state standards. This supports supplements and does not replace teacher-led instruction, discussion, or hands-on learning experiences.

[00:35:06] We also know that early learning and brain development are strengthened through human interaction, oral language, movement, play, and hands-on experiences that support thinking and writing. Reinforcing a balanced approach, combining digital tools with hands-on discussion-based and non-digital learning, especially in the early grades. Across all elementary use, technology should be intentionally selected by the teacher with the clear purpose to support learning. In secondary, students use a range of digital tools across content areas to read, write, collaborate, and solve problems they use learning platforms and creation tools to access

[00:35:43] materials and demonstrate their learning with technology supporting instruction not replacing it use becomes more integrated and increasingly independent aligned to the task and learning goal teachers continue to guide use ensuring it supports the learning there's not a set time expectation as use varies by course standards and student needs which makes balance and digital well-being being essential. While technology is used in different ways throughout the day, project and problem-based learning brings it all together. For example, in elementary, students design a farm based on weather conditions, researching the

[00:36:21] digital tools as defined by the ELA standards of learning, building with hands-on materials and explaining their thinking through discussion. Students were collaborating and creating together with technology supporting that work. And in middle school, students became bilingual storytellers, creating podcasts to share stories about their home countries with an authentic audience.

[00:36:44] Students were developing language, building confidence, and sharing their stories with pride. And in high school, students analyzed strategic plans and created a video using their voice to shape their educational experience and connect their perspectives to the division's vision, presenting their work to division leadership. Technology made that work possible, but it wasn't the focus. Students were researching, analyzing, creating, and presenting, working together and engaging with a real audience. This is the kind of active use research shows has the greatest impact on learning. As one student shared, this provided plenty of opportunities for me to step out of my comfort zone and make

[00:37:23] new friends. I'm more social with my peers, I'm a stronger presenter, and I care more about my in-school life. This is what we mean by developmentally appropriate, purposeful, and active use. And moving forward, our focus is on making this kind of learning consistent for every student in every classroom. To do that we are setting clear expectations for classroom practice aligned to the digital learning integration standards and grounded in research we are continuing to review our tools use and outcomes ensuring they support learning we are reinforcing a developmentally appropriate progression so use looks

[00:38:01] different across grade levels by design and we are strengthening partnerships with educators students and families because this work requires all of us at At the core, our commitment is a consistent approach grounded in purpose, balance, and student well-being.

[00:38:20] And to make this work in practice, the third part of our framework is professional learning, ensuring teachers are equipped and supported to use technology to strengthen instruction and support student learning. To ensure this is consistent across schools, we built a system of support, and in every school that includes an innovative learning coach.

[00:38:40] This role aligns to the state's instructional technology resource teacher expectation and is intentionally designed to provide job-embedded support. Through coaching cycles, professional learning, and daily collaboration, they partner with teachers to bring the instructional model to life, supporting purposeful, balanced, and active use of technology. It is also an evolving role, and just as technology and classrooms have evolved, 25 years ago the focus for us was on access and really getting technology into classrooms. Today the focus is on impact and balance ensuring it is used intentionally to support active deeper learning the challenges

[00:39:19] have changed but the goal remains the same doing what is best for our students and to do this our innovative learning coaches partner with principals to develop a school innovation plan that personalizes support based on the needs of the school it looks at how technology is being used and the impact on student learning along with input from students families and the community From there, coaching and professional learning are aligned to support what teachers and students need most. In every school, digital citizenship and safety planning is a required expectation.

[00:39:53] It is embedded in each school's innovation plan and aligned to our safety requirements. This is where we support students, staff, and families in using technology responsibly with a focus on health, balance, and integrity. And here's what that looks like in practice.

[00:40:10] as we've heard concerns about overuse and the need for balance this work was developed in response and recently launched by students at our life ready innovation showcase tools like green time versus screen time and the pause self-check help students reflect in real time and make more intentional decisions about their technology use they also support teachers and families and guiding students and

helping them be more intentional with technology use this is digital citizenship and action, students building habits that support both learning and well-being.

[00:40:42] And while this work focuses on how technology supports teaching and learning, it is only possible with a strong foundation behind it. At this point, I'll turn it over to Brian Maddox, our Director of Technology, to share more about the systems and infrastructure that make this work possible. So, good afternoon, Mr. Chair, members of the board, Dr. Cashwell. So, first we start off

[00:41:16] with the Reliable Technology Foundation for Learning. So, at HCPS, we are committed to ensuring the technology systems supporting learning and teaching are safe reliable and innovative for over 25 years and richmond county public schools has provided innovative technology to support students and staff today our students access devices within a secure and flexible technology ecosystem allowing them to engage in modern learning experiences both in the classroom and beyond we understand that this is not about the device itself or the technology behind it it's about developing critical skills and preparing students for life in a digital world

[00:41:55] strong instruction requires a reliable technology foundation that is functional and safe the goal is simple technology works when it's needed without disruption ensuring teachers and students can stay focused on learning the complex enterprise systems technologies and access controls are managed behind the scenes by our specialized technology department team members who ensure everything is ready to support learning every day our approach to device assignment and access is intentional and aligned to student needs we provide a dedicated device

[00:42:33] for every student pre-k through 12 to support personalized learning and ensure equity of access we follow a progression designed to build digital literacy literacy and student responsibility pre-k through grade 5 devices are primarily used at school this guided structured experience supports our younger learners who benefit from hands-on instruction and strong adult support helping them build foundational skills for safe technology use in a very supported environment in our middle schools devices go home with the students this facilitates opportunities to complete assignments

[00:43:09] conduct appropriate research for school work and apply their learning in the home setting with clear expectations and support and in our high schools devices support independent anytime anywhere learning this aligns with preparing our students for college career and life readiness focusing on appropriate decision making with technology and for our families in need HCPS provides T-Mobile hotspots for internet access outside of school to adults with take-home devices which are filtered by our secure web filter. So the key objective, we want to provide

[00:43:47] a safe and secure learning ecosystem. So beyond the federal requirements and the state requirements, we have a critical responsibility to protect the privacy of students, staff, and division data. To ensure this, digital resources and tools are carefully vetted and reviewed before approval.

[00:44:04] this vetting process confirms they meet our standards for instruction data privacy and security we establish data privacy agreements with vendors and continuously monitor our systems to identify and respond to active and potential threats it's important to state cyber attacks are frequent and constant and while no technology environment is ever 100 secure all hcps devices systems are protected with appropriate security and access controls hcps technology partners with cybersecurity companies to monitor the IT environment, which is our devices, network, and systems, and to respond proactively

[00:44:40] to any potential cyber threats 24/7. While securing and maintaining systems is necessary to keep the environment operational, our goal is to manage the complexity of the security behind the scenes. This allows teachers and students to focus on learning in an engaging and innovative environment.

[00:44:58] Ultimately, protecting students, the division, and data is everyone's responsibility, and the division provides appropriate resources and training for staff and our students. With web access and the goal of protecting students in the digital world, HCPS meets federal legal requirements and Virginia's expectations for a safe, well-managed technology environment.

[00:45:23] HCPS is required to adhere to multiple key federal laws. FERPA, which requires us to protect student information, and COPA, which protects students under age 13 regarding access to digital resources. And to protect students online from harmful or inappropriate content and meet SIPA or legal requirements, Henrico County Public Schools uses Securely. As I mentioned before, a division-wide web filtering system for staff and students.

[00:45:48] All student devices are filtered, and web activity is monitored 24/7 by Securely for student safety, whether they're at home or at school on their device. And to talk a little bit more about Securely, our comprehensive digital safety tool.

[00:46:04] Securely Filter is a web content filtering solution purposely built for K-12 school divisions. It comes with age-appropriate, out-of-the-box filtering rules and policies designed specifically for educational environments. These rules are continuously updated by Securely to keep pace with the constantly changing nature of online content.

[00:46:22] As previously stated, the system not only meets federal SIPA requirements, but it's also flexible enough to meet local instructional needs. For example, we apply different filtering policies for elementary, for middle, and for high schools to support age-appropriate learning while maintaining safety.

[00:46:39] And like any technology solution, web filtering is not 100 percent foolproof. That is why student online safety is a shared responsibility, supported by technology, but strengthened by the active involvement of parents, guardians, teachers, staff, and our students all working together to promote responsible, safe behavior. Securely Classroom. We are currently piloting Securely Classroom in a couple schools in secondary. Securely Classroom is a tool that allows teachers to monitor, guide, and redirect students on their device used during instruction.

[00:47:12] It provides teachers with the ability to respond in the moment, reducing digital distractions, in helping students build healthy technology habits. Every feedback from staff and families has been overwhelmingly positive to date and we plan to expand implementation across secondary schools next year. Securely Home. To strengthen partnerships with parents and promote transparency, Henrico County Public Schools provides families with Securely Home features. So, Securely Home is a mobile application that parents and guardians can install on their personal device

[00:47:48] to view their students' web activity in real time, 24/7, on their students' HCPS-issued device. In addition, the app allows families to set scheduled downtime at home on the students' HCPS device, during which web access on the device's browser is paused, helping parents to reinforce healthy technology use at home. Securely Aware is our 24/7 student safety monitoring system for our HCPS-issued devices for both at school and at home. It analyzes student web activity by looking for indicators for self-harm, threats, or safety concerns. When concerning activity is

[00:48:26] detected, Securely's AI and trained monitoring staff assess the situation and, when necessary, they will notify HCPS safety staff and/or school administrators in real time, allowing us to intervene early and support students before anything escalates. And that takes us to responsible use and the code of conduct. So we want to emphasize our partnership with students and families to ensure technology is used responsibly and ethically. The student acceptable use policy found within the student code of conduct applies to all HCPS technology including devices, networks, and emerging tools like artificial intelligence at school and at home.

[00:49:06] We focus on positive use first. Technology should support learning, protect privacy, and reflect respectful behavior. Simultaneously, the policy clearly defines prohibitive activities such as cyber bullying illegal use bypassing controls accessing inappropriate content or misusing hcps devices this policy provides very clear expectations and shared accountability for students and families and last but definitely not least is the support staff that we have in our schools and also

[00:49:44] in the technology department so in our school buildings we provide in-person responsive support for our many systems devices and software and that's accomplished through our dedicated technology support technicians, and we call them TSTs. At secondary schools, we have a dedicated TST in every building. In elementary schools, we have one TST that's assigned up to three schools, and they rotate between them during the week as needed. Our TSTs are the first line of support.

[00:50:10] They promptly address technical issues in the school, and if needed, they escalate the issues very quickly for a resolution. These supports minimize disruptions to learning, allowing teachers to stay focused on instruction. And with that, I'll hand it back over to Courtney. thank you brian that foundation makes this work possible every day and as we move forward we'll

[00:50:35] can all right well thank you brian that foundation makes this work possible every day and as we move forward we'll continue building on it with a clear focus on learning and student well-being so here's

[00:51:12] what's next we will continue to learn we will continue to work with the department of assessment research and evaluation to review emerging research and use data and feedback to refine our approach and expectations. We will prioritize developmentally appropriate use, especially in the early grades, with a strong balance of digital and non-digital learning.

[00:51:35] And we will adjust as we learn, so technology supports active, purposeful learning while preparing students for what comes next. At the same time, we are strengthening our focus on digital wellness, aligned to recent state guidance and legislation.

[00:51:50] This includes integrating digital wellness across curriculum and programming, and using tools like securely classroom to help teachers support students in managing digital distractions and building healthy habits we are building on the student-led work we've started and strengthening school-based efforts and we are also developing a shared language around screen time balance and digital wellness for all stakeholders so we can better support our students and as for

[00:52:20] that shared language to have an impact for technology to be glitching during the technology presentation. And for that shared language to have an impact, it has to extend beyond our schools.

[00:52:53] We are partnering with families and community organizations, including Bridge Builders Academy, which provides virtual and in-person learning sessions designed to connect with families with

information and resources. We are expanding engagement through workshops, resources, and ongoing opportunities for feedback. And as the American Academy of Pediatrics reminds us, a child's digital world is a complex web connecting their individual needs their family their school and the technology itself because this isn't just home or school we must bring everyone to the table to find the right balance and refine our approach and expectations so it truly reflects the

[00:53:32] experiences of our students and families to bring clarity and consistency to this work we are bringing everything shared today together into one division-wide guide focused on purposeful balanced technology use as a part of this effort we will convene a group of stakeholders including students staff families superintendent advisories and community partners reflecting recent guidance from the american academy of pediatrics to build a more coordinated child-centered approach we will use the 5c's framework from the american academy of pediatrics in our guidance as well as research

[00:54:10] from our april 2026 literature review and updated expectations and standards from the virginia department of education our guide will establish updated clear developmentally appropriate expectations across grade levels including screen time considerations with close attention to elementary this will provide a consistent foundation and a shared vision for technology use in and beyond our schools ensuring we have what we need to collectively support our learners we plan to launch this guidance this summer and we will continue implementation and refinement

[00:54:46] throughout the next school year as we close i want to recognize the work across our division this work continues to evolve especially as technology changes rapidly and our students are surrounded by it every day we are proud to be a common sense certified district recognized for our work in implementation student safety and digital wellness along with recognition from the national school boards association and the national association of counties these recognitions reflect our commitment to getting this right for students and in the end this is about our students

[00:55:25] and empowering every henrico learner we know there are real concerns about overuse about balance and about getting this right and we share those concerns it's about making sure students have the skills to think the judgment to make good decisions and the support they need to navigate a world where technology is a part of everyday life that means balance that means intentional use that means meeting students where they are from a kindergartner just beginning to a student ready to graduate and giving them what they need when we do this well we are not just preparing students for school we are preparing them for life from the expectations of the profile of a virginia

[00:56:05] graduate and the promise of our mission to ensure every student is ready for life and a successful future it's about them and we owe it to every single student to get this right thank you for your time and your leadership and we are happy to take any questions you may have. Thank you all so much for the presentation and all the work that got put into this. I think this might be the longest presentation that we've had just in terms of slide length and so I want to recognize that the work that it took to put into this was was tremendous and it was done in a tight turnaround

[00:56:40] time after we made the ask back around I think it was student government day so we truly appreciate the hard work and on top of everything else that you all must do for the school division adding this on your plate is we would truly do appreciate it so so thank you a ton for putting all of this together um i'll start with my colleagues though um mrs shea would you like to start us off sure i'll try to keep it brief

um then redirect later if if something doesn't get covered um thank you thank you all this is um as you pointed out many times this is a changing landscape um and i think

[00:57:19] about when i first came on board with henrico versus where we are now and how how different it is and like you said miss busting it was about access at one point and now it's about impact um so um first of all i just want to say how excited i am about securely classroom this is something i've heard from and had many conversations with dr cashwell but heard from parents and staff about and even when I was in my classroom longed to have I think that immediate ability to redirect and create accountability but also scaffolding teaching

[00:57:56] appropriate computer habits as many times as you can tell a middle schooler you need to stay on task sometimes like developmentally it is addictive right and so being able to immediately redirect I am hoping will have a significant positive impact on our students' screen consumption, but also our teachers' ability to deliver instruction while the laptop screens are up.

[00:58:23] So I'm really, really excited about this for next year. So thank you for your team's thoughtful use in piloting it. I know it was piloted before with mixed reviews, and so thanks for giving it another try. And I'm really glad to hear the positive takeaways there.

[00:58:41] Throwing back to my, I won't say how long ago I started with Hemrico, but I remember when I was first with Hemrico, there was very, which predated Dr. Cashwell, I will say. So this is not on her. But there was very much kind of a philosophy.

[00:59:00] We have invested in these devices. We have purchased these devices. If I walk in the room for a classroom observation, I expect to see them used. Have we moved past that mentality? Absolutely. And, you know, I share with you, Ms. J., that history and experience.

[00:59:17] And early on, we started with a technology integration progression chart. The next iteration, we went to the teaching innovation progression chart. And now we are on the Hemrico Learner Profile progression. And that's where we're seeing the need for that recalibration and looking at the developmentally appropriate use to make sure that we do level set. But at the end of the day, it's not about the technology. It's about the learning and for our students. And we know that's where that shared language and vision for what that looks like is critical. I really appreciate your kind of reflection there. You know, we know great instruction can happen on paper. Poor instruction

[00:59:55] can happen on paper. Great instruction can happen on a computer. Poor instruction can happen on a computer right so looking at our real focus is how do we get great instruction to students in a way that is developmentally appropriate but also like interactive right we're not sitting and getting anymore and so being able to utilize multiple modes I loved the picture on the very first slide of it looks like a middle school or an elementary school classroom where you've got you know a student reading to themselves a student on a computer a student building, right? Multipliable modes happening at the same time in our classroom.

[01:00:36] For parents who may have a concern about either the quantity or quality of technology being consumed in their child's classroom, where's a good contact point for them to share their concerns or have a discussion to have a deeper understanding of what's happening in the classroom?

[01:00:54] Sure. I think, you know, we always ask parents to start with a classroom teacher because we want want to bring awareness obviously to the feedback from the parent about what their child's

experiencing in the classroom every day we also welcome parents to share that with their administrators in their school ILCs a variety of people at the school level and then of course always welcome feedback at the central office level as well so the Department of School leadership in the Department of Learning field feedback calls all the time from parents and we welcome that because we really want to know what the perceptions are of the learning experiences through the eyes of not only our students and our teachers, but our parents as well.

[01:01:34] - Excellent, thank you. I think anytime we broad brush in general, but especially in a division this large with this many diverse learning experiences, I think we lose nuance. And so for the parents to be able to have specific conversations about what their student is experiencing in class, I think is really helpful for all of the stakeholders.

[01:01:56] So I appreciate that. - What evolution have we seen in Henrico? You know, so coming out of COVID, obviously the pendulum on technology swung very far to one side out of necessity because of where we were.

[01:02:11] What evolution have you seen in Henrico in, you know, those last five or so years that have gotten us more to kind of a centric place with technology? - So, you know, I think it's multifaceted.

[01:02:26] I do think that following the pandemic, many of the resources that we were able to purchase as educators all looked digital, right? And that was really to meet the needs of our students in a variety of ways. So I can give you an example about one of the products we use, Newzella.

[01:02:44] Newzella is a platform where students are able to access non-fiction text and they can access every non-fiction text you can well imagine. This was brought out of a need. I mean, our digital resource companies that we partner with saw that it's much easier to buy one platform for a digital resource than it is to buy thousands and thousands and thousands of books and keep those books updated.

[01:03:08] So I think when we are procuring our digital resources that supplement our curriculum, or looking at any product that's available to us, while 10 years ago we were looking at resources and we were looking at lots of hard books, I think just the landscape of the educational resources have mostly all shipped to digital as well.

[01:03:27] So you see very different resources being used in classrooms than you would 10 or 15 years ago, and that's just by nature of what's out there for us to procure and purchase. That doesn't mean we don't have access to those other items in our classrooms as well.

[01:03:42] We do, but I just think that anymore when you're looking to really supplement your curriculum, most of what is available to us as educators is digital in some format. - All right, I'm almost done. I'm wrapping up, I'm wrapping up comments, kind of. All right, so I think when I think about this, it's really thinking about, you know, what are the necessary guardrails to ensure technology is being used responsibly and value added and thinking about creating those guardrails for both our educators and for our learners.

[01:04:14] I think it's twofold. I mean, I think we've got the home component too, which makes it threefold, but under our kind of our direct influence are those two pieces. And so it sounds like that's a lot of what your PL is digging into.

[01:04:30] And you shared a lot of the school-based resources with ILCs and creating framework there. Is this part of a PL strand, for example, that they access during their summer learning opportunities?

[01:04:46] Can you give me just a little bit more on how, as a division, we not only assess within the school, but kind of push out that model to our educators. - Absolutely. So we really look at the total learning landscape and what those specific needs of our staff are.

[01:05:04] And this year we're gonna use the task force and all of our experience from this academic year, the continued feedback from across our different stakeholder groups to really bring this updated guidance together. And that guidance will be what we focus in on during our summer learning series with teachers.

[01:05:20] We are prioritizing the purposeful and balanced use. We are prioritizing those reflective questions, really making sure that we are maximizing the use of the technology in the classrooms, again, in the ways that best meet the needs of the learners. And that really informs what we do throughout the year.

[01:05:36] That's also where the school innovation plan comes into play. And you asked the question about parent feedback and what is the avenue for that. And that's where we do that balance between district level and what we see as a large scale need versus the site base. very personalized based on the needs of the teachers and the students and what we are hearing from our parents and families based on the experiences they are seeing at home and beyond school so that really will it has set up the Department of Innovations year for the 26 27 school year we have a lot of work to do but we are also committed through all of the PL series this summer we're gonna have a standard base that we are using on how we define purposeful and

[01:06:15] balanced use how we define screen time in Henrico County Public Schools and And we're also sharing that developmentally appropriate progression so that we all, regardless of the level and support for students, we really understand what that PK through 12 progression looks like, why it looks like that, and how we come together as a community to make sure that happens on a consistent basis.

[01:06:37] Excellent. Well, that dovetails perfectly into my last question. So when we look at this HTPS guidance document, I think, as a board member, I think it'll be really helpful for you know to have it in one place you know as an access point is this guidance for staff parents students combination thereof we imagine it for all and this is where we really want to do that recalibration and level set so that all stakeholders have a common vision and understanding of what the progression is what technologies we have available what specific tools we have with the intended purpose of those tools if we have any time-based

[01:07:13] expectations set with them that we are very clear about that so again we can work together to monitor and make sure that is consistent across classrooms I'm really excited about this I'm excited about having a common language and kind of a common we have a lot of common expectations but to have it in one place where it's really spelled out and accessible for different stakeholders I'm excited about that if there is a stakeholder a teacher a parent a student who feels really passionately about this and would like to give feedback to the task force or participate in the task force, where should they go? Who should they contact?

[01:07:50] Courtney Bostain, Director of Innovation. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. I'd like to note that Mrs. Kinsella arrived, so glad to have you here. Would you like to go

next? Sure. And I'd just like to say I never miss a meeting, but I was actually celebrating my senior who received Henrico County Community Service Award today and I was not gonna miss that. He had some service done with Henrico Police Department so very proud. I missed the presentation so excuse me if I'm repeating you know some things that were

[01:08:27] already said. When I reflect on the K-12 experience for my children as well as in my time of service as well as you know trying to weigh the pros and cons of technology and where they're most appropriate speak to if you could just please highlight maybe what was said during the presentation about k2 because as a parent and as a school board member I'm so concerned about the reading the writing those connections the social aspect of those connections in our

[01:09:05] classrooms like mrs. Shea said we can't control what goes on at home you know in terms of screen time and technology but I just think those interactions are so important in our classroom. So if you could just speak to me about K2 specifically or K5. Yes and we talked about the need for NPK2 our work to really be limited and guided and in 3-5 structured and purposeful and how we use our digital learning integration standards from the Virginia Department education to help us define what that looks like. The intent in our early grades

[01:09:43] is that it's short, purposeful experiences balanced with hands-on and non-digital learning. And then in 3-3-5, that's where we start to see more structured and purposeful with opportunities for our students to research, create, and collaborate. Knowing that the SOLs begin in third grade, right, on technology. And I, you know, reflecting back on my elementary experience as a mom and talking to a lot of other moms and constituents over time I mean it just concerns me right the the amount I believe of technology used at the elementary level

[01:10:21] um if for nothing else it was in preparation for the SOLs right for the beginning third grade even though there's the opt-out but um that troubles me just the thought of you know we're gonna expose our children to this technology too much of it and you know they're distractible and anxiety and all the things that technology brings I don't know how do we balance that miss Bostein it's a valid concern and we are currently looking at that landscape carefully and we did also talk about that we know in early learning and brain development that it's strengthened

[01:10:58] through that human interaction oral language movement play and those hands-on experiences thinking and writing and they are critical and so we're convening a task force and we are especially looking at PK through two to really see what is most appropriate to make sure we do have a balance of digital and non-digital in the lower elementary grades but we also couple that with wanting to make sure getting into that third grade experience and testing that they do have the technical literacies that they need to be successful in those environments but we are thoughtfully and very carefully looking at

[01:11:31] pk into okay and then of course that you know just the reading and the writing yes um k-12 right not just i'm not just the elementary focus i want to be clear on that that the reading and the writing and while a screen is great for a lot of people it doesn't serve everyone i mean i love paper but i'm old i'm also older but i also know the benefits of writing it highlighting it reading it and um i don't know i just hope we would keep that in mind and definitely gather feedback from

[01:12:05] our secondary students who possibly still had the benefit and you know remember worksheets and things that you know weren't broken in my opinion i just think the pendulum has swung so far the other way that i'm grateful that we're having this conversation about balance and what's developmentally

appropriate and throughout all of that making sure it is centered on our students absolutely thank you so much thank you thank you Mrs. Kinsella uh Mrs. Atkins I could hear the

[01:12:43] passion in your voice I just want to acknowledge I'm super proud of how you presented today I also agree with the next steps in developing division-wide guidance there's great work and thoughtfulness in the presentation and acknowledging that we are learning too I think we should pause for that because this is still new in my opinion in education and because technology consistently evolves we will consistently learn parents will

[01:13:19] consistently learn so if the school division is learning and parents are learning that means our children are learning too so I just wanted to pause and say that out loud I also think as we continue to embrace this ever-evolving thing. I don't have a word for it yet. I guess I could say system when it comes to technology as it changes. In my opinion, I do think the heaviest challenge in public education is having the

[01:13:53] balanced approach. It is not the technology. It is not the books. It's heavy because we're balancing a moving target. And I think that when we think about high tech, it's about adding value to instruction when we think about high touch that is reading books writing it's the physical aspect because we know when we're moving physically it also helps the brain and so how do we help the brain from the mental capacity with technology but with a physical space when we know movement helps the brain

[01:14:32] especially in children so I'm wondering if we all agree that technology is going to help children become life ready taking the test helps but on the flip of that is the harm and I think we should openly and honestly talk about the harm too visually eyes will change and so digest that so the more that you you look at the screen over time humans bodies change and adapt to your

[01:15:10] environment our bodies change to adapt to environment pupils in your eyes will change and thinking really through this guidance document on not just the mental capacity and the mental development but think through the physical as well there's expenses to buying glasses so as you're developing this document I'd like to see us consider all the elements not just the mental but the physical as well and then the other part is I'm very delighted about a consistent approach

[01:15:45] something that is equitably used across the division and touching every person that touches the division from central office to the to our communities I do have a couple questions around lesson plans and developing curriculum I want to know as it's developed is there sort of a checklist or rubric or something that helps our leaders our educators determine is this lesson good for a conversation is this lesson great for technology is this lesson good for

[01:16:24] hands-on is there a checklist so that when a lesson plan is developed it could be compared to something that helps that person think through maybe this assignment is best as a conversation we are very conditioned in society to immediately go to digital out of convenience and that's just the truth sometimes it's faster it's easier but is there something that folks can use to compare when they're doing the lesson planning to determine the best approach I think those conversations Mrs. Atkins happened mostly in the actual schools when the grade levels are planning together with their coaches so it could

[01:17:01] be their reading specialist who's sitting at the table with them or their ILC and I think that can be part of our guide as well to really make sure that as you are carefully integrating that instructional model and you're designing your lessons that as you are looking at your standards and the curriculum and then you're looking at what activities might support that learning what would be the best means to get

there and to your point I think we can all admit that technology is the easiest thing sometimes to pull but it's not always the best thing to pull and so that I think as we work this summer and as Courtney teams as teams out with the ILC's and you know just we're all

[01:17:40] embracing this summer professional learning and as we're developing the guide I think that those are definitely the kind of conversations that we need to have around instruction absolutely and through our instructional model we have those elements of reflect and respond and so we're thoughtfully going to work those types of reflective questions in so it is a part of that planning process I'm so happy to hear that because it's not the first thought sometimes because out of convenience so having just a simple checklist helps with that lesson planning the other question I have is I think I heard a statement so keep me honest and that statement was technology must not be

[01:18:20] used to regulate emotions I want to be very clear and understanding what that means. Can you explain that? Yes so you know what we know is that sometimes students experience experience emotionalities in the classroom for whatever reason and we want to make sure that teachers are equipped to handle those moments and that school counselors are equipped to handle those moments and that a child is not just being placed on the computer to regulate or to calm down. That might be one strategy that might work for one student but we just want to make sure that that's not the only strategy that's used may I offer

[01:18:57] some guidance absolutely of course sometimes technology can be helpful in regulating emotion so that statement of must not be used I would ask that you alter that for many reasons but I'll just give you that one thank you the other thought that I had in the presentation it shared that curated resources would be used can you share some of those curated resources give me an idea of what they are for for to supplement the instruction oh yes ma'am

[01:19:32] so when you think about elementary we have actively learn we have I ready we have a new Zella we have pebble go and each one of those resources and elementary do something different so like I ready is a diagnostic tool that we use to help place our students appropriately. We know their reading strengths, their reading weaknesses. As I mentioned earlier, Newzella is a product that has hundreds and thousands of nonfiction text, and PebbleGo is a platform that we have that teachers can use to provide read-alouds to students.

[01:20:06] And so it's just a variety of resources, both in elementary and in secondary, and as the teachers are planning their lessons and they're looking at what the learning intentions are and the standards that they're to meet for the day they plan their lessons and then they carefully look to see which ones of those products should be pulled in for use during that particular day and all of these products are available they are vetted for instructional quality content privacy so we support that curated list to support our teachers would have an opportunity to personalize based on student needs using the resources that are already in the curriculum and if they want to use

[01:20:45] something that sits outside of that we do have a process in place to make sure that we find that balance and that we do vet every resource that our students are using in the classroom that's good news I was wondering about that because sometimes a teacher may use something that's outside of that list I'm not throwing shade anywhere but I just want to make sure that's known and so to understand that what the resources that are offered is what suggested it because they've been vetted will that be a part of the guide absolutely and reminding all staff of that and we have a Henrico digital resource menu where all of those

[01:21:23] resources are publicly available so anyone can see what has been vetted and approved can you share with me where that's located on the site you don't have to do it right now but just an email or something like that at some point I'd love to take a look at that and then also I want to thank Mrs.

[01:21:39] Concello because reading and writing is on my brain whenever we talk about technology and so I appreciate you bringing that up I think balancing technology with reading and reading comprehension I had the opportunity Mrs. Gonzalo was there as well at the librarian appreciation celebration on yesterday and we both were expressing how important our librarians are and I think this conversation is timely because I would like us to bridge books and technology there is a perception that we have to have technology or we

[01:22:16] have to have a book I think this heavy balance this heavy weight we're feeling maybe because we're thinking we have to choose one or the other I like for us to find a way to be a bridge and have them both at top of mind so when there is something being taught it's not you pull out your laptop only it's would you like a laptop or a book. The offer itself will lends itself, I think, to better reading and better reading comprehension. I also want to know that our librarians

[01:22:52] are a part of this strategic discussion. I really think it's essential that our librarians give insight into this because they curate the books, they understand what our children are wanting to read, and so if they can be a part of of this conversation, especially tied to technology, that might be a great way to bridge both.

[01:23:16] I'd like to hear your thoughts on that approach. - Absolutely, and librarians and ILCs are both serving within the Department of Innovation, and we have done a lot of work together this year, really around media literacy and supports for students, and so they absolutely will be instrumental in helping not only design the work, but support it with our innovative learning coaches in the schools.

[01:23:39] - Great, and then I know we're about to talk about environmental sustainability, technology plays a role in that space as well. And so with that being said, I also think, I would suggest pulling in, whether it's Susan Moore, Eric Byers, into this discussion.

[01:23:57] This is not one piece of a pie. I think you have several slices. One being, of course, our educators curriculum, lesson planning, the other spaces are librarians and understanding what they curate is based off of students and what they're attracted to, and then bring in our environmentalists, our specialists, because they are also knowledgeable about what students care about around the environment, and that is tied to technology in some ways.

[01:24:26] So really expanding upon as we move and learn, 'cause we are learning, please bring all different aspects into this conversation. So with that being said, I just wanna say well done. outside of the physical presentation that we are watching, the three of you did an excellent job in showing your passion around this topic, and that should be acknowledged.

[01:24:52] So thank you so much. - Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. Mr. Young. - Thank you, Chair Irvin. I wanna thank the team for this presentation. It's clear that a lot of thought has gone into building the framework around technology that is intentional, balanced, and aligned to teaching and learning.

[01:25:11] I appreciate the focus on student-centered learning, digital citizenship and making sure technology is used with purpose and not just presence and what stood out to me the most was the active learning versus the passive use are we educating or helping our parents understand the importance of that

are we are we using anything to communicate the importance of active versus passive once they get home because I think that's still important once they leave school what our children are doing absolutely and you'll see that reflected in the work in the ILC school innovation plan and that focus on digital citizenship and part of our commitment in working with common sense and our common sense

[01:25:50] seal is the commitment to doing just that with our families as partners and we know that the percentage especially with that passive use increases outside of school and so we definitely have to be partners in that work and we are committed to continuing that as we move forward because we really want to see less passive and really stay in that active space we were also able to partner with our family and community engagement department last year to do some bridge builder sessions on technology usage and um as we move forward through next school year we'll also utilize that resource and our media and communication department obviously to make

[01:26:25] sure that we're um you know spreading our work far and wide yeah i think it's important i won't i won't say what um disability my daughter may or may not have but i've come to see that technology helps her. That's right. So we're trying to get more to the active side as opposed to just the YouTube side. So I think it's important that we educate other parents on that as well. And speaking of parents, I will admit it. I did not know what securely was, but I was getting the emails of my daughter's use, and I just pulled it up up here. It tells me every single thing that my child has

[01:27:04] researched, studied, what she's done on her laptop. I think that's extremely important for parents to have I'm ashamed that I didn't click on it is I thought it was just another email yeah yeah so I do I do like that um can you break down with securely classroom is I know chair Irvin said that another school division may have access teachers may have access to the students laptops while they're in class is this something similar absolutely so it's that real-time line of sight into what our students are doing and it gives teachers the ability to push content to the laptops it can freeze students on tabs so we know one of the things we often

[01:27:44] hear about is digital distraction and it's a way for us to not only have line of sight in real time but they actually get reports once the class is over to also see all of the places that the students visited so we feel like that's that third piece we have the piece with our filter and securely home and now we have that last piece of the support triangle where our teachers also have that insight, and we can use it for real-time conversations and support with our students. And just as a reminder, we piloted that in several secondary schools.

[01:28:13] It's rolling out to all next year. Okay, perfect. Thank you for that. Now, I want to shift gears just a little bit and help me understand, is there a requirement for our educators to use technology? That's the first part of the question. And then what are we seeing with our veteran teachers, our 25-plus-year teachers with technology as opposed to our maybe our recent grad teachers what are we what are we seeing with the technology use you know I mean I don't have any like clear data that I can put down in front of you I have lots of formative data as that we're all walking through classrooms you know I think that I think we see all

[01:28:51] of our teachers from our you know more seasoned teachers to our newer teachers using technology and I think a lot of that is because they do have those resources available to them and they're taught how to use those resources when their planning so I don't ever worry about people not using technology but you know as we have all talked about today we do want to make sure that we have

guardrails up for those for that technology use and that it's used purposefully in the classroom as of right this minute we have recommended times that we have for all of our digital products right so like I ready in

[01:29:28] elementary school that's a diagnostic test and when that test is going on we recommend about 15 to 20 minutes maybe twice or three times a week to take that assessment and then I ready also has some opportunities for teachers to push out lessons to students that take the student where they performed on their diagnostic and then work through that in the classroom and so we have you know recommended times for that as well we see it a lot in elementary school in our small group instruction a teachers might be you know doing direct instruction with one group of students and then we have other students who are working independently on their computer and that is what we really want to make sure

[01:30:05] that we're putting those guardrails on that there's that teachers understand that throughout a school day what might be developmentally appropriate what might be you know opportunities to pull the best resource which may be technology maybe something else and so that's what the task force will all unpack but that is available to teachers now and I'll also add to that our requirement is high quality instructional practices in our classrooms and so you'll see again in the IOC school innovation plans that's where the personalized plans each year really come into play where we really look for the high quality uses and that active student-centered use we build

[01:30:41] lighthouse models and so we're working with all staff in the school to have that peer-to-peer job embedded professional learning so that really is our stance on that and I just wanted to provide some insight to your question related to technology use and perhaps whether it's veteran teachers or brand new teachers and I think there was a time anecdotally when I would visit classrooms years ago where you might see teachers who were newer in the profession more often utilizing maybe the Promethean board or the tools in an innovative way I don't think that's true anymore particularly not in Henrico County and I think that's

[01:31:17] kudos to the team to our ILCs to our incredible professional learning team I i think we saw a video that i'm remembering not long ago here in the boardroom where one of our art teachers merle james was um and who identifies as a veteran teacher and has shared that proudly and she's fantastic and she had worked with the ilc in her building and while the kids had created a hands-on art project they had worked with digital content to make it come to life and i I think those kinds of powerful examples

[01:31:54] of best practice technology use are more frequent now than they ever have been across all content areas. That was art elementary. I can think of examples across all content areas where there's a purposeful blending of that hands-on learning and instruction with technology as a tool that makes sense for that moment in time.

[01:32:16] And so I would just say that's a big difference I've seen, and I think that's really due to the purposeful work of our teams in providing that quality professional learning. And of course, you know, where those tools that may have some sort of a requirement in daily use that are related to assessment preparation or a particular learning objective are limited and guided in the minutes that they're prescribed, you know, I think the work the team is going to do with the guide and tightening up guardrails and guidelines will only further, you know, our ability to ensure consistency of practice across the school system.

[01:32:54] - Thank you for that, Dr. Caswell. Two more questions, and they may be in and out. I wrote down some things as I was going. At what grade do they learn how to type now? - Well, they learn how to

type even in kindergarten.

[01:33:12] - But we hear the iPads. - Yes, but yes, I mean, they're learning on their iPads or their devices, they're typing for different things. Like even to Mrs. Kinsella's point earlier, Our kindergarten students and our first grade students, they take a vowels assessment, which is a phonemic awareness and letters and sounds, and fluency and comprehension, all that is done on their computer.

[01:33:35] But we do have a formal typing program that we have in third, fourth, and fifth grade. And we mostly implemented that several years ago when the SOL came, when the fifth grade test, when the students were required to start typing as a part of their assessment.

[01:33:51] I mean, that wasn't the only reason why we did it. Obviously, we knew students needed the typing skills, but that was one gap that we realized when that test came online, that there was no formal typing instruction. In addition, we've had some ILCs work on typing instruction over the years. - Through our elementary resource, our ILCs serve in that innovation rotation, and part of that is where we start.

[01:34:13] And even in kindergarten, starting with a printout of a keyboard and working on home keys, but that is where that direct instruction takes place. allow Ms. Kinsella to redirect real quick. - Thank you, Mr. Young. So knowing, hearing what you just said about elementary, and that was a great question, Mr. Young.

[01:34:31] Keeper, 'cause I'm thinking about so many people that I know that still type like that, right? And they're still in K-12 Henrico schools. So we've got the resources in the elementary school, like you just said.

[01:34:46] So what are we doing to close the gap, if you will, for upper-level students, right? Like, what are we doing for those students? Because they're not life-ready in, really, in the world we live in, if they're just still typing like that.

[01:35:01] - They're behind. - Absolutely, and that's a great question, and something that, at the end of each academic year, we work with our ILCs in elementary to partner with the middle school ILCs to support not only the articulation, but that is something we absolutely need to consider as we work on the guidance and the task force, and we will incorporate into the ILC school innovation planning for next academic year in secondary to see where those opportunities are and make sure we're providing resources that support all students with typing middle school and high school when you say secondary because you just specifically mentioned middle school okay so both middle school and high school yes fantastic thank

[01:35:38] you so much for that redirect no that would that would be amazing thank you um miss Kinsella and I was thinking the same thing um along those lines with the pointer finger typing which i'm guessing kids can type better with their thumbs now right like i think that's a real thing um but i think that's everything that i have thank you all for putting this presentation together yes it was long it was informative it felt like homework at home when i was going through it so but thank you so much i this was this was valuable i work in a in a corporate 500 company technology is going nowhere that's right and and i know we need balance i kept hearing

[01:36:17] balance I heard 25 years ago access was the problem now we're worrying about impact and balance but technology isn't going anywhere it's replacing jobs so we still have to continue to push the needle just a little bit further when it comes to technology being responsible being balanced it's a tough job I'm sure it's gonna go up and down throughout the years but I feel like everybody on this board is on is

on board with accepting that it's gonna go up and down while we try to figure out what's working and what's not working on So I'm excited.

[01:36:45] Hopefully we get this every year. Excited about the summer. If you need a board member for the guidance, let me know. I'd be more than happy to join. But Mr. Chair, back to you. Mrs. Atkins had a redirect. I did. And in listening to the conversation, I also had an idea regarding typing, which is aligned to writing.

[01:37:08] I'm wondering if this has a cost, perhaps. but when you actually think about the old typewriters the sound the movement is very different from the movement on a laptop so the cognitive i'm not going to go into that so i'm wondering if it would be wise or make sense to try to procure some of the old typewriters especially for individuals that think differently.

[01:37:46] The old typewriter will allow the ASDF/JKL semi-cold sounds as you press with those cognitive skills. So I just wanted to give you that as an idea. The second thing I wanted to ask was around librarians, and do they have a leadership academy?

[01:38:08] If so, if so, I am wondering during that academy, would they have the opportunity to have a workshop with the technology teams to better understand how technology will progress so that they can stay on task or ahead so as this technology evolves books pretty much stay stagnant you know mystery murder comedy but they will never go away either

[01:38:41] because they are attractive to humans and so in that workshop or academy if they have one i'd love to see a pairing of the two so that our librarians can stay up to speed with technology as well i think that helps our children with reading and reading comprehension too chair irving thank you for the read all right thank you mr seconds yes thank you and again i reiterate my thanks for all of this i i um i remember back in the early spring i started receiving emails about technology usage from constituents in my community, and in

[01:39:18] particular about testimony that a gentleman named Jared Horvath gave to Congress, specifically the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. He is a neuroscience scientist with a PhD in it and a former educator, K-12 teacher, and I had not seen the testimony so I went to go look at it, and I think that kind of informed why I came to my colleagues and said I think, you know it would be responsible of us as good public servants to be proactive in our approach to this if our communities have concerns rather than reactive later on and so I'm very glad that this came to fruition and was able

[01:39:57] to be hopefully useful for our constituents I do want to read you'll humor me the executive summary which is not long of the testimony that he gave and then I want to kind of discuss some things off of that it says over the past two decades the cognitive development of children across much of the developed world has stalled and in many domains reversed. Literacy, numeracy, attention, and higher-order reasoning have declined despite increased school attendance and expanded public investment. One major structural change distinguishes today's classrooms from those of prior generations: the rapid and largely

[01:40:33] unregulated expansion of educational technology, ed tech. Digital devices now occupy a significant share of instructional time, assessment, homework, and student attention, the available evidence from international assessments, large-scale academic studies, and meta-analyses show that

increased classroom screen time exposure is generally associated with weaker learning outcomes, not stronger ones. In narrow circumstances, tightly constrained adaptive practice and remediation, digital tools can support surface level skill acquisition, and in most core academic contexts, screen slow learning, reduce depth of understanding, and weaken retention.

[01:41:10] This is not primarily a question of teacher quality, student motivation, or access to device. It reflects a structural mismatch between how human cognition develops and how digital platforms are engineered to capture attention, fragment focus, and accelerate task switching.

[01:41:29] So I read that because I think it's something that I have noticed over time, just with my own students, and I think just trying to pay attention to the way the world is going and I think it's parents have a lot of concerns about this because I think we just we created this thing and then just threw it out into the world without ever testing it without ever saying is this what's actually best for students we just had an entrenched interest of the technology that was created and then we just put it in schools in many cases divisions because I saw the 88 of public schools employ one-to-one devices

[01:42:07] my understanding is that in many cases a lot of divisions around the country were actually giving the devices for free initially seeing that if we give you buy-in you will use our product moving forward and not only will it be hard for you to not use it because of the pushback and early technology adoption and how people viewed it at the time it would be hard to switch away and i think it's important to think about that in context of the technology i um we talked about the the difference between active use and passive usage and i think that those are worthwhile but i

[01:42:45] But I think also that active usage does not mean that it has to be used all the time. And passive usage, which I've had some parents complain to me about certain things that are done to assess, especially elementary school students, are often very repetitive and they feel stunted the development of higher achieving students in a way that's not sufficient to their liking.

[01:43:11] I think, you know, we heard and there's even a report from the Organization of Economic co-development um cooperation and development my apologies it says digital technology is linked to better student performance when computer software and internet connections help to increase study time and practice and i think the way that means is you know learning improves when students spend more time learning but i think as john hattie taught us all of our education folks know john hattie when used appropriately literally any tool is going to improve student performance

[01:43:50] so it's not just a computer it's it's anything flash cards books you know devices that are created out of like milk cartons can literally make kids learn better if if used appropriately but my concern with some of the rhetoric is just oh we need to use this thing right and we need to make sure that the kids are educated on using this thing right but i think you know expecting students to appropriately use a thing that they're engrossed with and consumes their time is not a recipe for success. I think that's why we banned the cell phones and rightfully every almost everybody in the entire country has determined that cell phones

[01:44:27] do not belong in schools. Any sort of smart device does not belong in schools because the kids cannot control themselves. I tell my students that all the time I don't blame you for being addicted to this because how could you not be when you're when you're that young? How could you not be addicted to this? And I think when you look at assessments of the amount of time that children spend on devices there was a survey that showed students age 18 to 20 sorry, 8 to 18 utilize digital technologies, and these values are in

per week, 10 hours and 44 minutes playing video games during the week, 10 hours, 2 minutes watching television or film clips,

[01:45:06] also YouTube, 8 hours, 14 minutes scrolling through social media, 7 hours, 32 minutes listening to music, 3 hours, 25 minutes doing homework, 2 hours, 5 minutes doing schoolwork, 1 hour, 14 minutes reading for pleasure, 52 minutes creating digital content, and 14 minutes writing for pleasure.

[01:45:23] so what i see from that is that left to their own devices kids will naturally do things that are not learning because why wouldn't you right like every all those other things are incredibly interesting i don't blame you know a 10 year old for wanting to play video games or wanting to watch youtube clips of their favorite nfl player instead of doing schoolwork and what i notice in my students is left to their own devices they will do most things other than schoolwork and i do think that that, like, Securely Classroom will help. I use Papara, and it's great, but I think it's fighting

[01:46:00] a problem that maybe doesn't need to exist, right? So the way that I view this, and, you know, my colleagues may not agree, but I think that, for me, the one-to-one devices is actually the problem. It's not the computers. I'm not calling for us to be Luddites and get rid of the technology or rid of the investment for the computers, but I think the mindset of, I have my own device, rather than this is something that is perhaps a classroom set and I go and get when we need it is perhaps a better path because it recognizes the technology can

[01:46:36] be used appropriately if we narrow it down to specific instances and kids growing up only viewing it as this thing is a tool that I have to use because we can't access it with a book because books can't be updated in real time and then I put it away and then we go to do something else because I know again with my students as soon as they're done with anything if they finish faster than other students they're on to doing something that is not schoolwork on that device and then you're having to sit there on a program to try to keep them on task with something else and then you're fighting a constant battle that perhaps doesn't even need to be there so I think creating a mindset shift can be

[01:47:14] can be extremely important just how you view the thing like kids who will come through the school system not having phones by the time they get to secondary it'll be easier because I never had my phone in school and I think you know I'm not anti technology by any means because it does have important places and it does exist in the world but I think reframing the way in which it is given to students in a one-to-one format all the evidence really does suggest that that needs to change and we need to really rethink the way that we engage with it because I just again I think back to when I was growing up in school and we would go to the computer labs every week or so and I never had a laptop I didn't

[01:47:54] have a laptop maybe till I was a junior in high school and I knew how to use computers better than these kids who use them every single day for multiple hours today. So using the thing repeatedly does not make you better at it, and I think that is worth considering and developing a healthier relationship with and viewing it as a tool rather than just this thing that consumes all of your time. And I, you know, I greatly appreciate all the work that's put into this because it's important and it's important understanding the context of the situation that we're under with state mandates for technology usage and how we're going about doing it and the thoughtful work that that we're doing with our teams, but I think fundamentally

[01:48:32] when we're trying to fix something when there's a bigger structural problem at play, and I do think that that's the one-to-one usage and not the computers per se, but just how the relationship has

developed with them over time.

[01:48:47] So I thank y'all immensely for this. It was a lot of work. I have told a lot of constituents and parents and whatnot to tune in and make sure that they're aware of this because I want us to be, know that we are responsive to concerns and we take them seriously.

[01:49:05] And we always wanna take a proactive approach like we've done on many things rather than a reactive approach. And I think that this is just the beginning of this conversation rather than any sort of end point. So thank you. - Thank you. - And I just, to each board member, thank you for your feedback, your questions, and your continued interest in this topic.

[01:49:22] And as was stated, the work continues and evolves. We'll continue to keep the board abreast as the guide is developed. And I really look forward to digging into some of the dilemmas and challenges with our advisory groups, particularly our students and our teachers.

[01:49:39] They are so insightful always as we think about how to grapple with and approach some of these challenges. So I know their input will be invaluable as well. Thank you all. - Thank you. - All right, our next presentation is an update on efforts related to energy and sustainability across Henrico County Public Schools.

[01:50:03] And we have Susan Moore and Samantha Hudson here to provide us that update. - Good afternoon, Chairman Irving, board members and Dr. Cashwell.

[01:50:19] Today we will be providing an energy and sustainability update. And presenting with me today is Samantha Hudson, our sustainability division director. The previous position of energy manager has changed a bit.

[01:50:34] So Sam will start us off with a quick overview of the position and the supporting staff. - Thank you, Susan, and good afternoon, Chairman Irving, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell.

[01:50:51] The sustainability division was established in 2024 and built upon the county and HCPS's foundational energy program that has been in place for over a decade. The division includes three full-time staff, one part-time staff, and a part-time intern position.

[01:51:13] The sustainability division is shared between the Department of General Services, Department of Public Utilities, and Henrico County Public Schools, with each providing a portion of the funding for the division operations. The division strives to be collaborative, innovative, and to think outside the box with our work.

[01:51:36] Through our programs and activities, we envision ourselves as a model for sustainable practices, accelerating the use and adoption of greener technology, ensuring equitable access to green spaces, and building and expanding upon community partnerships.

[01:51:55] We also aim to provide resources and support to community members, businesses, and organizations as they improve their environmental sustainability activities. In terms of energy management, our work strives to improve the economic environmental well-being by focusing on reducing energy use and costs, supporting green building practices, and educating on energy and environmental issues.

[01:52:27] We participate with local and regional energy organizations, such as the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association, or BEPCA, and the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council. For the

energy program, we generally divide our work among three main areas: conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Conservation efforts focus on using less energy with the same equipment, such as simply turning off the lights or not running certain systems when buildings are unoccupied.

[01:53:04] Energy efficiency focuses on improving building systems to use less energy, such as replacing old light bulbs with newer LED bulbs. Renewable energy focuses on transitioning to sustainable energy sources and away from traditional grid utilities, such as increasing use of solar.

[01:53:27] For our energy program, we use a utility management system called EnergyCap to track our energy usage across all HCPS and county facilities. The graphics on this slide provide a high-level snapshot of electricity use and costs for HCPS.

[01:53:49] The overall trend is that energy use and costs have gradually increased in the past two years. Please note the data shown on this slide represents totals through January 2026. HCPS and county electricity rates are set in accordance with our VEPCA contract.

[01:54:12] VEPCA collectively negotiates with Dominion to achieve rates most favorable for unique government and schools' needs. During the time period shown, the solar program has also grown, allowing us to purchase some of our energy at lower rates.

[01:54:33] Energy conservation can employ the tools you already have in place to reduce energy use. Turning off lights, power bars, and other ancillary pieces of equipment can make a difference in our overall energy consumption. Another consideration is additional appliances like coffee makers, microwaves, and refrigerators.

[01:54:54] While individually, these items don't use significant amounts of energy, when combined, they can add a noticeable amount of cost to the monthly usage of a school. Another area of conservation that HCPS utilizes is automated setbacks in our HVAC operations.

[01:55:15] Each evening, the systems automatically switch to unoccupied mode, which adjusts the set point so that the systems run less. In the mornings well before school starts, the systems automatically adjust back to occupied mode with standard set points.

[01:55:34] HCPS also participates in a demand response program which helps conserve energy during peak energy use times or grid emergencies. If a demand response event is called, the temperatures in the schools are adjusted to conserve energy.

[01:55:55] This system participation not only conserves energy, but also provides possible rebates to our district. It should be noted that if an event is called during a time that is too disruptive to learning, such as testing, or a time which will adversely affect comfort and safety of our students and staff, HCPS does not participate in that called event.

[01:56:24] The facilities department continues to support efficient and sustainable building design. HCPS incorporates improved efficiencies and replacements of building components such as HVAC equipment, building automation controls, and lighting upgrades.

[01:56:41] New school construction, whether it's a rebuild or new, are designed to achieve LEED certifications. And this year, we have started construction process for our Living Building Challenge certified facility. This challenge is a very robust program which includes sustainable, efficient system

designs and meaningful selection of building components focused on healthy materials, minimization of waste, and use of recycled products.

[01:57:14] This slide on the screen now illustrates our LEED-certified schools in the district. As you can see, we have added a number of schools to our list of sustainable buildings. Our two recent ACE projects both receive LEED Silver certification, and it should be noticed that our Highland Springs ACE is the first HCPS renovation project to receive LEED certification.

[01:57:42] The new building at the campus of Virginia Randolph, as well as the new Davis and Longin Elementary Schools are all tracking to receive LEED Silver certification as well.

[01:57:58] And of course, we have our living building project, which is not today's typical K-12 school construction. From the selection of sustainable materials to the visible building mechanical systems, the architecture immerses students in an experiential learning environment.

[01:58:16] The building itself can provide project-based learning opportunities in many forms, which focus on sustainability and environmental stewardship. The center photo at the bottom of the screen shows our first group of students on the site who worked with the design team and Capital Trees to identify the existing tree species on our site.

[01:58:43] - Now on to renewable energy sources. HCPS now has 3.46 megawatts of solar installed across six different sites. The projected cost savings from these systems is between two to four and a half million dollars over 25 years.

[01:59:03] The solar systems allow us to pay several cents less per kilowatt hour of electricity used than we would using electricity from the grid. These systems also allow us to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from school facilities, which is an important action when it comes to climate change mitigation.

[01:59:25] The solar systems completed to date include Tucker High School, Highland Springs High School, Holiday Elementary School, Harvey Elementary School, Holman Middle School, and Glenallen High School. Design work is currently in progress for the solar systems at the Academy at Virginia Randolph and Hermitage Ace. There are several additional locations that are currently under evaluation for solar, including Longin Elementary School, Davis Elementary School, and Cuiacusson Middle School.

[02:00:00] And these are the core work areas for the Sustainability Division. We are currently in the thick of developing Henrico's first-ever Climate Action and Adaptation Strategy, which includes HCPS activities and will guide future priorities related to sustainability.

[02:00:24] The division continues to expand reforestation and tree plantings. and advanced sustainable materials management, including a growing composting initiative. The division deploys resources directly to students and community groups through scholarships and the community impact program, respectively.

[02:00:46] Additionally, we continue to expand our partnership with Capitol Trees to include trainings and expanded planting activities. The sustainability program provides oversight of Henrico's Environmental Action Resource Team, or HEART, including mentorship and guidance for the HEART Youth Council and related student-led projects.

[02:01:10] The sustainability program also includes expanding deployment of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, and we manage the energy program across the county and HCPS facilities.

[02:01:27] Moving on now to the HEART Youth Council, which has student representatives from all high schools in the county youth council members have monthly learning excursions where they get hands-on experience with different aspects of sustainability from visiting the water reclamation facility to learn about where white wastewater ends up to planting trees in local parks the 2026 heart youth council environmental sustainability summit was held earlier in april and it convened high school students for a an entirely student-led

[02:02:03] event the keynote address delivered by mbc12 meteorologist andrew frieden guided participants in exploring the interplay among weather climate and their daily lives thereby helping to enhance their understanding of environmental issues directly affecting their local community the The summit concluded with school-based action planning sessions during which students proposed actions such as establishing school gardens, enhancing recycling programs, reducing food waste,

[02:02:40] and increasing awareness through student-driven campaigns. HART has also partnered with the Henrico Education Foundation to establish an annual scholarship program for students. The scholarship program is envisioned to expand to support teachers in their environmental sustainability efforts in future years.

[02:03:06] And HCPS and the county also have a memorandum of understanding in place with Capitol Trees that supports a range of activities, such as tree planting, reforestation, training, maintenance, and educational activities.

[02:03:24] The MOU has been in effect for three years, and the collaboration and outcomes continue to grow. Capital Trees has collaborated for tree identification, data collection, and tree planting activities with the Academy of Virginia Randolph.

[02:03:42] In addition, Capital Trees host annual sessions for students and intern training on tree identification to learn common native plants and trees, as well as invasive species in our region. The most visible aspect of our partnership with Capital Trees is the tree planting and reforestation.

[02:04:03] In total, the HARP program has planted over 17,000 trees in the county since 2023. This includes a mini forest of over 6,500 seedlings planted at Knuckles Farm Elementary School this spring.

[02:04:21] Knuckles Farm Elementary School was selected as a site due to being located in a heat island area of the county and the availability of undeveloped land adjacent to a riparian area on the property. A future tree planting is also planned for areas at Highland Springs High School.

[02:04:41] And I will now pass it back to Susan. In addition to what we reviewed so far, and with the help of our sustainability division and our environmental specialist, Eric Byers, we continue to explore and develop other areas of sustainable practices to implement for both staff and students.

[02:05:03] Examples in our schools, again, include recycling programs, composting initiatives, and community gardens. Also, our Department of Transportation supports sustainability with the addition of 20 electric and 20 propane-powered buses, which have been added to their fleet.

[02:05:23] An additional 10 propane buses are also being purchased. This completes our update and we'll be glad to answer any questions you may have. - Thank you all so much.

[02:05:39] I will start with my colleagues. Mrs. Atkins, would you like to go first? - Chair Irving, may I go second? - Sure, sure. Mrs. Kinsella? - So much to process, I feel like.

[02:05:56] Thank you so much, Ms. Hudson and Ms. Moore this presentation again so much for me to take in but as I think about being a good steward of the environment you know I really appreciate this presentation and I guess I'll just start with maybe one of the easiest things and for what I would hope to see grow maybe the this type of presentation just like the last one we had about technology and our instructional environment because I

[02:06:30] would imagine the items listed on slide 13 that list will continue to grow right I'm sure a lot of the lists on each of the on each of the slides will grow but specifically this one I know the recycling dumpster just very basic was requested at so many of our schools so excited to see that composting in the gardening not to mention the transportation do we still have the barriers that we had in regards to transportation in terms of servicing because I know being able to service different kinds of vehicles I know for a

[02:07:08] while was a barrier I don't know if that's mr. Pritchard that may need to jump in there but are we set up to service all of the vehicles on this slide we are and I know that was a big conversation before we took advantage of some of the grant opportunities that we applied for and of course diverting our funds to make sure that we were well equipped for both charging for the electric and then of course serving and fueling propane and we are well equipped to do so and i know there's um been outstanding success with our our first run and as you uh heard in the presentation 10 more propane

[02:07:44] school buses on order and definitely something we can keep the board apprised of as we're starting to understand any savings and efficiencies coming from these programs over time fantastic i appreciate the clarity around that um i think i'll i'll ask that what are we doing i know on slide let's see maybe slide seven our lead our lead projects and then we have solar panels on slide nine

[02:08:17] so are we what are we doing i see a lot of new buildings on slide seven and nine what are we doing for some of our older facilities in the meantime what projects are we engaging in there to either save energy or for sustainability so in our older buildings it is a little more difficult in our older buildings without a more extensive project occurring uh to cover some of the things that we do within our new construction however when we do our mechanical system

[02:08:51] replacements whether it's rooftop units cooling towers chillers any room-based components that we have, we're replacing them obviously with current and more efficient systems that are better as far as their energy consumption and more efficient with the conditioning that they provide to the school. Another area that we look at is lighting improvements. We have converted a lot of our lighting over to LED, but we still have some older fluorescent lighting throughout our schools. Most of

[02:09:31] it is either what we call T8 or T5 which was a newer fluorescent bulb than the older T12 fixtures that you might hear or read about. So we would continue to convert over those fluorescent lights to the newer LED lights in areas we start with common areas and hallways and then graduate into classrooms and of course we look at our capital program as far as where these schools will line up in future renovations and or replacements as we make those decisions to do smaller projects such as that which typically fall into our meals tax or a mechanical

[02:10:10] CIP well you went there so I'm gonna go there I know in the Brooklyn district we've been talking a lot lately about you know about trees and I know that when we renovate and or when we do additions or when we do rebuilds can you please explain the specific process that is used in terms of preserving trees on site and I right now I'm specifically speak speaking to Long and elementary school because I would like for folks to hear this discussion understood so with our

[02:10:49] rebuild projects we obviously have to work within the site we have most times and particularly in certain areas of Henrico County where it's more built up and there's not as much green space available within each site.

[02:11:04] We work with our designers to carefully place the new building where it works best and most efficiently, as well as where it works best in order for us to phase over the transfer between the old building to the new building.

[02:11:21] And quite often in that process, we build the building first, and then the second phase is the demolition of the older buildings, which quite often involves additional site work, which would be our playgrounds, additional parking area, certain drive lanes, that type of thing. So all of that phasing is looked at by our design team.

[02:11:44] We always try and maintain as much of the original landscaping as we possibly can. Unfortunately, sometimes our site constraints make difficult decisions that have to be made. We have to look at not only what is going in the area, what the area that we need for the new school to have, but we also have to look at how that construction process is going to affect any remaining landscaping trees specifically and sometimes the trauma of digging up everything around it laying

[02:12:24] new asphalt near it or curbing gutter or playground area in the estimation of our design team which includes landscape architects as well as our civil engineers the decisions have to be made that maybe it's better to remove a few trees and quite often where we remove trees we add trees back as part of our plan of development? So for example there are a couple trees specifically on the

[02:12:56] Long and Elementary School property that two trees specifically one one specifically by the office is planned for to come down and did the team look at every way possible to try and have a different plan instead of taking down this tree this tree has become its beloved in the community right you're you're well aware of this because you've been engaged with this community it has

[02:13:31] been looked at from all angles am I correct it is looked at at all angles we establish what kind of parking we need the parking we have to expand to as well as our stormwater management that we have to have on the site whether it's in the form of a BMP or a water retention area, or it's part of our parking lot design in the impermeable surface that we're adding. So we look at all of that and look at how that phasing occurs,

[02:14:05] and unfortunately there wasn't really a way to save that tree in the process. That is my understanding as well, and I know that the team is very engaged in communicating with not just the school community, those parents and families currently enrolled at the school, but can you also speak to community communication throughout this process? Yes, so as part of the design and as we brought the schematic design to the school board, we also had community meetings, invited all of the neighboring

[02:14:41] the property owners who touch the property of Longin, as well as putting out general notifications for community meetings so we did give the community the opportunity to see the plan and to

make comments about some of the concerns they had or if they liked the building and we of course had our school board presentation where we brought the schematic design to the school board so we we have had multiple communications both at the school we also had a community meeting held at Tucker High School, actually, and covered the project

[02:15:19] a few times in order to give our community members opportunities to understand what the project was going to look like, how that construction on site would occur, as well as what the overall site plan would be when we were finished. So not just a site plan for the new school, but also the demolition, if you will of the original school correct it we we showed what the new site plan would be so that did identify where the old buildings would be uh demolished and removed and where the new parking would occur well thank you i mean i know how the team i know how the team uh works and i appreciate

[02:15:58] you going into that specifically since that's um an item of interest in my community um let's see set points i'm very interested after all of our discussions around mechanical this year about set points can you explain um i guess maybe a very basic understanding on slide five about set points and how you know i know for energy saving reasons you said you know we would not make working or

[02:16:33] learning conditions uncomfortable but how the set points are set for example for the heat and then the air conditioning to come on and there has to be a gap between the two. Just, I don't, you know, I've spoken, my colleagues and I have spoken about this and I've spoken to Mr. Pritchard, spoken to Dr. Cashwell, that I would really like for buildings to have some kind of professional learning regarding mechanical systems and how they work.

[02:17:05] For example, what the protocols are when there's an issue, whether it's in your classroom, a few classrooms, whole building, I would just, I've learned a lot, and I think a lot of folks in the community have learned a lot as well through this conversation, but I recommend some professional learning around it, so that folks do understand it, but specifically to set points, because doesn't there have to be a specific, there has to be a range, right, like, for things to cut on or cut off or to switch over?

[02:17:40] Correct. has is that easy for our systems to do or for example when we have uh 25 to 30 degree temperature swings in a day right we started out the morning in the 40s and by the afternoon we're at 75. is that a challenge for any system in commercial buildings like ours and these set points i mean is that is that a challenge i think it's always a challenge for pretty much any mechanical system when you have 30 to 40 degree swings in a day and it's

[02:18:18] particularly a challenge for our older systems that may not be more current systems we have updated our building automation system and that's where the gap in the setbacks occurs okay so we have to have that gap between the cooling set point and the heating set point because the building automation system looks at all of it so the building automation system determines when the heat when the heating needs to shut off and the cooling needs to shut on and there's numerous different types of systems some systems change temperatures a little more quickly than other systems they catch the building up to the newer

[02:18:57] temperature a little more quickly and without getting involved in some really extensive and probably quite boring mechanic I don't want to be in the weeds I don't want to be in the weeds I just want big picture yeah it depends on the system, and we have a number of different types of systems throughout our schools, but you are correct. We do have to have that gap between heating and cooling so the system

understands and doesn't get confused on how to operate. Okay, and then we, not we as in me, but you and your team can also monitor it remotely, correct? Correct. Because I think that's brilliant for all the

[02:19:36] reasons, not just monitoring, you know, great learning and working conditions, but also to the efficient, you know, right, the efficiency and cost savings. So thank you for bearing with me on that. Let's see. Maybe it was said in this presentation, do we, do we on this in Henrico schools have an energy and sustainability plan? Were you leaning towards that? So there is an energy plan for

[02:20:12] county government definitely and then there are some aspects of that that also carry over to Henrico County Public Schools however I will say what we're working on currently is our climate action and adaptation strategy that expands upon energy energy as a component of it and that will also apply to Henrico County Public Schools so currently we do not have a plan we have components on the Henrico School side right is that is that what I heard I mean

[02:20:48] so in our designs we're all I mean I know when we do additions and renovations and rebuilds of course we're focused on that but we don't have for example like a strategic plan for energy and sustainability currently not per se okay but I will say as we design to lead standards energy efficiency is very much a part of our LEED requirements. LEED dictates daylighting that we have in the buildings. It dictates the temperatures that we have. It dictates energy efficiency throughout the systems.

[02:21:28] So in following LEED, I would have to say we have an informal energy sustainability plan with regard to our building mechanical systems. Okay. Thank you very much, I mean, for the presentation and for your patience with the questions because this is trying to understand you know um this outside of my home you know bigger scale right on what we're responsible for i really appreciate it chair irving thank you so much ms kinsella uh mrs atkins first let me thank you chair for asking

[02:22:02] to go second i was typing and i i just want to make sure that uh i was ready for um some of the comments that I have. I also know that sustainability is not just about environmental responsibility. It's fiscal stewardship, it's also smart governance given some of the conversation we just heard and I believe some of the conversations we're going to hear shortly. I think that prioritizing energy efficiency, utility savings, fleet improvements, and infrastructure modernization, we are making operational investments that help enhance our

[02:22:41] student learning environments and we also are honoring our taxpayers with their money I think that this is good news that this approach demonstrates proactive planning I think that it's important as we think about environmental sustainability that we think beyond trees as well as conservation I think this topic is also new in public schools so this is another space just like technology where it is evolving and we are learning too I am encouraged about

[02:23:20] the conversations I do have questions my first question you may not know this is probably more a John Watt question but I want to know how much do we spend on our Dominion power bill I would like to know that for the year of 2024 I would like to know that for the year 2025 and I would like to know what that is going forward I appreciate the chart showing me the difference between solar and power however is very hard to understand from a fiscally responsibility perspective how much money are we spending that also will help me understand the impact of

[02:23:58] the solar - the second question is are we ensuring that sustainability improvements reach schools facing the greatest infrastructure challenges and resource limitations first? We look at all of our

schools as far as what their needs are and obviously we watch our older schools that haven't had as much work or haven't had a comprehensive renovation or potential rebuild very closely, particularly as we begin to move towards the next capital plan that

[02:24:34] could identify which schools would be next in a bigger capital expenditure. As far as sustainability, we do try and look at what that sustainability would be across the entire district. Many of our East End schools, which tend to be our schools that have some older timeframes.

[02:24:58] We have Verona in our oldest group, Montrose in our oldest group. We watch all of those schools very closely. We look at what improvements we can make in addition to the renovations that those schools have already been through.

[02:25:14] - I wanna say that that makes me happy, but it does not. And I wanna be honest. I know both of you and your teams do excellent work, but if we know the oldest schools that require the most help and they are not prioritized, I would like to know what that really means.

[02:25:36] Dr. Cashwell. - So we do a facility study and we have that done by a third party and they do look at the age plus the condition of the facility for quality teaching and learning as well as the mechanical systems.

[02:25:51] And that's how they're rank ordered for work. And so it isn't solely by age though, largely schools come out grouped by age, but it's age and condition. So for example, when you're looking at our timeline for our capital improvement plan, and I don't, because I don't have it in front of me, I can't give you the exact order.

[02:26:12] You can see how schools have been progressively renovated rebuilt and it is largely built built based on the age or the year in which they were built with some exceptions and so that has been how they've been prioritized related to age and condition so if I may clarify talking about sustainability I'm talking about sustainability so what you're referencing is capital projects but when I'm thinking about environmental sustainability I'm thinking about the areas that may have the most air pollution I'm thinking about the areas that may have the most land pollution

[02:26:50] I'm thinking about the areas that may have the most water pollution and so what that might look like is an area that may have a landfill that may look like an area with a technology park of data centers that may look like an area that's built for manufacturing and so if that is an area that has that heavy level of industry we know from an energy perspective that they may be the highest priority area that needs the most energy sustainability refinement reframing and so I want to better understand from an energy and that's

[02:27:26] what our topic is in conservation and all the things if we know this Montrose success is what you mentioned. Schools are stellar, wonderful places to live, to love, to learn. But when you know more, my understanding is to try to do more. So if we know this, I'd like to hear the answer to that question. In relation to sustainability, I'm not sure I understand what actions or building

[02:28:04] modifications you might be referring to great and so thank you for that question I'd like to see the research I like some time spent whether it's a light bulb we're not talking capital improvement projects we just had budget discussion I get it we were not gonna move the needle in a great way but I do think we can move the needle in some way it could just be replacing light bulbs it could be looking at putting something in around the air that that is being used it could be small things

[02:28:42] that can help around energy efficiency one of the reasons why i'm asking for what is the cost of the power that we're using once i get that information then i'll probably ask for it to be segmented out because areas that are in certain situations will demand more power so i want to speak from facts but before I can speak from facts I need to know is it prioritized is there a plan how do I myself advocate better or how am I more informed and it really starts with asking these really really tough questions because that's what they are they are very tough questions and I want

[02:29:21] to acknowledge that and I also want to say it's okay to say I don't know it's okay to say I can look into that and and I will be glad to look into that for you I can tell you from an energy use standpoint our energy cap tracks every school so we can tell through energy cap what energy is being used by every school as well as looking at our district as a whole another thing that goes into that energy use is not just our mechanical systems, but how much the school is being used, how active

[02:30:00] after-school programs are, how active evening programs are, at our secondary level how active sporting events are, what time those sporting events are occurring. So there are some use factors involved that very directly affect what the energy use of the overall building is, but we will be able to break that out out for you. Thank you. I appreciate that because I can share when it comes to athletics particularly in the Rhinos and Highland Springs there is heavy usage and I just want to be able to speak from facts and not opinions so sharing that

[02:30:35] data with me would be very very helpful in advocating for families. The other question that I have is I wonder if the division and what level of effort it it would take to create an annual sustainability scorecard for our schools?

[02:30:57] - That one I will have to say, I don't know. But I'd be glad to look into what a sustainability scorecard could look like. Sam and I both can take a look at that. - Yep. - And then develop something for division leadership to review and then be able to bring it to the school board as far as going forward with it and applying it to each school.

[02:31:22] - And I think that would be helpful for all schools if my colleagues agree that the effort is worth it. I think that's something for all schools that we can begin speaking from a data perspective around energy and we can learn a lot more.

[02:31:38] And then the next thing is in the presentation, I saw the tree farm at Knuckles Farm. So in full transparency, Chair Irving, when you called on me the first time, I was doing research because I was so enlightened with that and learned that that particular property cultivated tobacco.

[02:32:00] There is a very, very interesting history in the soil of that spot. You're nodding your heads, I won't share. - Wasn't familiar, so I am nodding it that I learned something new today as well. - Yeah, so that is why I needed the extra time because I was really enlightened to see that you could get so many trees on that property so that soil must was ready for it, and how could that soil be ready for it? And so I decided to do a little bit of a research on that. And so because tobacco was grown there, it's still rich soil, and that is why you're able to get those trees in the way that you were able to plant them.

[02:32:41] And then after it was a tobacco farm, it was a dairy farm. And so I'm listening to the the conversation about the tree, and I'm listening to all the things, and I just wanna say to that particular community, bravo for advocating, because now that I know in just those few moments about the history of the soul, I plan to learn a whole lot more about history in that space.

[02:33:10] And so again, great presentation. Today has been a day of great presentations. It's also been a day of tough conversations, but that's how we get better and that's how we learn. And I think this effort right here is gonna be defining and showing other areas of what leadership looks like in sustainability.

[02:33:31] So thank you so much, Chair Irving. - Thank you, Ms. Zackins. Mrs. Sherry? - Thank you so much. I'm so glad you mentioned lighting because that didn't immediately come to mind, but I know not only when we look at sustainability, but also what it's like inside the buildings, profound difference.

[02:33:52] I'll use Godwin as an example, a school that has little to no windows. I know a couple years ago y'all came in and did whatever those cool number lights you just talked about are. And it makes such a difference, like in the commons area and the class, well, in the common spaces, to not look like you're kind of in a cave, right?

[02:34:15] to be brighter and I think it does have a significant impact on what a building feels like, right? And student productivity and engagement and just so multiple benefits there. So I'm really glad you mentioned that, you know, when we do big construction projects, we're making these strides, but we're also looking at smaller ways that we can make incremental steps that are not only sustainable, but they also improve quality of life within the building and that sort of thing.

[02:34:46] So thank you for bringing that to attention as well. I have a couple of questions around cost. And I wanna acknowledge that sustainability is not just about cost and financials. There are a lot of other benefits for building sustainable buildings.

[02:35:05] And so I'm not ignoring those. I'm just kinda, I think my colleagues have some of the other aspects smothered and covered. So I'm gonna concentrate on those. So with our new buses, propane and electric, are we saving a savings there? Is it more cost than diesel?

[02:35:23] Is it too soon to know? - I would, I probably may have to defer to Mr. Pritchard. - I could speak to this only because I know Mr. Pritchard and I have spoken about it frequently. So when we just opted to go this route, we were able to look at a body of research about what fleets typically save a division based on the miles traveled our school system.

[02:35:46] So we know there is savings there and efficiency related to the cost of diesel versus leveraging, for example, power for electric buses and similarly propane, the cost difference is significant. And so, yes, while we have not had our fleet long enough to give you some long-term savings and numbers, we are evaluating that and looking into it.

[02:36:11] But there, as I said, is a good body of research about not just the positive environmental impacts, but the savings related to those. - Thank you for that clarity. I love seeing all of our new builds and rebuilds with this focus, doing things right from the get-go.

[02:36:32] I'm gonna put get-go in quotes 'cause some of them are rebuilds, but really, again, taking those strides where we can. On the solar slide, it says \$2 to \$4.5 million savings over 25 years.

[02:36:47] To be clear, that is not every year. That's total over that time, correct? Correct. That's cumulative. Cumulative. So we're looking at roughly \$80,000 to \$180,000 a year.

[02:37:03] And it looks like we've got six buildings online now. So I know every building has a different number of megawatts, but roughly \$12,000 to \$30,000 a year per building is kind of what I ballpark.

[02:37:21] So we're looking at savings, which is great, but it's not a cash cow in terms of energy offset. Or is that a significant energy offset when we look at cost, kind of to Ms. Atkins' point?

[02:37:38] - Sure, across all of the facilities where you have solar currently, you're producing about 10 to 30% of your total building energy through the solar panels. I will say that since you installed and first had solar systems operational in 2023 to today, you have saved a total of \$349,225 on electricity bills across all six of your solar systems.

[02:38:13] - Great, thank you. That 10 to 30% number for an individual building does seem significant, so thank you so much. All right, just trying to wrap my head around all the things, but thank you for your work incrementally and then both in our large scale projects keeping Henrico sustainable fiscally and environmentally.

[02:38:36] - Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Young. - Yeah, thank you for the presentation. I think my colleagues have pretty much hit on a lot of different topics here. I'll piggyback off on a couple of them. The first one is the lighting in the buildings, right? To Mrs. Atkins points with our older schools, do we have some sort of time frame where our older schools are receiving the LED lighting before maybe some of the newer schools, right?

[02:39:01] Is there like a long-term plan? We've converted a lot of our older schools over to the LED lighting. And we continue to go back and identify. That's been a big part of our mails tax process. So we continue to go back and identify areas that we still need to make conversions over.

[02:39:22] As a matter of fact, we started converting our schools over before LED lighting became really cost competitive to some of the improved fluorescent lighting, if that makes sense. So some of our conversions were to those more recent fluorescent improvements, so now we're starting to go back and identify those areas to look at will LED save us a significant amount of money, because obviously the better the fluorescent fixture is, the less savings we get in converting over to LED.

[02:40:00] So we're beginning to identify some of those other areas that were either converted just before led really kind of took off uh and any areas where we haven't had the opportunity to convert it at all thank you for that um one school in particular when i was visiting the innovation center over at ralph has their lighting begun to match from the innovation side to the regular side of the school we have not started conversions on the rest of the school yet we do have the led lighting in the Innovation Center. Rolf is on our plan, our CIP plan, in the

[02:40:39] relative near future as far as when we start looking at our next big projects to go forward. So Rolf is in that five-year plan. Okay, that's awesome. Just because you can you can feel the difference from just walking a hallway over there and it's all about student experience and their learning environment. So I'm glad hear that it's in the pipeline. Another thing I wanted to bring up was Holman is LEED certified.

[02:41:05] Is that because of the year was built? Because I know Elko, Wilder, Hunger Creek, same build. What is it just because of the year? Holman was one of the later, I call those the five sisters. Okay. And so Holman is the baby sister in in that whole group and Pocahontas actually.

[02:41:21] right um so yeah they they that was a much newer school compared to wilder was the first of that prototype um so we'll continue to look at those schools and what we can do to speak to the sustainability changes as far as the led lighting goes but also looking at it as capital projects and capital improvements throughout our building okay thank you that's all i have everybody else touched on

everything. I'm still learning as well. I think great presentations teach us something as well. And we've had great presentations today. Actually, a fun session. Back to you, Chair.

[02:41:59] Thank you all. Yes, thank you for the presentation. This is a topic that is near and dear to my heart, I think, both from the sustainability element, from a moral standpoint of, like, we should be good stewards of our environment and we should do what is within our control. And I also think that, the energy, especially with one of the charts about costs and electricity, the fiscal standpoint is also extremely important. I do want to touch first on the lights, because we've been talking about LED lights, and we talk about the need to turn off lights of the buildings, but my understanding is that we've been having issues in a number of our buildings with the ACE-LC,

[02:42:39] which is the automated logic control, and lights not being able to be shut off when people are not the buildings and that is a my understanding is that is a third party that handles that system but we've been having a lot of issues within buildings and what are we what are we doing on that front that's our building automation system so alc is the vendor that supplies that building automation system primarily where we had issues with problems with the lighting was our exterior lighting and i believe we've worked through most of those that's a scheduling issue it's in the software of the program and we have had ALC working on those. We actually had

[02:43:17] body boots on the ground where we had them turn them off and then turn them on and we called in back and forth to confirm what was on and what was off. So we've been working diligently to catch all of those areas and make sure the programming was correct for the scheduling on those and it was predominantly exterior lights to my to my knowledge, but I will check and make sure we didn't have interior light issues. Absolutely. No, no, I appreciate you looking into that, and I appreciate the explanation. I was, my eyes, I think, were drawn almost most of this on the amount of electricity costs. If we could, if we could get that on

[02:43:52] the screen, that's slide four, I believe. Um, 2026 year to date, we are four months into the year, and we are at two-thirds of our costs for the entire last year. Um, fiscal - The fiscal year, yeah.

[02:44:09] - Six months into January. - That's the first half. - Yes, yes. Still concerning, I would say. And I think about from electricity, like that is a cost. It is only going to increase as time has gone on. We have seen that Virginia is, you know, beginning to lead the nation in terms of electricity costs increase long-term.

[02:44:32] And I think that from my standpoint, when it comes to, you know, sustainability within buildings and like solar and whatnot, the cost of inaction on this front is far greater than the cost of action. Because when I see the solar panels, and Mrs. Shea talked about the savings over 25 years, what I see in that is we are not using solar enough to offset costs.

[02:44:54] Not that the investments haven't been worth it, it's that they have been worth it and we should be doing far more of them. And when I, I beat this drum before, but I'd like us to explore, instead of just putting solar on roofs where we have to take into account building age and whatnot, building solar canopies in our parking lots, because that is a massive amount of space that's unused, gets direct sunlight all hours of the day.

[02:45:19] They exist all over the world. They work, they exist in Arizona, they exist in California, they exist all over the United States. And the disruption in terms of like building life and longevity is less.

[02:45:34] And I think it brings the benefit of reducing heat in parking lots. It reduced the damage to our asphalt because of its protection from weather events sun damage and so I think that's something that we need to be really considering over time because I'm a big believer in doing what is in our sphere of control like great we can't control what individual people within the county doing the decisions that they make on renewable energy and sustainability but we can control what we do and if we own these properties which we do and we have all this untapped potential it is incumbent upon us to make that investment because like I said inaction is going to be more expensive than

[02:46:14] action we are at a point in history now with solar panels where upfront installation cost is at parity with fossil fuels and it is only getting cheaper and then the lifetime cost of these things is effectively zero I mean you just have maintenance costs on a given solar panel so it is cheaper now both upfront and long term to make these investments than to not make them and I think it would be a mistake to just leave again all this untapped potential on the table I love the tree farm and knuckles farm in my in my neck of the woods. That's tremendous work. I love that we're that we're planting more trees than we're taking

[02:46:50] out. That's tremendous work. But I do really think from a dollars and cents standpoint, again, inaction is more expensive than action. And we need to be engaging as a county, not just a school division, and more action on the renewable energy front to save all of our constituents money moving forward. So thank you for your presentation. And we truly appreciate your time. Thank you.

[02:47:13] - Thank you. That concludes items for me. - Yes, yes. Colleagues, we'll now move to unfinished business. Does anybody have unfinished business?

[02:47:28] - Chair Irving, I do have some unfinished business. I would like to just read out what I wrote. I am being cognizant of our time, so I'm going to ask to read it, and we can discuss at another time.

[02:47:45] - This year, I've consistently heard from students, staff, and school communities about the need to strengthen our performing arts programs, Our high schools have had strong band, choir, theater, and visual arts programs with high student participation and strong community support.

[02:48:01] Currently, student activities directors in high schools oversee both athletics and extracurricular programs at the high school level. I propose we consider refining our structure to better support both athletics and the arts, specifically by creating dedicated athletics director and a dedicated performing arts director role at each high school.

[02:48:28] This would ensure performing arts receive the same level of coordination and leadership support as athletics. Research shows students involved in the arts have stronger engagement, attendance, and school connection. These programs are vital to student belonging and success, but much of their coordination currently falls to teachers on top of their instructional duties.

[02:48:51] While budget constraints may prevent immediate implementation, this idea deserves further study, including its organizational impact and staffing needs. I believe we should begin the conversation soon, not today, so that we are ready if funding does become available.

[02:49:09] Thank you, Chair Irving. Marcy's looking at me. Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. Colleagues, do we have any other unfinished business? No. Do we have any new business?

[02:49:26] Hearing none, we will move on to the announcement of the meeting dates. The next meeting will be in 30 minutes here in this auditorium. After that, the school board's next meeting will be a work

session on Thursday, May 14th, 2026 at 3 p.m., followed by a monthly meeting at 6.30 p.m.

[02:49:42] Meeting times may be adjusted as needed. This meeting is adjourned.



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