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# Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, June 11, 2026

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[00:00:07] I would like to welcome everyone to the June 11, 2026 monthly meeting of the Henrico County School

[00:06:40] Board. Our first item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Is there a motion to approve the agenda? I move that we approve the agenda for this evening's meeting. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. All in favor say aye. Aye. The ayes have it. The agenda is approved. I'd like to take this moment to recognize Dr. Adrienne Cole Johnson. She stepped away for a moment. We'll wait till she comes back. We will wait till she's back. All right. I will now turn it over to Dr. Cashwell. The first item is we will begin with

[00:07:17] the Pledge of Allegiance, as we always do. And while students are out of session, it's typically led by students. Lenny Pritchard will lead us in the pledge. If everyone could please stand and join me in the pledge, I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the public for which it stands one nation under god indivisible with liberty and justice for all

[00:07:45] if we could please remain standing for a moment of silence thank you now we would like to recognize miss adrian cole johnson um for her service with henrico county public schools uh colleagues would

[00:08:22] anybody like to say anything uh to doctor i mean mrs cole johnson before before she departs us I would love to say something. I didn't have anything pre-written, but no, Ms. Cole Johnson, thank you for your service to Henrico County. Thank you for the leadership we face. Thank you for everything you've been able to accomplish. Thank you for laying the framework for the next person that will step into your role. When I got here, I couldn't imagine someone else being in this role. You're so good at what you do. You care. I can call you anytime. I ask you for something I need for a family or school. I mean, your team is right on it. I mean, that just goes to show

[00:09:00] that your leadership is impeccable. We're going to miss you. I'm so thrilled at your new position, even though I sent you text messages that say otherwise. But I am happy that we still will be able to work with you and hopefully we can expand community and schools in Henrico County Public Schools. Thank you so much. Adrienne Cole Johnson. On behalf of the Brooklyn District And really, honestly, Henrico Schools, because we serve all, but it has just been a tremendous

[00:09:36] pleasure working with you and getting to know you. I'll never forget the first time I met you at Hungry Creek Middle School for an event. And I've been working with you for, I'm in my seventh year, and I'm so, I'm going to miss you so much. But as Mr. Young said, you have truly grown the department set up the framework we've got our CLC's ready to go we've got more advocates than we started with and the work just keeps going and just thank you really for all you've done and I'll be calling you because there's more I'd like to say to you off the record but just thank you so

[00:10:14] much for being you and for choosing Henrico schools when you did and in her next role we'll still have the opportunity to collaborate together so I look forward to that. Chair Irving? mrs shea adrian such a joy to work with you um and i particularly want to thank you for really digging into perception versus reality in my district um and recognizing and uplifting that there are significant resource and support needs in pockets of the tuckahoe district and often a

[00:10:47] resource um support gap um in our area and so you've been really intentional in expanding um things like the summer tour to hit um some of those communities and been really intentional with supports um in some of the schools in my district um that have higher needs for them and so i just want to thank you for that um i think it's really important um you know as we as a division a school board in a division recognize that all districts um have these uh acute or or more widespread needs

[00:11:21] but all of them are important. I mean, you have done that. You have really expanded the breadth of who family and community engagement touches. And so Henrico will be forever changed by that. And so thank you for laying the groundwork. Mrs. Atkins. I just say glory be to God for you.

[00:11:42] I know that time is created by God. Perception is created by people. When we first met, I remember some of the words that you used and there were so many perceptions around needy and judgment around different areas and what different areas needed but your whole focus was like a dream

[00:12:14] it was like i'd love to see these things happen and with time they did and that is because of using you in a way with your gifts and your talents and your curiosity and your sense of humor that got you through some stressful times. So I appreciate you. We all appreciate you. You can't be replaced. And I just wanted you to hear that. We are going to fulfill the role, so let me be clear on that, in making sure that we continue to serve. But there will be no one that serves

[00:12:54] like you because you are uniquely authentic and that is what all of us need examples of so thank you so much i'm gonna miss you but not too much because we'll still be partnering henrico county public schools we'll still be partnering with miss cole johnson in her ceo big lady move situation is what i've been calling it but sincerely grateful for all that you've done all of who you are and look forward to your becoming as well thank you i'll just echo the

[00:13:32] sentiments of my colleagues they've said it better than i possibly could thank you so much for all that you've done and we look forward to all the great things that you're going to do thank you dr cashwell our next item is the recognition of our vsba business honor roll recipients mr bayton Good evening, Chair Irvin, members of the Board, Dr. Cashwell, and distinguished guests.

[00:14:02] I am Mac Baten, Director of Workforce and Career Development, and I'm honored to present tonight's recognition the Virginia School Boards Association Business Honor Roll. As pointed out today in our work session, we know how important our business partners are. The VSBA Business Honor Roll is just one way for school divisions to recognize the support of local businesses, and we are excited to highlight the following organizations please join me in welcoming to the front front represent Earl

[00:14:35] Otto and representatives from Caliper Collision representing Covington Woods LaFawn Jackson and from EMC Mechanical Services Bruce Tibbetts. These local businesses have been instrumental in helping our own not only our career and technical education students but also students

[00:15:14] across Henrico County be truly life-ready when they graduate. Our collaboration has helped to empower our students with skills to be well-trained and highly educated upon entering the workforce through such things as internships opportunities, supporting connections between students and local future employees, and of course businesses and students working side by side creating together.

[00:15:42] Thank you for all of your support and for the impact that you have had with our students and the larger Henrico community. Thank you. We're so grateful for the partnership and thank you again to our business honor roll recipients. The next item on the agenda is our Henrico highlight and it won't surprise you that we are using this time to celebrate the nearly 3,500 students who earned

[00:16:16] their diplomas as part of the class of 2026. What you may not know is 66 percent of graduates earned an advanced studies diploma. Additionally, 90 seniors from the Advanced College Academy of Business Administration at Highland Springs and the Advanced College Academy for Social Sciences at Tucker simultaneously earned an associate's degree from Reynolds Community College. Needless to say the class of 2026 has plenty to celebrate this graduation season let's take a look at some

[00:16:52] of the ceremony highlights gentlemen i hereby call this commencement ceremony to order let's bring that blue devil energy to the henrico sports and event center please rise as we recognize and honor

[00:17:21] the graduating class of 2026. Class of 2026, we didn't just go to school, we built relationships, created memories, and grew into who we are today. As corny or as cringy as it may sound, I couldn't be happier that I didn't say no to this beautiful opportunity to be a part of the Jaguar family. Buildings age, trophies collect dust, and records are eventually broken. Yet something that endures for much longer is the influence that we have upon each other life is not about

[00:17:57] how fast you run or whether you come in first it's about who you help along the way who you inspire how you make people feel and that you keep on running keep trying new things keep supporting

the people around you and keep growing into better versions of yourselves even when it doesn't feel easy today we get to choose our own path in life make our own big time decisions because starting today the world becomes ours continue learning continue exploring and continue becoming the person you want to be whatever your next step is the important thing is that you keep building

[00:18:32] it's not how long your journey is and it's not how long it takes to finish it and today we're finishing together there are so many that i would like to think individually but for now i'm gonna miss oh yeah we leave here not with certainty but with the experience to adjust persevere and find our flow state no matter the conditions ahead at the end of the day life's more memorable and more fun together thank you and congratulations again to the class of 2026 will the candidates

[00:19:09] for graduation please stand by virtue of the authority vested in me by the commonwealth of virginia the hirico county school board and on the recommendation of the faculty and administration I declare these candidates graduates with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining to. Will the graduates please turn their tassels?

[00:19:45] Carter Vines Anderson. Riley Hayden Geyer. Payton Jerry Anderson. Addison Grace Knitter.

[00:20:21] and Stella Cole Anthony Jackson

[00:20:44] James Berger Lisa Maria Fatoulkas Ruth White Alexander James Whiplier Elijah Doriel Swart

[00:21:21] Marie Rion Dea Denwine Amar Noel Watson

[00:21:46] Gail Nathaniel Lenka Congratulations! Graduates of Henrico High School!

[00:22:04] And in addition to graduation, we are excited also to celebrate the high school students in our career and technical education programs who earned approximately 5,000 career credential certificates.

[00:23:04] And we proudly salute the 43 Henrico school students representing each of the division's high schools who took a ceremonial oath of commitment to military service this spring. These dedicated students have chosen to enlist in the military, attend a military academy, or enroll in a college ROTC program.

[00:23:24] We want to thank them in advance for their service. Mr. Chairman, as you can see, HCPS is home to exceptional students with diverse interests and abilities. And of course, as superintendent, I am thrilled to shine a spotlight on their accomplishments and welcome the opportunity to celebrate these successes with the school board and our community each month. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell, and congratulations to all of our graduates. We are remarkably proud of you. We'll now move on to the HCPS mission statement. Mr. Young, would you mind

[00:24:02] reading it? Enrico County Public Schools, through engagement with our families and community, equip students with the knowledge and skills to be ready for life and a successful future. Thank you, Mr. Young. And now, while I believe most people are here, we will move on to the public forum. This is a time when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division.

[00:24:24] Citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board. Speakers will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else. We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state their name and school affiliation, if applicable, and the subject of their remarks before speaking.

[00:24:45] After stating your name, please place the number you were given in the cart near the podium. Speakers must present their remarks to the school board, not the audience, and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk. The use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order.

[00:25:04] To assist you in tracking your time, there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen. Speakers will also receive a notice from me when the time has expired. The school board is here today to hear from you. We will not be responding to speakers' concerns or questions during the public's forum.

[00:25:22] However, a Henrico staff member will follow up with speakers. Stakeholders have also had the opportunity to provide written comment through an online form in advance of the meeting. These comments are shared with the school board members prior to the meeting and posted in board docs for public record.

[00:25:38] Equal consideration and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments. We appreciate your attendance here this evening and for providing your input. The first speaker is speaker number one. Thank you.

[00:26:00] My name is Melody Beauchamp, and I'm here tonight in my role as a parent and a community volunteer, and I'd like to speak to you in regards to the intentional use of technology in our schools. I am a fan of Antioch County Public Schools, and I'm thankful to live in a county that has such good schools.

[00:26:19] I have five children two are older and they're graduated and I still have three in high school we have been connected to several schools over the years including our zone schools specialty centers gifted learning centers IB programs and we have been involved with community activities like scouting programs PTA and local clubs during COVID there were major changes made to our learning environment to adapt to an emergency situation this was fine as an

[00:26:56] intermediary step and method of teaching but many of those practices continued after we returned to in-person learning the amount of time that children spend on screens has gone from occasional to majority books in the classroom have disappeared and have been replaced with digital media and digital-based information.

[00:27:18] I'm concerned and so are many other parents and volunteers. As human beings, we use our five senses to learn. The more learning you can do with the multiple senses, the more information is received and processed for usefulness in our brains.

[00:27:35] If I wanted to teach someone how to make lemon poppy seed muffins, it would take much more engaging things like seeing, smelling, tasting, touching and hearing the timer going off than it would to watch a YouTube video on the same process.

[00:27:52] I feel an increase of screen time has also increased the symptoms of ADHD in our kids and learning hurdles. Eye problems, sleep problems, discipline problems, and lack of social skills have increased as well. Fine motor skills have decreased.

[00:28:10] My high schoolers spend the majority of their day on computers. They come home with schoolwork that needs to be completed on computers. And as a parent, I am limited to taking those away because when I do, they cannot complete the work they need to get done.

[00:28:25] I love my kids and they've gotten to a place of constantly craving this dopamine adrenaline that they get. Please bring back traditional learning to our schools, books that they can feel, eyes they can track with, their memory needs to find where they left off and not use a search key.

[00:28:45] They are responsible to care for these tools, which need to be returned in good condition. Also responsibility to know where they left off reading and where they've left their book. Worksheets, where they can be required to have handwriting and completion and board work, which develops their public speaking skills and fear of being in front of people.

[00:29:06] Please take action on limiting devices in our schools. - Thank you, speaker number one. - Thank you. - Speaker number two.

[00:29:21] - Thank you, good evening. My name is Hannah Robbins-Bruce, current resident in the three chop district mom of a two and a half year old uh and also a future perspective enrollee at henrico county public schools i'm also a former student from hcps uh having attended henrico schools from fifth through twelfth grade and i also had the pleasure of serving on the school health advisory board miss atkins um in 2022. so i'm here to i'm here tonight to express concern similar to the last speaker about screen time in the classroom and specifically

[00:30:00] my own son's future academic experience in Henrico, but also on behalf of the more than 950 Henrico residents who signed a petition about excessive screen time in schools. My education and professional expertise is in public health, specifically in health promotion for children and young adults.

[00:30:20] I, and I know all of you, um, know that raising a healthy child requires important social, emotional, and cognitive development, which is why I'm trying as much as possible to ensure my kid's childhood isn't dominated by screen time. Of course, I hope that part of his childhood includes going to Henrico schools. I myself had a great experience in education in HCPS, and as an adult and Henrico resident, I appreciate the high standards of learning, high standards that hcps sets for its students the last two and a half years of becoming a new mom

[00:30:56] um have been it's been feeling like we're in the trenches right um so when i look forward to what comes next in his next three years i really want to feel confident in his introduction to his k through 12 learning experience currently i'm not feeling that confident um that he would get the best start because of the lack of policies that hcps has about excessive screen time in the classroom there's a few different provisions in the petition that are included that i think someone else here

[00:31:32] may speak on so i'll just touch on the ones that i really really care about um one is setting specific enforceable screen time limits by grade level so daily and weekly maximums also eliminating devices for the youngest grades kindergarten through second grade preferably as well as making sure that that non-educational platforms are blocked on all district devices i'm talking about youtube social media gaming platforms that we all know have long been proven to be

[00:32:06] addictive for children and to also be harmful to their mental health so i want to conclude with first optimism and hope because i know henrico county can be a leader in virginia on this topic and commit to doing what's right for our kids and then last thing is mr irving i would love to continue this conversation with you moving forward thank you speaker number two speaker number three

[00:32:34] good evening my name is kimberly fares um and i have a rising fifth grader and eighth grader in the henrico public schools and it seems that with the best intentions there was a general embrace of

technology in schools nationwide specifically i mean specifically after covid and accompanied by the need for take-home devices. What started out as a desire to stay on the cutting edge and prepare our children for a world full of technology has instead become an over-reliance

[00:33:09] on technology and to our children's detriment. Countless studies have come out from esteemed educators, journalists, and doctors about the effects of constant and unmonitored technology use, which is evident in the continuing decline in test scores and students' inability to focus, write or socialize. In an effort to make learning fun, app usage is forced on students with limited oversight. The gamifying of learning gives children dopamine hits to keep them coming back for more.

[00:33:36] It rarely gives them feedback on how to work through the mistakes they've made or shown them patience or the ability to sit with getting something wrong and working to correct it. The use of YouTube and gaming is particularly rampant is more often than not being used for for educational, not for educational purposes, even being encouraged during downtime.

[00:33:57] The kids can't focus as they toggle from tab to tab, work, emails from friends, YouTube, game, back to work, back to another tab. And who could resist going to other sites rather than working? Even as adults, we struggle with staying on task even during our work hours, given the expansiveness of the internet.

[00:34:13] Anecdotally, I am fortunate to have fairly focused children and often my rising eighth grader will get his work done and then have 30 minutes of downtime afterwards where he's allowed to play games. Many other children play the games and watch videos first without oversight and then catch up later while my son takes his turn gaming. My other son tells similar stories about his elementary school, kids that seem to have the most trouble in class are finding ways to get on other sites rather than what the teacher has asked. If the computer wasn't an option, it stands to reason that the teacher would be able to see the child struggling or getting distracted and that's where interventions could occur. I'd like to say that securely classroom is the answer to our prayers. Teachers

[00:34:50] can oversee screens shut down tabs and make students stay on certain pages my son's school was part of the pilot program and i would say its rollout did not inspire confidence teachers were doing less teaching and more monitoring like a police guard checking all the screens for violators some teachers indiscriminately would close all tabs including during a test limiting my son's ability to finish it is a band-aid fix that ultimately does not get to the root of the problem the tech companies will continue to say that they have found ways to fix schools issues with technology because it is in their interest to keep the contracts and to sell products that can't work magic on the inherent issue. Ultimately, the answer to the overuse of screens

[00:35:26] in the classroom is not the use of more technology. Oh, I'm running out of time. I pray that you will take these comments to heart. It is alarming as a parent to hear what is going on, the accumulating evidence around technology usage, not be able to do anything about it. Thank you, speaker number three. Speaker number four. Good evening. My name is Heather Crook and When I live in the Tuckahoe District, I stand before you as a parent of two, and I'm deeply

[00:36:03] concerned by a growing crisis in our classrooms, the overwhelming and often detrimental reliance on screens. Technology is a tool, but in Henrico County, it has become a crutch. We are risking our children's education, mental health, and privacy, and we must prioritize their well-being over digital convenience.

[00:36:25] Far too often, we outsource high-quality instruction to gamified apps, sacrificing true academic rigor. During asynchronous learning, I have witnessed my children not being taught but rather being conditioned.

[00:36:40] They were trapped in a tedious loop of timed drills, forced to guess and repeat the drill until they hit a target score. There was no meaningful feedback, no true pedagogy, just a superficial dopamine hit disguised as education. Decades of research show that children learn best through tactile, hands-on experiences, not by staring at a screen waiting for a digital prize. Furthermore, the Virginia Constitution makes clear a foundational promise that textbooks shall be provided at

[00:37:17] no cost to every public school student. By relying on Chromebooks for core materials, This division is failing to uphold its mandate and neglects our children's constitutional rights. An online module is not, and never will be, an acceptable substitute for a physical textbook.

[00:37:39] We saw how fragile this digital-only approach is when a single cable was recently cut and halted instructions for an entire day. Reliable learning should not depend on Wi-Fi.

[00:37:54] It should be built on resilient systems that keep education accessible at all times. But even when the Wi-Fi is working, this forced screen dependence is failing our students. Beyond the classroom walls, this forced reliance on screens is actively harming our students.

[00:38:13] We are ignoring the explicit warnings of child psychologists who link excessive screen time to skyrocketing anxiety and shattered attention spans. worse we are exposing our children's personal data to third-party breaches unapproved data collection and forcing them to be beta testers for unregulated ai let me be clear this is not a failing of our students or sorry our teachers or our schools but a systemic issue and the responsibility to fix it falls squarely on this board i implore you stop funneling money into expensive unproven

[00:38:52] apps and honor the state constitution protect our children's minds limit screen time thank you speaker number four and bring physical textbooks back in henrico county school boards thank you speaker number five hi my name is angela clinton and i have a student at godwin back in march i informed the school board and dr cashwell of a breach in security such that thousands of hcps students my daughter including and across multiple schools were spending their days on a wide open

[00:39:29] internet with everything from tv to porn available to them throughout the school day for months on end this was the second breach of which i am aware in a single school year my child reported other breaches last year all the while parents myself included were being sent securely emails reassuring them that their child was on task it is appalling that it took a parent me about 15 seconds to learn that her child had not been receiving an education for months and more appalling that it has taken the district 74 days and counting to not inform other parents that this

[00:40:04] ever even happened if my child was skipping class for months the school would have a duty to inform me yet thousands of students were effectively skipping class and parents weren't informed we rightfully cared about the months of lost learning time due to covid why not the months of lost learning time due to laptop use when i discussed the situation with brian maddox the security landscape has described to me will continue to permit evasion detracting from learning and unauthorized sharing of student data when i asked the district why they would not be notifying parents what happened i was told because the problem was in the process of being

[00:40:40] fixed as if months and years of lost learning can be fixed without parent knowledge for hcps's current actions parents don't even deserve to know so my ask today is the same as my ass 74 days ago tell parents what happened advertise an analog option give parents the opportunity for actual consent and pursue more intentional tech policies because of time i'll discuss just one of these which is advertising an analog option parents are under the impression that their child is required to have a school issue device and use school approved ed tech apps the district rightfully

[00:41:16] advertises vaccines for safety and resources for community services but it does not inform parents if they have the option to opt out of a situation that may be causing direct harm to their child think visiting eating disorders content on instagram gambling or messaging with adult strangers i have moved to everyone listening i have moved my child to analog and it is such a relief you don't have to wait on the school district you can tell your your school you're going analog today. Tomorrow will be day 75. I hope parents will receive an email from HCPS that is

[00:41:54] honest and humble, recognizing that mistakes were made, but they intend to set them right and give parents another option. Thank you for your time. Thank you, speaker number five. Speaker number six.

[00:42:10] Hello, my name is Tim Bronstetter. I'm a Godwin parent. I wanted to talk about the one-to-one devices and the possible expansion of the securely service ever since my two daughters were given one-to-one devices the majority of my time in relation to their learning is spent trying to keep them on task because the devices offer so many ways for them to avoid their school work there's no question that a laptop can be an extremely powerful tool for learning but that's not what these devices are set up for and we're asking too much of children even teenagers to stay

[00:42:48] focused and on task um sorry uh when the machine that is in front of them is designed to take their attention away um also this is combined with their seemingly endless ingenuity for skirting the safeguards um how much money and effort are we going to be putting into trying to recreate the learning environment that students had before these devices arrived in the classroom you could spend thousands of dollars and tens of thousands of dollars and add as many zeros as you like and

[00:43:26] thousands of hours and it could take one of these teens 30 minutes to work your way around the security devices that we have in place right now. I have serious concerns about expanding the contract with Securely and doubling down on that system. They've only just settled a lawsuit in California regarding how they've handled student data. I also have serious reservations about the idea of teachers having to act as security guards watching cameras while they are trying to teach.

[00:43:59] In tackling my concerns, I'd like to ask the board to consider two things. Number one is to direct the schools to be more transparent with parents about the ability to opt out of one-to-one devices uh and two to consider eliminating one-to-one the need for one-to-one devices and going back to a computer lab model where students are actually learning about the technology in front of them uh my daughter went to the opt-out of the the device the one-to-one device and she

[00:44:34] brings home books and notes and i can't guarantee that she's studying but at least i know that those books and notes haven't got her on TikTok or Instagram. I appreciate your time. Have a good day. Thank you speaker number six. Speaker number seven. Hello my name is Ross Collin. I have a fourth grader at Gaten Elementary School. I'm also concerned about screen time in schools. I share the concerns brought up by the other speakers. One thing that impresses me about this issue is this

[00:45:09] is a truly cross-partisan concern. Left, right, and center, every parent I know feels there is too much screen time in schools and we need less of it. And we want to support teachers in getting back to face-to-face teaching and away from screen-to-screen teaching. One request that I have for the board is to gather more data and to present us, parents and community members, with a clearer, more detailed picture of screen time in hcpss how much screen time is typical for students at

[00:45:42] different ages at different schools in different subject areas what kind of work is being done on screens is this individual work group work whole class work or what and for what purposes are teachers using screens in classes the more data that we can get on this in the clearer picture THAT PARENTS CAN HAVE THE SCHOOL BOARD CAN HAVE I THINK THE BETTER OUR CHANCES FOR GETTING THE POLICY RIGHT THANK YOU THANK YOU SPEAKER NUMBER SEVEN SPEAKER NUMBER EIGHT HELLO MY NAME IS BEGAN CORNISH AND I HAVE THREE KIDS MY OLDEST WILL BE IN THIRD GRADE AT GATON ELEMENTARY IN

[00:46:22] THE FALL AND MY MIDDLE KID WILL BE STARTING KINDERGARTEN I'M A LICENSE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER WHO LONG STORY FELL INTO MARKETING FOR TECH COMPANIES I'M NOT AN ED TECH BUT I THE SALES pitch is the same across all tech companies so I can tell you pretty much word for word what these companies are going to say to you when they try to sell you their project product so for most of the technology they're going to sell you they're not going to tell you that nobody has properly checked the claims where researchers have looked about into tech and schools the answer keeps coming back that it's not really helping schools around the world have bet really big on technology and they're not seeing kids doing better in reading or math and in fact the kids who spend

[00:47:02] the most time on computers at school are doing worse but we keep buying it because the people who sell it are very good at their jobs and when they tell you the product is researched back they'll wave a study at you but they're not going to tell you that it was not under real world conditions it was conducted by hand-picked teachers who are often incentivized to make it work extra training and support and everyone's very motivated and often what got tested was more of a strong curriculum with a good lesson plan where the gains came from the teaching not just the screen and the same children might have done just as well with a workbook they'll tell you that their technology solves teacher burnout but anyone who's ever worked in a school knows that

[00:47:38] burnout is not a software problem teachers are worn down because there are too many kids in their room and there are too few adults in the building and the pay doesn't match the work and what fixes that is wages staffing and smaller classes in place of proof we're accepting a promise and then we run their experiments ourselves with our children as the subjects and district by district our whole country is testing this tech for them and it takes years sometimes a decade or more to learn that the technology doesn't work and meanwhile our kids are falling behind and our already thin budget is going into silicon valley's pockets now you might be wondering how these companies could fail so badly for so long and still be thriving but they haven't failed they've

[00:48:17] succeeded exactly what they were built to do which is to make money they never had to succeed at helping kids learn they only had ever had to succeed at convincing us that they could so the So the question isn't whether we can afford tech, but rather where is the evidence that it helps? And that evidence needs to be gathered before our children are the ones gathering it.

[00:48:35] So before you sign anything, ask for three things. Show me independent research that you didn't pay for proving this improves learning. Show me a school where it worked after the free pilot year, and show me it does something a good teacher with good resources cannot already do.

[00:48:50] And if they can't pass those three tests, skip the tech and hire more teachers for the sake of our kids. Thank you. - Thank you, speaker number eight. Speaker number nine.

[00:49:06] - Good evening. My name is Jane Dye. My oldest of three children is a rising first grader at Pemberton Elementary. Before he reached kindergarten though, my husband and I deliberated over how we would educate our kids. We seriously considered homeschooling.

[00:49:24] Screens and technology use have been our top concern. And word around town was that there's quite a bit of screen time in our schools. were lucky to grow up largely without technology as it presents today and we all now know that healthy boundaries surrounding technology are necessary for healthy students emotionally mentally socially and physically so before our son enrolled in kindergarten we requested meetings with the principal and with a kindergarten teacher to get a better idea of how tech was used and importantly

[00:50:00] how much time was spent with screens we were told 20 minutes per week of iReady for math and 20 minutes per week for reading what we found out throughout the school year was that there was also time for listening to stories on individual tablets with headphones so-called brain breaks where videos with songs or stories were played on a smart board and music class often included youtube videos and those are just a few examples of additional unquantified screen time the school ran a denim clothing drive for charity and the reward for the class with the most donations was

[00:50:36] extra tech time in the final weeks of the school year my son's kindergarten class visited a first grade classroom he was so excited after school that day i asked him how it was and he told me that a first grader told him they get real computers that was his takeaway tech should be a tool to assist and not what it's all about for students i think we've gone too far particularly for five and six year olds and we're doing them a disservice i believe the teachers and administrators do intend to keep screen time minimal and henrico county schools provide a

[00:51:12] wonderful education it's a huge reason we chose to live here i'm hopeful that we can come up with ways to be more intentional with technology use we witness decreased attention spans higher anxiety decreased ability to connect relationally or to focus for extended periods of time we ask that you eliminate devices for the youngest students, reduce one-to-one device programs in elementary schools, and ban device use during unstructured time. Thank you so much. Thank you, speaker number

[00:51:46] nine. Speaker number 10. Dr. Cashwell, members of the school board, employees, and guests, I give thanks to God for this opportunity to stand before you today. I come simply to say thank you.

[00:52:13] Thank you for exercising your role as leaders to inspire community advocates like myself to serve the school district. Your vision and guidance put wind in the sails of community servants like myself. Finally, to stay true to what I signed up to speak about, I'm excited to let you know we have already recruited half the high schools as well as middle and elementary schools in their feeder pattern to implement LIL clubs.

[00:52:39] LIL stands for Ladies in Leadership. Through this experience, we hope to inspire more girls to see the virtues of golf through the prism of science, technology, engineering, art, math, and leadership.

My team is already looking forward to the start of the next school year.

[00:52:57] We won't rest until we see more girls on high school golf teams. Thank you. Thank you, speaker number 10. Speaker number 11. Good evening, Chairperson, School Board Members, Superintendent, Distinguished Guests here.

[00:53:22] My name is Dr. Shawn M. Nicholson, and I'm here to invite the Henrico County community to participate in our Juneteenth Community Day at the Academy of Virginia Randolph on June 19th from 12 to 4. While we honor that important moment in American history, this event is also about looking forward to creating opportunities for future generations.

[00:53:47] This event will bring together students, families, educators, businesses, workforce development organizations, faith-based partners, and community leaders for an afternoon of education, empowerment, and community engagement. Attendees will have access to community resources, job readiness information, opportunities to enroll and receive industry-recognized micro-credentials, local businesses, vendors, live entertainment, youth activities, physical fitness, and a STEM-focused drone soccer exhibition that showcases innovation and emerging technology. One of the things I appreciate most about this event is that it will connect the classroom to the community. It gives

[00:54:26] students an opportunity to see pathways, careers, leadership opportunities, entrepreneurship, and even lifelong success while helping families to connect with organizations and resources that can make a meaningful difference. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Ray Beasley and a fellow collaborator, as well as publicly thank principal Adria Mayo of Academy of Virginia Randolph in Wrightville County public schools and all of the community partners that are helping to make this event possible.

[00:54:56] I respectfully invite members of the board, HCPS staff, students, families and community stakeholders join in this June 19th celebration of freedom, unity, opportunity, and collective strength for our communities. Together we can continue to build a stronger Henrico County, one where every student has an opportunity to learn, grow, and to thrive. So thank you for your time and continued commitment to the students and families of Henrico County. Thank you speaker number 11. Speaker number 12.

[00:55:26] Good evening. My name is Bill Richter and I'm the father of a middle schooler at Pocahontas middle school and elementary school or at Gaten elementary. I'm here tonight to encourage the school board to reduce the reliance on computers for classwork and homework. Learning a new math skill or reading a difficult passage or an essay or book can be challenging and it requires focus, careful thinking, and deep engagement. When every student has a laptop open for hours at a time, they're faced with a constant source of tempting distraction. Think about how much harder it is to

[00:56:04] concentrate on a new and occasionally frustrating skill when with a single click you can instead read an electronic version of a graphic novel you've checked out or type notes to your friend in a shared google document or some other distraction that i probably don't even know about we don't ask our kids to learn long division on the playground and we shouldn't require them to learn while they're surrounded by games and media that have been fine-tuned to capture their attention i understand that the district is considering stricter monitoring and tracking of technology use in the classroom but that step alone would just place additional burdens on teachers and reduce the time that they can spend engaging directly with their students i'm not

[00:56:41] against technology or online learning but i encourage the district to restore balance to its educational practices to reduce distractions and help students teachers and families work together to help our students learn and master challenging subjects thank you thank you speaker number 12. speaker number 13. good evening my name is amber rhodes i'm a former henrico middle school teacher at Cuyacus and Middle where Ms. Shea filled in for my class so I truly appreciate everything you all do. I come on behalf of nearly 1,000 Henrico parents, teachers, and community

[00:57:20] members across 71 schools who signed a petition for the intentional technology use in our schools. This isn't against technology or against our teachers who are doing the best within the guidelines the county has set. It's a request to use it intentionally, introduced gradually, in developmentally appropriate ways with clear district guidance for teachers and evidence that backs it up in jared cooney horvath's review the digital delusion the average ed tech program shows a learning effect of about 0.3 a teacher giving live instruction is roughly twice that and a teacher with small group nearly four times that the most powerful tool in any classroom is not a

[00:57:57] device it is a teacher that is why this spring the u.s surgeon general urged a return to textbooks and paper and the national teachers union 1.8 million educators called for screen-free classrooms through second grade when teachers themselves ask for this that it is not a complaint about them it is a call to support them you don't have to wait for new state guidance you and dr cashwell can act tonight our petition lists eight asks but here are four that you can begin with now number one eliminate devices in pre-k through second grade shared carts only for required testing number two block youtube gaming and social media on student devices number three ban devices during unstructured

[00:58:35] time recess lunch passing periods when students should be with peers and not screens number four invest in professional learning that helps teachers judge whether a tool truly helps kids learn and evaluate platforms for efficacy and safety because i'm a former henrico teacher this is where i see your greatest opportunity i've worked with school districts across the state and henrico's professional learning is truly unmatched you already have the team to lead on this imagine aiming that expertise at one question does this tool actually help a child learn and is

[00:59:09] it safe i know firsthand how hard it is when the answer is unclear when a platform arrives because the county has paid for it and teachers are left to make it work i've been that teacher and what i wanted most in those moments wasn't another program it was someone asking whether it was working and that's the culture shift within reach here from measuring the quantity of technology to protecting the quality of learning i encourage the district to analyze the current programs in place and where technology dollars aren't delivering redirect them to more support staff better teacher pay and the hands-on resources that actually move learning henrico has a chance to lead on something

[00:59:48] parents are clearly telling you that they want we're not asking you to study it or to start thinking about it, we're asking you to act. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 13. Speaker number 14. Hi, my name is Gracie Herbert. I'm the mom of two boys, one at Pocahontas and one at Godwin.

[01:00:19] I'm also the PTA president at Pocahontas, was the PTA president at Knuckles Farm and have advocated on behalf of Henrico County and the Virginia PTA at our capital multiple years in a row. education is very important to me public education in general is very important to me half of my neighborhood didn't covet left and went to private schools which i find to be very disappointing because

that's obviously not solving our problem that's fixing their problem they went to schools that did not have large amounts of technology use they went to schools where there

[01:00:53] was a lot more analog learning styles which i feel like is important both of my kids have adhd I have ADHD. They were lucky to inherit that from me. But I cannot imagine being in school as a kid with ADHD and trying, if you gave me a computer as a 12-year-old or a 15-year-old, I would have been playing Minesweeper all day.

[01:01:19] And I still, or Oregon Trail, because that's, you know, the stuff in the more forward direction. Both my kids are struggling. Since they've been home, they're required to write a paragraph in order to play video games. They can't spell. I have a rising seventh grader that spelled the word write W-R-T-E this week.

[01:01:38] So I'm embarrassed for him because he never has to write in school. I homeschooled them when they were in first grade after the first year of COVID and in fourth grade instead of sending them to virtual school because that is my nightmare, having to monitor them on a school computer.

[01:01:56] And I hate that for these teachers that they have to monitor these kids on computers. I get emails weekly about my kids playing on games. They're on YouTube. How are they on YouTube? I've contacted both of their computer specialist people in their schools.

[01:02:13] They're not supposed to have YouTube on the computers. My children have used their powers for evil and figured out how to get in there and make a whole separate desktop on their own desktop. I don't know how to do that. I can barely turn my computer on to, like, write this that I'm not reading from.

[01:02:30] but i am also disappointed that instead of stepping back from technology we are stepping like doubling down and now we're monitoring them um i mean i don't think that that's a step in the right direction i've printed off other schools like sweden is developing a whole new program going back to books and papers la county is doing the same this year there are um places in vermont they're passing bills to have less screen time for our children that they're just they're not moving forward the test scores are saying they're not moving forward and i don't think doubling

[01:03:06] down on more technology to monitor them is going the right way thank you thank you speaker number 14. speaker number 15. good evening my name is corey booker and i'm a parent of two sons a rising seventh grader at tuckahoe middle school and a rising third grader at tuckahoe elementary i'm here tonight to ask the school board to place limits on the use of laptops and similar technology particularly in middle school my oldest son entered middle school this year and one thing

[01:03:44] stood out the ever-present and all-consuming use of his laptop it was everything it's how his teachers posted the assignments it's the closest thing to a textbook he had it's where he did the majority of his daily school work and where he took all tests and quizzes and it was a source of constant distraction at tms the laptop is always open one of the most disappointing things to me was that there's not a backup to for teaching or testing on three separate occasions

[01:04:22] my son went to school prepared to take a test at the end of a unit but his computer wouldn't turn on and he wasn't able to secure a loaner laptop from the school's help desk because of a computer malfunction, his teachers would not allow him to take the test. There was no way to print out a test and let him take it on a piece of paper. He was present, he was prepared, and he could not participate because of

a technology malfunction. I'm also concerned about the unlimited use of the internet and all its tools and distractions. My son spent a significant amount of time emailing with his

[01:04:59] friends playing online games and checking the scores from last night's games this past school year. I think it's naive to think that more technology is the answer. Our kids are smart and our teachers should not have the responsibility to monitor 20 kids in their classroom and continue to teach. Our current technology plan is like giving each student a cooler full of drinks.

[01:05:26] It's got lots of healthy and useful drinks. It's got water, hydration for after sports, protein shakes, but it's also got sugary sodas, high caffeinated monsters, high noons, and beer. We have classes where we tell our kids that soda and alcohol are bad and tools so our teachers can see what our kids are drinking, but it's still up to our kids.

[01:05:52] We don't ever close that cooler's lid. My ask for you at the school board is to close the lid and limit the use of laptops and technology in middle school Thank you speaker number 15 speaker number 16 I don't know if I need to speak because you've heard such great things, but I wrote it. So I'm gonna say it I'm Michelle alder. I'm in the three top district. I this fall I'll have a fifth grader a second grader and a kindergartner and I was gonna share some of the research that I've and facts that I've learned

[01:06:30] But then I realized, like, that's your guys' job to know this stuff and to make the changes. So, and I know that you are. I know Madison is. He's my person, whatever. And so I'm sure the rest of you are, and you'll discuss it and make changes. So I'm going to just tell you quickly the two different experiences at the time my first grader and fourth grader had this year.

[01:06:51] My first grader had a teacher that was great, did not like technology. He's been there for a long time. So he only used it as a tool, which is what it's meant to be, a supplemental tool. They used it when she didn't know the answer to a question, they could look up the facts, right?

[01:07:09] And I watched him grow in his creative writing stories that I have saved. I have a box full because I'm like, who is this kid? I've watched him learn in his critical thinking and solving problems and getting along and playing and solving problems with his friends or and his classmates and he cried on the bus stop um on the last day of school because he was so sad on the counterpart my fourth grader didn't want to go to school um but when he did he was on his chromebook and that was during school work but it was also during free time it was also during

[01:07:46] indoor recess he would tell me he played minecraft during recess like wow so um it seemed like the device became his teacher instead of a tool the worst part is he'd come home and want to log back in because they put these games that you think are teaching games but instead they're dopamine hits and all he wants to do is get to the next level or earn the next badge and i'm like and then we have to become the bad people and tell him no um and then he's not his reading comprehension has struggled his math has gone down and now my first graders handwriting is way better than

[01:08:25] my fourth graders handwriting because he doesn't write anything So I read the 30, there were 30 comments submitted online. I don't know if you guys have read them yet, or I know you will, but they're not just one or two sentences, they're paragraphs of parents like us who are begging for changes.

[01:08:47] And I know that like changes were made quickly when COVID happened. So like what was said before, like these changes could be made now. We don't need to discuss, we can implement them now. So

thank you. thank you speaker number 16. speaker number 17. my name is marlene sherlock and our family lives

[01:09:22] in the fairfield district done finally after 15 years we're done with hcps it was hard to decide how best to well finish off my mission of public commentary does one toss a grenade and let the background burst into flames sing a rousing finale worthy of a Broadway hit no i wouldn't like that or just fade gently into the night and not let the door hit me on the way out.

[01:09:51] It's timely then, I suppose, that I'm reminded of President Eisenhower's farewell address of 1961. A West Point graduate, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, a military man if there ever was one, warned against the very military-industrial complex he was so a part of. How germane might his words of caution be to you if we replace the word military with educational he said and i'll substitute in the councils of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence whether sought or unsought

[01:10:30] by the educational industrial complex the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist and just sentences later added akin to and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial educational posture has been the technological revolution during recent decades how true do you find those words even now 65 years later in closing he said down the long lane of the history yet to be written america knows that this world of ours ever growing

[01:11:07] smaller must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate and be instead a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect as a school division you have the tremendous power and responsibility to teach our kids do it wisely do it efficiently do it with cooperation amongst yourselves with our board of supervisors with the state and most importantly with the community at large i wish i had more time to list off the many many individuals who have so profoundly impacted

[01:11:44] our family in a most positive way. But three minutes is three minutes. So I've taken the liberty to provide a copy of my comments this evening and included those names. We are forever grateful. So here we are. Most languages have short, hopeful endings. Hasta luego. Au revoir.

[01:12:06] I'll get a little wordy. Until we meet again, I bid you good night and goodbye. Thank you, Speaker number 17. And thank you to all the speakers who came out tonight and anyone who joined them, we appreciate your public comment. We will now move on to the approval of the consent agenda. Are there any requests from a from school board members that an item be separated for

[01:12:40] discussion or individual action? Chair Irving, I would like to pull out item 7.10, code of student conduct um i'd had a few questions i wanted to know dr cashwell if um the dependent virginia department of education provided any guidance for the commonwealth on implementing the new law around the bell to bell schedule i'm not aware of any guidance specific to that i do know that in the prior year uh you know the the guidance was issued and and there hasn't been

[01:13:19] a significant change so I would imagine that that guidance still remains current or perhaps there may be some more forthcoming thank you and then I'm also particularly interested in understanding how the schools are going to address certain situations and I didn't know if we had any updates yet around implementation but I'd love to hear those sure certainly upon approval of the STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND ANY UPDATES WITHIN. ONCE THAT'S APPROVED BY THE BOARD,

WE THEN WORK WITH OUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY'RE TRAINED ON THE LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTAND

[01:13:57] IT. I WOULD NOTE THAT SPECIFICALLY WITHIN THE LANGUAGE AND CHANGES BEING PROPOSED FOR THIS EVENING, YOU KNOW, THE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE WOULD BE THE REMOVAL OF PREVIOUS LANGUAGE THAT SAID THAT A CELL PHONE MIGHT BE USED AT A TEACHER'S DISCRETION. THAT'S BEEN REMOVED BECAUSE THAT'S no longer permissible and that's also in accordance with code so that's a change to the cell phone language as well as the there is a note within the new code that students may not be suspended for possessing the cell phone in school and so we've clarified that in our code I mean in our student

[01:14:37] code of conduct to be in alignment with the code of Virginia so those would be the substantive changes there and certainly again if approved then we would work with our administrative teams to make sure they understood what the the appropriate consequences were and we do outline in the code what those look like at various levels that are developmentally appropriate and would work with our teams to make sure there was deep understanding of that thank you for that and i do have a few more as i went out to the community and really wanted to make sure that families understood to

[01:15:08] help us with some of the adjustments and so one of those areas particularly is around students who demonstrate compulsive or addictive technology use behaviors and are we prepared from a staff perspective to assist with that with counselors i mean certainly if made aware by a student or parent of a concern like that we would certainly work with our school counseling teams and any individual student need to to work to meet that and if it wouldn't be something we were quick to handle with then we could certainly work with our families to have the right resources you

[01:15:45] may know we have some wrap around resources with care solace and others where we can connect families with care that's appropriate for them and then the other piece is around transparency and re-promoting care solace and some of the other opportunities that families can take advantage of so that when students do come to school families are already reminded of the resources that are available and can help us with the transition for some students and so that's less of a question

[01:16:19] but more feedback so that while we will vote on the change I think that being more transparent over the summer and allowing parents to help us in the school with this change and so it's listed here in board docs will we be sharing more of the changes regarding policy with parents over the summer so each year as the new school year begins the new student code of conduct and any changes within are shared with both students families and our families and as you know the

[01:16:54] student code of conduct covers lots of rules of conduct not just around cell phone use but we would certainly reiterate and we have actually in the past few summers made sure that both principals, maybe in the case of teachers are reiterating our expectations, not just with the code, but division-wide and school-wide that they are not allowed bell to bell, that start of the day to end of the day. And certainly this year's student code of conduct, if approved, reflects that same expectation and will continue to reiterate that. And so that student code of

[01:17:28] conduct, the code of student conduct, usually comes out at the beginning of the school year. what i am asking and feedback that i have received is instead of waiting until the school year starts to share the information can there be a campaign or a launch to help families in advance of that so that they can help educators because educators are going to be the one in the classroom helping to enforce and our

community and our families and partners can help us if they receive the information before the start of the school year. Yes, and we previously did that last year with the changes to

[01:18:06] the code. There was some summer messaging that went. It actually went from the schools, and then we had some messages that went out division-wide as well, but we'll continue that messaging and work with our school leaders and get their input as well. Thank you so much. Colleagues, anything else? Okay. Hearing no more requests for individual action, we will move on to approving the consent agenda. Is there a motion? I move that we approve the consent agenda for items 7.01 through 7.28

[01:18:43] as presented. Okay. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Young. All in favor, say aye. THE AYES HAVE IT ITEMS 7.01 THROUGH 7.28 ON THE CONSENT AGENDA ARE APPROVED COLLEAGUES WILL NOW MOVE ON TO UNFINISHED BUSINESS DOES ANYBODY HAVE ANY UNFINISHED BUSINESS MRS SHEA THANK YOU SO MUCH MR. IRVING I JUST WANTED TO BE VERY TIMELY THAT'S CALLED UNFINISHED BUSINESS BECAUSE IT IS SOMETHING WE'RE STILL WORKING ON BUT JUST IN CONTEXT OF THE FEEDBACK THE BOARD'S BEEN RECEIVING THROUGH THE SURVEY EMAILS AND OTHER FEEDBACK ABOUT TECHNOLOGY USE I WANT TO

[01:19:21] um encourage the community that the board's been discussing this informally for some time um even that there were updated instructions for this past year about not using technology during indoor recess and limiting screen time during uh free time more formally at the april um at one of the april school board work sessions we per we received a presentation from teaching learning and technology in hc hcps this included information about current technology usage the direction of instruction in Henrico and what the support looks like within the school building.

[01:19:58] Anyone in the community who missed that and would like to watch the full presentation and board discussion, it's on the Henrico school's YouTube page that can be accessed. But something I think is really germane is that during the presentation the team shared that HTPS will work this summer on a guidance document for teachers for students for all stakeholders that considers but is not limited to purposeful balanced use of technology it will be grounded in research there

[01:20:30] is an https lit review on technology usage in board docs for that meeting and also grounded in requirements of the virginia code it will be informed by students staff families and community partners there will be clear grade level expectations including screen time considerations so these are things that the division has been talking about and has a plea to put a guidance document in place before the start of the next school year if anyone who would like to be part of the work group or focus group they can reach out to Courtney Bastain who you will if you have

[01:21:06] not met already you will get to meet if you virtually if you watch the presentation she did a lot of the presentation she's our director of innovation and she shares um her email there to contact her but her hcps handle is kd busting um for email so um this remains unfinished it remains continuous work that the board is working on but all stakeholder voices are um including parents and students and staff are really important in working on this document and these guidelines SO THAT WE CAN BEST SERVE OUR STUDENTS AND OUR STAFF AND OUR FAMILIES IN ALL ASPECTS,

[01:21:44] BUT PARTICULARLY THIS, WHICH IS REALLY COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL POINT OF DISCUSSION. SO I JUST WANTED TO ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNITY THAT IF YOU MISS THAT, IT IS SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING. THANK YOU, CHAIR.

[01:22:00] THANK YOU, MR. SHEA. COLLEAGUES? HEARING NONE, WE WILL MOVE ON TO NEW BUSINESS. COLLEAGUES, IS THERE ANY NEW BUSINESS? HEARING NONE, WE WILL MOVE ON TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT of meeting dates the school board's next meeting will be a work session on thursday august 13th 2026 at 3 p.m meeting times may be adjusted as needed this meeting is adjourned



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