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Henrico County School Board Work Session, Thursday, September 24, 2026

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[00:02:47] I would like to welcome everyone to the September 24, 2026 work session of the Henrico County School Board. The first item on the agenda is the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:03:04] Miss Eileen Cox will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence. 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.

[00:03:25] remain standing as you are able for the moment of silence. Thank you. At this time I would I want to note Mrs. Atkins physical absence from today's work session. Mrs. Atkins notified board members of her request to participate electronically from remote location due to a medical condition that

[00:04:00] prevents her physical attendance. Our school board policy P2-04-006 electronic participation in meetings from remote locations requires a majority vote of the board members present at the primary or central meeting location to allow a board member to participate in a meeting from a remote location per the school board policy do i hear a motion i move that the school board approve miss atkins participation from a remote location thank you mrs kinsella uh do i hear a second second thank you mr young uh we will engage in a roll call vote uh mrs shea aye mr young

[00:04:39] aye mrs kinsella aye and i vote aye mrs atkins request has been approved this meeting is being live streamed on the hcps website we'll begin our meeting with a roll call when i call your name please verbally indicate your presence mrs shea mr young present mrs kinsella present mrs atkins present thank you please let the record reflect that a quorum of the board is physically present mrs atkins is participating electronically i ask mrs atkins to verbally note if she lee if she needs

[00:05:12] to leave the meeting and subsequently verbally note when she returns we will now move on to the the approval of the agenda. Colleagues, is there a motion to approve the agenda? I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting. Thank you, Mr. Young. Do I have a second?

[00:05:29] Second. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. On favor, say aye. Oh, sorry. Aye. No, roll call vote. My apologies. Mrs. Shea. Aye. Mr. Young. Aye. Mrs. Kinsella. Aye. Mrs. Atkins. Aye. And I vote aye. The ayes have it. The agenda is approved. The next item on the agenda is a closed meeting. 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 and A2 of section 2.2-3711 of the code of Virginia 1950

[00:06:08] as amended pertaining to the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific school board employees, and the request for religious exemption from compulsory attendance that would involve the disclosure of information contained in scholastic records concerning individual students. Thank you, Mrs. Shea. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Young. Roll call. Mrs. Shea? Aye. Mr. Young? Aye. Mrs.

[00:06:39] Kinsella? Aye. Mrs. Atkins? Aye. An aye vote aye. The ayes have it. We will now go into closed session we will reconvene the work session at the conclusion of our

[00:06:49] closed meeting we are back is there a motion to certify closed session I move

[00:17:47] that the school board certify by a recorded vote that to the best of each school board members knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting 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 mr. Shado

[00:18:06] Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. We'll do a roll call. Mrs. Shea? Aye. Mr. Young? Aye. Mrs. Kinsella? Aye. Mrs. Atkins? Aye. And I vote aye. The ayes have it. Closed session has been certified. Dr. Cashwell. Thank you. Good afternoon, members of the board. For the first item, I'm recommending your approval of the request for release from compulsory attendance for student case number 26-27-RE-9.

[00:18:36] And this authorizes, I mean, and this is related to bona fide religious beliefs and the name of the student is protected under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. Is there a motion to approve the request for religious exemption from compulsory attendance?

[00:18:53] I move that the school board approve the request for release from compulsory school attendance for student case number 26-27-RE-9 based on bona fide religious beliefs. Thank you, Mrs. Kinsella. Do I have a second? Second. Thank you, Mr. Young. I'll roll call vote.

[00:19:11] Mrs. Shea? Aye. Mr. Young? Aye. Mrs. Kinsella? Aye. Mrs. Atkins? Aye. An aye vote aye. The ayes have it. The request for religious exemption from compulsory attendance has been approved. Yes.

[00:19:32] All right. For the next item, yes, the board will receive an update on the living building, which is currently under construction, as well as a sneak peek at some of the innovative learning practices that are going to happen there for students across Henrico County Public Schools, as it is preparing to receive students for experiential learning.

[00:19:54] And as a next step, this will initiate the 30-day public comment period related to the building naming. That period will conclude on October 25th, And following that, we'll be returning at the November 12th meeting with recommendations related to that naming.

[00:20:13] I'll now turn it over to our presenters. Good afternoon, Chairman Irving, members of the school board, Dr. Cashwell and members of the community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide us an update on, to provide you an update on exciting project that reflects Henrico County Public Schools commitment to innovative learning environments and student success.

[00:20:36] Today we're excited to provide an update on the environmental education living building. This project represents much more than a new facility. It is an investment in how students across Henrico experience learning, connected rigorous curriculum with authentic place-based experiences.

[00:20:56] The living building will serve as an instructional hub for the Verina Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainability while also creating new learning opportunities for students across the division. This work connects directly to our Journey to 2030 strategic plan, specifically academic achievement and learning environment.

[00:21:17] There are four connections I'd like to take a moment to emphasize. The Living Building creates rigorous, meaningful, and authentic learning experiences. It provides opportunities for students to engage in project-based experiential and role-world learning. And that learning will occur in a community-connected infrastructure that creates a welcoming learning space.

[00:21:38] And finally, the facility itself demonstrates our commitment to efficient green energy solutions in new construction. Those priorities come together in this project. The facility supports what students are learning, how they are learning it, and the environment in which that learning occurs.

[00:21:55] At this time, I will turn the presentation over to Susan Moore, Director of Capital Outlay and Planning. Good afternoon, Chair Irving, Board Members, and Dr. Cashwell.

[00:22:10] As a reminder, our living building project is located on a portion of the land formerly known as Wilton Farm, which is an approximate 1,200-acre parcel of forested and agricultural land near Osborne Turnpike and the James River.

[00:22:27] The Wilton Farm was established in the 1600s, however, this property has historical roots that run far deeper. The site and surroundings are rich with early Native American history as well as revolutionary and colonial ties. The original home was built in 1753 and the site was visited by notable historic figures, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Lafayette and his troops, just to name a few. The yellow highlighted area is the approximate 60-acre

[00:23:03] site that HCPS is utilizing. The locator symbol shows the location of the new building on a gently sloping open field near Whale Lake. This location is ideal as it is far enough away from the overpass so that vehicular noise isn't audible at the building, nor will it be visible.

[00:23:24] Utilizing the clearing means that no trees needed to be removed for the construction of the new building, and the proximity to the lake allows curriculum to include learning modules on wetlands, water quality, native flora and fauna, and other environmental topics. This slide zooms in on our site and is annotated to show the major landscape features. At the top center, a proposed orchard is shown in a circular Fibonacci sequence pattern, which is envisioned as

[00:24:01] an opportunity for students to leave their mark on the school in sight. For example, each graduating class is invited to plant a tree to commemorate the time they spent at this site so that this mini forest will grow slowly over time, offering an opportunity to watch the trees life cycles. The site will feature various educational stations which will cover the aspects of nature, the environment, and the history of the site. In this aerial view, you can also see the building's relationship with the newly proposed drop-off area. As the visitor

[00:24:39] walks through the wooded area, the woods open up to provide a striking view of the building and the entry. This stunning view is the lake facing elevation of the building. Students will be able to look out over the field, forest, and whale lake. It also promises to be a beautiful and dramatic view of the building. The right side of the building shows the glass enclosed administration area separated by the covered outdoor deck area at the center the left side of the building shows

[00:25:16] the large common space with the classrooms behind it in the foreground the landscaping is shown as a natural habitat to allow insects birds and mammals to thrive and be part of the experience the large expanses of windows are articulated with sunshade devices to minimize heat gain in the warmer months while allowing for free solar heating in the winter. The blue enclosure on the lower level, just left of center, is a restroom space for use during outdoor activities so that

[00:25:50] students who are learning outside don't have to travel upstairs to the main level. This is a view of the lower level where the kids can muster before and after they enter the fields and woods for experiential learning. This area can also serve as an outdoor classroom. You will notice the window views into the equipment spaces of the building. These views allow the students to see the building systems which support the sustainable design approach. The sustainable

[00:26:25] design includes a geothermal-based HVAC system, radiant heat flooring, fire mitigation and potable water systems supported by rainwater collection with a backup well, water purification of the collected rainwater, LED lighting, daylighting throughout the classrooms and common spaces, and a solar array to power building use. What we are building is clearly much more than a traditional school facility. It has been intentionally designed to support sustainable

[00:27:00] practices as well as the instructional experiences that will happen both inside the building and across the property. This slide outlines our updated construction timeline. In clement weather, as well as a delay in the steel package delivery, which is a critical path component, have affected the overall schedule. The first delivery of steel will now come in late October with the completion of the delivery in November. The special nature of this project and the living

[00:27:35] building challenge requires that the building components meet material compliances as well as sourcing and delivery requirements. Meeting these requirements has led to longer lead and delivery times in some cases. It should be noted that the contractor is working with HCPS to allow students access to the site for outdoor experiential learning. Additionally, teaching and learning team members are working to leverage the use of the outdoor spaces like Deep Bottom Park

[00:28:09] and Three Lakes Park for learning during this construction phase. These opportunities will continue throughout construction. This will also allow students to observe and learn about the construction process while they are at the site. I'll now turn it back to Dr. Taylor Snow, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, to introduce the Living Building, how the Living Building will serve students. Thank you, Susan. I'm now excited to dive into all the ways our students and teachers

[00:28:45] will benefit from a school building that is itself a teaching tool. First and foremost, the Living Building will serve as the instructional home for the Varina Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainability. VSES students will attend the Living Building every other day for a three-class instructional block. Courses being taught at the Living Building may include biology through environmental studies, chemistry through environmental studies, energy demand, geographic information systems, and a senior capstone experience along with some new exciting coursework that has been approved for your consideration by our new course approval committee. That creates an

[00:29:25] opportunity that goes well beyond a traditional classroom. Students will be able to move between classroom instruction laboratory experiences the sustainable systems of the building and the surrounding environment as part of their regular school day the living building becomes an extended classroom where science and career and technical education intersect and where students can immediately apply what they are learning at the same time one of our goals from the beginning has been to ensure that the impact of this investment extends beyond the students enrolled in VCS. Later in this presentation, you'll hear more about how our Varina Center students

[00:30:01] will leverage this unique coursework in an authentic and connected way to support common experiences for students across HCPS. It's important to note that the Living Building isn't just a destination for one-off experiences. As I noted, the very design is a testament to what can be learned by engaging with sustainability in an authentic and engaging manner. Students who visit the Living Building will investigate science, history, art, and a host of other disciplines by connecting directly to the environment of Varina through explorations of energy,

[00:30:36] watersheds, the impact of humans on ecosystems, and their own wellness. While VSAS students will use the Living Building as their instructional home, this facility was also designed to create learning opportunities for students across Henrico. There are four major ways we are approaching that work.

[00:30:54] Our Grade 3 and Grade 6 Common Investigations will bring students to the Living Building for curriculum-aligned experiences. Green Wheels for Bright Minds, our Environmental Education Bus Initiative, will extend environmental learning directly to schools through a mobile environmental learning lab, and school-based outreach will support investigations and environmental learning on students' own school grounds and in their communities. Together, these approaches allow the Living Building to serve as both a destination for learning and a catalyst for environmental learning throughout Henrico County. This slide shows

[00:31:31] our sample implementation for the grade 6 common investigation. The intentionality behind this timeline is important. We began this summer by introducing teachers to the living building and engaging them in the development of the investigation itself. This fall, teachers have dedicated professional learning and collaborative planning time to determine how the experience connects with the curriculum that they are already teaching. Students will then build background knowledge and participate

in local or school-based investigations before even arriving at the living building finally the on-site investigation becomes one part of that larger

[00:32:07] sequence followed by analysis application and action planning when students return to school that is how we move from a field trip to an embedded common investigation we will follow a similar intentional process as we prepare to launch the grade 3 common investigation in fall 2027. That means the experience starts before students ever arrive. Before the visit, students build background knowledge along with critical vocabulary, then investigate an environmental issue and begin asking questions. During the experience, they collect authentic

[00:32:43] data, investigate real systems, and explore the environment firsthand. And afterward, they return to school to analyze their findings, communicate conclusions, and plan for informed action the living building visit is one part of a larger instructional sequence that distinction is central to our planning we want the experience embedded within curriculum rather than functioning as a standalone event these principles come together with a detailed overview of our two division-wide common investigations for grade three the experience is intentionally interdisciplinary

[00:33:19] students will engage in ecological journaling explore indigenous geography create with natural earth pigments, and examine agriculture and food ways through the What's Growing Now cooking lab. By grade six, students move into deeper investigation. They will collect abiotic water quality data while paddling on Whale Lake, investigate biological indicators through aquatic macroinvertebrates, explore the history of the property through land, lives, and legacies, and investigate the sustainable systems of the building itself. These are different experiences, but they are intentionally connected to build a coherent learning arc as students matriculate

[00:33:58] through hcp's another important part of our planning is recognizing that students are not learning on an anonymous piece of property the land itself is part of the curriculum students will investigate its ecology but they will also examine the relationships people have had with this land over time this will include narratives of innovation and triumph will also recognize the deep injustices perpetrated on the site through the scourge of enslavement and the treatment of indigenous peoples every learning experience will acknowledge indigenous peoples and their connections to the land and ensure that african-american history and culture associated

[00:34:35] are elevated to their rightful significance alongside the critical environmental understandings of the site additionally the agricultural identity that has helped define the land for millennia not just on the living building site itself but across varina as a whole will be traced directly to the contemporary agricultural approaches that continue to shape varina today environmental learning is ultimately about relationships between natural systems, people, and place, and this property gives students an opportunity to investigate all three. We also recognize that meaningful environmental learning should not depend entirely on traveling to this facility.

[00:35:14] Green Wheels for Bright Minds, our environmental education bus initiative that was graciously funded entirely by community partners at META and through a grant provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, will help us bring hands-on environmental investigations directly to schools through a mobile learning lab. The image you see here is a concept rendering of how that mobile learning environment could support learning stations and hands-on investigations at a school site. As I noted

previously, in addition to the core coursework in which they'll be engaging, VSES students will also play an important role in helping make these division-wide learning

[00:35:51] experiences possible. Beginning with the 27-28 school year, we are proposing the addition of two courses specifically designed to give visas students greater ownership of the living building and its programming first through introduction to plant systems students will help design plan grow and maintain the agricultural experiences that support our grade 3 programming that includes growing seasonal foods that students will use to explore foodways as well as plants and natural materials that can support experiences such as earth earth pigment paint making our new senior

[00:36:26] internship will be based entirely at the living building. Senior VSES students will work alongside our environmental education team to help plan and implement programming for the grade 3 and grade 6 common investigations. In doing so, they gain authentic hands-on learning experiences while taking on a meaningful leadership role within the facility to help make the living building work.

[00:36:49] Additionally, as we prepare for the opening of the living building, we have also been working through the process of establishing a permanent name for the facility. As early as last school year students were asked to ideate around not only potential names for the living building and its grounds but also around what their priorities were to ensure that their learning experiences are represented. These priorities and suggestions will be provided as part of the 30-day public comment period that will be outlined on the next slide. The steering committee that engaged in this work was composed of representatives including the groups noted above. This group will form the

[00:37:24] foundation of a standing Henrico County Public Schools Environmental Education and Sustainability steering committee that will also serve to elevate our division sustainability efforts going forward. Our recently revised policy on the naming of school facilities will dictate the next steps in our building naming process. Beginning tonight, we will ask to initiate a 30-day period during which members of the community will provide comment around the name of the building and grounds, along with priorities they feel should be represented. Upon the closing of that public comment period on October 25th, central office staff will engage in a process to consider the

[00:38:02] feedback and priorities we've received before passing on a name for approval at the November 12th board meeting. And as our presentation draws to a close, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge some of the partners who have graciously contributed their time and resources to our efforts to build a comprehensive approach to environmental education, from the installation of environmental monitoring systems, an electric bus, and innovative student furniture that will support the instructional initiatives that we've outlined today, while also supporting a host of other programming and support needs a project of this scale and level of innovation doesn't work

[00:38:38] without community investment and we are truly lucky to have partners like these as always we want to thank the board for their supportive innovative learning experiences for the students in hcps and at this time we'll be happy to answer any questions that you may have thank you dr snow um this is more and everyone else um i i think that this is wonderful and i will i will certainly start with my colleague mrs atkins who i know is extremely excited about this not only being in her district but just her general interests and i i know that she wishes that

[00:39:12] she could be here right now so i'll start it off with her can you hear me sure can okay great well you got that right i really do wish uh that i was there with everyone however uh the meat and potatoes are

here and you know it's many minds as many hands and one shared belief and what is possible and i'm i'm very very grateful i also just want to make sure we all keep in mind that as we move forward with this project we're not just building for our school communities

[00:39:50] we are building with our communities and that part makes me very very happy i'm looking forward to the seven petals of the challenge being established the future internships reviewing the naming recommendations will be very fun just thank you to everyone who have brought us to this point as i was preparing for this i tried to reduce all that i had for those who know me well no i probably you know i did had tons of pages of things and trying to get it coordinated so i narrowed it down to three areas that i'll focus on, which is community stewardship,

[00:40:29] and of course learning and opportunities. So i'm grateful for everyone serving on the steering committee. It is an important first step. I understand starting with the steering committee, you're gonna try to bring in all the expertise and leadership and perspectives necessary to try to move it from this planning phase to almost an implementation phase.

[00:40:55] I do want us to continue to try to find intentional ways to bring more voices from Verena, Sanston, and Highland Springs to the table. I don't know what makes the most sense, whether it's expanding the steering committee, perhaps creating a community advisory group, or just some other meaningful structure, but whatever it looks like, our community certainly should have an opportunity to participate more opportunity to participate and really help shape the vision.

[00:41:28] I personally want Lorina, San Jose and Highland Springs residents to know that just walk around and say, we didn't just watch this building being built. We helped build it. And that's very important to me and thousands more. And so i'm looking forward to the next phase of this expansion.

[00:41:47] The other area around stewardship. Thank you, Ms. Moore and team and all our partners for staying true to the materials. I don't know if folks know this. There are seven petals and materials is one of them, and it has very strict exclusions on toxic materials. And so when there is a delay specifically around materials, it's not so easy to find substitutions because there's some very specific criteria around how we build this and what type of materials that we are going

[00:42:25] to use and with that I did have a few questions I wanted to know if the delay has affected the project budget at all and if so what type of adjustments do you think we need to anticipate at this point they have not indicated that there's going to be a budget related to the steel the delay in the steel delivery. It's more of a time factor. Wonderful. I love hearing that. Just as I alluded to, I only mentioned one of the seven pedals, but when one piece of equipment or material is delayed, I know

[00:43:01] it can be tough because you just can't go out and grab something else. There's some specific requirements in order to meet the living building challenge. And so the other question I had is once the building is open, have we determined who will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining some of those sustainability systems? Because it's a very unique process and very unique system itself. So have we identified or do we have a plan yet for what that looks like?

[00:43:34] Yes, ma'am. We will have dedicated maintenance staff from facilities who will be at the building every day they will also be the personnel who is certified to do the water testing and that's something we have to do in accordance with the design of being able to purify the water in addition to looking at all of our systems keeping the grounds kept as they should be in the areas that are manicured

versus our areas that don't need manicuring so there will be dedicated maintenance staff assigned to the living building thank you for that susan i want to make sure when

[00:44:13] we're thinking about um the training um that it is true certification on the ground specifically on the water i am a student in that space i i really want to make sure that we um whether it's an assigned person we already have or however we plan to fulfill that specific position that that we're paying attention to the type of training and the type of chemicals that should be used within that building so thank you for that the other question i had with is has there been

[00:44:48] discussion on what this looks like 5 10 or 20 years from now i want to make sure that we're doing a good job of delivering on our promise and the investment itself and so it's also about being a good steward of our resources and our communities trust so can you share with me if there's discussion on that at this point or if that's something that we discuss later on we we always want to look at what our how our buildings are built and how they're going to be maintained maintainability is a big part of our design discussions and how we go forward i can say

[00:45:26] we haven't had specific conversations about where things are in 5, 10, or 20 years with the building but as we continue to learn the systems and understand what we have to do to maintain the systems part of that would also be when we would have to be proactive about replacing systems or upgrading systems as we continue to operate the building and if I'm sorry I go ahead Mrs. I think i heard someone speak i apologize mrs atkins i think because of the delay i inadvertently cut you off please go ahead i was going to add on to some of the comments mrs moore made but please go

[00:46:04] ahead oh no worries no worries this is a an area that i think we can be stellar in if we are proactive in the discussions i think we would be late if we waited for the opening of the building However, really thinking through what does 5, 10, 20 years look like from now, and I think perhaps talking with our students, what do they see?

[00:46:32] How will this building morph? Because it will, because it's living. How will this building breathe and grow? Does it get bigger? Does it shrink? So I would really ask the team to consider asking our students that question, because they are the ones, 5, 10, 20 years from now, that may come back or hopefully never leave and continue to work on this building, but they could certainly give some insight into the future that they will be in as adults.

[00:47:05] And I had something else here. And so I wanted to give kudos to that instructional model that was presented in the slide. I'm excited about what I saw there because it allows the building itself to be the teacher.

[00:47:21] And I think having students walk in the door to a teacher that looks something a little bit different because it's a building, that got me really excited. The question I had was, has there been discussion on how we connect the facility, the building, the teacher itself to career paths?

[00:47:43] Yeah, I mean, from the beginning, this has been a partnership that we've undertaken with our Office of Career and Workforce Development. I mentioned in some of the course works that we were talking about the geographic and information systems work and the unmanned aircraft work that is embedded in that center.

[00:48:01] We've actually had students out there this year from our GIS class doing mapping. I think another really exciting piece of that is bringing in the introduction to plant systems class. That class will be

part of other new courses that will be shared with the board for our course proposal process and planning guide updates so yeah all along the way we want to make sure that and this is true of any of our classes but what living building will do is introduce a set of career clusters that maybe our students haven't really thought about and and by once they're out

[00:48:37] there on that site and are connecting with it in a real way just like our students would do in an hvac class where once they're in that that equipment and they're working on something it goes from being just a hypothetical career to something that feels really real to them.

[00:48:52] I think the instructional experiences that we've designed alongside our colleagues in career and workforce development are really aimed at appreciating sustainability in the environment as a whole, but doing that while also having an eye toward what might be a next step for some of our students as they leave us and enter the world. So I want to give you some feedback on that i received as i've been touring many many schools uh and also talking about um the living building itself so their feedback um i i agree with what you've shared let me just give you that

[00:49:30] as a preface for what i'm about to say i do agree i think that's wonderful but i want to get to excellence and so some of the feedback i received sounded like we would love to be able to take pieces of the living building and travel abroad to share what people are doing in other countries so that's the level of feedback that i'm getting from our students that is beyond what we do now and i am hopeful that we are really thinking through how do we give our students experiences that they have never received before in henrico county public schools that i mean i'm just gonna

[00:50:08] give you that to marinate on i'm not looking for a response now but really interested in making sure where we hit the mark for the future and really listening to students in what they morph or see as their future and how it connects to the living building.

[00:50:27] So not looking for a response, but just really think through that and think through with such a unique building, how do we also give unique experiences to match it beyond what we do, whether it's with HVAC at ACE centers and other places.

[00:50:43] and then I wanted to just hone a little bit on universal accessibility and inclusion for the building. Susan, can you share with me what that looks like so that all of our learners can participate? - The building will be fully ADA accessible as well as the ground areas will be ADA accessible.

[00:51:04] - Outstanding, and I only had a few more here 'cause I'm sure my colleagues have thoughts as well. So I'm gonna get to my other question. Actually, this is more of a recommendation. I'm wondering if there's an opportunity worth exploring a living building performance dashboard.

[00:51:22] And this is something that would be open to the public or students or teachers or families that could really show how the building is performing around energy and water and other key measures. And something that, of course, something else that can continue to evolve over the next five, 10 years as well.

[00:51:42] And what are your thoughts about doing something like that too. I would really like both of your perspectives. - From an instructional perspective, we're always looking for ways to generate for science, for math, across the board, authentic data sets, whether that's a paired text and a poem or really specific energy usage data.

[00:52:06] So certainly because we want this to be something that extends science learning across the curriculum, We wanna make sure that all the data we're gathering is gonna be useful for and usable for all of our students for curriculum design and everything in between.

[00:52:27] - Okay. So I'll just share you my thought process with building out a dashboard. I think it would create transparency and it also give a real time learning opportunity for our students.

[00:52:42] I think it's important with this type of idea that's turning into a reality that folks don't just hear, they can see it, and I think it may be easier to do some level of a performance dashboard. So I'll leave that there.

[00:52:58] And then also trying to figure out how we build on what we learn, you know, definitely the design, how to maintain this building, all of these things are very different and very unique. And I think those lessons should come back to the board to help us inform future school facilities.

[00:53:16] I think one of the greatest legacy of this project It's not even this building. I think it may be what the building teach us and how we build everything else after it, especially around sustainability. So that definitely is an ask again to share the lessons with the board.

[00:53:36] I know in Fairfield, we have a facility coming. I have a facility coming with Highland Springs Elementary School. It'd be wonderful, it'd be grand to hear about some of these lessons learned from the living building and let's see here.

[00:53:54] Also a readiness and risk update. So I'm grateful for today to get the updates. This is something that may not need to be a presentation or an agenda item, but once we, as we move to fall and the opening, I think we need to know what remains at risk.

[00:54:14] This is a living building. there are pieces that will be at risk. And so from a risk management perspective, I would love for the board to have some level of a building readiness and risk update, especially when there's weathering, you know, if there's really bad weather, things like that.

[00:54:31] How is that going to impact this building? I think this is a much bigger conversation that we're not gonna have today, but it is a conversation that I think is going to be necessary as we get closer to the launch. i just know at the beginning and at the end of the day we're not just giving breath to a building we really are giving life to a vision i'm so so grateful because this vision is more than just teaching our children how to live on this planet they are going to learn how to live with it with this project and i'm super grateful everyone who's had a hand in it and who will have a hand in it

[00:55:11] in the future. Chair Irving. Thank you, Mrs. Atkins. Mrs. Kinsella. Thank you. I was certainly nice to see an updated presentation on this. Ms. Atkins covered quite a bit. I think I'm interested in if our center students are going to be there every other day, then on the alternating days, is that when the field trips will occur to this property?

[00:55:39] yeah the way it'll be set up is so there will be center students there every day but it um we'll have to split that group in half depending upon the courses that they're taking to accommodate the space but we will we plan to also have field trips there uh pretty much every day uh so it'll be a combination of our center students who will be have some presence there every day and then um students on uh in those common experiences that are there also and that's going to be one of the great parts about having our

center students involved in planning those commonest investigations is that it's not going to be always like two separate things running in parallel tracks that

[00:56:19] those the education of our vcs students and the common experiences will merge and allow students to learn from one another and then next um miss moore you mentioned sourcing and delivery requirements and i just know from an earlier conversation with you i was surprised at the restrictions can you elaborate more on it's not just that the steel is delayed but it's delayed and it matters also where we get it from and how it's delivered can you just expand on those

[00:56:55] restrictions that we have on this project that are unlike other projects for us so you are correct it is it's a function of where we source it from it is also a function of how it is delivered to the site they for certain products they even talk about air versus water versus train versus tractor trailer road so and i am by no means the living building challenge expert so i do want to caveat that the different products that sourcing and delivery is all part of what has to be

[00:57:32] determined and evaluated with for the whole project for the different materials throughout the project I mean that just adds a whole new layer when you when you were describing it earlier I was just like I never would have thought about that but um that's why I guess it's a living building challenge right I'm so very excited for this opportunity uh to truly come to life um and be completed thank you chair Irving thank you Ms. Gonzala uh Mrs. Shea and thank you so much um actually I was having lunch with a group of science teachers today and this came up on the

[00:58:10] living building and that wanting them wanting to know what's the timeline and what resources are going to be available there we were just they were excitedly talking about it so I'm excited to share the presentation back with a couple of questions shockingly most around curriculum as a science teacher first of all I really love Dr. Snow what you said about how we're we're leveling up from it just being a one-off field trip to really be like curriculum embedded and having school

[00:58:43] investigations um alongside or i should say um on the front end of the on-site investigations so students are really getting the most out of this i think that is um tremendous um i'm a little curious as we do you know we have a lot with our line curriculum and the instructional flow of topics in science um how will that um dovetail with for example in grades three and six of them all trying to come right they're obviously the whole county is not coming within a week right so so how does that work with um the aligned science curriculum so it's not going to be

[00:59:22] dissimilar than the as from the approach that we've taken with the james riverfield trips in uh fourth grade where um you know just because of the nature of having students on water and being outside those have to happen and the fact that all of our fourth graders are doing those types of trips we have to spread those out uh but the the big the way that we can make that work and flow within uh just regular pacing and within those demands is to focus on really yes hitting on the specific content type learning but also focusing on larger conceptual ideas right so when you're out And you might be learning about ecosystems at a time where it's not necessarily,

[01:00:02] it doesn't necessarily fit to the sixth grade pacing, but every step along that trip will be able to talk about experimental design and those other science and engineering practices that from a best practice perspective, we want embedded across our year, right?

[01:00:17] Those are things that we want students to leverage and lean into every single day. And the more we do that, I think the more students going to be able to make those connections across topics and across contents and you know they see the ecosystem in march even if they've learned about it in november there are other things that they will have learned throughout the year that they will then have an anchor to they will be able to connect and kind of forge that understanding excellent so do you see possibly the while the lesson may be similar across the year it flexing a little bit as to what the main talking points are

[01:00:54] to dovetail with where they are absolutely yeah that's part of the i mean we mentioned the um the what's cooking now uh part of the third grade experience we're going to have something growing in garden areas there all year long whether that's squash or you know we're digging up potatoes or doing something like that so yeah those will have to evolve and that's what makes play space learning so exciting is it captures not this hypothetical idea of what it looks like in the spring but what it looks like right now what the ecological activity looks like at the moment students are

[01:01:28] there so those will evolve based upon the place which is uh just one of the coolest parts of this whole thing excellent i'm glad you brought up the watershed experiences because that was top of mind for me as well as i was looking um looking at this um what is the approximate capacity for field trip students at the living building so our goal is to have all of our third grade students come to the living building for an experience during their third grade year and all of our sixth grade students sorry i should have clarified like in one day like is it a couple hundred students being there at the same time is it more like 50 students like what's our

[01:02:06] what order of magnitude are we looking at so we'll have around 100 center students there on any given day and then uh the students who will be participating in the field trips will vary a little bit it'd be hard to give an exact number but because that that learning experience is rooted outside it's not going to be uh challenging the mechanical systems of the building it's not going to be challenging the water filtration systems of the building susan i'm not sure if you have a specific number where that's sort of where things are set we designed around 100 kids to be outside and as well as 100 inside and i think you know there will be variables related to supervision

[01:02:46] and all those things that we'll carefully construct but you know i think uh once we live into it if if the capacity can grow because to your point a lot of those outdoor spaces aren't limited uh in the same way the indoor spaces are but you know we want to make sure we're um maximizing safety and supervision along with uh you know the learning experience as well absolutely thank you thank you I was just trying to kind of figure out order of magnitude there I know for our watershed experience for middle school it's a very it's a much smaller class size because they're going out on on boats you know for safety and um reasons so i'm i'm glad

[01:03:23] to hear that it's a it's a larger number at the living building i know um that seventh grade sixth seventh grade watershed experience is so formative for these students to be able to go out on a boat but from an instructional standpoint in the building the teacher is gone on a field trip every day for, you know, a week or however many classes they have because of the limitations.

[01:03:48] And so that can, you know, create some instructional challenges there. And so just as we expand these upgrade wide opportunities across the county, just being intentional about thinking about and it sounds like you have been what that looks like in the classroom, both before and after.

[01:04:03] And if a teacher is coming, you know, multiple times to be able to cover all their students, how do we make meaningful experiences on both sides of that? so i'm sure you're looking at all of those things um two more quick questions um so i see we've got the the third grade and the sixth grade we've got the center students there and we've got a smattering of other opportunities across other disciplines um once the center gets once the living building gets rolling a little more do you think it would be possible to perhaps leverage some of the lessons

[01:04:37] that are designed for VSTAS as hands-on or deeper learning for other high school students from other eight high schools to come experience as well yeah absolutely and Eric Byers who couldn't be here tonight but our environmental education specialist has designed and already gone through multiple groups of an environmental education micro credential where he has worked with teachers about giving these types of the types of experiences that students will get at the living building but doing those within their own school from using the the counter on the water bottle fillers that that we have all over schools to think about student traffic and to also we've

[01:05:15] had a lot of fine arts educators complete that micro credential it seemed to really resonate with that group and we've had a lot of a lot of our visual arts teachers who have engaged in that micro credential and then brought that learning back to their schools so that works ongoing already and we know that this will give us an opportunity to amp that up even more well i'm really excited about how this um is going to be able to enhance authentic learning and i i didn't even notice that was on the slide until i said those words but really bolster authentic uh learning experiences

[01:05:47] both at the living building and also being able to be pushed back into our schools so thank you for that and then one last question for Ms. Moore our expert on all things construction when you mentioned the delay in the steel delivery is that unique we have a lot of construction projects going on is that causing delays in any of our other construction projects or is that specific to some of the sourcing and delivery of the steel for the living building it's more specific to the living

[01:06:21] building project right now our other projects are not at a point where steel would be a factor is probably the most clear way to say it excellent thank you so much miss moore that's all for me thank you mr shea mr young oh thank you all for the presentation and the work going into this project i don't think the presentation will ever do it justice for a building that you need to see feel and and touch and experience um but it is good to get this update i'm especially appreciative how history and culture of the land is being woven into the curriculum. There's something powerful about students understanding that people and stories connected to a place where they're

[01:06:59] learning. And as I set up here and everybody asked all their questions, I started thinking about some of the students in my district, particularly the students that live in apartments, right? So we talk about exposure. They may love nature, but they don't have backyards. They don't get to go outside anymore. So I think we are discovering and opening up opportunities for kids. I'm thinking about our EDAC committee where we talk about access, knowledge, and accessibility. So these kids that come in here in third grade and sixth grade, eventually we're going to see an increased enrollment in VCS. And it's going to be that

[01:07:33] because of the exposure that we're providing them to kids who never saw a career in this field. So I'm excited about it. I have probably zero questions because my colleagues are so good. But as I set up here, I just thought about, you know, young kids who would never get a chance to do this. I think we're on

the right path. HCPS is always leading the way in everything we do. So thank you for the presentation. I'm excited to get out there. Hopefully we can get a walk through before the grand opening to kind of see the stages of where we're at right now. So thank you so much, Susan, Mrs. Snow. I appreciate it. Yes. Thank you, Dr. Snow and Mrs. Moore for the

[01:08:13] presentation. I have no real questions, but I just want to say that I think that this is just an incredible achievement. It's an incredible thing that this building and how it will improve our students' learning will be for this division. And I think, you know, this is just a testament to that public things should be beautiful and they should be sustainable. And I think that this building will kind of be a guide and a shining light on a hill for future construction within THIS COUNTY BECAUSE AS MS. ATKINS SAID AND I BELIEVE I SAID LAST WORK SESSION THAT I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO NOT LEARN FROM HOW THIS CAN BE APPLIED TO ANY CONSTRUCTION THAT WE DO

[01:08:53] MOVING FORWARD. AND I THINK THAT IT WILL BE A GUIDING LIGHT ON DOING SO. SO THANK YOU ALL FOR THE PRESENTATION. THANK YOU TO THE COLLEAGUES FOR THE QUESTION AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. THANK YOU. MR. CHAIR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD. CHAIR IRVING, I HAD TO READ THAT BACK.

[01:09:08] I didn't. I think they're already off. You texted me and I did not see it. My apologies. Mrs. Atkins? That is all right. We are all multitasking here. I just wanted for the public perspective to understand what those seven petals are and why another reason why the building is unique.

[01:09:34] So the seven petals are place. So it has to restore a healthy coexistence with nature. It's water being net positive with water. It's energy being net positive with energy. And what that means is relying on localized renewable solar or wind energy to get to net positive energy.

[01:09:54] That fourth one is health and happiness. So optimizing indoor air quality. Lighting is a big one. And psychological well-being is a piece of that health and happiness paddle. And materials, which I alluded to earlier, they are strict exclusions on non-toxic materials, especially in the space of water and how it gets to you.

[01:10:19] Looking at if it's toxic, is any part of that toxic? How we got here, how we're building. And then that sixth one is equity, promoting justice, inclusiveness, fair community. So equity is a space, which is one of the reasons I was asking about accessibility and so forth and making sure we're really paying attention to that in the build of this.

[01:10:44] And then the last one is beauty. So a design that really celebrates the human spirit. And so that in itself makes it difficult and makes it a challenge, but we're doing it in Henrico County.

[01:11:00] And when there's a delay on a particular material, it is not easy just to go find another contractor because of some of what I've shared around the seven pedals that we have to adhere to. So for the public's interest, just wanted to share some of that background knowledge chair irving thank you mrs atkins dr cashwell that that's it with your all right uh colleagues will now move on to unfinished business do we have any unfinished business hearing none we will move on to new business colleagues do we have any new business hearing none uh announcement of future meeting dates the school board's next

[01:11:36] meeting will be tonight in this auditorium at 6 30. uh and then our next work session will be on Thursday, October 8th, 2026 at 3 p.m. The meeting time may be adjusted as needed. This meeting is adjourned.



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