



MACHINE TRANSCRIPT • CORAGGIO CONSULTING

Manassas City School Board Meeting - January 15, 2025

Date Wednesday, January 15, 2025
Place Manassas City Public Schools / School Board meeting, Virginia
Length 0h 36m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_bbnDe_J9M

Machine transcript (speech-to-text) produced by Coraggio Consulting. Not an official county record. Names and numbers may be misspelled; check the video at the timestamp before quoting.

Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-17. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:29] Garza would you please call the roll? Yes ma'am. Chair Seberg? Here. Vice Chair Spall? Mrs. Stevens? Here. Mrs. Brescia? Here. Ms. Miles? Here. Ms. Brown? Here. Dr. Jones? Here. Thank you. Ms. Glenn? Here. Ms. Breeden? Here. Thank you. Madam Chair we have a quorum. Thank you very much. Before we get started I'm very pleased to welcome our newest members Diana Brown, Zella Jones and Dana Miles to our governance team.

[00:01:22] your dedication to education and commitment to serving our students staff and community are appreciated we look forward to working collaboratively with you to ensure that our schools thrive and our students succeed together we can make a meaningful impact and continue building a brighter future for everyone in our division welcome aboard dr. Newman are there any additions and deletions to the agenda no ma'am can I get a motion for public approval of the agenda chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the

[00:01:57] public meeting agenda as modified as presented modified i have a motion by mrs stevens second by vice chair spall that the school board of the city of manassas approved the public meeting agenda as modified is there any discussion all in favor any opposed motion carries seven zero next up on our agenda is students uh superintendents announcements and spotlights mrs al radford would you please tell us what we're celebrating tonight of course good evening to everyone

[00:02:33] thank you chair Seberg thank you to all other members of the board good evening to you and good evening to everyone that has joined us tonight and our viewing audience before I begin with our

spotlight tonight I do want to give a shout out to our building principals and assistant principals you know we've been away for a little while with our winter break that was extended but this week is Virginia principal appreciation week and so we just want to give a shout out to them and thank them for all the work that they've done with our students and our staff our families and wanted to publicly acknowledge them so if you see our Facebook post and you want to go in there and extend some congratulations and

[00:03:11] appreciation to them we'd appreciate that thank you all right tonight we have the pleasure of recognizing eight remarkable MCPS family members who recently earned advanced degrees at George Mason University as I call your names please come forward so we can celebrate this outstanding achievement Katie Bombera from Round Elementary School.

[00:03:34] Riley Brockman from Jenny Dean. Kyle Cook from Mayfield Intermediate School.

[00:03:49] Sarah Cook from Jenny Dean Elementary. Arlene Higgins from Metz Middle School.

[00:04:04] Jennifer Lay, Osborne High School. Jennifer Metcalf from Hayden Elementary. And Tori Savas from Hayden Elementary School.

[00:04:25] This group graduated in December after completing Georgia Mason University's master's program in mathematics specialist leadership. They earned a master of education in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in mathematics specialist leader. This rigorous program prepares educators to take on leadership roles in mathematics education. Participants engage in research, curriculum development, and practical applications such as conducting professional development for

[00:05:01] their schools and gathering insights through student interviews. These These experiences equip them to advocate for research-informed instructional strategies and provide targeted support to improve mathematics, teaching, and learning. We're also joined tonight by Sarah Burkhead, our Pre-K through 6 mathematics coordinator, and Elizabeth Susco, who is our 7th through 12th grade mathematics coordinator, if you all could come on up.

[00:05:33] These two outstanding leaders supported the cohort throughout the program and helped ensure their success. Congratulations to all of you on this incredible accomplishment. Your hard work and dedication to advancing your expertise will undoubtedly benefit our schools and students in countless ways. Let's give them a round

[00:05:50] of applause. Short spotlights for tonight that

[00:06:44] concludes our presentation for this evening. Before we move on I want to recognize MEA leadership in the audience tonight. Tammy Potts, secretary MEA, President Anna Demaria, and Treasurer Brandon Fincham.

[00:07:06] Thank you for being here. We don't have any board committee reports tonight, so I'm gonna move along to citizens' comments.

[00:07:22] At this time, we welcome citizens who wish to speak about services, policies, and affairs of the City of Manassas Public Schools. Because we have an agenda we need to complete, we ask that comments be limited to three minutes. We appreciate the time you have taken to be here, and we treat citizens' comments as a public hearing, so we do not engage in conversation with speakers.

[00:07:43] The lack of an immediate response to your comments should not be taken as a lack of interest or concern. Please be respectful when presenting your comments. And first up, I have Tammy DeHaven.

[00:07:59] - Good evening. As a member of the MEA and a commissioner on the VEA's Fitz-Turner Commission for Human Relations and Civil Rights, along with Tonequa Williams and Dr. Brandon Fincham, I'm speaking tonight to advocate for the support and implementation of the Black Lives Matter at School Toolkit within our division.

[00:08:16] This invaluable resource aligns with our commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment for all students. Black Lives Matter at Schools is a nationwide initiative that seeks to dismantle systemic racism in education. It aims to spark dialogue, inspire reflection, and drive action within school communities, empowering educators and students to address issues of racial injustice.

[00:08:38] The toolkit offers a wealth of resources, including lesson plans, discussion guides, and strategies designed to foster conversations about race and promote anti-racist practices. and empowers teachers to create inclusive classrooms where all students feel seen, valued, and respected.

[00:08:54] By adopting this toolkit, we can take a significant step toward ensuring that our schools are truly equitable for all students, regardless of their race or background. We can cultivate a culture of understanding, empathy, and respect where students feel empowered to challenge injustice and advocate for change.

[00:09:11] I urge you to consider the following. Recognize and support Black Lives Matter at School Week. Black Lives Matter at School Week is February 3rd through 7th, 2025, and is celebrated by a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education. I also ask that you declare support through a future resolution, as this is an annual event.

[00:09:31] As the NEA has proclaimed, the goal of Black Lives Matter at school is to spark an ongoing movement of critical reflection and honest conversation, and impactful actions in school communities for people of all ages to engage with issues of racial justice. The Fitz-Turner Commission for Human Relations and Civil Rights at the VEA.

[00:09:49] Host Manassas City Public Schools will help us celebrate Black Lives Matter at School Week, February 3rd through 7th, 2025. - Thank you, Ms. Potts. Is there anyone else that wishes to speak during citizens' comments?

[00:10:07] - Okay, I will also like to recognize. Oh, welcome to the podium, Ms. Tonia Vasquez Luna. - Thank you, ma'am, Madam Chair, board members, and Superintendent.

[00:10:29] I stand before you as a mom of two children and I just want to say last week it was difficult, but I command you and I thank you for keeping our kids safe. I know that it's still right now is some challenges and I really appreciate how the city and the schools and how the decisions that you make keep our kids safe.

[00:10:54] I know everybody might agree to that, but I just want to make sure that you know that I'm thankful for that. I also want to say the band season ended, but their uniforms are great. Your investment, not only on their uniforms, on their equipment, it's really valuable and has to make a difference for them.

[00:11:14] So I just want to make sure you know that, you know, as a mother of two in the band, I truly appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you. last thing sorry congratulations to all the new board members thank you our clerk's going to make her sign in um i also like to recognize miss sonia vasquez luna as a member to the monastas city council and our mayor michelle davis younger is also here today thank you

for joining us anybody else wish to speak nope okay motion for consent agenda chair i move that the school board of the

[00:11:54] city of manassas approve the consent agenda as presented i have a motion by mrs stevens second by mrs vice chair spall that the school board the city of manassas approve the consent agenda as presented is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed motion carries 7-0 moving along to our action agenda we have some old business um or unfinished business resolution to request the appropriation of state funds for a pilot alternative education program we have seen this in a previous

[00:12:31] work session on January 9th. We discussed it and we're requesting appropriation of state funds for a pilot alternative ed program. And we're now discussing approval of this resolution. Are there any questions from the board?

[00:12:52] I think, Chair, I think we need to make a motion first and then discuss. Chair. I I move that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve Resolution R-2025-03 requesting the appropriation of state funds for a pilot alternative education program.

[00:13:15] I have a motion by Vice Chair Spall, seconded by Mrs. Brescia, that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve Resolution R-2025-03 requesting the appropriation of state funds for a pilot alternative education program. Is there any discussion?

[00:13:33] Mrs. Brescia. I would like to indicate my enthusiastic support for this resolution. I am excited to see where this program would go. I am anticipating the rest of the board members will join me, but I do want to put it out there on the record that this is something that will, I believe, help our student-- I think I feel like I'm echoing-- help our student achievement, help support the kids who need the support that we are not currently able to give them.

[00:14:00] And I'm excited to see how this resolution plays out in the State Senate and General Assembly. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to share that-- the idea of having an alternative education program here in mcps is not a new idea it's something that we've been discussing for a number of years off and on in the past prior to i think anyone being sitting up here we did have alternative education programs we've had one at least one in mets we had one at the johnson learning center right sharing the parking lot with osborne high school and we've always felt there continued to be a need for alternative education in our school

[00:14:38] division we do have an agreement with Prince William County Public Schools to use independence but that's not ideal for all of our students and we would rather see our students stay with us as MCPS students then send them out somewhere else we've also found that we do have a need for students grades 5 through 12 who really can't succeed in a traditional classroom setting who need that alternative education setting to suit their specific needs - Thank you, Mrs. Stevens.

[00:15:10] Anyone else down there looking? - Chair, I agree. Keeping our students does foster a nourishing environment. Also, it gives us an opportunity to gauge their progress and be inclusive about their reintegration.

[00:15:27] And it also sends a very positive message to us students that we're not giving up on them, that they are still ours and we are still holding them accountable for their actions, their behaviors, and their academic progress. - Thank you, Ms. Brown. Mrs. Spall, Vice Chair.

[00:15:46] - Yes, I just, I would like to reiterate that keeping the kids in the city is gonna help with both attendance rates and graduation rates, and also point out to just the general public that, although we want it to be a rare occasion, there are some under sixth grade kids that need support, and we do not have any county services that will accept children that are that young.

[00:16:12] So that age group is really an imperative need. Thank you. - Thanks, and I'll just also point out, it's not just the programming that is needed, but I mean, we don't have enough slots sometimes. We just don't have enough slots. So that results in online learning, which we know is not preferred.

[00:16:34] All right, I'm gonna read the motion again. I have a motion by Vice Chair Spall, seconded by Mrs. Bredgett, that the school board of the city of Manassas approved resolution R-2025-03, requesting the appropriation of state funds for a pilot alternative education program.

[00:16:54] All in favor? - Aye. - Any opposed? Motion carries seven zero. Thank you. What is your question?

[00:17:12] Next on our action agenda is under finance at the January 9th budget work session. Mr. Taft-Kelly is here with us this evening. Director of finance presented the FY 2024 year-end financial report and carryover. It's included on the agenda for everyone to see.

[00:17:30] and I can take a motion. - Chair, I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the FY 2024 financial report and carryover request.

[00:17:48] - I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens, seconded by Mrs. Brescia, that the school board, the city of Manassas approve the FY 2024 financial report and carryover request. Is there any discussion? Looking and seeing none, all in favor? - Aye.

[00:18:03] - Any opposed? Motion carries seven zero. We're moving on to board members' comments and I'll go first to our student representative, Ms. Bland. I wasn't really done writing my comment, but good evening.

[00:18:24] Do you want us to come back to you? No, no, it's okay. Actually, I have some. Good evening. Welcome to our three new board members, and happy new year.

[00:18:40] I have a quick reminder for seniors. It's time to get your FAFSA applications in. This is a free application that gives students access to financial aid for college, career school, or trade school. You can go to the College and Career Center for more information.

[00:18:58] And reminder, tomorrow's an early release day, so don't forget that. I don't really have anything else. Thank you, Ms. Glenn. Ms. Braden. Good evening. I hope that everybody enjoyed their snow days, and I'm so glad that Vice Chair Spall's Creative Snow Day Announcement Contest could be put to good use.

[00:19:25] I enjoyed seeing that. And then I want to recognize and give my thanks to the Manassas City custodian and maintenance and facility team for all of their effort they put towards to make the snowy and icy environments of our schools safe. They not only worked hard on our extended break, but they continued to keep our schools clean day in and day out. And then next, I would also like to thank all of the Manassas City School principals for their appreciation week. Without their vital leadership in our schools, we want to have amazing school environments that we

[00:20:01] possess today and then my last thing that I want to just talk about since we were on the note of alternative paths of education over the break I was just brought to attention via a conversation with family

friends of the thought of the post-graduation resources we have for our special education students I don't I heard that there's not really any direct correlations with that and once we let our students go once we feel that they're ready there isn't a any like direct connections with something that can help them in their adulthood and maybe get

[00:20:39] them a job or something i'm not fully um informed on this matter but i just wanted to bring up to provoke any um thought on that topic and thank you thank you for bringing that forward uh before i go on i do want to recognize councilman ralph smith joining us here this evening thank you mrs breja do you have any comments sure i'll make some brief comments the first being happy new year everybody. First board meeting of 2025. Welcome back to school. Oh my gosh, that was two thumbs up in our house when we got to go back to school. So some things that are coming up as I also,

[00:21:16] I'm sorry, how could I forget? I want to congratulate our master's cohort earners for doing the hard work of earning their master's while working and educating our students. That is pulling double duty. That's an incredible accomplishment. I was very happy to honor you all today. And also our principals, it is Principal Appreciation Week. We do appreciate everything our principals do, including leading the teams that cleared our sidewalks and made sure that everything, when we did return to school with the snow and ice on the ground, went as smoothly as possible. So I had the honor myself, since the last time this body

[00:21:54] met, of attending the Jenny Dean Groundbreaking. Most of us were there. It was a very exciting moment for our city. I see many people in the audience who are also there. Very exciting moment for our city. I cannot wait to see that school take shape and to see that school community grow and thrive in that new building. Yesterday was the city council swearing-in ceremony. I was excited to attend that and see everybody start their new terms. And of course, over the winter break, I had the honor of attending the Nutcracker Ballet at the Manassas Ballet Theater. Always a really great time. Coming up, I do want to issue a

[00:22:30] reminder, because of our extended winter break, we have, we moved the end date for the second quarter. So that is tomorrow. It was supposed to be January 9th. That is tomorrow. So everybody get your work in. Report cards are still coming out as scheduled on January 31st. We also have Martin Luther King Jr. Day coming up. That's on January 20th. That is a day off. So keep those things in mind. I'm excited to be up here serving with our three new members, with our existing members who've returned i'm looking forward to doing a lot of good work in 2025 thank you mrs

[00:23:04] stevens thank you chair um first i want to say welcome to our newest board members it's nice to see you up here on the dais welcome to the team we're excited to have you here um happy principals week most of you may not realize all of the things principals do and that once they put on their principal hat even if they're not in the building they're still a principal especially in a city as small as ours everyone knows who they are so if you happen to see any of our principals or other building administrators please say happy principals appreciation week and I have to say it was really wonderful getting to watch all the snow day videos as we were looking at them and voting on them

[00:23:44] we all really wondered are we gonna see any of those videos this year because we haven't and then did we get to use all of them oh we got first and second but They were the cutest things, and sharing them on social media got so many likes and so many loves.

[00:24:00] They were great. I think it's a wonderful tradition that we need to keep up. And congratulations to the math specialist leadership graduates, especially that really, really little one who was probably the

cutest one there, although he was too young to participate in the whole thing.

[00:24:16] I think he was the highlight of the night. And the Alt-Ed program. Alt-Ed is very important for some of our students. These are students who may be struggling in one way or another, but who have the right to an education. And we need to do our part to ensure that they get the best education we can offer them.

[00:24:36] And the best education we can offer them is here in our schools. So if you happen to see any of our legislators, please remind them how important this is for our schools and our city. Because when our students are in school, they're learning.

[00:24:52] They're learning to become successful members of society. And that's what our goal is. Teaching, raising successful members of society. And welcome back to a new year. Let's see if we have any more snow days. Some of us are banking on them, but that's okay.

[00:25:08] So welcome back everyone. - Thank you, Mrs. Stevens. Ms. Brown. - Yes, students, staff and families. I hope you had a great break. Welcome back. We are ready to get to work. I would like to start my remarks by extending my sincere gratitude to all the voters whose support has given me this opportunity to serve for the next four years.

[00:25:32] I'd also like to thank Ms. Garza and Dr. Newman for going the extra mile to ensure that we had a smooth transition. And I thank you goes to the rest of the board also for hosting and onboarding all of the new members. It has been a very busy month for all of us.

[00:25:51] Since the election, I made it a priority to continue to actively engage with both the community and our schools. I've had the privilege of attending several events, including the Dracula play sponsored by the Osborne Theater Booster, the CTE Expo, the Weems Wildcats Winter Program, the Osborne Holiday Fest.

[00:26:12] In addition, I attended the Friendsgiving at Mets. I also co-hosted a celebration for the Three Kings Day for Hispanic families. This holds a very deep significance for many of us. I also participated in the Annual Regional Leadership Awards Luncheon for the JMU, Char Schools Regional Elected Leaders Initiative, and I attended the Manassas City, Manassas Park Parades, and also supported the League of United Latin American Citizens Toy Drive, and attended the VSBA Annual Conference virtually.

[00:26:48] Remaining connected to this community is essential to me and I invite you all to follow me on Facebook at Diana Brown, proud MCPS board member for engagement opportunities. I'm eager to collaborate with my fellow board members.

[00:27:04] It is really important to me that we work on our collective goals to advance our students' educational experiences and outcomes. But students, we have a lot of work ahead of us. Know that I will work and advocate very hard for you, but in return I have high academic expectations as well as behavioral expectations, and I look forward to meeting many of you in person pretty soon.

[00:27:30] I would like to close my remarks by extending a heartfelt thank you to the principals and assistant principals who support all of our students and staff every day. As a former assistant principal, I know how hard this job can be. Please know that I see your hard work and I truly appreciate everything you do.

[00:27:49] Thank you for living the words of Reverend Martin Luther King. The time is always right to do what is right. Happy Principals Week. - Thank you, Ms. Brown. Ms. Files. - Yes, I've prepared a few things. Happy New Year, everyone.

[00:28:06] I'm excited about 2025 and all the possibilities. First, I wanna thank Manassas City voters for giving me this opportunity to serve my community as a school board member. I'm looking forward to a great four years of working with the fellow board members, Chair Seberg, Vice Chair Spell, members Sarah Brescia, Lisa Stevens, Diana Brown, and Dr. Zella Jones.

[00:28:25] I'm delighted at the warm welcome from current school board members and our superintendent, Dr. Newman. I'm excited about visiting each school, meeting the administration, and the dedicated staff of Manassas City Public Schools. I plan on also attending school events and any sports games my schedule will allow.

[00:28:41] I hope all the students, families, and staff enjoy their winter break and extended time off due to the snow. It was nice to see all the pictures online that families and teachers shared of how they spent the snow days. As we enter the end of the grading period and start a new quarter, my hope is that each student will continue to strive to do their best.

[00:29:00] As we embark on this new year and new board, my goal is to work as a team to push Manassas City forward. A few more things. First, I wanna congratulate all those who graduated from George Mason with their math specialist leadership master's degree. I know that took a lot of work.

[00:29:16] I want to also give a shout out to all our administration and MCPS. This week is Principal Appreciation Week, as we know. We want to make sure you know that you are appreciated. And I hope you really, truly feel loved this week by your staff. And lastly, this is a long weekend, one where we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

[00:29:36] I know had it not been for his work in civil rights, I would not have the privilege to be up here today. So let's remember that, as we remember also our swearing in of our president as well. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Miles. Dr. Jones. It gives me great pleasure to partake in my first school board meeting tonight.

[00:30:01] I'm truly committed to working alongside my fellow board members, Manassas City's central office staff, teachers, parents, and the community to ensure student success. As we prepare to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday from tomorrow through January the 20th, I'm reminded of his belief that education is the key to unlocking the potential of all individuals.

[00:30:24] Dr. King emphasized the importance of providing high-quality educational opportunities to students of all races. In that spirit, student achievement and success will remain a priority for the Board, as we work to ensure every student receives a quality education.

[00:30:41] We can all celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King on Saturday, January 18th, starting at 11 o'clock at the 40th annual mlk or talker program at mount zion baptist church in triangle virginia we would love to see you and we've had monassas city students win in that or talker contest it's important as we move forward to highlight facts about our schools all monassas city public schools are accredited to are accredited with conditions principals presented detailed plans in 2024 to address areas of concern and faculty and staff

[00:31:18] diligently work to implement these strategies to help students meet individual goals. I encourage all parents, residents and stakeholders to stay involved by attending meetings, voicing concerns and staying informed about updates and progress.

[00:31:35] I also want to thank all our principals and assistant principals that lead the Manassas City Schools daily. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the school communities and it does not go unnoticed. Thank all of you also congratulate all those who received advanced degrees. Thank you for your leadership and for continuing to work for Manassas City Public Schools and once again I know that we can all work together so I want to support school activities. I also want to be in the school seeing what is going on and just thank all of you for all that you do and all the extra that you're going to do to make Manassas City Public Schools.

[00:32:15] what it is and what it can be. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Jones. Vice Chair, Jill Spall. Okay, I want to thank the MEA for speaking about, you know, an opportunity with the Black Lives Matters toolkit. That's something we'll definitely look into. February is right around the corner.

[00:32:32] Going almost last is not something that I'm used to. So a couple of these things, you know, the master's cohort folks, thank you for your dedication and your hard work. It means a lot. I'm hearing good reports on the cell phone policy. Shout-out to the principals again.

[00:32:53] I also want to -- what I wanted to say before, just not getting Robert's Rules of Order exactly right, our Alt-Ed program is not a formalized program yet. It is a pilot. So it is important to understand that, you know, You know, some work or some information would be premature since we really don't have any idea about funding at this point in time.

[00:33:19] So, you know, don't look for conflicting information to be coming out. We're going to try to have a formalized plan, and we're going to, as we know information, share it. But this is not a plan that we have ready to go.

[00:33:36] We know what we want to do. Don't mistake that. But it's not something that we're able to necessarily tell you every step of the way until we understand about funding. It's 2025. With three new members on our board, it is my greatest desire to recommit to a strong school culture, including attention to discipline concerns, focus on family and community engagement, exposure for opportunities, exposure and opportunities for students.

[00:34:06] I'm interested in ongoing, I hope we're all interested in ongoing professional development and concentration on salary increases in neighboring districts, salary increases that might stay in line with neighboring districts. I want to congratulate our new and recommitted council members and looking forward to a productive future with them.

[00:34:28] I do want to thank our maintenance crews for their work in this brand new year on cleaning our parking lots and just paying attention to all the tiny details. And I promised Education Foundation that I would ask everyone to please consider attending our March 22 Pancake Fundraiser for the Education Foundation at Metz Middle School.

[00:34:48] Thank you. Thank you, Vice Chair. I want to use my comments this evening to address some comments that were made during last night's City Council meeting. During the citizen comment period, a resident expressed disapproval of our schools, claiming they are unaccredited.

[00:35:05] Let me clarify for the record and for everyone present or watching online, all of our schools are accredited. Two of our schools are accredited with conditions, but none of our schools are unaccredited or have had their accreditation denied, as was falsely stated.

[00:35:28] The speaker also claimed that his son is about to graduate with a meaningless diploma. While I do not know this parent or their student, I can confidently say that our diploma holds the same value and merit as any other Virginia high school diploma.

[00:35:45] falsehoods like those shared last night is not only disrespectful but also misleading to our community. Our staff and students work hard and do not deserve to have their efforts undermined by misinformation. Please join me in addressing and correcting misinformation and disinformation whenever it arises in our city. Thank you. Can I get a motion to adjourn? Chair, I move that the school board meeting adjourn. I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens at the school board seconded by

[00:36:24] Mrs. Vice Chair Spall, that the school board meeting adjourn. Is there any discussion? All in favor? - Aye. - Any opposed? Motion carries seven zero, we are adjourned. Thank you all, have a good evening.



Coraggio Consulting · aguyonx.com