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Manassas City School Board Meeting - January 28, 2025

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[00:00:12] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the Republic, which is in one nation. Mrs. Garza, would you please call the roll?

[00:00:33] Yes, ma'am. Chair Seberg, here. Vice Chair Spall, here. Mrs. Stevens, here. Mrs. Brescia, here. Ms. Miles, here. Ms. Brown, here. Dr. Jones, here.

[00:00:49] Ms. Glenn, here. Ms. Braden, here. Thank you. Madam Chair, we have a quorum. Thank you. - Dr. Newman, do we have any additions or deletions to the agenda tonight? - Yes, ma'am, under discussion, please add policies, policy section B, school board governance and operations.

[00:01:07] - Thank you. - Chair, I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as modified. - Second. - I have a motion by Mrs. Brescia, second by Mrs. Spall, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as modified.

[00:01:25] Is there any discussion? All in favor? - Aye. - Any opposed? Motion carries 7-0. Rolling along to superintendent's announcements and spotlights. Mrs. Radford, what do you have for us tonight?

[00:01:42] - Thank you, Chair Seberg. Good evening, other members of the board, and good evening to everyone that has joined us tonight. Yes, we do have a wonderful spotlight on February 3rd through the 7th has been designated as National School Counselor Appreciation Week.

[00:01:57] And so I'm very honored to have the MCPS student support coordinator, Ms. Duff Jones here to share insight into our school counseling program and to introduce some of our amazing counselors. After

she's here to share her information, I will come back with a proclamation regarding the week.

[00:02:22] - Thank you, Ms. Radford. So I'm so excited to be with you this evening as we recognize our wonderful MCPS school counselors and gear up for national school counseling next week with the theme being helping students thrive. Our MCPS elementary, intermediate, middle, high school counselors work hard to guide, support, and inspire students through some of their most challenging and transformative years. School counselors are dedicated professionals who do much more than facilitate groups, deliver classroom lessons, and assist with academic planning. They are trusted mentors, mental health advocates, essential support systems,

[00:02:59] and trusted go-to adults in our schools. Their commitment enables students to succeed academically, socially and emotionally, and to become college and career ready. Our school counselors listen without judgment, provide hope during difficult times, and empower our students to recognize their own potential.

[00:03:18] They make significant impacts in countless lives every single day. Furthermore, our school counselors are school leaders who collaborate with administrators, teachers, families, and the community to ensure that our students are thriving. So thank you to each of our school counselors for your hard work.

[00:03:36] it is definitely appreciated so our school counselors and mcps are at baldwin elementary sam connor and jill just at hayden heather hartman and ali restoris at jenny dean crystal gordon mia williamson at brown steve green lily kulikowski at weems nora abugaman amy miller at baldwin intermediate danixa carr at mayfield intermediate jill lascola erica lima bravo tammy shaffer robert bavernack at mets middle carmen perez renee tibbs tim i'm sorry renee pete

[00:04:15] tim tids tibbs shanequa williams and harry woolen and then osborne high we have logan francisco stephanie greth alka howard lee kaiser carissa michael emily morales st claire phillips laura rotella tanya shuford paul stansbury and peter uncles and we do have a representation of our school counselors here with us this evening and they are in front of you so

[00:04:39] if we could just give them a round of applause. Thank You Miss Jones. We're hopeful I know this is the last week of January that we will receive a proclamation from the governor next week once the week begins but I do have a proclamation from the American School Counselor Association or ASCA and that's one of our guiding organizations for our school counseling program and and I'd like to read it in your hearing.

[00:05:13] National School Counseling Week, whereas school counselors are employed in public and private schools to help students reach their full potential, and whereas school counselors are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development, and whereas school counselors help families focus on ways to further the academic, career, and social-emotional development of their children, and whereas school counselors work with teachers and other educators to

[00:05:48] help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves, and whereas school counselors seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society, and whereas comprehensive school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process that enables all students to achieve success in school.

[00:06:18] Therefore, February 3rd through the 7th, 2025 has been designated as National School Counseling Week. Thank you all for the amazing work you do with our students.

[00:06:30] Thank you all.

[00:07:21] Chair, that was our lone spotlight for tonight. Thank you. Mrs. Radford, I'd like to acknowledge that the mayor is here with us tonight, Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger in the back.

[00:07:42] Thank you. And we have MEA and VEA representatives here, Anna Demeria and Tammy Potts with MEA, and Shaniqua Williams with VEA. Thank you for being here.

[00:08:01] Next on our agenda is board committee reports, and I believe the policy committee has a report. - Thank you, Chair. We did have a policy committee meeting last Thursday. We'll discuss it in a little bit further detail when we are on the discussion agenda.

[00:08:19] Thank you very much. Now we have citizens' comments. 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.

[00:08:37] We appreciate the time you have taken to be here, and we treat citizens' comments as a public hearing. We do not engage with conversation with speakers. 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.

[00:08:54] And first on our list, I have Mighty Whitesell.

[00:09:13] - Good evening, everyone. My name is Mighty Whitesell. I stand before you as a concerned parent. I have two children in Manassas City Public Schools, an eighth grader at Metz and an 11th grader in Osborne.

[00:09:31] What I have shared with you is a policy that we have regarding our academic and career path that should be developed in seventh grade and signed by the students, parents, in a school administration in eighth grade.

[00:09:46] Neither of my children have an ACP. I believe the lack of not having an academic and career path, as it is established in this policy that I just shared, has serious consequences.

[00:10:04] So for example, our kids, if they don't know what their roadmap is, they're going to miss out on crucial guidance. They're not gonna know what path they might be allowed, what course they might be able to get.

[00:10:19] And also, they might not know of certifications available in high school. I think it could also bring anxiety and stress if they don't know what their future is. It also could limit their college and career options if the students are less prepared compared to other districts that might have and may have implemented a policy.

[00:10:39] And also, they might limit their certification courses electives that sometimes go unfulfilled because the students don't know that it exists so I believe that if we have a policy it should be implemented our children should be well prepared for their future as you can see that policy was presented in approved in 2008 it was revised last year so I'm not sure why this was not implemented it's clearly a disservice to our students and I believe

[00:11:16] that the school board should investigate why there's a gap in this policy we should know as parents and we should be communicated what the plan is on how to close this gap so I think there are children deserve better I did not know about this gap until two weeks ago and I can tell you it was very shocking to see that many counselors did not even know that it existed and so to me I think that whatever's going on at Mets, because this is where the breakdown is, it didn't get catch in Osborne.

[00:11:55] So there is a problem in two sections. In having two kids in 8th grade and 11th grade, this is where the breakdown is, at least that I can confirm. So thank you. Thank you for your comments. Is there anyone else that wishes to speak during citizens' comments?

[00:12:12] Thank you. I will move along. Consent agenda. Chair, I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented. I have a motion by Mrs. Brescia, second by Mrs. Spall, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented.

[00:12:33] Is there any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries 7-0. Discussion agenda, student achievement, English speakers of other languages.

[00:12:48] We have a presentation by Mr. Kurt Emel, director of federal programs and family engagement. He'll provide an update on English speakers of other languages, ESOL programs. Welcome, Mr. Emel. Good evening. Can you hear me? Good evening, Chair Seberg, Vice Chair Spall, fellow school board members, and Dr. Newman. My name is Kurt Emel. I'm the Director of Federal Programs and Family Engagement. One of the most important roles that I play in the division is the oversight and management of our English or Speakers of Other Languages program.

[00:13:29] So this evening's presentation will emphasize the periodic evaluation of our English learner students via our annual English Language Proficiency Assessment, WIDA ACCESS for ELs.

[00:13:49] This federal and state mandated test measures progress and proficiency of English for all identified EL pupils levels 1 through 4. The data collected from this assessment directly informs inclusive and collaborative learning environments through instructional planning and delivery that facilitates equal and meaningful participation of all students within content curricula.

[00:14:10] Additionally, the English Language Development Support Tool I will share with you connects to building strong family and community partnerships as it allows limited English proficient family members the opportunity to polish and or learn English with their student. Manassas City Public Schools has a high percentage of direct ESOL service English learners.

[00:14:35] These charts break down our English learner percentages by school category, as well as direct ESOL service, refused ESOL service, and reclassified as former L pupils. As you can see, the percentages at our elementary schools are higher than our intermediate, middle, and high schools.

[00:14:54] Typically, if students enter our ESOL program in kindergarten, there is a high likelihood they will exit or meet proficiency, as measured by the access, before or just after fifth grade. The percentages for middle and high school increase due to recently arrived ELs at the higher grade levels.

[00:15:16] Direct ESOL service students are pupils who have been identified for language assistance services and are placed on a caseload. These students are periodically assessed to determine how they are growing in their English language development. There are four levels of direct ESOL service in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

[00:15:34] Entering Level 1, these pupils in Manassas City receive a minimum of 300 minutes a week of ESOL service. Emerging Level 2, these pupils receive a minimum of 225 minutes a week of ESOL service. Developing, Level 3, these pupils receive a minimum of 200 minutes a week of ESOL service.

[00:15:56] Expanding, Level 4, these students receive a minimum of 200 minutes a week of ESOL service. Each level of proficiency has descriptors for interpretive and expressive language. These are arranged by three features of academic language.

[00:16:12] Discourse or messaging, sentence or language forms and conventions, this is the grammar of the language, and word-phrase usage, or vocabulary and phrase usage that adds precision to the language that students are processing and producing. These descriptors are divided into grade-level clusters, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12.

[00:16:38] An example of discourse or the messaging would be students' ability to create coherent text, spoken or written, Using, for level one, sentences to convey intended purpose with a merging organization. For an example, topic sentence supporting details.

[00:16:56] For level two, short text that conveys intended purpose using predictable organization signaled with some paragraph openers, such as first, finally, in 1842, or plant cells have. Level three, expanding text that conveys intended purpose using generic organizational patterns such as introduction, body, and conclusion.

[00:17:20] And level four, text that conveys intended purpose using genre-specific organizational patterns such as statement of position arguments or a call to action with a variety of paragraph openers. In reviewing the data, we can see the importance of academic English language development in every lesson, every day, as 42% of our total student body are learning English and content concurrently.

[00:17:50] Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, schools are expected to ensure that English learners make progress in learning English, attain proficiency as measured by a state English language proficiency assessment, and achieve academically or meet the same challenging state academic standards as their non-EL peers.

[00:18:15] This means that students must demonstrate proficiency in both language development and content knowledge across all content areas. The test we use is the WIDA ACCESS for ELs that comes from the WIDA Consortium, which Virginia is a part of. ACCESS stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners.

[00:18:38] There are 42 other states in the consortium that use the same assessment and the same standards. The assessment mirrors the adopted Commonwealth English Language Development Standards. The access assessment is essential because it facilitates L progress monitoring, instructional planning, accountability, placement decisions, and instructional equity.

[00:19:10] The access assessment allows our division to do the following, progress monitoring. This tracks English language development over time and is used to inform instructional planning, delivery, and English language development goals for each identified L. It also informs next steps for professional development related to inclusive and collaborative learning environments and L instruction.

[00:19:35] Instructional planning. The data provides educators with data to tailor instruction to student needs. The data is used to inform instructional planning and delivery via a cycle that works in our

collaborative learning teams through the role of the opportunity agent. This role works to lower language barriers of content instruction by developing language objectives aligned to recommend the strategies that engage students in grade-level curriculum and develop English concurrently.

[00:20:05] Accountability. It's a requirement under federal law of the Every Student Succeeds Act, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, to ensure English learners are making progress toward English proficiency. Placement decisions. The assessment helps determine program eligibility, accommodations, and exit criteria, also used in scheduling student services.

[00:20:29] And equity. It ensures students receive appropriate language support across the grade-level curriculum. The Access4Ls assessment is a challenging test.

[00:20:45] For students to show progress and attain proficiency, they must demonstrate ever-increasing levels of language processing that are aligned to the complex nature of academic English and content disciplines. Rigor of academic language may have students processing and producing English within writing tasks that might require comparing scientific concepts or arguing a point using evidence.

[00:21:10] Time intensivity, students must complete multiple sections illustrating language abilities across four domains of the English language, listening reading, speaking and writing, each requiring focus and effort. Cognitive load, balances content knowledge with language skills which can be overwhelming for pupils and is why intentional academic language practice is necessary for English language development.

[00:21:35] The access assessment captures the language that students are typically exposed to during classroom and grade-level content instruction. It's important for educators to be aware of the access test design because it is different than a content assessment.

[00:21:53] Content assessments measure students' academic achievement. Typically there's a right or wrong answer. An English language proficiency assessment tests the language that students would or could use in a content area. Access does not measure the content, but instead measures the language students would typically use in specific content disciplines such as English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

[00:22:18] It is our collective responsibility to support language development throughout the day across all content areas in order to support our L pupils in developing academic English language proficiency. So let's take a look at an example release-to-access test item.

[00:22:42] This illustrates a grade-level cluster 6-8. WIDA English Language Development Standard 3, Language 4, Mathematics. It is a Tier C, for the language domain is reading. It is a question that a student could experience during an access test.

[00:22:58] When students take the assessment, the dynamics of the exam place students within the tier that they are tested on. So depending on how a student does, the information that they need to process and produce increases in linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions, and precision of word and phraseology.

[00:23:19] In this example, students have read through the language of mathematics. Not to solve an equation, but to navigate the language in a sequence to follow the directions within the text in order to choose what the equation should be. This example emphasizes the interpretive language demand of

analyzing possible ways to represent and solve a problem and then to express analysis by choosing the way in which you would solve the problem. Nowhere in this does the student have to solve the problem. It's using the language in order

[00:23:55] to be able to set the student up to be able to solve the problem. In teaching something like this, educators would need to look at the specific language skills necessary to complete the task. Once this has been ascertained, then intentional planning would focus on expressive language explanation using specific language functions such as the use of connectors to link sentences and longer stretches of text signaling details of time, for example, first, next, at the same time, causality, therefore, consequently, and as a result of, and clarification, for example, as seen in the model.

[00:24:33] So as you can see from the previous example, the Access for Ls assessment requires a student to demonstrate usage of academic English. Examining progress data from the spring 2024 Access for Ls assessment, 34.06% of the identified ELs in grades 7 and 8, with two access data points, made progress. To address this need, my team and I began to work closely with METS administration and teaching staff in order to examine this data, develop goals for improvement, and refine ESOL services. In addition to the ESOL services that we provide during the school day, my team and I

[00:25:12] also began to investigate the feasibility of supplemental English language development tutoring. We began this investigation in March of 2024 looking at two specific resources, Lexia English and Summit K-12. We chose to go with Summit K-12 due to its correlation to the WIDA Access Assessment and that we could support Level 1, Level 2, and our long-term English learners to address the difficulty they are experiencing in demonstrating their knowledge at METS.

[00:25:42] In our investigation, we found that this program facilitates the teaching of academic language and exposure to the form of the access assessment, because you can't necessarily teach to this test. Summit K-12 Connected Literacy is a digital tool designed to enhance English language proficiency.

[00:26:03] This system is aligned to WIDA's five English language development standards. These standards are, standard one, English learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting. You can think of it as kind of your basic interpersonal communication skills of school. Standard two, Ls communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.

[00:26:27] Standard three, Ls communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics. Standard four, Ls communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science. And standard five, Ls communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

[00:26:50] Standard 1 is integrated into all the other ELD standards because it emphasizes English used across all disciplines and school settings. The items that students experience within Summit K-12 are organized by grade-level clusters.

[00:27:07] These clusters are K-1-2-3-4-5-6-8-9-12. These items are categorized by English Language Development Standard and Tier A-B-C. Pretty much mirrors the WIDA access. To correspond to the ACCESS testing tiers, the system assigns each student a personal learning plan based on listening, reading, speaking, and writing performance as measured by a pretest of English language proficiency.

[00:27:38] This resource helps our students prepare for the linguistic and cognitive load of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The student experience working in this system replicates the experience they would have when taking the WIDA ACCESS. It also has the benefit of additional English language development work and time that is specific to each child on his or her personal learning plan.

[00:28:03] During the fall semester, we piloted this resource at Metz Middle School. Teachers and administrators were trained on the system, and a schedule was developed for after-school supplemental English language development tutoring. Families were informed of the program, and a consent-to-participate invitation was sent home.

[00:28:22] During our parent information session, parents were directly given the permission form for enrollment. Additionally, our METS staff, specifically our family liaison, reached out to the families of our pupils in order to help our families understand the benefits of this program.

[00:28:42] So this is an example of an access preparation question in Summit K-12. The grade level cluster is the same at 6-8. The WIDA ELD standard is the same, language 4, mathematics.

[00:28:56] The tier is the same. This is a tier C question. The language expectation is the same as the access release test item on slide seven. The student needs to analyze possible ways to represent and solve a problem indicated within the text. As you can see, Summit K-12 mirrors the types of questions student might experience while taking the WIDA access for ELLs assessment.

[00:29:23] Based on survey analysis from our ESOL Parent Advisory Committee and also Title I Annual Meetings, many of our families have indicated that they would like to have classes in Learning English.

[00:29:41] We have accommodated this request in two ways. Face-to-face adult ESL classes that we hold at METS because METS is kind of the hub for all of these classes. We have 10 of them currently. And also Summit K-12.

[00:29:56] When students are enrolled within the Summit K-12 program, they receive four free family licenses. These licenses are at no cost to our families as they are part of the program subscription. This allows our families the freedom to learn English at their pace and on a time schedule that is convenient for them.

[00:30:17] It also facilitates a closer connection with our parents and their student as they can work together to polish their English skills. Metz Middle School hosted the K-12 Summit Family Information, or I should say Summit K-12, Family Information Session on September 12th.

[00:30:41] Parents were provided an overview of the program, the duration, and who would be teaching their students during the tutoring sessions. Parents were also shown how they, if their student participated in the tutoring program, could access Summit K-12 in order to build their own English language abilities.

[00:30:59] We had 51 families attend the meeting, which was incorporated into one of our Parents as Educational Partners meetings for this information session. That concludes the presentation, and I am ready for your questions.

[00:31:18] Thank you, Mr. Emel. And I'm looking to my right for any questions. Ms. Miles. First off, thank you so much for your presentation. I appreciate the time and effort you put into preparing it for us. I had some questions that you already actually answered, which was very good to see.

[00:31:37] One thing I noticed you have the breakdown of the entire district and how many levels one twos threes and fours we have But I would like the breakdown for Mets and Osborne For the percentage levels of each of those because I feel like it would be nice to just see that in those Specific schools if you're able to yeah, I don't have the percentage levels with me today, but I can send that to you problem Thank you. I had a question about the summit k-12, but you thoroughly answered a lot of the questions it was great information it sounds like a great program I love that it mirrors the access test I also love that each family is able to learn English at home

[00:32:16] you know having four family licenses that's wonderful so I think that that's a great program and I'm glad that we have piloted and hopefully it will be a success in the schools thank you thank you Mrs. Stevens thank you chair um just a couple quick questions. We're piloting Summit K-12, and we just rolled it out in the fall.

[00:32:40] What has been the feedback so far from both teachers, students, and families? Yeah, the feedback's been positive. When working with the students directly, the students seem to be engaged in the program. One of the things that we've discovered is that when we do access testing, it's an annual thing, okay? Students really don't have that much exposure to it, and unfortunately, the WIDA, University of Wisconsin, because WIDA comes out of the University of Wisconsin, they don't have many released items for us in order to be able to practice.

[00:33:12] The only other way that we could practice is by purchasing assessments and then building that into the daily schedule in order to assess students. And to do that is very time-consuming. So, I mean, you all know how complicated our schedules are and the things that we need to do on a daily basis in order to meet the needs of the students that we have.

[00:33:33] to add in another layer of assessment would be extremely complicated to do so. Plus, there are also funding considerations to be able to do that. So, that being said, from my experience, working directly with students, they seem to enjoy the program, and the results are promising.

[00:33:55] And then, with the four licenses each family gets, do we know what kind of participation we're having outside of the school? Yeah, that's actually really tricky. So, my major emphasis for working with this program for this year was to figure out, is it feasible for us to do a tutoring program specific for English language development in order to be able to close even additional gaps or more gaps than we could during instruction, right?

[00:34:24] During the instructional time, during the instructional phase. The added benefit of this and why it really swayed me more, well, it's one of the reasons what really swayed me more, was we could have that option for the family licenses. The program that I'm working with right now does not have a way for me to gauge that.

[00:34:44] So from what I understand from the vendor or the company themselves, they are working to be able to do that. So I don't have data on that. Because that really would be good to know. because if we've got families that are engaged within the program at home, there's only benefits that could be seen.

[00:35:06] So I'm very curious about that. Now, I have a question, and you may have answered it in your presentation. I may have just missed it. So Summit K-12, is that being used during instructional time, during the school date, or just after school? It's just after school. Just after school. And that's why it's supplemental.

[00:35:22] Okay. Because the funding source is federal grant funding. Okay. And in order for me to be able to use that funding source, it has to be in addition to, above and beyond, their core language instructional programming time. And so then, is there some alignment between what's being taught in the classroom and what they're working on independently?

[00:35:41] Or when they're doing the tutoring, are they just working at their own pace? They're working at their own pace. Because this is, what I like to say, straight up English language development, depending on what your needs are based on where you fall on the language development continuum. So if you fall in listening across those four domains, so listening, reading, speaking, and writing, if you fall as a 2.2, it will automatically path you to what you need to work on in order to increase your proficiency level on each proficiency band continuum.

[00:36:10] Okay, so it's based on, so where a student places in each different section per se is based on whatever that WIDA access score was from the prior year, the prior administration. Nothing to do with, so two different things. Okay. So, the access test is separate from this.

[00:36:28] Okay. Okay? So, when students enter into this program, they take a pre-test. Okay. That gives them where their proficiency levels fall across the four language domains, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Okay? And then it will set the path. The access scores are what we use instructionally, and we use them in multiple ways.

[00:36:49] One, it's how we ascertain what their proficiency level is, what kind of minutes of service they're going to have, and how much do they need to go. So when we write goals for each individual student, because we have goals for every one of our identified ELs, it's called our English Learner Individual Instructional Plan. They have two goals per semester, four per year, and they're aligned to how they're falling out on that language continuum. Thank you. These are great questions. These are great answers. They really help. Just a quick question on EL status. We've got active EL, which is one through four,

[00:37:26] and then we have former EL and identified but refusing services. Why do we include, why is former EL and identified but refusing services included in our EL status? That's a good question, because by federal definition, we have to report that, okay?

[00:37:43] So when you see it in a state report, it would be state code 1, state code 2, state code 3. State code 1 are those students who receive direct ESOL service, level 1 through 4s, and they are indeed receiving the direct ESOL service. State code two, we have to track to see how many of our pupils are refusing service.

[00:38:01] Does that raise a red flag? Why are they refusing services? And then our process, and it's also a process that's supported by the State Department, is that we conference with the parents. Or if the students of age and they can refuse themselves, we conference with the student to make sure that they understand the benefits of the ESOL program.

[00:38:21] But we have to report that. So our, sorry. I can be wordy. So our identified but refusing services, that is 0.2%. Is that pretty much so standard or level with other divisions in other states?

[00:38:39] Or is our number higher or lower? Because I think in a school division of 7,700 approximately students, 0.2 is going to represent a very small portion. It is a small portion. It's a handful of students. I cannot speak on that particular data point, but I can find out for you how we compare.

[00:38:57] Because usually when I look at how we're comparing, I'm looking at progress and proficiency as measured by the interim measures of progress and the composite proficiency level gains chart under the ESSA plan. But I can find out. Okay, great. Yeah, I have a million other questions, but I'm not going to take up anybody's time.

[00:39:13] So thank you very much. Any other questions? To my left. Mrs. Brescia. Mr. Amel, thank you so much. I enjoy your presentations. They are very dense, so I do like listening to you.

[00:39:30] But that sometimes means that I miss what you say. So if I ask something that you covered already, I want to issue a preemptive apology. So you, if I followed along correctly, this was piloted at METS last year. This year. This year it's being piloted.

[00:39:45] In the fall semester. Okay. Are there plans to roll this out to other schools? Yes, actually. So it's interesting that you say that. So we piloted at METS because I have found the working relationship for several reasons.

[00:40:03] One, because we saw that that is an identifying need. okay? We're looking at progress that really does need to improve at that particular school, okay? And we see that in the 6-8 cluster, that 6-8 band, okay? The other reason is I've gotten a really good collaborative working relationship with the Mets principal, Ms. Julia Finnegan. And once I expressed this interest to her, she was really, really motivated to try this out. So I think that's why she jumped on it before the intermediate schools did. After working with this program and

[00:40:42] after working with Ms. Finnegan, and I'm sure principals talk, Ms. Jackson inquired about the program. And her school started this in November. November's very tricky because of the time, so really they got going with it in December. And her intention is to run the program all the way up to the access window when they have their access test because the access window is open right now.

[00:41:08] I don't know if you know that. So it's, you know, January 13th to March 21st. You have this entire time. And for us, we have to test 3,070 students. Okay. So it's a lot. She wants to run it all the way up until at least the access window and maybe beyond. So it is at Baldwin Intermediate.

[00:41:27] It is at Baldwin Intermediate. Okay. Because that was going to be a question that I had because the, you know, when you go to our school quality profiles, when you see our ESSA tabs, Baldwin Intermediate for the school year last year also, it was actually lower than METS in terms of the percentage of students making progress. So I was hoping to hear that in your answer, that this was going to make its way over to... It was lower, but if you were doing a calculation by reduction of progress by 10 to 15 percent, they actually outperformed METS. That, I know we could get...

[00:41:59] Right. Well, I mean, Malden Intermediate, it's kind of a strange school to analyze because it's so small. And then you have METS, which is so very big. And we're talking in percentages in both cases. So I totally understand that. So can you go over again how are students identified for this?

[00:42:18] So what we did was for the identification process, and I don't know where it is on the slide. I'm just going to fast forward. Actually, I'm going to save that picture because that's the best one. What we did was looking at the data, looking at access data, looking at the proficiency levels of our students.

[00:42:35] We initially started with our Level 1, 2s, and our Long-Term Ls. For those of you who don't know, Long-Term Ls are those students who have been identified for L services, and they've been in our L

program for more than five years. So that was, from my intention, what I wanted to focus on.

[00:42:52] And then Juliet wanted to open it up a little bit more. So in the end, we invited everybody who was a level one through four. Now, we didn't get as many, I call them, hits or returns for students to participate because we did this as a voluntary program.

[00:43:15] So the list whittled down to 125 students. Of that, we got returns for 109, and of that, we had 90 students who actually came, were there, did the program. You mentioned that.

[00:43:31] But it was based on data. Every decision that we've made for this program has been based on progress data. Thank you for saying that. I'd like to engage with data myself. I do hope, and I expressed to you in an email, that I did feel a little bit like that was missing in the transition from these RL students, this is what we're doing to help them, but we were kind of missing that middle piece in terms of what the results were that we were working with.

[00:43:57] I do appreciate you verbalizing them during your presentation, just something to keep in mind. You did mention that this was federal grant funded. Yes, ma'am. That's been in the news today, as it turns out, because there was an announcement that federal grant funding has ended, but maybe not.

[00:44:15] So I just want to inquire as to do we know, have any clarity as to how this might impact this program? I have -- I do not have any clarity from the State Department. So I will take the direction from the State Department, depending on what are our federal grants that I oversee where they fall.

[00:44:35] - Is this a license that we're paying for or have we purchased this? - It's a license. - Okay, so if it doesn't perform the way we are hoping, we can terminate the license if it doesn't perform. Do we have any benchmarks for success? What are we looking for? - And I'm glad you asked.

[00:44:51] But before I explain this to you, this is where it gets really complicated. So when you look at data for progress, it's not looking at percentages. You have to keep in mind what a progress level looks like. So if you take the number 3.7, 3 is your L proficiency level.

[00:45:10] 0.7 is how far you are to the next proficiency level. So this is where I start to gesticulate. Sorry, Cameron. So if you have a range from 3 to 4, within that range, there are 9 decimals. So up to 3.9, and then a full proficiency level is 4.

[00:45:29] When students make progress, they're moving through. Now, sometimes they can have leaps of progress, which is fantastic. But a lot of times, especially at this age group, you see smaller numbers of progress. To put this into perspective, if you pull the ESSA plan and you look on, I want to say it's page 18, you will see something called the composite proficiency level gains chart.

[00:45:54] This is how progress is officially measured. Also, keeping in mind that in order to measure progress officially, a student needs to have two access data points. So a lot of times, we might have students, a lot of students that assess, but they won't be counted for official progress because they do not have two recurring access data points.

[00:46:15] So if my student is Mr. Gefeller, he needs to take the access last spring and the access this spring in order to have those two data points. When looking at how that's measured, that chart is broken into grade-level clusters.

[00:46:33] You have grades K to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 12, okay? And then you have proficiency bands. So you have 1.0 to 2.4. At the 6A grade level, overall, they need to make 0.4 amount of progress if they're in that

proficiency band.

[00:46:54] So it gives you some perspective when you're looking at a 3 to a 4. To go up 0.4 doesn't sound like a lot, but when you're looking at English language development, it's a tremendous amount of growth. And that's what is measured for that proficiency band.

[00:47:11] Moving up from there, you have 2.5 to 3.4. Students at this grade level cluster need to make a 0.2 overall composite. And moving from there, you have 3.5 to 4.4. They need to make a 0.1. So it really puts it in perspective, because when you're looking at the numbers, and the numbers that I'm going to share with you, you might say, oh, that doesn't sound like much if you're thinking about percentages.

[00:47:33] But if you're thinking about that continuum from one proficiency to another, it's quite a lot. So are we hoping that our students, because we're doing, it's at METS, so it's the 6-8 band that we're piloting right now. So I can share with you what we see thus far, because I think that's what you want to hear, right?

[00:47:52] Yes, that's what I want. Thank you. Okay. So, as I said before, students take a pretest, and then towards the end, we went from September 23rd to December 16th. And around the end of that time, they had to take a summative assessment. In listening, we saw students go up average of 0.35, which is a third of a proficiency level, okay?

[00:48:17] In reading, which is a little more challenging, as you can see from the access assessment examples that I showed you, we saw students go up an average of 0.15. In speaking, we saw students go up an average of 0.48, okay?

[00:48:33] So just to highlight, we did not have a chance to finish the summative because the time frame had to end, And so I do not have the average for writing. But the data that I do have is promising.

[00:48:49] If you consider that the average minutes of use was 417, which is under seven hours. So that's why I say it's promising. Very good. It does sound promising. It would have looked nice in a slide, just putting that out there. That's all for me. Ms. Brown?

[00:49:08] All my questions have been asked. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for such a thorough presentation. Just one comment maybe. Was this presented to students as a remediation, or is there a possibility to present it as well as we move forward if given the grant as an enrichment possibility?

[00:49:32] Well, that's exactly how we did present it, as an opportunity to polish your English language, not to learn English language, not to develop, you know, not as anything that could be perceived as I'm not doing well.

[00:49:47] to polish your English language. So that's how we... Enrichment. Yeah, we kind of, when we worked with our students, we were trying to express that this is an enrichment. Because if you look at the purpose of Title III is progress in learning English, English language enhancement, and academic achievement for RLs.

[00:50:10] Thank you so much. Mrs. Paul. Thank you very much for that presentation, Mr. Emel. I want to, I guess, let everyone know what I know and that your reporting expectations are many and varied. And, you know, this is a really difficult time for you to be able to understand exactly where the future of some of these kids are going.

[00:50:35] ELL students, some of these questions I wrote before your thorough presentation, but I do want to kind of drive it home. ELL students are expected to master the same grade level standards that

non-ELL students master, correct?

[00:50:51] Yeah, absolutely, because when you look at the intent of Title III, and so I mentioned Title III because that's the guidelines for language instruction education programming. Our ESOL programming is really officially known as language instruction education programming.

[00:51:07] Those guidelines that are connected to the Castaneda standard, okay, those guidelines emphasize English language development or progress in learning the English language, language enrichment, and academic achievement of English learners. We measure academic achievement by tests that are written for never else, which are our standards of learning assessments. So we have to make sure that the barriers of understanding, those language barriers, are being overcome so that students have equal and meaningful access to the content curriculum

[00:51:46] because the eventuality is that they will be assessed in that content curriculum. sure and that is across all content levels um so just to drive home kids can grow a tremendous amount and still not measure to the next eric to the next mark they could so uh there's a couple ways in that they might fall short depending on where they fall on that composite proficiency level games chart uh they could fall a little short there but also too when we test students like I said, we have 3,070 students that we're going to be testing. Not all of them will be

[00:52:25] reported as making progress because not all of them have those two access data points. But that doesn't mean that we can't use that composite proficiency level gains chart to set goals for our students. The contrary, we can use that information, whether you have two data points or not, in order to be able to help you to grow. Sure. And 51 families being engaged in that growth is, you know, something to really celebrate.

[00:52:51] I just want to say that. So that leads me into, you know, we might have to take a minute to think, but what are you most proud of or what are you happy to highlight, you know, with our students, staff at MCPS with the ESOL program, given that there are wide bands in between what other people measure as success?

[00:53:11] Yeah, you know. Because kids can really progress a lot. I'm proud of a lot of things. I've been with the division for a long time. I started as an ESL teacher, became an ESOL specialist for the division, and now I'm fortunate enough to be able to be the director of federal programs, really the director of your ESOL program.

[00:53:30] I think what I'm most proud of are the students that we serve and the resilience of our students and the incredible things that our students are able to do. Something that always resonates with me is one program that I'm very proud of is our Voices from the Heart program, where students, typically at the high school, level ones and level twos, Choose prompts from the National Writing Project, and they work on writing a narrative about themselves over a protracted period of time.

[00:54:05] Going through, you know, in a sense, the development, using the Rita writing model in order to be able to help them to be able to craft their own stories. And then through the process, the revision process, these stories are then shared.

[00:54:23] And we do this every fall. And this fall, we call this sharing, building communities through storytelling. And the amount of families that participated this fall and the amount of students that participated and the things that they were sharing, the wonderful poems that they were, it's just, to me, it's

amazing because a level one student is capable of incredible things with the appropriate support and the appropriate instruction.

[00:54:52] Okay. Okay. Because it's all about language learning and language teaching. You know, acquisition is a whole different thing. I could teach a class on the difference between acquisition and language learning, right? But language learning is what we have responsibility for as teachers, you know, and the moves that we make in order to be able to help students to be able to express themselves, to be able to process and produce language across those four domains connected to content, you know, that's where it's at.

[00:55:22] You know, that's what we need to, you know, to do. Well, I would personally love to invite some of your students to come in the fall and tell us some of their stories. I'm a big fan of storytelling, and I think that that is a message that more people need to hear. I'm one of seven board members, so I can't make that happen.

[00:55:40] It happened. I would love to see that in a second. You know, my other passion besides storytelling, or at least the idea of storytelling, is our mantra, our sort of new mantra of addressing kids' needs by name and by need.

[00:55:58] And it sounds to me like, if I'm understanding correctly, between access, which may turn around the needs assessment a little more slowly. But WIDA, I believe you said, you know, does help inform our instruction by name and by need.

[00:56:13] And so, you know, again, I just think that was a really important thing that you explained to us tonight. So thank you very much. Thank you, Mrs. Ball. And Mr. Emil, I have one last question and then a comment. Can you talk about some of the professional development that you've done through your team with our staff?

[00:56:31] Sure. So I have a small team, but a very mighty team. We have done training for the entire division on the WIDA ELD standards framework. We've done training for the division on writing language objectives. We've done training for the division on the sheltered instruction observation protocol, otherwise known as SIOP.

[00:56:50] And, of course, we've done training for the division on elevation. Elevation is another tool that I underwrite through Title III that provides every teacher in the division specific strategies. It's really like a library of strategies specific to English language development and content understanding.

[00:57:06] Thank you. And I just wanted to comment that you're very passionate about your work. Nobody cares more about our L's than you and your team here in Manassas City Public Schools. And we appreciate you.

[00:57:21] I've been very fortunate to work with you on ESOL advisory through our different events at school and getting more parents engaged. So if there are some parents out there of ELLs or if you know of somebody that would like to be involved, we do have an advisory group.

[00:57:39] We have PEP programs. And our next advisory meeting is February 6th. That's right. So thank you very much for tonight's presentation and thank you for your work. Thank you. Okay. Moving on to policies. I'll go to Mrs. Stevens. Thank you. The policy committee met last Thursday to look at a few policies, to revise two policies, and to discuss two policies. The first

[00:58:10] policy is BCF, which is the copy of the advisory committees to the school board. When we look at the advisory committees to the school board, the policy had originally said ESL advisory committee and a fine arts advisory board the policy that we're revising is to change the name of the el advisory committee to the english learners parent advisory committee or epac and to remove the fine arts advisory board because there is no fine arts advisory board so that was policy bcf the second

[00:58:48] policy was policy BCE copy of school board committees what we did was we realized that the finance committee doesn't meet as a committee whenever there are financial discussions concerning finance those are held before the full board as opposed to the committee and then sent to the full board so we chose to merge the educational support committee and the Finance Committee so it would be Educational Support and Finance we also changed the name of the Personnel Committee to the Board Development Committee because the title Personnel Committee can tend to be misleading

[00:59:27] because it would lead one to assume that personnel means all Manassas City Public Schools employees whereas the Personnel Committee really just relates to school board we have many many policies that relate to employees of the school division but this one is geared specifically towards the school board the other two policies we looked at were BCB school board officers at this time we're not really thinking or talking about revising or updating this policy but the final policy we looked at so I have to move through my policies was BCA

[01:00:06] school board organizational meeting I believe it was at our organizational meeting one of our school board members asked a question about term limits for chair and vice chair which brought us to discuss this policy to look at policies in other school divisions across the state and we engaged in a conversation as to whether chair and vice chair should have term limits how long they would serve and how many terms they would serve we're going to continue with that discussion when we meet again to look at what a policy would look like if we crafted a

[01:00:40] policy to include term limits and numbers of term limits as in how long a chair or vice chair would serve or how many terms they could serve once we come to a decision we don't vote as a committee once we come to a recommendation we will bring the recommendation to the full board and it will become a discussion item and that is where we are right now if anyone on the committee

[01:01:06] would like to add to that miss brown or miss miles okay thank you any questions yes so we have and you know i've never thought to count them so we have academic committee board development committee policy committee and then educational support and finance committee so we have four regular standing committees now i am going to bring up something that miss brezha originally got brought up. Standing committees are committees we're required as a school division to have.

[01:01:42] We can build, create any committees we think are necessary. They can become standing committees or special committees. If they become standing committees, then I believe they need to be in policy BCE. But if they're special committees, they do not need to be added to a policy.

[01:02:03] An example of that is last year when we had the compensation committee. That was a special committee that had a begin date and a potential end date. Now, we can have a committee that starts out as a special committee that becomes a standing committee.

[01:02:20] We can also do that as well. And then, so, Ms. Brescia, if you wanted to mention. Yes, I wanted us to think about, and you are absolutely correct, that we do not have to add this. This is policy BCF I'm

talking about. These are our advisory committees where members of our school community and members of the public give us, the school board, advice and recommendations on certain topics.

[01:02:42] And yesterday evening, so I will admit that I have not had a lot of time to really fully form my own suggested game plan about this, but I realized that some of our surrounding divisions have advisory committees on immigrant and refugee student concerns.

[01:02:59] And this is something that if we wanted to, we could revise the policy. If we wanted to make it a permanent standing committee, advisory committee that reports to us, we obviously have the power to revise this BCF right now if that's what we wanted to do.

[01:03:15] We could make it a superintendent initiative, indicate to the superintendent that we would like him to do that and like him to give us a report at some other future time. That's a little bit more nimble. It's a little bit of a faster option because if we have an advisory committee, we have to vote on the membership, all that kind of stuff.

[01:03:33] It takes a little bit longer. It might be something we want to do at a later date if we get either a special committee or a superintendent's committee set up in the short term to address some short-term questions and needs that are coming up and revisit it at a later time to maybe make this a permanent feature of Manassas City advisory committees.

[01:03:54] It was an idea I had that seems germane to the issues that many of our students are facing, and so I wanted to submit that to see what the appetite was of the board on that, And I am open to any and all feedback on it. So my thoughts on it, I think it's a necessary committee to form.

[01:04:15] But I do believe time is of the essence. And so establishing a special advisory committee for immigration and refugee status, families, situations, whatever we choose to name it, I think it would be better in the beginning to have it as a special committee because we can move faster.

[01:04:39] and we can make more changes as we see fit whereas if it's a policy change there's a process and a procedure we have to go through and that's a little bit slower so that's that's my initial thought and I would be supportive of that if we wanted to and we don't need to take a vote on that you know I see a lot of nodding heads I feel like right uh all of us it appears like all of us have a comfort with a and superintendent anecdotally we do have support from the community to establishing a committee, but like I said, I think it's faster, and I think in some ways

[01:05:16] we do need to be very careful, very mindful in what we do, but there is a piece to it where we do need to move faster rather than slower. And that's all I have. Thank you. Did you have a comment?

[01:05:36] I do want to say that we want to move very purposefully when we're doing this. I definitely like that we're going to do something, and it's going to happen pretty soon, But we definitely want to make sure that we're being proactive and not reactive.

[01:05:58] And how we get, you used the word nimble, I love it. You know, our job is to make sure that our families feel heard and, you know, supported where we can. And that's the big question is where can we. So I think a committee is exactly the right answer.

[01:06:17] But we just want to make sure we're doing it really, really purposefully. Exactly. And I'm sure Dr. Newman will. And I think it's important that we put it in, we develop it so our students feel safe. Because right now, our students are anywhere from pre-K to 12th grade.

[01:06:37] They're hearing things and not sure what's what. And as a school division, it's our job to not just teach them, but to protect them and provide for them. And I think this is a piece in protecting our kiddos. Dr. Newman, did you have a comment?

[01:06:53] I was just going to say, As we put the committee together, I think we need to think about our ESL teachers who work directly with the students every day, our translators, and also our parent liaisons who have direct connection, and they know things maybe we are not privy to on how students are feeling and what parents are calling in and saying as well.

[01:07:18] Good thought. And then just real quick, we also need to be, and I'm just putting this out there, we need to be very mindful of student and family privacy. and what our role as a school division is as opposed to what's being heard out in the media.

[01:07:34] But I think we really have to focus as well on maintaining student and family privacy. - So is it, as far as next steps, is it too late to discuss this at our next work session?

[01:07:50] - It's not until February 27th or-- - Chair, I'm wondering, can, sorry, I'm thinking through this as I'm trying to speak the same time I'm wondering if it would be better to do something a little bit earlier but to provide the school division with time to kind of flesh out what this would look like to look at what other school divisions are doing and also to be in discussion with the city itself and with the city police

[01:08:27] department because we need to know where they stand if that makes sense but this really needs to be a partnership I have a few other thoughts about that but I'm not going to make them public. So we won't wait. We will continue on. So an option that we have available to us tonight if we wanted to move, you know, I know I agree that faster is better. I don't I don't really feel comfortable waiting until the 27th. I feel like there is a pretty good appetite to, you know, at least get a committee started. It doesn't, you know, it's not going to sprout

[01:09:02] fully formed out of the ground tomorrow. It is going to take a few weeks of work. So someone can make a motion I'd be happy to make the motion you know directing the superintendent to come up with a plan for an immigration and refugee student concerned committee it's not strictly necessary but it is a formal you know it is something that we is a more formal measure so everybody we'd all know everyone's on the right page with that if that's the method we want or we can by consent with if there are no objections indicate that that's our

[01:09:36] desire question yes if the board can just provide guidance on what exactly they want well that's what I was thinking too I mean do we want the meetings to be conducted in Spanish yes yes definitely I mean I think you're asking more like who is invited what are the goals what are that you know and so I do think that that is your your that is a good we can talk about it now and where we're meeting right now if we want to try to set that, but maybe a work session would be a better context for that

[01:10:15] to really hammer all of that out because I can see that's the kind of thing where we might circle around a little bit and it might need to make a few drafts before we have a final agreement. We could also do it in a way where you can draft something and bring it to us later for our discussion.

[01:10:32] So if you feel, but I don't want you to do anything that you, you know, if you would prefer us to lead the way and draft that out. I do think it needs a work session, but if you want to make a draft and bring it to our next meeting, we can do that too. We're all in it together, so I'm not trying to not do anything.

[01:10:50] I think we all support our kids. We love our kids. They are all ours, regardless of status, and we want to make sure that we are protecting that right to an education. So I'm not against anything, but I just want to make sure that I'm meeting the goals. You want to meet the expectation that you want.

[01:11:07] That is extremely reasonable. Well, I suggest that we have a work session. I just don't want to wait until the 27th. That's my only objection. So I would not be opposed to having a work session to really figure out all the who, what, and where for you and the staff.

[01:11:27] But I absolutely do not support waiting until the 27th of February. How about February 4th? I will make it a priority. okay all right Alba can you work with us to find a date thank you right we can do that we can do

[01:12:01] that we can yeah let's go ahead and find a date offline aiming for February 4th okay perfect all right and here we are at board members comments and I'll go first to a student representative miss Bland good evening happy early national school counseling week counselors do more behind the scenes then we truly know thank you to all counselors for all contributions

[01:12:38] to help students focus on academic and career development seniors please don't forget to order your caps and gowns you don't want to be the only one walking across the stage without a cap or gown order as soon as possible to ensure you look and feel your best on such an important day reminder Saturday learning seminar is this Saturday Saturday learning seminar is a great opportunity opportunity for students to get extra help from staff or catch up on missing assignments free breakfast is also provided Osborne is offering a free SAT

[01:13:14] during the school day on March 13th for juniors only the link to register can be found in the Osborne newsletter that was emailed out yesterday registration ends on February 10th or when all the slots are full take advantage of this opportunity to take the SAT for free the earlier you start the more chances you may get to improve your score thank you to mr. Emil for your very thorough update on our L students we all appreciate all the time and effort you and your team pour into the success of our L students as some students may

[01:13:51] feel frightened or scared during these times like these and I have one last reminder for everybody the first day of spring sports at Osborne is on February 24th please make sure students to have your following documents on file in order to try out for spring sports a physical that is dated after may 1st 2024 a concussion form a sudden cardiac arrest form and an emergency contact form thank you thank you miss bland miss breeden comments

[01:14:26] this evening good evening i would also like to thank mr emil for um the beautiful beautifully showcasing what good hands our monacety public school english learners are in so thank you for that positive update and then i would also like to appreciate the school counselors um i never see them where they're not hard at work in the hallway so i appreciate them for that and then on the note of school counselor appreciation i would like to restate multiple comments that i've heard in regards to osborne's course selection um it has i've heard an immense amount of positive

[01:15:05] conversation on the amount of courses available and the variety. Osborne has done great at their CTE variety and just an amazing job of providing all students with courses that are specific to any student's needs so I want to urge the school board to continue to consider new courses.

[01:15:23] It gets students excited which is a really great thing to have in a school community. This morning Osborne's unified team played basketball at continuity read. This team and the whole unified physical education program displays how committed Manassas City Public Schools are and including all in the joy of sports as it should be. And for any updates on upcoming games, they actually have an Instagram page at Unified Osborne Eagles. And then lastly, Osborne is holding a kindness week

[01:15:57] this week, which students can earn score cards to get prizes. And tomorrow is make a heart hand with a staff member day. So I'm sure there's many pictures to come on that. And with that, have a good evening. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Braden. Mrs. Stevens. Thank you. I don't know the last time I was the first person to give comments. Wow. It's been a while. Wow, this is new. In honor of School Counselors Week, I just wanted to share some of the things that our school counselors do every day. This is from the American School Counselor Association. They apply academic

[01:16:37] achievement strategies, manage emotions, and apply interpersonal skills with students. They plan for post-secondary options to include higher education, military, or workforce. They provide individual student academic planning and goal setting. They provide school counseling classroom lessons based on student success standards. They provide short-term counseling for students. They help create referrals for long-term support they collaborate with families teachers administrators and the community for student success they advocate for students at individual education plan meetings and other student focused

[01:17:16] meetings they provide data analysis to identify student issues needs and challenges and they act as systems change agents to improve equity access achievement and opportunities for all students our school counselors don't just wear one hat they wear many hats and often transfer between hats every single day so a huge shout out goes to all of our school counselors your vital important parts of our school community and the ideal caseload for student to counselor ratio is 250 students per school counselor now if that's a little bit shocking to you you can contact someone in the legislature

[01:17:55] and see about getting that change just as something much more manageable thank you. Thank you, Mrs. Stevens. Ms. Brown. Good evening. Thank you. I want to start my remarks by reminding families that attendance really matters. Regular attendance can help students through their academics and social skills. Students who attend school regularly and consistently are likely to achieve better grades because they are connected to what they're learning because they are present.

[01:18:34] socially when your students attend school regularly it builds relationships with peers and teachers and this enhances their ability daily to collaborate communicate and resolve conflicts so attendance matters and attendance is everyone's business so I'm urging everyone every family to ensure that the student comes to school regularly I would like to thank again Mr. Emil and all of the educators who work so hard to ensure that our English language learners not only succeed but feel supported through their journey so thank you and to our school counselors

[01:19:15] you pour your heart into helping both not just our students but our teachers and always offering support with lots of compassion and care the impact that you make as Ms. Stevens mentioned is immeasurable we can list it but we will not be able to be inclusive of everything that you do so thank you for the difference you make every single day in happy school counselors week thank you miss brown miss miles yes i have a few a few things to highlight um i was very excited to be able to go to the new school board orientation that vsba hosted i had the pleasure of attending

[01:19:54] it um in richmond and i learned a lot and look forward to using my knowledge to um as a new member. Also, I was able to go to wrestling senior night, which is actually on a Saturday morning. It was great to see all the families come out to support their seniors on an early Saturday morning. I also have a few things that I want to mention just to remind people of, of course, school counselors week is next week. I want to thank all the school counselors in our schools for all the things you do for our students and our families. I know our schools are better places because of your dedication another thing two other things I want to mention a black history month is starting next week and I look forward to

[01:20:33] seeing how schools observe this month of celebrating contributions to American history also the last thing I'm going to say is this year's theme for the second annual keep Manassas beautiful video contest is food waste composting ways to help our community and the environment and last year round elementary actually won a \$500 prize for their video submission so I'm really encouraging teachers to get their students to submit this year the contest friends it actually started January 1st it ends April 1st and if you want more

[01:21:10] information you can contact Colleen Burrows who is in charge of this this video contest and they are awarding second place gets \$300 and \$500 for first prize so it was really cool to see the snow videos so I think I think we can do this video as well so I hope that some students will be able to put something together and enter the contest thank you thank you miss miles dr.

[01:21:39] Jones you have comments this evening good evening everyone first of all our counselors they are an important part of our school community our students benefit from them on a daily basis because they're so committed so please please next week send out an email a thank you note or just a phone call to let the councils know how much we appreciate them special thanks to mr.

[01:22:02] Emil for the EL presentation I know mr. Emil that you're dedicated to both the students and teachers in our schools division your leadership is definitely appreciated the information on the assets the ELD development was very informative and we ask that you continue to provide information to us and also I think it's a great idea that the language program is available to our students and our parents i also spent the last two days in richmond so on yesterday it was the school board capital conference in which i learned a lot about the bills they're in the house and senate and today i participated in the orientation for new school school board members some of our

[01:22:39] topics were advocacy in our community budget strategies for teamwork collaboration with fellow board members and the superintendent and the roles of a school board member so definitely I learned a lot of things that I will use in the upcoming years and as Ms. Miles said Black History Month does start on Saturday February 1st Black History Month recognizes and honors the achievements and contributions of African Americans throughout history and today I look forward to visiting the schools during the months to help you participate in celebrations thank you thank you Mrs. Brescia so thank you very much thank you especially to our school counselors for everything they do every

[01:23:19] day, making all of the pieces of our school community fit together and nourishing and boosting up our students at the same time. No easy task, and my appreciation goes out to you. I do have some business reports to share with the board tonight. Since we last met, I enjoyed my very first meeting as the Special Education Advisory Committee liaison, and they have so many exciting things going on that I'm going to highlight here for you.

[01:23:45] They're working on bringing a sib shop to Manassas. A sib shop is a supportive program for siblings of special needs, the kids, so that they can meet other children in the same situation they are and get that support, which I love.

[01:24:00] They also discussed an idea about doing kind of a PEP program spin-off in which targeted for families who are entering the IEP process for the very first time. Love that so much. Very excited to see where that goes. They also briefly discussed a parent-teacher resource center and about doing a survey of the families of the division's 800 or so special ed students, which seems like a pretty daunting task, so good luck putting that all together.

[01:24:30] Also, everyone, please save the date for the next unified event, the Little Feet Meet, which will be on April 4th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Yesterday, I also had the pleasure of supporting Weems at the City Council meeting last night where they gave their presentation and I was delighted to highlight that school's incredible achievements in attendance, which I will repeat here again today.

[01:24:51] In 22-23, Weems had a chronic absence rate of almost 28%. That number is now half of that at slightly under 14%. It is an amazing accomplishment that I was honored to highlight. Last, I did stay for the meeting, and I noted that the City Council had their annual report night for the city's departments.

[01:25:09] I've noticed that we were mentioned several times. I was happy to see how the Economic Development Department highlight their cooperation with our CTE department in developing the Manassas City workforce. I was happy to see new dean on the list of the parks and recreations accomplishments.

[01:25:26] And I was excited to hear city plans for improvements to resident mobility, which I anticipate if they are successful in improving our mobility might actually have some positive effects on our attendance for when students miss the bus and lack other options for getting to school so I'm excited to see how that develops. I want to remind everybody for if you want to support Baldwin Elementary School there is a spirit night tomorrow from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Skate and Fun so I hope to see everybody in their skates there tomorrow and some other news to share I I have, in my personal capacity, joined the Regional Board of Directors for the Boys and

[01:26:05] Girls Club organization. I am excited about this opportunity to enhance the communication between this important resource and our school division to help our young people get on track and stay there. And finally, be alert, everyone. Report cards come out Friday. That's it for me.

[01:26:22] Thank you, Ms. Brescia. Vice Chair Spall. Okay, this morning, MCPS had an opportunity to reiterate our legislative priorities that were laid out at our legislative breakfast in the fall. We promoted to State Senator Roam and Delegate Maldonado our commitment to local control, funding and budget issues, school safety, accreditation and accountability scaffolds, student mental health, school construction and modernization, as well as employee shortage issues and pay.

[01:26:51] We even supported a bill that is in session to make VDOE account for all of the mandatory training that it's pushing out. aren't stopping at the state level on Monday we have the opportunity to travel with the delegation to Washington where we will liaise with Senators Kane and Warner and Representative Subramanian as well as others when we tell you that our board is committed to excellence we want you to know that we will not stop short of whatever it takes to help kids be successful I guess just so as an aside of some of the things that we learn when we're in that session we and the highs

[01:27:30] and lows of a daily school board member we heard this really cool idea to give quiet private places for kids to receive private counseling you know during school but when you start looking for the pitfalls you can see that private access to the internet enough in a private room is maybe not always as simple as it sounds so that's just the kind of thing that we have to work through as we watch legislation pull through and see how we're gonna actually make things happen. And then just in thinking about the life of a school board member, I also

[01:28:07] wanted to just, I noticed today when I was looking through on our consent agenda, there's a lot of information that we pass through, you know, and some of it's really interesting. And today I just happened to notice that gifts, grants, and bequests are, there were some line items on there that would really knock your socks off. And, you know, some businesses wish to keep their generosity out of the limelight, but they may, many are noticing what we're doing and they are committed and actively participating in our student success. So I just want to thank people that are helping with whether it's athletics, CTE, or just general student need. There's a lot of people out there

[01:28:42] that really are looking for ways to help us and we appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you. Vice Chair Spall. I myself am attending a series of webinars. It's called Empowering Your School Board for Student Success. This is one of our main goals. And the first session was on having a vision with clear goals, which I know we're on track for that. I'm looking forward to forward sessions and sharing more with my fellow board members. As Mrs. Spall mentioned, we attended the Capitol Conference yesterday and today and met with Delegate Maldonado and Senator Rome. I might

[01:29:19] repeat some of your stuff, but I might add to it, too. We argued against unfunded mandates. We asked questions where clarity was needed, and we shared our support for legislation that values our educators and provides opportunities to improve student success.

[01:29:34] And I wanna thank Ms. Brown and Dr. Jones for also participating in that and adding to the topics that we discussed. I also wanted to remind my fellow school board members, but also everyone really, if you have a concern or a question, please bring it forward, give us the opportunity to ask.

[01:29:55] And I thank our citizen for making comments today so we can follow up on that too. Just because you're not aware of a particular effort doesn't mean that efforts aren't being made. So we just appreciate getting the question.

[01:30:11] And that's all I have tonight, thank you. Can I get a motion? - Chair, I move that the school board meeting adjourn. - Second. - I have a motion by Mrs. Brescia, second by Vice Chair Spall, that the school board meeting adjourn. Is there any discussion?

[01:30:27] All in favor? - Aye. - Any opposed? Motion carries 7-0. We are adjourned. Thank you all.

