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Manassas City School Board Meeting - July 22, 2025

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[00:00:16] - Mrs. Garza, would you please call the roll? - Yes ma'am, Chair Sieber. - Here. - Vice Chair Spall. - Present. - Mrs. Stevens. - Mrs. Bresson. - Present. - Ms. Miles. - Present. - Ms. Brown.

[00:00:32] Dr. Jones. - Thank you, Madam Chair, we have a quorum. - Thank you. Dr. Newman, do we have any additions or deletions to the agenda? - No ma'am. - Thank you.

[00:00:50] - It's all ready. - We've added a closed session to the agenda. Can I get a public meeting agenda motion? - Chair, I move that the school board the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as presented. Second. I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens, seconded by Mrs. Brescia, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as presented. Is there any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? The motion carries 7-0. I have an announcement to make for our next regular meeting on August 12th. We will

[00:01:28] be at Jenny Dean Elementary School. They're going to be doing technology and HVAC updates in this room so we'll need to relocate to the jenny dean elementary school auditorium so we hope to see you there next is super now superintendent's announcements and spotlights mrs radford good evening thank you chair seaberg good evening to other members of the board and good evening to everyone that has joined us here tonight and our viewing audience our spotlights for tonight you

[00:02:03] know this is an exciting time of year as we begin preparation to welcome our students and our staff back for the new school year and tonight we have a few additions to the family some familiar faces

also that we want to introduce and present to you so that we can give them a warm welcome we will begin with the new round elementary school principal miss janita boatwright and we have

[00:02:41] some new assistant principals at osborne high school we will begin with mr fernando montanez another assistant principal at Osborne High School is Ashley Burnett at the central office level we have a new senior manager and budget services on the

[00:03:17] finance team Tamika Lovett Miller and we had one final one for tonight who could not be here regrettably Dr. Leslie Jones who is a familiar face among our MCPS family she was our science content specialist and now she will serve as an assistant principal at Metz Middle School so when you see Dr. Jones please give her your congratulations. Okay so these are all of our newest ones that we

[00:03:54] will share for tonight and if you all want to join together for a quick photo

[00:03:58] that'd be great. No that was just a short moment but we thank them for coming

[00:04:51] tonight because it's always nice to put a name and a face together and as you see them around the schools that way you know who they are so thank you for this time. Thank you Mrs. Radford. Next on our agenda is the board committee reports and and board committees have not met since our last regular meeting.

[00:05:08] 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.

[00:05:28] We appreciate the time you have taken to be here. We treat citizens' comments as a public hearing, and we do not engage in 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.

[00:05:43] And up first I have Anna Demeria. - Hi, good evening, I am Anna Demeria. I am the proud president of the Mass Education Association. I have several other officers in attendance with me, Tammy DeHaven, our secretary, Sarah Cook, one of our building reps, and Shaniqua Williams, another building rep, but also a member of the VEA board.

[00:06:08] So this summer I had the privilege of attending the National Education Association's representative assembly. It was a powerful experience focused on protecting Our students, public education, and our democracy, especially in these increasingly uncertain times. On the final day, I participated in trainings that provided valuable tools and resources we can begin using immediately to support our students and their families.

[00:06:33] One of the most relevant takeaways was the NEA's Supporting Immigrant Families and Students Toolkits. This free resource, which is available to not only union members, but to everyone, includes important guidance on how immigrant issues affect our schools.

[00:06:49] It covers such topics as student enrollment rights under Plier v. Doe, safe zone resolutions, how educators can advocate safely for immigrant students, frequently asked questions about mass raids and immigrant enforcement, a Know Your Rights guide, and update on the DACA program.

[00:07:08] The toolkit also includes printable Know Your Rights posters, family preparedness plans, and a training template for educators on how to protect immigrant students and their families, which we, the

MEA, are working on tailoring for Manassas City.

[00:07:24] The toolkit also has access to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center red cards. I'm proud to share that the MEA has already obtained some of these red cards in Spanish. We've placed another order for them in Arabic, and we can only place one order a week, so next week I'll be placing an order for Farsi, as these are some of our most common languages here in the city.

[00:07:44] We will be distributing these to anyone in our community who needs them. With these resources in hand, we are urging you to take an important step forward to adopt a safe zone policy for our division. Hundreds of districts around the country have already done so. This policy would outline clear procedures for responding to immigration enforcement on school grounds and send a strong, unified message that all students are welcome and safe in our schools, no matter their background.

[00:08:12] The NEA provides model policies, sample resolutions, and detailed frequently asked questions to support the implementation of safe zones. the MEA executive team is more than happy and willing to work with you to make this I'll work with you on this effort to make sure all of our kids feel safe at school we are also happy to share the resources I mentioned with you if you would like them thank you thank you next up is Shaniqua Williams Shaniqua

[00:08:38] Miss Williams could you please fill this out for me good evening members of the board my name is Shaniqua Williams and I stand here tonight not just as a school

[00:09:14] counselor but someone deeply invested in the well-being dignity and progress of this entire school community. I'm also a proud active member in my education union. I'm speaking today out of deep frustration with this board's continued emphasis on public performance over genuine engagement with staff realities. A few weeks ago, several of you, including the board chair and vice chair, leaders who many in our community hold to a higher standard, shared a graphic touting MCPS retention rates, comparing them to national averages from three years ago.

[00:09:51] This was an apparent attempt to paint over a deeper issue, but more concerning was Vice Chair Ms. Spall's comment, and I quote, in spite of what a small but inconsistent minority would have you believe, our teachers are staying at MCPS.

[00:10:08] This statement is not just dismissive, it's deeply disrespectful, coming from an elected official. It reveals a blatant disregard for the many educators who have chosen to leave, as well of those of us who are still here working under increasingly difficult conditions.

[00:10:25] It erases the detailed, personal, and painful feedback that has been directly shared with you and your colleagues. Feedback about burnout, toxic environment, lack of support, and systemic issues that persist across our work locations.

[00:10:43] Retention statistics alone do not tell the whole story. You don't get to silence or diminish staff voices by spinning the numbers and calling them a small but insistent minority. Educators are not data points, Ms. Spall.

[00:10:59] We are not public relation graphics. We are people serving students every day, often while navigating environments that harm our health and our spirit. So let's be honest. If this board truly cared and listened to the educators, you would already be aware of the details that's happening in our schools.

[00:11:20] But instead, you continue to try to silence us, crafting expensive resolutions and avoiding the hard conversations that could lead to real, meaningful change. MCPS can be a great place to work, but not when the leadership, those that are elected, chooses optics over accountability.

[00:11:41] if you want to share serve this community with integrity please start by truly listening to the people doing the work thank you thank you miss Williams Sarah cook hello I don't quite have a prepared statement but I'm just I'm looking forward to the school year ahead it was very nice to have the summer off and to be able to return energized like some of my other MEA colleagues I too

[00:12:19] attended a organizing institute which included 11 states down the East Coast it included New Jersey Massachusetts Connecticut New Hampshire New York Virginia Vermont Pennsylvania Maryland Rhode Island and Maine and during this organizing Institute we rallied around really important issues like public policy things that we do to protect public education and our students it was really disheartening to know that of the 11 states that were in attendance

[00:12:55] Virginia is the only state that has to get permission from their board to have collective bargaining everybody there was extremely shocked that this isn't just a given in most places that there are some places that do ban it I did pull some data about states that have collective bargaining and how their public schools rank and then the states that do not have it and so of the 11 states that were in attendance, six of them rank higher than us. Virginia actually does rank number nine. This was according to World Population Review. And then the states that

[00:13:35] attended that were behind us were Maryland, Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, with the lowest rating being 16. Those states that ban collective bargaining, as you have as the board rank 45 30 39 34 38 40 and so to use member brushes language like the company that we want to be in verse the company that we don't want to be and I think that those numbers speak volumes but yeah we've all been busy this summer we're really excited to come back we do have about 30% of our staff who are

[00:14:10] members so over 300 Manassas City employees are MEA members so our voice does matter and we hope that that is taken into consideration this year last year seemed to really to be a tumultuous year between the board and us as we attempted to start a collective bargaining campaign and so some of the things that we did the organizing Institute were for example the state of Maryland is attempting to get a support personnel Bill of Rights passed that would support things like a living wage for all of its support personnel, so a minimum of \$30 an hour, health

[00:14:48] benefits, things that we sometimes take for granted. So this is the work of the NEA, which is the largest labor union in the United States. Some labor unions, Ms. Waller, are not just for those people who do things like construction work. Just excited to get back to work.

[00:15:07] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Cook. - Is there anyone else that wishes to speak? Hearing and seeing none, we'll move on to consent agenda. Can I get a motion, please?

[00:15:23] - Chair, I move that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve the public meeting consent agenda as presented. - I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens, second by Ms. Miles, that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented.

[00:15:38] Is there any discussion? - All in favor? - Any opposed? - The motion carries 7-0. Okay, up first on our discussion agenda is Student Services, the 25-26 Student Code of Conduct.

[00:15:56] Mr. Greg Gefeller, Deputy Superintendent, and Ms. Betty Jo Wynnum is here to present the Student Code of Conduct for discussion. - Good evening, Chair Seberg, Vice Chair Spall, members of the board, and Dr. Newman. So tonight, I don't have much of a presentation with the Student Code of Conduct, except to say that there were no recommended changes that came out of the Academic Committee meeting in terms of the 25, 26 school year student code of conduct.

[00:16:26] I do say that with a caveat. There are things that are on the agenda this evening for action with respect to policies that are being recommended that the school board adopt. If the board takes action and approves those this evening, we would then have to go back and make some changes to the student code of conduct.

[00:16:45] Namely, the cell phone policy, which we had as a regulation. We have, I'm sorry, we had written our own policy because we had lack of guidance from the Department of Education last year. Our proposed change would be to adopt the VSBA policy and then move our policy that we had written and move that to a regulation.

[00:17:05] So those are things that would have to be updated in the Student Code of Conduct before, if you all decide to adopt those this evening and we would put that onto the agenda at our next school board meeting for your action as well. So with that, I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have regarding the Student Code of Conduct.

[00:17:25] - Questions or comments from the board? Ms. Miles. - I'm on the academic committee and I know after we talked, we talked about pictures perhaps for the dress of our students but I looked back through Prince William's Code of Conduct and the specific wording that they had on clothing items and I noticed that ours doesn't match and I am a little concerned about that because it leaves too much room

[00:17:53] different, you know, interpretation. And the one thing that they have in theirs is clothing items which reveal or expose undergarments fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments. And those were the things that we mentioned when the students came and spoke to us at the academic committee. So I was thinking that, you know, looking at that, that I would, and I don't know how the board feels, would like us to kind of sit back and look at that again, because I think moving forward, I know I've witnessed students who may are not wearing things that dress for success or preparing them for the workplace.

[00:18:30] And so I think adding that would be really helpful, one, to the teachers who are making sure these students are wearing what they should wear, but also it's in wording. So students can say, well, it's not in the code of conduct. I know that we have a long list of things that we are saying you can't wear, but specifically the undergarments is not in there.

[00:18:54] so I would like for us to look at it again so I don't know the process I'm pretty sure it goes back to academic committee for us to look at it and decide from there this is a code of conduct we're trying to get approved before the start of the school year correct that is correct chair any other comments from the board in response to what miss miles said or I mean I would support making that addition so I don't know if it's possible to flip to page six of this because that's where it is so everyone can see it the dress and appearance section is on the bottom and so I just want to understand what you're

[00:19:31] envisioning it's these bullet points yeah you're adding a bullet point right it would be two bullet points right above what we already have and it would state reveal or expose undergarments and fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments and then that would also fix the problem because I know

some of the boys were like well it's not fair you know girls get to wear this and we don't put girls we don't put guys if it's revealing undergarments it's revealing undergarments but yeah and if I have the link and I can send it to you of what friends William has so that you can kind of see where I'm pulling this

[00:20:06] from Miss Stevens my links concern with adding that into the dress code I teach middle school and students in middle school are growing at a very fast rate and it's not unusual especially for students who live in poverty to be wearing clothes that don't fit properly and because they don't fit properly undergarments may in some way shape or form be exposed but it's not because it's intentional on the part of the student or on the part of their parents and I

[00:20:38] think we need to be careful because not everyone can afford to wear clothes or undergarments that fit properly and when you're wearing clothes or undergarments that don't fit properly the chance of them showing is increased exponentially I would say, too, I know they had a caveat that said no employee may enforce the student dress code and grooming provisions by direct physical contact, which was something that the students mentioned.

[00:21:11] So if we were to put that in there, so it's more of a status quo. We want to keep it there so that students know this is what we're expecting, but no teacher should be approaching a student if they're not wearing those things. What's the caveat in Prince William County?

[00:21:26] So they say no PWCS employee may enforce the student dress and grooming provisions by direct physical contact with the student or the student's attire. And no student shall be required to undress in front of the individual to comply with these provisions. So that says direct physical contact. Right. That means in touching the student, but that doesn't mean they cannot say something to the student.

[00:21:44] That's true. And imagine you're a middle school student who's trying to fit in with everyone else, and your parents bought you jeans that might be too big. So they're constantly falling down. You have six, seven different classes, and every class you go to, the teacher makes a comment.

[00:22:01] What that does to your self-esteem as a student, and that's where I do have an issue with this. And I think that caveat is just a teacher cannot physically force a student, let's say a student whose pants are hanging down, they cannot pull the pants up for the student.

[00:22:16] So it doesn't stop a teacher from commenting or a teacher from sending a student to the office to get something different to wear. Ms. Brown? - Could we approve it as is right now and then we can amend it at a later time, correct?

[00:22:34] - It's only on the discussion agenda tonight, but we do need to have it approved before the start of school, so we would need to, oh, were we gonna waive second reading and have it approved tonight? - No, it would be on the agenda next time for approval, but you could, I mean the board could amend it at any time and we'd come back.

[00:22:53] - And, but the first meeting is on the first day of school, I mean the next meeting's on the first day of school. - Correct. - Okay, all right. - Yeah, I think it would be really important to look into the issue with more time, and so I don't wanna dismiss either perspective from that end, but I also know that we have to go ahead and move forward so that it's ready.

[00:23:14] August 12th? - 12th, yes. - Yes. - Mrs. Ball? - Yes, I also don't wanna be dismissive of any points of view, but my recollection of our academic meeting discussion after the METS students came, when we

talk about student outcomes, this leadership group, number one was, bra straps should not be considered exposure of undergarments or in violation of the dress code.

[00:23:43] So there was a specific request there to exclude one thing. And what I thought I remember is that we had specific language in and then we took it out very recently. And so I thought in our committee meeting, we agreed that we were gonna let this language ride for a little while.

[00:24:03] So I don't want to dismiss anyone's perspective either, but it seems like this has already been hashed out at the committee level for the time being. - Dr. Jones. - I just wanted to say maybe if we can check to see how big of a problem this is, but we did discuss in the academic committee and decided to leave it as is for now since we had gone from being very specific to more general, so maybe this could be the year to kind of look and see is it a problem do we need to make further changes mrs. Brescia so just in general I'm going to

[00:24:41] this is on my list of things to offer in any way but the tight timeline that we are facing here is part of the problem so as we are going through developing our calendar of when we talk about certain things you know we revisit the code of conduct every year so perhaps earlier than the second meeting before the start of school would be set up more for success I am I don't know I of, I do not think it's unreasonable to require students to cover their underwear, including their bra straps. But this is something that I think is worth further, worth further discussion.

[00:25:20] But if the appetite of the board is that we amend it, you know, amend it later, you know, we can always do that anytime. That would be fine with me. Okay. Anything else? More thing on code of conduct?

[00:25:36] On code of conduct, yes. So while we're on page six, can you scroll up or go to page five actually okay so I think there was some confusion out there the way this that the way that people were reading this document as it was posted to board docs you know throughout this code of conduct there's red lettering throughout I think there were some folks out there who thought that those were part of the red line that those were new or deletions or something like that but the red line was only there because of formatting changes right the red line

[00:26:14] was there has always been there the red line was there in last years as well it It just highlights different things. There's multiple places in the Code of Conduct that has the building administrator. There's also some red in there talking about the 10-day suspension in a pre-entry conference.

[00:26:31] So that was also out there in the published document from last year as well. Right. Sorry. I'm using a term I think maybe you're not familiar with. Red line is the track changes view. So the track changes view, the only changes that were tracked, like the reason why this was on was because there were some things that were not underlined anymore and stuff like that there were no substantive right changes so the red font that people saw throughout there I think folks interpreted that as new additions to the Code of Conduct but those have been in there there are no just wanted to get that on the record does the board want to discuss this further at our work

[00:27:06] session on Thursday I would like to I would like to but I don't know how the rest of we will we will take it up then okay moving on to student set student services we have a bullying presentation anti-bullying that is miss Betty Jo Wynnum director of school leadership miss Stephanie Jones student support coordinator and miss Tammy Schaefer school counselor will provide

[00:27:38] information on bullying good evening chair Seberg vice chair Spall dr. Newman and members of the school board I'm pleased to be here tonight alongside miss Steph Jones our student support coordinator and Tammy Schaefer the school counselor at Mayfield Intermediate School so together we will discuss the dynamics of bullying its manifestations within school and its impact on students we will also cover the reporting process and how incidents are investigated additionally we will share both our prevention and intervention

[00:28:15] protocols to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students at this time Steph Jones is going to come up to discuss key bullying behaviors types of bullying and the impact of bullying good evening everyone so I just wanted to start off by sharing some of the key bullying behaviors so basically there are three aspects to bullying. The first is that it's unwanted and unwelcome. The second is that there's a power imbalance. So be it a bigger kid's picking on a smaller kid, or there being social differences and a student is picking on another student, there's some kind of power

[00:28:54] imbalance. And then the third one is that it is repeated. So it's not a one-time thing, but it's definitely something that happens more than once. And we just wanted to start off with that because We wanted to share that definitely we don't want our kids to be rude, definitely we don't want our kids to be mean, and there's a difference between it being unwanted, unwelcome, there being a power imbalance, and it happening more than one time.

[00:29:20] So those are the key behaviors. And then we have four types of bullying. One is cyberbullying, and that's when you're using technology to bully. There's physical bullying, which is hitting, kicking, anything that might be physical. There's social bullying, which can also be known as relational bullying, so that's when there's some kind of social isolation.

[00:29:41] So, for example, you can't sit at my lunch table, or everyone in the class gets an invite to a sleepover except for one student. And then the final type of bullying is verbal bullying, so that may be name-calling, or it may be spreading rumors about another student.

[00:29:59] And we know there are varied impacts of bullying and definitely want to support our students because of the impacts, but some impacts may be a student doesn't want to come to school, or it may be how a student reflects their self-worth, or it may be academic achievement or social connections that a student is able to make in school.

[00:30:22] So in front of you, this is not to be read or even presented by me, but more of a resource for the general public because we do want families and students and any interested parties to have access of what we work from and what is our guiding principles when it comes to how we define bullying and how it's looked into.

[00:30:47] So these regulations provide clear definitions and really valuable insights. And again, that is just a reference for everyone. So, for everyone in the general public and those present tonight who are connected to Manassas City Public Schools, we want to emphasize that your reports are taken seriously and are essential in creating the safest environment for academic success for all of our students.

[00:31:10] Parents and students should feel empowered to report concerns without limitations, and schools actively educate students on the importance of sharing any unwanted behavior, whether that's bullying or any code of conduct violation. We want students to ultimately feel comfortable, to have a

trusted person within the school that they can share something with, because otherwise we're here to help them learn and achieve, and if those things aren't in place, it's near impossible for that to happen.

[00:31:38] Our staff is trained to promptly report any bullying allegations to an administrator or school counselor, as these incidents, if substantiated, are considered violations of our code of conduct and warrant appropriate consequences. One thing for this year when we can't so this is my first finishing my first year in Manassas City and coming in the bullying is a code of conduct violation so if you investigate it and it's an SBAR code which means a code from the state for bullying and so it is important that administrators are the ones investigating bullying while many students will come and confide in a school counselor or let a school counselor know and school counselors are

[00:32:15] not there to investigate and apply discipline they're there to be the support to restore relationships and to support like that so it really is important and we have trained all of our staff this year and school counselors worked on that partnership that those reports are going straight to administration to look and perceived so anyway so our staff is trained to address that we hope that this proactive approach encourages individuals to come forward ensuring that all incidents are documented and addressed in a timely manner teachers are informed if they are told they need to report it to a school counselor administrator confidentiality is critical in the reporting process and

[00:32:54] again this while we know this as a school board and as professionals it's important for me to say it tonight for parents and families that the confidentiality with the reporting process is there individuals making reports it's important to us that they trust that their identities will be protected it is our priority to ensure that anyone who witnesses or experiences bullying feel safe both emotionally and physically our school counseling teams work diligently and which we will share a little bit to educate our students not only about bullying but about everything it makes them how when do we say something I'm at the bottom of this slide it says see something here's

[00:33:32] something then please say something and it doesn't hurt to say something the best case is you know what it's not found it but we want to know in case that it is providing comprehensive support for victims of bullying is crucial for their emotional and psychological well-being this support may include counseling services peer support groups access to trusted adults who can guide them through the reporting process or once it happens like a check and connect someone that's there just to check on the students because if they're not coming to school they can't learn if when they're at school they don't feel safe or they feel like they're being picked on and as adults we all know what

[00:34:08] it feels like to be made uncomfortable. So, you know, kids, their frontal lobe isn't even together until 25, so their ability to reason and understand and find that self-worth on their own is really difficult, especially if we see our own selves struggling as adults. It's 10 times more for a student, and we really need to be aware of that. With that being said, we all here and in the community are shared responsibility for reporting bullying. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, coaches, community.

[00:34:39] So as the saying goes below, if you see something, hear something, please say something. Each group of stakeholders play a vital role in recognizing, reporting, and responding to bullying. Ongoing training for school staff, administrators, and teachers is key to creating an environment where every student has a trusted adult they feel comfortable approaching.

[00:34:57] Principals include this important information to staff at the beginning of the year, and reminders should be provided throughout the school year. Specifically, as stakeholders, it is vital that we

all serve as strong role models for positive interpersonal interactions within our school communities and extracurricular activities.

[00:35:15] Many of these students, we are the only model that they get. And by exemplifying effective communication and conflict resolution and knowing that we all are coming from different backgrounds, educators and staff set a positive standard for our students. Together by fostering collaboration among all stakeholders and modeling appropriate behavior, we enhance our effectiveness in addressing bullying because we are walking the talk.

[00:35:40] We will be able to strengthen our commitment to creating a positive and caring school environment if we all keep this in the forefront. The next slide is a progression of what it looks like to give you an overview when a school administrator investigates bullying.

[00:35:58] So upon a bullying investigation that's initiated, parental notification is required within 24 hours for both the victim and the perpetrator for those parents. The initial contact does not imply, so that call home doesn't mean that your child is being bullied or your child is bullying someone else, but it just informs a parent that an investigation is ongoing.

[00:36:23] School administrators are obligated to follow the process outlined in the school board's policy and related regulations to ensure transparency and effective communication throughout the investigation. It's important, as we all have said before and again, that not all bullying incidents are reported initially, which is a nation trend that, you know, people aren't feeling comfortable to report.

[00:36:43] So it's really hard sometimes to measure, are we capturing at all? So our best effort is making a place safe for people to report. Administrators are trained to approach every report of code of conduct violation with care and thoroughness ensuring they gather ample evidence and information Regarding all incidents that may involve bullying. They should consider various factors that may have contributed to the situation So in saying this granted this is about all investigations, but specifically bullying One thing that I've worked on with administrators is when you're doing an investigation Let's say on the surface level seems

[00:37:20] Argument in class happen right if we as an administrator approaches to students just as okay you guys had an argument Can you agree to get together and push it to the side? We are failing our students by not asking deeper questions like those relationships are key like why did it happen?

[00:37:35] Why did you guys argue because and that's where we're training our administrators to ask the right questions because that can uncover Maybe bullying but also could uncover other things that are going on that we don't know about but that we're equipped for resources here in Manassas City which I want to thank you for just the school social workers the school psychologists we have so many resources that we can provide students but oftentimes it starts with that relationship and we can't dismiss things or just try to be in a rush and get them off our desk administrators have to really partner with the students and ask those right questions so in that navigating the complexities of potential code of conduct violations

[00:38:14] requires that administrators are well prepared and they're skilled like I said and asking the right questions specifically a collaborative approach investigations is crucial as it allows administrators to benefit from diverse expertise of school counselors support staff teachers coaches and other personnel this framework is what fosters collaboration and even when we're doing a bullying investigation it is important especially students that are involved in athletic teams extracurricular that we don't forget about

those staff because those staff oftentimes are really seeing a lot of social interactions at a typical classroom teacher may not witness especially at the secondary level

[00:38:52] so whether or not there is an official bullying investigation day-to-day documentation is essential and I would say that is the one thing we have prioritized and focused on this year administrators and support staff are trained to document all interactions and reports using our student information system known as power school I have always liked to compare this process to an electronic medical record so for instance if I visited my primary care doctor for sore throat I would expect that my medical history be recorded so that a subsequent doctor visit where my primary doctor is not available someone could access my file and pick up and have a continuum of care where I was

[00:39:30] taken care of so this same analogy through documentation of all reports and student-staff interactions is crucial for effectively managing student behavior and providing care tailored to those independent needs so for example if Chair Seberg and I were assistant principals at Osborne together and Dr.

[00:39:50] Newman was a student and having a hard time and he always goes to Chair Seberg to talk so he came in today he was having a hard day with the basketball coach because they weren't starting him or something on the team so she does a little log entry and she was like Dr. Newman came to see me frustrated with basketball he's not starting we talked about some de-escalation techniques well Chair Seberg's out not in the building tomorrow and Miss Wenham's here and he comes storming through the door because he's punched a hole in the wall somewhere and I am able to log on to power school and can see what has been happening right so we're not blind at serving kids like and that is so

[00:40:25] important and it may seem really small details but it is so important and it is the one thing we've really focused on this year is utilizing power school log entries to maintain comprehensive records of supports reports and intervention the centralized system provides a complete picture for anyone with a legitimate interest in a child's well-being fostering a coordinated approach to supporting each student all code of conduct violations are also recorded in power school but they're under something we call incidents so log entries are like your notes incidents are formal code of conduct violations that have been founded so in documenting those and really focusing on how we

[00:41:03] document I would be confident that you would ask the principals and they would say yes we've spent a lot of time on that this year because it's important we also can search log entries at the division level and it is really important and a robust documentation system that it really enhances our ability to understand each student in their day to day so in speaking of that a lot of this is maybe a little redundant but what are we doing what have we done again this has been my first year here so some things up here have been in place but I would say that we really have worked hard to have an understanding for what

[00:41:41] we do why we do it and what we need to do to make it better especially with the direct contact that I have with school principals and school administrators I want them to be transparent and to let me know when something's confusing or it seems like we don't have a system so this slide highlights the division-wide supports and resources driving our essential initiatives over the past school year we made explicit efforts to ensure that processes were clearly communicated to school administrators with accountability measures established to promote adherence to these processes our goal is to implement these measures consistently across the division targeted professional development sessions and small groups allowed administrators to examine their individual school-based

[00:42:18] processes and then together we developed uniform approaches to discipline and student record-keeping including log entries and incidents as I just mentioned in my first year as director of school leadership I've collaborated directly with each administrative team on individual investigations and student concerns serving not only as a thought partner but also providing constructive feedback for refining processes and suggesting restorative consequences when applicable. We have implemented specialized training and guidelines for handling suspensions, documenting disciplinary actions, and reporting student information. All of this in a cohesive document that's tracking, you

[00:42:55] know, what are coming to us has resulted in a clear picture of each student's story through their student record. In addition, the prior authorization requirement for suspensions exceeding three days at the elementary level and five days at the secondary level was established in previous years and we kept that and it remains in effect however what we did do is we improved the documentation between myself and the hearing officer for tracking these authorizations and that has yielded positive outcomes because we've been able to link related incidents or connect with the school and say you know well were these two cases related because it's like a bird's-eye view and not in

[00:43:34] the day-to-day of the school building so those have really prevented we hope have prevented future occurrences by an overlay of support at the division level we are optimistic about the addition of our alternative education pilot program as we strive to provide a continuum services for students who may not be finding success in that traditional school setting but has a capability to exceed just as much as anyone else additionally our tier 1 supportive measures will be launched across all schools through the work of behavior supports as well as sources of strength which Steph Jones is going to speak to in a little bit which really provides as it says sources of strength for all

[00:44:13] students for emotional health and resilience so Steph Jones is going to share more about our sources of strength initiative and sorry hi good evening thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak with you tonight and discussed the strategies of addressing bullying so there are a number of ways that the k-12 school counselors here in Manassas City not only prevent but we also intervene and address bullying and probably one of the

[00:44:49] number one ways is through classroom lessons each year no matter what school you're in in Manassas City they are going to be numerous lessons on bully prevention making sure that students know exactly what is bullying making sure that there's not because sometimes that word bullying gets confused or misused so we want them to understand what it truly is and then ways to handle bullying and letting them know how can you contact us and who can you contact finding a trusted adult but there will always be lessons another thing that a

[00:45:29] lot of schools do participate in is we have a like a bully awareness week or kindness week and some of you I know have probably been in our schools when we've sometimes we'll dress up you know like in pajamas to you know so you know wake up and smile at one another or just a variety sock to them wearing crazy socks we we do that just because the kids love it but also it does bring awareness and it's just another reminder it's typically occurs in February and reminder that hey we are here for you and we support you we also I know at my

[00:46:06] school most schools we have signs all around the building that talk about what to do if there is a bullying problem and to report it of course there's always opportunities for conflict resolution through mediations but students can come to us and we will help them build those skills and work things out with

other students we offer group counseling small group counseling opportunities for students they can sign up for these small groups we have a variety of topics and all of the groups we not only provide support for our students but we

[00:46:44] give them skills we also have as I mentioned before individual counseling students can refer themselves all students have access to their school counselors and they can refer themselves they just sign up to see us and we'll set up a time to visit with them parents as well and can set up a time to talk with us many of our schools have peer mediation where students are trained to mediate situations with adult supervision and then sources of strength we're so excited about that sources of strength is going to be k-12 we piloted

[00:47:24] it at Mayfield a couple years ago. Last year was our year that we did lessons for the entire school and we were able to see many positive benefits. One that I would like to point out is 30 percent we had a 30 percent reduction in students who signed up to see the counselor. Now that might look bad, but I feel like a big factor in that was because they were using their sources of strength. They were using their strategies, and 30 percent is huge. Now, there could be other

[00:48:01] factors, obviously, that could have caused that, but we were very pleased with that. But Sources of Strength is an evidence-based program that is being used, K-12, to support the work of social and emotional learning it's often called SOS now while sources of strength may look different from the elementary level like kindergarten and second grade and on up and into intermediate and middle school and high school it's gonna look a little bit different at all the levels but it focuses on having those students

[00:48:36] know what their strengths are building those strengths building community it also just breeds a strong community where others are valued every voice that's one of kind of the rules every voice is valued students learn to make appropriate apologies they learn to celebrate differences they learn to have empathy and be able to see the other people's perspectives in their lives in their shoes and what it's like for example at the elementary and intermediate level. Students learn to exercise patience and build community. We have something

[00:49:14] called like talking circles. And we also do a lot of celebrations. It's really engaging. It gives students an opportunity to celebrate their successes. And in the middle and high school levels, students from diverse groups, student athletes, students in performing arts, students who achieve and struggle academically are trained as peer advisors as they implement the school-wide campaigns that focus on building community and the

[00:49:47] positive school culture and climate thank you so one thing that is new but we're excited to share that the graphic that you see will be included in our back-to-school information for all families and will also be available on our division website we strongly encourage everyone to remember if you see something here's something please say something to us and it's so important we want to ensure that no report goes unnoticed which is why we've

[00:50:24] included information on who to contact if a report has been made without follow-up from the school please know that we truly value your input the children's safety is our top priority we are dedicated to ensuring that every student has the opportunity opportunity to learn and achieve and we put this up there because often not often but I never want a parent and we never want anyone feeling like look I've reported to the school I'm not hearing anything because that is important the communication loop is huge and so my information is up there truly anyone Al if you call a central office they will

[00:51:00] get you to us we want to make sure that you know that you're heard and we want to make sure things are addressed so we put the second layer in there but ultimate just to the viewing public like please know like you can communicate or contact anyone with that concern and we will get it to school administrators and if you don't hear you can contact us at any time so we appreciate you all for having us tonight and if you have any questions we're here thank you wonderful presentations any questions or comments from the board I was noticing the group

[00:51:38] counseling. This is for the counselor that was just up here. I'm sorry. I'm gonna get your name wrong for Tammy. Yes, Ms. Schaefer. So I noticed you have group counseling. How are the kids identified for this, for group counseling? So at my school, at the beginning of the year, we do a needs assessment. And part of the needs assessment, we ask our students, would you like to participate in a small group on a variety of topics? And they can check. It's like a little kind of Google form where they can check off, but I'm sure that elementary, when I was an elementary school

[00:52:17] counselor in Manassas City, a lot of times we would have teachers help identify, as well as the older students, they could refer themselves, or a lot of times what we would find out is if we kept noticing the same kind of issue coming up over and over, like if it was a friendship issue, or if it was an anger issue, or if it was a self-esteem issue, then we would kind of design that group and we would invite students to join group small group counseling always requires a parent permission okay that's great and then I saw conflict mediation so how does that that happen like when do you

[00:52:54] decide okay this this particular student needs conflict mediation yeah thanks for asking that because conflict mediation is not for every problem so and Steph had mentioned earlier when it comes to an imbalance of power if there is a true imbalance of power we are not going to do a conflict mediation but if it is a actual problem that you know they keep saying this to me they keep doing this to me and it is kind of on an equal playing ground you know where they're you know

[00:53:33] what back and forth and they're both a part of the problem it's not just one I guess is what I'm trying to say so we will ask would you like to do a mediation would you like to do a mediation we get their permission we never force a mediation because that's not going to be productive both parties need to want to be a part of it and so typically I know at the Mayfield intermediate level we will have two counselors that way one student doesn't feel like they've got the support of that counselor or another counselor so it makes it more balanced

[00:54:12] and we always when it is an actual mediation we always make sure that it is equal balance we would never have like three kids who are upset with one kid because that's not fair that's great and how are we getting the word out to parents about sources of strength is this something that's being told to our parents or and we will be sharing with about sources of strength we actually have letter that sources of strength has given us that we'll be able to share with parents additionally along with the curriculum with sources of strength their home connection or i'm sorry home extensions and so that includes like backpack letters that can be sent home and newsletters

[00:54:51] that um that can be sent to share with families okay that's great and i'm i'm assuming the group counseling is similar to the talking circles or are they different like what is different it is it is very different okay can you tell a little bit more small group counseling is usually made up of three to six or seven kids no bigger than that where a talking circle is the entire classroom so it could be 25 kids and you you're not

going to have the time to go into a lot of like students will each person will be able to participate but it's not going to be to the depth and it's not

[00:55:29] going to be a confidential level it's more respect and everybody has a voice but it is while we are the similarity is we are building skills in both the talking circle and group counseling it is a more of an intimate situation more of a personal situation in the in the small group where they're going to actually share you know and feel comfortable to know that other people are going keep that confidentiality a community circle it's more like a community builder so the the part of sources of strength that offers like tier one teachers if you think about teachers that are

[00:56:07] coming in like we don't have many teachers that are going through your traditional education program right so this automatically puts structures in place for building you know community for talking like i went into i think a third grade class at weems and the whole class is in a circle and they have, like, their special stuffed animal they pass around, and it's just different, like, connections.

[00:56:28] And it's enjoyable, and it just creates that sense of, like, it feels good to be in here, honestly. And I think that's what I've seen a lot. I would agree with that. And it's more of, like, a question that's already formulated ahead of time, like, how would you feel if somebody took the ball away from you at recess or something or or some possible solution what could we do yeah how would you handle it if this happened or usually it's a word one word answer in the talking circle that everybody can

[00:57:05] participate but there again they don't have to it's never a forced thing where oh you know they can always pass which is a nice thing showing respect and for our students like acquiring english and stuff they can also say like i feel the same way like if they feel the same way as someone else so it just provides so many opportunities for them to feel like they contribute it or it's okay if I don't have anything to say and this is something that a teacher can go to the counselor and say I want to do a talking circle or you provide all the materials how does that work well the cool thing about sources of strength is our teachers are going to be implementing movies in their classroom so the the counselors will be pushing in and the

[00:57:43] counselors will be kind of like the coaches for the sources of strength so we will always we can push in and help them but really the teacher will be leading those talking circles last year when we so this is kind of like our second year of implementing and beginning sources of strength at Mayfield and so the school counselors took it on and did the lessons but starting this year in the intermediate level and that and actually at Weems they they're ahead of us as well the teachers will be doing the lessons all of our teachers will be

[00:58:22] trained on August 4th how wonderful thank you so much for answering all those questions I appreciate it thank you any other member down to my right have a comment or question down this way mrs. Berger hello thank you for that presentation um I actually have more questions now than when I said than when I started so but it's good it's not a bad thing so I wasn't really clear what challenges have we faced combating bullying in the past that we hope that

[00:58:56] we are solving this year I would just say I would just say one problem that we faced in the past is lack of truly understanding what bullying is oftentimes I might get a call from a parent and they say my child's being bullied and and it's been going on all year long, and we're in May, and I will listen to them and, you know, what details, what happened, and so sometimes I'll say, well, that is a problem, and we're here to

[00:59:33] help you, but in reality, that's not necessarily bullying because it just happened one time. Not to say that we're not going to address it, and it's very important, and it should never have happened so that's one thing I think are you asking like what else has happened I mean cyberbullying I know is on the rise and it's been a problem that sometimes as schools it's hard for us to handle because it happens outside of the building I mean the question I'm asking that I did send around earlier you know where have we been and where are we going I mean I think for me it's difficult for

[01:00:13] me to answer where we've been because I did just start in July um and there's the data is so like there's no concrete data like to be well this is how many kids have felt bullied or this is how many like we've had like this school year we've had 18 um incidents separate incidents for where it has been coded where that means an investigation has happened and it was founded as bullying we've only had three that where there's been intervention and it occurred again so that is a few up from last year and in 2022 there was only three

[01:00:49] right but does that what does that tell us and when I think of that what does that tell us I'm excited in a way that people are reporting it right so we could increase it so I understand what you're asking I wish I had like this perfect little number to tell you but I think I think you are answering it I think that you know we are moving from a place where bullying has been uh kind of ill-defined and not well understood and we're going to move to a place where it's more systematically addressed i think that's a perfectly good story to tell what she just talked about right where it's just a one-to-one thing before if we didn't put that

[01:01:28] in a log entry and we didn't document it if someone else is dealing with it next week and such and such is picking on each other they're not going to be able to see the trend so our documentation is serving as data points to reinforce our policy and our regulation and which is really really helpful we have considered like for underlog entries making it like a drop-down where it says bullying investigation and just put found it unfounded versus whatever just so we can get better data if if that's something we feel like we need but I think that's where we are and you know I think we see it across like my own daughter came

[01:02:06] home in kindergarten and was like mom such and such is such a bully and I'm like Josie Kate why is she a bully well she said she didn't like my shoes I said did you tell her stop yes did she do it again no okay well that's not nice but it's not let's not call her a bully right so it takes all of us educating our students on what that is because that's a hard name to call someone a bully is that's a big title like you don't want that and so I think it just takes all of us educating and treating people with kindness so that then when we see a pattern we can address it so kind of in that same vein for taking a more systematic approach to bullying if we're logging better if we're tracking better it is

[01:02:43] extremely possible and perhaps foreseeable that we're actually going to see our bullying log entries go up as more cases are detected and that that is not necessarily an indication that new bullying is happening just that we are capturing more bullying that is already beauty of the incidents increasing means There was a consequence applied so like that, you know, that is it's reported and a consequences of is applied so I just think the more we encourage people to speak up and report dr. Newman may feel differently But if the number goes up a little bit, I don't see that as a huge issue because we want them

[01:03:23] Reporting it right. I would much speaking for myself. I'd much rather have the incidents captured then then swept away more specific questions and we go back to slide five methods of reporting reporting an investigation methods of reporting confidentiality that one so I heard you say that reports for

of bullying are going to go to administrators instead of counselors and that is a change that's new this year so

[01:03:59] this year we have really improved the relationship I think between school administrators and counselors and really having clarity of roles. And Seth and I've been able to work together closely and I've been able to attend school counseling meetings. I've been able to get feedback from school counselors about feedback that they're receiving from admin when a student suspended. So I think that collaboration has improved. Ultimately, when I went to the school counseling meeting at the very beginning of the year when I first came here, some school counselors felt like they were in a place to, like, help investigate or figure it out, and we made that

[01:04:37] role very clear that it's not, because it's two different roles. Of course, they could help and, like, maybe pull a student in and say, hey, tell me a little bit. Can I help get a statement? But at the end of the day, we want them there as that support for it. So there was a lack of clarity between the two, but there is more clarity now, or we hope there's more clarity now. I would think, I would agree, and I would just say that a lot of times it may come to us at first but we just pass it off because they might just have easier access to us than they would an administrator so it may come on our

[01:05:15] doorstep and then we make sure that our admin knows and they can do it counselor could do a log entry Steph came reported that whatever she felt whatever and so then if I got a call at the school board office I called Mayfield no one has followed up I can see where she addressed it I don't see anything in right so that's where it helps us okay thank you slide six questions on slide six which is the next one so school administrator responsibility so who is that exactly is that the principal is that the assistant principal or if

[01:05:50] you're at Osborne are those the deans like how do we do for Virginia so you have to have your license as a school administrator so principal assistant principal and a Dean do we have internally any way that we any preferred person that we tend to send that we're planning to send bullying cases to or is it just each school is going to develop their own violation so based upon admin delegations at school like some do grade levels you know it depends on how they do any eight the responsibilities of an admin but all admin are trained to

[01:06:29] handle and so I wanted to ask about the bottom slides because as I was taking notes you know we spoke clearly about parental notification and what to expect with that interviews how how administrators have been trained to go a little bit deeper with the questions and collection of evidence we spoke there about improvements to our documentation which is more which always existed but will be more systematic going forward but I didn't catch due process

[01:07:02] notification of law enforcement outcomes and consequences so due process is just something we always though we put a lot of training on when it comes to investigations and basically that is making sure everybody has the opportunity to give their side and their version of what happened and that due process can also include getting witness statements for both sides so you want to get the full story and students are guaranteed that right for due process. And that's what we always want. We want statements from both sides. Notification of law enforcement would only happen should it be like a crime, like cyberbullying, something that is a

[01:07:38] crime that you, that as administrators, you have to report that to law enforcement. Whatever they choose to do with it is up to them. But you don't want to be contributing to the delinquency of a minor

by not reporting something if it's a crime that comes across as an administrator. So that's just for people to know that if we are made aware of a crime we have to inform law enforcement outcomes and consequences okay so that's the school based discipline can apply can arrange from anything so I always work with the administrators discipline is learning so anything that a consequence that we put

[01:08:14] into place that helps learn and to not make the mistake again or not repeat the same violation so it can range from any tiered discipline from restorative it be restorative if it's lower it could be out of school i mean it could be up to a hearing if it's something really egregious and really has you know it's a bullying is very extreme from one end to the other so if it's a reg if it reoccurs progressive discipline means we don't start with the ultimate top so if it's a minor lower end bullying you know a five-day out-of-school

[01:08:49] suspension probably would not be associated with that so progressive discipline means we've applied discipline we've done stuff to try to help improve it and it's another infraction so then we go greater so but you can't have progressive discipline if you're not putting interventions and stuff in place to help the student so progressive discipline isn't okay yesterday was two days oss tomorrow's five we have to put efforts to help teach and educate the kids so that they do learn how to not do the undesired behavior and then restorative practices if you're not familiar with that that is just how can we re-establish and repair relationships

[01:09:29] because it's not always just serving the consequence and then things are okay we have to be restorative students it's a valuable skill to learn for adulthood and what can we do so like i said if someone's upset punches a hole in the wall right we may also work with that parent and have some community service some education some anger stuff but what can we do to restore do I need to apologize to the custodians for you know how making this extra like little things like that what can we do to make the mate for them to realize the personal impact of their behavior thank you for answering that

[01:10:08] question my final clump of questions has to do with sources of strength thank you for sharing that 30% reduction in counseling requests that's you know it these metrics are funny things because it can be good news that the bullying you know numbers go up because that means more is being captured and sometimes you know if you say like oh students and counseling is going down that can sound bad but if it is because there is less need for counseling that's it's actually great so if that's where we think that's coming from that's awesome and i want to commend that uh do we have any other goals for sources of strength as it rolls

[01:10:46] out across the division it's definitely the the decrease in the student self-referrals but also Also the decrease in teacher referrals for discipline, one of the things we've noticed at Weems, and Tammy spoke to Weems being our pilot school for classroom teachers delivering sources of strength lessons, and so one of the things we received from Weems was that their teacher referrals have gone down as a result of sources of strength because we know that it is building community within the classroom, it's building a caring culture.

[01:11:19] Betty Jo was able to speak about the third grade classroom that she was able to observe. And I would really say if you have the opportunity to see sources of strength and action, it is beautiful. The kids are, they're passing the talking stick, they're being patient with each other, they're celebrating each other.

[01:11:35] And especially with the younger ones, they have their signs. It's like if you have an aha moment, this is what it is. And if you're apologizing, this is what it is. And then if you're celebrating the

other kids, you're giving applause. So it definitely contributes to our caring culture and building a positive learning environment for our students.

[01:11:55] And then also just thinking about the students wanting to be in school. You know, when you're happy in your class, when you're happy with your teachers, when you're building relationships with your fellow classmates, you want to be in school. So that's also something that is a goal of Sources of Strength.

[01:12:12] That's great. I would, if it's possible to get, like, the number that the teacher referrals went down, I'd be very curious. I mean I know weems has that data yeah I just don't have them here but they specifically shared their percentages with school principals when they presented it that's awesome I would love to I would love to see that I would love to see our referrals go down because the incidents are going down not going down because they're not being reported you know what I mean like I want the number of incidents to go down so is that what we're hoping to see across the division as this sources of strength rollout happens I hope we see a lot right I mean our attendance we want where there's so much that we want for

[01:12:50] these kids and whether we can say it sources of strength I think it's gonna help and having kids come to school kids want to be there making a friend with someone they may not have talked to before have an ability to navigate a conflict without having to immediately go to the school counselor there's things like that that then academic achievement if they're there we can teach them and so that's what we want if they're happy and they're ready to learn so I don't know if we're going to be able to have like a specific correlation with sources of strength did this.

[01:13:24] But I hope with all the initiatives that we have dovetailing together, I really do hope that we see just continued improvement for the nurses. I mean, I would obviously we're not running controlled experiments here, you know, and you never know what is the thing that what is the one initiative or what is the one thing that helps the kid get to school when they might have not otherwise gotten to school and all that other kind of stuff.

[01:13:47] but I do encourage anybody undertaking anything to think concretely about goals. - And we do have some pre- and post-test surveys associated with sources of strength, so we should be able to get it. - Great, that sounds good. And finally, last question, how are we ensuring that these documentation changes that you're encouraging, how are we following up on those?

[01:14:09] How are we ensuring that those are actually taking place? 'Cause if someone is not making log entries, I can imagine that would be kind of hard from a supervisory point of view, 'cause the log entry's not there, right? so it's very hard um when you see trends so we have instances where we have seen trends of thing like something um that should have been um and power school and is not there and so then it's a direct phone call from me or follow up um i see that as my job as overseeing administrators and principals and making sure principals know how to use power school principals can pull a log entry

[01:14:43] report um really quick any of us can at our hands to see who is making log entries it would be very clear to see who isn't um you know can't really babysit everybody and make sure that you want everyone to have integrity right and that's what we want and i need to trust and verify at times that it's happening so that's the process we use is trust and verify miss thought the hearing officer is great with pulling log entries and incidents and vetting those we do audit to see what's being put in what's being recorded and me holding them accountable for for the processes

[01:15:19] That's it for me. Thank you. Mrs. Paul. No, that's okay. I don't want to be a dead horse, but I just want to really explain for people that are watching how exciting this, you know, Sources of Strength program is and what's happening with bullying, you know, as a consequence, but the important work that you're doing with bullying.

[01:15:43] But just in terms of a highlight reel, the things that I noticed when I first found sources of strength, you know, on my own in a different capacity, you know, first of all, it's the eight spokes. It's physical health, mental health, family support, positive friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, and spirituality, you know, just your place in the bigger world.

[01:16:07] so I mean it just it covers so much and we talk a lot about student outcomes but you know my I think if I had to boil it down to one thing just finding a trusted adult in every building for every student you know we talk a lot about by name and by need but this is just like an extension of how powerfully we feel about really addressing everything that a student needs and the structure that comes with sources of strength you know I wouldn't call it necessarily groundbreaking but when you look at the whole the whole structure together is really full-bodied and it's very powerful I think and when you talk about

[01:16:44] all the extensions and the things that are possible to do once everybody understands the framework it's it's just it's very exciting for us to have it and everybody that knows it I know knows that but just you know describing the continuum of care is really important you know the analogy that you made i don't want to again just go over and over but but the good things are so good um so i just encourage people to watch out um for what we've got going on because i think that we're we're really building something that's that's very special um and so um even having miss winham's

[01:17:20] name you know right there if you have a problem i don't think that that's suggesting that nobody's going to get back to you but it's wonderful to have a name in case someone doesn't but also we're human it's not that that's right that's right it's not a suggestion missed an email before right and right I would hope that someone would go and let someone know or reach out absolutely we don't look at it as oh they're not getting back but just making sure they have someone that they can reach out to without feeling like they're stuck but that's an important really you know accountable thing where we come now you know I mean it's just we're taking ownership of it and I think it just really marks a change in the direction of the ship of monasticity public schools and as a school board member I

[01:17:59] I just want you to know that I'm really proud of what you guys are doing. I know we all are, but it's very special. Thank you. I have one final question for Ms. Wenham. You had put your e-mail up there for contact. When should students or parents expect to hear back?

[01:18:18] If they've, like, after report? I would say within 24 hours, just because we're mandated to notify them if it's going to be an investigation. But I think it's reasonable within 24 hours. on the weekend you know depending on okay very good nice good question sure um on teachers logging in reports and um along those lines not coming from monasah city but in other school divisions i've heard a couple different things um with logging entries into a computer system that

[01:18:54] number one you have teachers who forget to do it all the time number two you have teachers who sometimes say well i'm afraid to it because i don't want it to come back to me and then number three teachers who say well i log it in but then nobody does anything so is there a process for either administrators looking at log entries or is there another step teachers and other school employees need to

take to ensure that someone reads that log entry so there's different avenues for log entries and certain people have like a teacher necessarily wouldn't

[01:19:32] have access to a student's all their log entries they could put like a parent contact let's say that it's a discipline issue a login that's a teacher referral that escalates a referral administrators get notification of receiving that so they will be noticed also they will put an admin associate at the school level as someone that can get alerted to see if there's any incoming like an inbox for that's electronic referral right now we primarily are they're using that but that we still are in between paper and that referral so really it would be like I

[01:20:10] think when I first started teaching I had my contact log in my book right and I just write down who the parents have contacted that really just served me and at the end of the day if I needed to prove I called a parent and we would hope all teachers did that but we don't know so it's again just integrity and our expectations and following through and the moment that we see if you came to me as a teacher and said I'm having a really hard time with this student and then I could pull him up I'm like well I don't see where you called home you know like that that's where we have accountability our leaderships have to be looking and have an accountability if a leader doesn't look and see if there's a log entry then the expectation isn't there so we just as

[01:20:46] leaders have to have the expectation and follow up and again I would hope that if teachers feel like they're inputting things that aren't being seen that they would let one of us know so thank you for that for that clarification are you providing guidance as to when to simply log something in or when something becomes a referral can a teacher make a behavior referral or is that something the teacher needs to notify the administrator and then the administrator determines if it's a referral the initial like I go back back old school

[01:21:22] if you say you wrote a referral and the administrator would do due process look at both sides determine if there's a consequence is there a code of conduct violation so just like that it's like they receive it but electronically they review it and then if it needs to be a discipline referral which we call an incident they would escalate it to the incident and then when things like that happen how are you getting back in touch with the teachers or employees who made the original log entry so that they know something's taking place because you know you hear it well I did this but admin didn't do anything because they sent johnny back to the

[01:21:56] the classroom so to make sure that that communication loop stays a loop and no pieces are missing because I think sometimes teachers get frustrated because they worry that administrators are not hearing them and administrators are but they just they might not have time to get back in touch with the teacher so I'm curious on that well that's really important to us and honestly as soon as that one board at last year that was one of the things mr. Rockefeller made sure that we focused on last year in our admin retreat was the importance of following up with a teacher not just electronically but and if you can

[01:22:32] personally to let them know the outcome do they it's a need to know like you don't need to know maybe every single detail but just like if a student is being suspended right we've worked with our school counselors because they felt like sometimes they weren't being notified when one of their kids were out so there's things like that that we've encouraged and let administrators know that they need to follow up they do we are looking at like a new system for discipline and tracking that automatically has that

feedback loop and can give can help us expedite that but there's still something to say about face-to-face and I and that's what I

[01:23:07] encourage our leaders to do is to have those conversations with the teachers because sometimes the teachers need to just think it out or to see both sides and it helps and you can't do all that just electronically all right well thank you thank you for that further information and hopefully it will satisfy some concerns people have about that breakdown in communication because communication is that relationship builder.

[01:23:29] It's key, and we want to know. And again, it's not to get anyone in trouble, but we can't work on things and get better if we don't know they're happening. So I just, I have an open door, Mr. Gofeller, all of us, we have an open door and we want to make it better. Well, thank you for that and for posting your phone number and your email address.

[01:23:45] That says a lot about who you are as a person and your belief in the system and wanting to make it work. Thank you, Ms. Winham. Thank you, Ms. Jones and Ms. Schaefer. Thank you for your leadership and for presenting these strategies to us tonight. - Thank you. All right, next up, facilities and maintenance, Jenny Dean Elementary School construction update.

[01:24:04] And I'll go to Mr. Gefeller, Deputy Superintendent, for the update. - Good evening, Chair Seberg, Vice Chair Spall, members of the board, and Dr. Newman. So I am here to give the June update for the new Jenny Dean Elementary School construction.

[01:24:22] So I will start off with, as I at some point always do, that we are on time and on budget. So that has not changed. and it's exciting to think about this time next year, we will be settled, getting settled, into the new Indian Elementary School.

[01:24:39] So just to give an update for what has happened in June, in terms of the main building, the concrete slab grade is nearly complete. The masonry walls have been erected for the administrative, the first grade, and second grade wing.

[01:24:56] So if you see it, if you go over there and drive by it, you will see walls, which is very exciting. I have some pictures of those tonight. The mechanical trades are progressing ahead of the wall construction and to ensure the proper installation of the rough-ins for the future finish work that will happen at Jenadine Elementary School. The exterior facade mock-up will be scheduled for assembly this month. They're working on that now and I'll have an update for you at our July meeting with that. In terms of the site work we're focused on they are focused on the utility connections and preparations for the new side parking lot a couple weeks ago

[01:25:34] they connected the water which is exciting that has happened the parking lot if you've been over there recently you'll see the parking lot is pretty torn up and that is scheduled to reopen in time for the start of the school year and so we are excited about that and there's been ongoing minor site grading and maintenance has been happening over at the site in terms of procurement our Our focus has been on the door hardware and the structural steel and the procurement of the owner direct purchasing program which we implemented to save Manassas City money

[01:26:10] and is nearly complete. Right now there is currently approximately 80 workers that are there on site daily. So they have ramped up considerably in terms of the work that's been happening over at the site.

[01:26:26] We continue to work in collaboration with Manassas City officials to ensure the proper installation of the documentation and the utility services that are happening to get the school connected to the utilities. In terms of next steps, we will continue to look at the installation of the mechanical units and the assembly, obviously of the, as I mentioned, the exterior facade and the continued preparation for the side parking lot.

[01:26:55] So just to show you some pictures, these are some of the walls, and it changes daily over there. So you can see here the walls that are going up. That is a doorway that is there. So it is exciting to see actual doorways that we will be having students walk through there in about a year's time.

[01:27:18] And so you can see the progress that's happening there is very exciting. And with that, I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you for keeping us informed. any questions or comments from the board mrs. ball we are not worried I have talked with mr. Helton and if and if he's worried he would tell me and as long as he's not worried I'm not worried alls and doors thank you so much we have a year you just said that do we have any glimpse of fun stuff report coming anytime

[01:27:58] soon yeah so I will be bringing at the next board meeting I'm sorry not next board but I will bring the next in the next set of board meetings I will bring an update on furniture finishes and some bring some pictures of that and I will also be bringing some exterior photos and talk about a little bit about some of the exterior features that we'll be having at the new school and how that connects to some of our standards of learning and some of the learning opportunities that the new school will be able to provide our students. That's wonderful thank you that's very exciting. Love these updates Mr. Rockefeller keep them coming. All right if there are no other questions or comments from the

[01:28:36] We'll go ahead with our next item, which is a communications audit update. In spring of 2025, Manassas City Public Schools partner with the National School of Public Relations Association to conduct a comprehensive communications audit.

[01:28:51] The audit reviewed internal and external communication practices through stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and materials analysis. Ms. Radford, Director of Communications and Community Relations will present an overview on the audit process and share highlights from the draft report. Mrs. Radford. Wow thank you Chair Seberg. Good evening members of the board once again. I am privileged to stand before you to talk briefly about our communications audit. I am presenting part one of our audit tonight. This is the first part of a two-part presentation highlighting the

[01:29:30] findings from the spring audit that Chair Seberg just spoke about conducted across Manassas City Public Schools we will review what a communications audit is why it's important we'll talk about how it was conducted and just a few of the preliminary findings the final report will be shared next month along with action steps that we will take moving forward so what is a communications audit a communications audit is an objective third-party review

[01:30:07] of our internal and external messaging practices it gives us the opportunity to pause and to reflect acknowledging our strengths while identifying areas for growth it's a chance for us to take a step back and for us to ask are we communicating effectively with our students with our families with our staff and with the community through this lens we can make adjustments to ensure that our work is purposeful and aligned with the needs of those that we

[01:30:41] serve. So why conduct a communications audit? There should always be a purpose for what we do. Conducting a communications audit supports continuous improvement in how we inform and engage division-wide, not just from the communications office. And I want to reiterate that because you heard so many references tonight from Ms. Wenham's presentation, even from what we're talking about with Jenny Dean. Across the division, communications is something that we all are responsible for,

[01:31:19] and so this audit allows us to really analyze our practices across MCPS. By voluntarily evaluating both our methods and outcomes, we reinforce trust. We're promoting transparency and increasing consistency. Ultimately, the audit helps us align our communication practices with our division goals, such as those outlined in our strategic plan and school or department improvement documents, and the evolving needs of our Manassas City community.

[01:32:00] Who conducted the audit and how was it done? The audit was conducted by the National School Public Relations Association, also known as NSPRA. They're a highly respected organization in the field of school communications. In fact, we partnered with INSPRA for an audit in the early 2000s.

[01:32:20] This spring, INSPRA administered a communications scope survey, collected samples of our materials, and they held 10 focus group sessions. In total, 822 parents, 355 faculty and staff, and 13 community members completed the survey, 75 individuals participated in focus groups the focus groups as you can see included students teachers support staff administrators families and school board

[01:32:56] members among others these perspectives I'm sorry these perspectives paired with document reviews and survey responses allowed INSPRA to examine communication tools messaging protocols training efforts and overall perceptions I'm sorry We did not have a school board.

[01:33:19] I don't know why I said school board, but we didn't have a school board focus group. Sorry about that. The full results of the scope survey will be shared in the final report presented at the next meeting. So tonight, I'm just going to talk a little bit about our preliminary findings and overview of that.

[01:33:39] While we will explore the complete results next month, which I'm very excited to share with our community, I want to share a few preliminary findings tonight. Among the strengths, or GLOWS, was our multilingual communication and translation support.

[01:33:56] I am incredibly proud of Ms. Alonzo's leadership under our language services umbrella and her collaboration with the schools to support our families. Our language support has increased mightily over the last couple of years, and I think it's very exciting for us to be able to say that from a budget standpoint that we are We're putting dollars towards making sure that our families feel informed, and that goes across IEPs, eligibility meetings, parent-teacher conferences, other school-based meetings, back-to-school nights, any of those things.

[01:34:32] So it's always encouraging when we get phone calls from the schools asking for us to provide additional support outside of our Spanish language, even for some of our lower-incident languages, which is huge. The audit also highlighted the communications team's responsiveness and collaboration.

[01:34:52] For instance, Ms. Galavese Ballard, our communications specialist, brings a journalism and photography background and helps us tell the MCPS story every day across the division. We've received a lot of kudos for our social media presence and her ability to capture a lot of the stories that are going on in our schools.

[01:35:13] I would also like to recognize something that Ms. Wenham talked about, Ms. Clary and Ms. Quintanilla, our central office associates or our receptionists who staff our front office and help guide visitors and callers to the right resources.

[01:35:28] That's very important because the communications office is the hub of making those connections with our families, and they do a great job of making sure that they are the bridge to get those families where they need to be. Notably, nearly 69% of parents who responded rated their overall satisfaction with district communications as excellent or above average.

[01:35:53] While the slide shows 62%, I would like to note that figure relates to satisfaction with branding. And so I misspoke when I typed that. That had to do with branding. A majority of the respondents rated communications as average or better.

[01:36:11] But, of course, we are not satisfied with average. That is why this process is so important to us as a division. Our preliminary findings under our grows, those are our growth areas. One item identified was the need to update the department's 2019 communications plan, or our strategic communication plan.

[01:36:33] While the foundations of internal and external communication efforts remain relevant, our platforms and tools have evolved. We will revise this plan to reflect our current practices and needs and return to an annual review of it.

[01:36:51] One of the things that I discussed with Dr. Newman and Mr. Gefeller during this time is that the communications office is a support to all of the departments across the division and the schools. It's very easy for all of us to get caught up in the day-to-day work that we're doing.

[01:37:07] And while I said that the ways or the ideas and the purposes of us being able to communicate internally and externally with accuracy, with consistency, and all of those things have remained over the years since the inception of our communications department, which was in 2002, you know, some of the tools and methods that we're using have changed.

[01:37:30] And so we are going to make it a point to update that. Another finding pointed to inconsistent use of communication tools and a need for more training. This feedback came during the rollout of our new website, mobile app, and rooms platform.

[01:37:46] At the time of the audit, we were just seven months into implementation. The feedback was fair, and since then we've provided ongoing support and plan to expand train-the-trainer models to reach even more staff moving forward so that it moves beyond just the efforts of myself and Ms. Galavese Ballard. Finally, the return of the internal staff intranet, my MCPS, was a major area of interest in the focus groups among the staff. When we transitioned from our old vendor in June

[01:38:22] 2024, the previous intranet platform disappeared. The new vendor didn't have a viable replacement at the time, and our team and departments had to create several workarounds. Fortunately, we are excited to announce that MyMCPS is coming back through a new solution using Microsoft 365, thanks to collaboration with our technology team, and that is something I am very pleased with. As we prepare to share the full audit in part two next month, I want to reiterate that this process is

[01:39:01] not solely about criticism, but it's about growth. NSPRA notes that most school divisions should focus on just two to three recommendations each year while maintaining existing services, because we

will definitely discuss all of the recommendations that they've made and the action items that are recommended through that process.

[01:39:24] Even so, we are excited about the opportunity to fine-tune our communication services and practices. We want to continue building trust, increasing transparency, and strengthening engagement across all of our Manassas City public schools.

[01:39:42] Thank you, Mrs. Radford. That was great and a real good teaser for next month. Questions or comments from the board? I've just been waiting for this audit for seven months with bade of breath.

[01:40:02] Me too. I know. And so how much did we pay for this audit? How much was the audit? I believe it was about \$20,000. I just wanted to make that note. so i guess i'll continue waiting yes yes so the the results of the audit are in draft form and what they do is when they give you the draft they talk to you about the demographics some of the accuracy of what they were reviewing in documents to make sure that they captured everything there's no

[01:40:36] change in the comments or any of the data that they receive from the focus groups or the surveys or anything like that there's benchmarking that is um included in in the document and certainly you know some of our our neighboring school systems also participated in this it can be 18 month process several months i will say you know process from start to finish but i too have been really excited about it because i've been able to share some of the preliminary things Even minor things that are fixable at the moment, something as simple as not recognizing

[01:41:14] that the Manassas City logo was not at the top of every school webpage. That's a simple fix. As I looked at the vendor that helps us with our website, I recognized that on school sites from other divisions or districts that they had done, theirs wasn't on there either.

[01:41:33] It doesn't mean that it doesn't have to be on ours, but I didn't recognize it until it brought to our attention in the audit and so that has been fixed already and there's some other things that as I talked to the communications coming to the audit team that they are highlighted in the in in the draft that are quick fixes that don't have anything to do with budgetary impact which is always good so thank you for updating that number for families that are satisfied

[01:42:08] 69% is a much better number than 62%, and it's a good and an interesting number because it means that 7 out of 10 of our families are satisfied, which is good, and it means that we don't have too much of a distance to go to get to great, which would be 9 out of 10, 8 out of 10 are satisfied because that's really where we want to go.

[01:42:29] These are our customers that we are serving our families, and so just to put a point on you know what the \$20,000 was for all this effort that you've put into it. Thank you for all the effort that you've put into it. It's because we do have some distance we need to travel in terms of the trust that we enjoy with our community and the trust that we enjoy with our families. We do have some room for growth and this is part of why we felt we needed to call into some professionals to build and strengthen. So that's all I wanted to offer. Thank you. Mrs. Small. Yes, I just want to say It has been over 10 years since our last audit.

[01:43:07] That's correct. Yes. And also just kudos because the translation staff and the responsiveness metric I find to be, you know, absolutely accurate. So that's really good. The intranet as a former substitute from MCPS, it was helpful.

[01:43:25] So I'm glad we're bringing it back. Yes. And probably focusing on three things, you know, in a year is a very achievable but reasonable, you know, that it will do three things well. And then we'll move on. I think they are very respectful of the number of hands in the particular staffs that they are dealing with.

[01:43:44] And so the things that are most doable are the things that we'll tackle first. And I think it was very considerate of that. And there are some big ticket things that are there that I think, you know, even something as simple as returning to ambassadors in our schools, you know, over the years.

[01:44:06] and then with the pandemic as I mentioned to someone today you know people get caught up in the work that they're doing a teacher will do an excellent lesson plan and even though our department may be asking let us know when you're doing something great like that so that we can cover it while they're in the middle of doing it they're not thinking of letting the communications office know and so someone in their school though however might would be the person to go and capture that for for us and send it to us and so we had some in years past and they trailed off a little bit but coming back to this process has allowed us the opportunity i have a new

[01:44:45] team of people for us to be able to say let's bring our school-based ambassadors or pr folks you know back together so that we can utilize extra eyes and hands in the schools when we can't the two of us can't be in every location that's great thank you thank you Mrs. Radford we'll see you next month yes you will thank you so much okay our last item on the discussion agenda is school board operating protocols and I'll go to Mrs. Brescia who's the chair of our board development committee for that thank you so the item included on board docs the document included on board docs as a result

[01:45:24] of our latest trip to Charlottesville governance training where we sat through and worked on this altogether so these edits for the most part should not be new the most substantial and newest thing that was included was there was some appetite expressed during that meeting down in Charlottesville that we include a section on the consent agenda and so between our return from Charlottesville and now I sat with Ms. Garza and I ended with this the committee did not type you write this out like this was just my draft for the board's consideration

[01:46:02] based on the notes that I had taken in Charlottesville and so from here we can discuss here if there are any minor amendments that we want to make we can absolutely do that and then vote on the amended version you know similar to the Code of Conduct with its updated policy numbers and stuff like that if but if people want a larger discussion about it then we can have a larger discussion about it and that can take the shape of either going back to the committee or

[01:46:33] going to a work session so. Comments on the document? Anyone? No, I think there's nothing strange in there. Okay, I did try to take very good notes so I'm glad everybody is pleased. It's very clear. And this will be on our action agenda next time. One question. Will we or will we not be signing this document?

[01:47:04] At a previous point, we had decided not to sign it, to take the signature page off. That's my understanding. But we will be voting on it. But we'll be voting on it under action. A clean version, not a red line version. Next time. Anything else, Mrs. Faulkner?

[01:47:20] All right, very good. Let's move ahead to the action agenda. First up is a big bunch of policies from Mrs. Stevens. I'm just going to give a synopsis of what was discussed at the last meeting concerning the policies in general and then the bulk of policies that you're going to see together on the action agenda

that we'll be voting for or against as a whole at our last meeting at the policy committee meeting and then at our last meeting there were 48 policies up for discussion based on board member input several policies will

[01:48:00] will be discussed tonight and voted on individually I did want to note that the call policy excuse me I wanted to draw some specific attention to several proposed updates as they relate relate directly to some important things first to employees policy GCB our modification requires substitutes to be 21 not 18 GCL required non-academic training activities cannot exceed 25 hours every five years outside of training regarding testing regulations training required by

[01:48:35] federal law and optional training policy GCPD employees will not be subject to disciplinary action made in connection with administration of an opioid opioid antagonist provide the administration is in good faith then we have a book of policies that impact student school safety EB requires divisions to establish an athletic emergency plan, a cardiac emergency plan and a bleeding control plan. Policy EBB provides protocol when contacting guardians in relation to a threat assessment on their child and

[01:49:11] what needs to be included in that communication. Policy EBCB requires divisions to hold annual cardiac arrest drills. Policy GBEB a prohibition of firearms at all school sponsored activities.

[01:49:26] IGAG school divisions will provide instructions to students on opioid overdose and prevention policy IGBA if deemed appropriate by the IEP team the IEP will include language addressing individual accommodations and supports for students during emergency situations and drills policy JFCD adds additional prohibited weapons to the list policy KGB this is a new policy and require schools to notify guardians of students of students within impacted

[01:50:01] schools within 24 hours of a suspected school connected student overdose with the name and identifiable features of the controlled substance and provide updated information to guardians if there were inaccuracies in the initial notification and finally policy J-O upon written requests from foster parents the division will redact the address of the foster parent prior to providing the parent with any records that would contain the address finally we have a book of policies that affects that impact student outcomes GCL school divisions can provide high-quality PD on communicating with and supporting

[01:50:40] students with autism spectrum disorder policy IGB a the IE team when the student reaches 11th or 12th grade will provide to the Guardians a written notice concerning the students rights and obligations related to dual enrollment and policy IGBI any student between the grades of 3 through 8 who scores within the top 25th percentile across the state on the SOL math assessment will automatically be enrolled in an available advanced or accelerated math class for the following year parents will then have the

[01:51:15] opportunity to opt out if they choose for their child not to be enrolled in those classes those are the policies that's the bulk that's the first thing we're going to vote on do I have a motion or any questions first you have to make a motion and then yes sorry so I'll do that I'll do you the honors chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve policies section B school board governance and operations section E support services section F facilities development section G personnel section I instruction section J students section K school community relations section L education agency

[01:51:54] relations and legislative priority no legislative priorities doesn't belong as presented I have a motion by mrs. Brescia second by miss Brown the school board the city Manassas approved policy section

B school board governance and operations section E support services section F facilities development section G personnel section I instruction section J students section K school community relations

[01:52:25] section L education agency relations is there any discussion I just want to thank miss Stevens for that thorough rundown mrs. Stevens are all of these policies was this reviewed by VSBA yes all of those policies were reviewed by the VSBA as usual there were quite a few policies that had very simple either grammatical updates addition of footnotes or addition of cross-references but the ones that I spoke to specifically were

[01:53:01] ones that had an impactful change that will direct us that will impact us directly is there any other discussion all in favor any opposed motion carries 7-0 the next three policies so the following six policies we're looking at each one individually because there was board interest in discussing them individually the first three although we vote on them independently they're very much so related to each other because they all reflect the same legislation

[01:53:36] from Virginia policy GCDA - M effective criminal conviction or founded complaint of child abuse or neglect policy DJF purchasing procedures and policy QK commercial promote promotional and corporate sponsorships and partnerships well those are three different policies they reflect a change at the Code of Virginia that individuals who have committed who have a felony conviction for a crime of moral turpitude but not a barrier crime once their rights have been restored by the governor may either through policy

[01:54:16] gcda-m be employed in the school policy djf purchasing procedures become a vendor or a contractor with the division and policy kq can have sponsorships or partnerships with the school division and in each of those situations they would be able to interact directly with our students to do a deeper dig because I was a little bit confused, the term moral turpitude.

[01:54:48] I didn't know exactly what that meant. As it turns out, there's not a real clear definition. It just is a phrase that describes wicked, deviant behavior constituting an immoral, unethical, or unjust departure from ordinary social standards. Crimes of moral turpitude can be divided into three categories.

[01:55:06] Sorry, I just lost my spot. This is what happens when you take notes and you take them very quickly. They can be put into three categories. Crimes against property, crimes against government, crimes against person. There's a process someone who's been convicted of a felony has to go through to have their rights restored.

[01:55:28] But that is a big question for us. I do know we have a teacher shortage, but is this a step we want to take either in directly employing, in contracting, or in sponsorships and in partnerships? And one of the biggest issues I found was in policy GDA-M, it doesn't spell out what the requirements are for the person to have their rights restored.

[01:55:55] And that's a policy that relates directly to people employed by the school division, whereas policies DJF and QK, those are contractors and individuals or groups that want to do partnerships and sponsorships. I know there had been a couple questions on it the last time at the last school board meeting.

[01:56:15] At this time we can discuss, we can vote. It's up to the rest of the board how you would like to proceed. We get a motion. Well if we are not planning to if no one is planning to support the policies then there is not going to be a motion on the floor for because currently these policies are that we do not hire

anybody convicted of any felony. Yes. So if nobody supports hiring people convicted of felonies under the circumstances outlined in the policy, then there might not be a motion at all in these cases.

[01:56:49] Correct. So I had a question. I had looked at what a barrier crime is and more specifics, and I came across barrier crimes for child day programs, which we have children in these schools, so obviously this would pertain. And it was very intense, the different things that the felony could, you know, be.

[01:57:09] So I think because it's not specific, it may be considered discrimination, right? But if you were to look up barrier crime and see what the barrier crime is, I think all of us would agree that we would not want a person who's committed that.

[01:57:25] Well, individuals who've committed a barrier crime cannot, even if they've had their rights restored, they cannot seek employment or partnership or sponsorship or contracting with a school. So a barrier of crime just nullifies your ability overall.

[01:57:44] It's crimes that are felonies that are of moral turpitude but are not barrier crimes is what it's saying. And my concern is that the policy, the model policy from the VSBA concerning employing people is very vague, whereas policies, model policies DJF and KQ kind of spell it out, Which to me, personally, that to me is a little bit odd because the people who are going to have the most interaction with our children are the people who are there every day as opposed to those who may be involved in a partnership or a sponsorship or a contractor.

[01:58:21] Yeah, which is definitely different. Yeah, it is very different. But like Ms. Brescia said, if everyone is okay with our current policy, I guess we just have to proceed because it's not a majority. Well, there would be nobody who supports it, so no one would make the motion.

[01:58:36] And so if the chair calls for a motion and it's not made, then we move to the next item. If there's no motion, move to the next item. I call for the motion. Okay. No, my understanding from the last meeting was that this was already decided.

[01:58:55] There had been a few questions on it, and so I did take a deeper dive just to make sure that we were clear on what we were either not going to vote on or vote for. Thank you for your work. I so much appreciate it. And another question, were all three of these recommended policy revisions by VSBA?

[01:59:17] These were recommended policy revisions, and they were recommended because of change in Virginia state code that allows what I've been talking about, individuals previously convicted of felons. And that's the reason those policies changed was because they were required to change by Virginia code, but we do not have to adopt them.

[01:59:37] And just a quick footnote, we did seek legal counsel. We did inquire with legal counsel as to whether or not it would be acceptable for us to not update the policies to reflect the VSBA's model policies. And legal counsel informed us that, yes, we are okay in not adopting these model policies.

[01:59:59] Thank you. All right. With no motion, I'll go ahead and we'll go to the next one. Okay. So the next two, we have policy JFCM, student cell phone and smart... Hold on, hold on a second. Oh, sorry. No motions are being made on any of them.

[02:00:18] There's no motion, can't vote. We'll do all three, the motion for the other two.

[02:00:38] So we still need to vote on them. Okay, all right, that makes sense. So what Ms. Garza is saying is that we have to make a motion on each one individually and then we vote yay or nay on each one or they

would fall into the category of the first policies that were in bulk.

[02:01:06] Okay. Chair. Yes, ma'am. I reluctantly move that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve policy GCDA-M effective criminal conviction or founded complaint of child abuse or neglect as presented. Do I have a second?

[02:01:26] We need to have a second because we need to vote on it. I have a motion by Mrs. Falls, seconded by Ms. Brown, the school board of the city of manassas approved policy gcda-m effect of criminal conviction or founded complaint of child abuse or neglect as presented is there any discussion all in favor any opposed aye can i have a show of hand for opposed please okay the motion fails zero seven

[02:02:05] chair i move that the school board of the city of manassas approve policy djf purchasing procedures as presented. Do I have a second? I have a motion by Mrs. Spall, seconded by Ms. Brown, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve policy DJF, purchasing procedures as presented. Is there any discussion? All in favor. Any opposed? Show of hands, please. Thank you.

[02:02:41] The motion fails 07. Chair. Yes, ma'am. I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve policy KO, commercial. Is it KO or KQ? Oh, sorry. It's KQ. KQ. KQ. My bad. Chair, I move that the school board of the city of manassas approved policy kq commercial promotional and corporate sponsorships and partnerships as presented is there a second i have a motion by mrs spall seconded by mrs brown that the school board of city manassas approved policy kq commercial

[02:03:18] promotional and corporate sponsorships and partnerships as presented is there any discussion all in favor any opposed show of hands motion fails zero seven miss stevens jfcm So, JFCM, student cell phone use and smart device possession and use.

[02:03:45] This one I'm going to talk about briefly in combination with policy JEDA, portable electronic communication devices. JEDA, with an asterisk after it, was our policy to address Governor Youngkin's executive order concerning cell phone, portable electronic devices in schools.

[02:04:06] We developed a policy prior to the VSBA's development of a policy, and what they have rolled out to us is the model policy JFCM. And so the goal here was that we adopt the policy directly from VSBA, JFCM, and retire policy JEDA apostrophe so that the superintendent can incorporate JEDA of the policy into a regulation. However we still do need to have a board vote to retire policy JEDA

[02:04:43] asterisks. All right so let's do JFCM first. Chair. Yes ma'am. I move that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve policy JFCM student cell phone and smart device possession and use as presented. Second. I have a motion by Mrs. Fahl second by Ms. Brescia that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve policy JFCM, student cell phone and smart device possession and use as presented.

[02:05:12] Is there any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? The motion carries 7-0. Chair. Yes, ma'am. I move that the school board of the city of Manassas retire policy JEDA star, portable electronic communication devices as presented.

[02:05:31] Second. I have a motion by Mrs. Spall, second by Mrs. Brescia, that the school board of the city of Manassas retire policy JEDA star portable electronic communication devices as presented. Is there any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries 7-0.

[02:05:50] Moving right along the final policy we're going to discuss is BCA. The modification the potential modification to this policy which would make it BCA-M was initiated by school board members

and is not a VSBA model policy or model modification the modification would add term limits to the office of chair and vice chair any school board member serving as chair would only be allowed to do so twice during a four-year term and the position of vice chair would rotate through board members until either everyone has had the opportunity

[02:06:25] to serve or there is no one left who would like the opportunity to serve is there a motion chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approved policy BCA school board organizational meeting as presented is Is there a second?

[02:06:49] I have a motion by Ms. Brescia, seconded by Ms. Miles at the School Board of the City of Manassas Approved Policy BCA School Board Organizational Meeting as presented. Is there any discussion? Ms. Miles. There's been intense discussion concerning these two leadership positions and how the current policy impacts the School Board of the City of Manassas.

[02:07:18] Since presenting the proposed modification, debate has continued as to whether the modification provides greater opportunities for members to serve in leadership positions, that the current policy is a sign of board dysfunction, that any changes made to the current policy will impose arbitrary restrictions on the democratic process, and that any modifications to the current policy could result in stagnation.

[02:07:43] Each argument made has had some base in fact, but has also been colored by personal opinions and perspectives. To be clear and blunt, I do not care either whether we modified BCA or not. It is my belief that term limits will not fundamentally change the work the board is tasked to do or how it functions.

[02:08:07] Each member of this board has one vote with each vote being equal, regardless of the position the board member holds. Problems are not resolved simply through term limits. They can only be resolved when members of the organization or governing body are willing to put aside personal difference and are able to come together in good faith to work towards a common focus, the focus on student outcomes.

[02:08:31] Whether I vote in favor or against the modification of BCA is related not to the arguments my fellow board members have made, but to my values and beliefs as they relate to publicly held offices, not just at the local level but at all levels of government and to my beliefs around the value and importance of teamwork and compromise without those we can never move forward to quote Nelson Mandela may your choices reflect your hopes not your fears is there any other discussion miss dr.

[02:09:05] Jones I respectfully disagree with the proposed policy that would restrict the board chair from serving more than two years within a four-year term and that will require automatic rotation of the vice chair role among all seven board members the current system where the board elects the chair and vice chair annually already allow for change and continuity as determined by the will of the board there's no need to change your policy simply because the outcome of a regional election was not preferred by some the existing process ensures all board members have the opportunity to express interest in the leadership roles and be fairly considered during a vote if a chair vice

[02:09:44] chair turns earns the trust and support of the board to serve multiple terms that is a reflection of confidence in their leadership in the past several board chairs have served more than two years because the board collectively believed it was the best in the best interest of the division leadership community can be a strength especially when chairs do an exemplary work conversely circumstances may also call for

leadership to change sooner which the current system already accommodates while term limits may offer benefits such as encouraging a new perspective for preventing stagnation they can also result in the loss of

[02:10:21] valuable instructional knowledge and leadership experience leadership transitions do not automatically resolve board dynamics thoughtful collaboration and mutual respect do that additionally the proposed proposal for vice chair rotation is mathematically flawed with seven members a A one-year term rotation would not ensure all members have an opportunity to serve within a four-year period.

[02:10:47] A rigid rotation could also place someone in a leadership role before they are adequately prepared while denying others the chance to continue building on progress. In summary, the existing policy provides both flexibility and fairness. It allows flexibility when it's beneficial and change when it's necessary.

[02:11:06] I strongly support preserving the current process that allows the board to elect its own leadership annually based on merit and consensus. - Ms. Miles. - So I did a little research and this is what I brought to the committee when we made this decision to update the policy.

[02:11:25] And I went to boardsource.org and it was resources and term limits. And I'm just reading what I found online. Board chairs play a critical role in board leadership and development, devoting considerable time to the organization and exerting considerable influence over the board. Term limits help prevent board chairs from burning out by shortening the duration of their commitment. Term limits help protect the board and chief executive from an ineffective chair and also enable the board to adjust its leadership to suit changing organizational needs. Recruiting board members with leadership capabilities and developing them for officer

[02:12:01] positions is critical for board revitalization. So that was one thing that I found. And what is your source for that? Oh, I'm sorry. It was boardsource.org. And I can send you the link if you would like to see that. And then I also found on the community foundation, martinsaylucy.org.

[02:12:21] And it also was term limits, thumbs up or down. And it was board source, and it was a PDF. But I'm going to read what it said about specifically board chairs. Should board chairs and other officers have term limits? Board chairs play a critical role in board leadership and development.

[02:12:37] devoting and that actually that that was the same thing so let me read the the the second part of it by comparison other officer positions offer a measure of continued continuity and depth of institutional knowledge because of the likelihood of longer tenure so other officers which we obviously don't have other officers besides the vice chair but that being said I support changing it just because if you have someone in a chair position year after year it it changes the continuity of the board, and it also stifles the growth of the board.

[02:13:15] And I feel we don't have in stone or written in our policies what a board chair or a vice chair specifically does. I even looked that up to see if there were other, you know, school boards that had specific descriptions of what exactly their jobs are, what their descriptions are, and I think that moving forward, whether this passes tonight or not, we need to really look at what those duties are so that if you are wanting to be board chair or vice chair, you really know what you're getting yourself into.

[02:13:45] 'Cause right now, there's no specifics. And I know Dr. Jones was mentioning about vice chair and that it would not be feasible. I know that Prince William elects a vice chair each year, and they also

have in their wording, shall rotate each year to enable multiple members of the school board to serve in such capacity.

[02:14:06] and I'm reading verbatim what it says in their document, or their policy, a member of the school board who has served as vice chair should only be eligible to serve as vice chair if all other members of the school board have had an opportunity to serve in that capacity or have declined a nomination.

[02:14:23] And that could be something that we could add in there because if they're not willing to do it, at least they have the opportunity to do it. And I think it's very important to, all of us have been elected the same exact way. So to say that any of us have garnered a certain number of respect or votes or whatever the case may be, I think is very disrespectful to what we had to do to get to where we are.

[02:14:46] All of us have credentials behind our name in some kind of way and have experience. And so all of us should have the opportunity to show that in a leadership fashion. And it should not be based on popularity or whether you called someone and said, hey, are you going to vote for me again?

[02:15:04] It should not be based on that. So I'm hoping that this passes today, and I think that this will push our school board forward into giving us opportunities to have everyone serve, no matter if you have respect from the community or not.

[02:15:21] - Is there any other discussion? Ms. Brown. - Yes, Member Miles, I already placed that on the agenda on the 24th for the role of the chair discussion and expansion on the duties. But I wanna begin by addressing some of the troubling assumptions and false narratives that have been circulating regarding this proposed chair term limits. To begin, this proposal was not introduced unilaterally, or this was sent to the committee by a consensus of this board back in January of 2025. Despite the beliefs,

[02:16:00] I was not the author, although I would not have a problem taking ownership of that, but I was not the author, but I strongly support the measure. And I did not appoint myself to that committee. I was appointed to the policy committee by the chair. This was not a committee of my choosing.

[02:16:17] I don't enjoy reading 250 pages of policies relentlessly, but I bloom where I'm planted. The committee itself, despite the false narratives, is composed of two Democrats and one Republican.

[02:16:38] This was a collaborative procedural matter, not a political power matter or a personal attack on anyone on this board. There would still be yearly elections for both the chair and the vice chair, so that's a false narrative.

[02:16:55] That does not go away. But it's also worth that we acknowledge the structural truth. The board has no formal process to evaluate a chair's performance. Yet, the last time, Chair Seabird said that peer votes are the measure.

[02:17:16] Well, if that is the measure, she only earned her seat with three votes. That's 50%. And it's not a criticism. I just merely bring it up as a signal for a collective reflection. And I know that this policy has sparked a lot of emotion, and I can honor that.

[02:17:38] I've been there before. We are human, but emotions alone cannot guide governance, guys. We were elected to think critically, weight those decisions with care, and lead with clarity. So I will urge you tonight to move beyond initial reactions and vote from a place of thoughtful discernment, not fear or loyalty.

[02:18:02] I support this policy because I do believe that leadership is not about maintaining an inner circle of protecting political alliances. Leadership is about showing up, doing the work, and serving every student in our district just fairly and faithfully. And I know board member Miles mentioned some things that we should be proud of as a board.

[02:18:22] There is a false narrative that no one else on this board is qualified to serve in these positions, and that simply is not true. The voters of Manassas elected, for the first time, two African-American leaders and one Hispanic leader to this board.

[02:18:42] Some of us, as she mentioned, earn our seats by defeating incumbents, not through unopposed races. We had opposition, but through hard work and daily sacrifices, each vote that we received was a well-earned vote of trust.

[02:18:59] So that should speak for itself. And just to mention another glow, for the first time, this board has a dual-language educator, a special education educator, a retired principal with 40 years of experience and a Ph.D., and then myself, a school leader with more than two decades in education with a master's and a specialist degree and then we have the rest of the board members that we're already serving and they also have higher education and a legacy of community service and trust.

[02:19:32] So to suggest that we are not prepared or qualified to lead is not only wrong, it is a false narrative and this chair shall reject the narrative. It is a dismissal of our expertise and the trust this community have placed in us.

[02:19:50] So, I don't want anybody out there in Manassas to be discouraged by the spirit of debate. This is actually healthy. We really need to have these conversations. We want this dialogue because these decisions warrant it.

[02:20:08] If it was easy, then it would be easy, but these decisions are not easy. But tonight, after all is said and done, your decisions should be made based on merit, transparency and what is best for students not on preserving power structures. I was elected to serve students to stand on principle only with integrity and that's what I intend to do. My vote tonight will echo that and I know Dr. Jones I know you feel really strongly about it but you mentioned last week or two weeks ago when we met that a title is not required to lead and I 100% agree

[02:20:45] no one should be scared or worried of losing this position you can still lead on this board with or without that title the true purpose of leadership as an assistant principal as an administrator as a teacher in a classroom the true purpose of leadership where I found the most reward was when I was able to empower people and I this policy really empowers each board member to stay ready to lead in any in all capacities not keeping a position indefinitely that's

[02:21:19] not conducive to growth or innovation so I am asking all of you to just focus and make responsible votes for responsible governance and governance that students center and a center in progress thank you is there any other discussion. Mrs. Brescia. I can go next. So I am in favor of this reform. To me, this is a procedural institutional adjustment to facilitate our effectiveness as a governance team going

[02:21:57] forward. To me, it is not a referendum on the current chair or any past chairs, nor do I think it is helpful or appropriate to frame it that way. The role of chair is and should be boring. It is a job

facilitating meetings, performing needed administrative tasks such as providing a signature on behalf of the school board, serving as a spokesperson for the board as a whole.

[02:22:20] It is not a role that is designed nor should come with any additional power. You know, as others have mentioned, we are seven equal members and we are supposed to function as a team, or at least so we are told, on our trips down to Charlottesville. And to me, this is a proposal that would facilitate that by building capacity among the team and building trust among our team members.

[02:22:43] The fact that this policy change is so hotly contested is a problem all on its own. And what Member Stevens said earlier resonated with me, like this is a policy, but it's not the end-all and be-all of our internal dynamic. And, you know, Member Brown, you said something too about this, that it's a piece of a larger conversation.

[02:23:02] Other boards do this, or a version of this, including Arlington County, where I used to live, where they are elected as five equal members entirely at large, not dissimilar to us. And in Prince William, they do have a separately elected chair, but they do rotate for vice chair.

[02:23:18] It should be a boring procedural discussion oriented around the results we would like to achieve in the future, which is enhanced trust and enhanced leadership capacity. And for those reasons, I support this policy change. Is there any other discussion? I'll try to be quick.

[02:23:36] As a co-equal board member, I have welcomed the opportunity to hear from every person on this board to make their argument tonight. I will say that I believe, regardless of the outcome of this vote, that there is a way to move forward as a board with every member feeling valued for their unique perspective.

[02:23:56] In the meantime, I will be voting on this issue based on several considerations. Number one, the MCPS board staff, students, and their families face many challenges. We as a board are pledged to meet those challenges, collaborating to find the best attainable solutions.

[02:24:12] I do hear the arguments in support of policy change on term limits, even if I do not fully embrace them as clearly addressing any particular change now facing the system. To many who have approached me on the subject, such a change appears to me to be a solution in search of a problem. As we continue to expend energy on the issue of term limits, I can't help but think of 50 better uses of our resources of time and attention.

[02:24:35] right now, right this very moment. Number two, with any policy change proposal, the first question I ask is how might this help the students? How might this better address the priorities of the school system? At this stage, I remain unconvinced that it serves either.

[02:24:51] Most members, myself included, begin their terms believing their service will be one thing. Yet many, especially on their first critical year of service, learn that it's another thing entirely. Serving as vice chair is no different. Each January, the board will decide whether their nominee has earned enough of their trust and confidence to serve 12 months.

[02:25:09] Whether this proposed term limit policy is accepted or rejected by the majority tonight or new vice chairs elected in this January's officer election, adhering to those majority decisions will always be the only rational choice for each member of this board.

[02:25:27] No one will argue that stability, fairness, and clarity in governance are not appropriate goals for our elected teams. No one will argue that guardrails are superfluous to efforts to maintain focus on those goals. Hopefully, tonight it can be made clearer by those in support of these changes how they would serve as actual guardrails that improve on the annual January elections.

[02:25:51] Let's get this basic work done before we further dilute our effectiveness as a board. Please, let's move past this effort so we can entertain future well-reasoned proposals for change. Thank you. I have nothing further to say, And I will repeat the motion and call for a vote.

[02:26:11] I have a motion by Brescia, seconded by Miles, that the School Board of the City of Manassas approve policy BCA School Board Organizational Meeting as presented. All in favor, show of hands please.

[02:26:27] - Aye. - All opposed. The motion carries 4-3.

[02:26:44] Jones, Spall, Seberg, opposed. Moving along to board members' comments, and I will go first to Dr. Jones.

[02:27:01] - I have the opportunity to attend board governance meeting in Charlottesville on July 14th when we completed several key tasks and began meaningful discussions around student outcomes I was also glad to join the Friends of Manassas City Library on their first ever loop for the library that's continuing to promote reading wellness and local engagement as we prepare for the start of a new school year I want to extend a warm welcome to our new teachers who will begin orientation next week continuing teachers will return shortly after with all staff officially back on August 1st to our parents and guardians your involvement is more important than ever research consistently shows that when families

[02:27:40] are engaged in their child's education students perform better academically attend school more regularly and develop stronger social skills I strongly believe in the power of homeschool partnerships encourage you to be active participants in your child's learning journey please make plans to attend your school's open house it's a great way to meet your child's teachers ask questions and build relationships to support student success the open house schedule is as follows Baldwin elementary August 7th from 3 to 5 p.m. Dean elementary August 7th for pre-kk

[02:28:16] from 3 to 5 and August 8th for first through fourth grades three to five Hayden elementary August 8th from 3 to 5. Weems Elementary, August 7th, pre-KK, 2 to 4. And August 8th, 1st through 4th grade, 3 to 5. Round Elementary, August 8th, 3 to 5.

[02:28:35] Baldwin Intermediate, August 7th, 4 to 7th. Mayfield Intermediate, August 7th, 4 to 7. Mets, August 7th, 4 to 6. And Osmond Office, August 8th, 830 to 1130 for our freshmen. If you see any school board members there, don't hesitate to say hello.

[02:28:54] We look forward to connecting with you. Also, mark your calendars for the upcoming African American Festival on Saturday, August 2nd from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. This wonderful community event will feature food, vendors, entertainment, and local talents. We hope to see you there.

[02:29:10] Remember, together, let's make this school year a strong and successful one. Thank you, Dr. Jones. Mrs. Brescia. Thank you. Welcome to our new administrators. It was great to get a chance to recognize and see each of you.

[02:29:26] Thank you to our presenters today. Today is 21 days until students go back to school. And it is also our last meeting before students return to school. The next time we convene here, the students will be

back.

[02:29:44] So I saw that my children's school released their school supply list, so I recommend everybody looking out for that, and I'll see you all at Target to sort that all out over the next 21 days. I had the, so some other things that I've been up to since the last board meeting.

[02:30:01] I had the pleasure of getting my car washed and vacuumed by the OHS choir last weekend. During that event, I had the opportunity to connect with some of the parents who were there, and some of them had some really wonderful things to say about the difference that choir had made in their children's lives, And it was a really good reminder, and a timely reminder, that a solid extracurricular can make a big difference.

[02:30:22] So I encourage you, if you're watching, to encourage your kids to make this year the year that they show up for something, try out for something, or join something. There's never a bad time. I did see Dr. Jones at the end-member spa at Loop for the Library. That was a great event.

[02:30:38] It was a mini-loop in our click case, because I was— Chair Seberg. And Chair Seberg, that's right. I'm sorry. We had some little legs, so we did a mini-loop. We did not do the whole thing, but I could see the effort that went into it, and I just love seeing everybody come together for our Manassas City Library.

[02:30:54] That was a great event. And I would just like to express my gratitude to my fellow school board members, since, as Dr. Jones mentioned, one of the things we all did between this and our last meeting was go down to Charlottesville for another round of governance training, and it sounds like we did it, guys.

[02:31:09] I think we finally got a set of protocols figured out, and I'm so proud of the work that we did there. grateful to this board for that earnest and rewarding effort that's all from me thank you Mrs. Brescia Ms. Brown thank you I wanted to welcome the newly appointed administrators once again I know that your leadership is going to be that ripple effect that get that will change lives and will make an impact on our students and also on our teachers so we know that you're ready to lead and

[02:31:47] you'll have our support so I personally look forward to hearing about your successes and all the great things that you will do for our students welcome to Manassas City Public Schools I also like to thank Miss Schaefer Miss Jones and Miss Winnom for the very detailed bullying presentation our families and students can rest assured that there is a process and a culture of care of caring in place to keep all of our students safe thank you for all the work that goes into putting a program like that in place and I would like to remind the Osborne students about the meet and greet that council member Ashley Hudson and I are hosting

[02:32:27] at Sandra's on August 3rd from 2 to 4. There are details on the website and there will be also some other flyers being passed around. And then I just want to close my comments just by reminding the schools about the magic of, you know, kindergarten classes or first-time students my very own grandson is going to be part of the nest and he was so super excited to get his yellow t-shirt and his little bag with all the details about what to do the first day of school

[02:33:05] and I cannot tell you how proud I felt when I actually opened the bag with him and got all his goodies and stuff just a reminder to the schools that all the families are sending you their best and when those children walk in their classrooms they are the best that any family can offer you and just look at each

child that way and then you won't forget the magic. Thank you for everything that you're going to do for our students for 2025-2026. Thank you Ms. Brown. Mrs. Stevens?

[02:33:58] Mrs. Stevens. Ms. Miles? I'm very excited for the new year coming in less than three weeks and also the teacher going back to school and seeing students I want to wish all

[02:34:35] our new administrators a hearty welcome to Manassas City Public Schools it's a great place to be I was able to visit a few weeks ago Baldwin Elementary in Mayfield intermediate at their summer school showcase which is really awesome just to see the students and all the things that they did in third grade and how they were making they also used a lot of the Keegan strategies which is really good because students were able to talk to each other and share the presentations a lot of oral language going on which was great and I just it was just a lot of fun to meet the teachers and to be able to showcase all

[02:35:13] the things that they did over the the three weeks that they were there I also was able to attend my first legislative breakfast last week where we met with City Council and state legislators discuss our legislative priorities there were so many great things that we had on the list and it was great to just be there I was my first one so I enjoyed that um I looked I look forward to attending the open houses scheduled throughout the schools the first week of August check in see MCPS Facebook page for the correct times and dates dr. Jones read them as well so we're whining that so you can listen for your schools I want

[02:35:50] to invite also everyone to get the scoop on August 9th board members Sarah Brescia and I will be teaming up with councilmember Teresa coats Ellis to give updates on our schools and the city happenings please come out for free ice cream we're gonna be at Stonewall Park at 1 on August 9th so I look forward to hopefully meeting anyone that wants to bring their family there's a pool there there's a pavilion so it's rain or shine and as the summer comes to a close don't forget to take advantage of our local pools our parks and recreation centers so make sure you have a good time before school starts because when school starts hopefully everyone will be going to school and our attendance rates will

[02:36:27] very good so thank you thank you miss miles vice chair Spall yep we're right in the middle of an amazing leadership retreat that marks the for me at least the beginning of the back-to-school era we've got new hire orientation and luncheon coming up which we're very happy to always help serve the new folks and welcome them and a servant way with a certain servant heart we've got convocation coming up. And I guess on Friday, I think some of us are going to the conference on education for VSBA. So the start of school promises to be our best for students yet. So

[02:37:06] thank you for all that you're doing tonight and always. Thank you, Vice Chair. For my comments tonight, I want to share a quote with you. Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in. So volunteering and being an active member of the community is how I got here, and as we enter in a new school year, I want to encourage volunteering in our schools.

[02:37:37] If you have the time and the heart, please reach out to your school principal and offer what you can. I also wanted to let everybody know that the marching band has been at rehearsals from 830 in the morning till 5 o'clock at night every day for the past two weeks, and Friday they're having their show reveal, like their exhibition. Yeah. So it's the Osborne High School Screaming Eagles

[02:38:07] Marching Band, 60 some members. And it's a great way to expose your kids or your grandkids to this kind of music. And if you have like a nephew or a neighborhood kid that you would like to bring and show them the band, it's just phenomenal. And it's really exciting to see what they have learned in two weeks and throughout the season how they grow so it's a it's a very exciting thing 4:30 Friday at the practice lot which is behind Osborne to

[02:38:41] the side like by the tennis courts that field and with that I will take a motion to go to closed session chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas enter closed session pursuant to exemptions from open meetings allowed by section 2.2 - three seven one one up part a paragraph one of the code of Virginia 1950 is amended for the following purpose.

[02:39:04] Discussion of personnel matter PERS 2526-0032, PERS 2526-0033, PERS 2526-0034, PERS 2526-0035, and PERS 2526-0036.

[02:39:29] - I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens, seconded by Mrs. Spall, that the school board of the city of Manassas a closed session pursued to exceptions from open meetings allowed by section 2.2-3711 part a paragraph one of the code of virginia 1950 is amended for the following purpose discussion of personnel matters per s 25 26 32 per s 25 26 33 per s 25 26 34 per s 25 26 35 per s 25 26 36 is there any

[02:40:03] discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries 7-0. We go into closed session. Thank you for coming out tonight.



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