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Manassas City School Board Meeting - September 9, 2025

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[00:00:37] Mrs. Garza, would you please call the roll? Yes, ma'am. Chair Seabourk. Here. Vice Chair Spock. Here. Mrs. Stevens. Here. Mrs. Brescia. Present. Ms. Miles. Present. Ms. Brown.

[00:00:53] Here. Dr. Jones. Here. Ms. Breeden. Mr. Amun. Here. Thank you. Chair Seabourk. We have a quorum. Thank you, Mrs. Garza. Welcome to everybody here tonight, and it's good to see everybody up here, too.

[00:01:13] Do we have any deletions or deletions to the agenda, Dr. Newman? No, ma'am. Can I get approval for the public meeting agenda? Chair, I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as presented. Second. I have a motion by Mrs. Stevens, second by Mrs. Brescia, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the public meeting agenda as presented.

[00:01:36] Is there any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? The motion carries 7-0. We don't have any board committee reports tonight since we haven't had any committee meetings, standing committee meetings since our last business meeting.

[00:01:54] So I will go to public comments. And up first I have Anna DeMaria. All right, good evening, school board members, Superintendent Newman.

[00:02:13] So I am Anna DeMaria. I am the extremely proud president of the Manassas Education Association. In attendance also is our Vice President, Maggie Connors, our Secretary, Tammy DeHaven, and our VEA board member, Shaniqua Williams. So I just came to speak today to advocate for making

November 4th, the Professional Development Day, an asynchronous work from your preferred location day.

[00:02:38] It is Election Day. Election Day has become extremely contentious over the past few years. Fairfax County had an election, a special election today. their schools were closed the kids were not there just like ours aren't but they also had their staff not in the building they were able to work from an alternate location I think it's important that we treat our staff with the same respect that we keep their safety in mind just like we do with our students and we also teach our students every day about civics and citizenship and I think by making our parking lots accessible to voters that shows that I

[00:03:17] I think by giving our staff the flexibility to vote when they can exemplifies citizenship. And while we do have like early voting and mail-in voting, there are still barriers with that. I just recently learned that in Prince William County, if you're a resident of Prince William County, you have to vote at the old city hall or the old courthouse until like October 13th.

[00:03:40] So not everybody lives in a small city like Manassas. Most of our staff don't live in Manassas City. so i just hope that you take that into consideration as a um thought for our staff and also for the community thank you thank you mr maria do we have anybody else signed up alba okay moving along to our discussion agenda this evening facilities and maintenance oh consent agenda sorry chair i move that the school board of the city of manassas approve the consent agenda as presented second i have a motion by mrs stevens second by mrs breja that the school board of the

[00:04:19] city of manassas approve the consent agenda as presented is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed the motion carries seven zero on our discussion agenda tonight we have facilities and maintenance jenny dean the new jenny dean elementary construction update mr gefeller good evening chair seberg vice chair spahl members of the board and dr newman uh this month um i just was here last time uh giving you the july update on the construction of the new jenny dean elementary

[00:04:54] school and i'm now here to give you an update on the progress that was made in august so this this past month i am pleased to share that continuing progress is on the construction of the new jenny dean is on time and on budget on the site itself underground utility work has been moving forward on schedule the team has also prepared the site for the installation of the underground stormwater retention chamber and this system is a key part of the project's commitment to sustainability and it will reduce runoff and support both environmental and

[00:05:30] economic goals most importantly and it is all of our inspections are compliant and on schedule so nothing has been hanging up the progress of our construction inside the building the masonry crews have continued to make steady progress on the vertical and structural bearing walls structural steel materials have been delivered and the steel erection began in August the mechanical electrical and plumbing rough-ins are also underway at the site the piping and conduit are being installed throughout the walls and to the ceilings the current construction priorities are the administrative wing

[00:06:08] the gymnasium and the kitchen and the walls in these areas are scheduled for their first completion with the roofing work to follow the steel installation and I'll show you a picture of the steel installation here in a moment from a Project management, as I said, I'm happy to report that our overall schedule is on track.

[00:06:25] Our budget remains on budget as well. There's an average of about 100 workers on site each day. And so if you go over there, you will see significant progress that's being made on the building. Finally, the coordination with the existing Jenny Dean Elementary School continues to go well.

[00:06:43] The contractor has demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining safety and ensuring that the operations at the current school are not disrupted. And so at the next meeting that we have in October, I will bring you, in addition to the September update of the construction, I will also be bringing you an update on the outdoor learning spaces and how they will be used at the new Jenny Dean Elementary School.

[00:07:06] And I will also bring you an update on the Osborne Connector, which that product also remains on time and on budget. So with that, just a few pictures that you'll see. if you drive over to the jenny dean site you will see significant progress that has been made with the walls here last time i talked about the crane and the putting in the roof and the steels the steel trusses you will see that as you drive up to the building it's looking more like a school and so you'll see the the large footprint of the wall construction that's happening over there

[00:07:41] at the site and so with that i'd be happy to answer any questions questions or comments from the board mrs small i was going to make this a facebook post but i wasn't sure if it was insensitive so i'll just say it to a smaller group but i saw workers working there on saturday and i can tell that people are really committed to remaining on time and on budget um they were on the roof um and so i appreciate that and i also would like to say that after all of the back and forth i was with the city councilman who said i really like that the building is front and center

[00:08:19] and not off to where they originally wanted to put it so i would say all systems go and thank you for the reports thank you anyone else thank you mr kefeller thank you next up under personnel we have an update from miss katie fisher executive director of human resources and miss eric loesch director of professional learning an update on staffing and professional learning thank you yes good evening chair seberg vice chair spall members of the school board dr newman i'm happy to be here this evening to provide a brief update on human resources in partnership

[00:08:55] with Erica Loesch who will provide an update on professional learning these two departments work hand-in-hand as we prepare to kick off each school year the combined work of human resources and professional learning is grounded in the priorities identified within the quality workforce pillar it is critical that we recruit high quality staff provide opportunities for professional learning support support staff growth and ensure accountability along the way through the use of regular feedback and goal setting. A key component to ensuring we have a quality workforce is recruitment and retention. As you can see on this slide, the retention rate

[00:09:35] from the 24-25 school year is the highest it has been in the past four years. The 86% reflects the percentage of teachers that remained in Manassas City. This number does not take into account retirements or terminations, but it does reflect the number of classroom teachers that chose to stay with Manassas City Public Schools. Teachers that remained with Manassas City but transitioned to different positions or transferred schools are included in the retention rate as they remain teachers within the division. The human resources team worked diligently over the summer to go through all applicants, assist in setting up interviews with administrators, and attended a

[00:10:13] job fair in Quantico for military spouses to fill as many remaining vacancies as we could. We focused on expediting the hiring process by pre-screening applicants and ensuring reference checks before recommending candidates for interviews with our administrators these efforts enabled us to fill almost all classroom vacancies prior to the start of the school year when preparing this presentation and currently we we currently have three classroom vacancies that are being filled by permanent substitutes or long-term substitutes we are working very closely with school administrators to fill these vacancies and anticipate them being filled in the very near future.

[00:10:52] Our focus on quality workforce drives our work throughout the year. While we just wrapped up our main hiring season, recruiting efforts are always underway. We recently kicked off a campaign that highlights the tagline, Join MCPS Where Your Purpose Has a Place. We look forward to leveraging these graphics to market vacancies to a broader audience through social media and other platforms.

[00:11:14] As we plan ways to continually attract potential candidates to Manassas City, it is critical that we develop and support our current staff. Ms. Loesch will speak more about the opportunities that we provide to staff in order to develop their skills. In human resources, I do want to highlight something that we're launching this year as a way to continue to track our teachers towards their pathway to licensure.

[00:11:38] So we are finalizing a dashboard for each school that informs administrators of what the teachers within their building are working towards in order to obtain licensure so that we can support them in reaching that goal. Human Resources also supports leaders with the implementation of the evaluation process.

[00:11:57] We currently have evaluation processes in place for administrators, support staff, counselors, and teachers. The evaluation processes, as designed, provide a structured way for supervisors to provide feedback, set goals, and evaluate staff in alignment to standards relevant to their roles.

[00:12:16] All three of these components on the screen, when done successfully, should lead to retention rates that continue to increase, which will ensure all students get to benefit from a high-quality workforce across all schools and departments. There are many factors that contribute to retention, which sometimes makes it difficult to pinpoint one or two main contributing factors.

[00:12:37] When there were stay interviews conducted last year, the main common answers as to why people want to stay in Manassas City were support from administration, team, their team and colleagues, and the community. We look forward to conducting stay interviews throughout the year to pinpoint additional reasons why staff choose to stay here in Manassas City so that we can highlight those and continue to grow on those.

[00:13:01] We are hopeful that continuing to focus on the areas that are within the control of Human Resources Department that we will lead to continual increased retention. So with that, I am now going to turn it over to our Director of Professional Learning, Ms. Erica Loesch. Good evening, Chair Seberg, Vice Chair Spall, Dr. Newman, members of the board.

[00:13:27] Thank you for the opportunity to share a professional learning update with you all today. So we offer a number of different professional learning opportunities throughout the year, and our professional learning calendar kicks off with New Administrator Academy.

[00:13:47] New Administrator Academy is an onboarding experience intended to help ensure our new school-based administrators are supported and better prepared for success. All new to Manassas City

Public Schools administrators, regardless of previous experience, are included in new administrator academy. The goal of new administrator academy is to ensure our new administrators have the supports to successfully acclimate to their new roles within Manassah City. Even our experienced new to us administrators have greatly benefited from this professional learning opportunity because through this opportunity they learn the MCPS way. Our new

[00:14:26] administrator orientation is the kickoff to this induction program. Throughout this three-day event division leaders hosted sessions for our new school-based administrators that introduced a variety of content that is critical to supporting their role as a Monassah City school leader. I want to thank these division leaders for the warm welcome they provided to our new administrators. Throughout the year, our new school-based administrators engage in monthly learning sessions designed to provide timely support so they can successfully complete aspects of their role. And while there are focus areas scheduled throughout the year, We do build the sessions to be responsive to what our new administrators need,

[00:15:06] gathering feedback directly from them throughout the year. New Administrator Academy is built into our leadership professional learning calendar, and all new administrators are expected to participate. This year, 114 division leaders came together for our annual leadership retreat.

[00:15:27] This is hosted at Sweeney Barn, and division leaders received updates on the strategic plan. They had an opportunity to reflect upon what was successful last year, identified new considerations for this year. Teams began their continuous improvement planning for the 25-26 school year and the leadership retreat just sets the stage for that continuous improvement planning which does continue more in-depth following the leadership retreat. Additionally during the leadership retreat updates were provided to instructional leaders on co-teaching and behavior support system which is our divisions focus areas for

[00:16:02] the 25-26 school year. Opportunities to reflect on oneself as a leader and build connections with others across the division were embedded as well. Jumpstart was a full-day program designed to help those entering the education field acquire the foundational skills that are necessary for success. The instructional cycle plan, instruct, assess was the focus and practical tools teachers can use day one were provided. Just over 70 new teachers were invited and our professional growth specialists hosted 59 new teachers at our first Jumpstart on Friday,

[00:16:42] July 25th. This was an optional program because it began before a new teacher contract started. It's exciting that about 80% of our new teachers accepted this invitation. The teacher education and mentoring or team program is designed to develop, retain, and support high-performing teachers working for Monassau City Public Schools. This program is designed to focus on all teachers new to the division and our professional growth coaches and specialists lead this work with our

[00:17:15] team teachers. New Teacher Academy is the kickoff event of our team program. This four-day event welcomed 113 new teachers to Monassah City Public Schools. And during New Teacher Academy, our new teachers began networking and building relationships with others, explored creating a classroom environment focused on collaboration, engaged in the Kagan Cooperative Learning Day 1 workshop, participated in a variety of activities that help create an effective classroom environment through proactive classroom management, and learned about the instructional planning process

[00:17:55] and explored instructional resources available. Our special education teachers also discussed how to manage their caseloads while learning more about IEPs, online platforms, and other related

resources on how to set up their classrooms for success.

[00:18:11] Now, team teachers will partner with their mentors and assigned professional growth coach or specialist to engage in ongoing professional learning tailored towards their specific needs. This year's convocation was hosted on August 1st. This energetic event brings together the entire Manassas City Public Schools family in the Osborne Auditorium to celebrate each other, reflect on our accomplishments, and set the focus for the upcoming year. This year's video centered on student voices. And our very own food services baked our sweet treat, which was generously

[00:18:48] sponsored by the Manassas Education Foundation. A key priority in Manassas City Public Schools is to implement a coherent system of professional development. And this does take a lot of coordination and collaboration across many different departments. To start the year, we were able to successfully provide meaningful learning opportunities that were aligned to the unique needs of individual groups because of this coordination and collaboration. And I would like to thank all of those that were involved that enabled us to provide these sessions. Division-wide

[00:19:23] sessions focused on co-teaching, sources of strength, content-specific updates and instructional planning, literacy training, behavior support system, cooperative learning, and in K-8 math workshop. Teachers were also provided at least 15 hours of teacher-directed time. All of this is possible because of the incredible professional learning team that is dedicated to not only providing meaningful, engaging professional learning at the beginning of the year, but to keeping the learning going all year. It is critical that professional learning is ongoing and job

[00:20:02] embedded. These individuals here on the screen are able to make that happen through consistent messaging across all schools, small chunks of professional learning through the CLT meetings, ongoing workshops individual coaching and resources that support implementation as a team we are constantly and consistently gathering feedback through surveys and discussions which allows us to ensure we are connecting the dots for meaningful learning and growth thank you

[00:20:32] thank you mrs loesch thank you mrs fisher um questions or comments from the board i need hands i need to see hands miss miles sorry i was very encouraged to see we only have three vacancies in the classroom and that the increase of our retention was five percent that's great so hopefully we can break into 90 percent that's our goal right I know hopefully by the end of the school year of course I also love the dashboard to keep administrators aware of their staff

[00:21:11] and their process to obtain their licensure because I know that's always like a thing like where are you in the process you usually talk to someone but to see it on a computer is definitely helpful um and then the state interviews i think that's amazing um to see why a staff member has chosen to sign the contract um and the administrator academy like i think that's a great because if we have successful administrators we have successful students so just i feel like that all the things that you guys are doing is you know moving in the right direction um and then the jump start

[00:21:45] program like 80 of our new teachers participating in that is wonderful um is that something that they um that you provide lunch and for the teachers as well during that time so we followed a typical professional learning day schedule so that day lunch was not provided but um ample time for lunch and networking was provided during that time yeah because i was like lunch would be a great incentive for those who didn't that 20 that didn't sign up you know you get free lunch um but i think it's also great that

we are offering opportunities to prepare our teachers our new teachers because i know right now education is really hard to like when you sign that contract are you going to be

[00:22:23] supported so knowing right off the bat like right when they step in that before they step in that classroom to know they're going to get that extra support I think it's wonderful so thank you so much for what you guys are doing anyone else to my right my left miss brown good evening everyone um thank you so much for the presentation um really excited uh one of the things that I've noticed since I've been on the board for nine months is that recruitment and retention of assistant principals and principals and I'm going to be the first one to use that slogan since I

[00:23:00] have all the principals and assistant principals here your purpose has a place in Manassas City Public Schools and I want to make sure that you hear me tonight that we want to retain you we want to develop you you are a backbone we can retain teachers we can develop teachers but without you they won't stay so you are main the main feature I was walking around I believe it was Hayden and a student so Dr. Newman and he says oh you like the main character of this whole

[00:23:35] of this whole place but I want to use that assistant principals and principals you guys are the main character of this story of Manassas City Public Schools. So I want to retain you and I wanna make sure that you live here tonight knowing that.

[00:23:51] We want you to stay, your purpose has a place here. I wanted to talk about, and thank you again for only having three vacancies. That goes through the whole human resources department. I know how hard it is to get those teachers' vacancies closed and filled.

[00:24:10] So thank you for doing all that hard work the scenes I wanted to talk a little bit about the evaluation process because that that's also going to come into part when we go into the data piece how will we know that that's being accomplished throughout from walk me through from the top all the way to the bottom like I don't hide what systems do we have in place to ensure that we know that it's happening when it's supposed to happen okay so we utilize talent ed the perform component of talent ed and so we're able to run reports through there to ensure that initial goal-setting

[00:24:49] meetings are happening the goal-setting forms are being completed so we can monitor all of that by running reports through talent ed across all of the schools and so for example within the teacher evaluation our administrators when we have their beginning of the year meetings the teachers will submit their goal-setting forms they'll have their mid-year meetings that will be noted in the system as well as their end-of-the-year meetings and their final documentation summary so we can run reports to ensure that all that's being completed and you guys will keep track on that yeah okay absolutely yeah thank you anyone else miss pressure thank you for the great presentation I do have a

[00:25:28] few questions I want to follow up on so going back to the retention rates those are the instructional positions or just teacher they would be our yeah classroom teachers so we so we are exploring the reason for the change you guys are continuing to do stay interviews yes we will continue those this year I mean it will be I don't know what your timing is for this but as we go through the

[00:26:06] budget process you know and we're considering you know what impact does compensation have for example right whether or not people stay or whether or not people come you know that makes it makes a big impact in terms of our decision-making so I'm really glad that you're continuing to study it and we'll be looking forward to what you come back to us with because that will empower us to make a

more strategic decision for making our numbers even better the numbers that the retention rate here that reflects into vision-wide it's not school by school right that is the division one right so mileage may vary depending on what school, what individual building you're coming from, but overall 86.2%.

[00:26:46] Yeah, that is the overall number. So do we have a target? I heard 90% down there. I don't think that was official. I mean, I'm good with the 90%. Obviously we want it to increase, right? So our goal is to continue to raise that retention rate as high as we can.

[00:27:05] Well, because there is a healthy number, yeah, there is a healthy degree of churn, you know, you want new ideas, you want new people, you know, there is a, you know, the average American changes jobs every four years, right, so like this is, there's a degree of inevitability also as people move on to different things, so I don't want us to find us in a position where we are chasing a target more than we are chasing talent and what's best for the kids, which goes back to, I did want to go back to slide number two, the strategic plan, I love seeing that, I love seeing the pillars, but I didn't hear the top.

[00:27:38] What's the top? This is all four? Student academics. Thank you. Pop quiz. Yes. Are you paying attention? You're next. Anyway, so it was interesting that you mentioned the state interview results that we had before because that got me thinking of the exit interview results.

[00:28:02] And that was striking. And anybody who wants to see the exit interview result, oh, they were preliminary results because the exit interviews window had not closed but that's on our uh it's a presentation we got over our retreat so you can see that on our board docs and it was striking to me that the largest column was there was nothing you could do to keep me like there was a a good chunk of people who clicked you know you couldn't change the compensation you couldn't change any of these things i'm just headed out and so it goes to what i was saying before like sometimes that's just how it is right like sometimes people just decide for whatever sometimes people's jobs transfer to you know, people have spouses who transfer to Pennsylvania and they just got to go, you know.

[00:28:42] So, anyway, just wanted to make that point. The, on the professional learning side, so I was excited, was this the first year for Jumpstart? It was, yeah. And how are we going to further, you know, study and refine this?

[00:29:01] Like, how do we know that that's going to be, how do we know whether it's been a success? Yeah, so we do a number of different surveys at the beginning of the year and then throughout the year as well. So through that data, we hope to see an increase. Also, one of the things that we are constantly doing is reflecting on what are we offering and how is it impacting both on teachers, how do they feel, and what was that support like for them, but then also in thinking about how their performance is, student achievement, and thinking about all of those different factors as we're developing our professional learning.

[00:29:36] So all of those will be taken into account in order for us to refine the program as needed. Gotcha. Well, thank you for that. That's all I've got. Mrs. Ball. Thank you. These are just rambling thoughts by Jill.

[00:29:53] No real thread here. But today, just today, every time this year I put up a thank you to you guys for, you know, addressing the teacher shortage in such a professional way, in such an engaging way. And so this year is, you know, better than all the others.

[00:30:10] but it is something that I appreciate that you do. I hate to drill down, but I did tell one parent that the Spanish middle school position was filled. So I'm just asking, is that something that didn't happen, or was I misinformed?

[00:30:27] So there were two. There were two. So we did fill one, and then we're in the process. Okay, okay. So it's, okay, I guess we can talk offline. I just wanted to find out if I misunderstood. Also, I want to continue for everyone to know that we want to hear from you when workforce housing is an issue to hire because we are trying to kind of independently track that.

[00:30:53] I am trying to independently track that. And then also just a shout-out. I heard one of the teachers really sought me out to tell me how much they love Dean Stevenson and how they can feel connected. So that's not to take anything away from anyone else, But the person felt really strongly that he's doing a really great job and being a great mentor.

[00:31:14] So thank you for that. Compliments all the way around. I do have a question for Ms. Fisher. Mrs. Fisher, you said that you were committed to addressing the issues that you could through the parameters of HR. But I wanted to ask and just have a public record, if it's something that you can't fix, where does it go from there?

[00:31:34] I think I know the answer, but I would like to. You mean if it's something I feel as though it's outside of the control? Right. I, you know, I would go to my supervisor, Mr. Gefeller, and share feedback or to Brainstormer Dr. Newman as well. Great. I just want all our employees to know that it's not going to, that we really do want to address things.

[00:31:53] We want to make things better for everybody, everybody in the family. Okay. That's my only question. Mrs. Stevens? Question that came up as I was thinking. We're doing many, many things for our administrators and our teachers.

[00:32:09] What are we doing about hiring, supporting, onboarding our support staff? Because each individual layer in a school division matters. And if you take out any one layer, the whole system falls apart. So how are we supporting that support staff and onboarding new support staff?

[00:32:28] Yeah, so we follow, in Human Resources, we follow a very similar process for in the recruiting, hiring, and onboarding within Human Resources. we also have a fast colleagues program which is similar to the teacher education and mentor program for our support staff or they are assigned someone within their department who serves as that colleague that liaison that point of contact to help onboard them and be their source of support as they learn the Manassas City way and within their department as well I think you yeah because I don't want to diminish the work anybody does but if you're in a

[00:33:04] school day after day you realize and you see there are all these unsung voices that we don't talk about and then we don't hear about who make it possible for everybody to do what they need to do to support our kiddos so thank you mrs. Paul has one question I have one last question I'm sorry I just I love the bus tour and I didn't hear you really highlight that so that's a glow that I want the whole world to know that we do so I don't know if you want to speak to it or not I just for anyone who may not know I love it so part of new Teacher Academy is a bus tour that has members of our MCPS staff and our bus

[00:33:42] drivers go on a tour around Manasseh City to see where our schools are where our kiddos are living our families are and pointing out just what makes Manasseh City Manasseh City so it's a fun morning with everybody traveling together thank you for that explanation and I just wanted to ask you to

mention surveys and send out lots of surveys and I know that sometimes there can be a lot but do we ask every employee what they need for PD so everything that we do is aligned to

[00:34:17] the strategic plan and our key priorities so within schools they have identified potentially areas of additional focus that they believe will allow their staff to achieve meeting those key priorities. So indirectly we get feedback when we're gathering feedback around what it is that we're focusing on and needing and then anytime anybody participates in a professional learning there is typically opportunity for them to add in and so then if they respond and add in that

[00:34:54] anecdotal component then we're able to read that and take that into consideration as well. Very good. Thank you so much. All right. Our last item on the discussion agenda is regarding accountability. And Dr. Jennifer Cassata, Executive Director of Accountability and Finance, will present the 2425 SOL pass rates and chronic absenteeism data for Manassas City Public Schools that were recently published by Virginia DOE. Mr. Craig Gefeller, Deputy

[00:35:28] superintendent will share mcps responses to the data and the plans for the 25-26 school year dr. Cassata all right good evening chair Seberg vice chair Spall school board members and dr. Newman thank you for the opportunity to present student performance data for you tonight this presentation is lengthy but the level of detail is necessary to provide a full picture the focus of our presentation is student academic success specifically SOL pass rates and chronic absenteeism I will present the data about SOL pass rates and chronic absenteeism and then Mr. Gefeller will discuss the MCPS strategic response to these data. All right at the last meeting I shared with you the overview of the

[00:36:08] VDOE school performance and support framework and the timeline as we knew it for the release of data. Later that very week VDOE updated school quality profiles with SOL pass rate on the assessments tab and chronic absenteeism data on the enrollment tab for the state divisions and schools to include 2024-25 data. The purpose of tonight's presentation is to discuss the data that have been published and then to provide the MCPS strategic response to the data. VDOE has not yet released the accountability ratings through their new school performance and support framework. Their timeline says that those ratings will be shared by the end of September. A presentation on those ratings will occur at a school board meeting in the future after that release.

[00:36:48] It is important to start our discussion with some context from VDOE. In their news release and published data slides, VDOE discussed how the new standards on which students were assessed in 2025 in language arts and mathematics are, quote, more rigorous, designed to help students achieve course and grade level proficiency in the content.

[00:37:08] Further, they added that, quote, students must show 30 to 40% more content than last year to pass new reading and mathematics SOLs. They stressed that the tests include more complex items and that students must apply and integrate knowledge across standards.

[00:37:24] The link at the bottom of this slide takes you to the full VDOE data presentation. When the MCPS strategic plan was adopted, aspirational targets were set of having 80% of students pass reading and mathematics SOL tests by the end of the strategic plan. Of course, this remains our goal. However, it is worth noting that the targets were established when the previous standards were in place.

[00:37:44] The next two slides include screenshots taken directly from the VDOE presentation. This slide shows how they again highlighted the difficulty level of the standards and assessments. basically that

students were expected to demonstrate higher levels of knowledge to pass tests in 2425 than in previous years.

[00:38:02] While this presentation primarily focuses on SOL performance, it is important to note that the areas highlighted on this slide by VDOE are happening in MCPS as well, with more students taking advanced mathematics, more students taking dual enrollment or AP courses, more students earning CTE credentials, along with the implementation of high quality instructional materials, most notably in language arts.

[00:38:26] This slide also includes a screenshot of a VDOE slide. purpose of including this one is to show an example of how the performance expectations have gotten more rigorous. Previously, students could show proficiency through memorization and recall. With the current standard, students must also be able to justify reasoning and demonstrate deeper levels of understanding. An example from grade 4 reading is included. You can see on the left in the past the standard focus on students being able to retell events in a logical order. With the new standards, the focus expanded to summarize and analyzed ideas and details, which is a higher level of thinking. Again, for anyone interested,

[00:39:01] the link to the full VDOE slide deck is included on slide three. The bulk of this presentation is going to focus on SOL performance. The pass rates that are shown are those that are published by VDOE on the assessments tabs. We are going to examine this performance in a variety of ways.

[00:39:17] We're going to take a funnel approach by starting big and working our way to finer detail. At each level of analysis, we use color coding to show where there were increases or decreases of more than two percentage points we're gonna start big at the division level by subject and test we compare to the state as well as to performance in 23 24 in keeping with the state analyses we will also look at some student group performance on the grades 3 through 8 tests we will then look at overall performance by subject at the school level then we will dive into performance by grade level and test first at the division level and then by comparing schools you will see some of the same numbers repeated but again we're looking

[00:39:52] at it in different ways all right here we go okay this is our first data slide So let me provide some guidance on how to look at it. It shows us reading performance for both MCPS and the state at the overall subject level and by test for 2324 and 2425 with the change examined from 2324 to 2425.

[00:40:18] As I mentioned earlier, changes of more than two percentage points up or down are color coded, green for an increase, red for a decrease. You see the acronym EOC on here, which stands for end of course. That is the high school level reading test. You can see that MCPS had an increase on the grade six reading tests, highlighted in green, but dips on the grade five and grade eight tests, highlighted in red.

[00:40:43] Okay, I mentioned before we're gonna look some at the three through eight tests the way the state did. This slide takes a look at reading performance on the grade three through eight tests, which again excludes that high school end of course test. V2E made a number of comparisons using this set of data, so we're doing the same. This slide shows how MCPS and the state performed on those grades three through eight tests in 23, 24, 24, 25, both overall and for some student groups.

[00:41:07] You can see that the performance of students with disabilities and Hispanic students in MCPS both dipped. Performance of English learners and black students mirrors state performance levels. All right, the next two slides show the same information, but for mathematics.

[00:41:23] These numbers are at the division level. This slide includes overall mathematics performance plus performance on all of the individual mathematics tests. You can see from the amount of green that mathematics was a strength for MCPS in 24, 25, with double digit increases at grade three, grade six, and algebra two.

[00:41:40] Decreases were seen, however, on the grade seven and eight tests. All right, this slide is doing the same thing we did for reading, looking at the performance on the grades three through eight tests, which again, exclude high school and of course tests taken both in middle and high school.

[00:41:58] So this is only the tests that are grade three through eight. This slide shows how we compare to the state as well, overall and by some student groups. Overall, MCPS improved performance on these tests with significant increases for English learners and Hispanic students.

[00:42:15] This slide looks at science performance at the division level as compared to the state. Overall, science performance was level for MCPS, but that doesn't tell the whole story. Performance at grade four was up, but performance in grade eight, I'm sorry, grade five was up, but performance in grade eight was down. Performance on the biology test was level.

[00:42:32] However, it is important to note that significantly more students took the test in 24/25 than in 23/24. To mix it up a little, the next two slides provide us with some visual representations of MCPS scores by school and for the division. The division is at the far right.

[00:42:49] 23-24 scores are shown in blue and 24-25 scores are shown in green. This slide looks at reading performance. When you look at the bars, you see that in most cases, but not all, the performance at the subject level is pretty even. However, again, that first look does not tell the whole story.

[00:43:04] Tonight, we will be looking more deeply into performance by test at the school level. On this slide, we're looking at the same thing, except for mathematics. Again, performance for each school in the division is shown for 23-24 in blue and 24-25 in green for math overall.

[00:43:21] Here you see variety in the patterns across schools. Most schools showed increases. One was level and two went down. We will delve more deeply into patterns within and across schools in our upcoming slides. All right, on this slide, we're still at the division level, but we're looking at by grade level and test, and both reading and math are included.

[00:43:41] So we've got elementary and intermediate school performance on this slide. At grade three, performance was relatively level in reading and was significantly higher in mathematics in 24/25 than in 23/24 with a 12 point increase. At grade four, there was a similar pattern to grade three with an increase just not quite as big.

[00:44:00] In grade five, there's a different pattern. Reading performance decreased in 24/25 and math performance was relatively level. Grade six showed increases in both reading and math in 24/25 compared to 23/24. In sixth grade, some of our students also take the grade seven math test.

[00:44:17] The performance was level from 24 to 24, 25 with 97% of those students passing the grade seven SOL test. Elementary and intermediate mathematics performance is very encouraging. On the next two slides, we will look even more closely at elementary school performance.

[00:44:33] On this slide, the performance in grades three and four reading is shown by school. As we saw earlier, division performance was relatively level in both grades three and four. However, as this slide

shows, the story is more complex. Baldwin and Dean showed mixed performance with gains at one grade level and decreases at the other, although their patterns were opposite of one another.

[00:44:51] Gains were seen at Hayden in both grade levels, Weems was relatively level at both grade levels, and Round showed decreases at both grade levels. The next slide examines performance on the grade three and four mathematics test. There were some significant increases, which is exciting.

[00:45:08] At the division level, increases were seen at both grades three and grade four. Weems and Hayden echoed those gains at both grade levels. Again, Baldwin and Dean had mixed results, this time with level performance at one grade level, but increases at the other. And again, round had decreases at both grade levels.

[00:45:26] On the next two slides, we're gonna look at intermediate school data for reading and mathematics. This slide shows us reading performance for grades five and six. Here we see that grade five reading performance was down from the previous year at both schools. In grade six, performance was higher at Mayfield than in 23-24 while relatively level at Baldwin.

[00:45:45] This slide shows us the intermediate school trends for mathematics. At grade five, mixed results were seen across schools with an increase at Mayfield and a decrease at Baldwin. Grade six results were consistent with double-digit increases at both schools. The grade seven results for those students in advanced mathematics were quite high, with 97% passing overall.

[00:46:04] Baldwin performance went up and Mayfield was level. On this slide, we will look at middle and high school performance in reading, math, and science. And here you'll see the tests are no longer at the top of the chart because of how many there are.

[00:46:22] In MET, grade seven reading performance was relatively level and grade eight showed a decrease. Math performance decreased on the grade 7 and 8 tests, increased significantly in geometry, and performance on the Algebra 1 test was still at 94%. And in science, performance went down from 23-24 to 24-25.

[00:46:40] For Osborne, we're looking here at three tests, the end-of-course reading test, Algebra 1, and Biology, since these are the tests involved in accountability at the high school level. Reading performance was relatively level at Osborne. Algebra 1 performance increased, also with significantly more students taking the test, and Biology performance was level, as we said before, with significantly more students taking the test.

[00:47:00] We will take different looks at school level performance on future slides. But before that, before we move to school level data slides, we also wanna discuss chronic absenteeism rates. This slide shows chronic absenteeism rates for 23-24 and 24-25 by school and for the division.

[00:47:17] As a reminder, students are defined as chronically absent when they miss 10% or more of their membership days. This slide shows the percent of students who were chronically absent in MCPS and at each school. Overall, the percent of students who were chronically absent in MCPS decreased from 22.3% in 23-24 to 20% in 24-25.

[00:47:36] Six schools were at or better than the state average of 14.8% in 24-25. Hayden, Metz, and Osborne all had improvements of four percentage points or more. All right, the next of the slides provide school-level data snapshots.

[00:47:53] We've already discussed school-level data in the context of specific subjects and grade levels. These slides allow us a different look at the school data. And at the elementary school level, we also have early literacy data to compliment the SOL data. We begin with Baldwin, and on this slide, I'm gonna go into a little bit more detail to show you what you're looking at, but don't worry, you won't have as long for each of the slides.

[00:48:14] We begin with Baldwin Elementary School. SOL data show mixed results across grade levels with increases at fourth grade and mixed results at third grade. When you look at the cohort of students who moved from grade three in 23 to 24 to grade four in 24, 25, you see level performance in reading and an increase in mathematics.

[00:48:30] Baldwin did have some success with retakes with over 50% of students passing retakes in reading. As a reminder, students in grades three through eight are eligible for expedited retakes if they score between 375 and 399 on their initial attempt, with 400 being the passing score.

[00:48:45] The other piece of data on this slide is the early literacy data. When our strategic plan was adopted, a priority was placed on early literacy with one of the aspirational targets focused on students meeting early literacy benchmarks by grade two. Last year, the state moved from using PALS to using the Virginia Language and Literacy Screening System, VALS, which is definitely a mouthful, both to say and to type, with those extra L's and S's, for assessing early literacy.

[00:49:11] This change coincided with the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. Students are assessed for a risk level. The goal is for students to be identified at low risk. Really the first goal is to have students not identified at high risk and thus need a reading plan. But you can see from Fall '24 to Spring '25, Baldwin had a significant increase in the the percent of K-2 students identified as low risk across grades K-2. At Baldwin, 67% of the students were at low or moderate risk in the spring. Students at low or moderate risk correspond conceptually to how we assess grade-level benchmarks with PALS in the past. All right, now we're going to move on to Dean Elementary School. As with Baldwin, there were some mixed

[00:49:51] results at Dean on the SOL test. At Dean, significant increases were shown in third grade on both reading and math tests, while fourth grade had a decrease in reading and a slight decrease in math. When you look at the cohort moving from grade 3 and 23-24 to grade 4 and 24-25, you do see improvements in reading by 6 points and in mathematics by 15 points. Dean also had some good success with retakes, this time in mathematics, with over 60% of students eligible for retakes passing the SOL tests. In terms of early literacy, a significant increase in the percent of students identified at low risk did occur from fall to spring, and also at the

[00:50:28] spring, 49% of students K-2 at Dean were identified as either low or moderate risk. At Hayden, increases were shown in both grades 3 and 4 in both reading and mathematics. Double-digit gains occurred in math at both grade levels. When you look at the cohort moving from grade 3 and 23 to 24 to grade 4 and 24/25, you see level performance in reading and a 17-point increase in mathematics. One factor contributing to increases was success with retakes. In reading, over 60% of students eligible for retakes passed and over 50% of students eligible for retakes in mathematics passed. In early

[00:51:04] literacy, a significant increase was shown in the percent of students identified as low risk from fall to spring. And in addition, by spring 2025, 68 percent of the students were either low or moderate risk. At Round, significant decreases occurred in both reading and math at both grades three and four. When

you look at the cohort moving from grade three in 23-24 to grade four in 24-25, you see a slight decrease in reading, a significant decrease in reading, I'm sorry, compared to only a slight decrease in mathematics. Round did have success with retakes in mathematics with over 50% of those students who were eligible for retakes passing.

[00:51:40] Early literacy data are encouraging with significant increase in the percent of students identified as low risk from fall to spring. In the spring, a total of 71% of the students were identified as low or moderate risk. At Weems, significant increases were shown in mathematics in both grades 3 and 4.

[00:51:58] In reading, performance was level. When you look at the cohort moving from grade 3 in 23-24 to grade 4 in 24-25, you see an increase in reading of seven points and an incredible increase in mathematics of 32 points. A significant increase in the percent of students identified as low risk occurred from fall to spring.

[00:52:16] And in addition, 70% of students were identified as low or moderate risk in spring 2025. At the intermediate level, we'll be looking at SOL scores only. Moving forward, VALS will be administered K-8, so we will have additional data points in the future.

[00:52:35] We're gonna start with Baldwin Intermediate. In fifth grade, decreases in reading and math were shown. In sixth grade, increases were shown for mathematics, both for students taking the grade six test, as well as for advanced math students taking the seventh grade test. Reading performance was relatively level, with a one-point decrease.

[00:52:53] When you look at the cohort, moving from grade five in 23-24 to grade six in 24-25, you do see an increase in reading of five points. For mathematics, it is trickier to look at the cohort since students take different tests in grade six. When taken together, the cohort itself did improve slightly by one point.

[00:53:08] BIS did show some success with retakes in math, with over 50% of eligible students passing their retakes, and science scores did increase as well by nine points. Now we are looking at Mayfield Intermediate. In fifth grade, results were mixed with decreases in reading but increases in mathematics.

[00:53:26] In sixth grade, increases were shown in reading and mathematics, most notably on the grade six math test. Also, 98% of the students taking the grade seven math test, those students in advanced mathematics, passed that test. When you look at the cohort moving from grade 5 in 23-24 to grade 6 in 24-25, you do see a decrease in reading of five points.

[00:53:46] For mathematics, again, it's a little trickier to look at, but when you take them all together, the cohort was level in terms of performance when you take all of the sixth graders. Mayfield did show success with retakes in mathematics with over 50% of eligible students passing their retakes, and science pass rates also increased at Mayfield.

[00:54:07] As with the intermediate schools at METS, we're also just looking at SOL performance. In reading, decreases were shown at grade eight with a slight decrease in grade seven. For mathematics, we see some mixed results. Recall that students in grade seven and eight do not all take the same mathematics courses and assessments. Seventh grade students can take the grade seven test, the grade eight test, or the Algebra One test based on what course they're enrolled in.

[00:54:27] Eighth grade students can take the grade eight test, the Algebra One test, or the Geometry test. Performance of students who are in advanced mathematics continues to be high, with 94% passing

Algebra One and 98% passing Geometry. In addition, 85% of those students in seventh grade who took the grade eight test passed that test.

[00:54:47] In addition, over 76, I'm sorry, 65% of the students eligible for retakes on those high school level tests passed. However, performance of students taking the on grade level tests remains quite low and decreased in 24, 25. When you look at the cohort that moved from grade seven and 23, 24 to grade eight and 24, 25, you see a decrease in reading of three points and a decrease in math of nine points.

[00:55:11] that's across all tests. There was also a decrease shown on the grade eight science tests. Our final school data slide is for Osborne. This slide looks at SOL data in two ways. First, we look at performance on the three tests used for accountability that I mentioned before, reading, algebra one, and biology.

[00:55:28] Increases were shown on algebra one with significantly more students taking the test. Reading performance was relatively level and biology performance was level. Again, as I've said before, with significantly more students taking the test. The second graph shows overall performance mathematics and science, math performance overall increased by 10 percentage points. This also includes performance in algebra 2 and geometry which aren't broken out because they're far smaller numbers of students. In science performance was relatively level and this also includes performance in earth science and chemistry. As we come to the end of the data portion of this presentation, this slide provides some of the key findings. In reading, performance

[00:56:07] was relatively level at most grade levels. This is even with the increased rigor of new standards and assessments, new instructional resources, and all the requirements of the Virginia Literacy Act. Grade six saw the biggest increase and grades five and eight saw the biggest decreases. In math there is much cause for excitement. Overall performance increase at a rate outpacing state gains. All grade levels from grade three through six showed increases as did algebra one, geometry, and algebra two. Decreases were shown on grade seven and eight tests. Advanced mathematics performance is also encouraging with a pass rate of 97 percent for grade 6 students taking the grade 7 test, 94% pass rate for students taking

[00:56:44] algebra 1 in middle school, and a 98% pass rate for students taking the geometry test in middle school. As I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, I will be back to present the accountability status for schools after VDOE releases that information. I will now turn the presentation over to Mr. Gefeller who will discuss the strategic response to the data. Thank you. Good evening Chair Sieberg, Vice Chair Spall, members of the board and Dr.

[00:57:15] Before I get into our response on the SOL results, I do want to pause and thank our teachers, our instructional assistants, our administrators, our office staff, central office staff, food service workers, bus drivers, nurses, psychologists, social workers, maintenance staff.

[00:57:32] Every one of these educators is important to the mission and vision of MCPS and supports our students directly and indirectly. I stand here tonight representing the hard work of so many dedicated professionals throughout our division. I want to begin tonight by providing some context.

[00:57:52] All of our students returned to in-person learning full-time during the 21-22 school year. The school year, that school year, our focus was on helping students begin to recover the learning that they lost during the pandemic. But it was not an easy or a normal year.

[00:58:08] Large numbers of students were frequently quarantined, and in some cases, entire classes were sent home for days at a time. Many students had a transition in and out of the classroom multiple times, which made it extremely difficult to address the unfinished learning that our students had.

[00:58:25] At the same time, we began writing the new strategic plan, a process delayed by the pandemic. Since its adoption, we have worked to align every priority and initiative to that plan and our aspirational goals. It is important to note that those goals were written under different standards and different SOL assessments in reading, math, and science.

[00:58:46] As VDOE has made clear, the new standards and new assessments are more rigorous and more complex. In the 21-22 school year, we also began laying the foundation for a cycle that works that would begin in the 22-23 school year. This was intentionally designed as a two-year rollout plan based on staff feedback so that we could build it thoughtfully and systematically.

[00:59:09] It is our way of ensuring that every child has access to guaranteed curriculum, that lessons are aligned to the standards, that decisions are based and driven by data and that data is consistently used to provide both interventions and enrichment. At the end of the 21-22 school year, we took additional steps to set ourselves up for improvement for the following school year. We redesigned our master schedule guidelines to better support instruction and the school board provided schools with additional targeted resources, for example reading support and math support teachers at our elementary schools.

[00:59:44] Our story of recovery began just four years ago. Providing that context matters. Knowing where we started matters. And I want to be clear, this is about sharing context, not offering a groundwork for excuses.

[01:00:01] While we celebrate real progress in some areas, I also acknowledge that significant work remains ahead of us. And it is now with those shifts in place that I want to talk about where we are as a school division today. I just talked about where our story began, but now I want to add another chapter and share what last year looked like in our story.

[01:00:30] This past year brought the implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act, which required not only a shift in instructional practices, but also a shift in thinking and trust in the research around literacy instruction and the science of reading, which is a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction.

[01:00:47] Teachers had to complete a Canvas-based professional learning course on teaching with the science of reading. The Virginia Department of Education did not release the courses until August and September for our classroom teachers, just as schools were opening. That meant teachers were learning new content curriculum and instructional strategies and methods while simultaneously teaching new, more rigorous standards with no crosswalk year as in the past.

[01:01:14] The same was true in learning new math standards with no crosswalk year. In addition, we had a new high-quality instructional literacy resource to learn, new SOL tests in math and reading to prepare for, new early literacy assessments to administer, and individualized learning plans to develop for every student identified as at-risk in our elementary schools.

[01:01:38] I want to be clear, again, I am not creating a narrative for excuses. This was the reality across the state, and it was a heavy lift. But as I said earlier, context matters. Understanding these challenges helps explain the environment in which our teachers, our leaders, and students were working and learning.

[01:01:58] I am proud of the work that our educators are doing to help students be successful. And despite those challenges, we learned a lot from last year and had success. Literacy data and classroom observations highlight that reading instruction continues to need our close attention.

[01:02:15] By ongoing attention, we mean making sure that our high-quality instructional materials, benchmark advance, are fully implemented with fidelity, and that literacy instruction and assessments are matched and aligned to the rigor of the new standards. At the same time, the early grades, the VALS literacy data shows encouraging signs that we are moving in the right direction.

[01:02:37] In mathematics, we saw real gains at key grade levels and overall as a division. And in one of the areas that we've been working hardest on, crying absenteeism, is where we're beginning to see steady, meaningful improvements. And with that chapter behind us, I want to turn the page and talk about changes and strategies that we are putting in place for the 25-26 school year to continue moving our school division forward.

[01:03:03] Building on the lessons that we learned last year, we are moving into the new school year with clearer priorities and more targeted supports. Our focus is on strengthening Tier 1 instruction, the core instruction that every student receives.

[01:03:23] To do this, we are making high-quality lessons more accessible by recording model lessons and making them available on demand for teachers to use as reference and professional growth tools. We are also providing professional learning that goes deeper. Teachers will have opportunities to strengthen co-teaching approaches, ensuring that general education, ESOL teachers, and special education teachers are working in true partnership.

[01:03:48] Benchmark Advanced staff will continue to provide targeted training so that our literacy instruction is not only consistent across classrooms, but also fully aligned to the rigor of the new standards. And we are expanding coaching so that all teachers will be supported in implementing the cooperative learning structures at least once per quarter.

[01:04:08] Another area of focus is support for our special education teachers. We reorganized how we deliver support so that teachers feel less isolated and more connected to system-wide resources, ensuring they can provide interventions and accommodations more effectively.

[01:04:25] At the division level, we are also strengthening structures beyond the classroom. We are launching enhanced alternative education options to provide new pathways for students who need different approaches to be successful. Updates to attendance regulations are being finalized to build on the progress we've made in reducing chronic absenteeism, so schools now have clearer protocols and stronger tools to keep students engaged. We are also introducing a new system for tracking and reporting behavior incidents which will allow us to establish consistent expectations and provide better data for decision-making across all of our schools. Taken together, these changes are designed to ensure

[01:05:04] that every student has access to high-quality, rigorous instruction and that schools have systems and supports they need to keep students present engaged and on track just as we are making division-wide changes we are also turning the page at the school level each school has its own unique story instead of needs and our changes reflect that at multiple schools we are expanding the use of summit k-12 connect to literacy which includes Osborne High School Mets Baldwin Intermediate Mayfield

[01:05:44] and Weems this initiative is designed to provide targeted support for students families, teachers, and educators ensuring that English learners achieve measurable growth. The program specifically targets the English language development needs of each student related to listening, reading, speaking, and writing. This gives students greater access to tailored instructional support. This is about making sure that students at every level have the right scaffolds to succeed. At Round Elementary School, a new principal is bringing new leadership and expertise. Her focus is on ensuring that reading

[01:06:20] instruction is aligned to the new standards, and that the benchmark advanced resources are used with fidelity to accelerate literacy growth. Ms. Boatwright is committed to ensuring a cycle that works is implemented with fidelity, that data is being used to drive instruction, that lessons in every classroom are aligned with the new standards in reading and math, and that the work remains focused on our division initiatives. At Mets Middle School, we've made instructional adjustments to strengthen instruction and support. For example, Ms. Finnegan has her administrative team organized so that her assistant principal's primary responsibilities are focused on instruction.

[01:06:57] We've added a second instructional facilitator and a teacher on special assignment for special education, while also refining the Mustang Block to align it with the needs of our students better. These shifts are making sure that METS has the right supports and structures in place to support staff to drive improvement.

[01:07:15] This is intended to better support collaboration through CLT meetings, provide teachers with more frequent feedback on classroom instruction and actionable steps to improve student outcomes. At Osborne High School, we revised attendance protocols, building on last year's progress in reducing chronic absenteeism.

[01:07:34] These changes are designed to keep more students in school every day and ensure they stay on track for graduation. All of these school level adjustments are part of a broader story, making sure that leadership, resources, and systems are in place where they are needed most.

[01:08:00] As we talk about all these changes, I wanna step back and remind us that our story is still grounded in the same foundation. Each, even as each chapter brings new challenges and opportunities, our strategic priorities remain steady.

[01:08:16] They are the through line through our story. We remain committed to student academic success, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to meet rigorous standards and thrive. We remain committed to high quality instruction, making sure our teachers have the tools, training, and support they need to deliver engaging, effective lessons.

[01:08:37] We remain committed to inclusive practices, guaranteeing that all students, regardless of background, language, or ability, have access to opportunities. And we remain committed to safe and supportive environments because learning cannot happen unless students feel safe, cared for, and connected.

[01:08:55] These priorities will continue to guide us as we move forward. These are proven initiatives that make a difference for student achievement. And so as I close, I want to bring this story back to the people who make it possible.

[01:09:13] Our teachers, our instructional assistants, our administrators, central office staff, food service workers, bus drivers, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and maintenance staff. Their hard work and

commitment are what drive our progress. The data shows us that while challenges remain, we are seeing encouraging signs.

[01:09:33] Mathematics is a real area of growth. Attendance is improving, and our systems are becoming more aligned and more focused. These are not just numbers. They are evidence of growth, and I want to conclude by highlighting some of this evidence. As I said previously, our focus remains on our strategic priorities, and that means we need everyone all in.

[01:09:58] I began by discussing context, and it's important to approach this work with curiosity rather than judgment. It would be easy to look at the data and say that the plan isn't working. What I see is an opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the plan across every school, every grade level, every content team.

[01:10:21] And when you look carefully, when you compare where we were in 21-22 when we implemented the return to learn plan to when we implemented our strategic plan in the 22-23 school year to where we are now in the 24-25-26 school year, but based on 24-25, you see clear evidence that our plan is making a difference.

[01:10:47] When you compare SOL results between the 21 and 22 school year and the 24-25 school year, you will see growth. At Baldwin Elementary, math scores have risen 21 points. Reading has risen 5 points.

[01:11:05] At Baldwin Intermediate, science has increased 21 points and math by 12. At Hayden Elementary School, reading scores grew by 14 points And math scores have surged by 31 points.

[01:11:24] At Weems Elementary School, reading grew by 6 points and math by 24 points. At Mayfield Intermediate School, math has gone up by 21 points and science by 19 points. And at Osborne High School, mathematics has improved by 11 points.

[01:11:43] These gains are not accidents. They are the result of focused leadership, intentional planning, and persistence. and I want to share the voices of our leaders to highlight the work behind the numbers. So I asked our principals of those schools I just talked about to share with me from their perspective what made the difference between our data last year and where we were in 21-22 and I'm going to read you verbatim what they sent to me.

[01:12:18] Dr. Goldsung at Hayden said, one of the most transformative shifts has been the formal implementation of collaborative learning team structures across all grade levels. Beginning in the 22-23 school year, we established a consistent and effective CLT cycle that has strengthened instructional planning and delivery.

[01:12:37] Through this process, teachers collaboratively unpack standards, develop a shared understanding of mastery, and design instruction that is rigorous, aligned, and consistent across classrooms. This foundation has led to measurable gains in student achievement. In mathematics, growth was evident from the very beginning of this change, particularly in grades 3 and 4.

[01:13:00] Our focus on targeted conceptual understanding through task-based problem-solving and hands-on learning has deepened students' engagement and comprehension. In reading, Hayden began to see significant improvements in 23-24, driven by more intentional planning and alignment with grade-level standards.

[01:13:20] Across all content areas, we've increased opportunities for student writing, which has enhanced both literacy and critical thinking. We also prioritize student discourse, encouraging learners to articulate their thinking and engage in meaningful conversations about their learning.

[01:13:36] And finally, our collective focus on school-wide improvement goals and strategies has brought clarity to our vision and purpose for student learning. This shared commitment has unified our efforts and ensured that every instructional decision is grounded in what is best for students.

[01:13:56] Ms. Hutman at Weems said, following the CLT process of fidelity, so all teachers understand what students need to learn while they create lessons and activities that focus on students acquiring knowledge. A stable workforce with low teacher turnover.

[01:14:11] A robust multi-tiered system of supports process which identifies students by name and by need. Followed with actionable steps to close gaps in learning for students. The use of high-quality instructional materials in all classrooms. Targeted support based on data collection.

[01:14:29] An expectation across the school that learning is required, period. Classroom teachers' use of WIDA can-do descriptors based on student scores in each of the four domains of language assessed on the WIDA access test. An unwavering commitment to building foundational skills in all grade levels.

[01:14:48] An increase in staffing levels for ESOL, reading support, and math support. Nothing exceptional, just grinding through the work to better equip our teachers to meet the needs of our students. Mr. Rupert at Baldwin Elementary said, School improvement plan efforts in math were targeted with reasoning, probability, and statistics.

[01:15:16] Number talks turned into more general math talk, reasoning routine with all reporting categories as a focus. Power standards, number sense, and computation were major focuses during the online learning due to time and pacing. The cycle that works allowed expertise from instructional facilitators leading team collaboration with content specialists present to support.

[01:15:38] This allowed administration to be more of a part of the instructional process in the planning and monitoring of lessons. Getting students talking and getting back to real life through targeted student collaboration efforts that have turned into a more structured and improved approach with our Kagan Cooperative Learning Initiative, focusing on the Virginia Department of Education mathematical terms instead of just the orgo vocabulary.

[01:16:04] The cycle at work allowed us to have these conversations of the Virginia Department of Education terms that needed to be efficient and more aligned. The use of more manipulatives and understanding the standards. Content specialists in the cycle that works supported supplying resources and modeling effective use of the manipulatives.

[01:16:22] In reading the cycle that works, everything said for math plus digging into the standards, building vocabulary, background knowledge, and providing scaffolds based on name and need. We feel this has supported us to trust the intentionality of the Virginia Literacy Act implementation at Baldwin Elementary School.

[01:16:39] While as leaders, we were ready to model and support. Realizing the language of the standard through the cycle that works, vertical alignment, and being efficient, comprehensive with planning

lessons and addressing skills. We utilized the targeted support block to fill in gaps using the resources and knowledge and aligned with the science of reading.

[01:16:59] This allowed us to address each student by name and by need. Ms. Jackson from Baldwin Intermediate, in a 24-25 school year we implemented the team teaching model in our master schedule in an effort to utilize our staff in the areas of which they were instructionally strongest to include focuses on math and English language arts.

[01:17:21] We shifted our focus to strategic course placement of students. This means ensuring that students are properly identified in the areas of regular and advanced mathematics, pre-algebra, and gifted and talented identification. This resulted in an increase in our pre-eligible scores for the 24-25 school year.

[01:17:40] We implemented a CLT intensive protocol for math in the fall, winter, and spring, which provided our teachers with three opportunities for professional development in their content area and collaborative structured data reviews. We continue to focus on the effective implementation of a cycle that works through the CLT process with opportunities for coaching and feedback.

[01:18:00] For our Balto block, we engaged in targeted intervention using the ST Math. In addition, we purchased a license from Math Facts Lab to assist students in learning necessary foundational math skills. Our math support teacher provided small group instruction in addressing specific standards, identified in assessments for intervention, and reteaching opportunities.

[01:18:21] We utilized our instructional technology support teacher to increase accessibility of the curriculum for all students through technology. As with English, we will offer after-school boot camps for our students in need of Tier 2 support. We piloted our Summit K-12 Connect to Literacy four days a week after school for our ESOL learners, resulting in overall increase for our ESOL learners across all contents, including math.

[01:18:50] Steps for increasing science spiraling the unmastered fourth-grade science standards into the fifth-grade curriculum. We partnered with our Division Coordinator for Science as a resource to collect baseline data using fourth-grade diagnostics to determine which standards our fifth-grade students needed to master.

[01:19:07] This was a change to our STEM curriculum, which included the restructuring and delivery of the content to include both 4th and 5th grade standards in the SOL curriculum. From there, we identified standards to target through the teaching and reteaching during our Balto Block and our STEM Encore class.

[01:19:27] We implemented progress monitoring to determine the need for intervention and reteaching and enrichment. In regards to our instructional model, we increased our science instruction time by 100% from 40 minutes every other day in the 23-24 school year to 80 minutes every other day for the 24-25 school year.

[01:19:48] This allowed our teachers to dive deeper into the 5E instructional model, engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. We know that the SOLs require that our students explain, elaborate, evaluate, so we implemented the CLT intensive protocol to provide professional development to our teachers in the last three E's of the cycle, which we know is critical to success in understanding not only the what but the why of their science experiments.

[01:20:16] This pair with the close following of our STEM scopes curriculum and implementation of our cooperative learning structures maximize the effect of our science instruction each day. As of English and math, we offered our after-school boot camps and science for our students in need of Tier 2 support. As of the 24-25 school year, 100% of our students are enrolled in STEM, where they receive instruction in the spiraled fourth grade standards and continue to expand on the concepts taught in their fifth grade science classes. We continue this practice in sixth grade science as well, as we know the middle school science SOL is also cumulative, and we intend to

[01:20:55] set our students up for success as they advance through MCPS. The curriculum for STEM is product-based inquiry learning where students have designated time for hands-on learning of the material that gradually reinforces and reteaches previously learned standards in fourth and fifth grade.

[01:21:18] At Mayfield Intermediate, we have worked diligently to foster an inclusive and collaborative learning environment. We have fully implemented STEM scopes, which provides our students with high quality hands-on science instruction. To support this work we align our science assessments to state standards and increase their rigor ensuring all students are well prepared. Within our classrooms we intentionally embed scientific practices in our lessons so students are actively engaging with data creating models and conducting experiments. Teachers consistently use the 5e

[01:21:52] model engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate in their science classes and discuss its effectiveness in our collaborative meetings our new master schedule provides dedicated time for collaborative planning ensuring that special education and esel teachers are integrated into our teams we've also refined our scheduling practices to focus on increasing student access to the general education setting and to promote inclusive practices in addition the schedule includes dedicated time for our intervention through our bobcat block which allows us to

[01:22:28] address individual student needs. During the fourth quarter, an emphasis is placed on providing students with targeted interventions in fifth grade science based on data trends from common assessments administered through the school year. Equally important, we are intentional about building culture of caring. Our teachers are creating classroom environments that build strong communities and teach structured routines which minimize behavioral disruptions and maximizes learning time. Supporting this culture requires quality workforce. We are fortunate to have experienced teachers who are knowledgeable about the content and

[01:23:02] utilize best practices for instruction. Educators set specific measurable goals to increase student pass rates on the SOLs by 10 percent and we regularly monitor our progress through the teacher performance evaluation system. To support growth administrators conduct regular classroom observations and provide consistent feedback offering strategies to strengthen student engagement. And finally we recognize the importance of strong and family community partnerships Through improved communication with families, we have been able to increase student attendance, which has resulted in students being present at school regularly and fully engaged to engage in lessons.

[01:23:44] And Dr. Chapman at the high school says the creation of the Algebra Functions and Data Analysis class focused for students who failed the Algebra I SOL the prior year to increase foundational algebra skills and give students an opportunity to retest on the SOL in December and May of the following year.

[01:24:01] Focusing on limiting Desmos use and instead using the handheld calculators for foundational skills, mainly equation solving, to ensure that students are learning the process and not attaining an answer from a tool that can solve the problem for them.

[01:24:18] Many of our teachers, especially Algebra 1, reported some early struggles, but ultimately students had a stronger grasp on the targeted skills at the end of the school year. We also had each CLT identify critical ins and outs, which were used to drive our critical skill data tracking.

[01:24:38] With that, we identified essential skills for each unit and designed common formative assessments to measure the skill so that CLTs could work together on remediation and spiraled instruction prior to the summative assessments. That one is a work in progress, but we at least got a few successful iterations of it and are trying to build upon it this year and start in the other subjects as well.

[01:25:04] But just to conclude, their words show us what is possible when schools align the plan, use high-quality resources with fidelity, and stay focused on student learning. And so while we have much work to do, this story we are writing, we are writing it together.

[01:25:23] A story of progress, a story of persistence, and a belief that every student in Manassas City Schools can and will succeed. Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Gefiller and Dr. Quesada. questions or comments from the board mrs. Stevens thank you thank you for that very in-depth both in-depth presentations it's a lot to digest I'm sure we all have many things buzzing around in our heads but the first thing I want to say is handheld calculators instead of Desmos a lot of people don't

[01:26:00] know what Desmos is it's an online calculator where the student just has to type in the equation or the expression or the inequality and it pops out an answer and then students aren't able to explain how they got there so I think that's that's something I hadn't heard anyone doing so I think that's great and I think it's really helpful because it teaches our students to better understand the processes and the steps to get where they're going so first of all I have to say that's great that's really it's a tiny thing but it's a tiny thing that kind of means a lot um I have lots of questions I'm not gonna ask them all because they're a little bit all over the place um my first question has

[01:26:39] to do with absenteeism overall it looks really good but we have a couple schools where the net where the percentages really jump when we see a percentage in absenteeism jump to me what feels like a significant amount do we step in and examine what may be underlying causes for that increase in chronic absenteeism all right so i can speak a couple of things it's important to note this is also context not an excuse but in it one of the schools at Baldwin

[01:27:16] intermediate where there was a jump you have to remember the size of Baldwin intermediate and so you can have a significant swing in percentage up or down when you're talking specifically with the numbers of kids for absenteeism so that's that's important to note yes for my conversations with principals they they're aware of these trends as they're happening and they're doing things to keep targeting it there's only so much you can control but they absolutely when they're looking at it this is something that they're trying to figure out the causes because those causes are going to be different in elementary school and intermediate middle and high school so I can tell you with certainty that that's something the principals are exploring and you know thank you for mentioning

[01:27:55] Baldwin intermediate because just when you look at the numbers you're not thinking population right and a jump of six percent or seven percent in one school represents a much higher

number of children than in another school and I knew in Baldwin what is our what is our student population Baldwin intermediate so 76 yeah so 16 of 276 is going to be very different than 16 of 2000 so that I appreciate you sharing that piece of information because I hadn't thought of it in that sense until you mentioned it mentioned it and it is great to see so many schools that are coming down and that are at or better than the

[01:28:34] state average because they know chronic absenteeism is something we've really struggled with and at some schools it's been a very significant issue so I really appreciate all the work that's been done on that and I appreciate you sharing little bits about cohorts when we're talking about ELSA well scores because anecdotally just flipping through them and kind of comparing some of those cohorts the drops or changes in scores are not as significant because your students who were in third grade in 2023 24 are now in fourth grade in 24 25 and so in

[01:29:11] some ways it would kind of make sense for those pass rates to still be similar to when they were in third grade unless there was a huge change in instructional practices does that make does what I'm saying makes sense so yes and so it's important to look at things multiple ways this year because of all of the changes we did the focus the primary focus and you saw all the graphs were focusing on year-to-year comparisons because of the context the state laid out but it was important for us to walk through when we did the school level discussion about those cohorts so each school right has different a different story to tell but the cohorts of kids coming through each one of those cohorts

[01:29:49] right our kids who were in third grade in 23 24 fourth grade in 24 25 fifth grade in 25 26 all right I got through that without messing up the years their their story and their experiences throughout their lives and the turmoil that happened between 2020 and 2022 is different than those students who are now in ninth grade right so those con that context is important to look at both pieces I think both pieces are critical to tell the story yeah so I appreciate that and what I would like to see is just something that shows the movement amongst cohorts in that pass rate because I think if we can see that

[01:30:24] cohort that was you know third grade in 22 23 and then fourth grade in 23 24 and then fifth grade in 24 25 to see if their pass rates increase because I think that's a very valuable piece of information because that tells that those are kids who are truly learning because that's growth and personally me being a teacher I think growth is more important but that's just me so we don't need to go on with that and then we were talking about mr.

[01:30:53] Kefeller was talking about checking on fidelity of implementation of benchmark advanced how are we ensuring how are we checking on the fidelity of implementation through classroom observations with administration we're also doing our instructional coordinators and through our Department of Instruction is doing walkthroughs as well but primarily through through that process and then is in supporting teachers as well so it's really a variety of ways but it's being present in classrooms to making sure those things are happening make sure that CLTs are being focused that things are being

[01:31:30] planned according to according to the standards and using the materials and then making sure that those plans are then being implemented in the classrooms. And then I did want to talk a little bit about the new reading standards of learning and how they are much more stringent than previously. And I want to talk for a minute about how quickly all of the change occurred. I think Dr. Stevenson, I'm not going to put him on the spot and ask him to answer anything, but I really recall every meeting for a while

Dr. Stevenson would come up and tell us no the state still hasn't told us what our improved instructional materials are

[01:32:06] for reading and over and over and over again and if i recall correctly we didn't find out what the approved instructional materials for middle school were until well into the summer and teachers are used to especially content area having an idea of what's going to happen the next year as far as instructional practices are concerned but this was an instance where this rollout was really fast and we did have some instructional materials and correct me if i'm wrong that we had that the state said no is that correct am i calling that correctly we used

[01:32:42] we had scholastic we used scholastic resource which did not make it through the vetting process the department of education and so we had to adopt an entirely new resource so typically when we adopt a new resource how much time do we spend digging into that resource and learning that resource as educators before we put it on our children and assess our children more than we got this year is what I would say typically they have what is called a crosswalk here mm-hmm and a crosswalk here is where you're teaching two sets of standards but still being assessed on the old standards and then

[01:33:21] you have full implementation the following year so it's typically done over a two-year process in this case it was done in there was no crosswalk here for either math or reading the intervention materials we had to wait for those to be approved and then there were changes and then we were constantly we would call and say you know what what is where are we at with this we call the state we call our virginia literacy partner which they would say we'll talk to the state we say talk to this we talk to the state they say talk to your literacy partner um and so you know but when you think about the the um the canvas

[01:33:57] professional learning course that all of our teachers had to take and they weren't ready until for our classroom teachers for August or September I remember I took this yep and I took them after school started and they were in depth and so it was you know we already had students back and we're we're enrolling and so that's a reality that we face that we we had to overcome yeah so you know thank you for sharing all those things and that that doesn't mitigate the pass rate issues with the reading SOL and that doesn't say we

[01:34:33] don't have a lot of work to do but at the start of this school year are we in a better place than we were at the start of last school year for providing our kids with that instruction that teaches them to be deep learners of content yes and I would say that we actually have data to support that we administer at the end of the year we administered a survey and looking at where you started last year being prepared to teach and engage in the Virginia Literacy Act and use benchmark resources to where you concluded at the end and we had significant I think we shared that at the at the retreat summer

[01:35:11] where we had a high level of growth of people teachers feeling that they are better prepared now than they were the start of the school year so I feel like we are in a better place than we were a year ago we've learned a lot in terms of the Virginia Literacy Act we expand that now we're as dr. Casada talked about expanding the use of valves to upper grades and so I think that we have that we're better prepared than we were a year ago so you bring up valves valves is new relatively new to the state of Virginia do we know how the valves data for the

[01:35:48] upper grades is going to be used by the video yet I do not know that okay great um I'm just gonna ask one more question I know I have a lot more but I'm they're all bouncing around in my head um

the video we came out and said that SOS will be administered the SOL open window for administration is going to be much later this year what what are the thoughts on that do we think that's a because there's very there's two very different schools of thought and I can see the smile on your face as to whether or not that's a good thing but doesn't that provide our teachers with more instructional time,

[01:36:24] especially considering we had so many schools where 50% of students passed the retake. - Okay, so that's a complex question with a complex answer, so I'm gonna do Reader's Digest for now, and we can get you and the board more information because this is, it's video-y, so everything is ever-changing, right?

[01:36:49] So one of the things the Virginia Board of Education and then thus the Virginia Department of Education has talked about is shortening the SOL window and pushing it later. On the one hand, you say, great, more instruction before the SOL tests. However, it then does have an unintended, or intended, depending on your perspective, consequence of fewer opportunities for retakes.

[01:37:10] So I don't know exactly how that's gonna play out. We have not gotten, I'm looking back at Pedro Hernandez, our division testing guru, and we haven't gotten all the information on that or many other things from them yet. And so we're keeping an eye on that 'cause there are consequences.

[01:37:28] And there's pros and cons to the later window. Retakes when done well can be a success story for students. You heard that tonight. And so I would be wary of things that would take that opportunity away. But there's, again, pros and cons on both sides. So we can put something together for you once we have a little more information from the state.

[01:37:47] - Yeah, I was just curious about it. I was listening to everything that was being said. Like I said, I am sure I have a lot more questions, but I'm not gonna take up everyone's time. So thank you, Mr. Goodfeller, and thank you, Dr. Quesada.

[01:38:03] - Dr. Jones. - Thank you once again for all the information. So going back to slide five, there was an example from the state about example of grade four reading for 2020, and then in 2025, and how it's looking for different types, it wants more analyzing instead of just the retail.

[01:38:24] How do we relay this to parents of how they can help the students? How do we relay this information to parents so they can also help us to help their students, their children? I think that we, you know, through a variety of ways, can let parents know about the expectations being different.

[01:38:44] Obviously, back-to-school nights, we have parent newsletters. We do, through our Title I elementary schools, we do our partners' parents as partners as education. those can certainly be a part of the agenda to talk about how the expectations have changed because it is very different as you can see an example there and one of the things that we learned this past school year and some in some of the data is if we simply rely on that lower level instructional

[01:39:19] about you know recall and memorization our students are not going to perform well it is about critical thinking skills it's about reasoning it's about analyzing and it's an important piece for things for our families to be able to support at home as they're looking at some of the work that comes home and be able to have conversation with that our benchmark advance has a for lack of a better word a newsletter that goes home that explains what lessons students are working on so that is able to be sent home and was sent home to many families

[01:39:57] and looking at what is the expectations to our new high quality resource benchmark advance and so those are all things that I think can get the message out for looking at that the higher expectations that the assessments are also with reading being so central do we know how many monasticity do we know there's a problem with books being in homes I don't know the answer to that that question in terms of books, but we do, you know, one of the things that I will say that we have done to be able to get books in the hands of our students, we have Manassas Reads. One of the

[01:40:35] unintended consequences of, as Ms. Stevens mentioned, we had to discontinue our use of scholastic resource that we had. And so we had a multiple year contract that had already been signed with them. And so if you attended last year's Manassas Reads, we handed out brand new books we've handed out bilingual books we handed out high quality books and those were provided from Scholastic to fulfill their contract to us and so that was for two years and so we have a whole other set of books that'll be coming

[01:41:11] again to get in the hands of our students that are high quality because that is important that they have those materials at home improve their test scores yes all right if you recall back in the earlier presentation when miss Loesch was talking about at the leadership retreat she mentioned continuous improvement planning yes each school develops a continuous school improvement plan and we partner the first step is to do a

[01:41:48] needs a comprehensive needs assessment that looks at all the data not just SOL data because that's only one one piece of data and determine where they need to improve and then they develop goals strategies and actions in line with that and our process is in line with the state's improvement planning process so each principal with their leadership team in their building builds those plans each year based on their SOL and lots of other data and I'll just add to that Dr. Jones on our work session on the 25th we are going to be discussing what we want to see from school presentations so if there's something specific it's a

[01:42:27] good thing to think about now miss miles have a few questions I know on the one slide for looking forward towards the school year we talked about attendance protocols that we're that are being implemented Osborne could you go into a little more detail just for those who are listening that sure I think there's they refined some of the attendance protocols from last year to build on those one of the things say there's a couple things that specifically that they're doing one is greater accountability for tardies students who are tardy to class there's

[01:43:04] greater accountability for that in the building they've also looked at their analyzed their data and looked at the number of days absent of our athletes and leveraging that to get students in school they're also looking at the number of students that and analyze the data for students who drive to school, and seeing how that impacts and enforcing policies around that privilege.

[01:43:33] And so those are a couple of things that they're really focused in on to try to leverage those things that students are engaged on to get them into school. Okay. The other thing is, I know we've talked about some at K-12, but I had a couple questions about it.

[01:43:50] Is it an optional program, or is it something that is required of certain levels, ESOL levels? Yeah, so students are selected based on what we feel would be the best, they'll be most successful in there. We have at several of the schools that we're doing it, it's a combination of during the school day and after school or just after school at some schools.

[01:44:16] So it's a combination of both. We find that it's harder sometimes to get students to the after school or before school program. So we want to make sure that we're getting the right students there and getting them to be able to take advantage of those programs. And so in some places, for example, the high school that we're doing, it's going to be happening during the school day.

[01:44:33] Okay, great. And it's like an elective for them? It's not an elective. It's a situation where we identify the student we think would benefit from this program. And so we're going to identify them and then enroll them into our program. Okay, great. I have some other questions, and obviously some of the data that we saw in math, just with 7th and 8th grade, is just not, it's not something we like to see, you know, 20% passing or 32% passing for 7th and 8th grade math.

[01:45:06] When we look at that, though, because I know you talked about how those who took higher level math courses, they did excellent, right? Whereas the ones that were taking the just grade level, obviously the scores are different. Is there any way we can get a breakdown of the numbers in correlation with that?

[01:45:25] Like how many kids are taking these higher level classes as opposed to just the grade level? Yes. Okay. Yes, we can give you that breakdown. Thank you. And then in addition to that, I would like to know the Virginia pass rates for seventh grade math and eighth grade math.

[01:45:41] Just like, you know, what are the differences? I saw the decrease and increase and all that. But it would be nice to see apples and oranges, you know, just like side by side to see where we kind of fall in that. Is this an issue across, you know, Virginia where math, you know, is just really tough at this age?

[01:45:58] Or is it just something that we're really struggling with? So I just would like to see that. Yes, we can get that. I just want to take the opportunity to explain that middle school mathematics nationwide and statewide What students take which math tests at which grade levels when acceleration starts varies division to division, right?

[01:46:16] So some some schools have students who are in advanced math skip a fifth grade test Some of our students if the sixth grade test sometimes it's seventh and sometimes it's not till eight So actually I was at the middle school last week and we had this same conversation And so we're going to be doing an analysis which we can share with the board which would go into for the at the state level as well as Locally how meant not only what the pass rates are but how many students statewide are taking things at which level and then because that Context is really important because like our students in seventh grade because we have students taking Algebra in an eighth grade math in seventh grade you have you're already pulling the most advanced students

[01:46:56] but sometimes that happens in different grade levels. So seventh grade math scores in many places don't have some of those students, the acceleration, anyway, it's complex, but it's ironically something I was discussing with the middle school leadership team last week and we're working on that analysis and we will provide it to the board. - Okay, that's wonderful, thank you.

[01:47:12] And a couple more questions and I'm not sure who would be able to answer this, but I think about just students in general as a teacher myself and when I come, when you have a classroom of students and you're noticing that they have some academic concerns and these are things that are, you know, like keep happening.

[01:47:29] Like maybe they're a struggling reader and, you know, they should be here, but they're not here. What is the process? And I'm not sure if we ever detailed that, the process that we go about identifying these academic concerns. Are we meeting weekly about, 'cause I know you talk about name and need, but are we meeting weekly?

[01:47:45] Are we meeting bi-weekly? Like what is the process of that? - Yeah, so the process at the school level is primarily through our CLT meetings where they designate time to look at data and look at assessments and analyze assessment data. We give frequent formative assessments and then we take the time to analyze those and then use that information to develop groups of students to provide that intervention to, specifically what they need.

[01:48:11] We have students that, teachers who will take a group of students that need a specific skill and that may not be their primary homeroom teacher, but we do that on a regular basis. The other thing that we are going to be expanding this year is our data dialogues at the division level on a quarterly basis.

[01:48:29] We'll be looking at our data across the division. We started that last year, but we're going to be more intentional about it this year, looking at all of our data, K-12, on a quarterly basis and trying to make decisions and trying to adjust and provide more support where needed.

[01:48:45] But that's primarily the way it happens, and there's really two things happen at the same time at the school level and then now at the division level. Okay. And I guess I'm really specifically speaking about students who need Tier 3 instruction, not the Tier 1, you know, but Tier 3, just that they're not falling through the cracks, you know, and making sure they're getting the help they need, whether that is extra instruction outside of the classroom.

[01:49:12] Yeah, so that's kind of what I was kind of focusing on. Thank you. Questions to my left. Ms. Brown. I'm not going to ask any questions, but I do have some questions for the leaders here to ponder, and I'm going to start with me because I always believe that it's a mindset and it starts with me.

[01:49:35] As an instructional leader in my early career, I used to be very proud that I could run circles around reading instruction, science, and later on in my career when I became an instructional specialist for preschool, I became well-versed in the class reliability tool, and I can go in a classroom, and I was a whiz about it. But I do remember two times in my career where I didn't feel as comfortable, and the principal and I had a conversation, and she asked me two very important

[01:50:10] questions. What might you need to prioritize your role as an instructional leader in math, And then the other issue that I had at one point was VAP because our scores were very low.

[01:50:27] And that's the test for students with disabilities, the alternative assessment. And I went home to think about it very thoroughly. And then she said, if the answer was yes from me, what might you propose as a proactive measure?

[01:50:43] What would you try? What would you and the teachers try? And my answer was outside of the box for VAP. I tracked down a retired teacher that got 100% on VAPS for year after year. And I told my principal, if the answer is yes, I want to contract that teacher so that she can come teach me how to unpack the standards, how to do it, how to do audits with my teachers.

[01:51:10] And that's exactly what she did. So she contracted that teacher, and our scores went from 30% to 100% that year, just alone in VAPS. Now, that didn't raise their scores for the whole school because we

were doing great, but it raised the success for those families and how they felt about the instruction their children were receiving.

[01:51:33] And that was important to me because as an instructional leader, even if 1% of students do not pass, that is 1% of students who are not experiencing success from us. And the other thing for math at that point, I just asked if I could attend some sessions with the math.

[01:51:53] There was a math academy for math coaches. It was not for assistant principals, but I beg and plead it, and I say, I want to do that because I want to know what they know so that I can bring it back to the classroom. And so I'm just putting this out there for the principals, assistant principals, and coaches and leaders in our district.

[01:52:13] What might you propose as a proactive measure and if the answer from this board was yes? Why would you try? Why would you tell us to support you in I want to hear that because if It's feasible and we can do it. We want to try it miss pressure. Thank you So this is probably the most important presentation we do all year. This is the student outcome presentation and This is data, but we can't lose sight of the fact that behind each data point is a child whose future is impacted by

[01:52:53] what we do next and It's urgent important work, and I like the invitation you extended there member Brown I will say that from my perspective This job has gotten a little bit harder to do over time because when I started on this school board the data points were just data points and now I've been involved in the school division longer and There are names and faces and relationships But we can't lose sight of the fact that we have kids futures in our hands So some of my questions are maybe going to be a little bit difficult

[01:53:29] But it's the way a good personal trainer will encourage you five more reps Don't get out of that low squat hold you can do it right like it might be difficult But we've done hard things before and I know we can do it again

[01:53:44] So, these are my notes, by the way, so I want to ask, first of all, for some clarity for us to talk a little bit more about our reading results, because the changes that, you know, the challenges that you outlined at the beginning of the presentation with the VLA and the Canvas course, all that kind of stuff, that did not impact all grade levels equally.

[01:54:10] Some grade levels were more impacted. That is correct. All grade levels had new standards, but that did not impact I would say that the least impact that there was would have been at the high school level so Knowing that I see that there was not there. There was still not a lot of growth at our high school level So can we offer an explanation as to why that might be so I think that?

[01:54:39] We need to look at alignment of lessons To the new standards would be the first place I would go place first place that we are go going we had just today i'll give you an example today uh mr emel and miss winham did walkthroughs of our english classes over at the high school and we're developing a plan to support what's happening in those classrooms and making sure that there's a true partnership between our general education teachers and our english language teachers as well and so i think that's the first

[01:55:15] first place you have to go and look is alignment to look at standards I think you have to look at are the assessments that we're giving in those classrooms aligned with the standards and so those are the places that I would look and based on previous experience I would say that that's where we will need to make some adjustments you mentioned L students and so this is a good time just to clarify this because

last time we got a presentation about the changing framework, and the new timeline for when L students count for the purposes of what used to be called accreditation.

[01:55:55] But there has been no change. No, there's no change from last year to this year in terms of who's defined in anything. This does not have those types of adjustments. Right. So I don't want anyone confused about that. So I want to talk a little bit about our demographic breakdown for both reading and mathematics.

[01:56:16] students with disabilities was the area where we lagged the most via the state average and this is a hard one because I have two special ed students who thrive in Manassas City Public Schools and I am and I know our special ed teams and I know that there's a lot of people doing very good and dedicated work and so I want to hear a little bit more so I know it's not the people who are doing you know I know I know that I know that there is something more happening here so what are we doing support our instructors of students with disabilities yeah so that I want to

[01:56:53] highlight a few things but to leave that we've done for our special education students I want to first start off by saying that we started this year in a much better place than we ever have in terms of our staffing we were started the school year almost fully staffed in special education teachers we thought we were and then we had a teacher that changed their mind and so so I think that that is our reality we were excited about that because last year we had we had a lot of changes in special education and we had to fill a lot of

[01:57:30] gaps and we did not start the year anywhere near fully staffed for special education so that's one thing I will say you saw at the end of miss locious presentation we changed the special education coaches are now part of our professional learning team where they are integrated with our professional growth specialists and providing support to our special education teachers and the reason we did that was to try to be more proactive I felt like we have been reactive we've been to be reactive because of our staffing situation and so that compounded that I would also say that we have spent considerable amount of

[01:58:10] time this year supporting schools with scheduling looking and making sure that special education teachers are able to be part of an important part of our CLT meetings when we don't have we didn't have staffing a year ago it was hard we were teachers were doing double duty and covering multiple you know providing services to kids and we're not able to fully participate in that so we were having a hard time doing that and so that CLT process and having them being opportunity we call it opportunity agent an actual role in those process where they're actually talking about specific things that are working that need to be

[01:58:48] done in terms of supports for our special education students the other thing that I would say is is just looking at how they have been involved with working with our reading specialists our math specialists particularly working having our special education teachers that are supporting language development of our students being a part of writing the plans for the writing of the reading plans that we have for our students that is something that we have been more intentional about this year.

[01:59:19] And so I think that with those things along with Mr. Maciac reorganizing how we are supporting individual schools and assigning support, trying to make some shifts in that and re-looking at how we are overall supporting teachers across the division because we also recognize that many of our special education teachers are still working towards their license.

[01:59:45] And so we wanna make sure that they are making progress their licensure but also that they are getting the tools that they need to be successful with having students in front of them and you know try to provide micro PDs for example how do you write IEPs and trying to writing effective goals those are all things that we've had to as our workforce has changed look at how we are adjusting to supporting the teachers that are that we're hiring because some of them are career switches for example and so how do you write an IEP goal we're now supporting them with that and so I say those are some of the

[02:00:22] things that we're doing and I think we're in a much better place than we were a year ago that was a long list so thank you for the long list long list is encouraging this is something I think that as we have maybe at a future work session we just can discuss what kind of presentation we might want to see to go a little bit deeper into this what other options might be available to us to explore that more deeply because we cannot can't leave any students behind Okay. So question going to slide nine. I wanted to look at this one because it's got all that

[02:00:59] nice green on it. It had a better year than reading. Can you go a little bit, explain a little bit? So math got new standards as well. Reading got new standards and yet all green and less green. So can we talk a little bit more about the differences there? Sure. I'll start off if I miss anything. This is going to see how well I can paraphrase what Mr. Gefeller said before and based on my knowledge. So yes, the standards and assessments in both reading and mathematics changed in 24-25 in language arts as we mentioned the implementation of the Virginia literacy it was more more dramatic right because not only did the standards become more rigorous not only do the assessments become more rigorous

[02:01:36] our teachers were faced with completely new instructional materials that as you heard didn't we didn't know about until Wayne and way close to when it was happening there was intensive professional development mandated by the state in terms of courses and modules and things that had to be completed all year and so it was a more dramatic change in approach and so I think those are some of the fundamental differences the math data it's so exciting to look at all of the green that's really really exciting and I think because of the groundwork that had been laid for the previous two years with the CLTs and

[02:02:11] stuff in math that because the resources and the unpacking it wasn't completely upended and now you have to teach in it with new materials and with different pacing. I think that's my analytical reason as to why that happened. Does that answer your question? Yes. So math, the resources, curriculum stayed the same. Reading, everything changed all at once.

[02:02:30] And so this is, and also the test got harder, 30 to 40 percent harder. And the test got harder in mathematics as well. So these gains are like even that much more exciting. And you look compared to the state where they had some gains. Every place they had a gain above two points, so did we, and we had many that they did not have, so.

[02:02:50] - So I am excited to see what this year brings, because we have, for better or for worse, it's, you know, a lot of it's the same from last year. Which, by the way, Miss Miles, you had asked about the grade seven, grade eight, yeah, so it's right there on the breakdown.

[02:03:08] - Yes, and we're working on that, and we will get that to you. - So you briefly addressed this, you kind of touched on it earlier, but didn't quite get to the answer of, are we on track to meet the 80% goal that we set in our strategic plan?

[02:03:25] - So because the goalposts moved, right, and because the standards changed and the rigor changed and it's kind of resetting, and so the short answer is I don't know.

[02:03:41] I know that's not like the best answer, but the progress is encouraging in mathematics, and so if we get to 80%, that's exciting. you see another five-point gain in 25, 26, you're at 62 in mathematics, and it could be higher than that because if seventh and eighth grade come up, those things go even higher. You see the double digits, so it's exciting. In reading, there's challenges there as well, but what I would say is that goal remains our goal, and so everything our leaders and our teachers are doing is in support of getting all students, right? The goal is really to get all students to where they need

[02:04:18] to be, but we had to set something that was conceptually attainable. Because of all of the changes, that's still where we want to go. It's hard to say and put a number on where I expect us to end up exactly because every year something changes. And so the standards aren't changing this year, but every year the state changes something. And so as long as there's forward momentum, that's the most important. And you want to see, I'd like to see next year this kind of green on the reading slide right that's what you want to see next and you want to continue to see green so we're green everywhere is

[02:04:52] of course the goal so it's it's hard to say well there will hit 80 but if we don't hit 80 but we've made continuous improvement for the three years the two years getting up to that I call that a win if I could just add miss pressure we also know that this the state right now is considering a change in cut scores and so if you look at raising the cut score from a passing score on the SOL of a 400 to a passing scored next year potentially being a 444 I

[02:05:31] can't I can't remember the grade level I can't remember but that could change and so we just there's unknowns yes there yes all right well we're revisiting the plan soon anyway, so we can bake all that into the next pie. So going to slide 10, I just want to point something out. For our L students, we are right at the state average this year, and this is something where, you know, our L students, I have a feeling we're going to be talking a lot more about

[02:06:06] our L students as the, you know, state accountability framework has changed. The number is still low. That number needs to go up, but that's a kind of a highlight I wanted to hit, like our L students have hit, you know, they're not lagging the state average, they've hit it. So we can do better, we can do more, but we are at current state performance. So I wanted to ask you, Dr. Quesada, moving on to the next topic, why were more students taking the biology exam and the reading exam? Okay, so it was biology and algebra one. And so, so biology is the course that's the required part for accountability,

[02:06:44] right? And so that sounded like it was coming out of the microphone. Sorry. So if I look confused, that's why people on TV. So we have multiple options for students in ninth, 10th, whatever grade for science, right? So earth science is another option, but more students were enrolling in and thus taking the biology assessment. And so that's an encouraging sign because it sets them up on the path to take a variety like chemistry, physics, those other courses. So that's one reason this the the high school making scheduling decisions with that in mind

[02:07:20] for the students for algebra one that you heard in mr. Gefeller's quoting of dr. Chapman about courses in that that for students who had failed the algebra test and then we had better support with this algebra functions and data analysis class which was a way to get students with those foundational skills so that they can take that test so you saw those kind of bumps you don't I don't anticipate you're going to see a

bump in the number of students again that same way. We saw a bump in the number of students in reading the year prior when we made some changes to when that test was

[02:07:55] given is one reason for that. And so that's kind of a rambling answer. You know, I forgot to ask you under my previous question about our 80% target, VALS. We used to have a PALS target. What's our VALS target now? So the target for early literacy did not mention PALS. It's an literacy benchmarks and so it was also an 80% and so when I combined right the low and moderate risk at the when I on each of the school slides that was to get what that is so our schools are around most of the schools were in the 60s and even low 70s already so I think those targets are very attainable in the

[02:08:32] early literacy area and those were k2 altogether so I did not split out just two tonight but that is something that I believe is still a very reasonable target for us. Gotcha. And when students are eligible for retake, and they take a retake, that is reflected in these charts? Yes, a school's highest, a student's highest score is what's included, right? So if a student fails the test, and then passes the test, they count in here as a pass. But for end of course, it's a little bit different, because you can take that many, many times. Yes, but in a given year, so end of course, this is again, one of those ones we could go on for a long time, but I will try not to. At the high school level, because students do have more

[02:09:09] opportunities to take a retake because many of these tests are requirements for their graduation again in a given year's administration in a given year's reporting only their highest score then will be included right so even if a student took the test multiple times they're in in the data that you're seeing once so going to the you know math seventh and eighth math results as miss miles stated it's not it's not what we want to see and it's not what our students are capable of and i know it's not what our instructors are capable of. I know we can do, you know, five more reps on this

[02:09:44] one. Like, I know we can do better on this one. So I want to be constructive. And I'm just curious, you're taking the grade seven exam. You could be, and if you are in METS middle school taking the grade seventh exam, you are most likely a seventh grader. You are a seventh grader. You are a seventh grader. I looked at that. Yeah. Yes. Yes. Because that funny business with sixth graders taking the seventh grade exam, that you would, those scores would be reflected. Right. So if those students, Right. The sixth graders taking the seventh grade test, those scores are reflected at their school where they took the test.

[02:10:17] So in Baldwin and Mayfield's numbers, it met seventh graders who haven't done that already, take the seventh grade test. Again, some of them take the eighth grade test and some of them even take the algebra test. You take the test for the course in which you're being instructed. But if you're taking the seventh grade math exam, you are in the seventh grade.

[02:10:35] Yes, at METS Middle School. med's middle school so the question I have is do we know how many of our seventh graders received a passing grade in their class so I can get you that information as part of again that's another one of the things that deeper analysis of course course and SOL performance and so yes that's on the list of things to be getting for you because in terms of I'm going to guess it was more than 20% of kids who received a passing grade in their seventh grade math exam so I am in terms of what we as the board can be doing to be supporting

[02:11:13] student learning and to be supporting our instructors who are in the trenches trying to make it happen I think perhaps another conversation about how our grading might be lining up with our academic expectations might be soon in order all right and so now oh I guess this is the Mr. Gefeller time

for the I think you can sit down dr. Cassata I think I'm done with you all right so I I wanted to ask you for changes for the 25-26 school year I'm going to press you a little bit

[02:11:49] I did go back and look you know while we're still on the topic of METS at some of the you know changes and improvements that have been suggested and made for METS over the past several years because METS has been in this tough position for quite a while now and refinements to Mustang Block has been in some way shape or form on the list for three years at least so what about this is different well I think that the focus at METS is on teaching with clarity and so it's really when you think about the refinement it's not throwing things out

[02:12:25] it's taking that Mustang block and looking at the to make sure that the interventions that are set to be delivered to the students are actually being delivered and so making sure that there's increased monitoring of that making sure that that students are appropriately receiving the appropriate intervention and making sure that students are actively engaged in that Mustang block so that they can get what they need in order to make to be

[02:12:56] remediated to be retaught whatever that student might need so kind of going the moving into now the division response so looking at our pass rates by school the results are actually very uneven because there are some superstar performers Like, wow, Weems math.

[02:13:18] I think the Weems team went to bed. But there are some really eye-popping, huge, beautiful green numbers in there. But we do have two outliers that are consistently in the other direction.

[02:13:38] That's Mets and Round. I haven't talked much yet about Round. But when I look at something like this, and obviously that impacts the overall division data when you have outliers that gets into the average and so you end up in a situation where your pass rate is uh not as where the division numbers overall get uh kind of suppressed but which is fine because everyone's part of this family we own all of our results but i'm concluding that when i'm trying to draw a conclusion here in terms of how we are approaching this issue strategic our future strategically you know you want to look at is it the plan that needs

[02:14:14] an adjustment or is it the you know or is it something going on that is fairly isolated that can be addressed at the building level so I'm looking at this and concluding that there are specific issues in those buildings that it's more building issue and less plan issue is that a fair conclusion I believe so I think that as I said in the presentation I believe that the the issue is looking at making sure that we have consistent implementation of our plan at all grade levels content teams in all schools and so when you think about that the way I think about it in terms of alignment making sure that there is alignment with

[02:14:51] the schools with our initiatives in our plan that's happening and that there is monitoring that's happening in those in those buildings in those classrooms making sure that there is the things that are as I said happening and being planned in CLT meetings and that's transferring over to what's happening in the classroom if we're preparing high quality lessons in CLT meetings but then they're not being delivered in the classrooms that's an issue and so then it's up to us to figure out if it's an issue is an issue of we're just not doing

[02:15:27] it or is it an issue of we need support and so we want to be able to provide the right amount of support for what's happening in our classrooms and supporting our teachers and so I think that you have to have alignment all the way through the division so when you see you know when you see inconsistency

is across the division the first thing I look at is okay well what's happening here it's not happening here and I think that's important to number one recognize it and then number two how do we address it and as I said in the presentation I think each school has its own story each school has unique needs

[02:16:04] and so we need to make sure that we are providing the right resource when you think about you know if you have a cold antibiotics not going to help you if you have strep throat antibiotics are going to help you so at one size fits all approach is not going to be effective and so that's why we try to differentiate when you think about METS for example we know that we have a lot of new teachers there so we wanted to make sure that we had a second instructional facilitator that's dedicated to supporting our teachers we knew that we had special education last year was in supporting our teachers there was important so we

[02:16:43] have a designated person that is that is supporting our special education teachers they're on the ground getting them what they need to support them and so I think that's how we're approaching it we see a need we're trying to make sure that the resource and the support matches the need because if we have a need for special education and we're giving more ESOL teachers that's not going to support that so I mean from my perspective if the strategic priorities were a problem they would be a problem everywhere right you're not gonna get you know 20% you know 24% gains or whatever if a cycle that works was not

[02:17:19] working like it for example just to pick out one of them so I am I'm on board with that I wanted to ask you our fastest improving schools are in the schools who are in the improving bucket what do they have in common if anything well I think they have a lot in common one I think that there is close alignment as I talked about I think that I would answer that question and there's many things I would say about that I'll limit I think that you think about fast fast and performing performing schools they have trusted the process they have

[02:17:57] trusted the resources they have high trust within their teams they have discourse in their teams about students and what's the best way to teach something to our students I think they have high expectations for our students they don't accept they don't accept anything but a student's best and not saying that others don't but when I think about what makes the biggest difference and I think that you have very involved teams that are really

[02:18:35] struggling with and wrestling with how best to move a student forward I think that's that is important I think they they have they have let try to let go of practices that are not effective I think when you hold on to a practice when you're thinking about the literacy act it requires that I said a shift in thinking a shift in mindset a shift in practices and if we're trying to teach new standards in a in but using our old methods it's not going to give us the results so when we do see schools that are making lots of good positive change

[02:19:13] how do we how are we ensuring that that change is sustainable and that the momentum is carrying forward so we stay focused you know when and I think it comes down to you know as Miss Brown was talking about our leaders we rely on our leaders to keep the school focused and making sure that momentum happens being you know making sure that teachers have what they need you know we want to reinforce high expectations but we also want to reinforce high support for our students and for our teachers and so when I think about how we're reinforcing

[02:19:51] and keeping the momentum it's a lot in my experience it's easier to go from 30 to 60 it's harder to go from 60 to 65 because you've got to maintain that but it's really easy to go from 65 to 30 and so you have to maintain that momentum and I think that's number one staff in buildings need to know what the data shows need to respond quickly to that data they need to advocate for resources and support when needed and they need to keep the main thing the main thing

[02:20:27] which is instruction and student outcomes so for my what I think is my last question I'm curious to hear just about some I'm here curious to hear some reflection generally about what this past school year has taught us and I don't mean in a way that like you know this is the checklist for Mets and this is the checklist for our cycle that works and this is the checklist for this that or that I mean you know the system is all of us you know as Miss Brown you were saying and you're each of us are part of this system each of us are accountable to the system so moving away from the checklist and turning into you know what is our senior leadership reflecting on and learning from this

[02:21:05] past school year and bringing forward so again I'd have many thoughts on that if had more time to think about it but first thing comes to mind is change is not easy we had to adapt very quickly and I think that we did a really good job trying to adapt to that the changes with vla for example something that I think as we mentioned as well in the presentation is that we have to approach the new standards in a new way we cannot rely on memorization recall

[02:21:45] low lower level questioning strategies that's not going to help our students learn we have to focus and we have to focus on teaching critical thinking skills we have to focus on reading and writing when I think about reading reading doesn't just impact the reading sol and so one thing I have learned when you look at our data and when you look at our sol tests reading is a unlocks the keys to other contents when you look at science science is also a reading test

[02:22:24] math is a reading test social studies is a reading test and and we need to make sure that our kids are making progress in reading because that unlocks a lot of doors for our students particularly on the SOL tests I thank you for that I encourage all of us to reflect on it I don't want us to be a finger-pointing division I want us to be a hand-holding division you were all doing this together all of our students are our students so thank you for taking all of this time thank you dr. Cassata and thank you everybody for what you are doing every single day what you're gonna get up really early to do again tomorrow

[02:23:03] sorry guys such a late presentation vice chair Spall yes I'll try to be brief I do believe we're a team and I'd love to use the word we in some of our professional development we've been taught to use I statements so I just want to say that I believe our claim to fame is going to be our mantra by name and by need and we are going to make it and we are going to implement it with fidelity I have full faith in our principals and their teams and their schools and we are proving that we can do it and it may not

[02:23:39] be exactly the way we want it to happen but it is happening and I am very proud of all of us Thank you. Well said vice chair and Thank you Thank you for that very detailed and thorough presentation and for answering all our questions if we think of some more We'll send them in okay Before we move along to board members comments. I would like to acknowledge Councilman Tom Ossina who has ventured into the meeting to say hello and to cheer us on so Thank you for being here

[02:24:18] All right, I will go to board members' comments now. Ms. Braden, well, student representative to the school board. Thank you. Good evening, everybody.

[02:24:35] First, I would like to recognize one of my closest friends, Haley Cortez, who was recognized in the Hispanic Heritage Proclamation last night at the city council meeting. Hispanic Heritage Month takes place from September 15th to October 15th, and I could not think of a better person to be recognized than her.

[02:24:56] To name a few, she is involved in Marching Band, SkillsUSA, Student Council. She is the president of National Honor Society, and she is a community volunteer, a big sister, and a great friend to me, and many others. Just congratulations to her, and I'm really proud of her.

[02:25:14] And then additionally, I would like to shout out all the counselors at Osborne High School, because they have a lot of responsibilities. At the beginning of the year, between schedule changes, getting freshmen acclimated, and guiding us seniors, They do a great job at pleasing everybody, and the hard work truly does not get the recognition it deserves.

[02:25:35] And lastly, I find myself gratified after every school board meeting because I get the opportunity to learn about all that goes into our school system. Thank you to all that are the faces in front of our students, the recruitment and retention team, the advocates, as well as the data analyzers and executors.

[02:25:57] Thank you for everyone, for all you do to make Monassah City Public Schools great. Our future looks promising. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Breeden. Mr. Emone. Okay, okay. Sorry. I'll just be like this.

[02:26:16] So, first, I just wanted to thank everybody, you know, for coming. Thank you, Dr. Kasana and Mr. Kefela for that very thorough presentation. I just, I didn't really have, you know, a lot of questions.

[02:26:32] Most of them, they answered all of the questions I had. I like the way, at the end, when you guys, instead of looking at it as a statistic, you guys saw them more as students. You guys showed a lot of empathy in that. I like that.

[02:26:49] I just like the thought of trying to focus, instead of focusing on the consequences of absenteeism, we should try and focus on the benefits and the rewards that attendance brings. And I thought you guys showed that really well in your presentation.

[02:27:06] You know, there's a football game on Thursday. If you guys want to come, I don't know how much it is. Probably \$7 or something. It's Western. Dress Western, guys. Yeah, put a cowboy hat or something.

[02:27:23] To end off, everyone here, you know, coming here, it shows that you guys have a great passion, you know, for our students and our schools. And I really want to thank everyone for that. And I also want to remind everybody that your goals are also as important as, you know, all the students that you're trying to help.

[02:27:44] I just wanted everyone to know, and no matter, you know, where you are right now, no matter what slump, no matter how bad you're feeling, I just want you guys to know you can achieve any goals you guys have, just like you're trying to help all our students in our school system.

[02:28:00] So I just wanted to end off, I just wanted to share a quick quote from a fellow Virginian artist, Netspend. He once said, build from the floor so you can take off the ceiling. Thank you, everyone, for coming to the meeting again.

[02:28:17] Have a good evening. Thank you, Mr. Imoun. Isn't that just lovely to hear? Thank you both. Mrs. Stevens. Thank you. Following student representatives is a hard act to follow.

[02:28:33] So first of all, administrators, building administrators, thank you for being here. 8:28 I'm sure you're all thinking about what time you have to go to bed tonight and how much sleep you're gonna get before you have to turn around and do it all again so thank you very much for being here and for all the hard work you do because many people don't see that when you're a principal you're an assistant principal you are that person 24 hours a day no matter what you do no matter where you go and that when we talk about these numbers and we talk about SOL pass rates we're talking about your children and I know you feel very personally about what you do and you take it all to heart so I want to

[02:29:09] let you know we really appreciate you and everything that you're doing and the hard work you do every single day to get up and get out the door and to be that bright face for all the students when they walk in the building so really thank you for all you do I know we're moving in the direction we have some things we have a ways to go but we know what we need to do and we know how to get there so focus on the end goal and that's the kids successfully walking across the stage as Osborne high school graduates thank you miss miles oh wow that was really quick I wasn't expecting it to be there I wanted to talk towards

[02:29:49] our last presentation I had some other things I wanted to say and I just want to make sure we give a shout out to all the teachers who had a part in our students having their increase in their risk bands because I know how hard that is to get from you know having students like all your students at high risk and then having students that are in low risk so I need to as a fellow teacher shout out to you guys and what you're doing and also I know Mr. Gefeller mentioned all the positive changes that he talked to all the administrators

[02:30:24] about what kind of stood out in their mind about what was the reason was their special sauce and getting them where they got to and I wrote wrote them down and some of the things that really stood out to me were like high quality instruction using that using the WIDA can do descriptors increasing their ESL teachers doing number talks power standards having more manipulatives using the cycle that works actually was mentioned a few times team teaching and I just I one major thing and I know this is happening in other districts too is using the 5E model and increasing their STEM on core block from 40 minutes to 80

[02:31:02] minutes every other day which I think is awesome for our students because that's going to prepare them for that SOL so I there's a long list but it collaborative planning and interactive blocks targeted interventions increase rigor which is something that stood out is so important for our students no matter what whether there's a special needs student or ESOL student just making sure our rigor does not change um and I loved how um you're doing the tier two boot camps after school for science and intention being intentional about building the culture of caring um and regular classroom

[02:31:38] observations for feedback I think is so essential so I just I wrote all this while you were talking and I wanted to make sure that I mentioned it before I actually gave my comments um but now for my comments um I wanted to remind all the parents that tomorrow is an early release day I have to remind myself that my son will be going home early, so I wanted to tell parents who may forgot about that, look for your dismissal times on your child's school's website.

[02:32:05] And Thursday, I'm really excited about our town hall meeting. For all those who forgot about it, please don't forget, I know we have the football game, but we also have this town hall meeting that we've

been kind of gearing up for. It's going to begin at 6 o'clock at Mets, and it's going to start with a detailed information session on the following topics the grading policy MCPS calendars communications and school day start and end times and these topics were not just picked by us these were identified after our survey and after we have the information session we're going to have a breakout discussion that's going to follow where community members who come can share their thoughts and ideas

[02:32:45] during this time and talk to us fellow school board members face-to-face we'll be manning some of those breakout discussion tables and then around 7:00 we're gonna open it up for question and answers and so I'm just excited about this opportunity this has been something that I've wanted to do and I'm just glad it's coming to fruition and I feel like you know it's a chance for us to connect with the community and kind of come off of here and talk to you face-to-face you know we're up here and you know sometimes it's daunting to take time to comment you know during the public comments maybe you're a little

[02:33:22] scared to do it but if you have a burning question that you want to ask us that maybe wasn't identified in the survey bring those questions because we will be a front and center during that time I also want to bring some recognition to some of the events that we have going and ironically enough a few of these events are going to be at METS our parents as educational partners which is gonna be every Thursday starting September 18th and I think this is such a great opportunity for you to increase your students achievement and develop those home and school partnerships there's going to be free

[02:34:00] dinner and child care provided and it's at six o'clock and it lasts for eight weeks so it's not just a one-week thing but maybe if you're not able to come September 18th you can always come another time but I really encourage parents if you really have lots of questions about how our schools work and you're not even sure how the American schools work I really am I really encourage you to participate in that weems is actually going to be having a patriotic sing-along in the cafeteria this week at 9:15 a.m. I won't be able to attend but for all those who are going to be celebrating Patriotic Day on

[02:34:37] September 11th I wanted to mention that and then the last thing another opportunity for middle school parents they have a middle school madness series series and it's already in they've already had two sessions in September and for all of those of you who have new middle schoolers you've never had a middle schooler they're discussing teen development providing parents with strategies and support for their for you and also gives you kind of like a support system maybe you don't have family here but you can talk about some of the things that your teen your middle schoolers going through and doors

[02:35:14] open at 6:00 and there are two more sessions left and they actually have childcare if you have an elementary age student so that's all I have for today for this evening thank you thank you mrs. Brescia all right well miss miles covered most of the upcoming events but I do have a few things to add first I want to report out on the governor's school joint board of which chair Seberg and I are the liaisons.

[02:35:38] The joint board had its first meeting of the school year where each of the participants in Governor's school take turns rotating who nominates the chair of the joint board and with Chair Seberg's support. I'm the chair this year, so that was exciting. My first meeting doing that.

[02:35:55] And there's not too much to report. It was an extremely routine meeting just on admissions timelines and things like that. I will, if you are already putting together your May calendar tell you that there are two dates already set. The research symposium is going to be on May 1st. That's generally in the morning. They didn't give a start time. And the governor's school graduation ceremony will be May 16th at

10 a.m. And we, Osborne High School, we will be hosting it. So you can put that on your calendar. I encourage everybody to come to the town hall on Thursday. There's also the steps program tomorrow, which is, I believe the dinner is at

[02:36:34] 6.30 and the programming starts at 7. There is dinner and child care available. If you want the child care, you have to register in advance. This is the first of several topics, and I'm very excited. I actually don't know that I'm going to be able to go to the one tomorrow, but I will be checking it out at some point. The STEPS program is a program to help families get introduced to the IEP process and special education in general, kind of like PEP to get folks acclimated to the vocabulary and the little ins and outs and also I wanted to highlight that the first SEAC meeting

[02:37:07] will be on September 17th at 7 p.m. right okay 7 30 that one's at 7 30 p.m. there's a zoom option so get in touch with Mr. Masiac if you'd like the zoom link and so if you're interested in getting more involved with special education and all that good stuff September 17th is the date that's all I've got. Dr. Jones. Good afternoon. Good evening, everyone. Well, I attended the football game on August 28th, the first game, and it was a closed game, but a special note to everyone that purses

[02:37:44] are not allowed at Prince William County games. My husband had to walk my purse back to the car, so just for your information. I also encourage you to attend the town hall meeting on Thursday, September 17th, and then I also have the opportunity to stop by Mayfield Mets, Baldwin intermediate involvement elementary and we last week with dr newman and mr goodfellow so i'm always happy to see students engaged and to see teachers actively instructing our students and i look forward to many more visits into the schools this year i plan to give you a little bit of some highlights on the data but i decided not to do that but i will ask our parents and our

[02:38:23] teachers and all those here to go back and to review the um the data at your leisure and also for our parents you can really help us educate your children so when you think about it why don't you read to your students your children daily discuss what you read and think about those high-level thinking skills for math think about how math is using our daily lives have your children play games count money and that's something a lot of us we don't even take money into the store but give your kids a money and have them count money have them measure your ingredients for recipes and discuss food prices when you're at the grocery

[02:39:01] store encourage both exploration and questioning and the most important thing you can do for your students is to have them to go to school every day so we please ask that you get them up and on the bus so they can go to school and lastly for our special ed not for our special ed but special thanks to our Monash City staff for all the work you do to help our students reach their highest potential and the systems are in place for us to see continuous improvement and learning so let's continue on the path that we're on so that we can reach our division goals and make sure that the our town hall

[02:39:39] meeting is September 11th thank you Dr. Jones miss Brown thank you I would like to begin my comments by wishing everybody a happy Hispanic Heritage month this is a time to honor a vibrant culture history and contributions let this month remind us all that our strength lies in the richness of our diversity resilience family and the power of our community um i and with that i would like to invite you all to the bilingual storyteller

[02:40:13] community community literacy event that the education foundation graciously voted to sponsor and paid for the events are scheduled for tuesday 9 16 at bulwin elementary on wednesday 9 17 at

dean elementary and on thursday 9 18 at osborne high school all right um i had some comments prepared about our scores and data but more to come about that the only thing i want to say tonight is thank you to all of those teachers and leaders who showed up um and i want to remind everybody as we start talking about our data that behind every test score there is a student who

[02:40:53] showed up in a classroom and took that test and there was a family with hopes and dreams and there was a teacher giving it their all so i just keep that in mind as we begin the conversations about data and the most effective next step for us is to strengthen our instructional practices through consistent supervision and coaching this means ensuring principals and instructional leaders are actively observing classroom instruction providing meaningful feedback and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development I want

[02:41:27] to end my comments by reiterating two things one we say by mr. Goodfeller and the other one I just want to I said it and I want to reiterate this to all the instructional leaders what might you need to prioritize your role as an instructional leader and if the answer is yes what might you propose as a proactive measure that we can make happen for you and mr. Goodfeller yes we are a story of progress and persistence but that persistence and that progress starts with the growth mindset each one of us is willing to foster I think we

[02:42:04] can rise up vice chair Spall yes I'm also traveling to mechanicsburg fun Mechanicsburg to for legislative priority training next week and I attended a really fun 2020 class reunion at the football game our first home game last weekend but I think when we leave here we're all probably gonna start to read things in the newspaper about our SOL scores so I just wanted to talk very briefly one more time about that we know this year's SOL scores are not where we want them to be especially compared to state scores and we do take that

[02:42:42] seriously but they are only one measure of progress and internally I'm extremely encouraged by our report tonight over the past four years this board has strengthened early literacy expanded tutoring and invested in student conduct supports and our new alternative education program these steps are already helping make students make more students stay on track graduate and succeed beyond a test score and with admittedly more rigor and complexity the growth is slow, but shows that our consistency does work. We will keep building on this work.

[02:43:18] We will scale what's effective and ensure that every student in Manassas has the tools they need to thrive. And just one last word on outpacing state gains in a small number, but a significant number of areas is a really big deal. Thank you. Thank you, Vice Chair. And I'll wrap it up with a few announcements that haven't been made I first want to say as I was walking into this meeting really looking forward to this I really appreciate the opportunity to share our data with the public

[02:43:52] and to share what our response is and like Mr. Gefeller said context not excuses but as I was walking in I could hear the marching band playing they're rehearsing over in the field over there and it's just exciting and it makes me excited for the game Thursday night that others have already mentioned this is our September meeting we did have a later September meeting which was canceled because of the student holiday or the division holiday we do have a work session on September 25th so check out board docs for those topics if you're interested several have mentioned the town hall miss Brown has mentioned

[02:44:29] the bilingual storyteller that's coming to three of our schools and that's a community event so everyone's invited 6 p.m. September 16th 17th and 18th at various schools you'll see it advertised online

Manassas City Public Schools and Osborne High School are hosting another unified sports event on September 26 the student-athletes will participate along with several other schools in the rally for the rail it's at 7:00 p.m. on the 26th also to all our educators in Manassas

[02:45:07] City Public Schools the executive director of the Manassas City Public Schools Education Foundation Carol Hart sent an email today announcing that their innovative educator grants are opening at 10:30 a.m. on Monday September 15th and you have until October 31st to submit an application for a grant if you do have an innovative idea that you would like to implement during the second semester Thursday we got the town hall it's gonna be a come as you are because I'm going to the game afterwards so I might be dressed a little

[02:45:44] differently but we hope to see you there it's it's really for us to hear from you but also an opportunity for us to answer on the spot so we'd appreciate the input thank you all for being here tonight and making this a priority for our community appreciate it Mrs. Paul has something there there's an alumni raffle that's coming up and tickets are available and they do support student scholarships thank you thank you there being no further business I'll ask for a motion to adjourn chair I move the school board meeting adjourn second I have a

[02:46:23] motion by Mrs. Stevens second by Mrs. Brescia that the school board meeting adjourned is there any discussion all in favor any opposed motion carries 7-0 we are adjourned thank you



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