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Manassas City School Board Meeting - July 14, 2026

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

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[00:00:05] Could I please have everyone stand for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance? To the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:00:34] Ms. Garza, would you please call the roll? Yes, ma'am. Chair Spall. Present. Vice Chair Dr. Jones. Here. Mrs. Siever. Here. Mrs. Steven. Present. Mrs. Gracia.

[00:00:50] Present. ms brown ms miles present thank you madam chair we have a quorum thank you dr newman no ma'am are there any additions or deletions okay moving right along i have a motion made by ms stevens seconded by ms fresha that we approve the public meeting agenda um is there any discussion all in

[00:01:22] favor any opposed 7-0 we will now move to board committee reports i have just one board committee report and that would be policy thank you chair the policy committee met today to review policy updates recommended by the Virginia School Boards Association VSBA the committee considered a total of 60 policy updates including nine items carried out forward from February policy development and revisions are driven by changes in legislation enacted by the Virginia

[00:02:01] General Assembly a guidance from the Virginia Department of Education VDOE and recommendations from the VSBA to ensure compliance and alignment with current legal and educational requirements a comprehensive presentation on these policy updates will be provided at the school board's next regular meeting on July 28th in an effort to enhance transparency and strengthen understanding of

MCPS policies a new presentation format will be presented will be introduced this approach will provide additional context regarding the purpose of each policy, the factors driving proposed revisions, and the

[00:02:38] process through which updates are developed and adopted. Several policies reviewed today were tabled pending further clarification and will not be included in the July 28th presentation. The committee determined that additional information is needed before recommendations can move forward to the whole board. The committee will reconvene at a future meeting to continue its review of these policies as well as additional items that were not addressed during today's session the committee also noted that before the end of the calendar year the MCPS school board will transition to a new online governance platform for board related materials and operations as this

[00:03:16] transition occurs there may be changes to the process by which policies are reviewed updated and presented to the board and the public is there any discussion okay thank you so much at this time we will welcome members of the public who wish to speak about services policies and affairs of the City of Manassas public schools because we have an agenda to complete we ask that comment comments be limited to three minutes we appreciate the time you've taken to be here we treat public comments as a public hearing and do not engage in conversation with speakers the lack of an immediate response to your comments

[00:03:55] should not be taken as a lack of interest or concern please be respectful in presenting your comments I don't think we have anyone signed up to speak okay the next item is the consent agenda and these items are considered routine and may be approved by a single motion unless a board member requests an item be removed for a separate discussion can I get a motion chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented second I have a motion by Ms. Steven seconded by Ms. Miles that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented is there

[00:04:31] any discussion all in favor any opposed we have moving now to the discussion agenda the first item is student code of conduct miss Jackie Scott thought will our hearing officer Jacqueline thought I'm sorry our hearing officer will provide an update on the 2627 school year code of conduct good evening chair Spall vice chair Jones board members and dr. Newman presentation is to provide the annual review of the student code of conduct for

[00:05:06] the 26-27 school year no new educational legislation has been passed by the general assembly which requires any revisions to our code of conduct and no new recommendations have come forth from the board to make any changes at this time so the currently approved code of conduct is as it should be

[00:05:33] Thank you so this usually goes through the academic committee and then it comes to here so this is if you're not on that committee this is your first opportunity to weigh in on the code of conduct so I would like to actually offer a suggested revision to this 26-27 code of conduct which is page 5 under cheating plagiarism and dishonesty our provisions on cheating and plagiarism I think could use some clarification

[00:06:08] that giving or receiving assistance on assignments that are to be graded as independent work also includes the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence. We don't have that in our Code of Conduct. And similarly under plagiarism, students may not use material in violation of copyright or code through the work of others without proper citation and/or present the work of others as original creations,

and I think we should clarify that it's not just people that you're copying from, but also the work of generative AI. So those are two clarifications that I would like to suggest to the board.

[00:06:43] - Okay, thank you. Ms. Presha, Ms. Miles? - Yes, I know last time we looked at this code of conduct, I was actually on that board or on that committee and we talked about the dress code and I know it had been brought to my attention that at least in some schools, the dress code was something of concern.

[00:07:03] So was that ever brought up by anyone to talk about if we were gonna revisit rewording the dress code or at least seeing what the temperature is from the schools or the administrators as to whether or not they like it or they think it needs to be revised or updated?

[00:07:22] - Nothing has been mentioned to me. - What about the committee members? - No, the only issue is an enforcement issue is not that the issue is the word. So there's no need to change the code of conduct.

[00:07:38] - Thank you. - Any other questions by this board? - Okay. I wanted to address four members of Russia. I think the suggestion is feasible.

[00:07:55] However, I think we need to go back to our policy for AI and align it to whatever it is that we are requesting to be followed through. So I think that's where we start.

[00:08:12] And for tonight's purposes, I think we can move forward with this, but with the understanding that we need to refine the policies that they have. Thank you, Ms. Brown. Ms. Brescia.

[00:08:28] - So I agree with that. Yeah, I agree that everything should be in alignment. The regulation states for generative artificial intelligence that we prioritize integrity, I do think that clarifying that it is plagiarism when you copy and paste from chat GPT, I think that is in alignment and I wouldn't want to, the Student Code of Conduct, it gets mailed to everybody.

[00:08:53] gets mailed to every student and I do think that it's important for us to get that included before that happens so I think that it's possible if there is an appetite here to do this for perhaps as you one or two sentences to get reworked and then at the next meeting we have a kind of fresh thing to look at and we would still have time even after the next meeting to vote on it before the school year starts on August 1st. Do you have time to make that change and then it would come back to ESSA's action item, action agenda, and then there would still be time to mail?

[00:09:28] Yep. Is that true that we mail them to every house now? I think so. Okay. Ms. Miles. In relation to what Ms. Brescia is mentioning, I think also, and we did this before, like with the dress code, is just kind of looking at what other area districts, where they're going when it comes to that, because obviously it's a new thing.

[00:09:48] ChatGPT is new, I guess, in the last five years. And so I know that teachers have the ability to see, you know, when they get a document, how much is fabricated, and they can put it in the system to see is it 80%, is it 90%, is it 10%.

[00:10:05] And that's how they're able to make sure students aren't cheating. And I only know that, too, because when you're in graduate school, they can do the same thing. So I do believe that that's a great thing for us to add, that wording. But it would be nice for us to kind of do something that's along similar lines as the border county.

[00:10:26] Ms. Brown, my only concern, and I guess Dr. Newman or someone here on the staff may be able to answer, Do we have those systems in place if we are going to require the teachers run interference between what is, like, do we have the apps?

[00:10:51] Do we have? I think what you're asking, Ms. Brown, is do we have software to do that? The answer would be no, we do not. We had looked at the software, and we had a demonstration from one of the national companies and were not satisfied with the results of that demonstration, and so we opted not to engage with them.

[00:11:23] Okay, so whatever, and I guess I have to hear again for a member of Russia exactly what you want to be changed, because if we are putting this in the hands of teachers as a responsibility, we need to give them the tools. And if we don't have the software, again, I guess we have to go back to policy and see if it's something that we want to do.

[00:11:43] And then we want to put the money behind it. Thank you, Ms. Bell. Ms. Bell, sorry, sorry. I don't think this is something that necessarily needs any money. I mean, certainly as it continues and things become more sophisticated, I think that is something that not just our school system, I think we're all going to be thinking about how, you know, detection software and things like that that some universities have or whatever.

[00:12:10] But there is no detection system that we have to pay for for regular plagiarism. The yoga teacher sees three essays come in, and they look very similar. It doesn't matter if it came from generative AI. It doesn't matter if one person wrote it and then sold it to their classmates.

[00:12:26] You know, there are time-honored ways of detecting plagiarism and cheating. So I think that, and this is not a policy. This is communicating to our students what kind of conduct is and is not allowed.

[00:12:45] And it is not allowed, or at least I would like to make sure it is clear to our students that it is not allowed for you to use ChatGPT and then present that work as your own. Dr. Mooney?

[00:13:02] I was just going to say, since there's no action being taken tonight, We can keep it as is and make one version, because it was popular, but it's a minor edit. We can bring both back, and then when you take action, we can decide.

[00:13:20] I guess I wonder, can we make 26, 27 more of an educational piece, you know, and just start teaching kids that it's not what we want, but it's not really enforceable. We can keep the language a little softer than teachers must enforce.

[00:13:36] Ms. Brown, then Ms. Steven. Yes, I'm not in disagreement with what board member Russia is proposing as far as plagiarism. We do want students to show their own work. However, when we're asking for teachers to enforce this based on assumptions or to make generalizations about a student's piece of work, that's where we are setting the teachers up for failure and our students up for misjudgment.

[00:14:06] So until we have the software and the process in place, I don't think it's equitable or fair to put this in the hands of our teachers. I think it's our job to make clear what we want to be clear and put the resources in place so that the teachers can do their job efficiently.

[00:14:24] I did want to point out we do have a regulation concerning the use of generative AI artificial intelligence in school settings. It's I-I-B-A-B-E-A-R-1, if people want to look over it a little bit.

[00:14:43] I do know we have some policies, at least one that we discussed today, that does have a small piece about AI in it, but it is not super specific. But the regulation we have is pretty robust.

[00:15:00] I'm just looking over it right now, and it really talks to, bless you, guiding principles and the approach to ethical, appropriate, and productive use of AI. So there is a regulation that does cover generative artificial intelligence in school settings.

[00:15:19] Let's keep moving. We'll go back in a minute. Ms. Miles. I do agree with Ms. Brown when she says that the two go together. I think we definitely need to put the wording in, but at the same time, we need to be very proactive, especially for our high schoolers who are going to be experiencing this and I don't know, the temptation to use it, even us as adults are using it consistently.

[00:15:49] And so if we haven't pinpointed an app or something affordable, we should be working on that as soon as possible because that's the way of the world. and if we haven't we don't have that direction maybe we do need to ask others that have had success in other apps so I think that adding the wording without having how the teachers are going to go about doing that is definitely pro is counter active so counterproductive excuse me

[00:16:21] I just wanted to say, I think when you say cheating, presumism or dishonesty, AI, someone's using AI, that is cheating. I mean, so it's covered, in my opinion, it's cheating. And I think a lot of the software is not good software.

[00:16:39] I saw where it sometimes falsely accuses students of cheating or using AI when they didn't. And it says that it's better for a teacher to get to know their students and know their writing styles and know their ability. I mean, that's how you can pick out who someone's cheating, more so than using the software.

[00:16:56] So I think we're okay for right now, and I think we need to not rush and put something in there, but to maybe research it for a while until next school year. But technically, using AI or internalization of your own work is cheating. Ms. Bresha?

[00:17:14] So it is intended as a clarifying measure, because if it is cheating, then there is no harm in clarifying that generative AI, the unauthorized use of that, does count as cheating and a lot of the downsides that I'm hearing here is there's always, it's always been difficult to enforce cheating.

[00:17:33] Like that's always been something that, there's nothing really new here. I'm not talking about using a software, I'm talking about making it clear to students what the expectation is and the expectation is that you do your own work unless the assignment does have something to do with, you know, giving you feeding prompts and generates, what kind of answers you can generate, all that kind of stuff. Member Stevens is correct. There is a regulation that I did review prior to making this suggestion. And we do have structures in place that it comes out of our director of instruction, our instruction office, that guidelines are issued to each of our schools

[00:18:12] before August 1st of each school year. So that is coming out. And this is already here. So I just want to make it clear to our students that it's not just copying papers from other students that generative AI when you are not allowed to be using it does count as cheating so I uh it was a suggestion we I liked the suggestion from Dr. Newman that we could have two versions that we vote on next time and everyone can have time to think about it and if you discuss with teachers or discuss with students or discuss with parents that's why we have this first read second read

[00:18:51] protocol, and then make a decision. To my right, Ms. Brown. I don't know if anyone can answer this question, but don't the technology standards teach the students about AI and usage? Aren't we already embedding that in the curriculum from early grades on to high school? The short answer

[00:19:24] is yes. Okay, fantastic. So Chair, I think I do agree that we'll continue to teach the students and go through that principle. And until we are clear how to enforce something, we shouldn't try to put it in the hands of teachers so that they can make generalizations.

[00:19:43] That is my concern. That's not fair to the kids. That's not fair to the teachers. So continue to teach and continue to focus our efforts on what we want. Thank you, Ms. Brown. Anybody else to my right?

[00:20:01] To my left. We need to be realistic. Students are doing it already. let's just, let's just put it out there. They are. So I think that this is a wake up call for us to be proactive, especially if we haven't pinpointed what we are going to use to help teachers see whether or not it's happening. Um, so I think that needs to be a work session. Honestly, it needs to be for us to basically encourage, you know, that those next steps because, um, we're, we're fooling ourselves to think that it's not happening we can accept a work session if

[00:20:40] you just send an email but it is getting lengthy to make sure that we are capturing what everyone wants to discuss I know they're all important and I'm trying really hard but I've been sending those out in our text individual text so if you all see something that you expected to be on a work session and you don't see it then please speak up okay it does become a little cumbersome to track them in this pressure i mean you know i love a good work session uh but the i do think for you we're just talking about the code of conduct right now and i think that we can get

[00:21:19] an option a and an option b and make a decision on that before the start of the next school year i think that the like big question of software detection software and what is available on division laptops and all of that other like that's a big big big question that i'm like i'm just talking about this little thing you know and i think that we have i think that between now and then next time we have available to vote that we would be able to decide as a board whether we want to communicate that to our students you know that except you know that acceptable uh academic

[00:21:57] integrity parameters to our students i think we can make that decision between now and then and i also our next work session i don't believe is not until after the school year starts and we want this approved yeah some version of this needs to be approved before that school year starts so I think that we could I think that we should do a B and if you know and if and my suggestion is B and if my and the board does not adopt suggestion B then that is what it is but we do via times ticking we do need to make that decision and then take a deeper dive into that at some other

[00:22:34] point I'm getting a head nod from a thought that this is possible for the next meeting um and i think that we do need to walk before we run so let's just try to get started and then you know i don't think anybody disagrees um that ai is an important topic and we just spoke about it this morning at the legislative breakfast um not to add fuel to the fire river but to kind of give some light at the end of the tunnel um as of july 1st 2026 new virginia laws are requiring the virginia department of education to develop statewide guidance for the usage of artificial

[00:23:08] intelligence systems in elementary and secondary schools and in the 2027-2028 budget to help school divisions implement and evaluate ai tools while prioritizing educator training student privacy

equity and responsible youth so we're getting responsible youth so the state is beginning to work on it i think we're talking a little bit faster and further ahead than the state but that's a habit we tend to do we do things before they do them so we will be looking forward to possibly a policy update that will be much more robust on the subject of AI once the Department of Education

[00:23:44] has developed statewide guidance. So we are looking forward to the future and more direction that could possibly help with the student code of conduct with specificity. So thank you, Ms. Stevens. Anyone else? Okay. Thank you, Ms. Slott. We appreciate you. You guys here?

[00:24:06] Next, we will have Dr. Quesada, Executive Director of Accountability and Finance, to discuss the 27 budget, including updates from the state now that the final state budget for FY 2027 budget has been approved, as well as plans for the retention bonus to be provided to staff in August 2026.

[00:24:24] The discussion will include implications for Manassas City Public Schools and recommended next steps. All right. Good evening, Chair Spall, Vice Chair Jones, school board members, and Dr. Newman. The purpose of tonight's presentation is two-fold. First, I'm excited to share information about the FY27 amended budget now that the General Assembly passed a budget that was signed by the governor right under the wire of their June 30th deadline.

[00:24:49] And second, I will be sharing recommendations for a retention bonus using state funding that came as part of the FY26 Caboose budget. The amended budget and the bonus will be on the July 28th meeting agenda for approval. The state finally adopted a budget that was then approved by the governor on June 29th.

[00:25:06] On July 2nd, VDOE released an updated budget calculation tool. This tool allows MCPS to determine the specific impacts of the final state budget on our FY27 budget. The good news is that this FY27 budget includes additional funding for MCPS, as detailed in the next few slides.

[00:25:23] What the increase allows is for the top two school board priorities that were identified back in March to be funded. Increased staffing to support students with disabilities and information technology security service enhancements. In addition, the funding provides for the following: compensation-related funding for the MCPS match for a retention bonus, increases to school maintenance funding that are necessary due to increased costs, and instructional funding, I'm sorry, instructional materials to support educationally at-risk students, which is tied to the at-risk funding.

[00:25:52] On the next few slides, I will discuss this in more detail. This slide just shows you the amended FY27 operating budget after the increased revenue. The only line impacted here is the state aid line, and that's an increase. don't worry, more is coming on what that breakdown is. Here you go. This slide breaks down the final state revenue. The amount shown are either increases to the budget or decreases to the budget as compared to what came from the state and the governor's budget. The basic aid amount shows a decrease, but that's offset by other things. The state just moved some money around.

[00:26:25] The increases come from sales tax revenue, special education and at-risk funding, compensation supplement, school breakfast, and support per pupil allocations. The school breakfast funding as was discussed this morning at the legislative breakfast is tied specifically to the food services fund so then i won't be talking about that after this because that has a specific purpose after all the changes the net increase to our operating fund is two million one hundred and seventy one thousand dollars this slide shows our proposed uses of the funding the top priority identified by the school board as

an unfunded priority was increased staffing to support our students with disabilities this priority can be fully funded by this budget increase what the

[00:27:03] The board proposed with six FTE to have teachers on special assignment at all elementary and middle, I'm sorry, elementary and intermediate schools, which includes one that's shared between Baldwin Elementary and Baldwin Intermediate, to coordinate its services for students with disabilities and their families.

[00:27:19] The second priority identified by the school board as an unfunded priority was in IT, contracted services to enhance security. This priority can also be fully funded by this budget increase. In addition, the budget changes have some additional targeted and required uses. First, additional compensation funding is being used for the MCPS match for the retention bonus as a supplement for the state funding received at the end of FY26.

[00:27:42] The remainder of the compensation increase is used to help support salary increases already adopted in the FY27 budget. School maintenance funding is being increased by \$145,000 to support the division with increased costs. And finally, \$102,110 is being allocated in response to at-risk funding and special education add-on for instructional materials to support educationally at-risk students.

[00:28:06] The second component of this presentation is the retention bonus. The FY26 caboose budget included funding for divisions to support a one-time staff bonus of up to \$1,500. Divisions choosing to access these funds are required to include a local match.

[00:28:21] the state explicitly stated that divisions could give the bonuses in FY26 or FY27. Some divisions opted not to give a bonus, which was allowable if the division had given and is giving salary increases at or above the minimum increases indicated by the state. MCPS, who did that, but also many others, opted to offer these bonuses above and beyond the salary increases required, and many have opted to offer in FY27.

[00:28:47] MCPS is proposing to offer the bonus as a retention bonus this year. The plan is for the bonus to be paid out on August 31st, 2026, so the second pay period in August, to returning employees with full-time employees receiving \$1,500 and part-time employees receiving \$750. Once the board approves this bonus, staff would be notified of the plan and the timeline.

[00:29:08] Thank you for the opportunity to provide this budget update and bonus plan to you tonight. Thank you so much. Are there any questions? To my right, to my left, Ms. Brescia. thank you um so i couldn't help but notice how does it connect to our strategic plan so i mean it funds all you know everything in the strategic plan inclusive and collaborative learning environment quality workforce all of those things all of those things great to support student academics all of it is support support student academic success every last thing uh the

[00:29:43] uh question i had was the retention bonus so we didn't we're not required to make a retention bonus we're choosing to make it yes attention bonus and but we were required to match the funds the state yes if you're going to do the bonus there's they don't pay the whole thing there's a matching requirement yes um so we so that was required but the fact that it's retention was at our discretion yes how you how you chose to do the the bonus at the end of 26 or 20 or in 27 most places that we've surveyed if they're doing it or doing it in fy27 some did do it at the end

[00:30:20] of the year, but the money wasn't received until the very end of the year, and this highlights retention. Right. I mean, I definitely support retention, so I think that that is a wise use. And I think, and then the only, so you have to be a returning employee to receive it, and then there's a difference in the amount you receive between full-time and part-time, but otherwise all of our categories, certified, support, admin, everybody gets it. Okay. That's great no other questions miss miles yes so um i just wanted to ask i'm excited that we're able to

[00:30:59] fund those priorities so that's wonderful um but i wanted to ask about the increased school maintenance funding is that what we've already talked about as far as like the summer repairs that we're doing is that what other things are we yes and just everything costs more right so everything that is budgeted right costs more and you discover things and where and whatever and some increased costs of projects and things. So because there was, if you saw, there were things about support operations funding, so we're able to target that and put it into maintenance support.

[00:31:29] Okay, and then the other thing was at-risk funding. You included instructional materials. What are the instructional materials that were- So decisions would have to be, you know, made about that. There's, but the money is targeted in order to support, you know, our students with disabilities, our English learners, other students who are at risk. So things for intervention, assessment instruction and so all of those decisions the specifics um this all just came to us why it would be used but that money is earmarked for that um for those purposes okay yes because i know you know when you see the dollar amount and it's just very vague it's it's you know a lot of people may question um what specifically is it going to so whenever i guess

[00:32:08] we know is it possible for you to share it with us thank you that's all i have thank you thank you you miss miles anyone else it is very exciting news thank you so much for sharing problem thank you next up we have miss fisher executive director of human resources who will provide a general update on human resources as we close out the 2526 school year and prepare for 2627 thank you miss fisher yes good evening chair spall vice chair jones members of the board dr newman thank you for providing me this opportunity to share a general update regarding the work that has been

[00:32:42] done by the human resources team during the 25-26 school year. During this update, I will provide highlights on efforts that have been made by the human resources team around recruitment, onboarding, recognition, and overall staff retention. All of this work is directly connected to our strategic plan pillar of quality workforce, which ultimately leads to student academic success. One of our first priorities this year was to refresh our recruitment marketing to better reflect the human resources brand and highlight what makes Manassas City a great place to work. We redesigned marketing

[00:33:17] materials including hiring brochures, promotional signage that featured MCPS staff and students, branded giveaways, and a new job fair display that created a consistent and engaging presence at every event. Throughout the year we attended 10 university job fairs and hosted our own division-wide job fair in March. This event included an open house where candidates met teachers administrators and representatives from various departments to learn about mcps programs and opportunities candidates were able to interview potentially receive conditional offers

[00:33:51] and complete background checks in one convenient location we also offered licensure information sessions for individuals interested in pursuing a career in teaching through various certification pathways to make employment opportunities more accessible we redesigned the job

opportunities web page, making it easier for candidates to search vacancies, connect with human resources staff, and find information about our internal transfer process. Employee referrals also remained a key recruitment strategy. Through our MCPS employee referral program, staff members can earn

[00:34:27] a \$500 bonus per referral that they make, a successful referral. So to date, we have 19 referrals that have resulted in hires for the 26-27 school year. Our onboarding process was revised this year to focus on aligned foundational supports, which required strong collaboration across multiple departments to provide a seamless experience for every new employee. By revising systems and structures, we have streamlined the onboarding process to improve efficiency while enhancing the overall employee experience. Weekly in-person new employee orientation sessions

[00:35:03] ensure that staff receive timely information, build meaningful connections, and begin their roles with confidence. Throughout each step of the process, our team has maintained a strong commitment to customer service by providing responsive, personalized support to help new employees feel welcomed, prepared, and successful. The Human Resources team made employee recognition a priority this year by celebrating staff accomplishments and creating opportunities for colleagues to recognize one another the mcps star award program allowed employees to submit a brief google form to recognize co-workers with a message of appreciation each recipient received

[00:35:42] their message along with a collectible star pin including limited edition designs that were very popular such as the snowflake shamrock and b this year between august of 2025 and june of 2026 a A total of 2,634 star pins were distributed throughout the division.

[00:36:02] Recipients were also highlighted in a monthly Division Y newsletter that celebrated all honorees and featured selected recognition messages. We also launched the new Impact Awards, replacing the Apple and Pear Awards. They were open to all employees, and the Impact Awards recognized individuals who make a meaningful difference for students, staff, and the Manassas City community.

[00:36:24] In addition, Human Resources coordinated the nomination and selection process for several prestigious awards, including the Washington Post Teacher of the Year, the Mary B. Bicavaris Award, and the Recognizing Inspiring School Employees, also known as the RISE Award.

[00:36:40] Division finalists were submitted for regional and state consideration, and all nominees and finalists were recognized at the Evening of Excellence that was held at Sweeney Barn. MCPS also celebrated our employees at our annual retiree luncheon. This event honored retirees for their years of dedicated service and recognized the lasting impact that they made on the school division.

[00:37:02] Finally, we introduced a new approach to celebrating years of service this year. In partnership with the Awards Network, employees reaching a milestone number for years of service were given access to an online catalog where they could select a gift of their choice.

[00:37:17] This approach received positive feedback and will continue as a meaningful way to thank employees for their commitment to Manassas City Public Schools. In addition to initiatives focused on recruitment and recognition, we intentionally implemented systems to support employees and gather meaningful feedback throughout the year.

[00:37:35] To support teachers working towards licensure, our team created and utilized licensure dashboards to monitor staff's progress towards completing requirements to obtain licensure. These

dashboards were shared with school administrators to ensure that staff remained on track and received timely support with the goal of meeting important deadlines.

[00:37:55] Lori Ankoviak, who serves as our talent coordinator, also visited each school throughout the year to meet with administrators and teachers, providing guidance and ensuring there was a clear understanding around the licensure process. Through MCPS's partnership with 240 Tutoring, employees were also provided free online access for Praxis preparation at no cost to them.

[00:38:17] The Professional Learning Department provided targeted support through a variety of professional learning opportunities. One key component was the Teacher Education and Mentor Program, which pairs novice teachers with an assigned mentor, building lead mentor, and a professional growth specialist.

[00:38:33] During the 25-26 school year, the team program documented more than 1,600 coaching visits, providing 1,165 hours of individualized support to new teachers. A similar approach of providing personalized support was also provided through the Mentoring and Professional Support Program, also known as MAPS.

[00:38:53] this program enabled all certified staff to engage in intentional coaching cycles with an assigned collaborator this year mcps implemented a new meet and confer process as a structured way to gather feedback from employees representatives from every school and multiple departments gathered feedback from the employee groups in which they represented and collaborated to develop recommendations for division leadership and school board to better understand what encourages employees to remain with mcps our team also conducted state interviews with staff representing all schools and departments these conversations provided valuable insight into what employees

[00:39:33] value most and identified opportunities to continue fostering an engaged supportive workplace i will share several key themes that emerge from those interviews in just a moment while there are many factors that ultimately led to the retention of staff i do believe that the efforts shared this evening contributed to the highest retention rate that we have seen in years. As of June 16th, our retention rate for licensed staff was 93.4%, which is up from 86.2% after the 24-25 school year.

[00:40:02] Our support staff retention rate was also over 90%. We celebrate the fact that staff are choosing to stay here in Manassas City where they feel that they are a part of a quality workforce that is focused on student success. Feedback from state interviews consistently show that employees remain with us because they see the impact of their work, experience meaningful relationships with colleagues, have opportunities for professional growth, and feel a strong sense of belonging.

[00:40:29] Staff also tell us that they value the family-like culture of our division, the accessibility and visibility of leadership, recognition of their contributions, and the diverse supportive work environment that we strive to maintain. While we are encouraged by these retention rates, we view them as an indicator of progress rather than a finish line. We will continue listening to our employees, using their feedback to strengthen our culture, and investing in strategies that help us to attract, support, and retain a high-quality workforce. Throughout the year, the human resources team intentionally focused on building systems that strengthen the entire

[00:41:05] employee experience, from recruitment through ultimately retention. We enhanced our recruitment efforts to attract high-quality candidates, redesigned our onboarding process to ensure new

employees feel welcomed and prepared for success expanding meaning expanded meaningful staff recognition opportunities and implemented structured systems to better support employees while gathering valuable feedback collectively these efforts contributed to one of our strongest outcomes which is a high staff retention rate and minimal staffing vacancies as we move into the new school year thank you so much for this opportunity and i'm happy to answer any questions you may have

[00:41:43] thank you so much miss fisher to the right miss seberg thank you mrs fisher there's a lot to be proud of in that presentation so good job um the six additional fte for special ed that dr cassata just mentioned have we already filled those are we so we have um we've had them posted as an anticipated vacancy so no we have not filled them because we needed to secure the funding of where that was of course before we can do that but we have had it posted so we have been we've miss loesch and we've been proactive in preparing for that yes great and then just one more other

[00:42:21] question um which recruitment strategies has um been the most successful i honestly believe our employee referral um and you can by just our staff being proud of where they work and then bringing others to come work for us um the year prior we i believe we had over 30 employee referrals and in this year, we're close to 20. And so I do believe that that's probably one of our best strategies. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Seberg. Anybody else? Yes. Not a question, just a statement.

[00:42:52] As someone who's been on the school board for seven years, you've made a lot, you and your HR department have made a lot of really positive changes. And we can see in the numbers you share and all the efforts that are being made. So I want to thank you and the rest of your HR department for the hard work you all have done, you've really turned around HR, and people are feeling much happier, more confident, and more comfortable with reaching out to you.

[00:43:18] So thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Stevens. To my left, Ms. Miles. I had a question about the meeting confer. I know that you said that there was representation from all the schools, and I know in the past people have had concerns about the same people being brought in and sitting at the table.

[00:43:37] um so are we going to um uh have different people or is it how is that process going to so we are going to be discussing the the process the application process again i don't have a definite answer for you right now of that did you want to okay yeah so that's actually something that we'll be discussing um when preparing for okay and there's an application process and when you send out that application is it sent through staff um their staff email or is it a personal email because i know that was another question i know um the education association didn't get the email i guess in time for them to participate or there was some word

[00:44:12] about that so are we how are we getting that application out so the application is sent out through division email okay yes okay so and the application is it how does that look like just i'm just curious because i've never seen it so um so it's really we're trying to get a sense of why people want to be a part of this process um and so the within the regulation it outlines the process for each school has a prop like we followed the same process but we want to make sure there's representation from each school so each school can submit um a person that will be represented and then there's different groups as well so like the support staff that will flow i will send we

[00:44:50] send that out through human resources because that goes across multiple schools so there's a different process for each of the different groups that is it's outlined in the regulation okay i just just got to

interject here just to be clear as well. There was no, once somebody applied, as long as the only requirement was they had to be receiving a good evaluation. And so anybody who submitted their name who had received a good evaluation was then put to the staff and it was vote. It was a majority of vote. So there was no selecting of who was on the meet and confer.

[00:45:23] The people within the buildings are the ones who selected the candidates from the list of candidates it was that put their name forward that were end up participating in meet and confer. So there was no selection on human resources, anything. It was all done at the school level. So everyone gets a chance to vote once you have like people who have applied. Okay, that's great. And so if the same people that were on it this year apply again this coming year and their peers vote them in as the top majority vote getter, they're on meet and confer. So I say that because it could be the

[00:46:00] same people it could not we don't control that okay but the email went to all staff the regulation for meeting confer went to all staff and so there was no secrets as to who could participate how to participate it was done with full transparency okay great and do you send um separate emails though to the education association so they are able to have their representation or how does that work i guess that maybe i should we did not send separate because we don't know who who what associations are well all associations are in manessa city okay and so to single one out versus

[00:46:35] another one we sent it to everyone okay thank you so much and i do just so for the voting then same thing it happens with support staff group so we had a k6 support staff group we would send those names out and they would vote as well so there it was a voting process based on who applied for each individual group yeah i appreciate you clarifying the process because i guess i was even confused about how it went you know how it came together but i'm very happy with the results and hopefully this year will be um great results as well thank you thank you miss miles miss presha

[00:47:08] thank you and um i do recall that between after the meet and confer regulation was promulgated but before the deadline had passed that we the school board had received a communication from our association critiquing the regulation, which to me confirmed that they had received it as to why they did not, you know, submit a name ahead of the deadline. Yeah, I don't know. But I do recall that coming through to all of us between that and the deadline passing. So I do not think, and to his point, you know, do we know that we have any members of their Virginia Music Educators

[00:47:47] associate you know like there's many kinds of associations and so sending it out and through you know the global mcps va list is kind of the best that any of us can hope to do um so just briefly on that but the question i was going to ask you uh the retention rates yes this is so it the 93.4 percent 90.2 percent that backset that does not include retirements and it does not include non-renewal non-renewal correct so and if you transfer schools correct it does not correct count so in terms we retained you as an employee right this is the division number that goes for

[00:48:27] everybody and so if you are maybe people are hearing things about different schools it is this is the division number that we're talking about here and which is our as a school board what we are governing is the whole division so wanted to make sure that that number was fully contextualized. I'm going to join the choir to really congratulate you on the amount of stuff you've done. Have you been in this position even a year? Yes, just had one year, July 1.

[00:48:59] Okay. All of this. It's a great team. In just a single year, that's incredible, an incredible amount of work. I cannot wait to see what the HR department does next. This retention rate is high. So I think that

as we continue to talk about it, we cannot be afraid to talk about it. If it does go up and down, there's always statistical variations that play into things like that. But as long as we keep talking about it, and as long as we keep it on our list of things we

[00:49:33] want to keep our eye on, we can do hard things. We can do hard things. We can do this. And I have so many memories from four years ago, where, you know, when I first started on the school board, where this number was not publicly reported. But as we are talking about it more, the problem gets solved.

[00:49:53] I'm so happy to see that. I'm so happy for the work you've done. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Okay. Ms. Fisher, you've done some fun, and you and your staff have made some really fun and meaningful changes, and the results definitely speak for themselves. So thank you.

[00:50:08] Thank you for the report, and thank you for your work. Thank you so much. I think we can move now to board member comments. Ms. Brown? Yes, good evening. I want to begin my comments by addressing the students who are in summer school, finishing up their graduation credits. I'm looking forward to your graduation at the end of the month. I really want to encourage you to stay the course. I know that you can do it and I believe in you. And I cannot wait to celebrate with you at the end of the month.

[00:50:42] so I'm really excited about that and I don't I only have one more statement to make I know that in recent events and recent news the Hispanic community has been experiencing a lot of grief families are mourning neighbors are really hurting and many are living with real fear and uncertainty and at times like these our words matter even more so we must be careful not to spread misinformation or make statements that stigmatize entire groups of people especially those who live in our city for the official record i would like to make it known that schools do not

[00:51:21] collect students immigration status as a community we have a choice we can allow fear and division to define us so we can respond with compassion truth and humanity so no matter our backgrounds political beliefs or immigration status every person that lives in this city deserves dignity and every family deserves the opportunity to live without fear of violence. My heart is with all of those who are grieving and I'm calling on all of Manasseh City to action and commit like me to

[00:51:56] caring for one another supporting those who are hurting and building our community where every child that walks through our doors feel safe and every family knows they belong here thank you thank you miss brown miss miles so i this has been um a very uh busy summer for me already and i'm sure many parents who have their kids home full-time understand that even though um your kids are home and maybe it's slowed down as far as school um there's activities and you're

[00:52:31] running here running there um so i just encourage everyone to take time to read um get your favorite book from the library or um find a book at barnes and noble um and make sure you're reading um and also make sure you spend time with family uh whether it's playing game go to the pool because these uh these days you have with your kids are so short i think about that and i my child was um only five years ago and now she's 17 so i just it i get teary-eyed about that but i want to encourage parents that the time you have with your kids is so short so make sure you take time to spend with them but um before i go and i don't have a lot of um comments because i haven't been

[00:53:10] to a lot of events just been kind of a slow event uneventful um with the school board um as far as meetings yes but not events to go to so i miss going to um games and events so hopefully it'll be soon but i want to encourage everyone um the election cycle is here it's upon us um and i want to encourage everyone to be professional um you know and be kind uh to your neighbor whether you agree with your neighbor whether you agree with um what they believe or um you know their political

[00:53:48] stance or whatever because at the end of the day we're all people we're all human beings we all have families. We all have loved ones. We all go home to loved ones. And we all have people who love us. So I'm hoping as it continues, we get closer to November, that we all can just spread positive vibes and make sure that we have kind words. So that's all I have. Thank you, Miss Miles. Miss Brescia. Thank you so much. I'm struck by your pay attention, you know, spend time with your kids because it goes by fast. This woman knows it's my daughter's birthday today and she made it.

[00:54:30] You're killing me. You're killing me. Happy birthday, little girl. You're definitely not watching because you're only eight. But anyway, so I'm just making two observations with my comments today, always in support of our ultimate goal, student academic success. And that is to point out that summer is more than halfway done. It is already more than halfway done.

[00:54:54] students are coming back to school in less than five weeks, August 12th. There's two types of parents in the world, the countdown parents and the not countdown parents. And I definitely appreciate the structure of public school. And honestly, my kids are so happy when they get to go to school. So I'm looking forward to that. We're all looking forward to that. And then I also wanted to just say, we had our policy meeting today, and this is going to be the debut of a more transparent system. I am really proud of what is being built here and of how this process

[00:55:31] is unfolding. I mean, it's not going to be very, it's not going to be perfect, perfect. I'm sure people are going to have feedback as this process continues to iterate, but it is already, I think, clearer and easier to understand and is going to be more accessible to our employees and to the public. And I think that that will enhance our trust and it will bring us in the right direction that we need to go so i just wanted to thank every you know my especially my policy committee uh fellow members and colleagues who have been you know really taking the or on this process but for everyone for supporting it because i do think that it was necessary and is going to yield

[00:56:06] us some good results so that's it for me thank you thank you miss brush up miss stevens thank you chair um we're northern virginia it's summer it gets really hot it gets really humid we've already had at least one heat wave we're about to go into another heat wave so i wanted to do just a quick public service announcement to let you know where there are cooling centers because i've heard it's going to feel like 102 on friday um in the city of manassas the city of manassas community center is open the manassas museum if you want to be outside but you want to cool off stonewall park

[00:56:45] pool there is also in manassas park the manassas park community center and let me go back to my other list because i have multiple lists um all of the prince william county libraries are public cooling centers the ones that are closest to us are the central library on mathis avenue and the bull run library on ashton and as i just mentioned the manassas city public library the manassas museum you can also go to the manassas mall manassas park the manassas park city police department and the manassas park community center and the manassas park hall city hall and library

[00:57:21] so if you are getting overheated and you do not have a place to cool down please go to one of those places you will be welcome and make sure always have enough to drink being dehydrated and hot at the same time is not a good combination so stay safe if you need to stay indoors and have lots to drink thank you miss stevens miss seberg thank you chair tonight through approval of our consent agenda as we do every business meeting we're pleased to welcome new faces to the mcps family i was especially excited to recognize the names of at least three former manassas city

[00:58:00] students who are returning to serve our schools there is something truly wonderful about welcoming alumni back home to invest in the next generation of students and i'm thrilled to have all our new team members join the mcps family and look forward to the positive impact you will make as you collaborate with returning staff members i'm also looking forward to going to attending the vsba conference on education on thursday some of the breakout sessions that i'm most interested in are trust starts with access how and why we build a school board website um small steps big

[00:58:39] impact five simple ways to build a positive school culture it starts with trust the school governance team more than a building how another division transformed a central office into a family hub and students voice matters so through these conferences we meet with colleagues from all over the commonwealth and we often reaffirm that manassas city is doing well and we're right on track and other times we can learn something new and bring it back to manassas to help

[00:59:14] continue improving our schools thank you thank you miss seabird dr jones i want to encourage you all to mark your calendars for some important events in august first is the manassas african american heritage festival featuring art music history food and crafts on saturday august 1st 2026 from 11 to 6 at mets middle school there'll be more than 150 vendors a classic car show entertainment throughout the day free school supplies free children games free shuttle service

[00:59:50] and much more the event will spotlight celebrate and commemorate the rich history of the african-american community the second event is the jenny dean ribbon cutting on august 4th 2026 at 12 noon we will be celebrating the opening of the new jenny dean elementary school this ceremony marks a new chapter in the enduring legacy of jenny dean guests will have an opportunity to tour the new facility following the ribbon cutting. And last but not least, the opening of school for the 26-27 school year is August 12, 2026. And I encourage all students and parents to continue enjoying the summer. Summer meals are still available at Osborne

[01:00:29] through July 23rd. Read, play games, and enjoy the outdoors as you prepare for a new school year. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Jones. I just love the diversity of topics covered by our board. Everybody said probably everything that I would want to say so in effort to get us out of here at 7 o'clock I'm going to pass on my comments tonight. Could I get a motion?

[01:00:55] I have a motion by miss Stevens second name of my smiles at the school board meeting adjourned all in favor Any opposed motion carries 7-0. Thank you



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