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Manassas City School Board Meeting - September 8, 2026

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHawyORRo64>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-16. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:07] Join me for a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:00:26] Madam Clerk, could you please call the roll? Yes, ma'am.

[00:00:42] Chair Spall. Present. Vice Chair Jones. Mrs. Seaberg. Here. Mrs. Stevens. Present. Mrs. Brescia. Present. Ms. Brown. Present. Ms. Miles. Here. Mr. Amun. Ms. Albuquerque.

[00:01:00] Present. Thank you. Madam Chair, we have a quorum. Thank you. Dr. Newman, are there any additions or deletions to the agenda? Yes, ma'am. be adding a closed session to the agenda um could i get a motion for the public meeting agenda sure chair i move that the school board of the city of manassas approve the public meeting agenda as modified second i have a motion by miss stevens seconded by miss miles at the school board of the city of manassas approve the public meeting agenda as modified is there any discussion all in

[00:01:32] favor aye any opposed motion carries 6-0 chair i move that the school board of the city of manassas enter a closed session pursuant to 2.2-37128 of the Code of Virginia for the following purpose.

[00:01:50] Pursuant to 2.2-37118 of the Code of Virginia for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation where such consultation in an open meeting would adversely affect the litigating posture of the public body. I have a motion made by Ms. Stevens, seconded by Ms. Seberg, that the school board of the City of Manassas will enter into a closed session pursuant to 2.2-3712A of the Code of Virginia for the following purpose.

[00:02:23] Pursuant to 2.2-3711A7 of the Code of Virginia for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation where such consultation in an open meeting would adversely affect the litigating posture of the public body. Is there any discussion? All in favor?

[00:02:40] Aye. Any opposed? That motion carries 6-0, Ms. Garza.

[00:02:53] can i get a motion for our closed session chair i move that the school board return to open session second i have a motion made by miss stevens seconded by my smiles that we return to open

[00:03:25] session um is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed that is a 5-0 vote um certification yes chair i move that the school board certifies that to best of each member's knowledge only in public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard

[00:04:02] discussed or considered second I have a motion by Miss Stevens seconded by Miss Brown that the school board certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed and only such meeting business matters as were identified in the motion by which this closed meeting was convened were heard discussed or considered is there any discussion all in favor aye that is 5-0

[00:04:34] as well um yes i move that the school board i think it's just that whereas i move whereas on august 11th 2026 a petition for mandamus was filed against the manassas city school board and filed in the prince william county district general district court as matter number gv26019633 whereas the matter has been resolved between the parties as stated in a settlement agreement. Whereas in settling this matter neither party admits

[00:05:11] liability to the other or any wrongdoing. Whereas continued litigation is not in the best interest of the parties or the people of Manassas City. It is therefore resolved that the Manassas City School Board Chair is directed to execute a settlement agreement consistent with the resolution and approved as to form by counsel for manassas city school board upon confirmation of receipt of a fully executed settlement agreement council for the manassas city school board is authorized to endorse a dismissal order if required by the court resolving the litigation and any appropriate documents to

[00:05:48] achieve that purpose second i have a motion by ms seberg seconded by ms brown that whereas on august 11th 2026 a position a petition for mandamus was filed against the manassas city School Board, MCSB, and filed in the Prince William County General District Court as matter number GV26019633. Whereas the matter has been resolved between the parties as stated

[00:06:25] in settlement agreement, whereas in settling this matter neither party admits liability to the other or any wrongdoing, whereas continued litigation is not in the best interest of the parties or the people of Manassas City, it is therefore resolved that the MCPS chair is directed to execute a settlement agreement consistent with this resolution and approved as to form by counsel for MCSB. Upon confirmation of a receipt of a fully executed settlement agreement, counsel for the Manassas City School Board is authorized to endorse a dismissal order if

[00:07:02] required by the court, resolving the litigation and any appropriate documents to achieve that purpose. Is there any discussion? All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? Okay, is that a 5-0 or a

[00:07:22] five zero one abstain okay so that's five oh miss Garza okay are there any announcements or spotlights we will now move to board committee reports does anyone have a board committee report no report sorry at this time we do welcome members of the public who wish to speak about services policies and affairs of

[00:08:01] the city of Manassas public schools because we have an agenda to complete we ask that comments be limited to three minutes we appreciate the time you have taken to be here. We treat public comments as a public hearing and do not engage in conversation with speakers. The lack of immediate response to your comments should not be taken as a lack of interest or concern. Please be respectful when presenting your comments. First up, I have Ms. Janet Plebniak. Good evening. My name is Janet Plebniak, and I'm a resident of the city of

[00:08:38] Manassas. First and foremost, I'd like to extend my condolences to the family of the young lady that was killed Friday night, and it is devastating for this city. We've got to go up from here.

[00:08:58] We can't have any more children killed. So I just want to say a prayer. Heavenly Father, I ask that you guide the people on this school board to have them focus on the children and their success.

[00:09:15] Please take their egos away and give them your grace and humility. Change any plans meant for evil to good. If things are being done not for the good of all God's children, let it not make it to fruition. I pray this through your son, Jesus Christ. Amen and amen. This city needs some help.

[00:09:40] Next up is Miss Jane Jones. Good evening, school board and superintendent Newman. Today I did what I always ask my students to do, which is to observe. So I wanted to think about Friday night First Fridays and what might help. And I've been doing a lot of thoughtful reflections. And I drove back and looked at all the lighting that exists. And a lot of our lighting is dim and dark in the

[00:10:20] parking lot. And one of the themes, strongest themes in teaching is that light chases out darkness. Light is education. So as I drove through along Prince William past the schools, I check the lighting in front of the museum. I check the lighting at the train station and it's lacking. It's very dark. So I would like to think that maybe we can play a role or our student over here can play a role in thinking about lighting as a way to help alleviate places where students

[00:10:59] can gather or children can gather, teenagers can gather. That is a place where they can get into trouble, mischief. I even went by the pavilion to see how well that might be lit at night. And what's happened in a lot of cases is that the trees have grown up, and so it blocks the streetlights.

[00:11:20] So one thing to think about, students have a large voice, much larger than they think, in terms of solutions. And this is a place where I think that they will probably be able to meet with Officer Rodriguez and maybe act as a liaison in the future and driving some solutions.

[00:11:41] And I hope we become proactive. In, when I first started teaching at OP, we had gang sign. We were taught gang sign, to look for gang sign. We didn't really, and we had a big connection with our safety officers.

[00:11:59] Our students loved the safety officers. They hugged them in the morning. There was no really animosity there. They were friends. And so I don't know how that culture has changed or not changed. You probably would have a better feeling for that than I do.

[00:12:16] But we've got to do something. This can't happen again. My heart is just broken. And so I did try to observe and look for something that we can change and think of something that students can do.

[00:12:32] And I thought maybe even be brand ambassadors at first Fridays um you know go around with things promoting the stores you guys are important voices in our city i want you to be showcased you already are talented and wonderful thank you miss jones mr john pierce good evening members of the school board and dr newman my name is john

[00:13:08] pierce i'm a father of an eighth grader and soon to be pre pre-k parent i'm also a 2005 alumni of Osborne High School. I competed in track for four years at a state level. I've coached at Mets and Osborne and currently a Unity Braxton Middle School of Prince William County track coach. As a coach, I teach my athletes one team, one family. This means you compete as a team, but everybody out there is family. At the end of the day, it's all about doing your best. I believe our school system

[00:13:46] should operate the same way. I'm here today to speak on behalf of members of our school community and have and I have to say the current behavior of our school board is appalling. You each signed a code of ethics that states that your first and greatest duty is the educational welfare and academic performance of our students. So I have to ask are the students really coming first? That being said this board is here to defend and fight for the rights of the students and to get the help needed for that for said students at any cost. But that does not

[00:14:25] seem to be the case here. I've been made aware of one of our schools deciding to eliminate volunteers from an athletic program from all athletic programs. This includes Manasseh City Schools employees who work in who work elsewhere in the school system. If these employees can be trusted with students in one school why can't they be trusted and trusted in another to coach. Volunteers are the backbones of our schools. Coaches, parents, alumni, staff, and community members give their time

[00:15:00] because we care about these kids. They're our future. Yet some of us have been pushed aside, lied to, and treated as outsiders and made to feel like our service doesn't matter. That's not one team, one family. So I ask the school board, please investigate this situation as a board.

[00:15:22] Put personal issues and politics aside and focus on the students. Politics and personal agendas do belong in the chamber while school board meetings are in hearing we elected you to represent us and most importantly stand up for our children please be the school board we voted for thank you for allowing me this time to speak one team one family thank you mr pierce the next item is the consent agenda these items are considered routine and may be approved by a single motion unless a board member requests an item be removed for separate discussion could i get a motion chair i move that

[00:15:59] that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented. Second. I have a motion by Ms. Stevens, seconded by Ms. Brown, that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented. Is there any discussion?

[00:16:15] All in favor? Aye. Any opposed? That motion is 6-0, Ms. Garza. We will now move to discussion agenda. The first item is digital literacy, citizenship, and artificial intelligence readiness.

[00:16:31] Dr. Laura Goldzung, Director of Instruction, and Mr. Pedro Hernandez, Supervisor of Testing and Instruction Technology, will provide a presentation on digital literacy, citizenship, and artificial intelligence readiness within Manassas City Public Schools. Thank you for being here tonight. Thank you for welcoming us.

[00:16:51] Before I start, I do want to acknowledge the loss that our community suffered over the weekend and the great emotional toll that it is taking on us as a school division. and the support that is being expressed across our division and in classrooms.

[00:17:12] And I just wanted to let everyone know that while we are presenting tonight about our work, that our hearts are with them. So good evening to the board. Good evening, Chair Spall, Vice Chair Stevens, Dr. Newman.

[00:17:30] I'm Laura Goldsung, and I serve as the Director of Instruction for Manassas City Public Schools, and I'm joined tonight by Mr. Pedro Hernandez. He's the Supervisor of Testing and Instructional Technology. This evening, we'll provide an overview of how our division is responding to the accelerating development of AI and digital technologies.

[00:17:53] From our early groundwork three years ago to our current partnerships with universities and business leaders, the supports we've built for teachers, and we'll talk about the strategic direction ahead. Is it on? Let's see. Ah, here it is.

[00:18:20] let's see see i'm going to need a little tech support here for my ai presentation ah perhaps oh that could work this could work which computer does it go in that's all right

[00:19:32] yeah i said we're just going to do that like we're going to go low tech for the ai presentation tonight we are school people we can pivot that's what teachers do that's what coaches do Ah, there we go. Excellent. All right. That was our AI demonstration, right? That we still have

[00:20:09] to have some human involvement in our technology processes. School Board, we are preparing students and educators for a world where information arrives instantly, continuously, and often without regulation. There is no wisdom superhighway. It's only really an endless tap of ideas and data and opinions that just arrive 24 hours a day right in the palm of our hand.

[00:20:40] Our responsibility is to help students build the skills to interpret that world, to think deeply, to evaluate sources, and synthesize multiple streams of information into sound judgment. Our goal is to cultivate critical thinkers who can navigate complex systems and make informed decisions in real time.

[00:21:03] This work is connected to all four pillars of our strategic plan. We are creating learning environments that are dynamic and responsive and allow students the opportunity to construct meaning for themselves, and we provide safe spaces for students to develop the empathy that they need to be good digital citizens.

[00:21:25] We provide professional learning to support our teachers and staff in navigating these lessons and we partner with businesses and university leaders in our community to monitor the horizon and to make long-range goals for workforce development.

[00:21:47] So Manassas City has been engaged in these conversations since the spring of 2023. Under the leadership of then Director of Instruction, Dr. Ed Stevenson, our division joined the Virginia Association of School Superintendents Year of Learning and that That was a statewide professional learning initiative that explored the implications of emerging AI technologies for K-12 environments.

[00:22:15] That work marked our first coordinated effort to understand how rapidly developing digital tools would shape teaching and learning and what skills our students would need moving forward.

[00:22:32] January of 2024, Governor Glenn Youngkin signed Executive Order 30. That established guidelines for the VDOE to help schools integrate AI responsibly. And there was an emphasis there on student privacy safeguards and academic integrity. In response to the governor's order, MCPS adopted regulation IIBA-R-1. The regulation affirms that we are, and I quote, committed to modeling and teaching the ethical, appropriate, and productive utilization of

[00:23:07] generative artificial intelligence, AI, to support the short and long-term success of staff and students. And then on July, that summer, July 26, 2024, MCPS issued guidelines for teachers and school leaders that defined that work more specifically. And as we entered into that 24-25 school year, Mr. Hernandez and his team provided direct on-the-ground support to bring those guidelines to life in classrooms across our division. And so at this point, I'm going to

[00:23:43] turn the podium over to Mr. Hernandez so that he can share how he and his team have led this effort. Thank you, Dr. Goldson. The work Manassas City is doing today is not occurring in isolation.

[00:24:05] It aligns closely with Virginia's educational priorities around digital literacy and citizenship, responsible AI use, student well-being, and computer science. Together, these state expectations help ensure students are prepared to navigate technology safely, think critically about information, leverage emerging technologies responsibly, and succeed as contributors in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

[00:24:37] Students and staff have access to several tools that include AI-powered features to support learning, creativity, productivity, and information gathering.

[00:24:53] Examples include Google AI-enabled search, Microsoft Copilot, and AI-enabled tools embedded within instructional resources and digital learning platforms. Many of the platforms that educators use daily include built-in AI assistance and productivity features.

[00:25:13] Examples of those include PowerSchool Schoology's PowerBuddy, Nearpod, Book Creator, Canva, and Notebook LM. Artificial intelligence is not limited to stand-alone applications.

[00:25:30] It is built into the digital tools our students and staff use every day. As these capabilities continue to expand, the goal for Manassas City is not simply to provide access, but to ensure users understand how to use technology responsibly, evaluate outputs critically, protect privacy, and leverage these tools to support learning and productivity.

[00:25:58] This roadmap represents a thoughtful, phased approach to AI and digital literacy. We began by building a strong foundation through training, safety guidelines, and clear expectations.

[00:26:13] This school year, we transitioned to helping educators use instructional technology strategically through the PATH, Process, and Purpose model. As a continuation, we will support implementation through curriculum integration, ongoing professional learning, and building level coaching.

[00:26:36] The goal is to ensure both staff and students develop the knowledge and skills needed to use these technologies responsibly and effectively. Overall, planning reflects progression from awareness to implementation, because true capacity building takes time and continuous support.

[00:27:02] In school year 25-26, the focus was foundational, understanding safety, privacy, and policy guidelines to ensure safe deployment. The professional learning opportunities provided help staff

understand AI, its capabilities, limitations, and safe use.

[00:27:23] Examples of training slides are shown. These sessions were differentiated to meet the needs of learners at the elementary and the secondary level. As this school year began, we provided PD in August that aimed to shift towards pedagogical implementation utilizing a PATH process and purpose model, which placed focus towards intentional technology integration.

[00:27:54] PATH and purpose work together to create a learner-centered approach to innovation. PATH provides the process for supporting growth and change, while PURPOSE ensures every decision remains aligned to meaningful learning outcomes, equity, and impact.

[00:28:13] Together, they help us move beyond implementing technology to thoughtfully improve teaching and learning. We often talk about AI as a tool. In this image, the one on the far right, provides a real-world example.

[00:28:32] Success is evident in the quality of the overall design. AI helped create a visually appealing and well-organized graphic that communicates the message clearly. The failure, however, is that AI is not always precise.

[00:28:49] In this case, it altered some of the intended wording and even omitted a graphic letter "o" in the word "purpose." This reinforces an important lesson for both staff and students. ai can support creativity and productivity but responsible use requires careful human review fact checking and editing this october we will continue with practical embedded model lessons

[00:29:23] that will provide both technology enhanced and unplugged ai learning experiences we will also roll out course developed by virtual virginia vas which is virginia association for school superintendents, and ALP, Advanced Learning Partnerships, which teachers will be able to complete flexibly. As always, our steps forward will be fully supported by our school division's instructional technology training specialists, who will be enhancing these courses. Through example lessons, embedded digital literacy instruction, asynchronous learning opportunities, and ongoing

[00:30:02] ITTS support, we are building educator capacity while ensuring students develop the skills needed to be responsible digital citizens and successful learners it is crucial that we remain clear-eyed and transparent about the challenges evolving technologies bring massive opportunities but they are also introduced distinct risks manassas city is taking direct action in these five areas

[00:30:38] academic integrity we are shifting the dialogue from punishing plagiarism to teaching ethical transparent co-creation accuracy and misinformation helping students learn that ai can hallucinate or produce incorrect data highlighting the fact that fact checking is more vital than ever digital citizenship empowering positive online collaboration and behavior privacy securing school devices so no third-party developers harvest our students private data integrity

[00:31:16] or excuse me, equity. Standardizing access through division-provided devices. These challenges are not unique to Manassas City. Schools across Virginia and the nation are working to balance the opportunities AI provides with concerns around academic integrity, misinformation, privacy, and appropriate use. Our response is not to avoid technology, but to equip students and staff with the digital literacy, digital citizenship, and critical thinking skills

[00:31:49] necessary to navigate it successfully. While we've established strong foundation in digital literacy, digital citizenship, and responsible AI use, our work will continue to evolve. By engaging with organizations such as CERN, WISE, PSLN, and Region 4, we can stay informed about emerging trends, learn from colleagues across the Commonwealth, and ensure our practices continue to support student success, innovation, and future readiness. For more on these partnerships

[00:32:27] and future next steps, I'd like to now turn the presentation back over to Dr. Goldson. Thank you. So looking ahead, our response must remain agile and we need to stay proactive and continue engaging with industry thought leaders as this technology evolves. So just this past few

[00:33:06] weeks august the 26th dr cheng who is from george washington university she leads the wise gwu advisory board wise stands for working in sync with employers she and her team came and led a panel discussion with our principals focused on ai and how it is currently being used the realities that our schools are facing and the conversations happening at the building level and i'm going to say also at the parent and the child level because there was a parent and high school a young man

[00:33:44] that were present on that on that panel later this fall i'm going to contribute continue to contribute to that work as a member of the wise advisory board and that role is going to extend into early 2027 as a representative of regional school division. In November, a team from Manassas City will attend the School University Research Network or CERN conference at William & Mary.

[00:34:13] That conference is dedicated to exploring AI and its growing implications for the K-12 environment in virginia and then most importantly i think the an mcps committee will be formed of teachers and leaders we're going to review and update the guidelines and regulations so that they reflect current capabilities emerging practices our evolving understanding of the technology and the goal there will be to present an updated regulation and guideline to this board in the

[00:34:48] spring of 2027 ahead of planning for school year 2728 so i want to thank you for your time and your continued support as a division we remain fully committed to meeting the evolving needs of our students and teachers as technology and indeed the world around us continues to change we will keep approaching this work with care and with curiosity and focus on what's best for students

[00:35:24] and teachers and our learners in manassas city and at this point we welcome any questions um that the board might have thank you dr goulton yes i just want to add three things before we get to questions um the vast uh ai integration we actually hosted that in 2023 um so we not just didn't participate we were the host for that um i also want to thank mr wolf vice mayor wolf he is the person that connected us with the george washington university um team and on monday the focus of our

[00:36:03] region for retreat is on ai for the region so we'll be discussing that that's great do i have questions to my right um just real quick first of all you promoted me device uh to assistant chair Yes. Yes. So thank you. There wasn't any vote on it. So you just bumped it down the line. So that's all good. First of all, I want to say thank you because the subject of AI has been forefront in our minds with concerns about how quickly AI is evolving and moving. And several

[00:36:40] board members had concerns that were we abreast of it? What were we doing to address the changing needs in our students and in our community and for our teachers and other staff as well so i really appreciate that um i just have one question i don't know if you have the answer at what grade level

are we starting to provide concrete targeted instruction concerning digital citizenship um ai generative ai at what grade level are we starting that at well you're probably better equipped to

[00:37:13] answer that all of our librarians are equipped with common sense media lessons and and they run them through so we impact as many students as we can as early as we can okay great and of course you'll keep us abreast as things continue to evolve and as we progress through um the framework the timeline that we're on right now

[00:37:44] so thank you anybody else tomorrow i just want to thank you um i know you mentioned um something that is kind of my love language you say that you're going to go back as a committee with teachers and staff and those stakeholders who are boots on the ground uh to go back and check into the guidelines and the regulations and how they are performing, what needs to be changed, what needs to be adapted.

[00:38:13] So thank you for that commitment because that's where the work is and those stakeholders have a big input and their voice should be the primary voice that we hear. My left, Ms. Miles.

[00:38:30] I appreciate that you gave a rundown of how AI has been intertwined in our schools and with our staff. But one major question I have Um, and just from a high school perspective or middle school perspective, when people are, when students are actually using it really intricately, um, are we pinpointing a time when we are going to have that, um, AI detecting software that I know Prince William has and some other, you know, area schools have?

[00:38:58] And where is the timeline for that? Like, do you think that that's coming soon or, um, yeah, so. I would say that that is a topic for the committee that will be convened. we're going to put the committee together in November we'd like to do all of this professional learning that we outlined to talk to wise we're gonna go to CERN a few of us are going to PSLN sort of gather what is happening regionally what are the recommendation and guidelines from video we we also have DOE guidelines that were just released so I think we need some time to

[00:39:32] process what we are being told and kind of gather but listen to the thought leaders so I would say the answer to your question is that's definitely going to be a topic for that group of teachers and leaders and with people from procurement and we have to have obviously technology we have to think about all sides of that before we commit but I would say that that's that's the timeline great I really appreciate that it's nice especially if you are a teacher at our high school or middle school and you're wondering hmm I'm sure students are using it but how can i even check so i think that's encouraging for i'm sure them to

[00:40:10] hear um and also you know as we make a decision to add it to our student handbook eventually you know we want to make sure that we have that for the teachers so that they can you know enforce that eventually so thank you so much thank you miss miles miss russia thank you for the presentation uh i appreciate you putting it together very thorough i do have i do have some things i want to explore you mentioned early learners like getting started right away kindergarten first grade so what does that like give me something like concrete like what does that actually look

[00:40:45] like well it's at the um at the library level they unpack the common sense uh you know self-ready for um computer access for for students so that it's it's more it's less technical in in scope because they're not really focused on getting them online and active it's more of a communication piece to talk

about digital citizenship digital literacy they start unpacking those level of standards okay i'm i just have in the back of my mind you know i used to work

[00:41:23] in new york city public schools and they actually just banned ai tools you know at the elementary level period and so that's interesting to me that they went all the way there and we're kind of going all the way over here and i know that this is new and that we don't really have a i don't think there is much good consensus about it because of how fast everything is moving and everybody's trying to position their kids for the future and nobody knows what that entails or what that holds so that kind of stuck out to me and is something i'm just kind of interested in i can provide you an example of something that was done in second grade last year.

[00:42:00] There was a project that was done with Benchmark Advanced, second grade, ELA, and our ITTSs came together and kids were using, they were learning descriptive writing. And so they described a robot.

[00:42:18] They described a robot that would perform a job and they had to use, right? They had to use their descriptive vocabulary and create a paragraph. And then the ITTS helped those kids put that in AI and ask it to generate a visual model of this robot that it had described.

[00:42:35] And then they could go back and revise their description using their words, their vocabulary, and those skills to try to do a bit, to give the AI a better prompt. And then those images were posted side by side with the descriptive paragraph as a project.

[00:42:55] And that was in second grade. And so I think that's a concrete example of how we might teach them about being very specific with the prompts that you're giving it, and that it's not always going to give you exactly what you thought. Okay. I mean, I do feel better. Thank you.

[00:43:10] That's good. That's something concrete to hold on to. And I do feel better about that level, that kind of engagement. So the other question I had, kind of going back to the background, January 18, 2024, Governor's Order 30, that the guidelines come out and that that's where our regulation was born, I met, I caught my ear.

[00:43:34] So academic integrity was part of that order. And then I'm just, you know, obviously I have an interest in AI and academic integrity because we discussed that not all too long ago. So what were, if you can recall off the top of your head, and I know I didn't, I didn't know I was going to ask this question ahead of time, so I didn't prepare you for that, but what was the governor's structure and guidelines around academic integrity, if you can recall?

[00:43:59] So I don't recall right off the top of my head, but we, yeah, there was, the emphasis really was on what we need to do to protect privacy for students. And, but, you know, we can look into that and get back to you.

[00:44:16] Because I do become, you know, as we govern the school division, I become concerned about alignment and are we, is everything we're putting out in alignment with each other and in alignment with what we are being expected to do at the state level and all this other kind of stuff.

[00:44:31] So if we have a governor's order on academic integrity, and we developed a regulation based on that, that says look at the code of conduct for guidance on academic integrity. And then famously, we don't

have that now in our code of conduct. That is an area of concern, ongoing concern for me, although I guess nothing to be done about that at this moment in time.

[00:44:54] kind of somewhat relatedly the ai detection software my how are how what kind of testing do we subject that to because we have previously evaluated it what kind of testing do we give it and good evening didn't know i was going to get up tonight yes it's my goal every meeting so when we went through the procurement process we uh invited representatives from one of the main um detection software firms to come and we provided them um samples of things that were

[00:45:29] generated with ai things that were done with without ai and things that had a mix of ai and um they ran it through their software during the procurement process when we were there and it did not pass um it identified things that were ai as original and original things as ai and so at that point we abandoned that idea of bringing on that software yeah thank you for that i mean these are commercially available and i could share my own personal anecdote you know i'll put my own things

[00:46:03] through there and it will come back generally it will come back 10 or more ai and i know the real percentage and the real percentage most of the time is zero so this is i feel like as we continue to develop and explore that testing must be a part of it because once you have something like a software it gives a potentially a false uh you know a false stamp of approval to something that might not actually be there like some people just might be the kind of people who i don't talk the way i do i guess or write the way i use a lot of m dashes or something right like it's

[00:46:42] it's uh so we have to make yeah that that weighs very heavily with me like we shouldn't just do it because prince william does it we shouldn't just do it because loudon does it or because it's a big company, like it has to pass that testing. I'll also just throw it out there from my own perspective on this, that I was struck by, you know, needing to preserve human judgment. And that was an example given of an unsafe use of AI or a non-blessed, division-blessed use of AI to re-replace your own judgment. And I do get concerned when you talk about something like detection software, you should be using your own judgment to evaluate your students' work.

[00:47:22] Right. Like that's part of the student teacher engagement. Like, OK, do I see a natural progression here or do I see a sudden leap or something that sticks out to me? And if we're outsourcing that judgment to a software to read the essay first to determine, oh, is this student using AI or not?

[00:47:41] I do really have some concern that it kind of weakens the bond between student teacher and weakens the amount of judgment that the teacher brings to evaluating those assignments. So as you go on your journey forward to keep considering those softwares, you know, as they're deployed, I would really caution us against that kind of, you know, keeping that human judgment in there is imperative.

[00:48:08] Thank you, Mr. Goodfeller. I do have one more question that you guys can answer. The opportunities bring new challenges. slide 10 the I was struck by no more punishing plagiarism but instead I kind of had like a what we're not punishing plagiarism red alert that went off so can we talk a little bit more the the thoughts behind that is the exactly what dr. Goldson started to unpack with the bringing community of the teaching community together as a committee and having these conversations where AI is

[00:48:47] is ever-present. It's not going away. It's readily available. It's in everything that we have access to, from our phones to our computers to, you know, refrigerators, most likely, at home. So it's there. We

just need to make sure that those are using it as ethically as possible. So we need to have those conversations. And to your point, there's not an AI detection software out there that's going to be 100% accurate. So we need to make sure that we're focused on ensuring that teachers understand that fact as well and and so there's going to be some co-authorship when artificial intelligence is ever

[00:49:27] present so we need to make sure that we're not jumping the gun and saying that the student automatically cheated they failed let's have a conversation let's build that relationship let's see what learning happened when the student utilized the AI because that's the point of instruction where's the learning how did it happen can they reproduce it uh and can they grow from it so that that that conversational piece needs to happen and i think it's going to happen with those committees and subcommittees uh henceforth forthcoming okay if i could add i think that if we'd like pull back

[00:50:05] and we look at what our responsibility is how do we teach behavior right um we believe in pbis Yes. I believe that we can't expect students to understand what we mean when we say there's, you know, I can go very simply, right? No talking in the hall or hands to self or all of those things that we start with our littles. This is how we walk in the hall. And then we teach that expectation and then we reinforce that expectation. And as things get more complex, I think the

[00:50:42] answer is that we teach how we expect students to uphold. What is academic integrity? What does it mean to create and produce work that's entirely your own? What does it mean to collaborate either with a person, a peer, a teacher, or with AI? And that good instruction and good assessment means that we've been very, very clear. We've given that good feedback along the way. And so what does it mean to plagiarize? What does it mean to look at something in a book and copy that

[00:51:21] sentence and not attribute it? I have to tell you what that means. What does it mean to properly attribute a source? Those are research skills that we're teaching in the classroom. And so I think that the idea of, you know, if a student has been instructed and has received feedback that like copy and pasting out of an online textbook or off of AI or out of Google or Wikipedia or whatever it is if we've taught them that that isn't the expected behavior then of course we're going to discipline that right and and discipline is is a consequence that is intended to prevent that behavior from happening again and

[00:51:58] so these are exactly the questions I've discussions and parameters that I think that we need to continue to be having with teachers and with kids and with parents and as a community and as a committee um how do we do that right well i mean i can tell you how we teach kids to walk in the hall and have hands to self and you know i provide good peer relationships in a classroom i think this is just a another dimension of really good education that we're going to have to be really clear about what expectations are and just like if i'm teaching you to walk in the hall there's a very clear expectation of what happens when you don't

[00:52:38] so um so what if i may ask what is the current consequence for plagiarism you know we get a we get so i would say that that is a very specific question between a teacher and a student and a principal and a referral and we believe in having um you know a a progression of discipline so um as a former principal i can only speculate that the first time that happens it's an administrative conference right and so then there's the progressive response depending upon if that keeps happening again but that's how our code of conduct

[00:53:16] works is that you know the teacher would refer a student for repeated behavior and then that child would speak to an administrator and between the administrator and the student and the teacher and

the parent that consequence would be determined so that's the best answer I can give you as someone who was recently in the seat, that's how I would have handled that. Gotcha. I'll just kind of put it out there. When I was researching ahead of time, you know, walking into this, not just this meeting, but the other conversations we had on AI, I did notice that it seems to be a thing in other

[00:53:50] divisions where plagiarism and academic integrity is coming out of the code of conduct and is going into its own document, like, you know, guidelines, the academic integrity guidelines, and that it's becoming kind of a separate question. Because code of conduct is really, how do you walk in the hallway? What are you doing with your body? How are you dressing? How are you hitting? Are you chewing gum when you shouldn't be chewing gum? Those are the stuff in the fighting, those kind of things. And then a separate kind of, because I think that there is,

[00:54:26] listening to you talk, I can hear, okay, so plagiarism is kind of deeper than a behavior and is a learning opportunity. And I don't disagree with any of that, but we do have it in the code of conduct as a behavior. And so if we are shifting that, that might be something that we holistically kind of consider. Does that belong in the code of conduct at all? And should we develop a new academic integrity framework that is aligned with all of this AI stuff in addition to you know don't copy your friends homework and that kind of stuff so that's just a thought that's it for me um first i'd like to welcome councilman ralph smith to the meeting

[00:55:05] thank you for joining us um i also want to thank you too for setting the record straight about our actual ai journey um being thoughtful about how we are making measurable progress within a specific and reasonable time frame with clear expectations um that's the message that i hope we all take away from tonight modeling good behavior is always the goal of the majority of this board so thank you I've also heard anecdotally that if you run the Declaration of Independence through your AI

[00:55:35] detection software it's always an interesting outcome so thank you guys okay next up we have the draft school board handbook yes so I guess I'll present on this today we are discussing the draft school board handbook this document is designed to orient new school board members to their role and to serve as a continuing resource to all

[00:56:13] school board members throughout their terms the process to write this and develop this has been underway since for a long time but really since the beginning of the year the board development committee developed a draft that was then discussed in detail by all of us at the by the full board during the retreat this past June. The board agreed to most of what was in here at that retreat in June.

[00:56:35] Some sections were flagged for further legal review. That legal review was completed and that feedback was incorporated into the draft that is in front of us tonight. And most of that feedback was, yep, sounds good. There was just one paragraph that clarified, that they suggested adding, clarifying that division counsel is for the full board and not for any individual member.

[00:56:57] everything else the feedback was yep sounds good so as an additional kind of update as miss garza and i sat down and tried to make the draft into a final product we found that we needed to make a few more adjustments uh originally we had hoped to hyperlink all of the policy reference references but since we are soon leaving board docs and going to community it did not make much sense to do that at this point in time because it would just it would take a long time and just need to be redone the budget calendar section was updated to reflect what we adopted at our last meeting and there were some parts of the handbook where we had said to like include a like a you know

[00:57:35] like an illustration like a screen grab of for example our legislative priorities but we decided in many of those instances just to put a hyperlink to that instead because the book was getting very big and some of those did not fit very neatly onto the pages so those were some of those editorial decisions so this is the first reading of this handbook uh it is possible to offer and consider edits at this time if members have anything on their minds and we could do something similar where if someone has an option a or an option b we can do something similar to what we did with the

[00:58:10] code of conduct uh by the time it goes to action at our next meeting uh if there are no suggested edits the final version of this document just the way that it is now via this the final one not the the draft one was provided in case people wanted to edit or that's kind of a more editable version but these are substantively the same thing the two documents that are on there um so if there are no suggested edits then well um just a second uh if not the final version of the document goes on to action the way that it is and of course if the board wants to talk about it

[00:58:46] more it can go to a work session but i will say it is september and we will we do need this document ready before the end of the end of the calendar year so with that in mind it's feedback time we can start with miss miles um yes so at our work session on thursday i will be bringing up an additional um thing i think would be very timely um and that is specifics about closed session and our protocols and how we as school board members are to um act in those uh closed sessions

[00:59:22] and outside of them so I have something drawn up and our lawyer actually has been looking at it and I think we've come up with something to share with the board at our work session. Yes I mean just to clarify Ms. Miles has shared information with me she created it on her own and she had it added to the agenda on her own and I personally have just asked legal to look at it to make sure that it is tenable for her to present so there's nothing that's been shared with me there's no been no response there's nothing that's been shared with the entire board because the work session is the right time to do that I'm hoping that we will

[00:59:59] get that reply you know in a timely fashion for the work session but right now this is a member miles item anybody to my right yes I was I was going to propose to take it back to a work session because I have several edits to make and some additions so addendums to consider to the protocols as well and so I just I think this deserves our collective attention and so I know that

[01:00:32] time is present however I like to get it right more so than rush it so if we can probably set up a work session to dedicate to this since we are going to share with members from years to come I just would like to propose that we take it back to a work session where we can collectively work on it yeah thank you Ms. Brown? Ms. Seberg? I would agree with that. I'm also presenting some information to consider for the handbook at the work session on Thursday with regard to remedies, or in this

[01:01:10] case, the wording is corrective actions and solutions. I like to see some additional options in there. What's in there now is pretty vague, and they've been completely taken out of our operating protocols, which has left us in a compromising position. So I'll bring that up Thursday's work session I would like to have another work session to go over the handbook okay is it the will of the board to move this item back to work session I guess show of hands I just have a question since I'm just kind of

[01:01:47] confused logistic I don't I don't have a problem conceptually with moving it to work session I just have a logistical clarification which is that there so there are two items scheduled for Thursday that

want to go into this but But what I'm hearing is that actually it's a bigger project, like an operating protocols and that there's a member Brown mentioned many and several edits.

[01:02:14] And so it seems a little disjointed that we would talk about just two things on Thursday and then the whole thing separately is the best thing to do to move those two things that were scheduled for Thursday into the dedicated, you know, bigger session.

[01:02:33] That's just my logistical clarification, because we do have two items that's already on there. I don't believe at this point in time, I think it would be too soon, state law says 72 hours generally for adding things to public meeting agendas.

[01:02:48] I don't think we have enough time to add it on Thursday evening as a holistic thing, so I'm just asking logistically what we want to do. I don't think that we're going to holistically look at this book on Thursday, but there were individual requests to look at additions.

[01:03:07] So we can honor those requests on Thursday with the knowledge that there's also now a motion or a request to move the entire book for Deeper Dive to its own work session. I agree that we cannot add more items to this current work session.

[01:03:28] But scheduling work session dates has become increasingly difficult. So I think we should tackle what we can tackle and what's already announced on Thursday. Does anyone have? And then continue on with scheduling a separate work session. The goal of scheduling a deeper dive for an entire work session by itself for this document prior to January.

[01:03:52] Yes. Okay. We move to action agenda and I get a motion

[01:04:14] Chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approve the attendance awareness month proclamation as presented Second I have a motion made by Miss Stevens seconded by Miss Brown that the school board approved the attendance awareness month Proclamation as presented is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed the motion carries 6-0 Chair, I make a move that the school board approve the Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation as presented.

[01:04:46] Second. I have a motion made by Ms. Brown, seconded by Ms. Stevens, that the school board approve the Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation as presented. Is there any discussion? All in favor? Aye.

[01:05:02] Any opposed? That's a 6-0 motion also, Ms. Garza. We will now move to board member comments. Mr. Imun, welcome back again, again, again. Thank you.

[01:05:18] Good evening, everybody. I wanted to start off by saying rest in peace to the girl who was killed last Friday. And Old Town, it's a really sad thing to hear, especially at a very important and usually heartwarming event, First Friday.

[01:05:38] I hope that this is the only time it will happen, and condolences to all her friends and family. Today, I would like to celebrate the launching of Osborne's girls flag football team, which, as far as I know, is the first in our district.

[01:05:57] It is an exciting step forward for female athletics, and I wish them a great season. Please remember to keep yourself safe and healthy these coming months. Thank you. Thank you so much, Ms. Aboukere. Good evening, Superintendent Newman, members of the board and the community.

[01:06:17] And on a much heavier note, our hearts do go out to those affected by that unfortunate tragedy that had occurred last Friday. Events like this are deeply impact our youth. And it's really, they really emphasize how vital it is that we come together and work as a community to treat each other with respect and kindness and to protect one another.

[01:06:41] And on the topic of AI, I know that many students in the district, including myself, worry about the ethical and environmental implications of AI being integrated to the school system with the increasing number of data centers and their environmental impacts.

[01:06:58] But it is understood that we live in never-changing, developing society where it has become more integrated. To end off, I would love to highlight the amazing opportunity that was given to our students here in the district.

[01:07:15] The I Voted Sticker Design Contest is officially underway, and it's a great chance to have our students' art showcased on the voting stickers, and it also is a great opportunity to help them learn about civic engagement and being involved in their community.

[01:07:31] Thank you. Thank you so much for that note about collaboration. You guys are awesome, and we love to hear from you. Next up is Ms. Brescia. Thank you. I'm going to open my comments as well with what I expect most of us, all of us will be opening our comments with, which is to remember the young life that was taken from us in our community this last weekend at First Friday. First Friday, it should be a moment of togetherness and community, but instead we are grieving. It's a horrifying loss. And so I join

[01:08:06] all of you in praying for her, for her family, her friends, everyone impacted by this. But I'm also praying for our leaders and for their discernment, because there is a big task in front of them as they discern our public safety and the future of First Friday. So I really am keeping really all of Manassas in my heart as we move forward from this horrific loss. Separately, to change topics completely, I will say that tonight the school board accepted my terms for settlement regarding

[01:08:43] the writ of mandamus filed on August 11th. To be clear, there were no monetary damages at issue in this lawsuit. This was about getting the school board to do the right thing, and tonight they finally agreed to do that. So this is nothing less than a total victory for all of us, for the rule of law, for our city, and most especially for our kids who have always deserved a school board focused on their academic achievement. So I will have more to say on this soon, but it does, I am happy that this is over, and I am hopeful that we can move on to more worthy tasks.

[01:09:23] Thank you. Ms. Stevens. Thank you, Chair. I, too, want to talk about what happened Friday night, but I'm going to talk about it in a very different light. People are saying out in public that the young lady who was killed, she was murdered Friday night, was somehow at fault.

[01:09:43] She was not. She was an innocent victim. She had nothing to do with the individuals who were engaging in the inappropriate behavior. My husband was her coach. I knew her. My husband knew her.

[01:09:59] She was a wonderful young person. She was a child. She was 16 years old. And it hurts my heart when people make accusations that she was somehow in some way partially responsible for what happened to her.

[01:10:16] She was a good kid. you won't hear anyone anywhere say anything different about her when we think about Friday we need to think about her and the wonderful person that she was the friend that she

was the student she was the athlete she was that's what matters um and then on to something else that i feel is equally important very soon we'll be celebrating hispanic heritage month and i want us to take some time to recognize and honor the rich histories traditions contributions and accomplishments of hispanic and latino communities that have helped shaped our nation

[01:10:52] our state and our schools this month is not only an opportunity to learn about the achievements of hispanic leaders artists educators scientists and community members but it is also a time to celebrate the cultural written richness excuse me that many of our students and families bring to our district every day your heritage language traditions and family stories are valuable gifts that strengthen our communities and enrich the educational experience for everyone to our hispanic and latino students i want you to know that who you are and where you come from should never be

[01:11:28] hidden or kept a secret your identity is something to be treasured celebrated and shared with pride the languages you speak the cultures you represent and the traditions passed down through your families are sources of strength that connect generations and help tell the story of who you are our schools are strongest when every student feels seen respected and valued we encourage all students to embrace their heritage learn from one another and take pride in the unique backgrounds that make our community so vibrant and diverse during hispanic heritage month and

[01:12:04] throughout the year let us celebrate the many contributions of hispanic and latino communities and reaffirm our commitment to creating an environment where every student feels proud of their identity and empowered to succeed thank you thank you miss stevens miss seberg thank you chair um i want to come back with a report on the governor school at innovation park joint board i serve on its joint board uh it was the first meeting in the school year so it's kind of like an organizational meeting uh governor school is becoming an apple campus they have 86 juniors and

[01:12:41] 80 seniors and 17 of those students are Manassas City Public Schools. And Manassas Park is a supervising school division this year. We trade off with the county and with the city. I have sent dates for all the events at Governor's School to the school board and I hope that everyone will join us at those events. And I wanted to share a quote with my fellow school board members.

[01:13:08] The ultimate measure of a man or a woman is not where she or he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. And that's by Martin Luther King Jr. And I also want to say, RIP Ashley, no further comments, Madam Chair.

[01:13:31] Thank you, Ms. Seberg. Ms. Brown. Thank you. I just want to give my heartfelt condolences to Ashley's family, friends, and everyone who loved her during these incredible difficult days. I hope that you find comfort in the memories you share with Ashley and in the love that still surrounds you.

[01:13:52] Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers and that this community continues to hold you close in our hearts. That's all, Sharon. Thank you, Ms. Brown. Ms. Miles? Yes. So as I start my comments, I want to send my deepest condolences and sympathy to Ashley's family, friends, and everyone who loved her.

[01:14:12] My heart breaks for a family who should never have to experience this kind of loss. I have a 17-year-old daughter, and my girls go to First Friday almost every First Friday. Ashley was an innocent bystander who should have been able to enjoy an evening in her community and return home safely.

[01:14:29] And instead, her life was taken far too soon by gun violence. And yesterday I was able to attend a prayer vigil with many community members. And at this time, I believe we must come together not only to grieve, but also to ask what we can do differently to keep our Manassas city safe.

[01:14:46] No parent should ever receive a call telling them that their child is not coming home because of gun violence in our city square. No family should have to live with that kind of heartbreak, and I urge our city and community leaders to come together and develop a thoughtful, comprehensive plan to improve safety for everyone who attends First Friday and other community events.

[01:15:08] We should be able to gather, celebrate, and enjoy our city without fear. This is not about politics. It's about people. It's about Ashley, her family, and every family who deserves to know that their loved ones can come home safely. don't live in D.C. We're not in the inner city, as you would call it. And, you know, I have family that were raised in the inner city. And we moved out here. My dad moved us out here to evade that kind of gun violence. And our children should feel safe. But my prayers remain with Ashley's loved ones and with everyone impacted by this tragedy. And may we honor her life not only with

[01:15:47] our words, but by working together to make our community safer. So I'm going to go to more things a little less emotional, but I can't believe we're already in September and I have a few comments to make about our recent board vote to end our pending litigation. While I'm grateful that we were able to bring this conflict to a close, I want the public to be clear about why I chose to support reaching an agreement. Moving forward with litigation would have placed an additional financial burden on our school division that I did not believe our district

[01:16:24] needed to bear. As elected officials, we have a responsibility to be good stewards of our taxpayer dollars. There are times when putting aside differences and personal feelings for the greater good is a responsible thing to do. And I thought that this was one of those times. We cannot lose sight of why we are here because at the end of the day, we are here to serve our students, our families, and to ensure our staff have the resources and support they need to serve our schools.

[01:16:52] I believe bringing this matter to a close allows us to do just that. It allows us to stop devoting public resources to litigation and refocus our time, our energy, and our resources on the work that matters most, our students, our families, and our schools. And I'm grateful that we can move forward and continue to work with our community elected us, what our community elected us to do.

[01:17:13] As I end my comments, I want to remind us about September 11th. I know that that's this Friday. And this year commemorates 25 years since that tragedy occurred in our country. 25 years is a profound span of time. It is long enough for a child born on that day to grow up, start a career, and walk through adulthood. And for those who remember the world before September 11th, the date remains a sharp line in history. Many of us remember where we were at that moment. I was a sophomore in college. The feeling we felt when learned when we learned of the immense loss of life, over 3,000 lives. As the years turn into a

[01:17:50] quarter century, the responsibility shifts from merely just reacting to that shock of that day to actively teaching the next generation about the cost of freedom, the strength of compassion, and the unity that rose from the ashes. And I'm going to leave us with this quote from George Bush that he stated on that day. Time is passing, yet for the United States of America, there will be no forgetting september 11th we will remember every rescuer who died in our honor in honor excuse me we will remember every family that lives in grief we will remember the fire and

[01:18:24] ash and the last phone calls we will remember thank you chair thank you miss miles it's uh i was too going to speak to acknowledge the tragic loss to our extended community last friday and talk about 9-11 so i think that with uh the privilege of going last i will cede my comments and I can take a motion for adjournment chair I move that the school board meeting adjourn I have a motion by Miss Stevens seconded by Miss Brown that the school board meeting adjourn all in favor aye any opposed is a 6-0 vote have a

[01:19:04] good night get home safe everyone



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