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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting — PWCS Joint Session (Audio Only), Monday, December 4, 2023

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- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): https://www.pwcva.gov/department/board-county-supervisors

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[00:00:00] Okay, good morning everyone. Welcome. I'm Chairman Barbara Lateef of the Prince William County School Board and I would like to, on behalf of the school division, welcome you all to the Kelly Leadership Building for our annual legislative events and breakfast. And this year we've decided to work with the Board of County Supervisors and do this as one event. So we're excited you were all able to join us. I'm going to turn it over to Chair Wheeler. She has to call the meeting to order for the County Board of Supervisors side. Madam Chair.

[00:00:28] Thank you, Chair in Chief. It's 824 on Monday, December 4th. This will officially gavel in the meeting of the Board of County Supervisors. Always good to be here with the school board and sharing resources and talking to our delegation. Thank you. Very good. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:00:46] At this point, I'm going to run through, I'm going to ask everyone who's at the table to introduce themselves, and then we'll also ask the newly elected officials who are here to also introduce themselves. So we'll start with, to my right, Dr. McDade.

[00:01:01] good morning both on your days superintendent for principal county schools good morning jennifer wall representative for the gamesville district supervisor gainesville district good morning good morning everyone carol jeremy mcwhite state senator 29th district uh south manasus through

[00:01:35] good morning senator elect jennifer carol boy representing the 33rd district for principal and fairfax counties good morning delegate brianna sewell I'm currently representing the 51st and TV 25th.

[00:01:55] Top of the morning here, everyone. Supervisor Andrea Bailey, Potomac District. Good morning. Victor Anger, Neopsville District Supervisor. Good morning. Lloyd Williams, Wilber's District School Board. Ian Lovejoy, Delegate Elect for the new House District 22, and I welcome you there today because we're all in it.

[00:02:15] So welcome to HG 22, everybody. Good morning, everyone. And I think I'm on here for Dahlia, Michelle Maldonado, who now represents 50, will represent in just 20 seconds. Dan Helmer, Delegate representing the 40th District and soon to be the 10th.

[00:02:32] Good morning everyone. Kenny Bodie, Occhopan District Supervisor and the current Vice Chair of the Horsley County Board of Supervisor. Good morning everyone. Chris Shorter, County Executive, Prince William County. Um, everyone knows about Chair Wheeler. We'll stop over to the newly elected. Tracy Blake, do you want to start?

[00:02:54] Richard Jesse, newly elected district. Erica Trennick, Brentsville District, School Board, newly elected.

[00:03:10] Good morning, Tom Gordie, the newly elected Supervisor for the Brentsville District. DeShondra Jefferson, Chair of Lenk, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. Okay, well thank you everyone. So at this point we're going to move on to, I will just provide a brief update on the state of the school division, highlight a couple of our highest legislative priorities, and then our county partners will present and we'll use the remaining time for discussion.

[00:03:37] So I'm going to, if we take a look, do I hit the big button? Excellent. So just to give you some points about Prince William County schools, we are the second largest school division in Prince William County we are also the most diverse nationally we are the 34th largest school division in America and we're the 10th most diverse in the nation our minority population school division is 72 percent English learners make up 25 percent of our students students with disabilities 13 percent economically disadvantaged 47 percent you take a look over it comes to the right at our employee numbers we

[00:04:15] We have a total of 16,708 employees. We are the largest employer in Prince William County. The breakdown there is for teachers, staff, and others. Moving on to the next slide. So, you know, one of the things over the last five years that we have noted that is really important for our-- I think our legislators know and everyone knows that we've had tremendous growth.

[00:04:38] So if you take a look at just all students, our growth has been about 1.6%. But in these categories, special education, 7.2%, English language learners 40.4%, and economic disadvantage about 55%. So we are seeing growth in some of our more expensive students, frankly, and that puts enormous pressure on the school division.

[00:05:02] As far as our strategic plan, you know, we are guided by this four-year plan that we put together in consultation with our community, with our teachers, our staff, And the highlights and the

accomplishments here, I'm going to list a few of them for you guys.

[00:05:22] For learning and achievement for all is our first category. All Prince William County schools are accredited or accredited with conditions. Math and science have shown increases over the last couple of years. The percentage of students meeting PALS benchmarks at the end of the second grading session has increased.

[00:05:45] We've had continuous improvement for every school. We have continuous improvement plans, and we have equal opportunity schools. Our second category is positive culture and climate. We've dedicated post-secondary advisors to all schools. So every high school has a college and career counselor, and that's been really very helpful over the last 12 months, and we're excited to see that continue to grow.

[00:06:08] We have advanced safety screening technologies in all middle and high schools. That's something that you may have read about with the Evolve system. That's in all of our traditional and non-traditional schools as well. We have security assistance in every single elementary school. We have support core counselors, and then we have a program called You Belong Here that we're working throughout our division.

[00:06:29] On the third category, family and community engagement, we've funded parent liaisons in every single school. Prince William County Schools has launched the use of a division-wide two-way messaging platform with auto-translation in the home languages that integrates key student information and performance data to help improve our parent engagement. Our last category is organizational coherence. Prince William County Schools average teacher salary has increased 27.3 percent over the last five years in a compounded fashion. Prince William County Schools has added 20 million to various salary scales to improve the divisions ability to retain and recruit staff. I

[00:07:09] I think it's important when I say added $20 million, $20 million is something that we, when we talk about salary increases, is a baseline adjustment that we add every single year. And on that note, I do think it's important since we have the Board of County Supervisors here to recognize the Board of County Supervisors for their record increase in funding over the last five years.

[00:07:30] Without that record increase, we wouldn't be able to make some of these changes that you're hearing about for organizational coherence, our increase in salaries. And it's attuned to about $100 million more on a baseline adjusted salary. So when you hear, well, Prince William County Schools got $10 million, you know, sometimes we might get $10 million from the state, but it's a one-time award.

[00:07:53] We can't raise salaries with a one-time award. We have to raise salaries with a baseline adjusted budget. And I think it's important for us to take this minute to thank the Board of County Supervisors for that ability to do that. All classrooms have had an increased panel at five years old and less, and our teachers and students have one-on-one laptops and iPads for our students at four years old and less.

[00:08:18] Moving on, our session for our legislative priorities are, you know, we have challenges that school divisions across the nation face, And that is hiring teachers, filling all of our teaching needs, certified staff, teachers, and specialists, bus drivers, and food service staff.

[00:08:40] Our legislative priorities, and I'm going to go through them. And all of you have at your table a book with both the county's legislative priorities and the school division's legislative priorities. There's some other information in the packet that will help all of our folks who are here who are working in Richmond as well.

[00:08:56] But, you know, just spotlighting some of the legislative priorities, you know, one of our biggest challenges against the national staffing shortages in multiple areas, our primary focus is going to be on that.

[00:09:21] And so we're going to be strengthening, you know, our teacher pipeline, so we're pushing bills that adjust for that. And we are ensuring nationally competitive teacher retention programs.

[00:09:40] We're working on impacting -- sorry, my print is too small over here, and I didn't bring my red glasses. For an ophthalmologist, you know, I just did not get through anything.

[00:09:55] My apologies. All right, improve funding for school support positions, and I thank Dr. McDavid for saving me here. Increase options for elementary education, endorsements, international education licenses, licenses, allow teachers endorsed in special education and deaf and hard of hearing to teach American Sign Language, and shorten required break in service for Virginia retirement systems.

[00:10:21] We're looking to improve and strengthen Virginia's school support staff pipeline, modernize Virginia's classroom supports, improve Virginia's workforce readiness, enhance supports for student-advanced academic options, increase student mental health support, support school construction, renovation modernization and extend the 90-day limit for future substitutes so those are the highlights of our legislative priorities I didn't want to spend a lot of time chatting on that we're here to help answer questions you know moving on to the next slide really can't see but Virginia is the 41st on

[00:10:56] state in state per pupil spending so nationwide Virginia Falls 41 the Bridge William County Schools for Pupil remains at the bottom of the Northern Virginia area and we continue to face challenges in inflation. So, you know, some of the fixes for that are to provide for actual cost of the SOQs and that's been a thing we've been pushing each year and we hope the delegation considers full funding for the SOQs, support school construction projects, and we oppose all bills that have unfunded mandates.

[00:11:27] Another challenge is the mental health workforce. I mentioned that already, that we are going to be pushing bills to increase mental health supports and enhance supports that allow students to have advanced academic options. So, that was a quick run-through of what the schools are interested in getting done in Richmond, and I will now turn it over to Chair Wheeler.

[00:11:52] Sure. Thank you, Chair Lateef. I am going to turn it over to Glenn Lute, who is giving our presentation today on our legislative agenda. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And up in front, we're going to have Nikki Brown flip the pages for us.

[00:12:10] And in our opening section, it's sort of a preamble of the pros and cons of the what we're for and what we're against section. And I won't belabor that. It hasn't changed for the last three years. In our transportation section, we want to keep a diligent eye out on any new legislation regarding eminent domain.

[00:12:31] We want to pursue funding for transportation safety improvements. Restore funding for the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, which is a proverbial request, though there doesn't seem to be a large appetite for new transportation spending. We've requested two new pieces of legislation regarding abandoned property.

[00:12:51] We won't belabor the details of those. We'll be working with members of the appropriate committees and the delegation for the submission of those bills to clarify some technical adjustments

from the Transportation Department. We'd like to see restored funding to pre-pandemic levels for transportation allocations.

[00:13:09] Again, sort of a long-shot measure, but we'd like to see a more aggressive tone towards an enhanced transportation funding program for the Commonwealth. Funding for multimodal projects, which is a priority given the transportation needs of the county.

[00:13:27] Into the public health arena, our number one appropriations request is ongoing funding, operational support for the Crisis Receiving Center. This will be a request for $2.4 million in ongoing operating expenses.

[00:13:45] This project is all obviously gone a tremendous distance in a relatively short period of time, amassing nearly $25 million in government funding at all levels, local, state, and federal, to bring the project to a reality going into 2024-2025.

[00:14:00] Because of the opportunities for juvenile services facility matching funds, this is a part of the legislative agenda, given that the county is now appropriating the design phase for that project. The remaining items in that section are regional and local priorities for the Department of Community Services and the Department of Social Services, as they continuously confront still a workforce crisis left over from the pandemic.

[00:14:26] A new piece of legislation that the county is requesting is a technical change to a regulatory measure that would allow for an on-site pharmacy for the Crisis Receiving Center. It's our understanding that Delegate Sickles, who's going to be the new chairman of the appropriate committee, is going to pursue this legislation.

[00:14:44] And a new priority in this year's agenda is a diligent eye on funding and the threat of funding for child advocacy centers statewide in the public health i'm sorry public safety arena all those section pieces are are the same as the last three editions of this legislative agenda but this year at the request of supervisor angry we've included a approach to look at either legislative or regulatory changes to better regulate speed in areas of commercial

[00:15:19] day care center. In the economic section, given the changes in Richmond, there's a distinct possibility that legalization of cannabis is going to go somewhere. We need to keep a bill of denial now from both the public health, public safety, fiscal impact, different characteristics of that type of legislation that may be advanced during this session. Likewise, with gaming legislation and obviously housing and land use policies where a predominant number of new bills are focused on.

[00:15:55] The Virginia Housing Commission, which Delegate Sewell is a member of, is going to meet probably four times in the next week and a half, I think I counted up. Several subcommittees coming up in the coming week and then a full commission meeting, I think, the week after.

[00:16:12] Obviously, affordable housing issues are at the forefront for all of Northern Virginia and statewide in particular. There also seems to be a plethora of land use legislation in every session, and many of those try to encroach upon local decision-making, so we'll keep a diligent eye on those bills as well.

[00:16:33] In the education arena, obviously this is going to be the subject of the day, and maybe Senator McVeigh can elaborate on this, but obviously the report issued by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review

Commission denoting the lack of funding support for fully funding the standards of quality was a bombshell type of report, if you will.

[00:16:58] And coming out of the special session, there was a special joint subcommittee established between the House and the Senate to evaluate that study to come up with funding opportunities to correct that. Senator knows, I'm sure, can elaborate upon that, but given that the governor is going to unveil his budget on December the 20th, we'll see what that has included in that arena as well.

[00:17:23] But this is going to be a predominant subject that's going to probably take the next decade to rectify. I'll close with our administration of government section. We're requesting new legislation to better streamline and improve the authority of the county to enter into various contractual issues.

[00:17:42] These standards haven't changed since 2016, so it's about time for that. We're joining our program over in Loudoun County in requesting this type of legislation. So with that, I will close with this. Again, we've got to keep a diligent eye out on the governor's budget release on December the 20th and also an eye out on the closing year-end meeting of the Joint Legislative Auto Review Commission where they will be selecting the study topics for 2024.

[00:18:14] And there should be some interesting ones, and that makes including possibly data centers. So with that, thank you, sir. Madam Chair, do you have anything else to add? No, just that this is our delegation meeting, and it's great to do it jointly.

[00:18:30] We've done this sometimes in the evenings, and we have new people, and it's exciting. And we look, you know, our delegation represents us well, so I encourage them if they have any questions or any thoughts about either legislative agenda. So I'll come on in, and that's really what this meeting is for. Yeah, we'd love to hear your thoughts on what your ideas are for the session.

[00:18:50] And I should also add, we want to thank you all for the work that you've done over the last four years because, I mean, there's also been record funding from the state for schools. I mean, tremendous, and for the county. And we've been very fortunate to benefit from that, and I think we've spent it well with a large return on investment.

[00:19:09] So we really appreciate the work. So at that point, I'll open up the floor for discussion. Anybody would like to tell us what they're going to do? Senator Pike looks like he's ready to tell me what he's going to do for schools and for the county. Chairman, there's a phrase about payback being something, but I appreciate the opportunity to hear the left side of the agenda.

[00:19:32] A lot of the topics are topics that many of us have worked on, whether it be MSUQ funding formula, the support positions in restoring the ones that were cut during the recession. We made some progress, as you know, last, but we adopted.

[00:19:49] Timing is everything. Of course, now there's a potential forecast for a slight medium or mild or depends on which economist you talk to in terms of recession. And so it's always balancing those needs as we drive revenue to priority.

[00:20:07] And certainly the JLARP report issued earlier this year on education. And it puts us behind West Virginia in terms of per-pupil funding. Those who are elected and have not read it, you should read it, study it, tuck it underneath the pillow.

[00:20:25] It should be one of the top priorities is education that we have lost behind. It will really decade since really the last in-depth study. So it's going to take years to start to get up.

[00:20:41] We've made some progress, but it's on an annual operating budget. It's in the billions of dollars. needed investment overall it's commonwealth and so those are certainly priorities there's lots of certainly demands and we look forward to seeing the governor's budget December 20th thank you mr. chairman senator just to remind us so last year it was just a skinny budget or the this year's budget is going to be a full two-year package is that correct yeah

[00:21:17] that's correct as the governor proposed December 20th full final budget so the two-year budget and the General Assembly will take that and to some extent the tradition is the governor proposes and the General Assembly disposes. 140 members typically have their own ideas and takes through that budget process but you know it's still a collaborative decision. The last few cycles we've gone until sort of the end of June not knowing what the budget would look like. Do you anticipate it will be similar?

[00:21:47] Mr. Chairman, you're really adamant. Yeah, I did. I think so. Will you be the senior member? Mr. Chairman, you're really adamant. Yeah, I did. I think so. Will you be the senior member? Mr. Chair, is he the senior member? I'm going to have to speak on the telemarks here, Mr. Chairman.

[00:22:03] So, you know, it's our vote to obviously take care of business and walk away from session in our normal forest. This is a 60-day session. Traditionally, we'll come back and we'll have a reconvene and adoption of Everest amendments roughly mid-April timeframe.

[00:22:19] So there should be some relative predictability and I don't have that pure crystal wall as of this moment, but I anticipate we'll be able to collaborate moving forward on the time tonight.

[00:22:34] Thank you. Senator. Anything else? No, no. I think we should. No, thank you very much. I think Mr. Delia Henson, Roja Henson, our Delia elect, if you'd like to introduce yourself and tell us what district and which area you represent.

[00:22:48] Good morning. I'm Roja Henson. I will be representing House District 19 over at the Woodbridge area. So I have Woodbridge and Fairfax, Lord. I would just say, just like a freshman in college, I'm excited. I haven't gotten the keys to the office yet, trying to figure out how to navigate a new building. But I know that one of the priorities I did take was dealing with mental health for the youth in the LGBTQ community as well as public safety.

[00:23:18] So thank you, sir. Looks like Delegate Almer wants to say something. Madam Chair. Quick meeting. Yes. So I guess everything that we're out there, you're good with everything we have, no questions.

[00:23:41] Okay. Well, Madam Chair. Supervisor Bish. Oh, or Supervisor Henry. Right to you down there. That was a ventriloquist moment. Madam Chair. First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank our delegation and our school board representation.

[00:23:59] Welcome to the new members of both entities. I, as Glenn was making his presentation, I'm very thankful that the county board was very specific on our number one priority, and that's mental health.

[00:24:15] And so for the school board audience, thank you for also embracing that opportunity because it's absolutely necessary for our children. And as Glenn was making his presentation, this is an ongoing

forward project, and we will be very much in force, going to the GA, to our delegation, asking you to support the ongoing funding for mental health.

[00:24:43] And to Senator McPike and Delegate Guzman, thank you in its entirety for making it a priority in our first term to make sure that it was on the state of the Governor's mind and Department of Health and Human Services.

[00:25:03] And so thank you. I just wanted to bring that to the fore because we will be going forward again in the new cycle of the General Assembly to make sure that everyone knows that for Prince William County it is a priority, mental health is, so that we can heal the land and go forward to doing what we have to do.

[00:25:21] I want to say congratulations for the process that our superintendent and the school board has put together to make sure that we have a diverse pool of teachers coming in. During our election cycle, I had the opportunity of meeting several of those new members of your staff, and they are excited to be here.

[00:25:42] And you've done a yeoman's job in making that a priority and hiring new educators here in our county so that our students will have a diverse opportunity of learning. And so I want to say that in acknowledgement. And then lastly, I want to say there's a priority that says, that Glenn mentioned about the abandonment of homes in our community, of home to property in our community.

[00:26:05] And as the Board of County Supervisor goes forth, I want everyone to know that that is on our radar as well. We have a beautiful county that adds to our beautification when we look at those abandoned buildings and make sure that we are revitalizing, redeveloping, reutilizing, if you will.

[00:26:22] those entities that have been sitting there, just sitting there, and making sure that we recognize what the usage can be as we go forward. So, Mr. Chairman, I yield my time. Thank you, sir, Mr. Chairman.

[00:26:39] So, it's not unknown to everyone here that speeding is a problem in this county. For purposes of this joint board, I'm going to talk a little bit about the school speed zone campus. Of course, we've implemented the legislation that you've given us to add speed zones into the school speeding errors.

[00:27:02] And we're going to be testing that out. I don't know when those are going to be installed, so I'd like to probably get an update on that piece. But my bigger point to all of us as a joint board here with all of our legislators here is that this is a real problem that we really need to be doing more about.

[00:27:17] I know we have our police department here as well because this speeding is completely out of control. And it's not. You can leave here right now when we leave. And if there's a flash in the school zone, someone's going through it, going at least 20 miles over the speed limit.

[00:27:33] I just want to make an emphasis for the fact that we're on this joint board now to really talk about that. Now, not only that, but our red light counts, but that's something that we'll have to handle as a board. I think, again, for purposes of this joint board that we're on now, the schools and the county, when we look at our school zones and our children walking through those school areas, even our buses trying to cross those intersections, it is really getting out of control.

[00:27:58] It's not getting out of control. It is out of control. And so the last thing I'll say is one of the things is that we don't have schools on every one of our major roads that are having the speeding issues. I'm going to use Carl McGrath as a classic example, which is why I want to look at how can we expand that

legislation and add in such things as more of our corporate daycare centers or bigger daycare centers that really have an influence of children so that we can possibly get these cameras along those roadways where there aren't any opportunity to do so.

[00:28:30] So I just want to bring that to the forefront of the attention of this joint board here and hope that we can really take a deep look and get some things in place to slow people down. Thank you, Ms. Chair. Madam Chair. Just two items.

[00:28:47] One of the things when Supervisor Bailey was talking about mental health, and I know that the legislature is looking at it, it's really the workforce that serves mental health and how do we encourage that. And it's not so much even about money, but how do we get the people to work in this area. And I know that there are things you can do from a Commonwealth standpoint to make that better, because that's sort of a crisis situation.

[00:29:12] And the second, I just wanted to touch upon real briefly, you know, a few years ago we got the ability to have collective bargaining for our workforce. And I want to just pass on that both our police representatives as well as our fire and rescue representatives ratified contracts on their end and we'll be proceeding as a board with looking at those.

[00:29:33] But we want to thank you for that because that was a change in our county that I know a lot of you worked on and we're grateful for that. Thank you. Kenny. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Techos and my colleagues, you know, again, thank you for all the work that you've done over behavioral health and mental health of the last few years. I know there's a lot more work to do. One of the highlights of the faculty, again, one of our biggest responsibilities here is to fund our schools. And I know that we have endeavored over the last four years to do a lot more than I know the state you all are working on to do, as was said. Also commend Senator McPike for looking into bringing bills and legislation for localities to activate more funding

[00:30:11] sources for schools modernization renovation we know that especially in certain parts of the county we have some of the oldest schools in the region and there's a lot of disparities there in terms of facilities and things like that that we really need to work on so I wanted to highlight that and thank the delegation for their continued work on that to go back to transportation as Supervisor Angry said a lot of folks take for granted that Prince William County is not only the sole not the So the biggest funder of the PRTC, Omni, Ryan, and VRA network on a local level, but also that we're basically a regional hub of transportation that a lot of other localities don't exactly fit that same role.

[00:30:51] You know, we have a lot of folks that drive into Prince William County and then take a VRA's train. They come to Prince William County and take another bus up somewhere else, or they may just drive through our county and partake in our businesses and what have you. But the main thing is that we are currently operating as a regional hub for transportation, but the funding we get doesn't commensurate with.

[00:31:14] So whatever can be done on the state level to help us shore up our transportation funding, especially as it pertains to mass transit and our transit agencies, would be helpful. To Senator Pike's point earlier on a recession, we know that when recessions happen, it's our working class constituents who get hit the hardest and get hit the fastest.

[00:31:36] One of the things that comes down really fast from that is their ability to move around and get to their jobs. So especially at a time right now where things like the funding levels for transportation is tied to the motor vehicles tabs, which we know is, thank you for putting the floor in there, but it's been decreasing over time.

[00:31:53] More creative funding sources, more sustainable funding sources for our transportation networks will really go a long way in not only making us more resilient for our constituents most generally, but also because with chances of a recession coming or another sort of economic downturn, we need to have certainty in place for our transportation and transit agencies that they're able to operate and keep transporting our constituents.

[00:32:17] Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, so, Supervisor Andrews. I'm sorry. Mr. Chairman, thank you for acknowledging me. One thing that just dropped in my mind was this. We have been very focused on having a concerted effort of accountability as it relates to the partnership between the BOCS and the school board.

[00:32:42] And the school board has done an excellent job in providing that accountability in detail of what the utilization of funding is for. And so I say that in reference to, as we go forward, as we start our tenure the last four years, that is something that when COVID hit, Mr. Chairman said, we need $5 million.

[00:33:06] And we said, okay, for what? And he was very detailed in telling us, for what? That level of communication has been essential as we go about expenditures and how we support our school board. And so I offer that from a perspective.

[00:33:24] If that kind of information, as you go back to the GA, that kind of information is important as a remembrance of why we're coming and what is needed as you're representing us, Then I say ask for it and we will provide that or the school board will provide it because it is essential that we are all in concert as we talk about funding.

[00:33:46] So I just wanted to offer that inclusively to our group. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Weir. Thank you, Chairman. I'm going to actually take a opposing position on that. I have a greater expectation of transparency from the school division than we got last year.

[00:34:04] I think my comments from the last budget season stand. I also have a greater expectation from the board next year to actually address educational funding to the level that it actually requires, rather than simply doing a formula-based dispensation of allocation of county proceeds. Thank you.

[00:34:27] Supervisor Regis, you know, this is our delegation meeting, and we will have our meeting with the school board in January, where you can work out some of those concerns. Thank you. Madam Chair, I'm simply responding to Supervisor Bailey. Thank you. Thank you all. We really appreciate it. And so, you know, I think as we sort of wrap up here, I just want to thank you all for, you know, the school division is funded about 42% from the county and about 42% from the state.

[00:34:56] So each of you in this room have a big say in how the school division functions and works and how we're funded. And I want to let you know that, you know, over the course of the last four or five years, we've done tremendous work. I've shown you the highlights up there, you know, 27% increases and raises.

[00:35:14] We've also, you know, if you look at niche rankings, Prince William County Schools was ranked about 26 four years ago, five years ago. And that's of all counties in the commonwealth, 26 best school

division. We've dropped to 16 now, 17, 17, we've dropped 9 spots, 17th best, and we are really on track and a trajectory to break the top 10, and that means that we're up there with the Loudons and the Fairfax and the Arlington's who are actually funded at probably 25% per pupil more money than we have.

[00:35:46] So our return on investment when you invest in Prince William County Schools is much better than I think you'll see in other parts of the commonwealth. So I want you to be confident in that. And then when you go to Richmond and you're asking for more money, you could be confident that the Board of County Supervisors will delegate those dollars and the school division will spend those dollars in a way that I think will make you proud and to make a real return on investment for the citizens.

[00:36:12] So I want to thank you all for attending. Please, you know, reach out to all of us. We have our, I think, I didn't get a chance to introduce Jim Counsel, who's the lobbyist for the principal of the county schools right here. Many of you have met him and know him. And I think that's really important.

[00:36:30] And then I'm going to turn it over to Chair Wheeler for her concluding remarks and her motion to adjourn. No concluding remarks. Just always grateful to get together with our school board. I know we have such an excellent relationship with the school board over the last few years, and especially coming through the pandemic.

[00:36:50] Thank you all for what you did for getting us through the pandemic with our school system. And this is an official meeting of the Board of County Supervisors, so I need a motion. to adjourn so motion made by Vice Chair Bodie seconded by Supervisor Bailey all those in favor say aye aye anyone opposed okay this adjourns our board of committee supervisors there's food here we still have room for some time please mingle and thank you very much I want to thank Chair Wheeler who's been you know I may have talked to her on the phone two to three times a day every day since since she was elected and I was elected and I can't thank her enough for

[00:37:29] support she's done. The tremendous effort that she and the Board of Geisinger Prize have done for the children. We are giving her one of the gals that we use in our school board and this is for Carrie.