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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, January 18, 2023

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Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	1h 2m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jq2kNj6TCfw
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] I'd like to call the Prince William County School Board meeting to order. We will move straight into 1.03, the approval of the agenda. This is an action item. Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended.

[00:00:19] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote. Please vote. What happened to this TV, what's going on?

[00:00:39] - The vote is seven, yes. Motion passed, one absent, Raulston. - Moving on, a motion to enter closed session. A motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711 and section 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:01:01] One, to discuss with staff the appointment, transfer, release, assignment, and promotion of specific officers and employees under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A1, and two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, seven and eight.

[00:01:25] Three, to consult with staff and legal counsel regarding the legal requirements and procedures for collective bargaining by school board employees, which requires legal advice and guidance is provided

by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, eight. And four, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A 19.

[00:02:00] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:02:22] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, at this point the Prince William County School Board

[00:02:29] will enter closed session, return in approximately one hour.

[00:03:36] to reconvene the Prince William County School Board meeting to open session. At this point, we will have closed session certification. A motion is in order. Ms. Wall.

[00:03:53] - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3712, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of January 18th, 2023 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:09] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies.

[00:04:24] And two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:52] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Ms. Raulston, motion passed. - Moving on to the closed session action items. A motion is in order for the approval of appointments and releases. Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in the closed session.

[00:05:10] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:28] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Ms. Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, the next item on the agenda is a public hearing regarding the attendance area recommendations for the Rosemont Lewis school. We are required by law to hold a public hearing.

[00:05:45] So we will move to this section of the meeting and I have to read this by law. I declare that a public hearing is now open on the subject of elementary school attendance area modifications that result from the opening of the Rosemont Lewis elementary school for the 2023-2024 school year.

[00:06:06] Any citizen who has signed up to speak on this matter will be permitted to do so. Mrs. Simpson, do we have any citizens signed up to speak on this matter? - No, Chairman Lateef, we do not. - Okay, a sufficient time was given for everyone to sign up.

[00:06:24] Okay, thank you, Mrs. Simpson. There being no citizens who signed up to speak on this matter, I declare the public hearing closed. At this time, the school board will perform the Pledge of Allegiance and we'll go ahead and do that right up here and I'll go ahead and leave this evening.

[00:07:01] Okay, at this point, we will move to our Thriving Futures focus part of our meeting. Good evening, everyone. I'm pleased to share that tonight during our Thriving Futures section of the meeting,

we will be recognizing the talented fine arts students from Colgan High School. Mrs. Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles Magisterial District will introduce our award-winning students.

[00:07:23] - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. It is my pleasure to recognize two Colgan High School student musicians who were selected for all national honor ensembles. Caitlin Lofeld is a senior at Colgan and was selected for the 2022 National Association for Music Education All-National Honor Mixed Choir.

[00:07:42] Emily Yeh, a junior, was selected for the 2022 National Association for Music Education Symphony Orchestra. Students in these honor ensembles represent the top performing high school musicians in the United States. More than a musical showcase, the program is a comprehensive and educational experience.

[00:08:01] The national conference includes ensemble performances and a college fair where the selected students can connect with colleges, universities, and music conservatories. The ensembles performed at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, on November 5th and 6th, under the leadership of top conductors in the field of music education.

[00:08:23] The Colgan High School Choir Director is Carrie Staley, and the orchestra director is Ben Bernstein. Their principal is Dr. Tim Healy. Ms. Staley, please come forward to say a few words. I'm just so incredibly proud. This is like my wheelhouse, and I just know how big this is, so congratulations.

[00:08:41] - Thank you so much. I'm Carrie Staley, and I am extremely proud of Caitlin Lofeld and tonight's recognition of her high accomplishment in all national choir. I'd like to thank the school board, Dr. Healey and Dr. McDade for their support of the performing arts and recognition of the importance of public music education.

[00:09:05] Caitlin will be majoring in vocal performance or musical theater next year in college in preparation for a professional career in vocal music. She is truly one of the most exceptional singers that I've had the privilege to teach.

[00:09:21] She can sing just about anything that you hand to her and I am so, so very proud. Congratulations to you, Caitlin. - Good evening, I'm Ben Bernstein, director of orchestras at Colgan High School.

[00:09:39] This is Emily. I have known Emily since she was a young girl, at first as a very gifted pianist and accompanist, and now also our top violist at Colgan High School. In her first two and a half years in high school, Emily has quickly taken top honors at the county, regional, and state level, and then this past year made the all-national orchestra.

[00:09:58] When a student of this age achieves at this high of a level, I know it is because of one, their fierce determination, a very strict practice regimen, and probably a bit of competitive spirit. Of course, having a lovely and supportive network also helps.

[00:10:14] I know Emily has all of these and more. Congratulations to you, Emily, and thank you for working so hard in representing Colgan High School and Prince William County Schools at the national level.

[00:10:32] - Dr. Healy, did you have any words, sir? - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. I just, on behalf of our students and our teachers, wanna thank the school board and Dr. McDade for your continued support of the arts. We're very, very proud of our students and what we're accomplishing.

[00:10:47] And I would just wanna one more thank you. Of course, we have two outstanding families with us tonight supporting these students. And just wanna recognize the families who are behind us for being here and supporting the students. - Could the families please stand up as well?

[00:11:10] Very good. Well, way to go Colgan High School, Colgan Sharks. Thank you for representing Prince William County Schools so well at the national level. Before taking a quick picture, Dr. McDade would like to say a few words. Dr. McDade. I just wanted to pile on and also extend a congratulations to both of you, Caitlin and Emily, for not just your accomplishment, but all of your hard work over the years.

[00:11:35] Congratulations to your families, because I know families how much travel and time that goes into supporting your students' dreams and aspirations, but it's so important for us to continue to invest in our students' talents because we never know where it may lead them.

[00:11:52] And I just wanna impress upon you the importance of continuing to pursue your dreams. I wish you well in all of your future endeavors, and we can't wait to see all that you will accomplish. Thank you so much for positively representing Prince William County Public Schools.

[00:12:08] We are so incredibly proud. And also thank you to Ms. Staley and Mr. Bernstein and Dr. Healy for your continued support and for your commitment and dedication. I know how much hard work it also takes on your behalf, but I know that it is a passion.

[00:12:25] I can see it in your smiling faces and see how proud you are of all that your students have accomplished, and we are so appreciative to have such dedicated educators like you that continue to also pour into our students. So congratulations to you all.

[00:12:41] We are PWCS proud. - Another round of applause, and then if you could join us up here for a photo, that would be fantastic.

[00:12:49] - Thank you, wow, that was fantastic.

[00:14:18] Congratulations again, we are just so thrilled. Okay, moving on to the adoption of the consent agenda this evening. That will be 12.01, Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I recommend, or I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended.

[00:14:41] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:15:03] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. - Senator Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, at this point, I do take a little privilege as chair, I would like to comment on, we yesterday began the first day for the collective bargaining election being held in the school division.

[00:15:24] And the school board would like to address briefly the collective bargaining that began yesterday. We understand that some employees experience delays receiving their time-restricted ballots. The school board and the PWA, Prince William Education Association, worked cooperatively with the outside election vendor to make the process go as smoothly as possible.

[00:15:45] Although not the fault of Prince William County Schools or the Prince William Education Association, the volume of emails coming into the PWCS system combined with the other email traffic yesterday caused by some employees to experience delayed email delivery.

[00:16:02] If any eligible employee had trouble receiving the ballot in a timely manner, please know that you can resubmit the request for a ballot and another one will be delivered to you. Again, if any eligible

employee had trouble receiving a ballot in a timely manner, please know that you can resubmit the request for ballot and another one will be delivered to you.

[00:16:21] The board strongly encourages all employees to vote in this important election. Thank you very much. Moving on now to citizen comment time, those citizens who have signed up in advance where the clerk may address the school board this evening When they are called to the podium, the citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations of operations and policies of Prince William County schools.

[00:16:46] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared for, to restore public order.

[00:17:03] Tonight, we have three citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. And we will get started here. My list, where's my list?

[00:17:18] Who has a list? Anybody has a list? First, Josh Quill.

[00:17:40] - Good evening, my name is Josh Quill. I reside at 8345 Roxboro Loop, Gainesville, Virginia. So I'm here this evening to talk about what you may call accidental oversight, but I think the rest of us would call gross negligence.

[00:17:59] Actually, the fact is we wouldn't know exactly what you call it, only your spokesman, considering only one of you have spoken to this issue at all regarding the National Merit Award mishandling. First and foremost, Ms. Jen Wall, I would like to commend you for looking into this issue.

[00:18:17] I know you and I have discussed this, and I appreciate your dedication to this and looking into this. But if it wasn't for you, Prince William Cotney would not know that there were four schools that mishandled these important notifications.

[00:18:34] so i ask you i know you won't respond why did none of you knowing this information for a week make a comment on it why did you not make an official statement on this i scoured i looked through websites i looked through your social media posts did anybody make a comment on this no if miss wall didn't look into this and provide a statement if i didn't write two letters to the attorney general talk to news reporting agencies would we have known about this probably not am i

[00:19:11] shocked that this has happened in prince william county no i'm not but why why is this happening you look around the electorate elected you to be there for them to lead for them that is your job a whole week went by where you knew about this and didn't say anything some of you posted pictures of your cats on twitter during that time that was amusing did you not have the time to speak to this

[00:19:43] especially when these school these schools are in your districts why all i have to say is please do not downplay this please don't we tell students you work hard you do what you're supposed to do and you can achieve the american dream that's the beautiful thing about america hopefully that's a beautiful thing about virginia and what's happening no matter what the reason not notifying students of their accommodations is just wrong wrong gross negligence so i look forward to this week

[00:20:21] hearing an official statement. In the meantime, I have submitted a FOIA request under Virginia law, so I would ask that all of you please preserve all the documents with reference to the National Merit Awards and any emails or correspondence with the words equity in it. Thank you very much, have a good day. Willie Deutsch, William Deutsch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the board.

[00:20:55] It is now springtime or springtime is approaching and that means it should be the start of the most exciting time for the school board: budget season. Budget season is where the school board gets to act on the fiduciary responsibility they have to the taxpayer for having almost 57% of their property taxes, property home value taxes, given to you, the school board, to support the educational achievement of students across this county. And that requires time and diligence and oversight. Last year the school board went ahead and got rid of one of your

[00:21:32] budget work sessions which is an opportunity to provide oversight on the budget process. Back when I was on the school board we had two budget work sessions and some of us argued we needed a third because we need to be able to dig into the budget. A billion dollar budget deserves time and energy spent to dig in and understand what's going on. And then I saw this year's schedule of meetings come out there's a regular CIP work session that just occurred but then there's still only one more budget work session. Friends, with over a billion dollars and with the deficits in educational support right now for our

[00:22:09] students there needs to be work and time put into making sure that as much of the revenue is pushed into the classrooms to drive the educational success of our students and reducing the amount of oversight that's given by the school board over the school division at a time when we are now in the national news for what's being termed by the school board a administrative oversight is frankly wrong you owe it to the taxpayers to do all the work possible to get the maximum results for our dollars and to look into what's happening to make sure that every

[00:22:49] dollar is spent and pushed into the classroom to make sure that when you get to the end of budget season there is a real plan to support the challenges and educational achievement they're going on so bring back the budget work session spend the time this spring digging into the budget making sure they really are going in to where it needs to go and do it in public not behind closed doors just talking to staff one-on-one have public meetings of this board where you discuss publicly amongst yourselves you discuss in front of the public and you show the public that you're taking this responsibility seriously thank you Jen

[00:23:26] Good evening. My name is Jen Donnelly and my address is on file. Last year, this board spent $1.8 million to create an office of equity. Equity attempts to make everyone the same. It brings down that which is high and raises that which is low so that everyone is on the same level of mediocrity. It is forcing a round peg through a square hole. Naturally, such a methodology is bound to make differences and none in a positive way.

[00:24:12] I've been here week after week listening to this board praising itself for its thriving futures and its equity plan Until last week. I would have said that the plan has nothing to show for itself But it does we just learned that Prince William County students were not notified that their merit scholarships after they were awarded This may not sound like a big deal But it is an epic failure on the part of this board and it shows what a disaster chasing equity can be The National Merit Scholarship has been around since 1955.

[00:24:50] It seems like every year until last year when Dr. Brown took over as Chief Equity Officer, schools notified the students of their merit scholarships in a timely manner. This year, that practice ended. Is there a correlation? Sure seems to be.

[00:25:06] Why is it that only one school board member reached out through social media to their constituents to let them know of the issue that affected four different districts? Where were the others hoping their constituents wouldn't find out? Recent breaking news has shown that neighboring school districts also failed to notify kids of their awards, all in the name of equity.

[00:25:29] Because of that, we have hard evidence of the way equity is harming kids. The decision to place feelings over academic excellence has affected dozens, if not hundreds of children. You're playing with the futures in the name of equity.

[00:25:45] It would be one thing if we had an amazing academic record stand on allowing us to experiment with untested socially woke concepts like equity but unfortunately we don't. Instead 30% of Prince William County fourth graders can't read on grade level and students who are achieving on a high level are being denied information that could provide them thousands of dollars in academic scholarships. It's ludicrous. It's time to put the 1.8 billion or 1.8 million dollars back into the classroom where it belongs. They They say there is no such thing as coincidence.

[00:26:23] I would say that your equity policy and the failures to our students are a great example of that. Please stop with your equity policy and start focusing on academics again. That is what you were elected and hired to do.

[00:26:39] - Okay, thank you. That brings to the end citizen comment time. We will now move on to our student representative. Tonight we have our student representative, Danya Sharifi from the Gainesville High School. Danya, welcome.

[00:26:55] - Good evening to the Prince William County community, school board chairman of the board and superintendent. I hope you all had a great holiday season and a best of luck to our students who are finishing the first semester. Tonight, I wanna just touch very briefly about our thriving futures. Thriving futures within Prince William County is a great part of our school board meetings that recognize our students' accomplishments beyond the classroom.

[00:27:16] Seeing the thriving futures feature implemented in each school board meeting has been something that I look forward to anytime I am in attendance. There are many hardworking students, leaders, and teammates that work relentlessly on their extracurricular interests beyond the classroom. From placing at states for sports, to robotics and nationals, to our talented musicians, and even our turf grass management interests, all these highlights recognize our students, and most importantly, the thriving futures feature has a positive impact on the students.

[00:27:44] The opportunity that Prince William County provides for students, and then all the ways that the students take advantage of those opportunities is why I have confidence in the strategic plan. So many students who have had the opportunity to be highlighted at these board meetings have felt seen and proud of their accomplishments. I hope that when I tune into the school board meeting in three, four, five years from now, the thriving future features will continue to be implemented.

[00:28:06] We are a diverse body of students with a diverse set of interests. And our students are grateful for the recognition beyond the classroom. That's all I have for tonight. And as always, if you are a student, please reach out to our student representatives or the Senate's at each high school through Twitter or email.

[00:28:23] Thank you and have a good rest of your night. - Donya, thank you very much. I know congratulations are in order. I won't say why other than I understand you were accepted to a college of a choice, your choice. Is that correct?

[00:28:38] All right, very good. We are now moving on to superintendent's time. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. Prince William County Public Schools will recognize Virginia Schools Principals Appreciation Week January 23rd to the 27th.

[00:28:59] Our principals and assistant principals are vital to the success of our students, staff, and school division. They uphold the educational leadership of their staff and students, embrace the immense responsibility to their community, and act as the critical link between their school and central office.

[00:29:16] I speak for the entire PWCS community when I share my enthusiastic appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to our principals and assistant principals. I encourage all parents, students, and staff to take a moment to send a thank you to the principals of your school.

[00:29:33] I would also like to address the oversight leading to the delayed notification of some students receiving a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Program. First, it is important to note that we thrive on student success, all student success. Academic achievement is our core business.

[00:29:50] Our leaders and teams work incredibly hard to not only acknowledge, but also celebrate all student achievement and those schools that experience this oversight based on sheer human error are devastated that this was a missed opportunity to recognize their students' accomplishment.

[00:30:08] Many of our school leaders and educators regularly accompany our scholars to numerous regional and national competitions and have been present here in the boardroom to celebrate our students' successes all while beaming with pride. Our school leaders and their respective teams, the school division and school board, are all committed to elevating student achievement in many ways.

[00:30:31] from press releases to our thriving futures focus at every school board meeting. We always are honored to celebrate all PWCS scholars. We are deeply sorry for the oversight and offer a sincere apology on behalf of our schools, school division and school board for any frustration this delayed notification may have caused to our students and families.

[00:30:58] In the future, we will ensure every school has an identified dedicated person responsible for facilitating timely notification of student recognition. We will also be reaching out to the National Merit Scholarship Program to request a review of their notification process, including a request that they add the commendation notification directly, not only to the student portal, but also distribute notifications directly to the student's home, rather than solely relying on a mail notification to the local school.

[00:31:30] To date, all impacted students and families have been notified, and we thank our families for their understanding. PWCS will continue to celebrate all students for their many notable accomplishments. The month of January also requires preparation for the Fiscal 24 Proposed Budget and Capital Improvement Program, or CALL-CIP.

[00:31:54] Last week, the school board heard our initial proposals regarding the CIP, which provides a roadmap planning school facility projects. I have been working with our budget team and school division leadership to develop a budget that continues to support our vision 2025 launching thriving future strategic plan to bring forward to the school board. On February 1st we will submit the fiscal year 2024

proposed budget to the school board. The school board will hold a public meeting on the proposed budget on February 6th and hold a public hearing on February 15th. On March 8th the school

[00:32:31] board will conduct a work session for the final markup of the fiscal year 2024 budget finally on march 15th the school board will consider approval of the fiscal year 2024 budget and capital improvements program which will then be submitted to the board of county supervisors for their consideration which will occur later this spring more information on the proposed budget can be found on our website at www.pwcs.edu. I am looking forward to partnering with our school board as well as hearing from our community as we work collaboratively to

[00:33:07] develop a budget that best addresses the needs of our students. Before closing, I would like to reiterate the school safety concerns I shared in my end of week letter last week. I know we were all shocked and saddened by the recent shooting of a teacher by a very young student in Newport News.

[00:33:26] PWCS has worked very hard to ensure the safety of our students and staff. For example, we have implemented Say Something, which is an anonymous reporting system designed especially for students and staff to report concerns of potentially unsafe behavior.

[00:33:43] Earlier this year, I announced the addition of security assistance at all elementary schools. The new positions are in addition to the seven community safety officers that support our elementary schools and as a reminder through our memorandum of understanding with the prince william county police department our middle and high schools are supported by school resource officers in addition to security assistants security specialists and security officers recent advances in security screening technology allow for non-invasive detection and accommodate a high volume of staff and students this new preventative measure is a critical step toward

[00:34:22] protection and is already successfully implemented in sports stadiums, national museums, and school divisions like Charlotte Mecklenburg in North Carolina. Manassas City Public Schools has recently voted to install the technology in their high school and we are dutifully exploring this investment into our students and staff safety. In the coming weeks PWCS will begin engaging families and community members to discuss and gather input regarding the a potential addition of advanced security screening technology in PWCS schools as early as the 2023-24 school year.

[00:34:57] I look forward to working collaboratively with our community to provide a safe environment for our students to learn. Mr. Chairman, this concludes the superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. We'll move on to committee updates. This evening we'll have an update from our representative to the joint board of the Governor's School at Innovation Park, Ms. Williams.

[00:35:18] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to be providing an update. I serve on the Governor's School Innovation Park Board along with our chairman here. At the last board meeting, the budget was approved. There have been Alumni Day, but most importantly, the upcoming event would be the Public Research Symposium where students, generally juniors and seniors, are prepared, they are asked to solve a world problem given a specific budget, and then they present their research to the public.

[00:35:51] That will be held May 12th at the GMU campus. Graduation has been announced. It will be held this year at Manasseh City Public Schools at Osborne High on May 20th. We still have 163 students enrolled in the governor's school and a current wait list.

[00:36:08] So all is well at the governor's school. On the secondary update, there's no attachments in board docs, but it was for the racial and social justice commission. There will be no meeting this month. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. and as she pointed out, I do sit on that joint board as well and I think the deadline for students applying to the governor's school who are sophomores currently, I think there's still time to apply if you're still interested.

[00:36:35] Don't quote me on that, but I think there's still time to apply. I think there is and that school continues to do well and over the last couple of years, I'd like to remind the public that we increased the size of that freshman class from 40 to 60, adding in the engineering program, which has been really successful in its second year.

[00:36:54] So very good. So moving on next to board matters, we have the approval of revisions to policy. Yeah, right? Okay. Approval of revisions to policy 901, public information program.

[00:37:10] This is division council. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And it's policy 910. So is it? Oh, okay. In any event, this is the social media policy was charged to my predecessor even back then and the result of a committee task force that was assembled at the direction or overseen by division counsel to regulate and update our policies and how we handle social media and web page communications for the division.

[00:37:42] This is the for approval tonight. It was on for first read at the last meeting in accordance with our normal policy. Any discussion? Well, actually, you know, we're supposed to make a motion. So Ms. Wall, I'm sorry, then we can do that.

[00:37:59] Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve revisions to policy 910 public information program. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur.

[00:38:14] - I second. - Any discussion? Now we have a discussion, okay, Ms. Williams. - I just wanna say I appreciate all the hard work that went into getting to where we are to be able to vote on this policy this evening. It's been a few years in coming and we had to take a break for the transition, new board setting, new superintendent, and new legal counsel, I think this puts us in a very good position for our social media.

[00:38:37] And I think a lot of, just wanted to take time to recognize all of the hard work that went into this. So thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. And I think I should point out that the vast majority of this work was done by my predecessor, Ms. McGowan, as well as Eric Carlson Landy, who's an assistant division counsel in my office.

[00:38:56] Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to reiterate what division counsel said, that this is something that's been a long time in the works. And from the very early days of this board, it's important. And I wanna thank Mary McGowan in particular for taking on this big project and for all of her work on this and for everybody who helped her on that team.

[00:39:20] It takes a lot of hours to tackle a very important topic like this. So I just wanted to say thank you and I think it's very important what we're doing here. - Just echo the thanks to division council, Wade Anderson, and Mary McGowan and her team.

[00:39:37] I think it's really important to understand that this is a living document. Technology continues to change at a pace that is really challenging to keep up with. We are now facing things like chat GPT,

which can write an essay for you or, you know, come up with a paper for a student or for us.

[00:40:01] And so the challenges in technology and managing all of this are incredible and continue to require a keen eye on this. And so I commend everyone for their work and I'll be supporting this motion tonight.

[00:40:17] Okay, please vote. - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Ralston, motion passed. - Okay, we are now moving on to board matters. We will start with Mr. Wilk this evening.

[00:40:33] Mr. Wilk, Potomac Magisterial District. - Thank you, sir. in Potomac keeps churning with these visits and activities. This year, I'm already for my seven years, over 2,200 events, hoping to be at 2,500 events by the end of the school year over seven years.

[00:40:53] So I do not get paid. That would be quite some overtime, but so welcome. So since the last school board meeting, Some great things to highlight.

[00:41:09] I do love the basketball season. And so on, you know, January 5th, I was at the Potomac basketball game, victory over Colgan. On the ninth, Potomac Shores basketball had a game, victory over Grand Park High School.

[00:41:25] Outside of basketball, I did attend the inaugural Potomac Shores Builders Club ceremony. That is a middle school program, equivalent to like the key club at the high school level. And so it was great to be part of that event. On 1:12, I wanna highlight the great work Grant Park Middle School does with their specialty programs.

[00:41:45] We're in the midst of still the specialty app. Uh-oh, where's the time? Oh, you're watching, okay. Grant Park. So anyways, the specialty program night at Grant Park, hosted by Mr. Jason Brown, who's done great work there and he's been there for many years.

[00:42:01] So I was happy to be in attendance at that event. As many people do know, I do like to visit my schools during the school day. It does require me to take time off of my job and what I do for a living, but it is really helpful because it allows me to see the policy and the regulations we pass at this level and how they impact our actual schools in the classroom settings.

[00:42:28] So last Friday, I did start off at Potomac Shores, ventured to Forest Park High School, which Chance was here. I visited the robotics room and I saw his Barbie house that he's making. So I did go to Patty Elementary School, Henderson Elementary and Ashland Elementary School.

[00:42:46] Really cool being part of Ashland at the time. I attended a K2 math department meeting where members of our county team who come to do the coaching and stuff like that were there to better support and show some strategies.

[00:43:02] That night, I kept going. Family fun night at Mary Williams Elementary was that night. I came by, there was a full house there, a couple hundred people. And then that night ended with Potomac versus Forest Park basketball at Potomac High School. So that was a tough one.

[00:43:18] I wore all black to support both teams. And, but Forest Park was victorious there on 1:14. The next morning, Mrs. Agarpoor and I actually were at the chess tournament, countywide chess tournament, hosted at Forest Park High School.

[00:43:33] So that's great that that is going on. And then lastly, on the 17th, was that two nights ago? Forest Park basketball was, I'm out of time, was victorious over Woodbridge. So thank you very much. I appreciate it, thank you.

[00:43:48] - Miss Lisa Zargarpur, Coles Magisterial District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I wanna say congratulations to the C.D. Hilton debate team for its victories at the Lincoln Douglas tournament. We have some winners, freshmen Rebecca Clark and Beulah Sarsa. Then we also had London Young and MacLeet Asfa, they gave their, I'm reading this from their tweet, they gave their time and effort in contributing to case building, go debate bulldogs.

[00:44:15] Wanna make sure that we remember that we are about halfway through the school year. I know kids are looking at classes for next year and I want you to consider if you are in high school, looking at those AP, IB or dual enrollment classes, Those benefit you by not only boosting your GPA to help you be more competitive for your college applications and scholarships, but students can also earn credit prior to your first college experiences, which can save you money in your future.

[00:44:44] Furthermore, students who take advanced academic coursework will also be better prepared for the habits of mind necessary for post-secondary education and are more likely to complete their college degrees. So these are very valuable things we should be considering. I wanna also say, yes, we had fun at the tournament, didn't we, didn't we?

[00:45:03] Marshall, which is no longer in my magisterial district, but some of the families still live there, took first place, Miss Jessie, they took first place in the chess tournament, and they were very excited and very proud to bring home that trophy. Seniors, also start looking at those scholarship opportunities that are in places you may not have thought to look before.

[00:45:23] Spark Foundation usually has some coming up. There's Payton, what is it called, Payton's Project? Yeah, Payton's Project usually has scholarship opportunities. Novec, just start, go to your counseling department. They can help you find all kinds of things.

[00:45:38] I will be holding office hours on Saturday the 28th, that is the Saturday, yes, 28th between 9:00 and 11:00 at the Dunkin' Donuts over by the Food Lion. So if you wanna make an appointment, please email me so I know what time to expect you. Collective bargaining has started, voting has started.

[00:45:57] If you are in either of those bargaining units, please look for that email and please cast your vote. I think that's about everything this week. Oh, I did want to leave you with this quote. Sometimes we exist long enough to lead the next generation. Other times only to plant a seed and let its resonations of our time here on earth ripple into new waves.

[00:46:18] Learn well, my friends. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Ms. Adele Jackson, Brentsville District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Previously tonight, there was a vote scheduled on the boundaries for the school at the Rosemont-Lewis site, but it has been rescheduled.

[00:46:37] I support moving the vote for Rosemont-Lewis to be determined in the name. As to my knowledge, there have not been any updates as to when the vote will happen. I look forward to more information. This constituency, as all, deserve the very best.

[00:46:53] If it takes more time to reach a decision, then I respect that. Please keep in mind that boundary changes will impact all schools, including the fact that Ellis Elementary will be above capacity pretty

quickly. This week and we started the efforts in scheduling the Joint Environmental Task Force with the Board of County Supervisors and we'll be meeting soon in February and when that comes closer, I will provide an update.

[00:47:18] I will also try to update social media with any of the meetings for the Joint Environmental Task Force. I was able to attend Unity Read and Patriot girls basketball game and a human rights committee award ceremony this past weekend. I look forward to the community engagement that Dr. McDade talked about regarding security and I also echo the settlements that you discussed about celebrating student successes.

[00:47:43] Congratulations to all students who participated in the 33rd Annual MLK Orator, what's a word I have a hard time with? Orator, oratorical, I'm sorry, contest. I have trouble with that word, I don't know why.

[00:47:59] including from the Brentsville District. As Dr. Reverend King said, and it was quoted during the speech, be the change you seek. This speeches were a great reminder to lead with love and acceptance, and I hope everybody has a nice night. - Ms. Laurie Williams, Woodbridge Magisterial District.

[00:48:17] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just would like to start off by echoing, excuse me, echoing Dr. McDade's sentiments and wishing all of our principals and assistant principals a happy principals week. They are the culture and representative of each of our schools.

[00:48:32] And if you wanna get to know your school, get to know your school's principal. I always hate following Mr. Wilk and some of my other board members with their events and visitings with my small district, but I did get a chance to visit Elizabeth Vaughn for their specialty program night and their gifted game night.

[00:48:51] I am excited to attend a few upcoming robotics competitions this weekend for middle school in the Eastern end. so that will be exciting. Want to remind everyone that specialty program applications are due February 1st.

[00:49:07] Please go to the website and look up all of the specialty programs that we have to offer here in the county. I think it is one of the premier things that sets Prince William County Schools apart from our surrounding districts. Please do not be discouraged if your student is not a 4.0 student, there is a program for everyone and I highly encourage you to have conversations with your students about all of the different options that are available.

[00:49:33] I also take every January as a moment to pause and celebrate our historically Greek fraternities and sororities. January happens to be the month that most of the Divine Nine celebrate their Founders Day. And I'd like to give a quick shout out to, excuse me, Alpha Kappa Psi Fraternity Incorporated, who celebrated on the 5th Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, which are my frat brothers on the fifth as well.

[00:50:03] Delta Sigma Theta sorority on the 13th. Miss Jessie is a member and as well as members of our staff here, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority Incorporated. Dr. McDade is a member. And of course, last but not least, my own Founders Day was Monday, excuse me, on Martin Luther King Day, Zeta Phi Beta sorority Incorporated.

[00:50:27] I just want to give them a special shout out and thank them for inviting me to speak as an elected official to some of their social action groups over the past weekend. And last but not least, I'd like to remind everyone that the General Assembly is now off and running.

[00:50:44] This will be a short 45-day session. I would encourage everyone to monitor the legislation that's coming out from both sides. I know that myself and some of my school board members, if not all of them, will be down at the Virginia Assembly on the 30th, I believe, when we lobby, we will continue and I will continue to advocate for full funding for our K through 12 education system and to advocate that they continue to fund and provide all of the necessary resources for public schools because public schools matter and we do love our public schools.

[00:51:21] So thank you, Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Lily Jessie of the Occoquan Magisterial District. - Thank you. First of all, I want to congratulate Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for Founders Day, but also for the 33rd Oratorical Contest, the 38th MLK Celebration that took place on Monday of this week.

[00:51:44] I also wanted to say to the fourth grade String students at Greenwoods, you were awesome. And it was standing room only. And there were over 100 students in that, in that strings group.

[00:52:03] Woodbridge High School had its honors celebration of students who were inducted into the honor society. And I am on the last part of my gratitude tour for Marshall. I did Marshall and we gave cups there and I will be at Occoquan and that will be the end.

[00:52:23] I went on a gratitude tour. I hope to get it done sooner, but I've been able to get to all those schools. And I think I have a slide for my next celebration. Do I have my slide? Look at this. Now, you know, I gave this cup every Friday morning.

[00:52:39] I always gave it to one person. There was only one time in my entire career where I gave everybody a cup. And that was the time when I was in a conference in DC and there was a lockdown. And the school was locked down until eight o'clock at night.

[00:52:55] And they were able to take care of it. And I gave everyone a cup. So I decided to give everyone a cup at Kerrydale. Kerrydale has been announced as one of 14 schools in the nation to receive an award from the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Award.

[00:53:16] And they have done a tremendous job. So when I was at Vaughn Elementary, my daughter, Jennifer, who by the way, if you met Jennifer, you know she's an actress, decided to do the Oprah thing with these people. and so she she did the you get a cup you get a cup you get a cup and it was really tremendous and she said to me she said mom i never thought people would be so crazy about a cup and i told her it's not the cup it's the thought and the celebration of people and to principals i go i

[00:53:53] don't know what to say to principals i celebrate you because i know you're all tired but i love you and i understand that you're working every single day and i will repeat the words of ron Edmonds and he says that he has never found a high-performing school where there was not a high-performing principals and I want to thank dr. McDade because you brought out the best in all of our principals thank you very much miss vice-chair Jen Wall Gainesville Magisterial District thank you I'm looking forward to all of the all-county music events that are coming up this

[00:54:30] weekend and next and in the following month and I know all-county orchestra is at Colgan high school on the 28th at 3:00 p.m. so good luck to all the students for participating in that. To the Ronald

Reagan middle student, Ms. Sakshi Gauda of the Gainesville District, I loved your speech at the MLK oratorical contest and congratulations for winning the best before the audience award.

[00:54:52] I attended a winter concert on January 6th that brought a huge smile to my face. It was at Battlefield, it was supposed to be held on our code orange day, but the students were determined to hold the concert anyway, so they used the same program and everything with old date and everything, the Christmas tree, everything.

[00:55:07] Anyway, it was awesome and it did prompt me to ask that perhaps we could refine code orange just a little bit and maybe we could have a re-evaluation time where if weather conditions are such that they become really mild, maybe we could have a separate determination of evening or afternoon activities.

[00:55:24] I don't know if that's a possibility, but it just prompted that in my mind. Last Wednesday, we held the work session on the capital improvement programs and I'm pleased that there are a lot of great things in the CIP for the Gainesville district and for the division as a whole. And I know this coming up budget season is going to be tough, the toughest one that we've experienced on this board because we've had really some good budget years the last three years, all things considered.

[00:55:50] But I know we have some important decisions to make. So I would appreciate feedback from the community, from my Gainesville district community in particular. So please reach out to me if you have thoughts once those documents get out on the website. I want to wish good luck to the end of the semester for students and teachers.

[00:56:09] I know there's a lot of extra work and flurry of activity that happens as the semester comes to close. And I, for our seniors who have been identified as National Merit Commended Scholars, may I share my personal congratulations. And Dr. McDade, I appreciate your statement and apology very much.

[00:56:26] And I agree that academic achievement is our core business here in Prince William County Schools. And I asked the division about this. I was curious, I'd never expected it to be something that, I was hoping it could be something that we could get ahead of and understand. I do think there may be additional questions that the public has and they may still want additional answers such as do we know what happened and have we had issues like this in the past?

[00:56:52] But I am happy to hear about the recommended notification procedures and the checks and balances and contacting national merit. I think those are good recommendations moving forward. So I really appreciate that. I strongly believe that all student achievement deserves to be recognized and I know how excited students get over even small acknowledgements of their success and to kids that does mean a lot.

[00:57:16] I just, you know, when they bring home that paper and they've got an A on it and they're so excited or a high score on the test that they studied really hard for or making the honor roll for a quarter where maybe they never had made that honor roll and they did and they have such a positive sense of accomplishment.

[00:57:33] How much more significant is a high score prestigious test and something I learned is that kids who are in that commended status or category they're in the top 3% of all high school students in the nation that is awesome and some of these students are who are in the commended status are in the top 1% this is just absolutely amazing considering how many high school students there are across the nation so I

know me it oh okay I'm sorry I know it may not mean much to colleges and these kids are successful But I believe it goes a long way for those students, helping them understand who they are and how important, how valued their efforts are.

[00:58:12] So I am over time, I'm so sorry. Thank you very much and good night. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. First off, I'd like to echo Dr. McDade's comments about the commendations for the National Merit Exam. And I think from my standpoint, I have been committed over the last four years to celebrate all of our successes, bringing them into the school board room, putting them in the communicator.

[00:58:44] Scoop was really developed by our communications team to celebrate the successes. So for our families that received Scoop, you've seen it and folks that have opened it up. We encourage our principals, all of our schools to celebrate their successes.

[00:59:01] And this clearly was a oversight. And I believe I too am responsible as a school board chair that, you know, we make sure we do our very best to make sure this doesn't happen again. And I think Dr. McDade has laid out a set of recommendations that I believe moving forward, we'll make sure that we don't allow this to happen again.

[00:59:24] So I appreciate the superintendent's efforts on this, but it's also our job to make sure that we're doing the best we can to continue to do this. And, you know, just reminding folks, you know, As Dr. McDade pointed out, our members pointed out, our budget process is coming up.

[00:59:43] And over the last four years, I've committed to making sure the vast majority of our budget goes to the classroom. We have increased per pupil spending by giving enormous raises over four years, cumulatively to our teachers. We have committed to making sure our principals have their desire, their budget needs met more so than ever before.

[01:00:06] We have been able to fund extracurricular programs at levels we hadn't seen ever in the past. And we continue to celebrate the successes that have come from that effort. As Ms. Wall points out, the budgets, and as Dr. McDade points out, the budgets coming up forward will be a little bit more challenging.

[01:00:25] We will continue to lobby the state and the Board of County Supervisors for more monies, as we always do. And just to point out some of the academic success that the school board has brought forward over the course of these last three years, we increased admissions from Prince William County to Thomas Jefferson.

[01:00:45] We increased the size of the governor's schools, adding more students to our governor's school. What that does is increases capacity at our IB, our Cambridge programs, our AP scholars programs, where more students who may have been in those programs are now moved up to the governor's schools, so we have more room and capacity.

[01:01:04] We've increased gifted learning programs. We've increased our CTE programs. We've increased our fine and performing arts commitments and investments. We've dramatically invested in athletics across the division, expanding sports to even the Noakesville school, which never had them before.

[01:01:20] We've committed to all sorts of efforts to improve our special education program, which was one of the highest priorities four years ago. This board undertook after our audit and continued effort with Dr. McDade's new changes in personnel and effort to continue to make that better.

[01:01:39] So, you know, we are highly focused this year and the superintendent you'll see in the upcoming budget on our efforts for the English learners. And so there is not one stone we don't leave, you know, we want to investigate every aspect of the school.

[01:01:54] We want to turn over every stone and make sure that we're doing the best we can at all levels. And so again, I want to thank everyone for this evening. I want shout out to, we have so many community groups that do work with our schools, the Pied Piper Theater, which is a children's theater, which has many of our students who participate in it, has a show called The Big Fish.

[01:02:13] It is January 28th, 29th at the Hilton Performing Arts Theater. Please go out and support our children's theater, our local children's theater. All of that is another opportunity for our students to participate in the fine and performing arts outside of the school. So supporting those, our community partners helps support them, which they support us and it's mutually beneficial.

[01:02:33] Thank you all and seeing there's no further business before this board, I will declare this meeting adjourned.



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