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# Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, March 15, 2023

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| Place | Prince William County School Board, Virginia |
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk3qGxKnCnk
- 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 this meeting the Prince William County School Board order. Pursuant to school board policy 139, school board member participation in meetings by electronic communication. School board member Diane Raulston will participate in this meeting through electronic means from her home due to a medical condition that prevents her physical attendance. The clerk will so note in the minutes of the meeting.

**[00:00:18]** A motion's in order for the approval meeting agenda. Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - Ms. Raulston, how do you vote?

**[00:00:33]** - Yes. - Ms. Raulston votes yes. We have a quorum. All in favor? - Aye.

**[00:00:48]** - Okay, moving on to the motion to enter closed session. The motion's in order. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

**[00:01:04]** One, to discuss with staff the appointment, transfer, release assignment, and promotion of specific officers and employees under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A1, 2, to discuss with division

counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A7 and 8, 3, to discuss and consult with legal counsel regarding requests for religious exemptions pertaining to specific students under Virginia code sections for section 2.2-3711A, 2 and 8, 4 to consult with

[00:01:43] staff and legal counsel regarding the legal requirements and procedures for collective bargaining by school board employees which requires legal advice and guidance as provided by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, 8 and 5 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 2.2-3711A19. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarpur. I second.

[00:02:19] Any discussion? Please vote. Ms. Raulston how do you vote? Yes. Ms. Raulston votes yes. The vote is eight yes unanimous motion passed. The Prince William County School

[00:02:38] Board will now enter closed session and return in approximately one hour. Prince

[00:03:47] Prince William County School Board will now reenter open session from closed session. Closed session certification is in order, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712, closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of March 15th, 2023, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:11] 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 a closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and two only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening this closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board. Do I have a second?

[00:04:35] Mr. Chairman. Ms. Williams. A second. Any discussion? Please vote. Ms. Raulston, how do you vote? Yes. Ms. Raulston votes yes. The vote is eight yes unanimous motion passed.

[00:04:56] Moving on to the closed session action items and motions in order for 9.01 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 closed session. - Do I have a second?

[00:05:11] - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarford. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote. Ms. Raulston, how do you vote? - Yes. - Ms. Raulston votes yes, 9.02.

[00:05:32] Thank you. Moving on to 9.02, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the requests for religious exemptions in case numbers RE22-16 through RE22-20. - Do I have a second?

[00:05:48] - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Any discussion, please vote. Ms. Raulston, how do you vote? - Yes. - Ms. Raulston votes yes.

[00:06:17] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, at this time we'll move on to the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Williams, you can lead us in the pledge today.

[00:06:46] Okay, thank you everyone. Now we'll move on to our launching Thriving Futures focus. It is time, again, for that most enjoyable portion of our school board meeting, Thriving Futures. We dedicate

this time during our meetings to recognize students, staff, members, and schools who've earned an honor award at the state or national level.

[00:07:06] We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County Public Schools, and the school board is proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments. I am pleased to introduce Mrs. Lily Jessie of the Occoquan District to recognize one of our indoor track and field state champions.

[00:07:24] Mrs. Jessie. - Thank you, Dr. C.

[00:07:41] It is my pleasure to recognize Woodbridge High School's Torian Clark Stewart, state champion and high jump. Torian's coaches are Kelly McGreal and Alton Green will come forward and say a few words.

[00:07:59] - Hello, my name is Torian Clark Stewart. I'm a state champion for high jump, clear 6'4", and I'll be attending Lincoln University up in Pennsylvania.

[00:08:15] - How are everybody doing? I'm Coach Green, I coach this young buck right here, Torian, he's been with us for four years. And I tell you, it wasn't an easy road. It wasn't an easy road. Just like any coaches that's standing behind me, it was a lot of, ugh, but he figured it out.

[00:08:33] He figured it out his senior year, he did what he was supposed to do, and I can't say how much we're pretty much proud of this young buck right here, this young athlete right here. I'm gonna say the rest of the words, let Coach go. - Well, I just wanna thank you all for having all the athletes here.

[00:08:51] Congratulations to everybody here. It's quite an achievement. I'm just gonna speak on behalf of Walt Torian, first of all, congratulations. We're incredibly proud of you. And I'm still looking forward to Outdoor Track. We're here, but we haven't started competing yet.

[00:09:07] And we're going for that second ring in June. But I just wanna say thank you, let you guys know as a board how incredible the track programs are in Prince William County. All the coaches, we're all very, very friendly with each other.

[00:09:22] We all cheer on each other's athletes. Like, I feel like when I see success of other teams that we have here, we all get the same glory out of it. So I just want you guys to know how awesome we are. Congratulations, everybody back there. And congratulations, Torian Clark Stewart.

[00:09:39] We're so proud of you. - Wonderful, thank you, Mrs. Jessie, and congratulations to Torian and the Woodbridge coaching staff. It is now my pleasure to introduce Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District.

[00:09:55] Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Lateef. It is my honor to recognize Taik Bui of Potomac High School, the state champion in triple jump. His coaches are Jeffrey Foy, Tracy Golden. I invite Taik's coaches forward to tell us a little bit more about this Potomac Panthers state champion.

[00:10:14] - Hello, my name is Taik Bui, class of 2024. I just want to thank everybody for the opportunity and thank my mother, my coaches, Coach Foy and Coach Golden, of course, and just glad to run track. - First of all, thank you for the school board having us here today.

[00:10:37] We do appreciate the opportunity to recognize all of these wonderful athletes for the job that they did during indoor track. Couple of things about Taik. He was a state champion in the triple jump. Just last week, he went up to the New Balance Nationals where he placed second place.

[00:10:56] So he is a runner-up in the national championships. Another feather in his hat. He is a junior. We expect a lot more out of him. So with that in mind, I do want to, again, thank all the coaches here, again, to reiterate what was said before.

[00:11:16] All the programs here kind of work together, especially when it comes down to specialty type events, One being the triple jump or others being like the pole vault and things like that. We kind of work together. We'd like to put another push towards getting us an indoor facility in this region.

[00:11:36] We absolutely, absolutely need something like that when we're competing against the folks down in 757 and the Hampton Roads region where they have two great facilities.

[00:11:51] We have none. So, you know, the reason why we can't have that for these athletes to participate at the highest level, which they're doing. without that. Last thing is, on behalf of Coach Foy and the other athletes that I coach, just want to say thank you for everything that we've been able to experience this year on the track. Looking forward to the outdoor season as well and coming back here to visit you again.

[00:12:21] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Wilkin. Congratulations to Taik and his coaches. We won't say the 757 again in here okay. It is now my privilege to introduce Mrs. Lisa Zargarpur from the Coles Magisterial District to introduce our state champions from the Colgan High School and Osborne Park High School. Mrs. Zargarpur. Thank you Dr. Lateef. Colgan High School can boast the state championship in the four by 400 meter relay. Elizabeth Yeboah Cody, Cadence Taylor,

[00:12:54] calencia taylor and som jones are the class six state champions yeah melissa tyrone is their proud coach melissa would you come forward and please say a few words thank you very much and first and foremost i wanted to thank the school board for having us here today as our other coaches have already said tonight we are so privileged to be in a county that has such a rich track and field program the support we've seen has been amazing and it's great

[00:13:29] to see these athletes do so well. I want to recognize our outstanding 4x4 team. This group of young ladies have been running together for the last two years, three juniors, Cadence Calenciennes-Salm, and one sophomore, Elizabeth. So we have a whole nother outdoor season and another indoor and outdoor season with these young ladies. Not only were they first in the 6A state meet, but they also went up to Boston this past weekend to compete in New Balance Nationals where the sprint medley relay that they ran on placed fifth in the nation and our four

[00:14:03] by four placed third overall in the nation. So we're very excited to see what they're going to do outdoor season and hopefully they can get another ring to add to their collection. I also would like to recognize Coach Harris who's with us today. Thank our athletic director Mr. Staples who came out to support us and Dr. Tim Healy who's also here supporting us today. Coach Harris is there Anything you'd like to add?

[00:14:34] Okay, thank you so much for having us. Osborne Park High School can also brag about a state champion in indoor track and field.

[00:14:49] Viviana Rodriguez is the state champion in the pole vault. Her coach is Jerry McAvoy. Coach McAvoy, would you please come forward and share a little bit about Viviana? - I'd like to also reiterate our thanks for having us and recognizing these wonderful athletes.

[00:15:05] I think they deserve it every bit. So, yeah, every one of them. So, you know, I told Viviana when she first started that it would take two solid years to learn how to do the pole vault.

[00:15:21] She's a quick learner. She has now received her second state championship and she's a junior and, you know, also competed up at New Balance and tied her PR while she was up there.

[00:15:36] So she has done very well to date and a few more puzzle pieces to put together, and I can't wait to see the end result. She is gonna go. So, she did very, very well, and she will continue.

[00:15:54] So, thank you again very much. - Okay, well congratulations to our Colgan Charks Relay Team and to the pole vault champ, Viviana, and coaches. It's now my pleasure to introduce Mrs. Adele Jackson of the Brentsville District to introduce our final group of students.

[00:16:16] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. It is my absolute pleasure to share patrick larry from patriot high school is our state champion in the 1600 meter for indoor track patrick's coach is james demarco who is invited to come forth and share a little bit about patrick members of the school board thank you so much for having us here tonight again i've been coaching for 25 years most of those years as a head coach and the relationships here in prince william county among the coaches has been phenomenal as a first year head coach in this area very welcoming all the

[00:16:53] coaches working together helping each other's athletes rooting for each other's athletes it's such a great scene when you come to a track and field competition so to the other head coaches thank you so much for your support and for helping making all our kids better in prince william county i have the honor tonight to introduce senior patrick lowry at patriot high school patrick i got to start working with him last year when i first came into town as an assistant coach And he had the work ethic, had the gift, but he just needed time.

[00:17:24] And I said, you know, if you put the work in all summer, all fall and winter next year, this could be a very different thing. He barely got into the state meet last year. And this year, he not only won the regional title in the mile in the thousand, he went on to the state championships and ran a 417 mile over 20 seconds faster than last year.

[00:17:43] And, again, one of the first things when people I talked to after this happened and was the Woodbridge coach coming up and goes, that was amazing, so great. And her athlete was also in that race who also had an amazing day. But that's the relationships our coaches have.

[00:17:59] Patrick just worked his tail off all year, really believed and put the work in. Patrick next year will be going to Virginia Military Institute. Well, he'll be studying international relations and Homeland Security. And he'll be running cross country and track and field there on a track and field scholarship.

[00:18:16] So Patrick, I'm so proud of you. believed you know I told you this is what it takes to get to this level you believed in it you put the work in you put the time in and that's why you're here among these other sensational athletes congratulations it's wonderful congratulations Patrick we also have another state champion in indoor track for Brentsville District High School Dylan Sawyer who could not be here tonight and we will recognize him in April Brentsville District High School

[00:18:54] and PwC has made history this year in women's wrestling on February 24th and 25th, Unity Reed High School hosted the first ever Virginia High School Leagues Women Wrestling Championship. It's good to see you here again, May, where we saw you here last year. May Kyler is the first ever girls state

wrestling champ from Brentsville District High School and one of the first state champs in the state. This year, May competed in all, excuse me, competed in three all-girls

[00:19:32] tournaments including the state tournament with 11 pins all in the first period. May's coaches are Richard Adams and Brett Stein. Coach Adams could not be here tonight but coach Stein is here to make a few remarks about May. Again congratulations. Dr. McDade and members of board thanks again just as everybody else has said thank you for having us and honoring our state champs. We do have some incredible sports programs here in Prince William County so it's really cool to have everybody. Now as we make a massive left turn away from track and field and jump into the world the world of wrestling. What May Kyler has done this year

[00:20:07] is no small achievement. This year like we heard from you guys May has won the state tournament that is the first one ever sanctioned by the Virginia High School League and is the first and only state champion for the VHSL under Prince William County. So that is a quite a feat that we have had, and May has worked extremely hard to get to this point, and wrestling in the state of Virginia has worked extremely hard to get to this point as well to have the first ever VHSL state tournament, which was actually something very cool because Brentsville was able to host

[00:20:45] it this year at Unity Reed, and it was a lot of fun, and it was our honor to be able to put on such a great event. But going back to May, this year she did compete in three nationally ranked tournaments where she swept first place in all of those different tournaments. Currently, this season, she was 24-0 wrestling any female opponents, so she was undefeated this year.

[00:21:09] She was undefeated last year as well, wrestling against girls in the state of Virginia, and she continues to kind of put her mark here on Virginia wrestling as a figurehead for women's wrestling here in the state of Virginia. So, incredibly proud of May.

[00:21:25] She currently also is ranked 18th in the country at 144 pounds. And she is, once again, just an incredible athlete to watch, coach. She works extremely hard, does not complain. And she's one of our extreme role models for our program.

[00:21:42] So thank you, May.

[00:21:51] Congratulations to our indoor track and field champions and to our historic women's wrestling state champion. Before turning this over to our superintendent, I'd like all the parents and family members here supporting our student-athletes to stand and be recognized. If we have our parents here, you guys have done all the terrific work in getting them ready and prepared for this moment.

[00:22:19] Thank you all so much. Dr. McDade. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations to all of our athletes, our indoor track and field state champions from Brentsville, Cogan, Osborne Park, Patriot, Potomac, and Woodbridge High School. We're also incredibly proud of you. Your perseverance and dedication is what got you here today.

[00:22:37] Keep shining. May is absolutely impressive. And I had an opportunity to see that, witness it firsthand. The only thing better than being able to host the wrestling tournament here in Prince William County was to see our very own student athlete May walk away with the state championship.

[00:22:55] Congratulations, we're proud of you. Thank you to all of our coaches for all of your hard work and dedication, your passion and commitment for our students, our principals that are here that support

the programming in our schools, and to all of our parents for your continued support of not only our programming, but all of the hard work that you put in and time that you put in to help support your student athletes to go for their dreams.

[00:23:22] So thank you all so much. - Okay, with that, we'll ask May to come up front. We'll take a picture with May, and then after that, we'll take a picture

[00:23:30] with our indoor athletes, our track athletes.

[00:27:29] - Keep the smile. - Yes, please. - No mean face.

[00:27:50] - Took a month, so I hope you can find a good one there.

[00:28:42] - Fantastic, that is great. Okay, next, moving on to - Adoption of the consent agenda, Ms. Wahl, 12.01. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended.

[00:28:59] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote. Ms. Raulston, how do you vote? - Yes. - Ms. Raulston votes yes.

[00:29:22] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to citizen comment time. Those citizens who've signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. the citizen comment period for regular school board meetings and one hour citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:29:40] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you will be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order.

[00:29:59] Tonight we have 12 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. I'll call the first four up together or at the same time, Sophia Wright, Mitchell Schofield, Chance Williams, Jacob Bocosa.

[00:30:36] - Good evening, everyone. My name is Sophia Wright and I'm a sophomore from Forest Park High School and my address is on file. I would like to start off by thanking the school board and Dr. McDade for allowing us to speak. I've come here on behalf of the student staff of the seventh annual suicide awareness walk.

[00:30:55] The walk will take place May 6th from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Forest Park High School. We will begin the event in the Forest Park High School gym. We will have multiple people speaking about their connections to mental health. There will also be local, state, federal, and school officials speaking.

[00:31:15] Different organizations will be present, including Freeze Bullying for Payton and Caring Angels Therapy Dogs. After the speeches, everyone in attendance will participate in the 3.2 mile walk. Along the route, there'll be posters with inspirational messages and statistics about suicide.

[00:31:36] We have put this walk together for the past seven years because the cause is immensely important. Suicide rates have been increasing rapidly in recent years and we want to bring attention to it. People struggle with mental health every day and you may not even realize it.

[00:31:53] One of the reasons I'm helping with the Forest Park High School Suicide Awareness Walk is because I feel like my peers are being desensitized to suicide. Every day I hear kids saying that they want to kill themselves because of a bad grade, or because of an awkward situation, or because they got their phone taken away.

[00:32:12] "I want to kill myself" should not be a phrase used multiple times a day. I don't think people realize that suicide is a very real thing and it shouldn't be something you joke about. Saying you want to kill yourself is a cry for help.

[00:32:28] According to the CDC, more than 4 in 10 students feel persistently sad or hopeless, and nearly one third experienced poor mental health. In 2021, more than one in five students seriously considered attempting suicide.

[00:32:44] The CDC also says the good news is that teens are resilient and we know what works to support their mental health, feeling connected to school and family. We can all do more to help those who are struggling and the suicide awareness walk is the first step.

[00:33:03] Please come on May 6th to show your support. You are not alone. - Mitchell Schofield. - Good evening, my name is Mitchell Schofield. I'm a junior at Forest Park High School.

[00:33:19] My address is on file. I'm here to bring attention to and address the stigma of suicide. As you are aware, students in our schools are experiencing poor mental health for a variety of reasons. These feelings were found to be more common among LGBTQ+ students, female students, and students across racial and ethnic groups.

[00:33:39] According to the CDC, nearly half of LGBTQ+ students in 2021, seriously consider attempting suicide. There is an increased pressure on students to achieve, join clubs and teams, and do well on the many tests we are required to take.

[00:33:56] We watch siblings, and many of us have jobs to help support our families. Social media is another aspect that is taking a big toll on our minds. It has a constant barrage of influence that runs the gamut. Social media also has unrealistic views of people's lives.

[00:34:14] This can lead to anxiety, depression, and irregular sleep patterns. Social media can also have a bad influence on its users. An example of this is YouTube Kids, which has videos that glorify suicide, self-harm, exploitation, and simulated school shootings.

[00:34:31] It's meant for kids eight years and under. With all of these outside stimuli and pressure, students need even more help with rebuilding self-esteem and climbing out of the hole of depression. We cannot do it on our own. Our schools need more social workers and more psychologists so that our students can get the help they need.

[00:34:53] Join us on May 6th and help us put an end to the stigma. Thank you. - Thank you, Chance Williams. - Good evening, my name is Chance Williams. I'm a senior at Forest Park High School and my address is on file.

[00:35:10] I want to express to this board, who I've sat alongside for various board meetings as a student representative, that mental health issues and struggles affect everyone. I have struggled with mental health throughout my education, mistaking depression for exhaustion. This issue, while it seems so far away, is closer than you may think.

[00:35:31] At my last board meeting, I talked about how mental health affects every aspect of all Prince William County students and their time in school. Sometimes even I find it a struggle to get out of bed to go to school. Throughout middle school, I struggled with depression and I found my way to lighter thoughts through my activities and my friends.

[00:35:49] But there are students in all districts who may not have that. This is not an issue that can be ignored or handled later. This is a problem students struggle with right now. The Forest Park Suicide Awareness Walk continues to bring light to a dark issue, one many choose to ignore.

[00:36:07] We simply cannot ignore this issue anymore. When I speak from the dais, I speak as a voice of students across the county. From this side of the dais, I speak as Chance Williams, and I continue to struggle with mental health issues. Just a few weeks ago, I found myself sleeping for over 14 hours straight and continued to convince myself it was exhaustion, that I was tired, when in truth, I was depressed.

[00:36:29] I could not find the energy to get out of bed and do the things that were expected of me. Truthfully, I find my feelings difficult to put into words because I always feared what would happen if I shared these thoughts out loud. But the board needs to hear this. To understand that this isn't happening somewhere else, it's happening here.

[00:36:48] This issue affects everyone, your students and your staff. This isn't a battle you can win with one move, one action. It needs work. The board has to first acknowledge the issue that is plaguing our county.

[00:37:04] Then it has to go to work to fix it. To repeat my previous closer, mental health, depression, and thoughts of suicide are ailing your students. How you address it could be the cure. Help us end the stigma.

[00:37:19] Thank you. - Jacob Bocosa. - Good evening. My name is Jacob Bocosa. I'm a senior at Forest Park High School, and my address is on file.

[00:37:37] This is the second suicide awareness walk that I'm participating in to give tribute to a friend that lost her life to suicide. She was a beacon of light that left too soon and left many feeling devastated.

[00:37:53] This event, I support this event because it brings everyone together in honor of a subject that needs to be talked about. Suicide is a topic that resonates with everyone and it brings us all together so that we can lift each other up.

[00:38:13] This event allows others to tell their stories so that we can understand the significance of mental health in our community. You should come not only to bring awareness, but to gain supplementary knowledge that can be used in your personal life.

[00:38:30] The talk of suicide is not something that should ever be taboo. No one is alone. We just need to listen and reach out to one another to give support. We should stand against this crisis to promote positivity and inclusivity for all, regardless of what they've been through.

[00:38:54] Help us end the stigma. My friend was someone who was always positive, despite the adversities. She always tried to show a smile, even during the dark days.

[00:39:10] I wish she had shared with me, or someone, what she was going through. People are afraid to talk about mental health because they worry about perception.

[00:39:25] We all know many people who struggle. Let them know you are always available to listen. Ask questions. Don't take "I'm okay" as the gospel. My friend's life was unfortunately lost due to cyber bullying.

[00:39:45] She was only in eighth grade. Eighth grade. Through my grief, I was able to move past this tragic event with the support of my friends and the members who made this event possible.

[00:40:02] The ultimate goal is for us to watch walk with courage, strength, and pride to promote positivity to the hearts of those who want their voices to be heard. I welcome you all to walk with us at Forest Park High School.

[00:40:21] We begin in the gym at 8:30 a.m. All of us working together can end the stigma. We will see you on May 6th. - Thank you.

[00:40:38] - Thank you. Next up we have Jennifer Roberts.

[00:41:00] - Good evening, Chairman Lateef, Vice Chairwoman Wall, school board members, Dr. McDade and district leaders. I am Jennifer Roberts. I reside in the Gainesville district and my address is on file. As the mother of one Prince William County student, the mother of one former Prince William County school student and an active member of my community, I remain deeply disturbed by the lack of will and courage that some employees continue to demonstrate the district's commitment to family and community engagement. I by no means mean to paint all educators with a broad brush and recognize that we have educators in this district who are truly

[00:41:39] invested in student and family success, but we also have bad actors. I am before you to advocate for district policies that detail the rules of engagement by which district employees must participate with parents, guardians and community members. A district employee should not be able to avoid parents and guardians who are seeking effective resolutions to real issues, disengage from conversations when they become uncomfortable, and keep parents waiting for responses in hopes that we will forget or give up altogether. I am not only advocating for my children's

[00:42:17] educational experience but for other families in the district who have shared their stories with me. One parent shared that she had to wait weeks to get a conference with one of her students teachers to discuss her students grades because the teacher did not understand why she wanted to meet when the students grades were not declining. Another mom shared how her elementary school student was harassed because of her hairstyle and was spit on and nothing was done by the administration to resolve the issue despite parent advocacy students at a district middle school have been targeted and berated by employees

[00:42:55] in front of their peers and parents and students were never given closure as to how the issue was addressed with the teacher what they do see however is that the same teacher is still employed parents are not seeing that employees are being held accountable and that is a problem conversations that end in thank you for bringing this attend this issue to my attention but i am not at liberty to disclose how this was addressed offer no assurance whatsoever that our issues are being heard investigated and resolved the district has protocols to hold students accountable for their behavior there also need to be policies

[00:43:34] that are enforced that allow parents families and community members to hold staff members accountable and to know how that accountability is implemented it is possible it is impossible to build partnership when parents cannot trust educators. Thank you. Amanda Locklear. And after that, just so you

all know, is Eileen Devereaux, Richard Jesse, and Oveta Scott. Amanda Locklear. Good evening. Name is Amanda Locklear. My address is on file. I'm the proud parent

[00:44:10] of three completely different individuals. Two who are current Prince William County students. One actually happens to be one of the many special education students within Prince William County. This has been an interesting year say the least. I've spent countless hours trying to make sure my son receives a free appropriate public education where his accommodations are being followed and he is progressing with an evidence-based curriculum based on his individualized needs. Nothing more than any child should be

[00:44:46] receiving. Through my endeavors this year, I've spoken on numerous occasions to the Parent Resource Center, PEATC, Virginia Department of Education, Prince William County Office of Special Education, AIMS Web Plus, the Quantico Military Liaison, because we're retired military personnel, the Federal Department of Education, various parents, the Ombudsman, the FOIA officer, administrators, case managers, teachers, etc., and I've sat in and participated in Prince William County SEAC committee meetings. Most recently, without going into specific detail, I've had to

[00:45:25] to navigate through the Prince William County policies and regulations, focusing particularly on special education, student educational records, and recording parent conferences, and of course, our procedural safeguards. Due to what I have found and questions that I've had, I've reached out to the Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, the Associate Superintendent of Special Education, the Chief of Staff, Division Counsel, FERPA Compliance Officer, and Ms. Jennifer Wall.

[00:45:54] We are all aware Virginia laws require school boards to establish policies designed to provide that public education be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property and supportive of individual rights. More importantly though, policies provide guidance, clarity, consistency, establish rules and procedures and create standards as well as expectations and accountability for everyone.

[00:46:23] Without these, people create their own. The risk of liability increases and schools lack the structure and function necessary to provide the educational needs or in terms of idea or special education requirements of students.

[00:46:42] I ask and encourage you to look at some of the policies I have mentioned. It is time they be updated and clarified. Reach out to me for more information, conduct a case study utilizing the process and events that have occurred with my family over this year.

[00:47:02] Thank you. - Eileen Devereaux. - I'm Eileen Devereaux, the Gainesville District.

[00:47:17] Human suffering and joy are fundamental components of the human experience. At this very moment, you can find pain and beauty throughout the world across race, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic status, and so on. It's seemingly universal.

[00:47:32] Interesting, having privilege does not exclude you for pain or hardships. Privilege simply means that in some circumstances, your specific hardships not related to, or correlated to your race, gender, physical, intellectual ability, or sexuality, et cetera.

[00:47:49] Now, there are some that say that students can overcome their hardships by having involved parents that inspire hardworking children. I agree that parental involvement is critically important as

parent service of children's lifelong teachers. Over the past several weeks, I've heard from various educated, involved, and hardworking parents the children are not achieving success in this district.

[00:48:10] Although the families I'm referring to are African-American, I believe that some of what I share also applies to others as well. It's been my observation that if your child sits in his or her assigned seat and completes his or her assigned worksheet, that child will have a rather uneventful and smooth experience in Prince William County.

[00:48:29] However, if that same child requires anything different, maybe that child needs a gift of referral, extended AP robotics, or the child needs additional support, such as an IDP, academic mediation, peer restorative mediation or intervention, then that's when the smooth sailing gets rough and turbulent problems start.

[00:48:45] It's almost like the only acceptable option is to be content being invisible and staying in that seat. And for some, the only way to get out that assigned seat, that confining seat, is that you must have capable and involved, hardworking parents that relentlessly have to advocate for their children.

[00:49:01] This is your district, this is your students today. And so you may say, "Well, I didn't know." Okay, well, for that issue, we're gonna call that organizational coherence. We don't allow for candid but respectful conversations that allow us to discuss and document microaggressions against our children in an intentional and global way.

[00:49:22] Every school is its own site-based island, but we want family and community engagement, but we're not allowed to organize and voice our concerns together. But we're supposed to be committed positive culture and climates we can do better but we cannot fix what we willfully choose not to see but we instead we ignore we need to follow and create safe places for students parents teachers and administrators where they can feel heard and validated then we can take meaningful action and i know about the privacy concerns and policies but they are not a shield for paralysis

[00:49:57] our indifference our students are suffering and we must don't care as long as they sit in their assigned seat and complete their assigned worksheet we can do better thank you Richard Jesse after mr. Jesse will be a vet of Scott Chantel Rock Chris Funderburg and Julia Biggins a vet of Scott or I mean mr.

[00:50:22] Jesse sorry good evening name is Richard Jesse my dress is on file a couple of things I want to talk to you about today one is that I see we have the school naming on the agenda, I think, for tonight. I would like to encourage all the board members, and I know some of you don't want to name a school after the person, you'd rather name them after a locality or something like that. Two things I would like to say about that. First of all, people who do things, good things, deserve to have recognition. I know it's a lot more work when you

[00:50:58] have a contentious group of people wanting one name here and another another person but that's part of the the the thing about this naming it is important it is honorable and it's something that people should have most of the towns or city you're going to name the school after if you just do that is our name after some person so you know it got there and i just encourage you the other thing that I would like this board to do is to make sure you follow the rule that makes a person preferences

[00:51:37] given to significant educational endeavors within the county. The other topic is, again, I thought I hit the jackpot today when the first two or three students were able to speak to the board during the presentations.

[00:52:00] I would encourage, allow more students to speak. If there's a team, maybe one other person speak, but every student up here should have a chance to speak to the board, to say thank you, you know, I won this award, and so forth.

[00:52:20] I, nothing against the coaches, but the students are the one that we should be honoring. The last thing I would say is, again, I think I hit the JAPOC tonight about three meetings ago, maybe four.

[00:52:36] I suggested that this school board consider, this division consider an indoor track facility for this new high school. I think it's time. I've talked to Ken Bodie, my supervisor.

[00:52:54] He is in favor of that. I think we can get the support from the county and some other organization to pay for it, but I think it's time for us to have an indoor track associated, maybe not exactly attached to the school, but very close to the school.

[00:53:12] Thank you. - Oveta Scott.

[00:53:30] - Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the board, Mr. Chairman, Dr. McDade. My name is Oveta Scott, and my address is on file with the clerk. Tonight, I would like to express my appreciation proposed budget for our upcoming school year the proposed the proposed budget is keeping with the promise of a step and cost of living increase for all educators i support the attention to the replacement of the bus radios and the goal of security personnel at all prince william county schools my concern is the 4.5 million for international faculty and the 3.5 million for

[00:54:07] recruitment now i'm for new teachers and diversity at all schools but wouldn't you agree that some of these funds can go to the retainment of qualified teachers let's look at the 214 day instructional coach versus the 195 day title one teachers reading and math coaches like myself i work with two grade levels at my school one sol and a non-sol grade i attend every planning and plc meeting which equals about four weeks i assist in creating supplemental content material for each

[00:54:45] unit each unit technical enhanced lessons and small group instruction for struggling learners i have about eight classrooms that i engage with but sometimes i'm called for testing or to provide substitute coverage or any other school assistance that requires immediate attention i share my duties with you not to complain i like it but to shed light on how my job consists of more tasks than others but is set at the same rate of pay as a regular 195 educator i

[00:55:23] have shared ideas that don't cost additional monies and would not impede on the educational process with this board i belong to a team of three math specialists and we came up with the idea of me covering the math block, that way I could get my teaching fix in, and so that one of the other two can provide feedback and coaching to a struggling teacher.

[00:55:48] We were told by our admin that this was not allowed. If we needed to meet, it had to happen during planning or outside the school hours. I asked you why is this wrong? This was an awesome example of teamwork that allowed for a certified personnel, professional, to teach students during a math block and provide capacity to a teacher.

[00:56:18] I hope you reflect on this when you see the data for the second quarter. If I'm not the professional that you claim, then I need to exit this road because it's not worth my energy and talent. Thank you. - Chantel Rock.

[00:56:42] - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board. My name is Chantel Rock and I reside in Woodbridge District. September 13th, 2022 is a day as a mother and a parent that I will never forget. I received an emotional telephone call from my husband informing me that there was a gun inside Freedom High School.

[00:57:04] My heart immediately sank. I did what any concerned parent would do. I rushed to the school to get to my children. Upon my arrival, I noticed fathers standing anxiously at the door, frustrated and ready to enter the school, mothers frantically trying to contact their children to ensure they were okay, parents of Hispanic descent trying to comprehend and understand in their native language what was happening.

[00:57:32] It was heartbreaking to witness and experience. Guess what? We are still experiencing the increase in violence at Freedom today. Fights happen during near daily at Freedom. Some might have you to believe this is typical boy behavior or teen behavior, but is it?

[00:57:54] I am heartbroken and devastated at the continuation of violence happening in our schools, specifically, freedom. It is my and my children's lived experience daily. Just yesterday, a 14-year-old was arrested and charged with bringing knives to the school.

[00:58:14] He hid them in his pocket while engaging in a physical altercation. I asked my children each day how was school, and it never fails for one of them to tell me about a gang fight, a fight, vaping in the bathrooms, et cetera.

[00:58:31] One even shared that when he went into the bathroom stall, he noticed a Miller Lite beer can inside the toilet. He did report it. This is not just happening at Freedom. On Friday, a 17-year-old who attends Forest Park was arrested for chasing students with a stun gun out of the bathroom.

[00:58:53] This is too much. A call for the community to lift his voice and demand immediate action. We, the community and the school board, have a responsibility to protect the innocent lives of our students.

[00:59:08] and even those students who feel turning to a weapon is the best way to resolve an issue. You were elected by the people in your community to represent our values, views, and desires to be the community's voice.

[00:59:24] The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people. Do your ears ring with the community's voice or your own? Thank you. - Chris Funderburg.

[00:59:49] - My name's Chris Funderburg and my address is on file. And I appreciate these students who came up here to talk about suicide awareness. I know it's a big issue. Even back in my day in high school, there were far too many people that suffered from it.

[01:00:06] But you guys have put limits on what we can and can't do up here, specifically signs and banners and things of that nature. And if you don't follow your own rules, what example does that set for staff and students? So that's all I gotta say about that.

[01:00:23] What I'm actually here about is to discuss the inappropriate books in school libraries again. Don't worry, I'm not gonna read from any of them. But this isn't about banning books, it's providing age appropriate books for kids.

[01:00:39] Recently a kindergartner brought home a book called Mama and Mommy, a book about a kid with two moms, which is fine, I know kids that have two moms. That's not an issue. The problem is it was a

kindergartner. When the mother spoke to the principal about it, The response was that the parent should talk to their child about gay couples.

[01:01:03] Problem being, a kindergartner cannot understand something like that. They cannot differentiate between what is a friend and what is sexuality. If you were to tell a kindergartner, "Oh, well, a gay couple is when a boy likes a boy or a girl likes a girl," they're going to say, "Oh, I must be gay because my friends are girls."

[01:01:23] I think you can understand the road that is going to go down. If parents want to teach their children about that, that's fine, but I don't think it should be forced on parents who aren't ready to have that conversation. There are still gender identity books designed for kindergartners in the schools, such as What Riley Wore, Julian is a Mermaid, and Carlos Gomez Freestyles, all which support drag, cross-dressing, and transgender ideology for kindergartners.

[01:01:54] There are sexually explicit books in middle and high school, and I know some work is being done to do this, but it's just not enough at this point. So just to give you a small list of some of the ones I've found, there's Anatomy of a Boyfriend, Red Hood, Boy Toy, Jesus Land a Memoir, The Opposite of Innocent, A Court of Mist and Fury, A Court of Frost and Starlight, A Court of Silver Flames, A Court of Thorns and Roses, A Court of Wings and Ruin, Fun Home, A Family Tragicomic, Milk and Honey, What Girls Are Made Of, All Boys Aren't Blue, Blankets, An Illustrated Novel, Blazed, The

[01:02:32] Duff, Empire of Storms, Forever, Forever a Year, and that's by no means an exhaustive list. It's just a small fraction of what I've come across. The current method for requesting books to be removed is too easy for the staff to game, and I'll get into more detail about that next time. Thank you. Julia Biggins. Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My name is Dr. Julia Biggins. I live in the Kohl's district and my address is on file. Tonight, I

[01:03:10] would like to address the issue of safety in our schools, specifically one of the key budget initiatives for fiscal year 2024, their proposed weapons scanning technology. Right now, the school board is considering a $15 million investment in weapons detection technology for our schools, along with other security-based technology investments.

[01:03:30] While no school or parent wants guns or other weapons brought into our schools, especially after the news this week out of Freedom High School, I fear that the school board is once again looking for a quick fix to a much larger and systemic issue of mental health in our school, as we heard from the Forest Park High School students tonight.

[01:03:48] And the division is doing so on a fast track with little details released to the public. I attended two of the three community listening sessions where division staff was hard pressed to provide operational details for the scanners, but were quick to indicate that educators and front office staff, rather than trained security staff, would be manning these scanners every day.

[01:04:09] Most alarming was the discussion at the Freedom High School session, one of the few, if not the only school in the district where weapons have been brought into the school, where the conversation focused on drugs and bullying, neither of which the weapon scanners can address. The school board has already invested millions of dollars in technologies to keep the students safe from outside threats, but what have they done to address the root cause of weapons in our schools?

[01:04:35] What have they done to make kids feel safe at schools from threats inside, such as bullies? With the clear lack of consistent repercussions for bullying, how safe do our students in the LGBTQ, special education, or English language learners communities feel at school?

[01:04:52] I call on the school board and Dr. McDade to do more hand in hand with this proposed new weapons technology and look at the larger picture, the root cause for why guns may be brought to school in the first place. Along with the introduction of more and more technology for outside threats, I call on the school board to provide more resources to counselors, opportunities to enhance mental health curriculum, and to establish and consistently enforce consequences for bullying in all of our schools throughout the district.

[01:05:21] Thank you. that wraps up citizen comment time moving on to 1401 the fiscal year 2024 budget and capital improvement plan approval a motion is in order mrs. wall vice chairwoman no mrs. wall mr. chairman i move that the prince william county school board approve the fiscal year 2024 cip by project and the fiscal year 2024 school division budget in the total amount of two billion point three

[01:06:00] 1,000 million 611,316 and further to approve the revenue sharing agreement between the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors and the Prince William County School Board that provides 57.23% of general county revenues to be transferred to the school division for the operations of fiscal year 2024 and further three direct the superintendent to forward the requested school budget by fund totals to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and And further, four, request the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to approve and

[01:06:36] appropriate the fiscal year 2024 school division budget by lump sum appropriation in the amount of $2,371,611,316 by fund totals as in previous years. Mr. Chairman?

[01:06:51] I have a second. Mr. Chairman? Ms. Williams? I'd like to second. Any discussion? Mr. Wilk? Go, buddy. I had something else I was thinking. um pursuant to the Virginia Conflict of Interest Act I'm informing the public that my wife is an amazing and long-standing employee and a teacher in Prince William County Schools but I am able to participate fairly in this transaction which applies to all Prince William County School employees thank

[01:07:25] you mr. Wilk mr. Wallingford do we have any updates anything we need to know or dr. McDade sorry dr. Lateef members of the board and dr. McDade on a normal evening in this budget adoption process I wouldn't be here but I do have two or three items that I need to update the board on the first is as a result of the conversations that took place at the work session at the markup work session

[01:08:02] the item for the salary increase for the board is being removed from the budget the second item that I need to update you on is the fact that we are adding the 14.8 million dollars into this number that you're adopting tonight that's the 14.8 million dollars that the Board of County Supervisors increased the county revenue to us on the 28th this is a technical issue we need to add

[01:08:39] it so that our budget reconciles to their budget those funds will be placed in reserves and when we know the outcome of the conversations that the General Assembly are having then we'll come back to this board to adjust the budgets the final item that I want to draw your attention to is for the first time this year we've attached a schedule that details the projects that you are approving in this year's CIP that total to just a little over 511 million

[01:09:14] dollars. Thank you. Dr. McDade. Mr. Chairman, those are all of the updates. I just want to reiterate that everything that has been presented in the budget does align to our strategic plan, keeping in mind that our strategic plan was developed with a diverse body of stakeholders. Over 4,000 stakeholders have provided input into our strategic plan, which includes all of our advisory councils, as well as focus groups for staff, administration, as well as the board and community leaders.

[01:09:48] And so this year's budget, like last year's budget, is being driven by our priorities. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Any questions? Okay, at this point, again, we've gone through markup work session and had significant time working on this.

[01:10:08] At this point, after the board approves this budget, we will be presenting the budget to the Board of County Supervisors, I think in the first week of April. And then we'll await any final adjustments to the budget from the General Assembly in case there's whatever changes, they move with the new budget, the rest of the budget.

[01:10:26] Is that correct, Mr. Wallingford? And then just to point out, 'cause I think it's important, Dr. McDade, that this budget is consistent with our record of maintaining fiscal responsibility, keeping our AAA bond rating, and making sure that we're responsible with debt that we're selling, correct?

[01:10:47] - That's correct. - All right. Okay, at this point, I'd ask the board to please vote on the fiscal year 2024 budget as moved by Vice Chair Wall and seconded by Ms. Williams. Ms. Raulston, how do you vote? - Yes. - Ms. Raulston votes yes.

[01:11:06] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - That is a unanimous vote for this year's budget. Thank you for all of your work. To the board members, Ms. Wallingford, your team, Dr. McDade, thank you very much. That is our first step toward next year's budget. We are now moving on to, I was actually closing up 'cause I thought that was the end of the meeting, but it's not, unfortunately, it is not.

[01:11:32] What are we on, 15? - 15.01. - Thank you, moving on to 15.01, update on Rosemont-Lewis Elementary School naming. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have our Chief Operating Officer, Vernon Bach here to present an update on the Rosemont-Lewis Elementary School naming process.

[01:11:49] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board. I wanna thank you first for providing us with this opportunity to share with you an update about the upcoming naming process for our new elementary school that we have been calling Rosemount-Lewis. I will say it is a beautiful school.

[01:12:05] We're really looking forward to this school coming online for the fall. And so I'd like to introduce to you, we have here with us Matt Townsend tonight who's gonna provide to you this update. Matt is one of our supervisors in our facilities department and he oversees capital improvement planning and land acquisition.

[01:12:23] So at this point, I'm gonna turn it over to Matt. - Thank you, Vern. Good evening, Chairman Lateef, members of the school board, and Dr. McDade.

[01:12:41] As Vern said, my name is Matthew Townsend. I'm the supervisor of CIP and land acquisition in the facilities department. And I have the pleasure to facilitate the naming process on behalf of the naming

committee for our newest elementary school, which has been referred thus far by its planning name of Rosemont Lewis Elementary School.

[01:13:01] Now that the school board has approved the boundaries and we know who's gonna be attending the new school, the next step in the process to get this building ready to open is to approve a name. I just have a brief presentation highlighting the applicable policy and regulation for this process as well as touching on some key milestone dates to keep in mind for the process.

[01:13:27] Policy 854 calls for the creation of a naming committee and specifies that the naming committee is going to be producing naming recommendations. However, the ultimate approval of the school facility name as a responsibility for the entire school board.

[01:13:45] Meanwhile, Regulation 854-1 stipulates the composition of the naming committee to include the chairman at large, Dr. Lateef, the member whose district the new facility is located within, and that's the Brentsville district, Ms. Jackson, as well as any board member whose district is overlapped by any portion of the attendance area for the new school.

[01:14:09] And part of Rosemont-Lewis' attendance area does cross into the Gainesville district. So we have Ms. Wall on the naming committee as well. This committee, or this regulation rather, also provides some requirements, mainly at least one community meeting, as well as a method of collecting electronic submissions to collect suggestions from the community.

[01:14:34] And we are accomplishing both of those in our process, and I'll touch on that in just one second. Regulation 854-1 also provides some non-exclusive naming criteria for the naming committee to consider along through the process, including geographic elements, historical items or historical significance, and names of living or deceased persons who have made significant service

[01:15:08] contributions while noting that if a name is ultimately selected, selection preference shall be given to those individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of education, particularly within Prince William County.

[01:15:29] We put together a pretty robust process this year with more meetings than are minimally required by our regulation in an effort to really drive that citizen and community engagement in the process. The process starts tonight as I'm laying out the framework and highlighting these key dates to the community.

[01:15:52] And after this presentation, the next key point is the first community input session, so first of two we'll be having this year. That first one is March 22nd, that's next Wednesday. The second community input session is March 29th, the following Wednesday.

[01:16:11] Both of these sessions start at 7 p.m. and will be held on Zoom. And the point of these community input sessions is really to allow the community a direct connection to the naming committee and allow them to provide suggestions as well as any type of background or contextual information directly to that committee.

[01:16:32] So again, we're encouraging the community to come out. We would love to see a lot of participation and we're hoping to receive a lot of good suggestions as an outcome of these meetings. These language accommodations are available upon request, as well as live streams and closed captioning will be done for both of these meetings in English and Spanish.

[01:16:59] In order to register for the webinar, as well as to sign up to speak or make language accommodation requests, those links can be found. Our communications department put a link in a web story right on the main page of our PWCS website, so it's very easy to find, and again, we hope to see a lot of people sign up to speak.

[01:17:21] The next step in the process is the naming committee bringing its recommendation or recommendations for naming to the full school board as an information item, and that will be on April 19th. And the following school board meeting, May 3rd, is the scheduled action date for the school board to approve the name.

[01:17:42] Should a person not be able to speak at any of these meetings or just not feel comfortable public speaking, we do have mechanisms in place to collect written and verbal suggestions. On our web story posted on our website, we have links to a form that we've created specifically to collect written suggestions, and as well as we provide a phone number that people can call and leave a verbal message.

[01:18:05] In all of these inputs from all of the various communication channels, we're trying to cover as many communication channels as we can to provide as much opportunity for input, but any suggestion received through any of the communication channels will be compiled and delivered to the naming committee.

[01:18:29] Here we have pictures of Rosemont Lewis Elementary School taken over the winter. Couple quick highlights, it's a three-story building, just over 129,000 square feet. It's, as Vern mentioned earlier, it's a beautiful building. Every time I drive by, it always looks great as I'm passing by on Ashton Avenue.

[01:18:50] Here you can see the exterior metal paneling is almost finished as of these pictures. The interior is looking and coming along just fine and we are well positioned to be open for this upcoming 23, 24 school year.

[01:19:07] And with that, that concludes my prepared presentation and I'm happy to answer any questions. - Ms. Jackson. - Thank you for the presentation tonight. I just have two follow-up questions and one you might not be ready for tonight and don't wanna put you on the spot because I know you're probably figuring out some details.

[01:19:26] But the naming process for me is a priority that it comes from the community. So I was just wondering what extra steps you might be taking to make sure the community that is going to go to the Rosemont Lewis School is aware of the meetings and/or participates in providing feedback.

[01:19:45] - That's a great question, I appreciate that. So we've worked with our communication department to come up with a very robust communication plan. That includes emails going out. I think I've received one last week. We have targeted the community, schools who contributed portions of its attendance area to Rosemont-Lewis, we're going to be sending reminder texts to everybody in that community before each of these community input sessions, reminding them of the deadlines to sign up to speak, to sign up to make language accommodations, as well as reminding them to don't forget to register for the webinar themselves.

[01:20:23] Excellent. Thank you so much. And then my last question is, in years past when we've renamed or named, we got like a spreadsheet with numbers and like how many voted for what, will we be getting the same kind of data again this year?

[01:20:38] Absolutely. Just like in years past, we'll have a spreadsheet with individual, kind of the whole detail of the submission of the naming suggestion as well as a summary where we'll group those up and we'll be able to provide those at the information item and action item.

[01:20:54] All right. Thank you. That's all for now. Thank you so much. Okay. Any other comments? Moving on now to, we're gonna, our student wasn't able to make it this evening, so we'll go to superintendent's time, Dr. McDade.

[01:21:10] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For superintendent's time, we do have a pretty substantial presentation on second quarter grades, so I would like to use superintendent's time to bring forward Dr. Tim Neal, who is going to share with us some second quarter data updates that goes beyond grades to include attendance as well as assessments at the mid-year, And so it's a wealth of information that we have to comb through.

[01:21:37] So I'll be using superintendent's time to bring forward the second quarter data update. - Thank you, Dr. McTeefe. - Dr. Neal. - Thank you. Good evening, Dr. McTeefe, school board members, and Dr. McTeefe. So tonight I'm going to walk you through our second quarter data.

[01:21:54] The presentation is very reminiscent of what I provided in the first quarter, but we've added a little bit more information this time to dive deeper into a few points that we feel are critical. So first, we're gonna look at enrollment, attendance.

[01:22:09] We'll touch on our Virginia growth assessments, which was completed earlier this winter. And then we'll dive into our elementary performance, looking at second quarter grades and reading levels and our secondary performance, which is second quarter grades and our failing course analysis.

[01:22:26] So in terms of second quarter enrollment, we look very similar to the way we did at the start of the year. We've had some shifts up and down, and this is typical movement throughout the course of the year as students enter and exit the division.

[01:22:41] The table we're looking at now addresses second quarter attendance. You see quarter one, quarter two, and then the quarter one and quarter two combined. In a nutshell, we had an overall decrease in quarter two attendance by grade level with the greatest decrease being at the secondary level.

[01:23:01] When we look at quarters one and two combined, again, it's lower than quarter one. It's actually literally right in the middle between quarter one and quarter two. Now we can dive a little bit deeper into this data and look at some additional patterns. And so we used our school status tool to look at our daily attendance essentially from the start of the school year to mid-February.

[01:23:23] And when you look at this plot, what you see is that over time there's a downward trend. You can see that the second quarter information is indeed lower than the first quarter. And we have some dips there. And I've marked those dips with stars and some descriptive text.

[01:23:41] And you can see before holidays or long weekends, we tend to have greater dips in attendance on those days. Presumably that is the result of the holidays. But I would also add that in the second quarter, we also had increased numbers of students with flu, COVID, and RSV.

[01:24:03] So there are other reasons that can explain why we've had some of these dips. When we start looking at the number of absences, the row we want to pay attention to is the one that is highlighted in blue.

[01:24:18] Those are the students that we would define as chronically absent. So they have missed 10% or more of the school year. At the end of the second quarter, we had a total of 90 days. What's important to pay attention to here is that the year to date as of the end of the second quarter of our absentee rate with nine or more was just under 24%.

[01:24:41] So that's substantially higher than we would like it to be. We can break this data down by subgroup and by different groups, including level. So the chart on the left shows our combined schools, which really are three schools.

[01:24:59] It's Pennington, Porter, and Noakesville. Our elementary schools, our middle schools, and our high schools. And you can see the percent of students with nine or more absences is greatest at the high school level when compared to the others. When looking at student groups, you can also see that our English learner students and our special education students also have a higher percentage of students with nine or more absences.

[01:25:21] And then when we break this down by race and ethnicity, you can see that our Hispanics, our Hispanic students have a higher rate of students with nine or more absences. So we've been talking about chronic absenteeism essentially since the beginning of the year and it's a good time to circle back and look at why are we focusing on this?

[01:25:45] What is making this important? So first, we know that there is a correlation between absenteeism and classroom performance. Stated simply, better attendance is associated with higher grades. It's also important to note that it isn't just our academic performance that's critical here, but it's hard to make a connection and foster a sense of belonging when students aren't present in school, and we know that is critical in addressing the social emotional needs.

[01:26:12] The other thing that's important to consider here is that absenteeism is a factor in school accreditation. Historically, there are three ways that the state has calculated chronic absenteeism. They've looked at a three-year average, they've looked at a single-year rate, and they've looked at a decrease from one year to the next.

[01:26:34] Due to the high variance in absenteeism rates over the last few years, the Board of Education decided that they were only going to apply the current year, meaning this year's absenteeism rate, in determining accreditation for next year.

[01:26:50] So this means it's highly important that we not only focus on this for the benefit of our students, but because this could impact school accreditation. When we move on to our Virginia Growth Assessment, just as a reminder, most students in grades three through eight, participated in the fall and the winter administration of the Virginia Growth Assessment.

[01:27:13] This was a new assessment that was determined to track student progress throughout the year. There is guidance forthcoming from the state soon that will give us details on how we can interpret this information.

[01:27:30] It still is not present yet. We do have individual item level performance available for each student that the schools have that does help guide instruction. So before I share the next two slides, which will show you the data, I want to give you the key takeaway.

[01:27:47] And the key takeaway here is that the vertical scaled scores show a significant and substantive change from fall to winter. So we do see an increase. The caveat here is the VDOE has not provided us guidance yet on how we should interpret this data.

[01:28:05] This table shows the Virginia Growth Assessment reading scores. The first column is the fall vertical scaled score. The second column is the winter vertical scaled score. And across the board, you can see in grades three through eight, there was an upward shift in reading.

[01:28:22] Again, this was substantive and significant, but how we should interpret this is not clear yet per VDOE's guidance. This table shows math VGA scores. Again, there is a significant and substantive increase.

[01:28:39] I do want to note that in grade eight, there are students in advanced math courses that do not take the Virginia Growth Assessment. Moving on to grades, as a reminder, Prince William County does employ standards-based grading philosophy.

[01:28:57] This means that grading is focused on students mastering content material and standards and allows for remediation and grade replacement. Grades can be amended. demonstrate mastery of the material, which will account for some changes from one quarter to the next.

[01:29:14] And this can occur retroactively, so first quarter grades can be amended if that student has subsequently shown mastery. Lastly, Prince William County's grading regulations do allow the professional discretion of teachers to override the mathematical average if they feel that the student has demonstrated mastery of that material.

[01:29:35] So this table shows the grade distribution for our elementary students in grades three through five. You see quarter one and quarter two. Quarter two is bold for ease of identification. In a nutshell, what you see in the grade distribution is a downward trend.

[01:29:53] So you see a lower percentage of students with As, a slightly higher percentage of students with Fs, and then variation within the other grade ranges. And this persists across all subject areas.

[01:30:12] We also look at elementary reading performance. And this is a new set of slides for the second quarter performance. Pertsland County does use multiple sources of information to assess reading proficiency. What we have historically shared in this presentation is the report card data, and I'll be sharing with you that momentarily.

[01:30:31] And this is where teachers use multiple sources of data, classroom formative assessments, oral reading records, curriculum-based measurement, things like that, to determine if students are reading below, on, or above grade level. It's also important to know that we use multiple other assessments.

[01:30:47] One that has come into more recent use is our HMH literacy assessment. This is administered in grades two through five, three times per year, and provides grade level equivalency and lexile intervals for reading.

[01:31:02] We also use the phonological awareness literacy screening, commonly referred to as PALS. Historically, we've used fall and spring benchmark screenings. This year we have added mid-year diagnostic assessments to that.

[01:31:20] So when we look at the elementary reading levels as reported on the report cards, I would like you to focus in on the column that's highlighted in blue. This shows the combined percentage of students reading on or above grade level quarter one and quarter two.

[01:31:36] So in general, we see an upward shift in teachers' assessments using multiple sources of data of student reading proficiency. Then we look at HMH data, and again, remember this HMH is designed to track reading change over time.

[01:31:58] Again, the blue column shows students that are reading on or above grade level in grades two through five. And you'll notice again, quarter one and quarter two data are there, and you see a substantial upward shift in the percentage of students reading on or above grade level as measured by HMH literacy.

[01:32:22] PALS is a little bit more complicated. This is designed to serve as a diagnostic for measuring student progress. So it doesn't provide a level or a benchmark score. And what the researchers have done is they've broken down the reading components into different domains.

[01:32:40] So this table, you see the domains for kindergarten students, so rhyme, beginning sounds, and so forth. And you see two columns, below column and an on-target column. That on-target column is the percentage of students that are scoring within the mid-year range in that domain, meaning according to the designers of this instrument, those students are likely to reach the reading benchmark on the PALS spring assessment.

[01:33:06] So when you look at our kindergarten students across those domains, you typically see anywhere from 69 to 82 percent of those students on target for meeting the benchmark PALS score, which will be administered in the spring.

[01:33:24] Now first, second, and third grade is a little bit easier. There are fewer domains, word recognition and spelling. And again, you see anywhere from 46 is low in the third grade, I'm going to come to that in a moment, but typically around two thirds of the students to three quarters of the students in grades one and two are on target in those domains for hitting the benchmark for proficiency in the spring.

[01:33:49] Third grade is a caveat. This was only a percentage of the students. So for third grade students, it was generally administered to those students who were already identified for PALS remediation, and so it's a much smaller sample size, roughly 2,000 students compared to the 6,000 students respectively in grades one and two.

[01:34:12] Moving on to our second quarter grades in middle school, this largely mirrors the patterns we see in the elementary school. So again, quarter two is bold for ease of recognition, and you, again, see a downward shift in the percentage of A's and increases across the other grade distributions.

[01:34:33] This also persists across all grade levels. When we look at high school, we've added the semester grades in there as well as the quarter two grades. So semester grades are quarter one and two combined. So again, for quarter two, that same pattern persists, where in quarter two you see a higher percentage of students with failing grades, but you also see a decrease, a corresponding decrease in the percent of students with A's.

[01:35:00] When we average those out and look at semester grades, what we do see is better performance overall with fewer failing grades and higher percentages of A's and B's. Again, this pattern also persists across all content areas in high school.

[01:35:24] When we look at failing courses, so this table shows the percentage of failing courses for the middle school at the top and the high school at the bottom. quarter one, quarter two. Quarter two is bold and for high school students the semester grades are included in there as well and again this pattern

mirrors what we saw in the grade distribution so we see a higher percentage of students in quarter two that received failing marks. At the high school level again that pattern also stays and again we can see that the semester averages the students

[01:35:58] tend to do better. For this presentation we have also broken this down by subgroups. So this table shows our middle school students in quarter two and you see our English learners, our special education and it broken down by race and ethnicity.

[01:36:25] Again the general pattern overall persists for quarter two. With high school I have broken this into two different tables just for ease of looking at it. So again, quarter two, the percent of students failing for English learners and special education students failing two or more courses as well as one course, again, you can see slightly higher percentages there, again, at the semester level, generally improvement.

[01:36:57] That same pattern holds true when we break this down by race and ethnicity. So in considering the grade distributions in these patterns, this is consistent with what we saw last year and is consistent given the fact that we that we have seen lower attendance rates and more disruption to learning this pattern does not appear to be atypical however that doesn't doesn't mean that it is something that is being ignored by our practitioners and so I want to spend a few moments talking about the various support strategies that are

[01:37:37] in place and how the school system is responding to meeting the needs of our students so first First and foremost, we're continuing to implement the Unfinished Learning Plan and the Continuous Improvement Plans. Every school has a strategically and deliberately created Continuous Improvement Plan that addresses many of the areas that I've talked about already.

[01:38:01] Our middle school counseling and administrative teams are meeting with families to ensure that they understand current student progress and what available supports there are. This can include tutoring, extended learning opportunities, before and after school help sessions and so forth.

[01:38:19] At our high schools, they're providing family information nights and tiered supports for students in the 2023 graduation cohort who are currently off track. And we're looking at things like credit recovery, high dosage tutoring, and after school remediation.

[01:38:38] Knowing that high quality feedback is critical to helping students take ownership of their own work. We also have a division workgroup with school representatives from every level who are currently looking at ways of revising the grading regulations and norming best grading practices across our schools and at each level.

[01:38:57] Every school is also implementing a specific and targeted attendance plan to address chronic absenteeism. We have a new initiative called attention to attendance, that's a little tricky, that we implementing in 54 schools to improve improve the fidelity of chronic attendance notifications and lastly we've launched a multimedia attendance communication campaign division-wide with a special focus on schools that have high rates of absenteeism that concludes my overview and I'm open to

[01:39:33] questions that you may have Dr. Lateef we also have members of our academic team Denise Huebner is here and she all of the student supports rest in her office including attendance and she may want to speak a little bit about the attendance attention to attendance initiative we also have miss rita goss here from teaching and learning much of the initiatives that we have committed to in our two-year

strategic plan i have continued to reaffirm our commitment in that plan and we have stayed the course with that even with the way that we've expended our esser dollars so we have continued with fidelity many

[01:40:11] of the programming um that we identified at the outset of our unfinished learning plan and as you can see there yet there is work still work to do we we knew that this would be a long-term um process all of the research that has come out about post-pandemic uh you know improvements that the time that it's going to take is still in effect however what we are seeing is that we're moving in a positive direction and so we're moving in the right direction and we're seeing some promising practice as well as outcomes to show that the work that we're doing is taking root so i also

[01:40:47] see but i don't see doctor is that dr hart and dr hart and dr crawford um here as well we've been putting uh we we've had an all-out push around attendance um and so definitely if you have questions about what we're doing around um absenteeism and truancy we do have people here to address that thank you dr. McTate I'll start with a just a quick question right around that topic and I know you've said some of these things maybe give some more details but are we being as aggressive as absolutely possible to

[01:41:23] get these kids back in school are we using every tool every rule every policy every police officer whatever it takes to get these kids back in school I don't know about the police officer part but we we are using all of the all of the tools at our disposal. Denise would you or Dr. Crawford want to come and talk about our tiered supports and some of the practices that are in place in schools to address attendance. Sure absolutely I'm lucky to have Dr. Julie Crawford here with us this evening and she's been our lead on attendance. Dr.

[01:41:56] Crawford started with us in October and was tasked with the forming the division-wide plan which we do have in place and putting in some systems of support for our schools so I'd be happy to have her speak to that. To your answer Dr. Lateef, yes, we are full on. I remember, I think it was back in October when I promised you if I had to knock on doors myself, I would be knocking on doors.

[01:42:15] I know our school teams are working hard. As a division, we are trying to put supports in place for our school teams as well, resources, attention to attendance is one that I think is a joint effort between our communications and our office and we'll be supporting for schools because really what it does, it takes some of the burden off of our school teams, it enhances communication, both positive communication and necessary contacts in order to make sure that parents are understanding the value and students are understanding the value of coming to school.

[01:42:46] There's a lot of initiatives that are going on in partnership with promoting awareness and understanding of why it is so important. And we're hearing from a lot of parents for the first time that are being asked to provide a lot of documentation on when there are excessive absences. And so we're receiving a lot of feedback that we're doing a very good job, but I'll let Dr. Crawford speak to a few other areas.

[01:43:06] - Thank you, good evening. Yes, this is a full court press, as you would say. Across many departments, Ms. Huebner referenced several initiatives. I would also say you may have seen on Twitter or some social media trying to get information out there positively.

[01:43:23] Our communications department has been phenomenal in developing videos that are student-led with student messages, speaking to one another about why every day does in fact count. We have tried

to tailor different technical assistance to our schools this year, so speaking to our principals regularly, knowing that we're available to consult and support if there's any family questions.

[01:43:46] We've developed a walk-in Wednesday concept, a drop-in almost like an office hours for our school staff members to ask questions about attendance, about policy, about unique cases that they may have. I'm very happy to stand here and say yesterday we had 30 staff members who joined during our walk-in Wednesday to ask some questions that they had following attendance trends that they were looking at our attendance officers as I said yes hardcore press they are doing calls every month we've refined our data collection system to ensure that calls are being made and they're being followed up on additionally of course the

[01:44:24] board is aware of the support corps who is reaching out to our students who are at risk and having a variety of challenges to re-engage and then the last thing I'll mention is just our re-engagement nights that we started in January and are continuing in March as well as in May where we're reaching out to families who have had students who've become disengaged for a variety of reasons whether that's resulted in chronic absenteeism or being coded as a potential dropout and we're excited while the numbers are not huge yet in January we were actually able to re-engage 31 students including some

[01:45:00] family members and we have re-engagement nights this week and next week I believe at several of our high schools thank you very much I'll go to it let's complete topic on attendance if you have any attendance questions let's do those Miss Williams thank you well I appreciate all the work that the division is doing operationally for attendance one of the things that I did not hear in this presentation but I know is in critical to our accreditation process I was wondering if you could speak to is excused versus unexcused absences I

[01:45:39] think there's a lack of understanding of how that impacts attendance and our accreditation so I'll start with that sure absolutely so I usually let dr. Neal speak to accreditation but our chronic absenteeism when you look at the definition of that it's students who miss 10% which is approximately 18 days of their school year and all absences count excused unexcused and suspension and so that has a negative impact on our schools and that we want our schools to be accredited but really most I think the focus is on chronic asenteeism it has an impact on a child's education so when you look at what's excused and

[01:46:16] unexcused if you look in the Virginia code it does grant that authority to school divisions but it is things that you would expect illness would be excused we have a list in our regulation if any of the parents would like to look at it 724-1 does list what is excused and unexcused and when And it falls into things like all day truancy, class truancy, missing a bus or car trouble does not count for, it is an unexcused, but many of the excused reasons do fall in illness and other reasonable circumstances.

[01:46:49] So I understand that the difference between excused and un-excused, I just want to make sure that the public is very aware that even if you hold your child home, like say for the example they have mono and they miss 15 days of school, that counts negatively even though technically right by a family's code or values they may feel and even a doctor that's an appropriate thing to do to hold your student home when they're diagnosed with an illness that could be I don't know contagious right but it does impact our school accreditation and I want to make sure that we're really clear on that because that's not something we here at the school division have any control or say over it it is really at the state level

[01:47:25] but I do think as a parent and as of school age child elementary school child right now especially elementary school parents that that's something that's very stressful for for a lot of our families but it is absolutely necessary for with on within any reasonable measure that our students are in a building if they're supposed to be in a building and we do address in our policies correct like what we determine what excuse me when we determine a student should stay home like fever and things like that yes I happen to know that where they could find that information the student illness information or yes yes when we feel students should stay home when a student should stay home if you

[01:48:03] look on our student services health services web page we do ask that if child has a fever they're fever free for 24 hours without medication vomiting we do ask that we make sure that the child does not have anything that's related to illness or symptoms asymptomatic i bring that up because it's really a mind and a cultural shift from what we've experienced the last two years during the pandemic and i think that we're all especially still sensitive to attendance and illness and our students but I think it's important because I've as I said I'm a parent of a school-aged child I've received the attendance notices I have you know got children in high school and I've spoken with many families who've interacted

[01:48:41] with attendance officers but there's still a notion of sort of the rep leftover pandemic when I should keep my home child home and and those sort of notions and I just want to make sure that our families understand that we've shifted and it's not just at our level here at the county but there are also requirements that we're beholden to at the state right I appreciate that Ms.

[01:49:00] Williams it is a behavioral change you know a couple years ago we were saying it's a culture of acceptable absenteeism if you don't feel well stay home what we're saying now is it's critical that your child be in school and if there is an illness and even if it is for a justified reason we will be asking you for that documentation as part of our regulation if a student misses ten or more days we may ask for that medical documentation from the doctor as a parent I've had to submit that documentation for a child who had extended illnesses for very valid reasons but the message that we're trying to send to parents is that we care about your child we want to be sure that your child's well we want your child in school to learn so that is the reason that we do follow up on that I think the most important thing to note

[01:49:40] here one if students are not well they should stay at home what's happening is that we have to follow state and you know guidelines and laws attendance reporting those are legal documents so we don't have any choices here so what see in our regulation is what we're bound by law to do. Thank you that's all I have for attendance. Any other attendance? Miss Jessie and then a little wall and Zaria Cora. My comments will not be as long as they were in a two by two so thank you because

[01:50:18] there are so many issues taking place there's just a sense of so many things to do in these schools. The testing program we talked about that and another thing and this attendance issue seems to be another thing for them to do. Who does the calling I know it may have changed when I was a principal so I need you to update me because when a child didn't show up somebody had to find alert call and find out so some of these schools I'm told have 20 percent 30 percent absenteeism so at a high school you're talking about a lot of students

[01:50:57] who makes those calls and are we given additional help and support to the school so miss Jessie you heard me talk earlier about we're very excited about about the implementation of attention to attendance, which will help the school burden. The notifications to parents of absenteeism are made electronically, but we do have staff members that are shouldering the responsibility and following up.

[01:51:19] So our schools are encouraged to have attendance teams. It could be a variety of individuals. You know, it depends building by building. Some of those staff members might be office assistants, administrators, we ask our teachers to take responsibility for calling, we ask our counselors to help and follow up children are having concerns. We enlist anyone in the building, but it is a variety of people that we ask to participate in our attendance review teams. On the workload at the school level, you know I've consistently and I've talked to people about this hurt that you've got the

[01:51:54] attendance thing going, you've got the testing program that's being, well you've got several sources of testing. You've got the local testing, we're grading policies where you have to have so many grades, so the teachers are given those test, there are benchmark tests, there are state tests, and then there are central office tests.

[01:52:14] I will say what I said to you guys during the two-by-two that we need to look at testing at the elementary level because they're generalists and so they're given tests in language arts, they're given tests in math, they're given tests in social studies and science.

[01:52:31] And I'm hearing that there's a new requirement from the state for fifth-grade writing tests, is that correct? I'm going to give that to Ms. Voss. Rita, you want to weigh in on that? I don't need that answer.

[01:52:47] I just wanted to say this, that one test is too much if it doesn't guide instruction. And what I'm hearing consistently, not just in the Occoquan district, but, and you guys, I'm sure you told me that you heard it too, we need to stop and figure out how we can, these people can survive during the attendance situation.

[01:53:12] I have principals telling me that they're working as hard as they can to get these test scores up. This data is wonderful, but somebody has to submit this data, and they're working as hard. And to lose accreditation because of attendance is kind of a kick in the gut, for lack of a better word.

[01:53:28] And I agree. I know parents are responsible, but at the same time, we have to look at what the work on our teachers. We cannot afford to overload our teachers in some way. I don't know what you guys can do at Central.

[01:53:46] I said, you know, you write smart goals for everything. Dr. McDade, we weren't there, but I asked for a smart goal on a hug. Can you write a hug, smart goal for these teachers? I think they need a hug because it's just too much, and it's too, we cannot afford to lose our teachers, the good teachers that we have because we have so much coming down.

[01:54:09] and I know this unfinished learning, you can't, you have to bring up these test scores, but there's just too many things happening at the school levels, and if whatever you guys can do, whatever my HUD goal is gonna look like, I'd like to see it from somebody, because I think it's very evident that teachers are just stressed out, and everyone else, thank you.

[01:54:32] And you guys probably too. I know you're sitting there, you're stressed out too, but you do what you have to do, thank you. I would like to address that if Rita, if you could come forward and talk about the balance assessment and grading plans that we are building for next year.

[01:54:50] Of course, for state testing, that's a requirement that we can't get out of. We have to follow through with what comes forward from the VDOE, but we are doing our due diligence to have a more balanced approach to assessment and grading.

[01:55:07] We are recognizing that in some spaces we need to look at how we can streamline that for better support and to your point to ensure that the assessments that students are taking are for the purposes of next levels of instruction. So if Rita, very briefly, you can just share what we are currently working on to develop going into the new school year to address this concern.

[01:55:29] Absolutely. So student learning is working with a group of principals and right now they're really looking at what assessments are happening we've already gathered information earlier this year from schools around what assessments were being given to students at the school so we're really looking at that data what is being given to students is it teacher assessments is it division assessments state assessments in looking at that we're also looking at the research and what's best practice relative to assessments we are looking at trying to have a balance of assessments, we need diagnostic assessments, we need formative assessments,

[01:56:08] we need summative assessments in order to make sure that we have an eye on the progress of students. So as we look at that, we certainly don't want to over test students, but we also want to have enough information that we can intervene on student learning and that we We have visibility into that learning as the year goes forward.

[01:56:31] So as those recommendations are developed, we will be working with our lead teachers in each of the departments to take a look at those recommendations to provide further input on how we would best streamline the assessments.

[01:56:49] We are going to be following a process that we follow in other areas of the division, And that's what do we need to start doing, what do we need to stop doing so we can take some things off the plate of teachers and children, and what will we continue to do.

[01:57:04] And so ultimately the three-year balance assessment system will address all of those areas and ensure that we have the visibility needed that we need to have in order to report out and really know about the progress and intervene on behalf of students, but also to make sure that we aren't over testing students like you're saying you did previously ask about fifth grade so I just want to just address that fifth grade writing question for you so you may remember when the state decided to remove some of those SOL tests we were tasked at the local level to give local assessments in lieu of those tests so we're still required by the state to give those

[01:57:43] local assessments so someone may be talking about the local assessment for fifth grade writing that we must still monitor the progress of students in writing even though the SOL is not technically given I I will say this I'm not sure everybody out in the land of teaching has gotten in the memo I just feel that there are schools that are complaining not complaining but just saying we're overstressed that I've been here a long time Rita and there are

[01:58:21] schools that never complain and when those schools say it's too much I think it's too much and I don't know what you guys are doing and I hear the summative and the formative in all those terms but somebody needs to sit down and talk with someone about what's happening with this testing look at how many tests are being given and to let them know that you're aware and that you're going to work on it I know you say you are but I'm not sure the message has gotten out there yet so that's that's what i'll close with thank you thank you back to attendance ms um wall

[01:58:58] thank you um i do have a couple of questions on attendance the first question is um regarding slide four um and perhaps slide six but for our purposes for reporting to the state um do we is this slide four those are the numbers that report or is we report or is it the slide six numbers where i guess it would be the end of the year i suppose how many the percentage of days missed or is it the i mean when i look at the slide four quarter one quarter two it looks like percent

[01:59:34] attendance you know 92 93 94 that's a pretty good number at least not it's not great but it's not bad um or it doesn't look bad but then when you go to slide six and you see wow almost 24 of our students have missed nine or more days out of a 90-day cycle so just help me understand what are the which which data set are the numbers that we report for accreditation purposes sure for for accreditation purposes we report the chronic absenteeism rate by responsible school and so

[02:00:05] chronic absenteeism is defined as the percentage uh 10 or more absenteeism rate of both excused and unexcused absences and then there's a whole bunch of other little nuances that the state uses but that's the core of it okay so that above that 10 threshold and we do that by school it is it is done by school yes okay and then that determines whether that school is accredited or accredited conditions etc that's a three-year average right usually but not this year so so in a nutshell yes

[02:00:40] you are correct the the chronic absenteeism rate has has three different thresholds if you're lower than 15%, you're considered a level one, which is where you want to be. If you are above 15% but lower than 25%, that is a level two, and then higher than 25% is a level three.

[02:01:00] If you are at a level three, you could potentially be accredited with conditions, that indicator. If the indicators are correct, if the indicators are not all where you want them to be for all the other areas you could be at risk for losing accreditation and then there are a whole bunch of other factors that go into how those things are calculated okay thank you my second question on absenteeism has to do with benchmarking i know we're seeing a trend in

[02:01:33] absenteeism in our school division is that also the case in our across country or in our region in our other jurisdictions having success or i'm assuming that it is kind of a post pandemic problem but could you speak to maybe some benchmarking the extent of the problem so typically school systems um don't aren't always forthcoming with this data but anecdotally what we are hearing is that that attendance is an issue not just for us but our our surrounding um school divisions and nationally i would agree with that ms wall last week i had the opportunity to attend the

[02:02:12] superintendents convening with superintendents from across the country from the west coast to the east coast and the number one problem that was expressed was around absenteeism and truancy post-pandemic so this is something that the majority of school districts are grappling with as a matter of fact even today in our region four superintendent study group it came up about attendance and truancy and the impact that some of the changes that are being made to accreditation will have um on our schools and so this is a ongoing topic of um concern okay thank you and then i i expect that means a lot of great minds will be working to tackle it as as our division

[02:02:51] is trying to do as well um and my third question on absenteeism it's short i promise um the absenteeism and grades correlation um i know it we there's data that says you know generally if you're not doing very well it's even worse to miss school but it's not good for anybody to miss school just to clarify if a student is missing school for like a school field trip or some kind of like state finals for their sport or anything that's also an absence is it not I mean it doesn't matter I mean it would be an excused

[02:03:28] absence but it would still count toward absences correct the total number of so field trips are considered instructional as part of the instructional day and students would not be considered absent I understand you're saying it depends on the sporting events so private personal sporting events would not be covered as excused but typically when you're representing our schools we do have a code in which we put in that is an administrative code and those students are are considered as an excuse it's not like a counting against students okay so like a robotics tournament all state music

[02:04:04] those kinds of things are coded when they're coded as a school event there it is it is not counted against the student. Thank you. Ms. Zargarpur. Yeah, thank you. When I'm looking at some of this data, like on slide seven, it's second quarter attendance for, and it's by, you've got levels, you've got English learner, gifted, special ed, ethnicity. Do we, I mean, that tells us one thing, but do we actually have data that talks about these are medical absences, these are someone went on a trip absence, this is someone missed the bus and they couldn't get to

[02:04:44] school absence do we do we have that because it seems to me to solve the problem you have to know what the problem is and looking at this I'm just fourteen point seven five percent of gifted kids are you know missing school I so do we have do we have a better way of knowing what to attack the how to attack the problem so we don't have that data that that is is that granular we do have broad attendance codes that are in use what I can say is that when we look at the excused versus unexcused approximately two-thirds of our absence

[02:05:19] are excused with one-third being unexcused so because this is the other thing that's kind of concerning is if there's um you know we all we all care that our kids are well educated and we want to make sure they're showing up for school and you know I mean my kids I remember I remember being like oh you're not really running a fever go to school and then you know that instance of someone giving their kid a shot of Tylenol before they go in and they have to come home and other times where kids just not feeling good in school they're not going to learn anyway if they're not feeling well I mean there's a million different things that are going on I'm also a little concerned about like

[02:05:57] finding excuse notes from medical providers when maybe you can't even get in to see the doctor but you have a kid who's gonna run a fever and it's maybe a day or two so there's a lot of like layers to this I've I have heard from constituents on some of these concerns so I'm just trying to point out this is sort of a we all have to work together to solve this we have to work together to support each other and you know right yes they're nodding that's why I was yes absolutely we agree you know and I think Miss Agapar I think one of the things that you it's very easy to not be aware of absenteeism or how that can impact so

[02:06:37] you're like oh it's just one or two days a month but you know two days a month of the school year adds up to be chronic absenteeism and so what we're really just hoping is to really raise the awareness that it is important for our kids to be in school and so I understand it can be challenging but it's important for our kids Mr. Wilk Ms. Wall I apologize did you ask I walked in on it are other divisions experiencing similar okay that one okay a lot of us had questions in advance that was one I remember I was asking for coding on why

[02:07:12] there were absences one other thing so I was you know of course I'm I always talk about behavior and discipline on here I'm a staunch believer and uh I don't know how to describe the discipline but when it comes to discipline and now factoring this absenteeism issue is that considered like when delving out or determining the level of discipline for a out-of-school suspension versus a

[02:07:46] warning or a detention is that factored now into this process given the state is making such a focus on this and crunching this all together to lead to issues with accreditation is that something that's factored into our disciplinary policy now so mr. Wilk the code of behavior in our disciplinary policy is to really ensure a safe and a focused environment for our students and when discipline violations or code behavior violations occur, we expect that the administrator evaluates the situation, the interruption to the instruction and the safety of the students and we would not vary the sanction accordingly.

[02:08:26] We want to be sure that if a child's behavior is a safety concern that we would act accordingly and appropriately. So we don't not apply discipline just based on a concern for absenteeism, but certainly one of the things that we are doing is trying to go through if there is a need for a consideration of a long-term suspension or a short-term suspension that we move through that due process quickly in order to allow a student to return if that's not necessary.

[02:08:51] Thank you. Another quick question. I was thinking about this the other day. Do we have in-school suspension, ISS, at our secondary schools? Is that something we do? There are instances of in-school suspension. It is not used as widely as it has been in the past, but there are still instances of in-school suspension.

[02:09:10] And if a student had in-school, that would not count technically as an absence, correct? So technically, technically all suspensions are counted as excused. They fall into that. We're not asking a parent to explain. We know why the child's not in school.

[02:09:25] It is still exclusionary because it's removal from the instructional day. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Ms. Jackson. All right. Thank you. I have to put these on. I'm sorry. From what I understand, attendance has been all-consuming for staff, so it's nice to hear that you're going to be providing some more support from Central.

[02:09:47] I know that some teachers report that kids are sicker in class, and I know as a parent myself, I've been torn what to do, especially having knowledge that all of this leads to accreditation, and I have a doctor's note that I need to bring in when my kid goes back to school. So I follow the policy and regulations myself.

[02:10:06] My question, because I have Ms. Williams and Ms. Wall ask my other two questions, it's just one of just, like, clarification. What is -- for it to be coded as absent, is that all day? Or can, like, if you have a doctor's appointment, like, do you have to eat lunch?

[02:10:22] And then if you leave after you eat lunch, that's, like, what is, like, what counts as an instructional day just in terms of, like, if you're trying to schedule doctor's appointments? So I don't want to speak to the coding or how the data is done from Dr. Neal. I can tell you that there's two different types of the way that we record attendance.

[02:10:41] In elementary school, it's considered daily attendance. In secondary, it's period-by-period attendance. So, it's looked at differently in secondary than it is elementary. In secondary, we do code partial days, but in elementary, it is typically attendance is either you are present or not.

[02:10:59] So, if you come for the first part of the day and you leave, you are still considered present in that school day. I hope that answered your question. So, if you come in the first part of the day and then leave, you're present. But if you come late? It's considered a tardy, but you are present.

[02:11:16] We mark as tardy. I'm sorry. - Multiple hours, okay. - There are lots of different attendance codes and we try to reflect when kids are in school as much as possible. - All right, I'm good, thank you. - Okay, any other questions?

[02:11:32] We're off attendance, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Chairman. So I want to start with what I saw on slide 28. Just for reference, I don't want to feel the need to read it all the way again, but this is more, I think of a Rita, Ms. Huebner sort of a topic.

[02:11:57] I just want to congratulate the division and Dr. McDade as a parent and as a former student and someone who still has one for a long way to go. Working with our staff, I think this is even more critical at the middle and high school level, on having fidelity and utilizing grading regulations and norming grading best practices across schools and at teachers at every level.

[02:12:29] As a board member, that is something I consistently hear. As a parent, that is something I have struggled with. It can be from teacher to teacher, from school to school. One teacher will close when you can redo a test or an assignment, regardless of mastery or the student begging or asking.

[02:12:46] I think implementing that with fidelity will significantly reduce the amount of stress and anxiety that is endured by our parents, our students, and our staff members, because it will level the playing field. And I really just want to bring attention to that.

[02:13:03] I think I hear it more at the high school level. Well, I know I heard it more at the high school level when I was a high school parent. I still hear it now as a high school auntie. And I think that that's something that's really critical. It'll help our students really be able to understand the time constraints that they have with consistency and also alleviate, again, the stress on the teachers and parent conferences because it's completely different at a secondary level than it is at an elementary school level.

[02:13:27] And I think that's worth the call out. In addition to that, I was wondering if you could speak to the assessments at the state level. One of the things that was addressed early in the presentation was that the state has not given us a rubric for input for interpreting the scores.

[02:13:47] I don't think we can under discuss this, it's, It's one thing to receive a state test home as a parent and you get directed to the state website, but from basically a simple way to put it is, our students are taking tests that we don't have the proper guidance as a school division on how to interpret how they're doing on the test, is that correct?

[02:14:09] - So the state has provided, yes and no. So the state has provided for practitioners to use a student detail by question report. So the teachers can actually take this report, look at what their students are doing and use that report to help target instruction and look at various components of the content.

[02:14:32] So that's what we can do with it. What we don't know yet is when we take those vertical scale scores, we don't have interpretive guidance to say this student is proficient, this student is approaching proficiency, this student is above proficiency.

[02:14:49] And the reason for that is they are new assessments and they haven't established those benchmarks yet. Last year when they first piloted these, they were using prior year's data or prior year's content. So they were able to use that background knowledge to create the benchmarks for last year.

[02:15:08] Because this year they changed the test, those benchmarks no longer applied. And so they're still establishing where those points should be. I appreciate you mentioning the benchmarks because that

sort of leads me into my next point of references, how unimaginably stressful it is for our staff and our parents in our division when we have to keep establishing benchmarks year after year.

[02:15:30] And it's not up to us, it's at the state. Do you have any idea of how many new assessments that our students are going through? And I'm not gonna hold you to an exact number 'cause I have no expectation of that. But I think it's really important because teachers, we hear from our constituents, we hear from teachers about the amount of testing that was going on.

[02:15:49] Ms. Jessie just referenced it. I think we've all at one point or another spoken on it and it is important I think for our listening public to understand that A, a lot of the testing that we do is out of our control and is mandated from the state, but not only that, B, how do you do a year to year, year over year comparison and really analyze where our students are if they keep changing the goalpost every year?

[02:16:14] And it's not just to say the testing, but that's stressful in itself. We can't look at last year and say, students are doing better from the pandemic from this last year to this year because we have a brand new assessment do you have any idea about how many or what types of assessments have changed just from this year to last year so to my knowledge the the new assessment that was added this year was the winter virginia growth assessment so and the fall if you consider the fact that that was the current year's curriculum as opposed to the prior year's curriculum so you you could consider those two new.

[02:16:48] To my knowledge, we haven't added from the state level any additional standards of learning tests. - Thank you. I think that that's really important. And then the last, I think the last thing, well, one of the last things that I didn't hear is how impactful is it for that second quarter and the amount of days that students are actually in school?

[02:17:10] I don't think we touched on that. It seems to be in my time spent in this seat that the second quarter is one of those quarters that students are out a lot for holidays, breaks, it's really condensed in a short period of time, and it's also sort of, I feel like as students get into the classroom and get ramped up and on a routine, then we hit months as our common community says, things like no school November and things of that nature.

[02:17:36] How does that impact the grades that we see typically in the second quarter? - I don't know that Tim can provide statistical answer for that it would all be you know theory and hypothesis in terms of how grades turn out because of you know not just absences but days off and things like that I don't think that we it would be accurate for us to try to make a control some kind of conclusion without doing some kind of a study or an analysis could we well I guess it's kind of hard to look at it but could we do

[02:18:14] maybe a comparison from last year to this year and look if that has any impact on our student grades or performance overall. - The actual days, you're talking about the-- - Just second quarter, yeah, just to see if it's-- - The number of days out of school for second quarter.

[02:18:30] - Correct, because I feel like usually there's a dip in the second quarter as far as students and grades. Again, I don't have that information, so I'm just looking to see if we know if that also impacts the outcome of student second quarter grades. - I will talk with my team. Thank you. Obviously not now.

[02:18:49] I've got Ms. Jackson. I know I've mentioned this before in previous meetings, but it bears repeating. Data is vital to discuss, but it does not tell the whole story of a student. It is something while important, it loses impact when staff does not have time to analyze and adjust this practice, which is tonight we're analyzing, so I appreciate this discussion.

[02:19:12] This adjustment is often done during planning time. It should be done during planning time. is also used for IEPs, talking to parents, preparing for upcoming lessons, or calling parents. These are all very essential tasks, however, I'm just saying this one part about planning time because when we talk about data, we should talk about all data, and the amount of planning is data, and the amount of planning time is data.

[02:19:37] So from my experience, it takes hours to plan a saddle lesson, and veteran teachers currently have to revamp old lessons to meet changing needs. Moreover, assessment is vital and essential. However, we should never test to assess. We should test to assess, reflect and adjust.

[02:19:52] So it's wonderful to hear that you are creating a task force or commission to address assessment. I am going to echo what Ms. Williams kind of touched on about being concerned that we've not received guidance from the state about how to meet proficiency with the VGA.

[02:20:14] Typically, we should know a benchmark before assessing. And as an educator, for example, I would give my students a rubric or I'd give them the grading scale. And if I didn't do so, they would accuse me politely, of course, of a lack of transparency or that I would eventually move the goalpost.

[02:20:33] So I am concerned that we don't have, you know, more information from the state. But that being said, if a parent wants to know where to find the VGA scores, where do they look? if they didn't get it from the school? - So if a parent did not receive that communication from the school, they should contact the school, their staff at each school that administered the VGA that has access to all of those reports.

[02:21:02] - Okay, thank you so much. And again, I just wanna just echo, I appreciate the meeting to talk about testing and just trying to meet staff needs to avoid testing to test. So thanks for the presentation tonight.

[02:21:17] - Ms. Wong. - Thank you. I appreciate, first of all, the hearing this report. Thank you very much for giving us this presentation and for this data.

[02:21:32] I think it's really important to just have a very clear eyed view of where we are because that information can help us moving forward. And obviously, you know, as we work to help kids, this data will be helpful for us. And I also appreciate all the hard work of educators to help students.

[02:21:50] I know a lot of hard work has gone in. I can see the movement from, you know, where we were at the beginning of the year to where we are now. I can see that and the data is showing that. It's nice actually to see a data representation of the work that educators are doing every day in our schools.

[02:22:05] So I appreciate everybody's efforts on this from the classroom to, you know, the levels of researching and compiling. I feel like the trends are moving in the right direction. That's encouraging to me because I was one of those who was very discouraged with the pandemic and how it was affecting kids.

[02:22:25] So I am happy to see that we are seeing some movement in the right direction. I'm encouraged by slide 11, the Virginia growth, oh, sorry, it's not slide 11. Well, no, actually it is. We don't understand yet the interpretation of the data, but what I see is on grades three, four, and even five, a big jump, actually, in those lower grades, a big jump from fall to winter.

[02:22:54] So whatever it means in the end when we finally are told how to interpret these magic numbers, I think I am seeing, you know, those are big differentials between 1301 and 1373, especially in

those younger grades, not so much in the eighth grade, but I know, you know, some of those eighth grade students who are advanced fall out.

[02:23:12] So that helps explain that. I wanted to ask, first of all, if with the Virginia growth assessment, do we have any indication for when the interpretation of those numbers will be given? I mean, it feels like it should already have been given to us since we're giving the assessment.

[02:23:31] But is this soon coming or any intel on that? So I don't have a deadline, but my expectation would be in the near future. I do know that my testing supervisor was coordinating with the state on some of the more recent analysis they had done.

[02:23:52] So I'm hopeful that it will be coming sooner rather than later. - Yeah, me too, thank you. And then my last question is on slide 28, I would like a little more information about the division work group from every level that's looking at ways for our grading regulations and norming best practices.

[02:24:16] And I'm assuming this isn't meaning that we're gonna like make it easier to get A's. I'm assuming that it is to standardize the effort across the division, like what does in this class that multiple schools have, what does an A look like, right, or what does a B look like, so that we have better expectations and we have norming of our practices so that an A in one school, in a class, means the same as an A in-- - That's exactly right, it's the process of norming and making sure that there are clear standards and expectations across the board and that we're all operating against those standards.

[02:24:53] - Absolutely, and it's going hand-in-hand with that balanced assessment work that I talked about, and it will involve teachers, our lead teachers and department chairs from each of the content areas, because grading looks different, right, depending on the subject, based on the assignments.

[02:25:11] And so it's very important that we norm that practice, not just across a grade level, but also by subject area. - Okay, also, thank you. And will that also be looking at the implementation of our plan, our standards-based grading as well?

[02:25:28] that will also be a part of it, okay. - Because that's included in the regulation and so they are reviewing those regulations and giving input to how we might adapt those for future use, right? And also help to norm those practices by defining things in those regulations.

[02:25:48] - Okay, thank you very much. - Ms. Zargo. - Yeah, just to tag onto that. So I know that there has been some talk in the past about does an A in one of our classes equal NA in Fairfax's or Loudon's or something like that is there is there some dr. McDade could probably talk about this is there some norming across divisions no just it's we're deciding what we're doing and I mean we don't not right you know we haven't talked about what Loudon and Fairfax are doing you know we're more concerned with making sure that I mean standard space grading is a research-based right approach and so we want to make sure that in Prince

[02:26:28] William County whatever practices we're doing that they are driven by the research and that it's normed across the board so that from school to school especially if a student you know moves and goes to a different school you know what's expected at one by way of grading should be similar to what's expected at another one so that's that's the work that is at hand for us right now we're we're in the process of evaluating ourselves and working to get better and and continuously improve within our school district?

[02:26:58] - Do we know, just 'cause I don't, do we know, 'cause we're doing standards-based. As I recall, my oldest daughter was getting it in high school and then it went down into middle and then it went down, that's how it was implemented, correct?

[02:27:14] I mean, I know you weren't here, but-- - Yeah, I wasn't here for that, but I know that either Mr. Bixby or Rita can speak to that because I know that they have some the institutional knowledge about the approach at its origin. Yeah, I just recall it in my own family.

[02:27:31] They're fighting for the honors. So sure, so your recall is spot on. So we had a little bit of a grassroots effort that started at the secondary level and eventually we went division wide and that was captured in the regulations when they were updated several years ago.

[02:27:51] Okay, thank you. wanted to that's what i recalled i thank you okay um on that standards-based how many years when did we start that rita what year did we start standard-based that's my recall five ten seven well probably ten years ago i would say uh in the division the efforts around uh standards-based but you know again i think it's really important to note that uh we are continuously improving

[02:28:28] we have not had what I'm going to say is fidelity of implementation across all schools and across all classrooms right just being transparent and so while we may have started many years ago we are still on a journey and we're now even on more of a reflective journey about how how we've actually done with our implementation and whether or not that implementation fidelity needs to improve which we know it does need to improve and so we're looking at ways that we can do that but mr. Bixby do you remember I know you were you were instrumental in secondary and implementing this and mr. Bixby and I

[02:29:06] have had many conversations about the need for norming do you have some of the history on standards-based grading in PWCS to share thank you dr. McDade chairman Lateef vice chair wall the work that I'm aware of started at Woodbridge High School and Garfield High School 14-15 years ago and that and that was a school level grade by grade department by department systematic rollout at the time as far as when the division normed it I would I would reference the date of

[02:29:45] that regulation when that went into place as when the division embraced it it as a K through 12 from a historical perspective. - Thank you, Mr. Bixby. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. I think, you know, and I had transparency, so I gotta ask Dr. McDade to just look into, you know, my concerns about standards-based grading and implementation and how it's working, and if there are places that are doing best practices and we're doing it better in one place, why aren't we doing it better in another place, and how we can share those best practices.

[02:30:19] And I know Dr. McDade got hired at probably the worst time to become a superintendent in the history of America, besides maybe brown desegregation, you know, there's no tougher job in the United States of America, I think, than being superintendent of a school system in the post-pandemic era.

[02:30:38] And the data, while it's sobering, I think has some positive aspects to it that I think we can take away and say, you know, some of the work we're doing here is making a difference.

[02:30:54] I can't emphasize enough though, you know, we can have a school, we can have the doors open, we can have the teachers in there, but if the kids aren't coming in, if the parents aren't engaged with their children's lives and they're not promoting them to come in, it becomes very hard for us to get those kids educated.

[02:31:12] And, you know, I think, you know, everything we're doing around attendance, while folks may say you've spent a lot of time, Dr. Lateef and the board talking about attendance tonight, It is a huge factor in children's success. If you're not present, if you're not there, you're not there, you're never gonna learn.

[02:31:30] It doesn't matter whether you have an excuse or not an excuse, you are just not there. So if you have an excuse and you've decided you don't need to be there, it's still gonna hurt you. Doesn't matter whether it's excused, excused doesn't make a difference because you're missing the work.

[02:31:47] And so I think much has been dumped on the school division over the, certainly since the pandemic, of responsibility and the compounded damage done to children, you know, as you heard from the students on mental health, you compound that with missing school, you compound that with, you know, not getting the knowledge they needed at the time, has compounded in a way that we have incredible challenges to dig out of, as Dr. McDade has pointed out, post pandemic recovery is gonna be challenging.

[02:32:26] It's sobering and she has warned us about this over and over again from the unfinished learning plan to the strategic plan, everything we do and tonight's budget that we voted on is committed to this work and it's not easy.

[02:32:43] This is not the easiest time to be on the school board nor is it the easiest time to be a superintendent. But I would, you know, if anyone's watching and I know the parents are probably watching, probably have their kids in school, but if we can, whatever we can do for our faculty who are watching, our principals who are watching, whatever we can do to chip in to sort of reduce this chronic absenteeism, every bit helps, every single bit helps, and so please reach out to the central office and for whatever supports you need to get this done, but this is absolutely critical.

[02:33:18] So I think with that, we will wrap up on this section. Dr. McDade, do you have anything further superintendent's time no okay we will move to board matters and we will start i wasn't here last week who wants to go first okay miss jesse can go first hi i think i have a slide that i wanted to show from woodbridge high school there look at these fine young men and women woodbridge high school

[02:33:57] on the same day that you guys did your rounds had an accreditation reviewing team come in and look at their program under the direction of Victor Burnett and First Sergeant Jackson and out of a score of 300, this team received a score of 298 points.

[02:34:24] Unbelievable. And it's the highest points they've ever received and they are considered an honor unit. And I want to congratulate them and thank them for inviting me. Thank you for that slide. I also wanted to remind everyone that the military families, I went to Spring Woods and I talked to military families.

[02:34:50] And in my board article this month, I talked about military families and how these kids land on their feet. I started looking at military data a long time ago and began to realize that these kids are outperforming. Military kids, when you look at that data from VDOE, look at the military student performance.

[02:35:10] They are higher, they have a higher performance than regular kids in regular schools and in our school division they outperform all of us. So I want to congratulate the military families and all they're doing. I also went to Jenkins and the budget, when it reaches a school level they were so excited about

their budget because they are getting all kinds of new staff, they're getting kindergarten A's they're getting parent lays on but I just wanted to congratulate the the man with the money

[02:35:43] for giving money to those schools and allowing them to write their own budgets okay so this week I also went to you know uh we talk about having a counselor to go to uh and these kids who have problems but kids have need to have a place to go to and in 2016 we opened colgan high school and i know mrs uh william and i were there for the underwater robotics and several staff members from

[02:36:21] central office and the superintendent's office and i just wanted to share something that has happened since we opened that school because we get a lot of flack about opening uh swimming pools and alan dunn who has directed that program for several years shared the following statistics with me they have seen more than 3 000 second graders they've taught them how to swim and 17 000 people that students have participated in their water safety program and they host 60 high school for dual meets in several districts in the region this year i want to talk about to say to you that sports

[02:37:00] are very important for kids and a place to go to instead of a person to go to means that it will help their mental health and i'm done thank you mr zuckerberg we're mixing it up tonight all right sorry we have going this direction what miss Williams oh all right thank you I'm just gonna alter my speech a little bit and kind of pick up where Miss Jessie left off and they you know the the swimming pool was one of my first votes as a board member and it's important especially for a lot of children in my

[02:37:37] district who don't have access to public pools I am in that category if I don't get to my public pool by a certain time in the morning and have the budget in order to enter the public pool my children don't swim and I've been there on many occasions and having water safety for the students in my district even though it's on a rotation is paramount and critical water safety can save lives it's a big deal in my household my godson is a swim instructor and it's been something that I know makes a difference in the life of our students continuing on with that I just want to mention that I did go to Sea Perch with Miss Jessie we did hear all about the amazing things that go on

[02:38:16] at the Aquatic Center it was my first opportunity to be an observant at Sea Perch and I was also very pleased that we had a middle school team participate this year if you don't know what Sea Perch is it is underwater robotics it is amazing this it's just innovative and it's worth checking out I do want to also put in my continue plug but add it and revise it a little bit as you know I've been discussing have hoping that we will be able to fund a center to do robotics but I think it would be more collaborative if we included maybe robotics a pool in the track indoor track the multi-use center I'm all about multi-purpose spaces so something I think that we as a community can really

[02:38:56] think about and be strategic in our future years planning in addition to that I went to opiate robotics forest park multicultural night many PTO meetings participate in Kilby read across America participate in the father son excuse me mother son game night at Featherstone Porter steam night Hilton soccer scrimmage for my goddaughter I'm just gonna embarrass her a little bit and want to say thank you to a friend of mine who owns a meat company that donated all of the food for both Hilton High School and Colonial Forge I think they played it was interesting they had a cookout as we all know I'm not sports oriented it was a lot of fun and then I just want to say a little bit about a

[02:39:33] budget and how proud I am of the collaboration from this board and all combined stakeholders that we have come to an agreement we're able to pass our budget tonight notwithstanding or with the understanding that we may be right back here when the state gives us our final numbers it's not

something that we're unaccustomed to but I really truly think this board and the collaboration with the superintendent is impactful it's meaningful that all of our voices and our stakeholders were represented in this budget and no budget will contain a hundred percent of everything that everybody wants but it is important that we work together collaboratively to do the best for all of

[02:40:09] our stakeholders as well as we can and I just want to remind our community that the budget isn't gonna meet every need for example we still have elementary schools that don't have PTOs and PTAs and that's why it's important that we added things like resources for economically disadvantaged schools Kilby for example has no PTA they're struggling to get a book vending machine and that's just one of many examples but I am very proud of the investments that that we made the alignment to our strategic plan because it is our core guidance for what we are doing in this division.

[02:40:41] And I just want to, again, just really emphasize that public school is public for all. All students don't come here with parents. All students don't come here with parents that are able to or capable of helping them. And I think that we need to be mindful when we approach subjects like budgets or anything that goes division-wide and in understanding that public is for all and all means a lot.

[02:41:03] So, and diversity, thank you, I'm sorry for the time. - Ms. Jackson. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Dr. McDade and I spent the day in Richmond last Friday rooting on the Brentsville District High School girls and the Patriot boys basketball teams in the Virginia High School sports state championship.

[02:41:24] So both played exceptionally well and I was very honored to be in attendance. I just want to also thank Dr. Nichols for taking some time a few weeks ago to walk me through the halls of Unity Reed. It's always wonderful to visit. And I was able to stop in and talk to students and staff that participate in the CTE programs there.

[02:41:44] And I want to say especially thank you to the students at CPoach who took time to stop and show me their robot. And then I was disappointed that I couldn't make the state championships for the, excuse me, CPoach robotic competitions, 'cause it was at the same time as state champions.

[02:42:01] but congratulations to all teams who participated. School sports were not possible, would not be possible without athletic trainers, and this month is Athletic Trainer Month, so it's a great time for all families, staff, and students to learn more about the importance of athletic trainers, to take a moment to thank them and for their professional knowledge and their tactics to prevent injuries that when they recognize and treat the injuries and guidance to students athletes.

[02:42:30] So just thank you to all PWCS athletic trainers. Last month we recognized School Counseling Week and this month is School Social Work Week. School social workers create a great bond between families, students, community, various stakeholders.

[02:42:49] They work in conjunction with staff to create environments that meet all needs of students which helps them access their educational goals. I'm beyond grateful for school counselors social workers school psychiatrists and the work we've done to add to the positions and all students service staff for everything they do especially I know that attendance have been all time-consuming so I just want to say thank you for that as well during the month of March we have an opportunity to recognize and celebrate theater in our schools and youth so I look forward to attending more events it is also developmental disabilities awareness

[02:43:27] month and it's a wonderful time to learn more about developmental disabilities and the diverse communities that they offer and that the people with developmental disabilities to recognize the barriers that they face and World Down Syndrome Day is March 21st and just want to just take a moment the talk quickly about the importance of inclusion and the importance of seeing yourself in your curriculum and seeing all abilities in the curriculum including on your standards and just remind everybody that history standards public comment um is open until

[02:44:03] the 21st of um march so a quick reminder to make sure you put your input in on evolve and to participate in rosemont low-risk schools have a great evening naming schools thank you miss zargarpur thank you dr latif um i'm gonna start off with a quote by malala yousafzai she said i used to think that i had to wait to be an adult to lead but i've learned that even a child's voice can be heard around the world. So I wanted to share an example of something that I saw this week that I thought was really profound. Osborne Park's Metal Jackets, their robotics team, held an event at Osborne Park this week. Miss

[02:44:43] Wall had come, so had Miss Williams, and they shared with us some of what they do, their builds, their programs. This was something that was posted on their Facebook on February 11th that says, "Today on the International Day of women's and women and girls in science we celebrate all the young women and female coaches on our team female bilingual members of our electrical team hosted a zoom room to teach building and programming in Spanish to the schools in Ecuador who received the EV3s we sent in December we hope to inspire a much-needed focus on all girls entering science technology engineering and

[02:45:18] mathematics stems careers so when I went there they they shared with us a story about how they had when they were kids had been involved in robotics programs from elementary school and some of those schools got their first robotics pieces and parts because the high schools donated them so there was a teacher at Mary Williams apparently who connected this team to her home country so three schools Rockledge Cedar Point and Chris Young donated a collection of old robotics technologies, EV3 and then NXT. Dr. Julia Renberg made sure that the

[02:45:54] robots got to where they needed to go and these two students who are bilingual spent 90 minutes with these teachers on how to build robotics, robots and program them and all that good stuff. It was done completely in Spanish. So I think that's really profound that we have our own students teaching teachers in the world. Another student I want to highlight this evening is one who reached out to let me know that she received an award. Hilton High School student Alexa Zarkalkas received a Novec Youth Tour Award. She will be spending time in Washington DC in June learning about the government, the electrical cooperative,

[02:46:33] and the role they play in the environment. Students come from across the country and apply for these programs through their electric cooperative cooperatives in their communities they learn about American history and citizenship and according to the website quote some of our youth tour alumni have gone on to design airplanes to lead companies and serve in the highest ranks of our government including the US Senate so to close tonight I will leave you with one more quote by Malala one child one teacher one pen and one book can change the world mr. will thank you mr. chairman

[02:47:12] quick updates on what is happening well first I want to say we're proud of the of the work of the collaboration recently completed on the fiscal year 24 budget. The final product was a result of negotiation

discussions and compromise. It was important to me to remove the raise at the time and I'm thankful for the removal of the board raise.

[02:47:31] However, some budget and CIP items will continue requiring advocacy and collaboration like I was for Grand Park in previous budget cycles. I will continue vocalizing my support for a renovation review of Dumfries Elementary. Members of the community, including members of the town council, want to revisit the previous renovation cycle completed before my arrival on the board.

[02:47:54] I did hear immediate feedback from some crew families after my request and amendment of providing additional funding for non-traditional sports went through. This funding will also benefit popular programs like bowling and video games teams. I remain hopeful that the General Assembly will provide additional funding so that we can immediately apply, in my opinion, to employee raises.

[02:48:16] Quick update on my travels. At the end of February, I attended Ashland's K2 reading night. I was a volunteer actually as a parent. My son goes there. My job was to monitor one of the reading rooms. It was really nice. They set it up as an outdoor themes and there was a bunch of tents.

[02:48:34] The teachers spent all day setting up. So I want to thank the Ashland staff. On 3/7, Covington Harper hosted a well attended Substance Knowledge Parent Night. they told me there that this was one of the first elementary schools to host the event, an event like this for their community.

[02:48:53] The following night on March 8th, I attended Title I Parent Night that was hosted at Swans Creek Elementary. I do wanna thank our entire Title I staff for all the work they put into it, all the various stations and activities, and of course the Swans Creek teachers who remained there late to do the program.

[02:49:11] On 3/9, I was invited from the Ashland PTO to present the proposed budget to their group. On 3:10, I attended the Forest Park, JV and Varsity Girls Soccer Scrimmage versus John Champ. On 3:12, Ms. Zargarpur and I had a great meeting at the Darlanur Mosque where we heard concerns for over two plus hours from that community about issues that they're concerned about in their schools.

[02:49:42] Yesterday, I was at Henderson Elementary's Spring Book Fair. It's the first one of many elementary book fairs that are probably heading all of our ways. And finally this morning, I was at Potomac Shores Career Day, great event put on for the eighth graders, a number of parent volunteers and community members had stations, it was a rotation process.

[02:50:06] It was a great way, I think, for students to learn about careers in the area. And that will be it, thank you. - Ms. Raulston? - Okay, Ms. Wall.

[02:50:22] - Thank you. A Ugandan proverb states that a child that is encouraged grows up with confidence. And as I make the rounds from school to school and event to event, I see the wonderful encouragement that our students receive from their families, their teachers, their leaders, and their friends.

[02:50:40] And so that gives me a lot of hope for the rising generation. Over the last month or so, I've attended so many of these confidence building events, all county choir for elementary students, a girls basketball game at Unity Braxton, a pre-assessment concert with Battlefield, Bull Run and Reagan orchestras, a spelling bee at Reagan.

[02:51:01] I got to be one of the judges, that was awesome. A family dance at Gravely where they had over 800 people at the event. Bull Run honor roll, seventh and eighth grade celebrations. I love that this school

does this, it's awesome. A meeting with the newsletter club at Bull Run, a principal's advisory council at Battlefield to talk about the budget, a choral concert with Unity Braxton, Unity Reed, Sinclair, and Locke Lomond, an FRC robotics competition with Battlefield's 1885 Comet team, and this is their first year as Comet, and they did a great job.

[02:51:38] They got into the semifinals. And then I attended Read Across America Day at Sudley Elementary and read to a kindergarten, first, and second grade class, which was very, very fun, and I would love to do again anytime. I went on a field trip to D.C. with Battlefield's AP environmental science class and sustainability students to see Benjamin Banneker High School, which is a really cool school.

[02:52:02] It's a lead, I think they're trying to be lead platinum. It was amazing. And I went to District 9 Orchestra Assessment at Patriot, Sea Perch at Colgan, Hive Knight at OP with the metal jackets, and Alvia and Gravely bingo nights.

[02:52:19] So a lot of cool places, a lot of great encouragement happening and a lot of community involvement. I want to extend special congratulations to the class of 2023. A lot of students got their college acceptances, have been getting them this last month. And I want to also congratulate all of the winter sports teams for their fantastic jobs at district, region and state.

[02:52:42] In the Gainesville district, I'm pleased to see that my efforts to secure a school speed reduction zone on route 15 battlefield high school came to fruition with the installment of signs signage I hope that that will enhance the safety aspects of the school going along with the crosswalks and improved lighting over the next two Wednesdays I hope we will have good community involvement for the naming suggestions for Rose Mount Lewis I will also be holding office hours at the end of the month hoping for March 28th I can't open I can't register yet for the space at the library but but look for more details on my constituent Facebook page for specific times.

[02:53:20] As always, I appreciate hearing from the community about your concerns. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. All right, well, we are in the middle of Lent, so I'd like to congratulate folks who are celebrating Lent and wish them, as we won't be here, I don't think until after spring break, right?

[02:53:42] So happy Easter to everyone. Ramadan starts next week, So Ramadan Mubarak to all those celebrating. Basaki, which is the Sikh holiday, celebrates the spring and the festival. Will be happening right around spring break time.

[02:53:58] Holy happened last week, which is the Indian festival of the spring. And then we have the Persian New Year, which many of these holidays start with the, you know, what is that, the spring equinox, right? So, and then Nauruz, which is the Persian New Year.

[02:54:14] So great, so for all of our families, 'cause we are the 10th most diverse county in the country. We have folks who are celebrating all those things and just on our consent agenda tonight, we recognize Scottish American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Arab American Heritage Month.

[02:54:35] So congratulations to all those folks and let's all try to learn a little bit about each other some more over this next few weeks. Tonight, I sat and oversaw my sixth budget as school board chairman.

[02:54:52] I think they've all been unanimous. Was it unanimous last year? Right, well, you weren't with me, huh? No, okay, well, I think they're pretty darn close to six unanimous budgets that we have passed in

these last six years.

[02:55:11] And that's a credit to our finance team, our superintendent, Dr. McDade, the leadership team for putting together a budget that is reflective of the values that this board has, shares, and what's in our strategic plan, as Dr. McDade pointed out, which is a reflection of what the community stakeholders, over 4,000 people felt was important to the work we're doing.

[02:55:36] So congratulations to this board again on the sixth, you know, or fourth, or your all's fourth, is it fourth for you guys, right? Fourth unanimous budget that we've passed, that we've worked together with and closely with, and I really appreciate the school board members working closely with each other, with Dr. McDade on getting the things that we want in this budget.

[02:55:59] So with that being said, I have nothing further to add. Since we will not be here, I wish everyone a wonderful spring break when that time comes and be safe.