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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, September 6, 2023

Date	Wednesday, September 6, 2023
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	2h 45m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4QLTAA4IgE
- 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 2026-11-03. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:02] I would like to call the meeting the Prince William County School Board to order approval of the agenda. Motion's now in order for approval of the agenda. Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second?

[00:00:18] - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Ms. Zargarpur seconds, any discussion? Please vote, all in favor, raise your hand. Any opposed? No opposed, motion passes unanimous. Moving on to motion to enter closed session. Moving on to a motion to enter, Ms. Wall.

[00:00:33] - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code Section 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons. One, to discuss with staff the appointment, transfer, release, assignment, and promotion of specific officers and employees pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711A1.

[00:00:55] Two, to discuss and consult with legal counsel regarding requests for religious exemptions pertaining to specific students under Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711A2 and 8. Three, to review a disciplinary matter for a specific student that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the scholastic record for the individual student and to receive legal advice regarding same as provided by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A2 and 8.

[00:01:22] Four to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students under Virginia code section 2.2-3711A7 and 8. Five to consult with staff and legal counsel regarding the legal requirements and procedures for collective bargaining by school board employees which requires legal advice and guidance as provided by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A 8 and 6 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

[00:02:00] 2.2-3711A19. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman, I second. Mr. Agrapport seconds. Any discussion? Please vote. You can go ahead and vote on the screen. The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. Moving on to closed session. No, that's it, right? That's it. Okay, at this time, the Prince William County School Board will move into closed session and return in approximately one

[00:02:34] hour. Prince William County School Board will now re-enter open session and we have on action a

[00:03:43] closed session certification on the agenda 8.01. Ms. Wall. Mr. Chairman I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3712 the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of September 6, 2023 be certified by adopting the following resolution. Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge one only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and to only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed

[00:04:23] meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board do i have a second mr chairman miss our second any discussion please vote the vote is seven yes one absent ralston motion passed

[00:05:00] moving on to closed session action items motions in order miss wall mr chairman i move that the 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? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur seconds. - I second.

[00:05:16] - Any discussion? Okay, please vote.

[00:05:33] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to the next action item, Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the requests for religious exemptions in case numbers RE23-1 through RE23-15.

[00:05:51] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Agaraport. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:12] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. - Moving on to 9:03, motion's in order, Ms. Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that for the reasons set forth in the Student Management and Alternative Programs Department's SMAPD letter of August 22nd, 2023, the Prince William County School Board approve SMAPD's recommendation to approve the early readmission of student MS 23-166 to Prince William County Public Schools.

[00:06:40] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur, Ms. Williams, second. Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:07:01] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Ralston, motion passed. - Moving on to 9.04, a motion is in order. - Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the retention of the law firm McGuire Woods to provide legal services for specific matters as directed by the board and division council.

[00:07:21] - Do I have a second? - I second. - Mr. Jackson seconds motion, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:07:42] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, thank you. That wraps up the closed session action items. At this time, we'll stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. And before I do that, I'd like to introduce you all to our newly elected student representative.

[00:07:58] Joining us tonight on the dais is Bella Avrasano, who is a senior attending Gainesville High School. We also have tonight student representatives, Fernando Morante. Here this evening is a senior at Forest Park High School and our alternate student rep, Jackie Garcia, senior at Osborne Park High School is with us as well.

[00:08:16] Miss Aversano, can you please lead us in the pledge? - To the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, liberty and justice for all.

[00:08:38] - Sorry about that, I screwed up in my script. So let me reintroduce them properly, okay? Let me go back here, just happened. So again, tonight on the dais, who will be serving this evening as our student representative is Bella Aversano, who is a senior at Gainesville High School.

[00:08:57] Thank you, Bella, for joining us. We'll hear from her later. We also have student representative Fernando Morante. Where's Fernando? Right there. She is from Forest Park High School, a senior there. And then our alternate rep, Jackie Garcia, senior at Osborne Park High School.

[00:09:14] Thank you very much for joining us and you'll be hearing from them over the course of this year. And we truly do welcome all of them and we enjoy working with them as well. Okay, next to our first thriving futures focus of this school year, I welcome everyone to the first one.

[00:09:33] And before we begin though, I would be remiss if I did not share an outstanding collaboration between Michelle Garcia, who was a Woodbridge High School graduate and current Prince William County Poet Laureate in our Communications and Professional Learning Departments.

[00:09:50] The video debuted this summer at our Administrators Conference, the Triple E Conference, to the amazement of our staff. The video excellently presents, as Dr. McDade would call it, our why, and serves as our powerful reminder of our collective purpose.

[00:10:06] And so I now invite each of you to watch the video, And it is titled, The Value of a Tassel. Tassel from PWCS means that I'm ready to go out into the world and to pursue my dreams and how I want to change the world.

[00:10:46] It's September 2005, the first day of kindergarten. I'm wearing light-up Velcro sneakers that sparkle like Tinkerbell's fairy dust. Mom calls me her big girl, plants a kiss on my cheek and waves from the curb.

[00:11:03] I try my hardest not to cry. I'm being brave. My new teacher is nice. She has a gentle voice and kind eyes. She tells us, you can change the world. You can be anything you want to be.

[00:11:21] I think to myself, I want to be everything. I want to be a Disney princess and an astronaut and a librarian. the day will fade from my memory but i won't forget what i heard that morning i can change the world i know i want to and i know i will that tassel to me is going to mean a new page now turn it's going to mean that i'm going now to advance like everybody's being taken care of by the

[00:11:58] teachers principals you know staff of the school but how do they react when now they are left on their own where nobody's holding their hand and so I think that's really what that task is going to mean to me now I'm going to start a path that's going to really show you what I'm made of 16 now and in over my head life is complicated there's talk of life after graduation I'm terrified of the future crystallizing right before my eyes each day more concrete taking shape becoming real I've determined that I want to be a writer saying it out loud makes me weak and

[00:12:36] in the knees but i do it anyway to my english teacher mrs k as she sets up a display for our high school's annual career day i don't know why i pick that moment to say it but i do in one moment of reckless bravery i tell her i want to go to college to study writing i want to be a writer i prepare for her to laugh or respond with maybe you should pursue something more in demand something that automatically pays well but she opens her drawer and places a blank black and white

[00:13:12] composition notebook in my hands she says go for it i say okay in my memories now everything mrs k said to me in reply went along the lines of go for it i had a long way to go i have a long way to go But I thought then, and I'm thinking now, I'm going to show you what I'm made of.

[00:13:42] The value of a tassel to me is being able to step into the adult world knowing that you've already accomplished something. To be able to step forward into a new world with new opportunities, harder opportunities, but know that you already have something that's yours. The value of a tassel represents hard work and success.

[00:14:01] It's graduation day and pomp and circumstance cascades from the stadium speakers. Heartbeats ricochet off the metal bleachers, packed with the proud, beaming faces of our loved ones. This is it.

[00:14:17] There's a vacant dorm room waiting for me at my dream university four hours from here. My childhood bedroom is packed away in cardboard boxes. It's the end of an era, but I'm old enough to know that there is joy in beginnings too.

[00:14:33] In this shapeless gown and awkward cap, I find myself speaking quietly to the little girl inside of me who once dreamt of becoming something. You did it, I whisper. You're being brave like you promised.

[00:14:50] What's in a tassel? For me, it's the comfort of my kindergarten teacher's voice telling us five-year-olds, you can change the world. It's Mrs. K's insistence that I go for it. it's the composition notebook i still keep on my nightstand to write in when i want to remember why i ever even started it's permission and encouragement from my parents to relentlessly pursue what sets my heart on fire to grab it with both hands and leap forth with confidence my tassel is my own but it exists because of the hands that held mine as i took the first steps

[00:15:28] Because of the teachers and mentors who listened to my voice on paper and in person who made me feel heard, seen, and known. I can change the world. I know I want to.

[00:15:44] And I know I will. Value of a PWCS tassel?

[00:16:08] Limitless. Thank you.

[00:16:26] That was a wonderful poem written, again, by Michelle Garcia, our Woodbridge High School graduate and current PWCS poet, or Prince William County Poet Laureate. And so just very proud of this work our students are doing out there.

[00:16:42] Congratulations to the class of 22 who just left and we're excited, or 23, and we're excited to launch this school year with that inspirational video. I think if maybe we can have communications make that available on the website as well for others to take a look at that. Well, Thriving Futures Focus, everyone, is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for their, themselves, and their community.

[00:17:14] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor award at the state or national level. 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.

[00:17:31] Tonight, our first two spotlights shine on our four Project Lead the Way 2022-23 Distinguished Schools, Battlefield High School, Garfield High School, Patriot High School, and Woodbridge High School. These schools are among only eight high schools in Virginia to receive this honor.

[00:17:49] A Project Lead the Way Distinguished Program is a recognition that celebrates a school's commitment to helping students own their education by increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their programs. In other words, a Distinguished Project the way school teaches the knowledge skills and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community we begin with the representative of the gainesville district vice chairwoman jennifer wall thank you dr latif it is my pleasure to recognize battlefield high school's project lead the way program for their recognition as a 2022 2023 distinguished

[00:18:27] school dave david huckstein is certainly currently serving as interim principal at battlefield high school and we are fortunate to have project lead the way teacher mike spudick here with a few program participants so at this time i would like to invite mr spudick to say a few words actually with one participant it looks like yeah i have with me lauren mcnealy who's uh one of our great students here at battlefield uh in a project project of the way program um and i just want to say that i'm proud of all of our students proud of our teachers and uh thank you for the honor

[00:19:00] - Thank you, Mrs. Wall and congratulations, Battlefield High School. I will be speaking for Ms. Raulston, who represents the Neabsco District, to recognize our next school. The Neabsco District is proud to acknowledge Garfield High School as a Project Lead the Way 2022-23 Distinguished School.

[00:19:22] In attendance, we have Principal Matt Matheson and Project Lead the Way teachers John Ruff and Ardenia Lewis. At this point, I may have a member of the team to share a few words. Principal

Mathes. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I'd also like to recognize our assistant principal, Tiffany Gresham, who supervises our CTE programs, which includes our outstanding Project Lead the Way team.

[00:19:46] Just wanted to first off thank Dr. McDade and the board for their longstanding commitment to this outstanding program, Project Lead the Way. It's been something that Prince William County has been dedicated to, and it's something I'm passionate about as well. It's an outstanding opportunity for our students to, you know, in alignment with our strategic plan, you know, be college career and trade ready graduates on day one when they leave our care and go off and start their future.

[00:20:17] So this is an outstanding program and something that, again, we should continue to foster in all of our schools. So again, thank you very much. And, you know, on behalf of Garfield High School, I wanna congratulate our outstanding team of teachers and our outstanding students on their work in earning this recognition.

[00:20:33] Thank you. - Wonderful, thank you Principal Mathis. Next we have Mrs. Adele Jackson of the Brentsville District who will introduce our next awardee. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[00:20:49] The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Patriot High School as the 2022-2023 Project Lead the Way Distinguished School. Principal Dr. Bishop is here tonight with a few Project Lead the Way students. Steven Llasco, Luez-Nicolas Sershenchen, I'm so sorry, Sershenchen?

[00:21:07] Can you say it for me so I can learn it? - Sershenchen. - I am really sorry, I want to make sure I get it right. - Chris sent ya. - David Frost and may Dr. Bishop from Patriot step forward and please share a few words, thank you. - Dr. Lateef, Dr. McDade, members of the board, thank you for recognizing our Project Lead the Way program.

[00:21:27] Stephen, David, and Nicholas are all members of the program. Stephen is a senior, so he's a four-year completer and plans to go to Georgia Tech. We're hopeful that that comes through for him. We are happy with the development of our program as it's existed since we opened in 2011 and develops critical thinking skills, habits of mind, as well as communication skills, which aligns directly with the Prince William County Strategic Plan.

[00:21:48] So we thank you for this honor tonight. We appreciate the recognition. - Thank you, Mrs. Jackson, and thank you, Principal Dr. Bishop. Congratulations once again to Patriot High School. Ms. Lily Jessie of the Occoquan District will recognize our final Project Lead the Way awardee.

[00:22:08] Ms. Jessie. - Thank you, Dr. Motif. The Occoquan District is very proud to recognize Woodbridge High School as a distinguished school in the Project Lead the Way for 2022-23. Tonight, we have our principal, Heather Abney, assistant principal, Brian Karnback, and the Project Lead the Way teachers, Carlos Castro, Tara Healy, and Adam Fredericks.

[00:22:35] Mr. Castro, also known as the voice, would you please share a few words on this honor? - Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I was going to say something more flowery, but a week ago, literally, a week after school started, I got this email from our graduates to graduate in 2022.

[00:22:56] If you'll bear with me while I read the first paragraph, it'll be quick. Hello, Mr. Castro. This email is long overdue, but I wanted to say thank you for the incredible experience I had in high school through Project Lead the Way and all the things you did to prepare us for continuing in engineering.

Freshman year last year was in many ways a breeze since working with CAD, Arduino, circuits, and all the technical drawing and visualizations that we did was already so familiar.

[00:23:18] Some principles of engineering knowledge came into handy also when we did a balsa wood bridge challenge last year and my partner and I actually won and broke the school's record for maximum load to weight, maximum load of bridge to weight ratio. This is the kind of stuff we try to prepare our students for.

[00:23:35] All these schools here before you are working hard to get our students ready for the next generation of designers, the next generation of engineers, the next technical generation. We are thankful, we're grateful for your support. We hope that we can keep counting on it and well as we keep preparing our students, become the next generation of innovators, the next generation of designers.

[00:23:51] Thank you very much. - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Jessie, and congratulations, Woodbridge High School, and I think we should note why Ms. Jessie calls him the voice, if you didn't hear it in his voice, he's got a great voice, great radio voice, and I think if I'm correct, correct me if I'm wrong, he's the only one of all high school graduations who announces every single name of every single student that crosses that stage.

[00:24:22] There are no turns in that school. He does it all. Thank you, Mr. Castro. Congratulations again to all four of our Project Lead the Way Distinguished Schools and to all the principals, staff and teachers for all the great work you do and the time you commit during school over and above school and the work you do really does inspire all of us and we're really excited to have you all here.

[00:24:44] And then I think I have one more final acknowledgement this evening from Mrs. Lisa Zargarpur, the Coles District. I believe you have the next honor, Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board announced early this August, in this August, I can't talk today, announced early in August that the Charles J. Colgan Senior High School science teacher, Lori Ann Pollack, is the recipient of the prestigious Fulbright's Teachers for Global Classrooms program award.

[00:25:15] Mrs. Pollack was selected by a presidentially appointed 12-member board to participate in this program, the world's largest and most diverse international educational exchange program. Mrs. Pollack has been an educator in Prince William County Public Schools since 2012 and has taught physics at Colgan High School under principal Dr. Timothy Healy since August 2020.

[00:25:37] As a Fulbright honoree, she joins the ranks of other distinguished participants who have been included in no, oh good grief, I'm choked up, Lori, I'm just choked up. As a Fulbright honoree, she joins the ranks of other distinguished participants who have also included Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, and leaders from across private, public, and non-profit sectors, such as heads of state, judges, ambassadors, cabinet ministers, and university presidents.

[00:26:10] Congratulations, Ms. Pollack. Would you like to say a few words? - Good evening, Dr. Lateef and Dr. McDade, and members of the school board. I am honored to be selected as a Fulbright candidate. I am going to be going elsewhere over the summer, and we are just starting our cohort of people.

[00:26:30] I think that it is very appropriate that Dr. Healy's video that you showed about changing the world, he showed it to our faculty, is exactly what our Fulbright group intends to do. We want to change

the world, and we do that through global connections with our other counterparts in education across the world.

[00:26:52] And one of our requirements is that we bring it back to our schools. So we have a one year commitment after our we return that we can share our information and lead classes and create all kinds of information for you all to look at too.

[00:27:08] So thank you again for recognizing me tonight. It is truly an honor. - Thank you, Mr. Pollack. Will the family and colleagues of Mr. Pollack please stand in recognition as well so we can recognize them.

[00:27:24] Very good, thank you so much, Ms. Pollack. We're very excited and congratulations again. So I would like to request the honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board.

[00:27:39] Let's start with Battlefield High School first. Miss Diane, I missed your text. Oh yeah, yeah, Dr. McDade, please. - Sorry, thank you, Dr. Lateef. Well, congratulations again to our project Lead the Way Distinguished Schools, Battlefield, Garfield, Patriot, and Woodbridge Senior High School.

[00:27:58] We're excited about the work that you're doing. And I just wanna reaffirm our commitment to all of our CTE programs. We recognize that CTE provides really strong pathways, post-secondary pathways for our students. And so we're happy to have the work that you're doing and that it's being reverberated throughout the school system.

[00:28:14] And we're gonna continue to invest in our CTE programs. Also want to congratulate Lori Ann Pollack. Fun fact, not only is she the recipient of the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program Award, she's also the president-elect of the Virginia Association of Science Teachers.

[00:28:36] So we're excited to have our very own Prince William County Public Schools teacher as the president-elect for Virginia. So congratulations to you on both fronts. Congratulations to you all. We are extremely proud of the work that you're doing in fulfilling our mission and vision for Prince William County Schools.

[00:28:56] - Okay, let's do the photographs now. Thanks, Diane.

[00:28:58] Start with Battlefield High School first.

[00:34:31] Okay, everyone, again, thank you very much for that, and I thank you, Dr. McDade, for those great comments before we took the break for the pictures. Moving on next, we will head into adoption of the consent agenda, which is 12.01.

[00:34:48] At this time, I'll ask for a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Ms. Wall. - Dr. Lateef, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second.

[00:35:10] - Great, any discussion? Please vote, I'm signing back on here, I'm sure. Yes, I'm voting yes.

[00:35:26] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Ralston, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to citizen comment time.

[00:35:44] 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 is one hour and citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and the

policies of Prince William County Schools. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you will be asked to step aside.

[00:36:02] 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 do so, the board will recess. I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have 20 citizens signed up to speak.

[00:36:17] When I call your name, please come up to the podium, state your name and address for the record. I will call up the first five if they'd like to come on up and grab a seat up front. We have Jane Coburn, Maggie Hansford, Carl Greeton, Aileen Devereaux, Beverly Thompson.

[00:36:35] Jane Coburn first. Good evening, Superintendent McDade and members of the board. My name is Jane Coburn, and my address is on file with the clerk. I am one of the faces of PWEA.

[00:36:52] My husband and I are both employees of Prince William County Schools, and together we support our family of four. When the division's bargaining team sits down at the table with our PWEA team, they're bargaining the contract that will determine my salary, my protections, and my working conditions. PWEA is not a faceless, nameless numbers on a worksheet. We're people who are counting on you. I've been an educator for 25 years. 20 of those years have been spent here in Prince William County Schools. I've given a huge chunk of my life to this profession and to the school division and now I'm at a point in my career where I'm seven years from being able to retire and I'm

[00:37:29] counting down because we've reached an untenable point in teaching and the The career that I love has become so hard that I often have thoughts about leaving and never more so than in the past three years. But I'm holding on because of collective bargaining.

[00:37:45] Because getting a fair contract is my hope that I can keep doing what I love. So when I read the derogatory comments made by the chairman of this board to the media about collective bargaining, comments that disparage the process and undermine the dedication and hard work of the collective bargaining team for PWEA, I was angry and frankly disappointed.

[00:38:04] No one on the board has observed the process, and no one on the board spoke up to contradict the negative portrayal that Dr. Lateef made. This board and the superintendent have put barriers in place to make the process of collective bargaining more difficult time and time again. PWEA has done everything that was asked, plus we achieved 50% plus voter participation, something I can guarantee no single member of this board could do in their own elections.

[00:38:33] Now we need the board to step up and to ensure that negotiation is happening in good faith. Hardline tactics from a union-busting lawyer, closing the bargaining room so that employees cannot see and the media cannot see what's truly happening, and then making untrue statements to the media about what's going on during the sessions makes employees like me wonder, why don't you value me enough to respect this process?

[00:38:57] Your highly paid lawyer told our PWA bargaining team exactly how the division team is bargaining when he said this, "The needs of the employees do not supersede the wishes of the superintendent." Let me repeat that so you can really all hear it, "The needs of the employees do not supersede the wishes of the superintendent." That is a pretty clear set of priorities. How can we as employees feel valued when it's so clear that the negotiating team is not bargaining in good faith? I'm looking at the board, especially the former educators on the board, to prove

[00:39:32] that statement wrong. Tell your team to commit to negotiating in good faith because collective bargaining is our hope and without hope we don't have a reason to keep going. Thank you. Maggie Hansford. Hi my name is Maggie Hansford. My address is on file with the clerk. I want to first start by thanking our educators. It's not easy starting off the school year with almost 500 vacancies in our schools and I want to personally thank my children's educators. Thank you from our family

[00:40:07] to be able to teach our children and my hope is is that these teachers are able to stay and they're able to live here and work here so i'm here because dr latif your comments in the press are inaccurate they're lies and if you were there during the bargaining session if any of you would come you would know that so i want to share with you what it looks like in this room because

[00:40:41] you all have a responsibility. What it looked like in the room the first few sessions were educators did come with a contract. We did. And we were told no because your team needed more rules. Your team wanted the doors closed. Your team wanted to hide. We wanted the doors open. You all have Diana Gulotta saying that you care about the taxpayers when educators are just merely asking for a livable wage. Well, here, when we are in that room, we want taxpayers

[00:41:19] to see it. We ask for that. We ask for over the 11,000 educators who believe in their contract and want to see who is negotiating what, who is asking for what, who is rejecting what. We want them to see. Your team said no. Your team shows up to say no. So please don't say that you wish educators showed up. We did. We're not the ones saying that we don't have time for this. We didn't say that. We've showed up every single time and we've showed up prepared,

[00:41:54] ready to bargain. A fair contract. And this is not happening. And Dr. McDade, I'm publicly asking you, the team shows up how you want them to show up. I need you to ask for civility. I need you to ask for them to show up and work with us.

[00:42:14] We can't keep doing this. There are peoples, families, lives that say people deserve a quality of life. Your staff deserves a quality of life. Your students deserve fully staffed schools and a transportation department that's fully staffed, ready and able to pick up all of our students.

[00:42:36] I'm asking you all to show up on September 12th. You believe in collective bargaining? You support collective bargaining? Come, show us. - Carl Greton.

[00:42:56] - Good evening and welcome back. I'm Carl Greton of the Gainesville District. Why has the Prince William County School Board decided against the Virginia Department of Education's guiding principles, which are respect parents' values and beliefs, defer to parents to make the best decisions for their children, and keep parents informed about their children's wellbeing?

[00:43:14] Will the Virginia governor defend public schools based on your violations? hands off our kids. Is your decision a form of state-sponsored child abuse? The Prince William County School Board has made the decision to allow male-born students to participate in girls' sports and to enter girls' bathrooms.

[00:43:31] You as a school board will have to make the right decisions. You are setting Prince William County up for many problems. With only 1% of the population is trans, decide for the other 99% of the student population. Girls are now fighting for fairness. Just because other localities and made the irresponsible ruling, is Prince William County going to follow those decisions toward destruction?

[00:43:53] You are bowing down to hypocrisy and hysteria. There are at least eight other counties in Virginia that have rejected your stance. Why does Prince William County always have to follow Fairfax County? Regarding the issue of trans and locker room showers, the solution is to have previous gender boys wait until they get home to shower.

[00:44:11] Have you also thought about overnight field trips? What sports will have an impact previous gender boys playing in girls sports field hockey volleyball basketball swim and dive track and field soccer softball lacrosse just to name a few is the decision from the prince william county school board ready to take on title nine do you think it is fair the biological boys take scholarships away from girls the solution is easy start transgender leagues these leagues would be Paralympics and Special Olympics. As Billie Jean King says, "Trans youth deserve to play and thrive."

[00:44:46] I am adding "correct" in the proper leagues. If students want to change their gender pronouns, then this should be reflected in their student record. If parents are not allowed to see their child's record, then you may have opening up yourselves to constitutional amendment lawsuits.

[00:45:02] Portland, Oregon has made the decision that students can cheat, skip homework, and not show up to class is this what prince william county wants get back to the basics of learning and to get scores higher do not lower standards to make scores easier the bars should rise stop the nonsense with racial and social justice thomas jefferson is now ranked fifth when two years ago they were the top high school in the county country if the prince william county school boards want to act on what is right you need to stand up and reject the notion of student shutdowns mandatory vaccines and masking. We see that this has caused so many mental illnesses in the last two years. Refuse to

[00:45:40] participate. Please remember that Fauci's science was wrong. Reverse your maniacal decision regarding the trans group and drain the swamp and get rid of the county's diversity inclusion and equity division. How can you support child mutilation and not ban underage transgender surgery? Thank you Mr. Gritton. Thank you. Eileen Devereaux. Good evening I'm Eileen Devereaux a parent from from the Gainesville District.

[00:46:11] I stand before you today to speak about certain Prince William County employees that fall short and ultimately fail students in regards to positive climate and culture, learning achievement for all, and organizational coherence. Last week, I spoke to African-American mothers who shared their experiences with Western area county schools.

[00:46:29] I also previously heard from children. These statements happened just last school year. Teachers not recommended African-American children to extended classes despite grades, black children wrongly accused and put off school bus, but white student who did it was not. Teacher orchestrated a slave ship reenactment in class as white students laughed and mocked.

[00:46:49] Teachers would not allow African-American students to take retakes, but allowed whites. Child was merciless bullied with no action from administration, but when child finally responds, the child was punished without due process. Child called monkey by substitute teacher in front of peers.

[00:47:05] Children not given appropriate IEP 504 accommodations but punished without due process. Children accused of wrongs but denied due process. Coaches telling black children not to try out for coveted spots on sports teams. Counselors discouraging black children from taking any advanced classes.

[00:47:21] Coaches misplacing concussion forms to make children ineligible to attend tryouts. Children discouraged and not supported in applying for the gifted program. And children targeted for alleged dress code violations but not others. Honestly, I can speak to you for hours about the experiences of too many African-American students and it is infuriating to hear these repetitive stories.

[00:47:41] But, and frankly, I'm over it. But what I want to know, why aren't you? Why is systematic racism perpetrated by certain Prince William County employees allowed to be the de facto culture and experience it for some children? Allowing the weaponization of the disciplinary process, academics and sports.

[00:47:59] Where is the accountability? And these are not people who are mediocre and need additional support and incompetent. No, these are racist. People who do not recognize the humanity of children and they do not belong here.

[00:48:15] They're very comfortable and empowered in this school system. This is really upsetting. So I wanna know, in your position of power and influence, what are you doing about it? Are we gonna be complacent with racism against children?

[00:48:33] or maybe we'll hold them accountable. Maybe we'll say, you know what, we want to do this here. We talked about the value of the tassel, what about the value of African-American students? I need you to boldly dismantle and disrupt this apparent behavior and culture. Choose your side, but know that inaction, ineffectiveness, and even bureaucracy is a side, and it puts you on the side of the racist.

[00:48:54] So choose wisely, choose children. We have a problem, I'm asking, I'm begging, choose children, thank you. - Beverly Thompson.

[00:49:09] - Good evening, everyone. My name is Beverly Thompson, and my address is on file with the clerk. I'm going to address my comments this evening, and I hope I can appeal to your sense of humanity, Dr. McDade.

[00:49:24] See, while individual school board members, such as Chairman Lateef, are more visible, demonizing educators in the press, Dr. McDade was hired by our school board to enforce her vision for our school system. And while they seem to agree On what the vision is, Dr. McDade enjoys a little level of autonomy in her role that the educators, like myself, and employees she oversees could only dream of.

[00:49:55] Dr. McDade, you came from Chicago Public Schools, where unions are in fact of life, that school division staff must contend with. So when you came to Virginia, we were hopeful, where public sector collective bargaining had been illegal for more than 40 years.

[00:50:16] But for your first couple of years as superintendent, you were able to dictate terms to division employees, and dictate you did. For example, during the first year as a superintendent, the line item for professional development in the division budget increased by 90%.

[00:50:37] Parents, ask your child's teacher what effect the additional professional development has had on their ability to provide quality instruction to every student. They will tell you that teachers have been saying for the entire time.

[00:50:54] The more administrative work is required of staff, the less time and energy is left for teaching. But perhaps that isn't a problem for you. After all, the amount of standardized testing has also increased dramatically.

[00:51:11] A few years ago, the average student in our school's division took over five standardized tests per year. Dr. McDade, you have also required more meetings for our teachers, taking away more planning time to devote to discussing the data from all those standardized testing.

[00:51:34] And I just have one more thing, Dr. McDade. The morale in our schools should be alarming to anyone who cares about the environment of our students. Please do something about this, thank you. - The next five will be Marianne Jensen, Katie Jefferson, Brandy Peacher, Jared Gay, and Obetta Scott.

[00:51:59] Mary Ann Jensen. - Over the past three years, I have watched our district lower education standards, resulting in a sharp decline, and now to an all-out attack on the rights of parents to be involved in decisions affecting the very lives of their children while they attend school.

[00:52:20] This happens when school boards chase selfish goals that are not in the best interest of the students. All of you have a weak record on improving educational standards. Instead, your strengths seem to be fighting for collective bargaining, staying home, fighting for masks, and now fighting against parents.

[00:52:36] I stand here on behalf of hundreds of parents in our county because I am appalled by what I see. Because someone needs to have the courage to speak truth to power and demand accountability for your failure to ensure that our kids are educated and not programmed. You recently decided to double down on political activism by opposing Governor Youngkin's model policies aimed at protecting children by ensuring that parents, not an elected school board, have the final say in our children's emotional health and safety while at school.

[00:53:07] You had the opportunity to add it to your agenda, but you bypassed it. One of the most important topics in a generation not even discussed. Parents are not asking for something radical here, you guys. We already signed parental consent forms for field trips.

[00:53:22] Microsoft requires parental consent for kids to play online games. Airlines require it when kids travel alone. This concept is non-controversial and allows parents to have a say in the physical or online safety of their children, except in schools, because of political blindness.

[00:53:40] As amazing as our children are, they are not adults. They make innocent mistakes, and without guidance, some consequences can be more far-reaching than their developing brains realize. But now, extremist agendas dictate that schools must take it upon themselves to use these children as political pawns, once again, during this vulnerable period of their lives.

[00:54:01] Instead of championing educational growth, you now seek to socially engineer gender identities without any parental knowledge. This is asinine. If my child wants to change their name, I should know. If my child is being coached by an educator to pursue an unproven, socially constructed lifestyle that could ultimately lead to the mutilation of their little body, I absolutely must know.

[00:54:25] This is not a question. If my child is getting bad grades, is it not my right to get involved? Do you shield parents from seeing bad grades because it might elicit a negative reaction at home? Of course not. Therefore, it must be, it should be my right to be involved in all aspects of my kid's school life.

[00:54:42] Case closed. Would you wanna know if a cult was indoctrinating your child behind your back? Of course you would. So let's stop the clown world posturing and adopt Governor Youngkin's model policies so that the parents can once again work alongside you on the educational goals for our children.

[00:55:01] - Katie Jefferson. - Good evening, school board members Dr. McDade. My name is Katie Jefferson and my address is on file. My background is in special education and we've been trained and conditioned to maintain as much consistency for our students as possible. We're told that consistency is key. It's what's needed to ensure student growth and progress. In the classroom, educators are required to consistently collect data, consistently monitor student progress, and consistently provide effective and engaging instruction. Ultimately,

[00:55:40] I want my students to trust me and that relationship is built through consistency because my actions match my words. Sadly, the large majority Democratic School Board has not modeled the consistent behavior towards staff that we would be expected to hold up in the classroom with our students. But there is one school board member who throughout this process has been consistently honest about their feelings towards staff. The exclusive bargaining agent for 11,000 employees and the concept of collective bargaining.

[00:56:15] And most importantly, the school board member has consistently aligned their vote with their principals. And that person is Jen Wall of the Gainesville District. Jen Wall has consistently been against educators organizing to have rights and collective bargaining as a whole.

[00:56:34] She made it abundantly clear that staff does not deserve a seat at the table. Although our views don't align, her principles have consistently aligned with her voting record. Fundamentally, I wish she felt differently. However, I cannot argue that both staff and the community know exactly where she stands.

[00:56:53] Given our large Democratic majority on the school board, both the staff and the community thought their vote in favor of collective bargaining would align with their actions to support staff. Clearly, there's been many inconsistencies between their vote and their actions. Therefore trust is breaking, if not broken.

[00:57:10] For example, Chairman Latif claims he supports school staff. He claims that people who take care of our children are a most valuable resource for six and a half hours a day. But then he publicly disparages staff and the press when they try to organize and propose what's needed to improve working conditions.

[00:57:27] Another example is when we told the school board the election criteria was wrong and harmful, but nobody believed us. Now other educators across the state are facing an even higher threshold, up to 75%. I asked the school board, can your actions match your words?

[00:57:47] You have an election coming up, 50 to 75% of your district has to show up just so you can win. Do you think that's feasible? I'll answer it for you. It's not. So the questions I pose to the board are, why did you pretend to support a process?

[00:58:05] And how could you realign your actions and your principles to rebuild trust between educators and the school board? Brandy Peacher. My name is Brandy Peacher and my address is on file. I'm here to provide a perspective that normally doesn't get showcased at school board meetings, the perspective of a bus driver.

[00:58:26] I have been with transportation for this county for 17 years and things have finally gotten so bad for drivers in our division that I am compelled to speak out. I want to first address my concerns to parents in Prince William County. The reason that your children are often picked up significantly late or don't get home until an hour after they were supposed to or that your child was left standing at a bus stop

waiting for a bus that never came is that there are not enough of us bus drivers keep everything running on time the way it's supposed to the question is why doesn't the division have enough bus drivers I'm here to offer offer a few reasons first of all the pay is admissible the diff the difficult it's difficult to convince somebody to drive a school bus for poverty wages when

[00:59:05] other counties are being offered sign-on bonuses and pay that will allow you to live in the county if the school board wanted to prioritize school bus drivers in the budget they would have but clearly that didn't happen another reason drivers that have been here for years are leaving it's because of the way they are being treated. Hours being cut which affects their benefits, being forced to do extra routes outside of their regular routes which puts extra stress on the drivers and they're not being compensated extra for that. People get to the point where they start to think is it worth it? God forbid something happens on the bus and the driver is automatically to blame. It's sad that we're out here doing the best we can for our community but yet we feel unappreciated. We're already considered part-time employees which includes a

[00:59:45] minimum guaranteed base of six hours upward to a seven and a half hour base with the shortage why not make us full-time employees because with all the extra routes we're out here doing we're working full-time hours but again they don't want that in our contract because then we'd have more benefits these issues affect our VA retirement it seems to me that when our school division is facing a monumental shortage of drivers it would be appropriate to make the drivers we do have full-time employees our division apparently chooses the opposite the staffing shortage the driver shortage specifically is a choice the division is making another slap in the face is is that the drivers have been

[01:00:22] here for years are only making a couple dollars more than a brand new driver starting out do our years of service not count for anything why aren't we valued another issue for drivers is having another issue drivers are having is that many schools in our county refuse to allow drivers to use the bathrooms when they arrive and there are no separate facilities for drivers to used at the schools this issue has been raised numerous times but it doesn't seem to be a priority for the division management it became more clear to me that the division it became more clear to me that the division was making this choice when I joined PWEA's negotiating team for collective bargaining at first there were two other bus drivers on the bargaining team but they were sent home

[01:01:01] on the day of the first bargaining session and were pressured not to return in the bar in the beginning it had us in the beginning I had struggled to get my leave approved to attend bargaining sessions when we brought this to the attention of the divisions bargaining team lead Eric Patel who told us that I think their time is better spent driving a bus tell me how we're supposed to feel respected driving buses for Prince William County dr. Latif miss feature Jared gay my name is Jared gay and my address is on file with the clerk so I'm sad to say that I've basically given up trying to appeal to the empathy and

[01:01:38] goodwill of our school board members so I'm going to present my comments to the parents and students in our community you deserve better at a minimum you deserve to know what's really going on in our schools. Unfortunately, it seems practically impossible to get a completely honest portrayal from your elected representatives on the school board either in these meetings or in the statements they make to local media. You also aren't going to hear many employees speaking publicly about this this year. There was already a deep fear of retaliation from division management and school board members prior to this year. During the first leg of the collective bargaining campaign, we had members telling us that their principal asked them about emails that they had sent to school board members asking them to support collective

[01:02:17] bargaining, implying, at least to us, that some of the politicians sitting in front of me responded to communication from employees by forwarding it to their supervisors. But the fear of retaliation is greater now than it has ever been, due to the fact that the school division updated its regulations in January, adding language that instructs employees to gain permission from the Office of Communications before making any comments to the press.

[01:02:40] Staff across the division have reported that their administrators began the school year by handing down new directives from division management that instruct teachers to refrain from posting on social media about anything involving Prince William County Schools. More than one bus driver reported to us that their supervisors were having them sign a statement that they would not speak to the press or post on social media about the division.

[01:02:59] So what is it that they don't want you to know? Well, for one thing, many schools across the division don't have enough staff members to provide the supervision necessary to secure a safe, comfortable learning environment for all students, and the quality of their education is harmed by this.

[01:03:15] The school division's response to this trend, for one thing, has been to lower the requirements to teach. So many of the staff that are now working in schools this year and last year have no teaching experience or training. Now to be clear, we obviously support these employees and we advocate for their rights alongside everybody else, but this also places an additional burden on the veteran staff members who are put in the position of having to train these new employees on the job.

[01:03:39] Staff morale is virtually non-existent. I hope that I'm wrong, but I have a feeling that in the next few weeks we will see a sharp increase in the number of unstaffed positions as many of these new hires, especially the ones that are coming in without any prior training, leave, pushing those veteran teachers closer and closer to the brink of quitting themselves.

[01:03:56] Parents, ask your children how overwhelmed and overworked their teachers seem to them, not just this year, but from last year as well. Ask them what effect that this has had on student on student behavior and discipline over the past year. I think you'll be shocked and outraged at what you hear. Then I hope you'll contact your school board representative and demand they do right by your children by doing right by their teachers their bus drivers their custodians their cafeteria workers and every other employee of prince william county schools thank you oveta

[01:04:25] scott 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 as we start another year of launching thriving futures i come with a couple of concerns to help us move in that direction my first concern is flex days According to the regulation, the selected dates and activities will take place between July 1st

[01:04:59] and October 1st of the school year. One, how can any teacher complete flex days in July when the buildings are being cleaned and used for summer school? Two, how can I enter flex time after the start of the contract if the little box is gone? I thought I had until October 1st.

[01:05:18] my next concern is summative assessments and mastery connect while this is a great software for data tracking why are the departments creating a limited testing window when there are students who may be out sick or have accommodations for a flexible time i think teachers should have the autonomy to set testing for their students my third concern is our custodial staff as you are aware next month is

designed for recognizing the awesome job that our custodians provide for each building i would love to see a change in how custodians are scheduled currently the

[01:05:55] elementary and middle schools are budgeted for one custodian during the day shifts at our schools it is a superman or a superwoman that must open the building ensure the main doorways are clear manage and clean after all lunch shifts attend to the students and the staff restrooms stop and answer emergency calls from the radio and assist any facilities or other individuals that come into the building so I asked you why we can't budget someone from the night shift to come in around 11:00 a.m. or 12:00 p.m. to help

[01:06:31] offset one custodian that works in a building with 500 to a thousand people during the day lastly I would like to reflect on collective bargaining I want to applaud the school board bargaining team for standing ground with the current bargaining agent for employees. FOIA is a great American tool because I was able to learn that political candidates and non affiliates of the employees bargaining team were present during a negotiating meeting. I commend your team if they had to cease talks when employees stipulated additional pay

[01:07:11] for duties when these when individuals have been released from educational duties for these efforts. I am ecstatic that talks ended when the president of the employee's team sought personal gains. I hope that the school board bargaining team continues to maintain their professional demeanor or let it go since I didn't vote for the employee bargaining agent anyway. Thank you.

[01:07:37] Next five Jennifer Roberts, Chris Funderburg, Genevieve Yvonne, Josh Quill, Alan Baker. Jennifer Roberts. Good evening Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Wall, school board members, and district leaders. My name is Jennifer Roberts. I reside in the Gainesville District and my address is on file. The American writer James Baldwin is credited with saying, "I cannot believe

[01:08:11] what you say because I see what you do." This quote perfectly applies to the conversations I have had with school board members and district employees alike about the educational malpractice that continues to be carried out on black students. As much as I'd love to believe that you are interested in addressing racism and ensuring that black students have an equitable experience, I can't because I see what you do. I see what your priorities are and they are not the black students in the Gainesville district. Far too many black

[01:08:49] students, including my own children, continue to be emotionally abused at the hands of PWCS employees. The adverse experiences of some of the black students and their families in the Gainesville district contradict what is printed in policies like policy 738 which refers to harassment and discrimination. This policy states on paper that these behaviors will not be tolerated but it is not being enforced at the school level in the Gainesville

[01:09:23] district. This neglect of our black students is a huge problem. PWCS employs more than 12,000 people and serves nearly 90,000 students and their families. In a district of this size and with a thriving good old boy culture, educational predators are causing repeated injury to black students and are not being held accountable. Racism is embedded in and tolerated in our country and sadly our our district reflects this.

[01:09:56] We need a substantive approach from the district at every school in the Gainesville district that identifies and minimizes racism. It is not enough to have anti-discrimination and anti-harassment

policies.

[01:10:12] They must be enforced and all stakeholders must be held accountable. We must treat racism as the epidemic that it is and stop asking black students and our families to be responsible for our own triage.

[01:10:28] Just like we prioritize identifying and sharing our achievements like we saw today, we must prioritize identifying and being transparent about our deficiencies. I am asking you again to actively hold all PWCS employees accountable for enforcing policies that protect black students.

[01:10:50] Thank you. - Chris Funderburg. My name is Chris Funderburg and my address is on file. We have two prevailing issues that I believe will be pivotal in the upcoming election.

[01:11:06] Both of these issues you have patently ignored or only given lip service to. The first is the updated transgender model policy released by the Virginia Department of Education that requires you to adopt a policy that meets or exceeds the model. The current policy, 738-5, does not meet the current model.

[01:11:23] Number one, it defies Virginia law, section 1-240.1, Rights of Parents that says a parent has a fundamental right to make decisions concerning the upbringing, education, and care of the parent's child. Additionally, the policy requires teachers and staff to lie about the gender status of a child to the child's parents if the child does not want the parents to know.

[01:11:44] This is antithetical to the parent's rights law. If there was a situation, which is often cited but never warranted, that a child might suffer some abuse at his parents knowing of his gender status, then there are child abuse laws that cover that possibility and teachers are already required to notify authorities in the case of suspected abuse.

[01:12:03] Second, it requires compelled speech by forcing students, teachers, and staff to use a name and pronoun decided by a child and ignores objective reality. Other students and staff are at risk of punishment by misgendering or deadnaming another student. Virginia courts have found this illegal and it puts Prince William County at risk of lawsuits.

[01:12:22] Third, six of y'all aren't even willing to discuss this publicly and allow it to be put on the public agenda. What are y'all afraid of? Additionally, while you have required schools to inform parents of any sexually explicit content, you failed to identify all of these sexually explicit books or remove them from circulation.

[01:12:41] Paraphrasing Regulation 796-1, Virginia law defines sexually explicit content as any description of a lewd exhibit of nudity, sexual excitement, or sexual conduct. Instructional materials shall not be designated as sexually explicit based solely on the sexual orientation of the characters they're in.

[01:13:01] However, the list released by PWCS does not include the following that have been identified in the libraries. A Court of Mist and Fury and several other books by Sarah J. Moss, Anatomy of a Boyfriend by Darius Nadowski, Crank, People Kill People, Perfect, Tilt, and Tricks, all by Ellen Hopkins, Maybe Not, Maybe Now, Maybe Someday, November 9th, all by Colleen Hoover.

[01:13:28] Based on this, I doubt the veracity of the list that was released. There are some 40 books that are not on your list that are sexually explicit and should be removed from the school libraries. Stop hiding from parents and stop trying to indoctrinate our children.

[01:13:44] - Genevieve Ivan. - My name is Genevieve Ivan and my address is on file with the clerk. When teachers first began organizing for collective bargaining, I, like a lot of their employees, had a lot of hope that this process would see our division unified in support of employees and students.

[01:14:04] I always expected that both sides, sitting at the negotiating table, would be committed to working at a compromise that addressed the needs of employees. Instead, I see the actions that seem designed to overwhelm staff at a time when they are at their most vulnerable.

[01:14:20] I wanna believe that is not an attempt to weaken our union's ability to organize, but I don't know how else to interpret it, especially when I read the comments made by the chair and the division personnel. There has to still be an opportunity remaining the division to change course and come together with the pwa in the spirit of compromise and good faith i implore you please tell your bargaining team to work with our union if the issue is funding you have already seen how effectively we can organize work with us and maybe we can put that energy towards securing a larger allocation from the board of county supervisors i know we

[01:14:55] can do better for our employees and our students thank you josh quill good evening my name is josh Quill. I live in Gainesville, Virginia. I stand before you today as a concerned parent urging you to consider a matter of the utmost importance: the well-being and upbringing of our children.

[01:15:26] The Virginia Department of Education has set forth model policies that require, by law, schools notify parents of all matters related to their child's social and psychological development to include any requests by the child to change their pronouns or to engage in any counseling or social transition at school that encourages a gender different from their child sex this policy which is grounded in transparency and with the understanding that parents have the right

[01:15:59] to make decisions with respect to their children should be adopted immediately your current policy specifically section 2 of school board policy 738-5 require school staff to accept a student's transgender status and offer multidisciplinary support team to among other things support the student's gender transition all this without the requirement to notify the student's parent so let me just state that plainly prince william county schools can transition students without

[01:16:35] their parents knowledge let me share something with you you probably already know multiple studies show that at least 50 percent of trans youth have considered suicide and the percent of those that are bullied are even higher and what is your solution to this problem remove parents from the picture so tell me by keeping secrets and refusing to keep parents fully informed how do you expect us to make the best decisions for our kids the fact that i need to come here

[01:17:10] and raise that question is absolutely ridiculous these policies should align with core values of our education system and your current policies scream parents don't matter your policies are set in political ideology with zero respect for parents and negligence towards our students.

[01:17:32] At the end of the day, these model policies comply with the Equal Protection Clause, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, and the Virginia Human Rights Act, and are required by law to be implemented. For once, please, just be the adult in the room, put aside your political beliefs, and comply with the law, and implement the model policy. Thank you.

[01:18:01] alan baker hello my name is alan baker and my address is on file with the clerk plenty of others have talked about their disappointment in the school board with a democratic supermajority using union

busting techniques instead i'm going to focus on how deeply betrayed countless teachers in the school division feel towards three of those democrats in particular i'm talking to adele jackson lisa zigapore sorry zagrapoor and justin wilk all three of which have experience as

[01:18:40] educators. All three of you ran for school board on your first-hand classroom experience. Many teachers and division employees volunteered and voted for you because you knew what this job is like. You were supported because you claimed you'd represent the interest of employees on the school board. I, for one, appreciated when you defied the dangerous whims of Lateef and declined to send employees back into school buildings in the middle of a pandemic before vaccines were released.

[01:19:09] Sadly, when push came to shove over collective bargaining, the three of you seem to have forgotten about the profession you leaned on to get elected. It is confusing to me that you seem to trust the directives of a board chairman who has never taught in classroom throughout this process despite your own experience.

[01:19:26] Bowing to Lateef, you hired a union-busting attorney to ensure that school board and superintendent held onto as much power as possible in the resolution that he passed. A resolution which established a process designed to weaken Prince William County employees' ability to organize.

[01:19:44] For example, in order for PWEA to bargain on behalf of the employees, more than 50% of staff had to participate in the election for the result to be accepted. I can't help but wonder if all three of you would be sitting here tonight if your elections had been held to the same standard. But I suppose in the end it doesn't matter because far greater majority of employees, both licensed and confidential, voted to support the collective bargaining process.

[01:20:07] But still, the same union-busting attorney, now leading the vision bargaining team, tells us the need of the employees do not supersede the wishes of the superintendent, denying us the ability to make bargaining sessions a matter of public knowledge, a decision that makes it more difficult for teachers, parents, and students to stay informed, but does make it easier for politicians like Lateef to lie to the press about what occurs at the bargaining table.

[01:20:34] Lisa and Justin why do you remain quiet while Lateef continues to lie and insult the staff I understand he seems to play in school plays for costing him a bid for lieutenant governor but are the three of you willing to turn a blind eye towards the dignity of your colleagues and profession to support petty political rivalries or do you actually believe those teachers who helped you get elected and work every day for the betterment of Prince William County's student body are not worth the support in turn thank you next five Jeffrey Fuller, Emily Kubiak, Padreus Prater, Jalen Custis, and Kimberly Melman Orozco.

[01:21:13] Jeffrey Fuller. Hello Board, Dr. Lateef, neighbors. I'm Jeff Fuller from Gainesville District. I have a number of things I'm going to go through quickly. This strategic plan is basically a straightforward critical social justice manifesto. It's got social emotional learning all over it. It's got the

[01:21:49] requirement for restorative justice or restorative practices you don't have to be a rocket science scientist to figure out what we're talking about here the people that wrote that are all Marxist professors proud Marxist professors the origin of that so when you get translated into straightforward language at this level as miss Huebner explained to me it sounds pretty good I'm very

[01:22:22] suspect of it. The aim of our plan is to create global citizens, not U.S. citizens, who are productive and capable of defeating and working with others to defeat the CCP. No. The trans model

debate. Why are we talking about putting staff, teachers, and counselors between the parents and the students? In what world does that make any sense? I don't think this will stand. On school School safety, I think the division has made remarkable progress and I think you should

[01:23:01] be proud of it. I've followed it with some interest. But why can't you put an armed officer in the 62 elementary schools, which are most vulnerable, most vulnerable to a school shooter attack?

[01:23:19] COVID era missteps, failures, travesty, I think all those words apply. Now, I don't blame this school board for all of it.

[01:23:35] the federal government, the state government, but the school board had the bottom line on terms of implementing policies that were mandates for masks, mandates for vaccines, sending people home, sending kids home, putting all kinds of restrictions.

[01:23:55] I remember this room with 80 people able to sit in it and you still got this ridiculous standoff to protect you from what, bananas being thrown by the moms, really.

[01:24:11] I ask that you consider a resolution of apology for your COVID era behavior. So you don't make a mistake again when we get two little cases of cold, thank you. - Emily Kubiak.

[01:24:33] - My name is Emily Kubiak and my address is on file. This goes out to the community members, parents, taxpayers and working people of Prince William County. Based on the tone of recent comments made by the board, I'm going to make some predictions.

[01:24:52] I predict that over the next few weeks, you are going to see more articles coming out containing quotes about collective bargaining from school board members, division personnel, and union leaders. I predict that management will claim that the union is being unreasonable, despite the fact that they have put this school division in a dire position in which they can't hire enough people to teach our kids.

[01:25:19] A historic staffing shortage, 392 openings as of this morning, exacerbated by the school board and division action and inaction, has created a situation in which there is a lower supply of education professionals, increasing their demand.

[01:25:37] The value of our labor has increased. You would think the board and division would want to do everything they could to attract the best educators to Prince William County. I'm truly at a loss as to why the board and division are working hard to make PWCS less attractive.

[01:25:54] Yet I still predict that they will tell you that it is unreasonable for teachers and staff to insist that they should be able to afford to live in Prince William County or be paid comparably with neighboring divisions or police and firefighters in our county.

[01:26:10] I predict they will double down on their insistence that treating teachers and staff with the dignity they deserve will harm our students. As if our students are not already being harmed by going to schools where they sit in classrooms with 34 other kids and an overwhelmed adult who may or may not have a teaching certificate, as if our students are not already being harmed by the unchecked behavior of other students who have learned that their teachers lack the authority and are too overwhelmed to actually discipline them.

[01:26:42] Almost every school in the division has a decent number of students who have far exceeded the number of disciplinary referrals to qualify for alternative school, sometimes for violent offenses

against other students, and yet they remain. The reason for this is that we do not have enough room in our division's alternative school for additional students or enough staff to manage them.

[01:27:04] And let me tell you, this school system hates to spend money on anything other than required professional development for staff, new software that employees don't want, or union-busting attorneys. But it is this prediction that I am most confident of.

[01:27:19] Unless community members, parents, and voters stand up to the school board and the superintendent and tell them to negotiate with their employees in good faith, the problem will get worse before it gets better. - Padrius Prater.

[01:27:43] - Good evening, Dr. Teeth, Dr. McDade, school board members and community. I'm Padrius Prater, a resident of the Neasco district. And I'm here to talk about the legislative priority documents. It was March of 2023. I dedicated my speech at that point to a former student.

[01:28:01] Now his name is Chance Williams and also Jaylen Waithe. I sat in a couple of different community engagement opportunities there. And I heard the students talk about mental health. It's at top of mind for a lot of students. And in that speech here, I ask for you all to take a serious look at the legislative priority document.

[01:28:19] The 2023, for example, didn't mention mental health at all. I'm happy to come before you all today. And I see in 2024, it mentions increased student mental health supports for the first time in Prince William County history. So this is just a thank you.

[01:28:34] Thank you for the collaborative partnership that you all have made with the students and addressing their concerns for mental health. This is, I think, just the first step of many. The next step is, as a parent, perhaps what I can do is contact my state legislator.

[01:28:52] Name that comes to mind is Jeremy McPike, House Delegate, Michelle Maldonado. Those names come to mind because as I reviewed the dockets when it comes to the General Assembly, their names are usually attached to educational building funding.

[01:29:07] My next thank you is for Mr. Jim Council, who's sitting behind us. We've given him a lot more work to do. What I'd like to see when this is all said and done is bullet points, identify how we can specifically target mental health challenges in our schools versus just the snowball effect of funds that are coming.

[01:29:24] This is signaling something that's going to, I think, benefit us for years to come, additional funding and support for our students. My last 30 seconds, I'm going to say this. The community is hurting.

[01:29:45] And I say that because at some point we're all going to retire. We're in good health now. But what I'm hearing out in the community as I'm working to serve on the board as the next Neatrol School Board member is we're having retired teachers, we're having retired bus drivers, retired cafeteria workers who are no longer able to afford the cost of living in this community.

[01:30:12] What we're finding is that some of us finding our parents having to go into senior citizen centers but they can't put the parent in this community because they're outpriced so we have to really take a serious look at our future and let's put whatever kind of support we can behind to ensure that our people have a fair and livable wage. Thank you. Jalen Custis. Good evening Dr.

[01:30:46] McDay, Chairman Lateef and school board members. My name is Jalen Custis and I reside in the Woodbridge District. Last year I attended many school board meetings and I've heard several times from board members calling on parents to be involved in their children's education. Rightfully so, because parents engagement is crucial in a child's education and upbringing. Sol was appalled when this board rejected Governor Yunkin's policy which would strengthen parents roles in their child's education in life. Parents or guardians are required to sign permission slips in order for schools to take their child on a field trip. Parents are also required to fill out

[01:31:25] emergency contact forms at the start of every school year. So why would Prince William County not require parents to know that their child is possibly suffering from a mental illness. I've spoken with parents and they told me that they would be devastated to find out that their child was suffering through something and weren't made aware of it. I'm sure many of you who are parents here would want to know what's going on inside your child's school. This policy is simple and makes sense. Parents deserve to know what is going on in

[01:31:59] their child's life. For this board to not even consider it is a slap in the face to the parents I humbly request that this board bring the governor's policy up for consideration and implement it my name is Jaylin Custis and I reside in the Woodbridge district thank you Kimberly Melman Orozco good evening my name is dr. Kimberly Melman Orozco my address is on file I had about seven or eight pages of a speech where I wanted to talk about the audacity and hubris that you all had to put a recognition for disability awareness month and

[01:32:38] Dyslexia Awareness Month knowing full well in the past four months you've repeatedly been found in violation of federal and state law by the Virginia Department of Education. I was planning on focusing on that but given I'm reading the room and given what I've heard from some of the teachers I'm going to segue a little bit midway through my prepared statements. So I'm guessing you're going to cover this later on in the agenda you're going to to be celebrating Disability Awareness Month and Dyslexia Awareness Month, when just four months ago, the Virginia Department of Education found that you had a fundamental misunderstanding of your responsibility and you systemically

[01:33:17] denied IEP accommodations with students with disabilities. That's a verbatim finding from the Virginia Department of Education. Instead of accepting that, learning from it, changing, you all had the hubris to actually appeal it.

[01:33:33] And in your appeal, you said that the Virginia Department of Education had a fundamental misunderstanding of the way schools operate. You pointed the finger back at the Virginia Department of Education and an independent evaluator denied your appeal.

[01:33:50] Again, instead of fixing this issue, providing redress for these discriminated against children, instead of fixing it, I suspect that the one agenda item that you kept from the public was that you had to vote on it in this board meeting what you're going to do with these kids that were discriminated against but I'm not going to focus on that I'm going to challenge you to read the room you heard from a lot of educators here today you heard from a lot of parents as a sitting board member the content of your character is reflected by how you treat your students your teachers and your staff I'll say that one more time the

[01:34:27] content of your character is reflected by how you treat students teachers staff you have discriminated against students you have denied benefits and services to our educators who are one of the

most important professions in this county and should be competitively paid and treated fairly and not retaliated against when they complain just as you retaliate against parents and Dr. Lateef while you've sit there very nonchalantly sipping on your water and smirking at times I am curious to see what you're going to do on Monday during our debate because I'm one of the three candidates that's running for school board for

[01:35:02] chair and of those three candidates imagine my shock to find out that two out of the three candidates running for school board have their kids in private schools two out of three and why is that because we do not have happy teachers and therefore we do not have happy kids treat teachers fairly okay moving on next we have agenda item 14.01 I'll turn this over to dr. McDade regarding the office of chief financial officer thank you mr. chairman we have with us this

[01:35:40] evening Shaquille Youssef our director of financial services and so he'll come forward now to discuss the proposed sale of Virginia public school authority bonds for the fall of 2023 good evening mr. chairman school board members and superintendent McDade I'm pleased to recommend that the Prince William County School Board receive the fall 2023 VPSA standalone board funding project totaling $141,380,000.

[01:36:18] The CIP program, the Capital Improvement Program, was approved as part of the FY 2024 budget process. A copy of the CIP was previously submitted to the Prince William County Board of Supervisors for projects totaling $162 million.

[01:36:37] - Thank you, Mr. Youssef. Board members, if you have any questions, we'll take those at this time. - Questions? Mr. Youssef, so just for everyone to be clear, we're gonna put out this, what are we doing?

[01:36:55] Are we voting or this is just for information today? For information, we'll be voting next time, correct? - Correct. - On approving the sale of, what are we doing? Bonds totaling 162 or 141? - 141, 380.

[01:37:11] - 141, 380. And those bonds will go to the construction and the projects listed below. So if anybody in the community wants to take a look at the projects that we will be funding, that will be from this bond sale that will go out sometime in October, provided the school board votes on this next time, correct?

[01:37:30] Okay, wonderful. - Thank you. - And really appreciate it. Any other questions, concerns? Okay, two weeks from now, we will bring this back up for a full vote. And if you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please email Mr. Youssef for the superintendent's office and or bring those questions to the next meeting.

[01:37:45] Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I noticed in the description, it says that this is less than what we previously submitted to the BOCS. Could you expand on why it's less? - Yes, I can. Part of it was we were able to utilize some cash savings we had within our debt service fund, and we also were able to defer some of our projects.

[01:38:11] These projects do not need funding at this time, but they will be funded with future bond sales. Vern Bach can talk about what projects we deferred. I have a list here, but I think he could give you more reasons why we deferred some of those, we deferred the funding for those projects.

[01:38:31] - That'd be great, I think it's always a good idea to inform the public about our physical responsibility and how important it is, 'cause we do have a fantastic finance department, but I remember when I first started on the board, it was quite a complicated subject for me, and so I remember that when we talk about finances, and if you could just explain a little bit why this is a benefit or a good thing.

[01:38:55] I think that'd be helpful. And any projects. - Yeah, thanks, Ms. Williams. Happy to answer that. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, board members, and Dr. McDade. Just a few big projects that have really impacted this savings. Obviously, we came to the board seeking permission to delay the 14th high school for a year.

[01:39:16] The rationale and reason for that was to, we've been implementing a model building, and we wanna get away from doing that, a prototype, and we wanna fully engage the community and deliver a high school on this 14th high school that really does have stakeholder input involved and really driving the design of that process.

[01:39:39] So that was gonna take a little bit longer, so that deferred a tune of about $8 million there. We are going through the facilities condition index right now, helping us prioritize our renovations greatest need as you know as a board benton middle school was uh on the docket this year to be renovated we wanted to delay that and have go through 40 schools this summer and prioritize our renovations based on true need so that deferred about 10.5 million dollars in savings

[01:40:14] and then finally the other major project that we decided to defer on was the turf and lights at rip on middle school we recognize that we still have two middle school sites at bevel and unity braxton that do not have irrigation and meet the standards of the rest of our fields and we wanted to bring those two fields up to standards so that we had equitable facilities across our middle schools and that will include irrigation at those two sites as well as bermuda grass installation so those are the three major projects there were some other sprinkled in there but that's Those are the major projects.

[01:40:50] - Yes, sir. - Appreciate it, sir. - Okay, any other questions? - Go ahead. - Vern, you know I'm gonna ask this, 'cause it's been a topic of conversation for years.

[01:41:08] Can you tell me, I see Ripon and HVAC here, and I know we spoke frequently about HVAC conditions throughout the school division. I understand there's multiple challenges, everything from being able to receive the right equipment to the condition of the equipment in a building, how old it is, all of these wonderful facility things that I completely nerd out on.

[01:41:31] Please, can you, is this a new HVA system for RIP-On? - Yes, we are in the design phase currently. Obviously, if we could speed it up, we would, but obviously we're going through the architecture and engineering phase currently. We do have all the funding allocated for that and we'll be embarking on that very soon.

[01:41:51] So that's gonna be coming. - Thank you. I just harp on that because I think oftentimes the public doesn't quite understand that, you know, you could have staff members or board members or public describing to you the condition and don't fully understand the amount of behind the scenes work.

[01:42:08] It's not quite the same as when you own a home and you can just go get a few quotes and if you can afford it, a new HVAC system or air unit in your home, it's quite complicated, especially when you have older buildings and things of that nature to consider. So I just hate to harp on it.

[01:42:26] I know Rep-On will appreciate it, but I wanted to use that as an example of, sometimes it's not always a quick fix, you can't always get something done in 90 days or a year, or just because you approve it in the budget, there may be extenuating circumstances. So I just want to say from a few retired teachers I can think of off the top of my head, who regularly emailed me and some staff there, I'm sure your Rep-On will appreciate it, and thank you for your understanding and allowing me to use that as an example.

[01:42:54] - Any other questions, comments, concerns? Okay, thank you folks, Mr. Youssef, thank you. Thank you. We're going to move on to 1501 legislative priorities. Dr. McDade. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have with us this evening our Chief Information Officer, Mr. Guilfoyle, who's going to share information on our 2024 legislative priorities.

[01:43:15] We also have our lobbyist, Mr. Jim Counsel, who is here as well. So I'm going to invite both of them to come to the -- you can come forward, Jim. Good evening. It's my pleasure to present to you this evening for information, our PWCS legislative priorities for the upcoming General Assembly session that begins in January.

[01:43:36] In fact, the General Assembly just finished their work today on the last session. So we are already focused on our next session, which will be coming up in January, and I am pleased this evening to be joined by Dr. Donna Eagle and by Mr. Jim Counsel, our representative in Richmond.

[01:43:53] The full suite of legislative priorities can be found in Board Docs. This evening we're just going to spotlight a few of those. This year's legislative priorities maintain priorities consistent from previous years. Many of these are focused on increasing funding for education, maintaining local school authority and preventing unfunded mandates no matter how well intended.

[01:44:16] We also are seeking continuing support for programs such as our Virginia Star Initiative. This is a program that PWCS administers on behalf of the entire state, in which we provide refurbished laptops to families in need, and students garner the IT skills necessary by repairing these laptops.

[01:44:33] Last year alone, this program provided laptops to students across the state valued at almost $3 million. In addition, our legislative priorities this year have been revamped to focus on high-priority items that we believe will garner bipartisan support for our schools.

[01:44:48] These are primarily focused on increasing teacher recruitment and retainment, and I'm I'm gonna ask Dr. Eagle to just share a few examples of those now. - Thank you, Mr. Guilfoyle. Good evening. So just a couple of areas that I'll spotlight that are new to the legislative priorities this year.

[01:45:06] First off, we certainly support anything that the General Assembly can do in terms of providing financial incentives to those that pursue teaching careers. Enrollment in teacher education programs throughout the country is down 30%.

[01:45:21] So anything that we can do to incentivize individuals to pursue teaching, including free or reduced state tuition to teacher education majors and programs. Additionally, we're asking the state to take a really hard look at the elementary endorsement requirements.

[01:45:38] It is absolutely the most difficult endorsement to obtain and is unable to be done so with a practice test and requires extensive content knowledge and coursework in order to obtain an elementary endorsement. Furthermore, as you all know, We have a number of international educators here at Prince

William County that we're really proud of, and they bring tremendous diversity and culture to our classrooms every day.

[01:46:06] We are interested in the state allowing for a renewable international educator license, similar to what North Carolina does. So right now, educators have to actually go back to their home country for two years, and then they're unable to return to Virginia.

[01:46:24] Many of our educators actually return to the United States after two years in their home country and actually work in North Carolina because North Carolina allows an unlimited renewal period once they've satisfied their two-year home country requirement as part of their J-1 visa.

[01:46:41] Also, we're asking for support to allow teachers endorsed in special ed and deaf and hard of hearing to actually teach American Sign Language. This is also a very difficult endorsement and we feel that those teachers actually have the skills and competencies necessary in order to teach American Sign Language.

[01:47:01] We did make progress this past year in the General Assembly in shortening the required break-in service for return to active service for critical shortage for our VRS retirees. Prior to last year's General Assembly, it was a year.

[01:47:18] They did reduce it to six months and we are continuing to lobby to hope that they reduce it even more, the required break-in service. As it is in other states, many other states only require a 30-day break-in service. Also in terms of our bus drivers, one barrier that we have to employment often for those relocating to the area is that it requires actually two moral character references that have to reside in Prince William County.

[01:47:48] For anybody that's relocating, that's a difficult, can be a difficult thing to do, to have, to produce by the applicant if they're new to the area. We do obviously check professional references. - That's state law? - Excuse me? - That's a state law?

[01:48:03] - Yes, sir, yeah. It actually requires a statement signed by two reputable persons who reside in the school division in the applicant's community that the person is of good moral character, and so they require it in the county. And so we're going to suggest or actually introduce legislation.

[01:48:21] We hope to repeal that provision. And finally, the last one I'll highlight is the 90 day limit for teacher substitutes. Currently we have to actually file and request an exemption from the state superintendent anytime a substitute is employed for more than 90 days.

[01:48:43] In the pandemic, they give us an automatic waiver and they did pass legislation. It was actually tagged onto another bill last year to allow an exemption for the next two years, but we are going to request that it be a permanent exemption.

[01:48:59] Many of these letters go unanswered by the VDOE, and so we feel like it's an unnecessary bureaucratic step. We make sure that our long-term subs have degrees and have experience working with students, so we're going to ask for legislation to repeal that provision.

[01:49:16] - I'd be happy to answer any other questions that you might have regarding any HR related matters. - Donna, is that two letters from a county resident only law for school bus drivers and no one else? - Correct. - Like not school teachers, not subs? - Correct, it's only school bus drivers.

[01:49:33] - Anybody know the logic behind why they did that? We don't know. Okay, Jim, you gotta fix that, come on. I mean, that seems like an easy one. All right, sorry. - Mr. Chairman, I was just shocked you asked for logic though. - Very good, very good. We'll go to Ms. Jessie and then Ms. Wall.

[01:49:51] I don't have a lot of questions. I just want to comment on the new legislative agenda. Now, Jim, you and I have been in this county for quite some time, and these priorities are really different, don't you think, than we've had in the past?

[01:50:08] Yeah, so we have tried to take a fresh look at them this year. Again, we looked at them through a strategic lens. We're looking at the priorities of the organization, and then also looking at what we felt was reasonable and could be achieved in Richmond. Obviously, and I'm gonna actually ask Mr. Counsel to talk about the situation in Richmond here in just a moment.

[01:50:26] But things have changed, obviously, in Richmond, but we still feel like these are priorities that we can have statewide support on and would benefit multiple school divisions across the state. - Well, I've been to Richmond several times and every time when we talk about the legislative agenda, we always talk about COCA, am I right?

[01:50:44] But I've noticed that in this list, there are so many things that relate to teachers employment personnel. So I wanna list coursework, international licensure, retirees to return, bus drivers, teacher substitutes, and collective bargaining.

[01:51:08] And I've never seen a legislative agenda that has these kind of items in it. I want to applaud Dr. McDade and her staff for re-looking at how we look at our legislative priorities because these are very relevant. You heard people tonight talk about teachers not having enough teachers, not having enough bus drivers, and I'm not responding to the citizen's comment, but I do want to applaud this administration for re-looking at the legislative priorities.

[01:51:38] And I do have one question. You wanted to change how lottery funds are used. Could you explain to me how they're used presently? - Yeah, I don't know if I can ask Mr. Youssef if he's prepared to talk about that this evening.

[01:51:53] I'm not an expert in that. Mr. Wallingford's not here, but-- well he's new but he doesn't if he's not able to answer tonight he can get back with me okay yeah we i think we'd be better if we uh get back to you with the details make sure we have it accurate thank you i just want to applaud you guys for what you've done thank you thank you so yeah what i'd like to do now is just to wrap it up i'm going to ask mr council just to step up for just a minute and just talk a little bit about oh i'm sorry jen wall uh thank you thank you mr chair um on number 13 the extended 90-day limit for teacher substitute um i wasn't clear on what we are advocating it be extended to,

[01:52:31] is it being extended to like a six month or a year? - We'd actually like the requirement to file, to actually be repealed, the requirement. Right now you have to have approval of the state superintendent to allow a substitute to remain in their position for more than 90 days.

[01:52:49] And so we would ask for that provision to be repealed. - Do you know historically why they, that provision was in there? Or how long it's been in there or anything like that? I don't have historical context, I'm sorry. - Okay, no problem, thank you. - The 90 day sub.

[01:53:06] - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to congratulate everyone on the new lens to which we are looking through these legislative priorities. I am really excited about the focus on mental health.

[01:53:23] I also am excited about school construction, renovation and modernization, but through the lens of sustainability, I think that those two things are direct response that we heard from every facet of our community, board members, staff, teachers, students.

[01:53:40] I'm really excited that we are able to better capture everyone's voice in those legislative priorities. I'm also excited to see, I don't know if excited, but quite the right adjective, but I'm encouraged that we are still advocating for increased funding for COCA.

[01:54:01] I think it, like Ms. Jessie said, I think that's been on there long as I've been on the board was probably on there before I got on the board I don't think the general public really understands how limited that we are budgetarily because we aren't a generate revenue generating entity and how much what occurs in the General Assembly actually affects what we do here in our budget and our ability to pay our staff and how much funding of that comes from the state level I know I've said in years past that it's important that when we advocate for things that we do it at the local the county and I mean the school level the county government level as well as the

[01:54:40] state level because it is sort of like a partnership if one of those things is misaligned it absolutely impacts our ability to do whatever the task is at hand whether it's paying teachers staff more getting solar panels on a roof or something I can't wait is electric buses I mean all of these things have to work together in order for us to proceed down that path and I just want to get the school year off started by making note of that I think it's important we go down every year in January to lobby with our legislators but I think it's a conversation we should all be having all year long with our legislators to remind them of the things that we feel our priorities so I just want to apply

[01:55:20] these new legislative priorities and when mr. counsel gets up there if you could just talk to us a little bit about what you're hearing from some of are surrounding school divisions and if there's any opportunity for us to work collaboratively some of these priorities with the divisions, because I know that's important too.

[01:55:37] It can't just be Prince William advocating for things within the General Assembly and standing alone. It does take a lot of collaboration. And so I ask you that every year. So whenever you get up there, Mr. Counsel, good to see you again, sir. Thank you.

[01:55:53] - Real quick question, Matt, just semantics. Can we make a number three, so paragraph three section two on in addition the support cap that limits state fundings for support positions needs to be removed. Can that be its own standalone? I mean, we've always had that as a priority.

[01:56:10] No problem. Yeah, if that's possible, just because unless you have it somewhere else, I was looking, I don't think I saw it. Yeah, we can, I mean, if you want to call that out more explicitly, we can do that. Yeah, I mean, they made some progress and I guess Mr. Counsel's here to tell us what progress they made. Yeah, so I'll, looks like there's another question first.

[01:56:27] Oh, Adele, I'm sorry. you for the presentation and I agree with what Miss Jessie said about it's made the changes in the legislative priorities really address from my perspective some of the things that parents and staff members have mentioned including what the you know individual during citizens

comment time said and then there were staff members at one of my high schools talked about like helping teachers who come here from other countries to stay because they become part of the culture and it feels like we're listening to staff so I appreciate that I also

[01:57:07] appreciate the ASL number five and I just want to just clarify a point on that because I did have a number of parents reach out at one point about losing classes because not having staff to teach ASL although we are advocating to increase avenues to for teachers to become to teach in American sign language we although it's not clarified we still are asking that they be the teachers be proficient in ASL and knowledgeable about deaf culture right just to clarify even though it's not specifically stated that it's still

[01:57:46] what we need okay and I'm getting a nod so yes okay thank you okay so I'll ask mr. council to give some remarks just to wrap this up mr. chairman school board Members, Dr. McKay, good evening. Good to see all of you again. As Matt indicated as of lunchtime today we finally have some overdue good news from Richmond. The Senate and House have agreed upon and passed a budget bill, a mammoth one actually, and it's one the governor's indicated he will sign. So

[01:58:23] From AFP's perspective, it adds about $600 million in direct aid to K-12 education. And that's $600 over top of actually the $300 million in sum that we got in the skinny budget in April.

[01:58:39] So we're doing pretty well on that front. In addition to the consecutive 5% teacher salary increases, it adds another 2% increase. course it requires the local participation match but at least there's more money they're authorized and then finally another significant part and one thing you know we've been working on for years is the expensive support cap we didn't get rid of it for good but we got the ratio improved to the extent that it will mean about a hundred and fifty two million more in state funding to the

[01:59:19] locality. So just using broad math that would just on the support cap, we should realize probably another $9 million in Prince William just on that issue. So I can answer anything you'd like about the bill that was passed today, or I can move on to what I hope might happen in the upcoming 2024 session. Jim, just real quick, we've always pushed for the removal of all the support caps.

[01:59:46] what would the removal of the support caps eventually net Princewood County or the state? How much more do we have to go? It was about $300 million when it was installed in around 2008. To actually do away with it at this point would cost the state, save the localities about $400 million. So the state would have to come up with another $400 million? Yes. Year to year. So you You figure you got about 152 million now, so you'd be at another 250, in order to do away with the cap altogether.

[02:00:22] - Okay, great. And then Jim, I know in the General Assembly this year and stuff, they have done some monies towards things for recruiting and retaining teachers and making it easier for people to become teachers in the state. Is that correct? I know the governor's behind a lot of that.

[02:00:38] - The governor's behind a lot. We made some progress in the last session. And in terms of the bill that they just passed today, I just mentioned the big items. There are actually a lot of 15, $17 million items in there, among other things that are designed to help improve teacher recruitment.

[02:01:00] - Fantastic, that's great. Well, Jim, tell us what's coming up in the future. - Yeah, it's gonna be an interesting session. I will tell you about one thing that occurred in July that could have a serious impact and a favorable one upon the 2024 session.

[02:01:15] In mid-July, JLARC released a comprehensive 130-page report that focused strictly on state funding of K-12 education. And it's a remarkable document. It really is. It covers everything.

[02:01:32] COCA, how SOQ positions, benchmarks are calculated, teacher compensation, the local composite index, the support cap, it focuses another section on special ed, at-risk students, and also ESLs.

[02:01:54] So it virtually covers every category of K-12 where there is some state funding. And good news or bad news, but JLARC is nonpartisan, highly respected, and in virtually every category that I just mentioned, they recognized and concluded that the state was not living up to its funding obligation. So, taking an optimistic approach, this J-LARC report really gives us a good blueprint, starting with this session, to just see how much progress we can make in getting more funding from the state. Now, of

[02:02:34] course, it's dependent upon Virginia continuing to be very prosperous, as it has for the last three years. But finally, we really have a recognized, independent study that basically tells the state what we've all been telling them for the last ten years.

[02:02:52] So it's not going to all happen at once. If you read through the entire study, at the end it breaks it down into short-term fixes and puts a price tag of approximately a billion on that, and then long-term fixes, it has That's another price tag of about $2 billion.

[02:03:12] So everything's not going to happen this year, but it's a good starting point for a lot of the issues that we've been trying to accomplish in the last three or four years. The bad news as to the J-LARC study, as comprehensive as it was, I have to tell you in classic legislative fashion, in the bill passed today, the General Assembly set up a committee to study the J-LARC study.

[02:03:39] A couple other items, Ms. Jesse, I can't give you the real details on how literary funds flow, but the problem has been that originally in order to get the lotteries through, we were sold on the fact that the funds would be dedicated to education, and gradually they've They've diverted funds.

[02:04:07] They've used the funds to offset monies to K-12 that we would be entitled to anyway. So what we're really saying when we talk about literary funds is, go back to the original promise and give us the money we're entitled to from day one.

[02:04:24] Yeah, I mean, I don't know if they'll ever do that, Jim. Mr. Counsel, it looks like every state that approves a lottery just uses that money to you know, substitute cash rather than add cash.

[02:04:40] But thank you. So any predictions on, so you know, what we've seen is a $600 million compromise in this budget. The elections are gonna come in November and there can be any permutation of any sort of mix of who controls what.

[02:04:57] But do you see another push for another, you know, significant increase to K through 12 in next year's budget? Well, of course, I think the Democrats are going to maintain control of the Senate. The House could go either way. But even so, I think either way, and particularly given certain sections of the J-Log study, as long as money is there, I think ultimately the support cap is going to be repealed.

[02:05:27] I mean, I think that so many legislators that actually understand that and agree with it. On both sides. On both sides. that if I had to make a laundry list of success items, I would probably put repeal of the support cap right at the top.

[02:05:42] So, Matt, let's pull that out and put that right at the... And if you think, you know, even after today's action in Richmond, if it's $250 million, and I know John Wallenford usually says about 6% of any

state amount annuers to Prince William, So that gets you up to, what, $15, $18 million right there?

[02:06:10] Don't trust my math. - No, we'll wait for the state calculations, the official calculators. But thank you very much. Any further comments, question, Ms. Williams? Lisa?

[02:06:25] - I love the JLARC report. I, can you help refresh my memory though? 'Cause it's been a few months and this school started. I recall reading that the LCI is like 50 years old and it's never since its inception ever accounted for the fact that we have growth in population, growth in need in our schools, changes in educational landscape that's made requirements put on a public school system that has required us to hire different positions.

[02:06:49] So there was a whole, was that, that was a, am I capturing that correctly? - You're correct, it really criticized the current methodology as being totally outdated. - Right, and 50 years, 50 years, like nothing's changed, everything's changed.

[02:07:06] So I really appreciate that. I really encourage people to look at this JLARC thing because when we have teachers coming into our boardroom talking about their jobs being difficult, they want things taken off their plate, the job is a little bit harder now than it was X years ago, this is part of that story.

[02:07:25] This is a whole piece of what's been going on in the, you know, over the years. And to recognize that we are asking more of our education system than we have before. We require more of our students and our staff. And then just looking at Prince William County's population, about, I'm just gonna go about, 40% of our student population gets free and reduced lunch.

[02:07:49] About 25% or more are English language learners. And our English language learners are growing in population. There are requirements that we have to uphold by the state, by the federal government, that our system must do. But if the state is not funding us accordingly, that becomes a little bit of a local problem.

[02:08:08] So I want people to understand that these things are interwoven as well. So you want to correct me on anything there? - I think everything you said is accurate. I would not expect anything to be done with the local composite index. I mean, because, you know, anytime you tamper with that formula, you have serious winners and losers.

[02:08:30] right and and actually dependent upon what changes they might contemplate uh prince william could be a loser yeah let's not let's not do that right but uh but i i i just want to make sure i mean it's worth looking at that report it's got some great graphs and charts and interesting money values at the it really does these costs thank you yeah they're going to be a lot of legislators that are going to hear too much about the j-log report this session thank you uh miss dargaport you brought up a really good point i'm just going to ask you again mr counsel because i know a few

[02:09:04] years ago the lci was something that fairfax was like had a bullet focus laser focus on it are you hearing anything that like we're all in alignment with um educate you know with legislature in terms of education from some of our surrounding school divisions it doesn't have to be anything specific but i just know sometimes it's not just northern virginia but a statewide thing all of a sudden this is the focus of the year? You know, for probably about 15 years, there's been a K-12 lobbyist association. And we've worked closely together. It's grown to the point that it's almost

[02:09:41] unmanageable as more school divisions have added lobbyists. So most of my work in terms of with colleagues right now is a little group we call the Super 8, which are the eight largest school divisions in the state and I mean you know we we are in the sessions together every day we meet every Friday morning also included in that group is the SBA and the vast lobbyists so there's a lot of concerted effort going on among those lobbyists of school divisions that typically have aligned interests thank

[02:10:20] you I appreciate that because I think often the rhetoric we hear is that one school divisions following another or things of that nature and I think it's just important to remind the public that we all do work together in order to provide the best outcome for our staff and for our students and then you don't have to answer this now because I'm sure you don't have an answer but I am aware that there was a diversity program I'm not sure that somehow or another got cut I don't know who's responsible to diversity teacher program it was designed to bring my more minority teachers into more minorities into the teaching profession.

[02:10:52] And I think there was a disconnect somewhere that the program was cut, but there's still funding. Is there gonna be something like that? Maybe you can fill us in as session starts if we're gonna see an increase in any of those programs to try to benefit individuals coming from minority backgrounds or other marginalized backgrounds to increase our teacher diversity.

[02:11:13] 'Cause we know when students see individual who look like them, then they learn or have similar experiences in them. - I'm gonna really have to check on that because I agree with you. I don't know what happened to it. I suspect nothing's been done, but. - Well, if you find out, I'd be interested to know, especially since we're all about teacher retention.

[02:11:31] So thank you. - That concludes our presentation for this evening. So our next steps is that this will be on for a vote at the next session. It'll be on the consent agenda. And then of course, we will present this at a legislative breakfast probably in late November, early December timeframe following the election.

[02:11:51] We are also working in the spirit of coherence to potentially do that with the county as well as opposed to doing two separate events like we've done historically. So we'll share that information of course with all board members as soon as we have that locked in. So thank you all for your time this evening.

[02:12:07] - Thank you again and echoing the board members, Mr. Counsel, always a pleasure. Matt, thank you guys for so much for working on this. All right, if anyone has any changes, concerns, get them to those folks in the next couple of weeks. Otherwise we will be, as Matt pointed out, on it next week next we are on what is this 1801 no 16 16 oh okay tonight we have our student representative Bella Aversano senior at Gainesville high school miss Aversano we're getting pretty close to my bedtime here good

[02:12:46] evening to the school you used to sorry good evening to the school board superintendent and Prince William County community. My name is Isabella Aversano and I'm super excited and grateful to be a student rep this year. To put it simply I like to be where the action is. So as a student leader in the county working with the literal school board I think is as close as you can get. I served on the Student Senate last year and I've never experienced a leadership position quite like that one. It was incredibly valuable to me to work alongside students from every single high school across the county. I gained so much perspective and insight that I wouldn't have come into contact with with otherwise, and it has shaped my leadership since.

[02:13:23] A particularly beneficial experience was the student leadership conference that we hosted in December. I was placed in different groups of students from across the county, and as I interacted with each person, I gained more insight into the array of struggles that students face in PWCS. I'd never heard about cases of sexual assault, lack of mental health support, or economic and academic disparities between different regions of the county from such intimate testimonies until then.

[02:13:48] I've carried that vast array of student input with me since, especially throughout the initiatives that the Student Senate started that past term. One of our primary goals, and my personal favorite, was developing the framework for student voice committees. At the conference, I was part of the team that presented this idea and gathered feedback.

[02:14:04] Referencing student input, we identified even more concerns that student voice committees and the Student Bill of Rights hope to address. Equal opportunities and access for advanced classes, miscommunication between students and staff, grading policies, and more. Student voice committees will give students the opportunity provide input on issues that they feel are important or unique to their schools and to give feedback on district level ideas and policies as well plus we're on track to implement these in every high school this fall applications will be released soon and all students are invited to apply and apply to the committees or attend the town halls that we intend to host I hope to continue to see these initiatives through and offer support for their success most recently

[02:14:44] the implementation of the evolved weapons detection systems has especially garnered student feedback I've heard a lot students have shared that they're ready to protest that they feel criminalized and that they feel caught off guard and that schools haven't introduced the systems correctly throughout these varying opinions I've noticed a lot of common fears and misconceptions these detectors aren't bulky students won't be as late as they think they will be because multiple people can just walk right through them etc etc but I've also had the privilege of hearing presentations directly from Evolve so I've been able to use that as a resource when discussing this topic to assuage these fears my hope is that this knowledge can be distributed more universally in a clear manner across the county to improve what students have

[02:15:23] perceived as failed communication and to clear up confusion today's agenda item detailed included details about national security officer appreciation week so I think the timing is pretty spot-on regardless of how students may personally feel about evolve protocols I think we can all agree that we want to learn in a safe environment so our security teams are crucial to that thank - Thank you, and that concludes my remarks.

[02:15:48] - Thank you so much, Ms. Avarsano. We look forward to hearing from you each board meeting. Next, moving on to superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am excited to share with the school board the division updates for the new 2023-24 school year.

[02:16:04] First, welcome to our new student representatives. I know this is probably your fifth welcome for the evening, but we're so excited to have you joining us for the new school year from Gainesville High School, Bella Avarsano, from Forest Park High School, Fernanda Morante, and our alternate from Osborne Park High School, Jacqueline Garcia.

[02:16:23] Welcome student representatives. We're excited to have you here, eager to learn from you, and we want to hear your voice throughout this year and every year. On August 21st, PWCS successfully opened the doors to our more than 100 schools and centers to a brand new school year, welcoming over 90,000 students back to school.

[02:16:41] I believe that authentic engagement is vital for student success and during the first week of school, I had the privilege of visiting and engaging with students and staff at 31 schools during the first week. And we are off to a strong start. Back to school always proves to be an exciting time in Prince William County.

[02:16:57] In Prince William County Schools, our vision is to see every student graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. Which makes achieving our goal of 95% on-time graduation rate by 2025, critically important as a school division and drives every decision and action we take in service to our students, no matter the grade level.

[02:17:22] As we begin this school year, our first focus will be on improving the connections between our students, our teachers, and our curriculum, what we call the instructional core. We are staying committed to the instructional core, doubling down on supporting and strengthening teacher knowledge and skill, ensuring all students have access to rigorous content, and most importantly, increasing student engagement.

[02:17:43] Our second focus for the year is to stay committed to the work of continuous improvement throughout the school division. The continuous improvement plan serves as the vehicle for school improvement at every school site. Departments have also developed continuous improvement plans in service to school priorities and goals.

[02:17:59] Every school and department are expected to rely on their respective continuous improvement plans, which must be aligned to our four-year strategic plan vision 2025, which is our collective North Star. This year, we will ensure greater collaboration between and among departments and schools as we work together to achieve our goals.

[02:18:16] Third, we will be intentional in our efforts to bolster literacy to ensure stronger readers and writers at every grade level. We must fulfill the commitments of the Virginia Literacy Act by 2025. This year's focus will provide educators with professional development, safe practice, authentic feedback, and collaboration to build teacher self-efficacy.

[02:18:36] This is our year to support our primary teachers develop their expertise and skill set in the science of reading with support from our literacy department inclusive of coaching and feedback at the secondary level in literacy we will focus on media literacy including students opportunities to research and read technical texts and authentic reading writing and speaking experiences for students across various content areas our fourth emphasis for this new year will be on family student and community engagement we must serve as trusted partners with our students families and communities by ensuring that they all feel a part of a welcoming and inclusive environment

[02:19:13] to do this we must increase transparency through communication and remove communication barriers with our students and families as our families speak multiple languages and we do not want language to ever be a barrier all schools are expected to utilize school status which is equipped with two-way translation capabilities via text and voice and email.

[02:19:33] After implementing school status at the end of the past school year, at the end of December of last year, we logged more than a million emails and sent over a million text messages and we will continue

regular and transparent communication with our families. We are beginning the year focused heavily on student attendance.

[02:19:51] To date, our attendance rate for the first two weeks of school is 96.42%, which is a very strong start and we want to maintain this. We want to maintain this momentum throughout the school year by continuing our efforts to address chronic absenteeism.

[02:20:09] We define chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year. So for a school year with 180 days of student attendance, a student with chronic absenteeism would miss 18 or more days of school. We will work diligently with our families throughout the school year to improve our division's overall attendance rate year-over-year and reduce the number of students identified as chronically absent and as we can see within the first two years it is possible to have high attendance in Prince William County.

[02:20:39] In person student attendance is a priority because we know that a student who is in class on time every day will be on time for graduation. This year we're excited for the opening of our newest elementary school, Innovation Elementary School, home of the Falcons.

[02:20:55] We look forward to seeing innovation live up to its namesake because our students must be ready to adapt pivot and invent with the evolving landscape of our technological world. The official ribbon cutting for Innovation Elementary School is scheduled for September 21st and we're looking forward to celebrating our newest school with our families and community. Student safety continues to be a top priority and you heard Bella talk a little bit about the new security detection systems that are in our schools. In addition to adding the security positions from last school year, it's a part of an ongoing multi-layered security protocol we will be implementing safety screening

[02:21:34] technology on a staggered basis to all middle and high schools including traditional and non-traditional schools starting September 19th back to school nights have begun across all PWCS schools and will continue into the month of October I wish to personally invite our families to attend not only back to school night which is one of the first family events of the school year but also the many school based events and activities throughout this school year and I encourage you to get involved in one of our school advisory councils.

[02:22:04] Also, be on the lookout for two-way communication as I spoke about earlier from our teachers that are translated directly through school status via phone, email, or text message. We're excited for this tool because together we have the greatest chance at improving communication in support of student achievement. When the division is working together as a unified school system with common objectives, goals, and vision, the outcome is success for all. Thank you to to everyone who has worked so diligently to get this school year off to a successful start.

[02:22:35] Mr. Chairman, that concludes my time in the Superintendent's report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Okay, I think that leads us to board matters. We have policy 18, where are we at, 1801?

[02:22:52] And it will be a first reading for, from Division Council, Mr. Anderson. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first policy up for first reading tonight changes to policy 211 which is the board's policy regarding evaluation the duties qualifications and authority of the superintendent there used to be a regulation that governed the reg the superintendent's evaluation process which is you know is agreed to between the board and the superintendent what we've done is take that regulation out and make it essentially just make it a attachment to this policy the board as the evaluator should be the policy

[02:23:32] holder of the evaluation process and it's easier to change if the agreement between the board and the superintendent changes. That's really the main change to 211. Any questions?

[02:23:49] Okay. Next one, 1802, also in your house. Yes. This is a change to policy, sorry, 891 and this is near and dear to Ms. Jackson's heart.

[02:24:05] I believe she's been a big driver of this and so the real change here is to add universal design playgrounds to our facilities policy and it will require that all playgrounds in new schools employ universal design which means that playgrounds will be designed to be usable by all students to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation and specialized design.

[02:24:32] Any questions? Ms. Jackson. I just want to say that this policy is a great example of collaboration amongst board members AND I'M JUST REALLY EXCITED TO SEE IT ON THE AGENDA. AND I WANT TO THANK DEPUTY DIVISION COUNSEL CARA MARCHANT FOR HELPING WORK THROUGH ALL OF THIS.

[02:24:49] AND I WILL SPEAK FORWARD TO IT AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING. AND AFTER I HAVE TIME TO REVIEW AND REFLECT, AND AGAIN, JUST REALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE COLLABORATION OF MY FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS. AND THANK YOU, MR. ANDERSON. THANK YOU, AND THAT'S THE FIRST READING OF THAT POLICY. IT'LL BE UP FOR ADOPTION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

[02:25:06] THANK YOU, MR. ANDERSON. - Thank you, Ms. Jackson. Okay, that concludes business. We'll move to board matters. Mr. Wilk, why don't we start with you? Haven't heard much from you this evening. - Yeah, no. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone as we embark on another school year filled with promise here in Prince William County.

[02:25:28] To be honest, the initial meeting feels a bit different for me as I don't have an exhaustive list of events I attended over the past two weeks, I know. However, I did have the pleasure of participating in both Potomac and Forest Park's back to school nights, as well as attending the opening football game at Forest Park, the varsity team.

[02:25:46] It's also a delight to reconnect with families and provide support to newcomers as they navigate our school system. On the first day of school, I did visit schools within the district, including Covington Harper, Montclair Elementary, Dumfries Elementary, Potomac Middle and Mary Williams Elementary.

[02:26:03] Yesterday, I was invited to participate in the morning celebrations at Patti Elementary School. In conclusion, I eagerly anticipate future conversations with our families and the exciting upcoming events in the schools within my district. Wow, look at that time. - Outstanding.

[02:26:19] - Mrs. Zargar. - My goodness, that was fast. All right. Welcome back to the school year. As the new academic year begins, we are thrilled to welcome back all our students, parents, teachers, and staff to another year of growth, learning, and achievement.

[02:26:35] And as we step into this new school year, let's carry forward the lessons that we've learned the past carry them as strengths to make our our students and our schools even better our schools have always been a vibrant community of more than just buildings they are communities where young minds are nurtured and dreams take flight so let's continue to create an environment where curiosity is encouraged talents are honed and values are instilled earlier this evening on our consent agenda we had a number of

things that were approved by the board unanimously and one of the things was a new person to the um equity um the superintendent's equity

[02:27:14] council so i have um keisha strand who i nominated she is a parent of two kids out at signal hill elementary school and she is on the naacp health committee she's their chair she also works for the keep prince william beautiful board of directors secretary of solid waste advisory group at large appointment leadership prince william emerging leaders program and so i know she's going to be a fantastic addition she also just as a side note as a harpist and a self-published children's author

[02:27:47] so i can't wait to have her join us and have all of her ideas and input and all that she was fantastic when i met her so uh welcome uh last thing i want to uh monday is uh september is Monday that September 11th we're already into that week right well September 11th is Patriots Day and that's the day where we remember the lives that were lost at the World Trade Center on flight 93 and at the Pentagon so that's also a day where we will honor the first responders service members and civil servants who worked on the rescue and recovery efforts so take a moment on that day to

[02:28:24] remember these these people and before I move on I want to just thank everybody at Colgan High School and Hilton High School at their back-to-school nights and and I got to see the O.P. Hilton and O.P. football game. And I look forward to meeting with people at the back-to-school nights that I'm able to attend and catch some more football games and theater productions and concerts and all that good stuff.

[02:28:48] Hope you all have a great week. Peace out. - Ms. Jackson. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I truly hope everyone had a restful summer break and welcome back. I want to start just thanking all staff who work to prepare Prince William County Schools students and staff to return those who work summer school and for just everyone for a great first few weeks I also want to thank Prince William County families for their partnership and starting this new successful school year last week I attended back-to-school nights at Gainesville High School Unity Reed and Brentsville District High School this past weekend I kicked off the sporting

[02:29:27] events with a football game at Gainesville High School and I'm scheduled to attend many of the back-to-school nights of various and various extracurricular events throughout the fall it is a great opportunity to celebrate the start of the new school year, get a feel for different school cultures, and most importantly connect with the community and staff. I want to thank Miss Strahd for giving me and Miss Wall a tour of the new Innovation Elementary School. That school has both the Gainesville District and the Brentsville District students and families that attend and it was beautiful and I just am excited for the ribbon-cutting. Just a gentle reminder that Evolve will start going live in many schools soon. The best

[02:30:07] resource to find out one is your school and I'm just thankful for the video so this summer Prince William County Schools completed a video that allows for some students to preview what it is like to go through Evolve and if you have students like my own that are a little nervous about going through the video is was very helpful I don't want to thank staff and school counselors for reapplying and newly applying to the ramp designation that we was listed in the consent agenda and I want to just take a moment to recognize that September is designated as childhood cancer awareness month and the statistic listed on the

[02:30:44] resolution is sobering that one in 285 children in the u.s. will be diagnosed with cancer by their 19th birthday 43 per day are diagnosed with cancer annually and the average age of diagnosis is six compared to 66 years old for adults it is my sincere hope that all stakeholders take a moment to support

and recognize childhood cancer this month also thank you to national thank you to all security officers this week or not in a couple weeks is national security officer appreciation week and I just I don't know if I say it enough but

[02:31:23] thank you so much and of course thank you to the school resource officers but I just appreciate you keeping all of us safe both here and in school so thank Thank you. And I just wish, I'm almost out of time, that everybody has a safe drive home. Thank you for coming and have a great new school year.

[02:31:42] - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanna pick up where Ms. Jackson left off and say thank you as well to our school security officers at every level, 'cause we have so many. But welcome back to an exciting school year, excited for the start of another year in which students have an opportunity to once again thrive.

[02:32:00] I just wanna take a moment to welcome our new student representatives and to celebrate and thank all those who supported our students learning and fun over the summer, whether it was launch or through discovery programs or many of the activities that occurred around the county.

[02:32:17] I appreciate the fact that a lot of people think that school's out in June and we don't come back until September, but that's often not the case for most of us, including the board this year at summer. We also participated in some meetings and conducted business. Also would like to just give a special thank you to all those who helped organize and set up and plan out and implement things like the Triple E Conference, the New Student Welcome, all of those conferences that happen over the summertime that are dedicated to our school division staff.

[02:32:52] I had the privilege to, I feel a little Justin-y over here, Mr. Wilk, I had the privilege to attend the Prince William County Greater Foundation event at back-to-school event at Freedom. I think just about everybody was there this year and it was just nice to see our students be welcomed back from the community.

[02:33:14] It kind of rotates around. Last year it was more in the Navsco district, this year it was at Freedom. I know next year it'll be an even bigger and better event and it was exciting to see so many community resources. I was able to attend the VSBA conference on education, the African-American history festival, and so many more events.

[02:33:31] I would highly encourage Prince William County school families to check out the school board newsletter. It's a great way to keep track of what our school board members feel is important and all of the activities that we have participated in. I will be having a first of many office hours this year on September 23rd at 10:00 AM.

[02:33:49] Please email me if you'd like to participate. I just wanted to take a slight moment and update everyone on the governor's school. We did have our very first meeting on August 31st. Manassas parks is the hosting division this year. I wanted to say congratulations to Dr. Shante Jones on being voted chair.

[02:34:07] And I have been voted vice chair for this school year. I would like to also congratulate Freedom on a packed house for their back to school night. I think that was the most amount of people I've seen at back to school night at Freedom ever. Congratulations to Principal Smith.

[02:34:23] Clearly engaged, community engagement is working wonders for the school. I'd also like to give a big thank you to Ed Futuro and the partnership they have with Freedom. I think they're a wonderful

program and I look forward to a continued partnership with that organization of freedom for years to come.

[02:34:39] Hope to see everyone at the remaining back to school nights for the rest of the Woodbridge district. And if anyone is interested in volunteering on the equity committee, the Woodbridge district has an opening, thank you. - Ms. Jessie.

[02:34:56] - Okay, okay, thank you. First of all, I want to thank Dr. McDade and your staff for the EEE conference, it was wonderful. And I also wanted to, the panel with the students, I thought that was really a unique idea.

[02:35:11] And the way that was handled was really, it gave the students a chance for us to look through the eyes of students. I didn't meet with teachers and students at the beginning of the year.

[02:35:28] What I did, I went from school to school, and I don't know if we have the slide or not, but this is my M&M tour because teaching is a very stressful job.

[02:35:45] And the first week, the first day, I'd never go on the first week of school because I know it's very stressful. And I have this little, I said an M&M a day will keep stress away. And I gave all those teachers some M&Ms. And you know, teachers are very easy people.

[02:36:00] I don't know, you guys, they just love the M&Ms. Anything you give them, they love. It doesn't replace the need for salary adjustments and things of this nature. But I wanted to make sure they felt good about coming back to school. I also visit with Dr. Cindy Lemaitis, I hope I can pronounce it correctly, and Marlene Coleman.

[02:36:22] I have two new schools and they're off and running, two new principals and they're off and running. And I want to talk about something that was really very impactful and was well done. Vernon Bach, and he's not, is she here?

[02:36:38] I just wanna thank you guys for that presentation on the net zero school. Many of you know that we're getting, that Aquan will be getting the first net zero school in the county, and many people have asked me, what does net zero mean? I think I know what it means, but I asked them to put together a presentation for the community later on.

[02:36:58] And I wanna thank Mr. John Mills, the supervisor, And whoever planned that school, it is genius in the work. And I saw the beauty of the school. It's a genius that has gone into it. The environmental features, it is designed with Occoquan is the oldest school in the county.

[02:37:20] It's 100 years old. And it is that community. Occoquan was on part of the Indian Reservation. And it's called, I think it's Dog Egg, I looked it up.

[02:37:37] But this was the tribe, and this school is going to have a tribal environmental theme. And I want to thank and congratulate Mr. Buddy Lynn and his staff for showcasing this school in a way that the students design everything and parents.

[02:37:53] And I want to thank you, and I'm looking forward to that visit. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Jessie. Ms. Wall. Welcome back, everyone. been fun to be back in school and start attending sporting events and meet and greets and back-to-school nights over the first two weeks of school I took the opportunity to visit each of the 12 schools in the Gainesville district in the morning to welcome students back to school and that was a lot of fun and you have some great students they're very polite I'm so glad to

see that traffic at battlefield high school is moving well thank you so much to our staff and here in the KLC and also at the school everybody who was involved with the

[02:38:33] changes it's it's working nicely and people are really pleased I want to to extend a warm welcome to the three new principals in the Gainesville District. Principal Boynton at Unity Braxton, Principal Bowles at Sudley Elementary, and Interim Principal Mr. Huckstein at Battlefield High School, so welcome to each of you.

[02:38:49] I'm also looking forward to the upcoming report on the state of the schools, academic data, SOL results, and where we are in our pursuit of academic excellence. These are some of my very favorite topics. I can't wait to talk about it. And now if I can take a moment, I want to address a topic that has been top of mind for many of the families that I represent.

[02:39:07] Let me be fully clear, I fully support the governor's policies on ensuring privacy, dignity and respect for all students and parents in Virginia's public schools. It is my position that we should be telling parents all relevant information that concerns their children in our schools.

[02:39:23] This includes information about gender identity. Parents need to have confidence that they are our partners and that they can trust us to keep them not only informed but involved in the decision making with what is happening with their children while at school.

[02:39:38] I do not like this idea that schools could be in receipt of important information about a child and not tell the parents. In practice, I know we try to do this, but under our current policy and regulation, parents do not have assurance that we will tell them, and that is what they need from us.

[02:39:54] Letting parents know, keeping parents informed, these are common sense principles and the foundation of solid public policy. In our very own strategic plan, through our commitment to family and community engagement, We pledge to build collaborative, meaningful partnerships and trusting relationships to foster the success of all students.

[02:40:14] We state that, quote, "PWCS will ensure honest, transparent, and two-way communication with families, schools, and the community to foster trusting relationships." How can parents trust us if they feel like they may be kept in the dark about their child because of the existing language in Policy 738 and Regulation 7038.5?

[02:40:34] 5 moreover the language in section 22.1-23.3 of the code of virginia is very clear and the official opinion of the virginia attorney general makes it clear as well local school boards are to adopt policies that are consistent with the model policies that are currently in force so i believe we should follow the law that's the rationale offered by this board in 2021 and that's what we should do in 2023 lastly parents thank you for support and encouraging your students to show up to school and if your school has gotten more strict with cell phones thank you for your support and encouraging your children to keep off of their phones while in school to close students and staff it's been a strong start I'm

[02:41:12] hearing great things keep up the good work have a great evening everyone thank you madam vice chair moving on to my final comments or my comments welcome back everyone we are excited to be back congrats to the class of 23 for one last time they've been dropped off to college or starting their new job or have joined in the military since we've seen you last, and so I'm very excited.

[02:41:36] On my themes of student success, thank you Dr. McDade for that report on 96% attendance this first couple of weeks of school, that's great. We had record numbers of scholarship dollars last year and announced it during our commencements and during the end of the year, and so that's another mark of this school division's record achievement.

[02:41:58] I want to also talk, and you've heard from some of the school board members back-to-school nights have been extremely well attended. From some of the principals I've talked to, and I've gone to one for my child's attendance has been really off the charts.

[02:42:15] And so that's been fantastic. And so that just tells us our parents are engaged, committed, and are working towards student success. Number two, on my efforts for salaries. You know, we have good news coming from the budget from the governor and from the General Assembly on the compromise and some more money coming for salaries.

[02:42:33] And we'll see how that works out. And that'll be on top of the maybe the 5% salary raise we gave last year, we might see some more. And on top of 30% raises I've overseen since I've been here as school board chairman. Moving on to number three, my commitment to safety and security.

[02:42:53] You will all be seeing if you're not everybody, but many of our schools will be implementing the evolved system starting later this month. And we have high hopes for that being a strong detection and deterrence system. So I'm very excited about that.

[02:43:08] Moving lastly to space and infrastructure tonight, you heard of the VSBA bond sale we'll put out in two weeks and all the projects that are listed in there that we will be funding. I'm proud to say that over the last three years, we've reduced our borrowing, reduced our debt servicing over the course of the last few years with a very strong commitment to fiscal responsibility, clean audits, and continuing to have a AAA bond rating.

[02:43:34] This bond sale will help us, as you've heard, get back to some of the projects that we had delayed in the past. We are now moving those up and we're gonna be funding those. And some of those projects were delayed from prior years.

[02:43:50] And so there is a little bit more we're doing this year, but this is based on the savings that we have encumbered over the last three years that have been fantastic, both from a standpoint of a low interest rate and from the fact that we've just dropped our borrowing and made a strong commitment to pay down debt.

[02:44:08] Lastly, this week, Freedom High School, state defending football champion will be playing DeMatha, a private high school from Maryland, which is in and of itself a football powerhouse.

[02:44:24] They are opening gates early. This will be a well-attended game. So I encourage folks to go out and see it and to be safe, it's very important. We're very excited to see how Prince William County and Freedom High School stacks up against some very strong competition.

[02:44:41] So we're very excited about that. And that is, I think the game of the week for the region. Lastly, if you haven't seen it, you saw the video tonight, the value of a tassel. the value of Prince William County tassel limitless.

[02:44:56] Thank you very much, everyone. Have a great evening. The meeting is adjourned.



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