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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Date	Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	3h 56m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfz8LmNRK1g
- 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 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] I would like to call this meeting the Prince William County School Board to order. A motion is now in order for the approval of the meeting agenda. Ms. Wall. - Dr. Lateef, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - I have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:00:45] Moving on to motion to enter closed session. A motion is in order. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711 and section 2.2-3712. The Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:01:02] 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. Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A7 and eight.

[00:01:29] 3, to discuss with Division Council specific legal matters involving collective bargaining pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711A. 4, to discuss the award of a public contract to employees' exclusive representative which involves expenditure of public funds and the terms or scope of such contract where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

[00:01:57] And five, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and actions taken to respond to such matters, where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia Code sections 2.2-3711A19.

[00:02:18] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Zarifor. - A second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:02:39] Okay, I think with that, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session,

[00:02:44] return to open session in one hour.

[00:03:44] Prince William County School Board will now re-enter open session from closed. Moving on to agenda item 7.01, closed session certification of motion is in order. Vice Chair 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 November 14th, 2023, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:11] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements was discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies. And two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:04:35] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:58] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. - Mr. Raulston, motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action items, a motion is in order for 8.01, approval of appointments and releases of specific employees. Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session.

[00:05:17] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:37] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston, motion passed. - Okay, that wraps up closed session action items. At this time, we'll stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Tonight we have our school board member Jacqueline Garcia, senior at Gainesville High School, with us on the dais. Osborne Park, Jacqueline Garcia from Osborne Park with us on the dais.

[00:06:00] Jacqueline, will you lead us in the pledge? I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:06:19] Okay, great. Moving on to our Thriving Futures Focus. Thriving Futures focus 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 themselves and their community.

[00:06:37] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or an 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.

[00:06:54] First, I would like to share that I am thrilled to announce something we learned just this past weekend. Cadet Fahad Abdul Razak has been named a 2024 Rhodes Scholar. Fahad is a Prince William County Public School graduate of Woodbridge Senior High School, class of 2019.

[00:07:23] He is currently attending, so a huge congrats to Fahad, his family, and the Woodbridge High School community. Fouad has truly launched a thriving future for himself since graduation day, going on to study international fairs at West Point, the US Military Academy. The Rhodes Scholarship is the most prestigious postgraduate award given to university students from around the world.

[00:07:43] As part of this honor, Fouad will attend the University of Oxford University with a full scholarship next fall. He could not be here tonight as he is attending school at West Point. Our community should be very proud of his military service to the country and this tremendous accomplishment.

[00:07:59] He represents the best of Prince William County Public Schools and he embodies the profile of our graduates. Another round of applause for Faud, please.

[00:08:15] Terrific photo of this young man. Moving on to the school board, we'll now recognize the five Prince William County public schools that have earned recognition from the College Board's Advanced Placement or AP program. We will also recognize two students who scored a perfect score on the AP test, as well as our two National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists.

[00:08:34] The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools whose AP programs are delivering results for students while broadening access. Schools can earn this recognition annually based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness.

[00:08:53] The AP School Honor Roll offers four levels of distinction, bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. Additionally, schools on the AP School Honor Roll may also earn the AP Access Award, honoring schools that demonstrate a clear and effective commitment to equitable access to advanced coursework.

[00:09:11] The AP Access Award honors schools that encourage more responsive, inclusive, and equitable opportunities for marginalized students taking AP courses. To earn this award, the underrepresented students who take the AP exam must match the school's overall demographics. These prestigious awards show exceptional efforts to prioritize student achievement in advanced academics and demonstrate the rigor Prince William County Schools offers.

[00:09:36] We begin our recognition with Ms. Adele Jackson of the Brentsville District. Ms. Jackson. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Brentsville District would like to recognize Patriot High School for earning the 2023 AP School Honor Roll Silver Medal.

[00:09:52] I'd also like to recognize Nia Epperson, who is one of the only 459 students the world to earn a perfect score on the AP computer science principles exam Nia received a maximum score on each portion of the exam let's give her a hand congratulations also in attendance we have one of our national merits

[00:10:27] semifinalists Joseph Dietrich from Patriot High School the officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and that's the names of over 16,000 semifinalists and the 69th annual national merit scholarship program and These students entered the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2022 Preliminary SAT National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Tests.

[00:10:59] The pool of semifinalists represents less than 1% of the nation's high school seniors, so congratulations. There are extensive requirements to become a finalist in the program in which information is provided about the semifinalist academic record, employment and awards and honors received.

[00:11:20] This information is submitted along with an endorsement from a high school official. The semifinalists will be competing for one of 2,500 national merit, 25,000 scholarships. About 840 corporate sponsored merit scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 160 corporations and business organizations for finalists who meet their criteria, such as children of the grantor's employees or residents of communities where plants or offices are located.

[00:11:51] In addition, about 160 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 3,800 college-sponsored merit scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution. Congratulations, Joseph. Let's give him another round of applause.

[00:12:08] And Miss Mia. So congratulations to you both. Patriot High School is represented tonight by Principal Dr. Michael Bishop and Educators Randy Warren and Amy Lehan. Dr. Bishop, would you like to take a minute to speak on behalf of these outstanding accomplishments.

[00:12:33] - Recognize the hard work of students enrolled in AP courses at not only Patriot High School, but across the division. At Patriot, our vision since the day we opened has been for students to graduate with the ability to think critically, process and analyze information, and present what they have learned in a digital, oral, or written format.

[00:12:53] AP coursework provides that opportunity for students while allowing them to learn time management, meet deadlines, and develop skills that will lead to their success in the future. An example of that success is here with me tonight and helped us to win the silver recognition. Behind me is Mrs. Amy Linehan, an AP Economics teacher, and Mrs. Randy Warren, an AP Psychology teacher.

[00:13:21] Two of their students came with me tonight. Mrs. Elaine Yoon, who will complete 12 AP courses by the time she graduates, in the last two years has taken seven AP courses and has earned a five on every one of them. Wow.

[00:13:43] - As you mentioned, Nia Epperson is one of 459 students across the world that learned a perfect score on the AP Economics exam. She will also complete 11 AP courses by the time she graduates.

[00:14:02] I asked Nia to share a few brief comments about her experience, so I'd like to introduce Ms. Nia Epperson. - Thank you, Dr. Bishop. - As a student who's taken AP classes since sophomore year, I've seen firsthand the widespread impacts it's had on my classmates and me, both inside and outside the classroom.

[00:14:21] In school, many of my AP classes have spurred meaningful conversation between teachers and students and helped to promote learning beyond the standard curriculum, while also teaching me the value of a good academic standing. I'll always remember the long talks of genetic modification in AP Bio, the history and evolution of algebra and AP Calculus, and the recent bank collapses in AP Econ.

[00:14:43] And I'll especially remember how each class shaped my understanding of the world I live in today. The skills the AP program has taught me have also followed me outside the classroom and into my

personal and professional lives, improving the time management, research, and collaboration skills that I use every day at home and work.

[00:15:00] My years in high school would have been completely different if not for the resources provided by the AP program, and for them, I will always be grateful. Thank you.

[00:15:18] - Yeah, Ms. Epperson, that was the best advertising I think we could have had for everyone in the division to follow your lead and for all of our faculty and our students to encourage students to really try hard to do this advanced coursework.

[00:15:34] Thank you for those wonderful words and Dr. Bishop and staff, thank you. Always outstanding work from your high school, thank you. Moving on, Ms. Jackson, thank you. From the Coles District, Ms. Lisa Zargarpur will introduce our award-winning school. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef.

[00:15:50] The Coles District would like to recognize Osborne Park High School and Charles J. Colgan Senior High School. Osborne Park is recognized tonight for earning the 2023 AP School Honor Roll, Silver Medal. Osborne Park High School is represented tonight by Principal Lisa Marie Kane, Assistant Principals Lindsey Walton and Dylan Grazier, and Educators Ann Walters and Lisa Petrovich.

[00:16:15] Also in attendance tonight is one of our National Merit Semifinalists from Osborne Park, Skye Auger. Congratulations to Skye. Let's give him a round of applause.

[00:16:32] Ms. Wilcaine, would you care to speak a few words? - Thank you so much, Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, Ms. Zargarpur, and the entire school board for inviting us here today. I am here with our two assistant principals, Ms. Walton and Mr. Grazier, and two of our spectacular teachers, Ms. Lisa Petrovich, who teaches AP Government, and Ms. Ann Walters, who teaches AP World History.

[00:17:04] And these two phenomenal teachers represent 30 of the AP teachers that we have at Osborne Park, and I would like to take a minute and acknowledge and express my deepest appreciation for not only these teachers, but for the entire staff who support and prepare our students to be ready to take these courses.

[00:17:24] We know it is a whole school effort. We are so proud of the 878 students who took 1,868 exams last year and did incredibly well, that's why we're here. but what we are most proud of is the representation of the test takers.

[00:17:43] Of the 878 students last year who took AP courses at Osborne Park, 24% of them were Asian, 23% of them were black, 23% of them were Hispanic and 20% of them were white.

[00:18:06] The diversity is a testament of the culture of opportunity and high expectation that we set for all of our students at Osborne Park High School. So we're very, very proud of them.

[00:18:23] - Can I go off script for one second? Sky, would you like to say something? I know that's totally off script, you don't have to. - I would like to thank Ms. Cain and the staff at Osborne Park High School. I think that the support and the culture that our school has around AP testing and kind of encouraging everyone to do their best within the school and outside the school helped me not only do well on my PSAT because of the encouragement, but also has helped me kind of solidify my path forward and really appreciate learning better.

[00:18:57] I think that the opportunities that Osborne Park provides to many students from many different backgrounds, kind of bringing them together equally in AP classes and encouraging them to do

their best really has changed a lot of people in their course of their future, including me and many others, and I would just like to thank them.

[00:19:17] - Thank you so much. - Dr. Lateef, I think that was an awesome commercial too. - That's as good as off the key remarks as I've ever heard. Very well said, Skye, and thank you for telling us about the culture at your school. We're very excited about that. Thank you so much.

[00:19:33] - Thank you. The Coles District will also recognize Colgan High School for earning the 2023 AP School Honor Roll Silver Medal and the 2023 AP Access Award. Additionally, Colgan student Fernando Cedeno Pereira is one of only 247 students in the world.

[00:19:53] - Wow. - Yes. One of 247 students in the world to earn every point possible on the AP Spanish language and culture exam. Let's give Fernando at Colgan High School another round of applause.

[00:20:11] Colgan High School is represented tonight by Assistant Principal Melissa McClellan and Educator Stephanie Brown, Kyle Minner, Janelle Whalen, Jackie Martinez, and Sue Watts Stemple. Ms. McClellan, would you care to provide a brief remark or two?

[00:20:27] - Dr. Lateef, school board members, and Dr. McDade, thank you for having us here tonight to honor Colgan High School and Fernando and his excellent accomplishments. As part of Colgan's commitment to learning and achievement for all, we believe in providing equal access to advanced coursework for all our students.

[00:20:46] Over the last eight years, we have focused on increasing the number of students enrolled in advanced placement courses with a particular focus on those students who have never been exposed to an AP class. When students are exposed to AP course work, they experience increased rigor and college readiness.

[00:21:04] And research shows that students who take AP courses and exams are more likely to not only attend college, but graduate from college on time. We believe our success is directly tied to the hard work of our teachers, our counselors, administrators, families, and students.

[00:21:21] Our AP teachers, and I have five of them here tonight, Mr. Kyle Minner, who teaches AP English Literature and Composition, Ms. Janelle Whalen, who teaches both our Comp Sci Principle class and Computer Science A, Ms. Stephanie Brown, AP Biology, Mrs. Jackie Martinez, AP Spanish, and Ms. Sue Watts-Stemple, who teaches AP Human Geography and AP CompGov.

[00:21:46] I forgot Mr. Minner also teaches AP Research this year. So these teachers, along with all of our other AP teachers, work tirelessly to support our students and to provide the encouragement they need to be successful in our AP courses.

[00:22:02] And I would also like to take a moment to talk about Fernando here and his wonderful accomplishment. He was one of 247 students in the world, not just in the United States, but in the world, to earn a perfect score. And on that AP Spanish exam, you have to read, write, speak, and listen in the Spanish language.

[00:22:23] So that is quite an accomplishment for him. I would like to say congratulations to him and thank you again for honoring Colgan High School tonight.

[00:22:38] - Congratulations to you both. We are thrilled, and Ms. McClellan, your command of knowing what courses your teachers teach is excellent. Thank you so much, that's leadership. We really appreciate

it. Ms. Argerport, thank you. I now invite Vice Chair Jen Wall, representative of the Gainesville District.

[00:22:55] Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. On behalf of the Gainesville District, it is my pleasure to recognize Battlefield High School. Battlefield is honored tonight for earning the 2023 AP School Honor Roll, Silver Medal, and the 2023 AP Access Award, which we heard about earlier, both of those things.

[00:23:17] Battlefield High School is represented tonight by Principal Dolores Lucas, Assistant Principal Chris McMillan, and educators Dawn Fair, Michelle Adkins, Brianna O'Connor, and Jean Weber. Principal Lucas, would you like to share a few words about these achievements?

[00:23:37] - Thank you very much. Good evening. On behalf of Battlefield High School, we would like to thank the Prince William County School Board and Dr. McDade for inviting us to be recognized on receiving two awards from the College Board. And we thank College Board for honoring the achievements of our school.

[00:23:54] As mentioned, we do have some of our teachers here. we have our assistant principal, Mr. McMillan. We also have Ms. O'Connor, who teaches AP Lang. We have Don Fair, who is the department chair for social studies.

[00:24:09] We have Ms. Michelle Adkins, who teaches AP Econ. I think you have like four or five sections of those. And we have Ms. Jean Weber, who teaches our AP seminar classes. Receiving the Silver Award and the AP Access Award signals our commitment to ensure every student is prepared for a thriving future. It also serves as momentum for Battlefield to stay the course and to be audacious in our efforts. While I was not

[00:24:43] at Battlefield last school year, during these last couple of months I have witnessed their laser-like focus on the strategic plan's core values, particularly equity and inclusivity. Battlefield placed a strong emphasis on Commitment 1.1 of the strategic plan to provide equitable opportunities for all students to achieve at high levels.

[00:25:09] The Battlefield Village was in full force, and I thank them for their commitment in promoting conditions for success through integrated systems of support. Our teachers worked together to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students.

[00:25:27] work to review student progress data and provide the appropriate leadership, and families supported the school's vision of removing barriers and increasing access to more challenging courses for our students.

[00:25:43] Everywhere a student turned, our faculty, counselors, staff, Bobcat dads, PAC, PTO, and families were there to lend support, a hand to pull up a student, a shoulder for students to lean against a safe and clean environment and a voice to encourage a student to stay the course the battlefield bobcats community will continue its mission to strive for what george curos calls an innovators mindset and if i might add innovation is one of the core

[00:26:16] values in the strategic plan one that empowers learning and unleashes talent through a culture of yes. Battlefield said yes. Every student is capable of taking an advanced course and succeeding in that endeavor. Yes, every student can learn to be resilient, and yes, every student can leave Prince William County schools with the habits of mind to succeed because we are innovators who believe that equity and inclusivity are what makes our school and students great.

[00:26:50] Again, thank you to Chairperson, Dr. Lateef, Mrs. Wall, our Gainesville School Board Representative, Dr. McDade, and all the school board members for the opportunity to be recognized.

[00:27:07] - Congratulations, Battlefield, and thank you, Ms. Wall. Mr. Wilk, I turn this wonderful spotlight on the fabulous Potomac District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. On behalf of the Potomac District, it is my honor to recognize Forest Park High School for earning the 2023 AP school honor roll, bronze medal and the 2023 AP access award.

[00:27:29] Tonight, the school is represented by principal Richard Martinez and educators, Rachel Peidler and Alison Young and Tara Scott. Principal Martinez, would you like to share a few words, please? - Thank you, Mr. Welk, Dr. Lateef, school board members, as well as Dr. McDade.

[00:27:48] I wanna thank you all for this opportunity to be present here with two of my staff members who are also instructional leaders and mentors to staff. Ms. Allison Young, social studies, she's done AP World History as well as AP Human Geography and Ms. Rachel Peitler who teaches AP Comp Sci and leads our math department.

[00:28:08] I'm a share that this fee is a result of a group effort. This is my 10th year, 11th year now at Forest Park and it's a group effort of admin, school counselors, instructional leaders, teachers and students who choose to accept and rise to the challenge of taking these type of courses.

[00:28:23] We've also gone into the world of dual enrollment, so sometimes we do not have students who take the AP, but they rise to the challenge with dual enrollment as well. The AP honor roll recognition is not something that we thought of, we were just looking to provide opportunities.

[00:28:39] To be recognized with our sister schools, Patriot, Osborne Park, Hogan, and Battlefield, is a testament of the opportunities that Prince William County affords our students. To be recognized with distinction of equitable access to advanced coursework is what we have worked to provide our students at FP.

[00:28:59] We began this 10 years ago. I didn't know that this existed. So to receive the bronze medal, I was surprised, didn't know that existed. But Patriot and I are the last two schools that will be entering to the Equal Opportunity Schools Program. We had a meeting today, so I just look at it that what we're learning now is just gonna enhance what we offer our students even more.

[00:29:20] We hope that our work this year, being part of the EOS schools, will lead to even more participation and growth for our students. So thank you very much, and congratulations to all the sister schools as well.

[00:29:39] - Okay, thank you, and congratulations, Forest Park High School. Thank you, Mr. Wilk. Congratulations again to all five schools that have earned recognition from the College Board for their outstanding advanced academic programs. Before taking a couple pictures, Dr. McDade, would you like to share a few words?

[00:29:54] - Sure, thank you so much, Dr. Lateef. I just want to say congratulations again to Cadet Fahad Abzularak for being named 2024 Rhodes Scholar. We're extremely proud of Fahad and look forward to witnessing his amazing accomplishments that will continue in the future.

[00:30:09] And I also want to personally acknowledge our two national merit finalists, Sky and Joseph. Congratulations to both of you. Our perfect AP scorers, Nia, Fernando. I also want to acknowledge Elaine,

who is here tonight from Patriot.

[00:30:26] We are all so proud of your accomplishments, your hard work. You really do represent the best of Prince William County schools. And congratulations on your scholarship. To the AP School Honor Roll Awards and AP Access Awards, which highlights the outstanding students, educators, and communities who are dedicated to learning and achievement for all as a part of our strategic plan.

[00:30:48] I wanna congratulate each of you. And for the schools, our leaders and educators, are represented here tonight from Patriot, Osborne Park, Colgan, Battlefield, and Forest Park High School, you truly are making a difference in our students lives and helping them to be able to have a brighter future and so we're incredibly grateful for your hard work and your commitment and your sheer passion for ensuring students create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:31:15] Thank you all so much for your hard work. Congratulations to all of our student scholars. We are so extremely proud of each of you. - Thank you, Dr. McDade.

[00:31:30] At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and to receive a small token of our appreciation. We'll start with one photo that includes Battlefield High School and all the winners. Well, I'm gonna let Diana, Diana, you wanna work this out? Okay, are we doing Battlefield and OP and Patriot together?

[00:31:49] All of them, okay.

[00:31:50] And then the second photo will be Forest Park and Colgan.

[00:39:00] - Okay, all right, thank you guys very much.

[00:39:19] Thank you for that. I just wanted to, I myself, I don't think I might have said that I wanted to congratulate again Joseph Dedrick from Patriot and Skye Auger from Osborne Park for their National Merit Scholarship finalists, semi-finals, we're very proud of all of them, proud of everyone that came. This was a great event tonight.

[00:39:35] Thank you all so much for your patience. We are now moving forward with, where am I next? Here we are, adoption of the consent agenda, 11.01. Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended.

[00:39:55] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:40:14] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Raulston motion passed. - Okay, moving on to citizen comment time. Those citizens who've signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[00:40:33] please use proper decor and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have 20 citizens signed to speak.

[00:40:49] When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. We'll call the first five up and then grab seats up front. Kimberly Singleton, Kristen Morris, Isabel

Henderson, Mary Bownes, and Megan Landis. Kimberly Singleton.

[00:41:13] - Do I just start talking? - Yes, ma'am. - Okay, hi, my name is Kimberly Singleton. My address is on file. I live in the area where I teach. My children attend my neighborhood school. We are zoned for this school. As a teacher, I interact directly with 74 special education students each week, receiving direct services from me solo, including level two students, with materials I am creating myself, providing out of my own pocket at my own expense to the tune of $1,118.63 between this year and last.

[00:41:46] So far, I'm collecting data, assessing, and instructing. I have repeatedly, five times this year, said my security button isn't working, and it took 17 days after an incident in my classroom before someone came in and looked at it. Only two members of my administration have asked me, are you okay?

[00:42:02] I have said repeatedly, over and over, I don't feel safe. I have been met with deaf ears. As a mother, I was called upon on October 27th when my son was assaulted in a locker room at my school. Sustaining a serious concussion with no adult present, he has had headaches for the last 19 days.

[00:42:23] They finally stopped this morning. He has missed four days of school. I spent $50 for a copay at the neurologist and haven't yet gotten the ER bill. He said, "Mom, I don't feel safe." Why doesn't my son feel safe? My daughter texted me on the bus on November 3rd.

[00:42:38] A sub bus showed up. Not a problem. She was sent to school standing over a mile. 42 children in an aisle on a bus that showed up to pick them up already full. Why was the driver driving my precious cargo in this matter?

[00:42:55] Late is better than dead. Within the span of nine days, three members of my family, all three of us had some sort of incident in this county where our safety was placed in jeopardy. Very few people have asked us, are you okay? Are you safe? I don't know, are we?

[00:43:10] What are you doing about it? In one week, this one week, we were all placed in dangerous places, places where we go to work and learn, and it is costing me and my family thousands of dollars in my sense of safety. It really feels personal right now. It feels like nobody cares.

[00:43:26] It feels like nobody is listening. We are not okay. Please do better. Thank you. - Kristen Morris.

[00:43:44] - My name is Kristen Morris, and my address is on file. I'm speaking on behalf of a teacher I highly value, respect, and who has personally shaped me as a teacher. She unfortunately can't be here tonight due to significant medical reasons. She has taught for 23 years for Prince William County and has been awarded Teacher of the Year twice.

[00:44:04] In the fall of 2022, this teacher was diagnosed with stage two brain cancer. This teacher was gone for 3/4 of the year using FMLA and all of the sick leave she built up over 23 years so she could undergo brain surgery, recover, and go through chemo and radiation treatments.

[00:44:22] According to regulation 543-1, sick leave bank payments received on any unscheduled days that the division is closed count towards the 45-day maximum, but she's only been granted 30 days by HR. While most teachers in winter pray and look forward to unscheduled days off, she does not.

[00:44:42] This year, she must navigate the hurdles of leave without pay and eventually the sick leave bank, But in addition, she must hope she isn't scheduled to receive sick leave bank payments for a doctor's appointment that end up canceled due to inclement weather when the district is closed.

[00:44:58] The reality is she'll be charged for days when the rest of the county has been told to stay home. We all know more often than not that cancer comes back. So what happens if or when it does? That's when leave again for more surgeries, more chemo, more radiation, and even more doctor's appointments.

[00:45:16] What happens after she has used the 30 days granted by HR from the sick leave bank. She burned through so much leave last year. She only has a fraction of what she had to try and make it through this year. Did I mention she's a mother? We all know kids get sick often at the worst possible times.

[00:45:32] The division should consider revising the sick leave bank policy, especially considering how many chronic illnesses there are amongst its employees. Employees should be allowed to exceed the days granted by HR if they have leave specifically donated to them by their coworkers.

[00:45:48] In her 23 years, she forged relationships with numerous people who can't help her with her cancer, but who would be willing to help her by donating well over 30 days of sick leave. I don't understand why the county cares who we donate our leave to. If we have it and are willing to give it, we should be able to give it to anyone we specify.

[00:46:06] Being hit with an illness with this magnitude is hard enough to deal with, let alone figure out how you're gonna get through it financially when you're employed full time and have been loyal for 23 years to the same district. We can't afford to be sick. Do you really wonder why we come in sick and this is what we face?

[00:46:21] We don't know what the future holds and feel like we must hold on for dear life to our sick leave for any unknown emergencies. We have to risk our health because we can't financially afford to miss work. I can't give her a new bill of health or ease her financial burden. I can't afford my own. But I can contribute directly to her sick leave time so she can take care of her health.

[00:46:38] And today I find out she was diagnosed with a new cancer. - Isabel Henderson. - Good evening.

[00:46:53] My name is Isabel Henderson and my address is on file. I am also speaking on behalf of a colleague that could not attend tonight. Thrive, according to Merriam-Webster, it means to grow vigorously, flourish, to gain in wealth or possessions, prosper.

[00:47:09] The superintendent's letter regarding the division's strategic plan states that a key tenant of launching thriving futures is for schools to be welcoming environments where all students feel safe and supported, mentally, physically, and emotionally, and that it is critical that teachers have access to a professional learning community that values their professional expertise to achieve excellence in education.

[00:47:34] Board members, teachers and staff are not thriving here in Prince William County. We are barely surviving. In order to provide welcoming and safe environments and provide excellent education for our students, we need to be valued as professionals with expertise.

[00:47:52] We must be guaranteed the means to thrive. We need a balanced work home schedule, the ability to live in the district where we work, and fair compensation for the work we do as professionals these are essentials i teach language and literature i have five classes on a days and five different classes on b days my student counts have been between 250 and 297 for the past 8.3 years i grade approximately 500

[00:48:25] assignments per week and attend two clt meetings there are twice as many phone calls to make parent-teacher conferences, IEPs, and intervention meetings to attend and copies to be made. But I

have the same amount of planning time as my colleagues who have 130 students.

[00:48:43] What's my compensation for twice the workload? The stipend I'm paid equates to only one and a half to two additional hours per week rather than being compensated for teaching an additional five classes. Is this fair? Does this value my expertise? And don't forget there are still other duties as assigned, and seemingly never-ending PD. We need to teach our students that a thriving future means to flourish, to grow vigorously. They learn what they see. Their role models need to

[00:49:14] thrive, not barely survive. Mary Bounds. Good evening. My name is Mary Bounds, and my address is on file. First of all, good evening to all the board members and to Dr. McDade, sorry.

[00:49:37] thank you for giving us this time to speak with you you got you all have a hard job it's not easy we're up here every week you're listening um i see everybody trying to use their active listening strategies and we are back there too but you know we're all it's it's got to feel like a broken record to you see i have all these notes but i'm not even a we got to be like a broken record and all we're asking is to feel valued do you know when i was a pre-k teacher i never had a duty-free

[00:50:09] lunch ever never we want that in the contract so that preschool teachers can have a duty-free lunch why do we not deserve that little thing the first speaker doesn't feel safe I didn't feel safe at all last year and if you remember me talking the last time I got really I didn't feel safe at all and nothing was done luckily this year when I got punched by a student that student was at least suspended but guess what that very rarely happens I just I don't understand what the contract negotiation team is and what the school board what

[00:50:49] you're what are you so afraid of are you afraid to make your teachers happy do you know what the conversation at dinner today was it was how many times you got kicked it was feeling threatened by parents it was that everybody is afraid of the kids so nobody wants to do anything that's what teachers talk about now it's not about how much we love the kids it's about how we're surviving and And I feel like if you are not in our position, you probably feel like we're exaggerating.

[00:51:25] I mean, I can't imagine what it's got to be like, oh, my God, here they come again. But why don't you want to give us a contract? We're not asking for seven hours of planning time. We're not asking for an hour of duty-free lunch. We just want what's deserved of us.

[00:51:43] We just want basic rights like everybody else. I want to feel safe when I go to work every day. I want to feel like I matter. And thankfully, I work in a school where I feel like I matter. But I'd like to matter to everybody, not just my school.

[00:52:01] It's not an easy job, and it gets harder every year. I still don't know how I'm going to finish 28 hours of professional development that I've ever done five times. It's not an easy job, and we just want to be heard.

[00:52:19] So again, why are you scared of making teachers happy? What's going to keep us if you don't? Megan Landis. - Good evening, my name is Megan Landis.

[00:52:39] I am a mother of two Prince William County School students in the Gainesville District, and a wife of a Prince William County School teacher in the Neabsco District. I am here tonight to implore you to support a fair collective bargaining agreement for Prince William County School classified and non-classified staff.

[00:52:56] Not just for the sake of your thousands of dedicated PWCS employees, but for the over 89,000 students and their families, including my own. Over the last five years, I have watched my husband, my children's teachers, and countless other school employees face unprecedented and escalating challenges with diminishing resources.

[00:53:17] And I have seen firsthand the sacrifices that they make to their personal time, their finances, their physical and their mental health in order to try to shield our students from the impacts to their education. Time and time again, they rise to the challenge only to be met with more demands, including tasks that fall outside of their contracted work and hours, less resources, and pay that is not only insufficient for the cost of living in this county, but is significantly less than our neighboring jurisdictions.

[00:53:51] It is no wonder then that our schools are facing such severe staffing issues that we We have teachers that are not certified to teach overseeing overcrowded classrooms. The impact of the staffing shortages to students and families cannot be overstated.

[00:54:10] You have students like my eight-year-old who are getting their IEP services virtually because you do not have enough professional staff to oversee in-person instruction. You have students like my 13-year-old who is routinely missing lessons because you don't have enough bus drivers to get him to school on time.

[00:54:30] And you've got working parents like myself that are getting those panicked phone calls when the buses don't even show up at all and have to leave work to get my kids to school. Fully staffing schools is the responsibility of this school board and quite frankly you have failed to adequately address this over the last four years.

[00:54:50] The good news is that the state legislation has handed you a solution by authorizing this board to engage in collective bargaining a process with proven results for attracting and retaining qualified staff. Yet from what I have seen instead of embracing a proven solution this school board and the administration has been actively undermining collective bargaining by citing resource constraints as a reason. I am a county employee trust me I can feel you on financial limitations but too often lost in the discussion of costs is the cost of inaction. At this point you cannot afford to do nothing. We entrust our

[00:55:28] teachers with educating our children and it's time we entrust them with having a real voice in how that education is provided. Please do the right thing by your teachers and families. Thank you. The next five are Shannon Coriel, Carl Gritton, Lisa Ann Bodie, Katie Jefferson and Afton Schwalm. Shannon Coriel. My

[00:56:07] name is Shannon Coriel and my address is on file with the clerk. I am an educator in Prince William County Schools here to speak on the seven contract negotiations. Two weeks ago I gave a speech to the board and have been afforded another opportunity to address my concerns. To summarize my last speech, I work 10 hours of unpaid overtime a week, 360 extra hours a year, yet I can barely afford to rent a windowless basement apartment with no kitchen in this county. Today I am here to elaborate on two factors that make the working conditions in PWCS

[00:56:42] unsustainable. The persisting staff shortages and the unreasonable workload. Issues that could be alleviated through the seven contract negotiations. On average PWCS teachers leave in five years. Many of them feel defeated and leave teaching altogether. This is the second year at my school and I have already worked with five new CLT members and two different curriculums.

[00:57:07] This year I work with a six-person CLT that includes three inexperienced teachers, none of whom are familiar with the current curriculum. The majority of responsibility then falls to our one veteran teacher who has taken on this labor for years. Veteran teachers are consistently supporting new people and have stayed loyal to PWCS, yet the county fails to move them past the middle of the pay scale. Teacher retention is low and inhibits our CLT's ability to plan and create quality content for our students. Despite these staff shortages,

[00:57:44] we are still required to manage unreasonable county expectations. The constantly changing curriculum and resources, increasing state and federal requirements, extra after-school weekly meetings, managing chaotic student behavior with limited disciplinary options, the central office personnel parading through our classrooms, and writing out complicated objectives that include UDL, DOK, and IB criteria.

[00:58:09] we don't have protected planning time we don't even have a protected lunch yet teachers are asked to deliver rigorous authentic and differentiated lessons in this environment it is not possible to deliver quality instruction in our current working conditions as a result our students education is suffering Prince William County's vision is for every student to graduate on time Prince William County's mission includes an expectation of excellence from every student and employee every day. We cannot continue to be excellent without

[00:58:45] reciprocated excellence from our school board. Pass the seven contract negotiations to keep staff in our county so we can provide our children with a quality education. Thank you. Carl Greton. Good evening. I'm Carl Greton of the Gainesville District. Finally the advertisements for the elections are over. We hope you're happy. The school board issues have not changed. The current issue ongoing every day is about student walkout protests for the Hamas killings. Your diversity,

[00:59:25] inclusion, and equity department should not allow protests for terrorism and should support Jewish students. Have you had a march to support Jewish students and citizens and provide protection to them? The extremist Hamas Palestinians and the Islamic Jihad terrorist groups have murdered babies kidnapped and killed U.S. citizens. The protests are not a First Amendment right speaking in favor of a terrorist organization. Students need to be in class. If students are to walk out of class, they should also walk out like many other states that allow boys and girls

[01:00:00] toilets and locker rooms and for boys to play in girls sports. Support the model policies for the governor have you considered adhering to these policies thriving features is not following die philosophy and is only looking at the top percentage of students your statement is thriving futures focus spotlights the diverse accomplishments of prince william county students staff schools and programs throughout the school division that meet the established qualifications and guidelines we have noticed that only the top percentage of students are being recognized at school board

[01:00:38] meetings please adhere to your die philosophy soon it will be a new year and we hope the school board will work for the community book topics will topics of murder rape violence racist and pornographic issues be allowed in school racism in schools we've heard community speakers saying there is racism in schools eradicate bullying also low scores do not lower the bar strive for excellence and attendance social justice remove this from the schools there is no need to teach marxism in united states schools staff shortages teacher pay and the all-important lunch time

[01:01:16] what is your solution to these issues and are these issues complete codes in school shutting down schools for our upcoming snow events negative issues will only grow worse as abraham lincoln has said to sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men thank you lisa ann bodey

[01:01:39] good evening my name is liz bodey and i reside in the occoquan district i know most of you i'm friends with most of you i'm a combat wounded veteran and a breastfeeding mother of seven i need a cane to access my environment and to navigate terrain and it's a relatively it is relatively easy for my administrators to accommodate my needs from this

[01:02:18] perspective I can use an elevator I can modify my evacuation route the breast feeding part is a little bit more difficult though it's a the problem there and really anywhere that requires me to not be present for my students is that there's a staffing issue so I'm a special education teacher in a self contained classroom for students with emotional disabilities and in my classroom I have eight students ranging in age from kindergarten to fifth grade

[01:02:54] and I'm sure you can imagine we see a wide range of behaviors and those behaviors often require maintenance and patience and and so while we have our schedules and we have visual schedules and we are intervening and being in many places at many times we're also teaching concurrently at this time four different grades at the same time I can't pop out to pump when I need to so

[01:03:33] I had to make the very difficult decision to stop pumping during the day even though I have a seven month old and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that we try to go a year, and we're supposed to be able to pump at work, right?

[01:03:52] I can't do that because I can't step out to do that. I also don't get a duty-free lunch for the same reason, because it's very difficult to manage a break where I'm able to take 30 minutes away from my students by myself. We're able to get some time, small periods of time. While I have two TAs, It's always at the back end of managing those behaviors with the other students in my class.

[01:04:28] And I don't get planning at all. So I think I know that you're humans. I know where your hearts are. But on this side, we're only getting the salary piece of the contract negotiations.

[01:04:48] And it would be nice if we could hear more from you. Katie Jefferson. All right.

[01:05:08] Hello. My name is Katie Jefferson. Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My address is on file with the clerk. I wrote a poem and I'm not a poet, so bear with me here. I hope we smile a little through this process. So Expo marker in hand and wisdom in mind.

[01:05:24] She stands before her students. She's so kind. Her voice is soft, yet firm and clear. An outstanding teacher whom the students hold so dear. As daylight advances its gradual course, her stomach growls with pains of remorse.

[01:05:40] Like all other needs that she tries to ignore, the hunger lingers evermore. Her stomach is empty, her energy's low, but her bladder's not. But there's no time to go. Her attention is fixed on each student's needs, prescribing them self-care that she seldom heeds.

[01:05:59] But let's think about this just for a minute. As a student, it's quite hard to learn when your teacher's energy begins to burn. Overworked and tired, they can't keep pace, and despite their best efforts, it shows on their face. There's already a policy for lunch, they say, if your admin follows it anyway.

[01:06:17] The policies say we get planning time, but the superintendent says that too will be mine. So what is a teacher expected to do if not fight for a contract that we all can be held to? A policy is subject to further revision. Legally, a contract is the final decision.

[01:06:35] If your policies mean anything to you, then why not put it in the contract too? Make it enforceable, make it clear, and give your employees something to cheer. Actions speak much louder than words, then make them align and turn your nouns into verbs.

[01:06:50] If you believe that you're already doing what's right, then why is this something you would even wanna fight? It's time to give teachers what you know they deserve. A contract that shows you that you all have the nerve to stand up for your staff and guarantee them a break and acknowledge that that is not your time to take.

[01:07:11] But speaking of taking, I have more to say. When the school board misunderstands a silent protest and seeks to punish the community, they only deepen the divide and they cause more of this lunacy. For the power of a silent protest lies in its ability to convey a message that words cannot express and a passion that cannot be swayed.

[01:07:32] When the school board fails to see the value of this peaceful action, they miss an opportunity to engage in a constructive fashion. For when the government silences its own, it denies them their rights, their voice their home it creates a world where fear and distrust reign and where freedom and justice are held in disdain so let us rise let our voices soar against the board's oppressive ways for silence is not what the community is made for when we listen to each other and seek to build a bridge for our divide we can build a better future with hope and unity as our guide afton

[01:08:10] schwalm hello my name is afton schwalm and my address is on file with the court anyone who has listen to the citizens comments from the school board meetings over the past year have heard many many school employees describe their experiences in Prince William County schools. You have already heard multiple teachers describe the unreasonable demands of the division, the lack of autonomy in our classroom, the excessive amount of professional development including the sped PD that went out this week with a two-week deadline, the many required meetings, the drastic increase in the

[01:08:49] the number of standardized tests, the division's unwillingness to support staff in disciplining students, and the countless hours spent grading and lesson planning at home instead of bonding with their own children. It's heartbreaking. It's infuriating. And if you haven't listened to these sorts of stories in previous meetings, I'm sure you will tonight.

[01:09:09] But tonight, I'm going to talk about my own experiences of a different sort. I'm going to talk about the things that I have seen, heard, and experienced over the the past year with my union. I have seen teachers and other education professionals who are among the most overworked, stressed out, and desperate, and who have families and children of their own to take care of, but yet they find the strength and courage to push themselves harder than anyone could reasonably expect for the sake of the other 11,000 of their colleagues.

[01:09:44] I have seen an inspiring number of educators leave their job with almost nothing left to give at the end of the day, and then turn around, put in several more hours outside of bargaining, outside of school, during bargaining sessions in buildings, making signs, organizing their union brothers and sisters,

and being visible to the division's bargaining team in an attempt to humanize the employees whose contract they are negotiating.

[01:10:11] I have witnessed this entire chamber filled with teachers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, TAs, librarians, and many more of your employees who sacrificed yet another evening with their families to stand behind our union and our bargaining team for the sake of the contract that restores the dignity of our professional lives. I've seen our members and colleagues persist in their advocacy and solidarity despite our school board's attempts to turn them into pariahs condemning and mocking their insistence they have been paid a competitive wage and have some degree

[01:10:46] of agency over their employment. I have seen my union brothers and sisters continue to fight for one another as our members face retaliation at work and harassment online and at times even in person. And I have seen our union and our colleagues rise to the occasion and make history for the Commonwealth of Virginia. If ever there was a group capable of moving mountains to improve the state of our schools and professions, it's these people sitting right behind me. If our school board and board members were as wise to the public they would turn this passion dedication and talent to their own advantage because i couldn't imagine why you would want us to be anywhere but on your

[01:11:24] team the next five jared gay erica weiss maggie hansford andrea wortner and monique cerruti jared gay my name is jared gay and my address is on file with the clerk so when i finished speaking at the last school board meeting i expected to receive a lot of flack for getting as close to to losing my temper as any of you have ever seen, but I was surprised to find that on the contrary, the overwhelming majority of the feedback I received suggested that it got through to a lot of people

[01:12:04] in a way that had not been the case in previous meetings. Thinking about why that was, it occurred to me that it probably had something to do with all of the other employees that spoke before and after me who were sharing their deeply personal and emotional experiences of how McDade and the school board's actions and inaction have hurt them, their families, and their students.

[01:12:24] I think a lot of people finally understood why PWEA members' comments have frequently been so aggressive. It isn't performative, it isn't pettiness, and it's definitely not overreaction. PWEA leadership hears accounts like these on a daily basis from our members begging us to help them.

[01:12:42] Hell, we've experienced these conditions ourselves. Most of our board members are still working full-time for the division now. There are thousands upon thousands of division employees struggling in similar or even worse conditions those described two weeks ago and tonight. And after hearing these heart-wrenching personal accounts from their employees, did these elected Democrats prepare to come here tonight in a spirit of compassion and compromise? No. Instead, two of them, along with a Republican, came prepared to introduce a policy amendment that would further restrict citizen comment time and limit their constituents' ability to exercise their First Amendment rights in an obvious attempt to shield

[01:13:18] themselves from being called out for the open contempt they clearly hold for their employees who dare to call them out. I would expect this blatantly callous behavior from Barbara Latif and Jen Wall. But the third person bringing this forward is Adele Jackson, a former teacher endorsed by the Democratic Party. Adele, do you seriously want one of your last actions on the school board to be something this spiteful, this corrupt? For what? To attack your constituents in order to stick it to your colleagues? Why do

you want that to be your legacy? So yeah, these things do make me angry. They make me very angry. They make me furious because at the end of the day,

[01:13:54] you make it obvious over and over again that you do not care. If you did, you would behave differently. If the rest of you still care at all, you do still have a couple of weeks to demonstrate it by instructing your bargaining team and forcing your process to bargain in good faith and stop refusing to even discuss proposals like adding your policy language on duty-free lunch to our contracts. Believe me, I would much rather be up here week after week thanking you and singing your praises for working in out of compromise with your staff instead of coming and having to

[01:14:31] constantly shame you believe it or not i'm actually capable of being a pretty nice guy that's all i've got erica weiss my name is erica weiss and my address is on file we're at an interesting moment tonight for one thing local and state level elections took place over a week ago including our school board races contract negotiations between pwea and pwcs are also in their final stretch, with all contract language for next school year due to this

[01:15:09] school board by December 1st. Maybe it's the onset of autumn weather, but it certainly feels like things are coming to a close, making way for whatever comes next. With that in mind, the time feels right for some reflection and introspection.

[01:15:25] I always think it's a good idea to periodically pause and imagine what one's legacy would be if it was based solely on their efforts and accomplishments to date. For PWA's part, when I reflect on the efforts and accomplishments over the past two years, I know that our members have done an extraordinary amount of work to make our division competitive during an unprecedented teacher shortage.

[01:15:49] We have fought for a fair competitive contract so that all division employees are able to provide for their families so that our students can get to schools that are fully staffed with the most qualified educational professionals in the region.

[01:16:05] After all, PWCS regularly leads the region in the number of vacant positions. We are the second lowest in the region for employee salaries and the second lowest budget for funding per student.

[01:16:20] Even if you decide to continue thumbing your noses at your employees and refusing to negotiate in good faith, even if you ultimately pass the contract you always intended to pass and include none of our bargaining team's proposals. I know that PWEA members who have fought for collective bargaining have done everything we possibly could to make things better. That will be our legacy. What will your legacies be as the school board members? Justin, Lisa, Adele, what will your legacies be as current or former educators who now have the authority to either lift up your colleagues who are crying out for relief or consign them to

[01:17:00] hopelessness. What are your legacies as politicians, as Democrats? Do you really want to be remembered as the board that destroyed all trust and goodwill between educators and division management? The board did nothing to prevent the largest exodus of qualified teachers in memory and shortchange our students. You're running out of time to prevent this from becoming your legacy. Take heed and do

[01:17:27] the right thing. Thank you. Maggie Hansford. Hi my name is Maggie Hansford. my address is on file with the clerk I'm gonna respectfully ask a school board member Jen Wall to stop laughing at staff

that are coming up to speak we see you it's inappropriate please stop everything I'm about to say is not funny just to lay that out there first thing I want to say is

[01:18:01] sick bank was brought up about a staff member of yours who has cancer guess how many days are in the sick bank do any of you know they're zero for your staff they're zero the sick bank is tied to retirement you have one of three options if your retirement is tied to the sick bank you have zero

[01:18:28] days we've asked your team to negotiate we've received nothing you have a staff member with cancer taught 23 years has to keep working to be able to afford treatment and has a sick bank of zero days that's your employee when we came to you this fall and we followed the directions we got

[01:19:05] online on saturday morning we signed up to speak we chose how to use our three minutes there are educators in prince william that teach civics there's something to be said about that a silent protest is a first amendment right we could have done a lot of things with our three minutes we followed the rules we signed up we came many of us are mothers we are community members we're

[01:19:38] neighbors we don't want to be here our gas tank isn't filled up in the parking lot coming here we're not paid to be here we have a job we've been at a job all day we want to go home but you all are refusing to negotiate fairly there are five charges unfair labor practice charges five we want you to stand by your lunch policy. Educators in the room please stand. You

[01:20:14] have this many educators that continue to come and ask you to do the right thing. Give your staff lunch. We followed the rules. We have done our part. You are responsible to do yours. Put lunch in the contract and finish these next few weeks out fairly and just for your employees.

[01:20:43] - Andrea Bortner. - Hi, my name is Andrea Bortner and my address is on file. On May 1st, 1969, Fred Rogers, host of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, appeared in Washington, D.C.

[01:21:04] before the Senate Subcommittee on Communications to express his disagreement with a proposal to cut federal funding for public broadcasting from 20 million to 10 million. And in just six minutes, Mr. Rogers was able to convince them to keep the budget at a full 20 million.

[01:21:19] That's right, even Fred Rogers was an activist. I love when people ask me what I do for a living. I get to tell people that I'm a kindergarten teacher. And do you know, people love kindergarten teachers. I get called an angel, a saint, a Miss Frizzle, a Mary Poppins.

[01:21:41] I can't say that many people expect someone with my kind of job to be standing here advocating for a fair contract, but at a certain point this year, I had to ask myself, if you stand for nothing, girl, what will you fall for? I fell for this idea that it was fine, that I was working for an extra one and a half hours outside of my contract every day, 'cause that's just what good teachers do, right?

[01:22:04] I fell for the rhetoric that I teach for the outcome, not the income, right? Don't tag us in that. I fell for the idea that I cared so much. I must be such a great teacher. I worked so much for free to give my students and my great admin the best possible experience.

[01:22:21] I fell for the idea that the district could take away my planning period two to three times a week for required meetings and make me do all that work I should have been able to do then on my own time. I fell for this idea that it was okay that I was paid so much less than my other's master's degree holding counterparts because I was only working for 10 months, right?

[01:22:42] Except, except that that 1.5 extra hours a day times 195 days is the same as 41 of our seven hour days. Plus the week that I go in for free in August to get my classroom ready and inviting for families that may be sending their kids off to a perfect stranger for the first time, plus the 14 hours of PD that are due outside of our flex hours, that's another two days.

[01:23:03] That means that this district is getting the equivalent of 48 days of work from me for free. And maybe I'm talking fast because I'm running out of time or maybe it's because I'm watching so much PD on two times the speed, but I only have three minutes to convince you that PWEA proposed compensation package is worse and Mr. Rogers got six.

[01:23:21] Having collective bargaining means that for the first time, I have a group of thousands that is advocating for my needs, a group that can organize all this information that teachers want you to know about our jobs, about what is important to us because not everyone has childcare or energy to come here for hours for free to show you how important it is.

[01:23:36] I myself have to leave right after I'm done speaking so my husband can get to his hockey practice tonight. Every black-shirted teacher in this room represents so many more that can't do one more thing for free tonight, but they're watching from home and they're hoping you hear, and like Senator John Pastore with Mr. Rogers, agree that we're worth it.

[01:23:54] - Monique Cerruti? - Monique Cerruti. - Okay, next five, Beverly Thompson, Richard Jesse, Andrew McCarthy, Turkia McCauley, and Taylor Young.

[01:24:12] Beverly Thompson. - Good evening, my name is Beverly Thompson and my address is on file.

[01:24:31] When writing my comments for tonight, I plan to speak to the disrespect communicated to a teacher when their time to eat and perform all non-instructional tasks is taken from them. But then I looked at tonight's agenda and saw that your disrespect kind of extends to the rest of your constituents as well.

[01:24:53] I'm referring to the last item on the agenda, proposal from Barbara Lateef, Jen Wall, and Adele Jackson to amend school board policy 134 citizen participation. These are the proposed changes.

[01:25:09] Speakers confirmed to speak at a regularly scheduled meeting of the school board shall not be permitted to sign up speak at the next two regularly scheduled meetings of the school board. Speakers confirmed to speak at a regularly scheduled meeting of the school board who fail to speak at the meeting for which they are confirmed should not be permitted to sign up to speak at the next two regularly scheduled meetings of the school board unless they notify the school board clerk by noon on the date of the meeting that they are unable to attend.

[01:25:44] So finally, there is a prohibition on plain audio or video recordings during your common time, though I'm not sure what problem this is intended to solve. There are no proposals to prohibit citizen comments that are homophobic, or transphobic, or contain graphic descriptions of disfigured genitalia, or accuse students of being terrorists for exercising their amendment rights to protest against authoritarian violence.

[01:26:15] policy justification form says that the changes are needed to increase the number of speakers who can address the board over a period of three meetings. If the board wants to increase the number of citizens who can address the board I can suggest a much simpler and far less authoritarian way to

accomplish this goal. Increase the number of citizens who can address the board. It was this board who arbitrarily limited citizen time to just what 20 speakers per meeting and capped it at one hour. Less than a week ago, the PwCUS Planning Commission held a 22-hour meeting where they had around 200 citizens speak during citizen time.

[01:26:54] This seems to me that there should be some happy medium between these two extremes, that they propose solutions that should err on the side of protecting and advancing the ability of your constituents to exercise their freedom of speech rather than limiting it in thank you richard jesse good evening i'm richard jesse my address is on file and i am the uh next member of the school board to replace my wife

[01:27:31] and i think it's going to be very interesting uh and i'll start with tonight what i would like to say is that first of all i wanted to talk about the the people from gainesville who used to come up and talk and said you're going to kick you off the board and so forth and obviously that did not happen but more importantly I want to talk to my fellow citizens who disagrees with anyone on speaking a citizen's time it's very hard on the board when you

[01:28:04] hear only one side talking all the time and that's what we hear and you got to have the courage and intestinal fortitude to come up and speak you know when you go out and we're campaigning and you see signs out and I saw a lot of Republican signs. I go to a Democrat, "Oh I don't want to put out my sign because I don't want to hurt my friends and so forth." Come on folks, get some guts and do what you need to do. Now I also sometimes agree with a lot of some of the folks

[01:28:39] that I oppose and I think this thing on Citizen Time stinks to high heaven. I cannot believe that you are trying to pass this thing. I have spoken against the citizen time rules that this board has before and I speak against it again I think it's a thing I also think your naming of the schools and rules are unacceptable also I think there's a policy in there you have to be dead for

[01:29:14] three years before you can get your name on the building I can remember when one member of this board could not wait to get to a newspaper to get John Jenkins' name on the building. It is just unreasonable. People deserve to have their props when they are alive. I remember Fannie Fitzgerald telling my wife when she had Alzheimer's, and she couldn't remember anything, but she came back to the car and said, do you know my name is on the building? And of course

[01:29:49] Lily did because she helped get it on there so I just say to you I look forward to being on the board I look forward to getting along but I think these two policies are wrong thank you. Andrew McCarthy. Good evening my name is Andy McCarthy and we're all here today for the same reason and that is to put Prince William County students in the best possible position to learn. Everybody up

[01:30:25] here and everybody back here we all we all agree with that now we come from different perspectives different viewpoints you from up top us from the trenches but again the same outcome is that we want to help students and they're having a really tough time from post-pandemic now go back 20 years ago we had no child left behind right this emphasis that we need standards standardized testing to to hold schools accountable.

[01:30:55] And it worked at first because schools had to raise the bar. But after a while, we saw a lot of problems with it. I started teaching in 2004 at Woodbridge Middle School, and I would see posters that say, I think it was the Thoreau quote, education isn't filling a bucket, it's lighting a fire, right?

[01:31:13] And then I would go into the classroom and fill buckets and fill bubbles. And now we're right, and it didn't work. And I stopped it after the first year. I was like, I'm not focusing on the test anymore. was the greatest decision I've ever done. And I'm a good teacher. I'm a great teacher.

[01:31:29] I'm a great coach. We won a state championship in cross country because I coach the same way I teach. And know what I do? I ignore all the BS that comes down the pike and I teach students. And I focus on the relationships.

[01:31:45] And I focus on the equity. And not all students are created equal and they need equal opportunities. And that doesn't come from quantitative data and crunching numbers. So, things started to shift in the right direction to 2000 teens we started to see the pendulum swing back to lack of focus on testing and more focused on students a greater trust in teachers and then pandemic came now we're faced with mental health

[01:32:17] issues crisis among our students rampant drug use out of school absenteeism education is now a political tug of war and how do we fix it we're back to standardized testing and holding teachers accountable shame where you just rewound 20 years after all the research and everything we know we're back where we started we're all here for the same reason and it's the kids now we look a lot at quantitative data you all have

[01:32:54] tons of surveys and tons of feedback lots of quantitative data but there's also qualitative data and that's from all the teachers that are telling you what's going on I suggest you listen to it Turquia McCauley my name is Turquia McCauley my address is on file at the last meeting I poured my heart out to everyone because I needed you to hear the sacrifices that I have made in the hopes that you would throw us a safety line. I couldn't stay the entire meeting because I chose to spend time with my family before they went to bed. While watching the rest of the meeting I was a

[01:33:32] little bit disappointed that most of you glossed over the hardships that we talked about. While our feelings were acknowledged you also went on to say that this isn't the correct forum to voice our concerns and stated that those concerns should be brought to the negotiation table. Well we have been bringing that to the negotiation table, but we're continually met with no.

[01:33:54] Our working conditions should be a priority of the school board that employs us. School boards have the final say on the district policies, not the superintendent or the negotiation team. We've brought numerous examples of unacceptable working conditions that include inadequate wages, long hours, and safety hazards.

[01:34:11] Rather than acting, you're passing the buck to the negotiation team. Over the past two years, our working conditions have gone from inadequate to toxic. In a toxic work environment, employees are stressed, communication is limited, and blame culture is prevalent.

[01:34:26] Our basic human rights shouldn't need to be bargained. When did the workload, not getting a lunch, reducing the amount of PD, and the concerns for our safety have to be negotiated? In neighboring districts, teachers are given a pretest for some of the PD to see if they remember the knowledge from the previous year.

[01:34:43] Successfully passing the pretest means they don't have to repeat the same training. That's time saved. Your perception is that PWEA is bringing negativity, but our perception is that PWEA is bringing us empowerment. They're listening to us and trying to find a way to help.

[01:34:59] We feel empowered to speak because what we are experiencing daily is not okay. While I'm sure you have found it tiresome, we are thankful for those people who have worked tirelessly to remind us that we deserve better and we are worth fighting for. Without clear boundaries, we work long hours, sacrifice personal time, and neglect self-care, leading to burnout, affecting our overall well-being ability to effectively teach. A study conducted by NEA found that teachers who work more than 55 hours per week reported higher levels of stress and lower job satisfaction. When teachers have time to recharge and engage in activities they enjoy they're more likely to bring enthusiasm and creativity into the classroom. Teachers who spend quality time with their

[01:35:38] family during the weekends and evenings are more likely to feel refreshed and motivated when they return to work. Since prioritizing my time and setting boundaries I'm making better choices and I was able to enjoy soccer and basketball games without my laptop I sat on my porch swing and enjoyed the incredible view I have and I had more conversations with my children I enjoyed a few movies from start to finish I allowed myself to sleep in even my dog got some more attention I completed everyday household chores like laundry in one day because I wasn't multitasking over the overflow of work I have and I can't expect others to make the change for my life so I'm going to continue to

[01:36:08] respect my contract and hold firm to my boundaries thank you Taylor Young good evening dr. Lateef dr. McDade and members of the school board my name is Taylor Young and my address is on file. I stand before you tonight as a PWCS employee and parent of three PWCS students. I'm a new PWCS teacher but I am not new to education. I have 17 years of experience from preschool to high school.

[01:36:39] This is all to say that I love teaching and I found my calling in this community of teachers and students. I enjoy watching my children and the kids in my neighborhood school grow in their love of learning from the best of the best. but in these first 12 weeks of school I've seen some of the worst within PWCS.

[01:36:58] I've personally been overwhelmed to the point of tears, experienced verbal and physical abuse, and witnessed the same from my colleagues. I have been driven to consider alternate employment because the position of teacher is no longer what it was short while ago. It is no longer planning and executing engaging lessons, grading students, and building relationships with students and their families. That is what I know as the core of teaching, but it has been changed so much from what I and my peers know and love that I am standing before you in fear that our educators

[01:37:33] are being pushed out of a severely understaffed industry. The amount of pressure our teachers are under is insurmountable. We're often given new directives with little support or guidance on how to balance that against a full school day. We're micromanaged to complete a plethora of tasks, which is overwhelming. We are not supported to exercise autonomy in the classroom. Our expertise about how our learners show proficiency and mastery beyond the unit assessments is stifled.

[01:38:01] We have to meet the specific needs of every student but must somehow maintain a level of rigor and challenge to a group of 25 or more unique learners. We have been questioned as to why a student reads below grade level but is earning a high grade in our classroom. We are challenged for better results even when a child is thriving at their level.

[01:38:22] We're pushed and pulled in so many directions that most days we don't sit down to eat, barely use the restroom, feel guilty for not going in early or staying late in order to keep up with the amount of

paperwork and administrative requirements, and then we feel guilty because we've devoted so much of ourselves to the business of education that our family gets a tired, worn-out shell of a person.

[01:38:44] Something has to give, and what will that be? In my opinion, one step towards keeping the amazing educators you have in PWCS is to provide fair compensation better working conditions and respectable benefits to your employees and you can do that teachers want to feel valued respected and heard at all levels we don't want to worry about retaliation when we voice concerns or request clarity we are the faces our students see every day and holding a smile is getting more and more challenging PWC educators are currently the best but but that means nothing if we are not seen and heard.

[01:39:19] Like we say to our students, don't just tell me the solution, show me the work. Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. - Okay, that concludes citizen comment time. We're moving on to 13.01, the Office of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. This is on for information, the annual school calendar.

[01:39:37] Turn it over to Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now invite Dr. Stephanie Sullivan, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, to present the proposed school calendar for the upcoming, the new school year.

[01:39:53] - Thank you Dr. Lateef, Vice Chair Wall, members of the board and Dr. McDade. It's my pleasure today to present the work that's been done in preparation for our recommendation for next year's calendar. Would like to recognize Dr. Eagle who stepped in the void when we were transitioning employees to make sure that all the work that had been done prior to now was brought forward to the board.

[01:40:23] And so a couple of requirements are the first step of establishing a school calendar. One is, of course, Virginia Code. And we look to Virginia Code first to make sure we're in compliance. And it established the standard school year and school day, and it requires that the school year have 180 days or 990 instructional hours.

[01:40:46] Furthermore, Virginia Code 22.1 permits school divisions to start up to two weeks prior to Labor Day, but it does require a four-day student holiday if a division is electing to take that opportunity.

[01:41:04] Next step would be looking at our division policy, and our policy identifies required staff holidays, so that's obviously another important factor in the planning. And then when we look to regulation, Regulation 261-1 requires a minimum of 180 days of instruction.

[01:41:27] Within that, in addition to that, we have to plan for 195 teacher contract days with a maximum of 15 professional development work days. So meaning the 180 student days plus 15 teacher professional development or work days.

[01:41:45] Some other items addressed in the regulation include Columbus or Indigenous Peoples Day and that day is held as a professional development day. It also calls for workdays at the end of each quarter. And those are of course really important for teachers to be able to complete all of the required processes to close out student grades.

[01:42:08] The first quarter workday is always paired with election day when there is an election day year so that we can also protect the environment for students when elections are on our campuses. And to accommodate the voters, we're very mindful of parent conferences, large scale professional development, anything that can impact the campus while voters are present.

[01:42:34] And then we try as much as possible to make sure that the quarters are equal in number of days. So when we start with the calendar process, the team traditionally looks at the prior year's calendar first. What were those days like and how would the new year be related?

[01:42:52] We then look at all of the required holidays. Those are in policy and important for us to honor. The days can shift a tiny bit each year because some of the holidays are date specific and not on a school day.

[01:43:09] But in general, we can expect around 14 to 15 or 16 holidays. So we've got our 180 days, the 15 teacher work days, then the holidays to build into the calendar.

[01:43:26] And so the challenges begin on the time span for the 180 student days when we account for work days, professional development days, and holidays. We try to place teacher work days as much as possible as balanced throughout the year.

[01:43:43] This year we saw some challenges in our current calendar, and I think all the recommendations for next year include a better spread of teacher work days throughout the year. Some additional conversations that were had this year were centered around, do we need to start on a Monday?

[01:43:59] And it was some interesting conversation around the benefits to not starting on a Monday to include parents having access to school and division staff on the day prior to school start. So think transportation, phone calls, last minute questions or concerns, but then also for our students to have a shortened first week as well as our teachers and getting back into the swing of things.

[01:44:25] Picture our little ones in particular, that that can be challenging. And then the winter break duration, that's been a topic of discussion over the past couple years on really looking at a full two week break or do we look at a shorter break?

[01:44:41] So the process began with three initial drafts being developed for consideration by the calendar committee. The calendar committee includes teachers, school-based administrators, district staff, parents and students.

[01:44:56] So it is a combination of people providing input. Based on this calendar committee meeting, they actually requested more ideas. So three more calendars were developed as a result of that first meeting, giving us a total of six.

[01:45:16] Took back those six drafts to the calendar committee, asked them to provide feedback and rank their top choices. After that, we took the six drafts also to our superintendent's principal's advisory council, wanted to make sure we had even more feedback from school level personnel.

[01:45:37] Those results were then taken to cabinet for discussion on what would be brought forward to the board. And in that meeting, it was decided that the committee's top choices would be the ones that we supported.

[01:45:52] Thought it was really important to support the work of the committee and the recommendations that they had made. So then the three going to our community was the next step.

[01:46:08] And so when you look at the calendar options, the three choices that were presented for feedback, not significant amount of changes, but these were the top three chosen by both sets of committees to move forward. In the first column, you'll see the current calendar, just to give you a framework of how it relates to this year's calendar.

[01:46:28] And then you'll see three different options that were presented. In all three cases, teachers report back on August 12th, and student recommended start dates would be slightly different. In option A, the pre-service time maintained as five days.

[01:46:48] In option B and C, there's an additional day added, and I'll explain that more in a minute. You'll see a difference between a two-week winter break and a just less than two-week winter break, spring break, the last student day, and the last teacher day.

[01:47:06] This really covers the differences between the different plans. So on option A, the teachers have five days of pre-service. And that is a traditional structure that we've had. They start on a Monday. Winter break is two weeks.

[01:47:22] I'd like to address the six days of spring break for students. And so in this plan, the Monday after spring break would be a student holiday and a teacher work day in that setting.

[01:47:39] I'd like to point out in all three in those two models, a teacher workday was changed to a workday from a professional development day. So in terms of total counts, it is adding more workday over professional development days for our teachers.

[01:47:55] On option B, you'll see a similar structure except six days. So in option B and C, that Monday after spring break was moved to pre-service time because we also heard teachers needing more time in pre-service.

[01:48:13] So we wanted to provide those options as the Monday after spring break or a pre-service option. And so I'd like to share the results and I'm really proud of our community. We had a tremendous amount of survey respondents, well over 8,000 total respondents.

[01:48:37] And if you take a look at the bar graph there, you can see that the majority of the respondents were parents. Pleased to see our parents did engage. Lots of response from our staff members as well and some student responses.

[01:48:54] When you look at the next slide, this shows you the grade band that those respondents represented, the parents that responded. And although it looks uneven, it's actually quite even when you consider the grade bands. And so in our elementary schools, we have the most grade bands of students, meaning in many cases six or even seven with pre-K grade bands represented, three in middle, and then four in high school.

[01:49:21] So a pretty nice balance of types of parents and their interest in schools. So when you look at the next slide, you can see the preference for our community was by and large option A.

[01:49:36] And the way this graph works is we ranked depending on if it was someone's first choice or third choice. So a first choice counted more than a third choice. When you look at the dark colored bars, that's representing the number of people that chose it as their first choice.

[01:49:55] So as you can see, Option A is definitely the option that was most favored by our community. I want to talk a little bit more about Option A since that was the favored choice.

[01:50:10] We had about 3,000 comments on the survey from our community and I thought it was really important to honor those comments and try to address some of the concerns. One of the big concerns was the colors are confusing.

[01:50:27] And I will say that this created a perception that was not accurate. see a purple day on the day before the Labor Day and a purple day right before Thanksgiving.

[01:50:42] And the schools are closed that day, offices are closed. Teachers also do not work on that day. And there was a lot of questions or concerns that we were having teachers work on that day. There isn't. There are some staff members who are 250 day contracts that do work on those days.

[01:51:04] similar to how we do this year. It's just tricky in denoting that in the calendar. So they thought a different color would be a good idea, but it did cause confusion. So I do want to assure our teachers that those are teacher holidays without question.

[01:51:20] The other thing that came up a lot is the relationship between professional development days and teacher work days and the balance of those 15 days. If you take a look at that colored grid, it's those green colors that are the days designated for professional development.

[01:51:40] The ones with a slice through them, we are only division-wide doing two to three hours of professional development on those days, and that's consistent with this year. But again, one of the days, the day particularly in April, was a professional development day.

[01:51:57] It was changed to a teacher work day because of the clear needs for teachers, particularly at that time of the year. Not necessarily the most effective use of that day for professional learning. And so as you can see the teachers can expect a division-wide day in pre-service, the one in October, and then two half days.

[01:52:18] So it does represent more time for them. Lots of questions about snow days. So new for this Florida girl. So admittedly I had to do some work and research on snow days. And there's a lot of confusion around an abundance of snow days, the elimination of snow days.

[01:52:38] And so I did research the past 10 years to get real clarity around what has been past practice in Prince William County. And so a couple of things of note. Up until relatively recently, there were more than 180 student days in the calendar.

[01:52:54] And I think that was potentially the start of the confusion. So our base calendar for a number of years was 183 student days. Actually, it was a strange combination of 182 and 183. In 2020, that was eliminated.

[01:53:10] It was taken down from 183 to 182, then to 181. Beginning in 2020, we began scheduling a firm 180 school days. So there were no longer extra days built into the schedule.

[01:53:28] But there were for a lot of years, so I can certainly understand some of the confusion. But the 180 days has been based since without extra days built into the schedule. There were a lot of comments about if we have Code Orange, why can't we eliminate some days?

[01:53:47] And I know our Board is certainly familiar that Code Orange does not replace other codes. It may in a certain circumstance, but there is a strong likelihood we'll still have code red days that come up, and those days would then have to be evaluated for lost student attendance days.

[01:54:07] And so there was a perception out there that we would be eliminating code red and every weather-related day would be a code orange, but I know for certain that that's not the intent and wanted to clarify that for our audience today. We certainly know there will be weather related circumstances that cause for closing down this school division.

[01:54:27] We also know we have some opportunities to capture minutes if we need it. There have been years in Prince William County where they ran out of days and had to do some creative rescheduling here, we did, in order to make sure we captured the minimum minutes.

[01:54:44] So it is an opportunity for us with Code Orange when we need to capture instructional minutes and it's best for our students and families, but there's also a decent likelihood, depending on the weather, that we will have a traditional code red. So I wanted to emphasize that.

[01:55:01] Winter break. Winter break was a big source of discussion amongst our constituents. And I tell you, a lot of excellent points were made. And really talking about the two-week winter break. We probably had about 20% of the respondents that perhaps did not think the two-week winter break was appropriate i would say 80 felt that it was essential some of the key points that were made in the family statements are we have split families sometimes where students are spending a week with one parent than a week with another parent that's a pretty traditional model in

[01:55:35] agreements and for me a very compelling thing to emphasize in protecting that two weeks as you all know prince william county is a global destination something we're all really proud of but that also means that many of our families are going out of country for the winter break and the winter holidays and of course the needs of our teachers and staff and everybody's um desire to really recharge reflect and and rejuvenate during the break so a two-week winter break i i think i heard loud and clear and i wanted to make sure i shared that with the board that there were a lot of

[01:56:11] reasons to our community that that was really important work days and holidays this was this This was a really split topic, literally for every comment on, we love that we embrace the holidays and we have holidays throughout the years.

[01:56:28] We had some, we shouldn't embrace any of those holidays and we should compact our school year. Certainly our families and our staff recognize kind of the trade-off. And it was pretty evenly split on the perspective of those additional days and the value to the individual family.

[01:56:50] And so I could not share a compelling overarching consensus, because there was really no consensus. A lot of comments that were very deeply passionate in support of the periodic breaks, the recognition of the different holidays, and all that it represented, and a lot of very strong, compelling perspectives against it.

[01:57:14] And so I wanted to make sure the board knew that that was a topic that people do not agree on, and really as also related to teacher work days and professional development. Some of our families, those days are very difficult when they have to go to work. So for a family, they weren't necessarily distinguishing between no school, whether it was a professional development day or a holiday.

[01:57:36] To them, it was no school, and they had to tackle family obligations. But again, many others really recognize the positives of it. Another comment I wanted to mention, there was a lot of comments made about the relationship between other calendars, and our consistency with other divisions, because a lot of our communities live in one, work in another, have children in another division.

[01:58:01] And so we did take a close look, and Fairfax County is almost identical to this recommendation a very tiny differences on two of the work days they may have chosen the Friday we may have chosen Monday but winter break was the same and spring break was the same winter break was consistent across

all the divisions around us that was those were consistent dates spring break is nearly consistent with all districts, with the exception of Stafford.

[01:58:39] The other districts have spring break attached and preceding Easter traditionally. And so the vast majority of the districts have the exact same spring break, have the exact same winter break, and many of the other dates similar, but not exact.

[01:59:00] Fairfax were almost identical. So I did want to make a point and mention that we did have an opportunity to look at those and address them. And so today, as you know, today was just for information.

[01:59:16] The calendar recommendation will come back to the Board on December 5th for the Board to vote on its election of a calendar. And then after that, we will of course use multiple communication opportunities and resources to share that calendar broadly.

[01:59:32] I know our families look forward to it as soon as possible to begin making their arrangements for anything from family events to summer programming for students and different opportunities. So thank you.

[01:59:49] Thank you. Does anyone have any questions for Dr. Sullivan? Ms. Jackson. Thank you, Dr. Sullivan. I received just I think one or two, two or three emails on the calendar. The main input from the emails were planning time, which is something I support and I've and consistent in advocating for.

[02:00:08] You touched on this a little bit already, but if you, could you maybe-- - Yeah, thank you. I'd be happy to. We did transfer one of the professional development days to a teacher workday, and the teacher workdays are much better spaced out next year.

[02:00:25] You guys may know we have them at the end of the school year this year, which is really difficult for teachers in getting their obligations done. We're very mindful of the increased time for teachers in that space. This choice that the community picked is number one, does represent one of those days being converted to teacher and it represents the balance and includes also that Monday after spring break.

[02:00:52] - And I just have one follow-up for the average listener. What is the difference between a professional work day and a professional development day and a work day? - Yeah, good question. So there are 15 total days, actually two of which are flex days. So 13 total days that make up those days where teachers are on contract but there's not students in the school.

[02:01:15] And so when we identify something as a division-wide professional development day, that is to clearly denote that that day will be used for typically required professional development, not always. And so in some cases they will sign up for opportunities, in other cases those days are pretty well scheduled.

[02:01:36] And so teachers will have one of those days in pre-service, one of those days in Octobers, and just a couple of hours on the other days. And really trying to minimize the time where those are obligated, but also moving the division forward where needed to on key initiatives, and of course state or local requirements.

[02:02:01] - Okay, thank you. - Jackie, Jacqueline. - This is work, okay. Hi, I just wanted to thank you for thinking about other aspects such as students and families and such things like that.

[02:02:16] My only question was necessarily, what are the pros and cons to an eight day winter break versus a 10 day winter break and necessarily pros and cons and what the committee was necessarily

thinking about that?

[02:02:32] - Yeah, thank you, great question, I appreciate it. So with an eight day winter break, what it did was shorten the end of the school year. And so, again, every day that we add either as a day off, in addition to 180 days, lengthens the school year.

[02:02:49] And so the students would, and the teachers would pick up the two days at the end of the school year versus in the winter break. So an opportunity basically for a week and a half versus two weeks. And the committees and the families and the teachers and everybody, like I said, not all, probably about 20% like the shorter version, but most really wanted the extra time.

[02:03:19] - Thank you. - Jessie. - Hi, I'm gonna ask the same question I always ask, which is Thanksgiving, and those persons on different contracts, because as a principal, every year, if you didn't get that day off, you didn't quite kill somebody in your family, but you had some emergency that made you need to leave town.

[02:03:42] So could you explain that so that people will understand that they can have that time off in some way? - Sure, for the members in our employment force that are not the 195 teacher days, we are on a slightly different contract, I'm in that category, and so it would be a work day on that Wednesday before Thanksgiving, but we would certainly support and encourage people using their leave for that capacity.

[02:04:12] So it is not a you can't call in, or you can't use your leave. Every employee has leave that would be appropriate to utilize on that day, if that's what makes sense for their family. I have seen both things happen.

[02:04:28] I've seen lots of employees in different circumstances using that leave. In some cases, some people don't want to use their leave on day and enjoy kind of the quieter day at work. And so those opportunities are there for our staff. - Well, I really appreciate that.

[02:04:43] When I was a principal, you were not allowed to let people use certain kinds of leave day. That's a long time ago, but people are still thinking in that mode. I just want to make sure that people know that they can take leave. - Yes, thank you.

[02:04:58] Dr. Eagle's gonna give the precise answer. - Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Jessie, for the question. The only employees that are scheduled for work days on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving are our year round, traditionally called our 250 day employees, which are primarily here at central office as well as principals in our buildings.

[02:05:27] And also our 236 day employees, which are our high school assistant principals and our middle school DSAs, I mean not DSAs, directors of school counseling, and I think that's it.

[02:05:46] And yeah, I think that's it in terms of, you know, other than principals who's actually scheduled to work that day, principals, school administrators here, I mean, school administrators in buildings in terms of the principals and our year-round employees primarily that work here at central office.

[02:06:05] - I will tell you that the men will work, the women will go home, thank you. - Thank you. Ms. William. - Thank you. I just wanna thank you for the presentation, especially going over the snow day part.

[02:06:22] I think it's a combination of those of us that have been here for a very, very long time, remembering having snow days added into the calendar and then all of our new people. So I like when we do our calendar presentation and we can sort of level set expectations. I would like when we post this, if

maybe we could start doing a small FAQ along with noticing to the public we're discussing the calendar I think that will help improve our discussions significantly one of the things that I heard most from teachers and I don't know how to answer this is the day like the teacher work day before report cards

[02:07:00] and somewhere around in that time frame I just want to know you know I'm clearly I'm not a teacher but I I feel like I've heard it more the past few years than previously and so I want to know what the committee had to say or what input was our attention brought to that sort of topic because I feel like there's been a shift I think what we see now is there was sort of a traditional way of doing things and then the pandemic happened and we did things differently and now we're sort of resetting those norms if you will so I just wanted to know if there was any attention given to that in the committee

[02:07:40] and if what the feedback was yeah there there is a teacher workday at the end of each nine weeks and in some cases it matches up against an election day in an election year and other holidays so for example that first week in November you'll see a combination of events occur because of additional holidays so we did ensure that there was a full and complete teacher workday after each marking period that was unobligated and like I said in some cases it's either preceded or followed by

[02:08:19] a holiday as well. Okay. I thank you. I appreciate that because I think it's important to hear those comments and to acknowledge that that was something that was discussed. I think the rest of my questions deal with more like what actually occurs on that day.

[02:08:37] a topic for a different night and I think the last thing that I wanted to emphasize is often when we get to this point of the year and we're talking about calendars I hear often from the public that we've already made the decision or things are already set in stone and that has not been the case since I've been up here on the board so I can attest to that but I just wanted to remind the public that you do have ample opportunity to still reach out and provide commentary or feedback especially based on what you may have heard this evening there's email there's let's talk there's phone there's all sorts of manners of being able to communicate anything you may think of

[02:09:16] now or feedback I just wanted to make sure that is stated and it and the opportunity is there for the public to continue to comment if they wish so thank you very much for the presentation I appreciate it Mr. Wilk okay it's my annual calendar rant okay I'm prepared yes nothing against you I think actually Dr. Sullivan, you gave a very detailed overview, probably better than one we've had in a long time.

[02:09:43] So I appreciate that. So thank you for that. And I'm not, I learned my lesson last year with the awkward silences that were elicited from questions and stuff like that. So I'm not gonna ask questions. So don't worry about that. I just really kinda wanna provide some thoughts. And of course, if anyone wants to come back and do a Q and A on my thoughts and why there are, why things are not discussed the way I think they should be in consideration.

[02:10:07] because I think the game changer, I think, is when the state said 180 or 990 hours. - Correct. - Because that wasn't always the case. - Correct. - And so whether we go back and review our regulation one day about the 180 required days, that's a whole 'nother thing.

[02:10:23] I'm not gonna ask how many hours we actually have because I know we actually have a bank way more than 990 hours for banking things for like inclement weather. I think the last total was like 14 or 15 possible inclement weather days, again. - So the 990 translates to about a five and a half hour student day absent lunch.

[02:10:44] So that would take us to a six hour student day. We have a six hour and 40 minute student day. - Okay, perfect. Okay, so there are additional hours, right? Again, for a bank, right? So if we go under 180, we have the hours, right? And so I understand that logic and I get that.

[02:11:01] But I also see a balance because ideas of consideration, because we hear a lot of the common themes, not just from members of PWA, but from the general teaching population of the number of hour PD, the number of required meetings, the grading, the lesson planning, things like that.

[02:11:18] And in my opinion, I think we could be more creative and look at solutions to address these areas by simply doing things that maybe are a little bit more unconventional. I wanna put this disclaimer out there because I know this has been thrown at me before, is yes, learning loss is real.

[02:11:35] And I understand the importance of instructional minutes and making sure we close gaps. I also believe it's at what cost? Because with our strategic plan, we're talking about climate and culture. And we've heard repeatedly over and over again that people are tired, that they're burnt out, that they're losing planning, that they have to have meetings and stuff like that.

[02:11:55] So items of consideration, again, that I don't need answers at this point, I'm just spouting off. And this is just the opinion of one board member, not reflective of the entire board. But we look at half days. And I look at half days as a possibility because maybe it's a half day of instruction, but the other half day could be the opportunity for teachers to do maybe grading.

[02:12:16] Teachers can do what they have to do in their room. Maybe they have that team meeting that otherwise would take a planning period out of their week. So that's something I've thought of, and I'm sure others have thought of it too. And I know there's probably pros and cons for everything. I get that, right?

[02:12:32] And then the other one is, you know, something to consider is, you know, back when I, many years ago, going to high school, in my division, which was a fraction of the size of this one, but we on Tuesdays had early dismissals, one hour earlier, and that one hour alone gave the teachers and the administration the ability to have that faculty meeting and get that out of the way, potentially, and not take a planning period or hold teachers after school.

[02:13:00] So I look at these solutions and I look at these, and again, some might be more feasible than others, and there are pros and cons with everything. I acknowledge that. But I look at this also as the opportunity to talk and address. We hear often teachers are going home and having to take the PD home with them.

[02:13:17] We often hear about the amount of planning, the unencumbered stuff that they have said that kind of goes into it, overlaps with it with meetings and things like that. I just think we can be creative with calendars, potentially in the future, so that we can address these things upfront and try to help with the climate and culture moving forward.

[02:13:38] And again, I'm not expecting answers and things like that. I just wanted to say my piece. - I appreciate it, thank you. - So seeing there's no further comments, board members, you have two weeks.

[02:13:53] We'll be back to vote on the final draft. And if you have any questions or concerns, please forward them to Dr. McDade's office and Dr. Sullivan. Thank you so much. - Thank you. - Thank you. - Moving on, we have our student representative time, Jacqueline Garcia, senior at Osborne Park High School on the dais with us.

[02:14:10] Jacqueline will be reading her speech in English and in Spanish. Thank you, Ms. Jacqueline Garcia. Let's go. - Thank you, Mr. Lateef. I will begin my remarks in Spanish and translating them into English, so.

[02:14:45] students esta noche. Ver nuestras escuelas secundarias dentro de Prince William County elevarse con la excelencia es una mejora increíble y espero que ver que más escuelas regresen a la cuenta con más logros. Además, el movimiento para la cuenta escolar, la cuenta escolar, reconozca la semana de la educación en ciencias de la computación, impulsaría aún más nuestros datos, ya que Prince William County produce la mayoría de ingenieros en cuantos a carreras.

[02:15:20] Centrarse en diferentes disciplinas de ingeniería permitirá la innovación y la creatividad. Centrado en los estudiantes de la división de escuelas secundarias me gustaría recordarles que si tienen algún inquietud, pregunta o comentario para la cuenta escolar o sobre sus escuelas tienen estudiantes senadores en cada escolar secundaria, con quienes discutirlos con. Trabajamos juntos casi todos los meses para discutir la información que hemos recopilado de nuestras escuelas y o comunidad. Mientras

[02:15:59] trabajamos juntos, convenimos en ideas y soluciones para los estudiantes, pero como hay más de 90,000 estudiantes, significa que hay más de 90,000 opiniones para mejorar nuestro condado. Una simple pregunta puede dar una gran ayuda para resolver problemas. Es posible que miles de otros estudiantes tengan la misma pregunta.

[02:16:24] También me gustaría llamar a la atención del consejo escolar. La accesibilidad de estas reuniones a otros idiomas es límita. Las agendas traducidas tienen poca o ninguna información en comparación con las en inglés. Los videos en YouTube no tienen no tienen una transcripción o cualquier important information is not translated correctly.

[02:16:48] If we analyze only one demographic group, the 36% of students are Hispanic. The 26% of these students are learning the English idioma. And I gather these data from the demographic of students and personnel on the website of Prince William's condos.

[02:17:10] These numbers don't even count for their families, ni para las otras minorías tácitas que caen dentro del grupo demográfico de no tener mejor acceso a estas reuniones. Eso significa que estamos limitando la cantidad de personas que tienen acceso adecuado a esas reuniones.

[02:17:31] Somos un condado inclusivo, entonces, ¿por qué no impulsar que esas reuniones se traduzcan adecuadamente for others to read and learn what is happening within the condado.

[02:17:48] I would like to highlight the attention focus on the east side of the condado. As we are a large condado, we can see the difference in the level of education, infrastructure and academic push to compare both sides of this condado.

[02:18:05] Al leer los porcentajes de graduación en cada escuela, se puede anotar cuáles son ubicadas en el lado este y en el lado oeste. Escuela secundaria Garfield, 85%. Escuela secundaria Freedom, 75%.

[02:18:23] Escuela secundaria Woodbridge, 89%. Todas las escuelas en el este, en comparación con la escuela secundaria Osborne Park, 89%. Escuela Esconderio Battlefield 97, y Escuela Esconderio Cogan 97, que las escuelas están en el oeste.

[02:18:46] La pregunta es, estos datos muestran un nivel desproporcionado en equidad. Yo puedo hablar por esto porque yo he experimentado escuelas en ambos lados. Asistí a la escuela primaria Moransko

Hills, y a la escuela intermedia Roadbridge, and now in the secondary school Osborne Park with the Governor's School.

[02:19:10] My personal experience begins in the primary school school. Since the infrastructure is very old, I understand that the creation of the schools has moved in the most part of the east to the west as the school division has grown.

[02:19:30] Of my most young memories, I can remember that the baths were outside of the service. Those remorqués alineados in the back of the school and the lights at a menudo didn't work.

[02:19:47] My years in the middle school consisted of the same problems in the infrastructure, but compared to the opportunities when I presented the secondary schools in my eighth grade. Only two secondary schools: Secondary Freedom and Secondary Garfield.

[02:20:07] Realmente creía que Prince William County no tenía más escuelas secundarias fuera de este alcance hasta que me hablaron de los programas especialidad. No por un consejero, ni por maestros, sino por un estudiante. La cantidad de perspectivas de los estudiantes que recibo cada día aumenta a medida que conozco las oportunidades que tuvieron los estudiantes cuando asisten a escuelas en el lado oeste.

[02:20:34] Al comparar mi experiencia con los estudiantes que asistieron a la primaria Bennett, a menudo recuerdan el aspecto más nuevo del edificio y la diversidad de los clubes que se ofrecían. En comparación con los estudiantes de las escuelas intermedias ocidentales, el estudiante no quería revelar qué escuela intermedia atendieron.

[02:20:58] Además, tenían equipos de rodóticas más fuertes, Lo que ha atraído mucha atención últimamente debido a la mejor financiación de las escuelas. Programas especializados que permiten los estudiantes tener créditos de escuelas secundarias más temprano.

[02:21:16] Y presentándose casi todos los programas de especialidad. Esta preocupación por la equidad en toda división es una prioridad estratégica. And, therefore, we should be able to make sure that we are working to provide a future prosperous future to all students, independent of where they live, in the county, or in which schools they live.

[02:21:46] This has to be a collaborative effort. This is the account of the superintendent's office and the schools, and especially the propios estudiantes para ayudar a mejorar ese problema. Gracias por escuchar y representar sus escuelas, familias y su comunidad. Que tengas buenas noches. Alright, that was in English, now I'm going to go in Spanish, now I'm going to go in English. Good evening Dr. May Dade, good evening to the school board, your members, and Prince William community. I am Jacqueline Garcia, your alternate student representative. I am proud to serve this role for my community

[02:22:22] and hear your voices as students. To start off my remarks, I would love to congratulate the the accomplishments of said students this evening. Watching our high school students within Prince William County soar with excellence is an amazing improvement to watch, and I hope to see more schools returning to the board with more accomplishments.

[02:22:38] Furthermore, the movement for the Computer Science Education Week to be recognized by the school boards would further push our data as Prince William County produces the most engineers career-wise. Focusing on different disciplines of engineering would enable innovation and creativity. Focusing on students on the high school division, I would like to remind you that if you have any concerns,

questions or comments for the school board or about your respective schools you do have student senators at every single high school to discuss these with we work together every month on discussing information we have gathered from our schools and slash or community as we work together we convene on ideas

[02:23:14] and solutions for students but as there is as there are 90,000 plus students it means there are 90,000 plus opinions to improve our county a simple question can go a long way to solving problems possibly thousands of other students may have your same question. I would also like to call to attention to the school board the accessibility of these meetings to other languages is very limited and something and it's something we can work on together to improve.

[02:23:37] Examples of some improvements are ensuring translated agendas have information comparable to the English agenda and adding translated transcripts to YouTube videos. Looking at just one demographic 36% of our students are Hispanic and 26% are English language learners according to the student and staff demographics on the Prince William County's own website. These numbers do not count for their relatives nor the unspoken minorities that fall under the demographic of not having better access to these meetings. This means we're limiting the number of people who have access proper to these meetings. We are an inclusive county so we need to work together to make these meetings accessible for all. I would like to highlight the spotlight onto the east

[02:24:16] side of the county now. As we are a large county, one can see the difference of level education, infrastructure, and push for academics when comparing both sides of these counties. As I read our graduation percentages of each school, it it can be noted which are on the east side and on the west. Garfield High School, 85%.

[02:24:33] Freedom High School, 75%. Woodbridge High School, 89%. All eastern schools. Compared to Osborne Hark High School, 89%. Battlefield High School, 97%. Kogan High School, 97%.

[02:24:48] Which are western schools. The question is, does this data show a disproportionate level of equity? I can speak about this as I have experienced schools on both sides. I attended Moromska Hills Elementary School, Woodbridge Middle School, and now Osborne Park High School along the side of the Governor's School.

[02:25:04] My personal experience begins at the elementary school level as the infrastructure is very old with an understanding that the creation of schools has for the most part moved from the east to the west side as the school division has grown. For my younger memories, I can remember the bathrooms being out of order, trailers lined up at the back of the school, and lights would often flicker or not work.

[02:25:23] My middle school years consisted of the same issues of infrastructure, but comparing the opportunities that were presented high schools in my eighth grade year, Only two high schools were presented to me, Freedom High School and Garfield High School. I truly believe that Prince William County did not have any more high schools outside of the scope until being told of specialty programs, not by a counselor, not by teachers, but by a student.

[02:25:47] The amount of students' perspectives I get each day grows more as I get to learn the opportunities students got when attending schools on the west side. Comparing my experience to students who attended Bennett Elementary, they often remember the newer look of the school and the diversity of clubs provided. Comparing to students of Western Middle Schools, as the student who attended this middle school did not want to disclose which middle school, they had stronger robotics teams, which had

garnered a lot of attention lately due to the better funding of the schools, specialty programs that allowed students to have earlier high school credits, and being presented almost all specialty programs.

[02:26:18] This concern of equity across the division is a strategic priority, so we should be able to ensure that we are working to provide thriving futures for all our students, regardless of where they live in the county or what school they attend. This has to be a collaborative effort from the board, the superintendent's office and schools, and especially the students themselves to help improve this problem.

[02:26:38] Thank you for listening, representing your schools, families, and community. Have a good night. - Outstanding, Jacqueline. Gracias por brindarnos sus comentarios en español. Es fundamental que llegamos a todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad.

[02:26:59] Gracias, okay. Thank you very much. We really appreciate your remarks this evening. Moving on to superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank our school board members for their commitment, dedication, and mission to see every student graduate on time.

[02:27:21] - No masks. - All right. As many of you know, last Tuesday, our community members participated in an important election to choose people to serve in many critical roles across our state, including the Prince William County School Board.

[02:27:47] I want to acknowledge Lily Jessie, Diane Ralston, and Adele Jackson for their work and service to our students. We thank you and wish you the best, a best for you as you move on to other interests and opportunities.

[02:28:02] We look forward to celebrating with each of you on December 5th. I would like to congratulate and welcome our new and returning school board members who will begin their term on January 1, 2024. Dr. Barbara Lateef, Chairman at Large.

[02:28:17] Erica Trendenic, Brentsville District. Lisa Zargarpur, Coles District. Jennifer Wall, Gainesville District. Tracy Blake, Neabsco District. Richard Jesse, Occoquan District. Justin Wook, Potomac District, and Lori Williams, Woodbridge District.

[02:28:34] I look forward to working with each of you as we fulfill our commitments to learning and achievement for all, creating a positive climate and culture, and engaging our families and community, and convergence and organizational coherence. PWCS wants to provide every student with every opportunity to pursue whichever path their future may lead.

[02:28:54] These paths may be military, career, academic, or entrepreneurial, and we want to help all students take the right steps after graduation. November is National Scholarship Month and our college and career counselors are prepared and eager to meet with our students to plan the launch of their thriving futures.

[02:29:12] All PWCS high schools have a college and career counselor to support students in their post-secondary aspirations. Please encourage your senior or junior to set up a meeting with their college and career counselor and visit our PWCS scholarship resources and databases webpage for more information.

[02:29:30] While you're on our website, If you're interested in or know of someone who might be looking for part-time employment, PWCS will be hosting a virtual information session tomorrow, November 15th.

We're looking for substitute teachers, teacher assistants, bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, and other temporary employment opportunities.

[02:29:51] Those interested can register for this event online or call us at 703-791-8050 or submit a request on our website. These positions are in high demand and we hope that you will consider joining the PWCS community.

[02:30:06] Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. We are moving on now to 1601 VSBA Academy Awards. Tonight's meeting is taking place on a Tuesday in order for board members to attend the Virginia School Board Association's Annual Conference, which is attended by school boards across the state.

[02:30:23] This time each year, we award board members, so that meeting starts tomorrow. This time each year, we award board members who have taken courses offered by the VSBA to extend their knowledge and stay current with best practices. Tonight on behalf of the Virginia School Board Association, I am pleased to announce awards earned by our board members and superintendent to the VSBA Academy for their commitment to effective school board governance.

[02:30:46] The Virginia School Board Association is recognizing the following who've received the award of distinction. Miss Adele Jackson of the Brentsville District, Miss Lily Jessie of the Occoquan District, Miss Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District.

[02:31:02] All right, congratulations. Next, we have one board member who has received the Award of Excellence, and that is Ms. Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District. Very nice, the next award is the Award of Honor, goes to Ms. Jen Wall of the Gainesville District and Superintendent Dr. McDade.

[02:31:19] And last, we have the Award of Recognition. Going to-- - Participation. - Participation trophy to Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac Distress and remarkably myself. I'm not sure why at any point they would award me anything there.

[02:31:37] And our school board clerk, oh, and award of recognition for B. Simpson and Deputy Clerk Anna Utada-Tay, woo! Outstanding, fantastic, congratulations to all. Very good, enjoy the conference.

[02:31:52] 16.02 annual report of the ombudsman, on for information, moving on, here we go. We have our ombudsman here with us this evening to present the report, Ms. Bookstein. right there right on time please carry on thank you good evening i would like to thank chairman latef vice chair wall school board members dr mcdade and the pwcs community for providing me the opportunity to serve as your ombudsman and to speak on my annual report this report represents

[02:32:24] concerns raised to my office for the 2022-2023 school year established by the school board in In 2019, the Office of the Ombudsman provides parents, students, employees, and members of the school community with a safe place to discuss an issue or concern, explore options to help resolve conflicts, and bring systemic concerns to the attention of PWCS.

[02:32:55] While there are different types of ombudsman, I am considered an organizational ombudsman and adhere to the standards of practice and the code of ethics established by the International Ombuds Association or IOA. The code of ethics established by the IOA provides practice principles and core values. The core values such as acting with honesty, promoting fairness, remaining non-judgmental, encouraging diversity, communicating accurately, empowering the individual, and endeavoring to be a

[02:33:31] trusted resource are essential to the work of the ombudsman. There are four fundamental principles of an ombudsman's office: confidentiality is the defining characteristic of any ombudsman's practice. The identity of those seeking assistance from the ombudsman and all communication with them is kept confidential. Impartiality denotes the ombudsman is a designated neutral who does not take sides or serve as an advocate for any person or entity.

[02:34:04] Independence ensures the ombudsman is considered independent in structure, function, appearance, and decision-making. Informality ensures the Ombudsman does not participate in any formal investigations or play any role in a formal process. As the Ombudsman, my role is twofold. First, I work with a visitor to address their concerns. I do this by serving as a neutral sounding board and helping them to identify what could be causing the conflict while exploring all

[02:34:40] all options that could be used to address it. Second, I will work with PWCS to provide feedback focusing on improving PWCS's overall health. By serving as an early warning system, I can shine a light on areas which may be unknown to PWCS. Visitors are often unsure what to expect when they contact the office. As the slide highlights, there will be the initial conversation between myself and the visitor. Then I will clarify my role where I explain what I can and cannot do.

[02:35:16] For example, I will advise that I cannot mandate change, maintain records, conduct investigations, or serve as notice to PWCS. Then I will work with the visitor to understand the situation, analyze it, explore options available to them, and discuss next steps. Now I will go through the data compiled for those who contacted the office for the 2022-2023 school year the total number of

[02:35:47] visitors for the office was 298 which was a 54 increase from the prior school year the ioa notes the nature of sole practitioner offices such as this one is not to see everyone but to assist those who do come and to serve as an early warning channel regarding issues which may need further examination of the 298 visitors 233 were employees 55 were parent guardians and 10 were community

[02:36:23] members of the 233 employees 153 were in certified positions 53 were in administrator positions and 27 were in classified positions visitor contacts for the 2022-2023 school year were in the highest in September and January. There was a steady growth of visitors for the year with the third quarter seeing the highest rate of contact. Of the 233 employees who contacted the office,

[02:37:01] 80 visitors worked in the in elementary school level, 64 visitors worked at the middle school level, 48 visitors worked at the high school level, and 41 visitors worked at the central office level. I would like to note that while employees contacting the office are identified at the level they worked, this does not necessarily indicate the concern that was raised was with that level. Of the 65 parents, guardians, and community members who contacted the office, 29 visitors raised concerns with

[02:37:38] the middle school level, 16 visitors raised concerns with the elementary school level, 15 visitors raised concerns with the high school level, and 5 visitors raise concerns with the central office level or with PWCS policies or regulations. The IOA identifies nine categories which an ombudsman uses to classify the type of concerns raised. For all visitors the highest category identified was the evaluative relationship category which refers to

[02:38:11] questions, concerns, or issues with the supervisor and employee relationship. The next highest category was the services administrative issues which refers to to questions concerns or issues about services provided the third highest category was organizational strategic and mission related which refers

to questions concerns or issues that relate to the whole or part of the organization for each visitor type i will now identify what category is of the

[02:38:48] highest concern for the visitor group and then the top two subcategories the highest category for employee visitors fell within the evaluative relationships category which is again considered the supervisor and employee relationship the most often expressed subcategories were communication which is the quantity and or quality of communication and supervisory effectiveness which is the management of the department or classroom and or failure to address issues the

[02:39:24] highest category for parent guardian visitors fell within the services administrative issues category, which is regarding the services provided by the organization. The most often expressed subcategories were administrative decisions and interpretation or application of rules, which denotes decisions made on matters and the behavior of the service provider, which is how the parent was dealt with by the school division. Similarly, the highest category for community visitors fell within the services administrative issues category,

[02:40:02] is again regarding the services provided by the organization. The most often expressed subcategories were also administrative decisions and interpretation, application of rules, and behavior of the service provider. In addition to working with visitors, there are several other accomplishments that I would like to highlight for this last year. First, I met with all principals to learn about their school, staff, and the community that they serve, as well as to provide them with information about the office.

[02:40:35] To create awareness of the office, I ensured the website was organized in such a way that it made it easy for the visitor to find information, as well as worked with the communication department to develop a video highlighting the ombudsman role within PWCS.

[02:40:51] To provide conflict management skills to staff, I developed and presented the course Think Before You Speak. It's all about perspective at the annual Classified Employee Conference. I also connected with our parent liaisons to explain the role and provide a fact sheet about the office, which could be provided to parents in their native language.

[02:41:14] Finally, I began serving in the leadership role for the IOA's K-12 Ombudsman Group, which has over 40 members who serve the field throughout the U.S. In this position, I provide leadership, guidance, support for their programs. Feedback is important because it can help an office understand its strengths and weaknesses, as well as providing necessary insight for improvement.

[02:41:42] The slide highlights a few examples of visitor feedback received by the office over the last year in which people expressed their appreciation for having a safe place to feel heard. Again, I want to thank the school board, superintendent, staff, and the PWCS community for the opportunity to serve as your ombudsman.

[02:42:05] I would like to highlight our new online booking system for visitors, which can be reached through our website. Now visitors can schedule and manage their appointments directly. For any questions or concerns, I can be reached either by email or phone.

[02:42:21] I look forward to your continued support and I'm happy to take any questions you may have. Ms. Jessie.

[02:42:32] Slide 7, I think it's slide 7, spike during the quarter/third quarter.

[02:43:08] Look at this data. Do you look at it in terms of patterns or why certain spikes occur? Why do you think the spike occurred at the third quarter? That's a great question. And actually, I do look at that.

[02:43:24] I would say that for myself, being here for only a year and a half, it's hard to determine what that data shows me at this point. But I am keeping track of it so that I can understand are there reasons why things are spiking at certain times.

[02:43:39] I would say for the -- that without true knowledge based on that on the third quarter, part of that had to do with the coming back of winter break that might be time where people had an opportunity to think about things wanted to reach out discuss issues that could be but I can't say with certainty yet at this point okay

[02:44:05] and slide 10 if I'm able to get to it slide 10 yeah the high school is there you know we're having all these attendance issues and whatever at the high school level so can did you look at the nature of the complaint and also a

[02:44:44] slide 11 you had middle school or middle school complaints yes so for the for the employees who contacted the office so again I would note that that the concerns that were raised at that level don't necessarily denote that the concern is at that level and to give an example of that I may have had an employee who worked at the high school level but they had a concern about a benefits issue so it doesn't necessarily indicate that the concern is at the high school level that is for employees but I will say for parents and guardians

[02:45:19] the in the community members the concern is at that level so what I noted as for parents and guardians the highest concern for them were concerns at the middle school level is was there a pattern of concerns or did who do you report that information to I provide the continuous feedback back to the organization as well as to the board and slide 13 evaluations that's the personnel matter so when you get the evaluation concerns who do you how does that how does that work I'm just trying to figure out your role and I guess at

[02:45:59] the end I have a question are you a listener are you a fixer because I saw these comments I'm wonderful I love talking with you and my question is do you fix things or do you just listen to things listen to complaints so I guess it depends upon your vantage point of what's fixing it I am a listener that's first and foremost is what I do but I try to empower the individual to resolve the situation on their own and give them the strategies in which to do that as my role as the ombudsman I am an informal entity so I can't mandate change I can't

[02:46:39] change, and I make this quite clear when people come and talk to me, I can't change what's already occurred. But what I can do is help them. So sometimes I may have to point them in the right direction. I may talk to an associate superintendent or a principal about an issue.

[02:46:56] Again, I try to empower the individual to do that. But sometimes I do have to engage with maybe whoever they have conflict with. But again, the fixing part of it is not within my authority as the informal entity.

[02:47:11] I guess I'm wondering how do you weave this whole thing of confidentiality and then talking to someone who can fix the problem if the person doesn't take heed and use the suggestions that you've provided for them?

[02:47:28] Absolutely. So to explain how that works is when I do talk to the individual, I explain the role of confidentiality here and that they are the driver of this. If they would like for me, for example, if a parent contacts me and they don't feel comfortable contacting the principal, I ask them under the veil of confidentiality, do they want me to speak to the individual that they have the concern with?

[02:47:51] And if they give me the authority to do that, then I will do that. But they drive this. I don't do it unless they want me to. Ms. Williams. Ms. Thank you, Ms. Wall. - I just want to sort of piggyback on what Ms. Jessie was saying, because I think there's sort of a lack of understanding.

[02:48:13] I think if people see the org chart and see that you report to the board, but I wanna make it, if you could make it just even more clear that it's not a someone comes into your office, parent A complains about school C and the board gets a report that says, parent A named Susie came in to talk about, I don't know, Eagles Point Elementary, for example, and had XYZ problem.

[02:48:42] We don't get that level of information. We get what we're seeing here, and that is absolutely due to the fact that you must maintain a confidentiality, and even when that you are provided additional authorization, right, as you were just saying, it's still the same details that are being translated to the respective party, correct?

[02:49:04] - Yes, absolutely. And so, just to kind of make sure that it's quite clear on that, because there is a lot of misconception of what the role is, is that I am not that type of individual entity. My role is to help within the process, not hinder it.

[02:49:22] So helping it by, I say, is helping to resolve what the situation is, and pointing people in the right direction. But I'm not going back and sharing this information if an individual comes to me. And it may just be that they just want to talk about it and how best they have no one else to, in a sense, talk to.

[02:49:43] I do hear at times where I have individuals who will say, "Talking to you is different than talking to a peer, talking to my partner, my spouse, my friends. You're a neutral entity who understands this organization." And so having to bounce things back off on you where your interest is not necessarily it is for their well-being I do want to see people succeed but it is also to help them and help the organization I do point out that what I do back for the organization is provide that systemic feedback that I see in the trends that I

[02:50:19] see and how I do that is contacting the individuals who are a part of that whether it's the superintendent staff whether it is a school staff or something like that that's how I engage with it but again confidentiality is a cornerstone of any ombudsman's office and I do take that very seriously thank you I appreciate that that your office is of course near and dear to my heart myself and Gil Turner who kicked that ball rolling and I appreciate the additions and the growth that you have demonstrated within the office to make it easier for everyone to access you and the education processes process that

[02:50:58] you've undertaken within our schools and our community to help people continue to further understand your role and your availability. I think that's really critical. We can stay up here as much as we want and put in emails and telephone calls, but I think there's a lot of value to you personally, making yourself available, especially with the classified teachers and the parent liaisons.

[02:51:23] I think you can translate what it is you do and the role that you play in a much more effective manner than we can by putting out an announcement. I also appreciate your leadership in the IOA. I think that sets us apart as a school division and appreciate your continued service.

[02:51:40] I just wanna make sure that people really understand that there is such a high level of confidentiality and that you really are sort of like, I like to sort of like a connector of resources and a listening ear for anyone who seeks your services that is neutral.

[02:51:56] So I just appreciate that and thank you for the updates. - Thank you and if I can also just share I'm piggybacking on that. I do often say to people, I am a bridge. That's what my role is, is to help bridge people. So thank you, thank you for the feedback.

[02:52:12] - Jackson. - Thank you for speaking a little more on the confidentiality piece, and just clarifying it again. And then the connection, the information that you report to us is very different than the conversations you have one-on-one with people, especially when it pertains to confidentiality.

[02:52:31] So I appreciate that. Is there anything else you wanna add on that to clarify? Because I know that was really important to a lot of my constituencies, that confidentiality piece. Absolutely. And I guess if I can share, because it's tough to show on a slide, actually, what I do when I sit down with a visitor.

[02:52:47] But just to explain, as I do walk through all of the four principles that I mentioned, and we stop and we talk about confidentiality, and I do tell them, as I said, they are the drivers of this. I am pointing things out to them as they go along.

[02:53:02] If in part when I'm listening to them, I'm hearing things that I sound like it could be a systemic issue, those are things that I am keeping on the side that I think, you know, is it something better for the organization? Do we need more conflict resolution training?

[02:53:19] Do we need more communication skills? Things like that. That's in part what I'm taking out. But if it's an individual's issue and an individual's concern, if it may mean nothing more than what happens in my office, the further that it goes.

[02:53:34] And again, the individual is quite clear on what my role is, and especially in regard to confidentiality. Okay. So I just have one follow-up question and one point. And my knowledge on this might be a little bit antiquated because it's been a few years since I've seen the graph.

[02:53:51] But there is a graph out there and some data that shows that there's a drop in teacher morale in January, which corresponds with some of the data that you're seeing here. So that might be helpful. Oh, thank you. information. And then when people are coming and going, does that count as an individual visitor or do you count them as one? So if I was a parent and then I left and then I followed up in a few steps and I came back to you, is that two visits or one visitor?

[02:54:17] That would be one visitor. But I would say that if you came to me in September and then you came back to me in January, you'd be considered two visitors. all right thank you all right I just want to say thank you for the work that you do and I acknowledge that you provide a very valuable service to our community and looking at the graph it looks like a large portion of our individuals who come in are from our our school division so you're providing a

[02:54:53] large or a great service to even to our employees so I wanted to say thank you on slide four you know those four principles that you highlighted confidentiality and partiality independence and informality that's those are that's really important and I appreciate that you highlighted the principles that undergird the office going to slide 16 I just wanted to highlight the additional things that you are doing to

promote the office and what it can offer I think that was good outreach and you know even as simple as updating the website and a video highlighting it your office providing training connecting with

[02:55:32] the parent liaisons I think that's really big that's very huge because a large part I mean it's one of our strategic commitments is to engage the community um you know that community engagement those parent liaisons are very a very important connector they're also a bridge so I love that you identify as a bridge and then you're helping our other bridges with our community um and thank you for you know serving as a leader to the larger ombuds community that brings distinction to our our school division and it also helps promote best practices within your field.

[02:56:04] So I wanted to highlight that as well. So I don't have any questions. I just want to say thank you for your service. - Thank you, appreciate it. - Okay, thank you. I echo all of Vice Chair Wall's comments. Thank you very much for the-- - Thank you. - Thank you. Okay, we're moving on to revisions of policy 854, naming of school facilities.

[02:56:23] Policy's on for first reading tonight. I'll turn it over to Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The proposed revisions to policy 854 are designed to put processes into policy and out of regulation.

[02:56:41] The changes clarify that naming of schools and naming of school components are the prerogative of the school board and thus should be set forth in policy, not regulation. If you look at the existing policy, it's very, very lean. And we actually do have processes that we have, are following, but they're in regulation.

[02:56:59] So the revisions will also establish a defined process for measuring community support for the naming of school components. As I said, the naming processes are more appropriate for policy which the board owns and is responsible for.

[02:57:15] And so these changes reflect good governance where the board is the owner of these things. It provides for transparency. It provides a better framework for the process so the public understands it. And most of these things that are in this policy, these processes are things we already do, but they're in regulation, we're moving them to policy.

[02:57:38] I also wish to point out that over the course of several years and even just a year ago, many board members had recognized that there was a need to improve this policy and to update it. And so the ideas in this proposed policy have come from multiple board members over time, that it reflects the work of the collective board from discussions and previous efforts.

[02:58:05] So this is a springboard. This is for information tonight. So obviously it's not set in stone, but it is an opportunity to address some of the challenges that have existed with our naming policy and to improve the process.

[02:58:22] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. And I agree, we've been working on this and have had this on the back burner for quite some time. And so in tying up things, And it's this time of the year, in the beginning of the year, we would make changes a lot of times to the policies and regulations. And so I think this is in line with some of the reforms we wanted to make regarding this issue.

[02:58:41] And so, again, this is on for first reading. Feel free, anyone to send any concerns to us and to Division Council. They've looked at this as well. And we'll take a look at any amendments or concerns over the next couple of weeks. If anyone has any comments tonight.

[02:58:59] Ms. Jessie. I have some serious questions about this policy. First of all, there have been several of us who had some situation, me in particular and Mr. Wilkes, and I don't want to offend anyone, but I was not asked and I had no input into this policy.

[02:59:22] I want to share something with you. These schools were named with my direct input or input behind the scenes, and I want to share something with this data. Fannie Fitzgerald Elementary, followed by Charles Cogan, George Hampton, Anita Flemons, Renee Lacey, Dr. Robert Icorn, Betty Covington and John Harper, Unity Braxton, Celeste and Carol. Most of you don't know that Celeste was one of them went to my church and Mr. Carol is a member of the Moffa Point Marines and

[03:00:01] we're very close. He's 90 something years old and I was kind of pulled into to the Hilda Barge situation, what it actually offends me in this report is that of all of these people on this list, there are nine people on this list, Dr. Renee Lacy was the only person that was deceased.

[03:00:25] Only one of these people were deceased. And it's offensive to me and to these people that you have an item in there where you say that the person 10A to deceased three years prior to consideration I don't know why that is in there I'm offended by it and I don't know what the thinking was I don't know why deceased and why they have to be dead for three years that's one thing the other concern I have is that you have you've changed the number of people to put it on the agenda you've changed it from four to an

[03:01:03] additional vote which means five people have to get to in order for this to get on the agenda there has to be five people which is a majority so in other words what we're saying is that if we want to name a school put a name on a school or a name on a building or in a gym that we have to have five votes beforehand then later you say there's going to be a vote I don't know why there's a vote because you already have your in order to get it on the agenda is five and normally we have three uh i don't know what for the ad hoc committee facilitated by

[03:01:40] facility what does that mean and i want to know why the significant contribution to education in prince william county was removed and in 10b 4a does the principal have the authority to override the community or the student said the principal has to approve well there is no in the previous situation I had to have a committee because these things were being they we had no guidelines I want to thank you for putting together the guidelines and I don't I don't I this has been very difficult for me all day long I've been

[03:02:18] dreading coming to this board because I didn't want to disagree with you but you guys did something without even talking to me or I don't know if you talked to Justin or not but we are the two people who had the problem that I've named the most schools and so I wanted to know the 10% in small schools well the 10% of the population is there a committee does that committee have any input 10% in the small school could be as many as 30 kids 10% in a large school could be as

[03:02:52] many as 300 kids and what does it mean that the board may suspend any requirement of this policy and who makes a decision about the type sign in location in the last situation there was controversy about the principal who was going to place it there was a committee i felt that committee met and no one met with it so there are all kinds of problems with this as i see it i cannot vote for this at all and i don't think

[03:03:27] i'm not sure that we should even be involved in this situation i think we need more time and i'm not sure if this is something that this board should do or maybe we should put it in a situation where it is uh for other people the new board coming in it's a major decision and i don't think you've gotten the input

you've gotten input from the three or four of you but you haven't asked anyone else oh thanks miss jesse i mean some of much of the stuff that's in here is related to the work that we did when we circulated things about what folks would like to be changed or if

[03:04:06] we were to put together policy but we're very happy to discuss over the next couple weeks any changes in here that might make this more amenable to everybody I think the the answer for the deceased three years was more like you know that's sort of a common practice in many places and it helps sort out if there's any issues with somebody after that you might hear about something afterwards that may take away from maybe their legacy and so part of the reason we did that that's in practice but certainly not wedded to any part of this part of this is they just help organize how we go forward.

[03:04:44] And the last line that you mentioned was very important because the board at any time can suspend the rules that they use for anything they do. So if, for example, extenuating circumstances arise and the board wants to make a different change, they could suspend the rules for this by a majority vote and then decide to name the school whatever they wish.

[03:05:04] And that's just like with anything we have, this board can suspend its rules by majority vote on any issue we have, just as part of Robert's Rules. - I just wanna reiterate, I wanna reiterate to you guys that I'm offended that none of you felt the need to even include me or to ask me what my concerns are.

[03:05:28] And you know that I am the person. And I wanted, my husband said this earlier, I wanna share something with you. Fannie Fitzgerald, no one knew her history, no one. I called her, 40, she said it's been 40 years, she screamed for 25 or 10 minutes before she could even answer.

[03:05:44] And she did have Alzheimer's, and that's the one thing she kept. She would wander around that building. The same thing with Charles Kogan. I remember that Allison Saddlewhite and I walked that building. He was alive. He loved it. And George Hampton. George Hampton came back to that school and shared with those students, and they loved him.

[03:06:05] And I think to say that a person has to be, I don't care how long he has to be dead, But the fact that you only have dead people, that you're only gonna name this building after dead people and five people have to even get the name on the board docket to me is offensive and I think it just speaks to the fact that I feel that you and your committee don't want to have people's names on building.

[03:06:33] That's my sense of it. Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, so we circulated information about this last summer or summer before or to look for what areas we have in common. There were a number of board members who just don't believe there should be a person's name on a building.

[03:06:51] I mean, I'm one of those. I'm not in favor of that being the sort of default choice. I prefer myself, geographic areas, and that's kind of how I've been. But I recognize the board, you know, will take a look at this over the next couple of weeks and see what we can come to agreement on.

[03:07:10] I'm happy to look at all of this. Ms. Wall. - Was I first? - Yeah, I know we're gonna discuss this more. I just want to reiterate a couple of points on this. And I mean, I think Ms. Jessie kind of eloquently said some things and, you know, I also do not agree about the death requirement, I guess we'll call it, you know, I can speak from personal experience, you know, from the schools that were named during this, my term or tenure on the board.

[03:07:40] And, you know, being at Dr. Hampton's funeral, that was a hallmark of his life, that moment, you know, when that school was named after him and he got to enjoy it. He got to live with that, you know, Mr. Harper.

[03:07:55] I remember principal Whitten, the former Covington Harper principal would say that, you know, it wasn't uncommon to see Mr. Harper sitting in the front lounge talking with the kids as they came into the school. So I think there is something to be said about, you know, recognizing what I would say are living legends in the community and giving them the opportunity to enjoy whatever period would be left of their life and at school.

[03:08:21] You know, I also have concerns about the five board member requirement. I think it almost eliminates and stifles debate before the public eye because it almost says, okay, well, you need that majority to get it on the board. So it almost, again, keeps, you know, someone from having to vote against a name in public and say, and make that hard decision and say, like I said, and I said, no, I did not vote for John Harper.

[03:08:47] I had to make that decision and I wanted Ms. Covington, you know, and you have to take, you know, some hits with that and it ultimately worked where it was hyphenated, but having it be five before it even comes before the board for debate, I have trouble with that. I also kind of a little concerned about the fact that you need the principal to sign off on it.

[03:09:06] I think that could be potentially a major barrier an obstacle depending on the relationship with that principal and their board member, the principal with their community, et cetera. I don't necessarily think it should be a requirement.

[03:09:23] It could definitely be a component of it, but I don't necessarily believe you have to get a principal sign off for something like that. But those are just my opinions and I know we have two weeks to submit our feedback, but I just wanted to re-echo some of the concerns Ms. Jessie brought up.

[03:09:43] - So I appreciate what members have said. want to clarify a few things is I think it's a complicated policy because we had the rename the naming and the renaming and we've combined them and I think it's important to be specific when we're talking what we're talking about so the five member five people in support of putting a renaming on the motion on on motion so it's for the naming of a school you don't need five people according to how this is written the naming works when you have a brand new school the naming works like how we have been doing it if you want to rename a

[03:10:17] school now we're talking significant community upset we're talking significant cost we're talking you know there are a lot of implications so if you want to rename a school I feel like it is appropriate that you have the you have the requisite support to get it on the agenda to discuss it now an individual may very well say great let's put it on there and discuss it but I'm gonna vote against it and that does happen you know where somebody says sure I think it's appropriate that we talk about it but you know I'm not going to support it that could happen so it doesn't guarantee that you have to all vote the way that

[03:10:54] you know you said to get it on the agenda but again let me let me point out that you have to read the labels you have to read the draft carefully because if you're going to name a school you don't need five members to do that that's just a normal process if you're going to rename a school you got to get some support and also the 10% requirement doesn't require doesn't apply to the naming or renaming of schools

but it would be something for the naming and remaining renaming naming and renaming of school components so that's tracks fields laboratories libraries auditoriums media centers and gymnasiums

[03:11:32] and that's when you would say okay you know if we're going to put a name on this gym or a name on this track do we have sufficient community support for that name otherwise what we have is a system of or the risk that we just are naming things because somebody's curried favor with a board member and I personally don't want to play that game where people are coming to me incurring favor with me not that's not always the case don't get me wrong but it could be abused because people would be you know maybe lobbying for their name to be on a gym or an auditorium in certain cases so if you do have some safeguards in the

[03:12:11] process where you have you know a letter from the principal saying yeah I support that a showing of the community driven support saying you know we the people of this school think this is a good idea because we love you know this security guard at our school who's worked here for 10 years and we think that's great if we leave we you know name the gym after this security guard for instance and then a little bit of detail for you know the accomplishments of this individual I believe this is kind of the process that we involved or that we followed when we named Hilda Barg, and I can't remember what we named her after.

[03:12:46] But anyway, the media center. So this is kind of what we did. Like we have already put in place an ad hoc procedure, and this codifies it in our policy. So I think that's reasonable. And then the last one I want to address is the deceased issue.

[03:13:03] I understand that it's an honor to have a school named after you. However, is the naming of a school for that person, or is it for the legacy of the students and the community going forward? Yes, it's an honor, but when you name a school, you also face a great risk because reputations of living people can change and things that have happened in a person's life that nobody knows about can still come out right at the end of their life or before, or people can change, they can live a wonderful life

[03:13:41] and then something horrible may happen come forward and so I think as a community if we're going to protect the reputation of the school division and avoid unnecessary renaming after the fact then if we have a person who is deceased for three years which is kind of a standard in the industry but in the in the in the practice it's a standard practice if we name schools after individuals whose reputations have been settled and they can no longer really change and there's time for any sifting or settling a reputation then we we look forward with good governance for the

[03:14:19] legacy of the school division and the future of that school in particular so those are some of the reasons you know just to kind of give the other side of why I feel like that is an important requirement I just want to add I want to add to you that the ten names the names that I have given have we ever had a problem with this because by the time these names are put on a building every there have been people in this boardroom, and I think it's offensive to those people who have had their names placed on building, that now you say the only way you can get your name on a building is that you have to be deceased.

[03:14:57] That's just my thought on it, I'm sorry. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, I'm not gonna take up too much time with this 'cause this is our first read. I do, I mean, it's no secret, I'm not a fan of naming anything after any person, but that's irrelevant in the fact that we've done that.

[03:15:14] I think that what's missing in this conversation is our cultural competency when it comes to why we were in this situation in the first place. Three years didn't make a difference to Godwin, it ended up being longer, and it was just a horrible reputation. And I think that when we talk about school naming policies, and I'm just gonna go out on a limb and assume, you know, there is missing that aspect of being sensitive to one's cultures, why we went through these changes, how we got here in the first place, and that's really the driving factor, and I think that that's missing from this policy.

[03:15:45] I plan on submitting my changes that I would like to see. I think we should all do that. It has been an extremely long time since we talked about this and namings are always going to be a sensitive component when it comes to this board and any other board that has to deal with namings.

[03:16:03] I do think that one of the things that I very much would advocate for is the removal of the five members because it is already a guaranteed vote. And no matter whether people are like, oh, well, the perception will be that it's already guaranteed to be that way. So I think we just need to be sensitive about that and the perception that we put out there.

[03:16:22] Three is generally the standard when it comes to adding things on the agenda. I've sat on this board with a plethora of different personalities. And I think if we're doing this to have something that's going to be living long before, long after any of us are here in the seats, I think three would be a more favorable outlook long-term than five because five is what seals the deal.

[03:16:47] And I just wouldn't want any member of the public to be confused in thinking that we've already made up our mind before we even got something on the agenda. The rest of the things I'm happy to submit in writing. Ms. Wall, Dr. Lateef, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Zargarpur, thank you for bringing this back up. I mean, it's something that we absolutely need to do.

[03:17:04] I just think that based upon the conversation we have here tonight, that there's just some more wiggling room that we need to hash out, which is understandable. Again, it's been a long time since we broached this topic, but I appreciate everyone's input and I think we should just continue to discuss this.

[03:17:20] Thank you. - Ms. Jessie. - I need to clarify something. I went to Wayne, I mean to Wade Anderson and said, after what happened with the school at Independence, I said, look, I wanna be on the committee.

[03:17:41] I want to change this policy. this thing came out i was going to talk to him because i am retiring and i wanted to make sure i had some input because i've had more experience than any of you in this whole process and i've lived through some really bad things you know and so has so so has uh other members of this board but i went to him and somehow was miscommunicated that i wanted to be a part of this so when i saw what I thought, why was I not a part of it?

[03:18:11] It's not, it's just that I think when you form a committee, Dr. Lateef, you have to think about everybody. And I think sometimes we look at who has the votes and you leave people out. So in future references, I would like for you to really consider that some of us feel left out and I feel left out, thank you.

[03:18:35] - Just to be clear, there was no committee at all formed. - Yeah, understood, understood there's no committee. The standing rules of this board, and we did circulate discussion and drafts a couple years ago on this issue to get an idea where folks were.

[03:18:52] Some of the members got together and decided to, they should finalize this, complete this work, and they took a look at that work that we did a couple years ago and summarized it in this document. And as any rule that exists on this committee, Any three board members can choose to, or a board member can write something that they would ask for support to then put it on the agenda to vote for.

[03:19:17] So it doesn't require a committee. And so that's just how this formed, but we have two weeks. We're happy to entertain any discussion on this. I mean, we all have participation in this. I'm happy to talk to anybody about this, but this is how this gets started.

[03:19:34] And if there's no committee, it's just the way the rules are set on this board. No, no, no, that's fine. I just, I don't, understood, yeah, no, I understand. I understand, understood. Okay, moving on to 1604 revisions policy 134.

[03:19:50] This is regarding citizen participation. Also on for first reading tonight, Ms. Wall. - All right, thank you, Chairman Lateef. This also came forward through multiple board members recognizing the need for looking at our citizen comment.

[03:20:11] The intent is to promote a more fair process and improve access. We want to hear from more citizens and promote a spirit of taking turns. Since spaces are limited, this would promote fairness by setting guidelines for those who are confirmed to speak but fail to appear without prior written notice to the clerk.

[03:20:33] You know, while petitioning one's elected officials is an American right, we don't want to penalize people for showing up to have their voices heard, of course, but given that time is one hour long for citizen comment, it's not the intent that citizen comment be monopolized by any particular group or individual.

[03:20:51] So fairness is also important, an important American value as is equal access to one's government. And as it's written here, in collaboration, in discussing those who monitor citizen comment and who are responsible for administering it, we have some good suggestions here.

[03:21:12] are many ways that the board can hear citizens other ways include phone conversations back-and-forth emails and in-person meetings through office hours or at community events and those those are those remain in the policy the policy is largely intact and we also can send video recordings which is some people did early on and it was really great anyway there are a lot of ways for reaching out to board members that lead to better conversations and better results because they allow for a back and forth where a citizen comment does not.

[03:21:47] One option that we could consider, you know, this is a starting point, right, because this is on for information, same as with the naming policy, but we could, if we wanted to improve this further and ensure that we always have 20 speaking spots available, we could, and that no spots go unused, we could put language in to the effect that if spots remain, then And folks who had previously signed up could then be given a spot in order of their sign up.

[03:22:17] We could also do that so that spots don't go unused. But I think in the spirit of a more fair process improving access, that's why these changes were proposed. Jesse.

[03:22:34] The last few meetings have been very challenging for me. Sometimes the speakers were professional in their presentations and sometimes their anger and genuine frustration got the best of them. We were elected to listen to both types of speakers.

[03:22:49] I oppose any gesture to limit speakers. My personal feelings that we need to listen more and make it easier. The time for requests, Saturday, immediate after. Most, many people like Mr. Jesse, for example, he will set his alarm because he's so left brain.

[03:23:10] Welcome to the board, guys. This man will put his alarm so he'll get on that board. Most people are not like that. And so they missed the opportunity to actually speak. And so I think that that person, I don't know how you make that more visible so people know, but I think that those people who do know get on there and they take up the 20 slots.

[03:23:31] I would suggest also that, I didn't see it in your recommendation, but I think what you're saying is the same thing I'm thinking, that when you have 20 slots and you only have 17 people, have holding people who have let them know that they can come to the boardroom, I would also like to see a sign up at the door.

[03:23:52] I think maybe two or three slots for people who just don't, they don't get around to doing it, they really want to speak, and just an opportunity for them to sign up, I think that is important.

[03:24:12] The other thing I'd like you to consider that I think that there are people who speak several times and they're repeating it, the same speaker, to penalize them and say you can't speak for two board meetings just makes us look like we don't want to hear the other people.

[03:24:33] And I'm not sure this is what we want to convey. And the number four was no. I said no to that too because if the person has an emergency, they may not be able to call me at 12 o'clock or whatever. And to say that they cannot speak for two meetings I think is punitive.

[03:24:53] and I don't think it's in our best interest. That's just my thoughts. - Ms. Jackson. - All right, thank you. So we are still collecting input on this policy, but for me, whatever we end up with, the goal is to have productive meetings, or to promote it from productive meetings, and to hear all voices.

[03:25:18] This policy has been a living document. This is the third change to reflect the needs of our community, and citizen common time is one way to provide feedback and advocacy and amending citizen comment time to increase avenues and opportunities for diverse feedback is imperative while promoting a fair process.

[03:25:40] So I'm a firm believer that inclusion is not multiple choice. And every time we make a change to this policy, it has reflected community feedback. And I have one question for Division Council. was a some feedback given earlier about why we are not limiting speech like Homer I think they gave the example of homophobic slows and I was just wondering if you could touch on that thank you the citizen comment involves First Amendment rights of citizens that come to here to speak the courts in

[03:26:19] general have frowned upon content based restrictions to citizen speech at board meetings like school board meetings or other kinds of public forum like this and so that was that is one that's a significant reason why the including things that would limit or try to perspective or you know proactively censor speech is how the courts would probably see that in advance of citizens being able to speak would probably would run afoul of a lot of the court cases

[03:26:57] on this and First Amendment concerns in general. - Thank you for explaining that. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, I'll try to keep it brief. I think it's important for the public to understand that whatever changes we make to citizen comment time does not limit your ability to share your opinions and your thoughts with the board.

[03:27:19] And I feel like I should record this, but it's absolutely 100% correct. We have, this board has expanded citizen comment, the ways that members of the public can contact us more than any other board that I've sat here with. I also want to remind the public that it is an absolute privilege to be able to get here as the person who lobbied for, I don't even know how many years to get a bus stop outside, got one, no bus schedule that you can actually come to the meeting and ride the bus home or get here.

[03:27:46] So it's still a privilege to be here in person. And I think it's something that we need to respect. I'll have some changes that I'm gonna add, you know, we'll discuss them as we always do. I just appreciate the opportunity to be able to continue to modify citizen comment time as we hear feedback from the public, which has been my understanding and as to what prompted this change, because I've been hearing from lots of members of the public that citizen comment time has once again been weaponized and it's preventing other members of the community from being able to come here and talk on other topics.

[03:28:22] And that's very important. If you are able to get your name on the list, you should be able to talk about more than just whatever the dominant flavor is of the moment. And if you're not able to get your name on the list and you want to be president because it is being, the list is being monopolized by one group or another, I think that this board has made a conscious effort to continue to evolve citizen comment time so that more people with more topics can come and speak.

[03:28:47] And that will always, I think, be the point of citizen comment time. So I don't want people to walk away thinking this is something that we're doing punitively or that we're trying to restrict voices. I don't think that that's the case. I think that there's definitely more back and forth that needs to go on amongst all of us before we land on what we're going to end up voting on.

[03:29:07] But I appreciate my fellow board members taking the initiative to put this on the agenda. And again, just like the last policy revision, it's up to all of us to provide our comments, discuss and be prepared to take action next meeting. Thank you.

[03:29:25] - Ms. Wong. - I agree with those comments and I wanted to share also, it's a common misconception that this board reduced citizen comment time, but several years ago, the policy was written to allow for one half hour of citizen comment time for 10 speakers, and when we made revisions to the citizen comment time a couple years ago, we doubled the amount of time that was available for citizens to comment.

[03:29:53] We moved it from 30 minutes to one hour, from 10 spots to 20. And so I think it's important to recognize that. That's an example of the adaptation because people had more to say and now people want to say more to us because school boards are awesome.

[03:30:11] So, as we heard tonight. And also, you know, just to give a little bit of insight into this, as of lately, when we open up, we have a process and it's working well as far as signing up goes.

[03:30:27] But when we open it up, when that clock hits eight o'clock, 20 spots are filled by 804, so that's not fair. And I think Americans understand fairness, not even Americans, I think that's a human thing. We get fairness.

[03:30:43] Kindergarteners get fairness. That's not fair, you know, if somebody gets a cookie and they don't, or if somebody gets all the cookies because they just take, take, take, and then there's nothing left for anybody else. So I think, you know, yes, it's a balance with First Amendment rights and speech, addressing your elected officials and you know taking them down that that is a that is a right but we have to balance it with the need for hearing a multitude of voices and I know for a fact there were students who have tried repeatedly to sign up to raise issues that have nothing to do with

[03:31:19] the issues that we've been hearing about in citizen comment time who have not been able to get in because they're not fast enough and and that's that's unfortunate and so they send us an email which is great but you know we have to be guardians of the process that's part of our job guardians of the process and I think it's good governance to recognize when policies need to be changed and this we could change it now and in a year later we could say we think the Board of County supervisors have the right answer and we should have 20-hour meetings you know We could do that if we want to.

[03:31:56] So, you know, I'm just saying, like, if we change it and we think, okay, that's an improvement, great. If we change it and we think that's not an improvement, we can change it again. And future boards can change it again as well. This will be a new board in a couple, you know, in a month.

[03:32:12] You know, maybe they'll have a different idea. We as a board will have a different idea. But, you know, as a majority, I think there is some, I have confidence as a majority, we can come together and figure out something to make this to balance the concerns that are here the First Amendment concerns with the fairness concerns so I'll wrap up with that thank you I just want to say that the PWA and all their issues and what they I think we have to be careful that we don't get so caught up in that group and how they've dominated and maybe it has revealed that the process for getting on the board get an opportunity to speak students

[03:32:52] are not going to wake up at 5 o'clock or 7 o'clock in the morning on Saturday morning. And you have to make it available. I think we need to look at the process a little bit more so we can get more speakers. I do not, I'm not going to be on this board, but I know that Mr. Jesse doesn't want to be here until 3 o'clock in the morning, and nobody wants that.

[03:33:11] But I think that we have to be careful that we appear to be open to people, and they're saying there's a problem. And I think that if you allow maybe something for them to sign up when they come in, a process for more people who are last minute people, or if there is an issue that comes up after the date, I think we need to create that opportunity somehow, and I'll make a recommendation for that.

[03:33:38] Thank you. - Ms. Stark. - So when you mentioned the students, there have been two from my district who have tried to get onto citizen comment time and have not been able to. whole board did see the one email and so for the public just so you know it was a high school student feeling like the no bag policy at the games and events at our high schools is unfair because for girls or for people who may have to carry a medication with them because if they need to carry a bag with

[03:34:14] feminine hygiene products or with an EpiPen or whatever that that's kind of that's not fair so that was the nature of the last email you all got to hear but I want to make sure as students if you do email me I do try to amplify your concern in my in my comments so that I know you've been heard but also that the board can hear and maybe perhaps other people just because I know that the people do come to our citizen comment time because they they are seeking a greater audience that what they have to say they feel is very important so I I

[03:34:48] try to amplify those things for you guys as well okay thank you I just to add on to what Ms. Zargarpur says you know when when when folks email me I you know really try to forward them on to the administration the administration has been terrific about reaching out and going through a process to try to help find solutions and and and so I do appreciate dr. McDade and her team's work on that, regarding, I thought Adele Jackson's statement on this is a living document, you know, when we changed it the first time, we said we'd have 10 speakers for agenda items and 10 for non-agenda items.

[03:35:25] And we found that, you know, there weren't that many people coming to talk about agenda items. And so we made the change and said, look, let's open it up for topics germane to the school board's operations and the school division's operations.

[03:35:40] and that was a good change. You know, again, when there's not controversial stuff happening, I think we had done a study, the average number of folks signing up was 13. This is, you know, was the majority of what shows up at the school board meetings when there's controversial issues like the pandemic and we were here till three in the morning.

[03:36:00] And I think it's important that you want to remember what Jen Wall's statement that, you know, we doubled the citizen comment time. The policy and the regulations was only 30 minutes for 10 speakers and we formalized that to an hour and we created the ability to send in videos and those kinds of things.

[03:36:17] So it is a living document and it's something that we have continued to change. I thought Adele, thank you for reminding us that I think this will be the third or fourth iteration of the work we're trying to do and I think that that's exactly how government should work and how this board has worked that we will continue to try to improve upon where we've been and when we make issues that don't seem to work or like the 10 items for agenda and 10 for non, and we changed that.

[03:36:42] I think that worked out really nicely. So again, this is more of the boring aspects of being on the board is trying to make it so that the work we can do is more efficient to get to the real work of making sure we're doing what's good for kids. So anyways, I thank the board for entertaining this motion and please email division counselor, Ms. Wall, or I regarding all these changes.

[03:37:05] At this point, I think we are, are we done? Are we at Board Matters now, where are we? Yeah, so Board Matters, and it says here tonight we'll begin with Lori Williams, how about that?

[03:37:20] Yeah. - Well, all righty. First, I would just like to say congratulations to all of those who won their election and really appreciate everyone who came out to help anyone who was running and anyone who ran because it takes a lot to do that, no matter what level of office that you choose to put your hat in the ring for.

[03:37:47] I am especially proud of the amount of first-time young voters that I saw this time. I mean, that always gets me excited. First-time voters always get me excited. I absolutely believe that it is our responsibility as citizens to be informed citizens and to participate in our right to vote.

[03:38:06] So thank you to all those who came out. I think it was about 37%, give or take a few, of all the registered voters in our county. so everyone who didn't make it, better luck next year 'cause we get to do this every year. Fun times in Virginia. Also, I would just like to say I hope everyone, since we will not meet 'til after the Thanksgiving holiday break, everyone who celebrates Thanksgiving, I hope you enjoy, if you do not, whatever it is that you do during your time off, I hope you are able to enjoy.

[03:38:36] And to all of those of us who are going to Virginia School Board Association Annual Conference Williamsburg I appreciate the opportunity to have one last conference for the members who are going it is something as it's an opportunity for all of us to continue our education to be better board members and service members better board members and better community servants so expect an update when we get back and outside of that I just want to say I appreciate all the staff who once again was in a building during election year or during election day I will keep trying my hardest and and I want to say for the record we have gotten so much

[03:39:15] better I don't want to keep dragging up the old part but it's always going to be a work in progress when you have a large school division and things outside of our control but I do want to thank Dr. McDade and her administration for continuously improving how we deal with election day making it a priority and for our parents and families who made it in for conferences thank you very much All right, bye, good night.

[03:39:43] - Who would like to go next? Okay, Justin, Mr. Wilk. - And Lily, you can have my time after. Oh, you don't need it tonight. Just real quick, I want to thank, of course, you know, and congratulate all those who won their election a week ago.

[03:40:02] I do want to thank and I'm very grateful for the 20 plus students ranging from schools, Forest Park, OP, Colgan and Potomac, who covered precincts for me all day throughout the Potomac District, 15 precincts. And of course, I do wanna thank the citizens of the Potomac District for my overwhelming victory last Tuesday night.

[03:40:23] I'm very thankful for my service and what I've done. And I really appreciate the support and the affirmation you provided. So that is it, thank you. - Okay, Ms. Jessie. - First of all, I wanna thank everyone who helped our campaign.

[03:40:43] And I know you guys had people who helped with your campaign. You know, I've been in the administration, I've never had people who I didn't pay actually help me. So the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, I know they were out there for you guys doing all the work.

[03:40:58] I want to thank them first of all, and I want to congratulate everyone who won. But I want to say something to Ms. Jackson. I was hoping that you would win, but you have won my heart because you love your work.

[03:41:15] And every time when you come in here, you have your notes. Obviously, you're dedicated to your work, and God has something big for you. I don't know what it is, but I just want you to know that I appreciate you, and don't hang your head because there's something down the road for you.

[03:41:31] I want to put my one slide up. I think I have one slide. Yeah, my cups. So my gratitude cups. You know, I had Occoquan did well, and I thought about my middle school, and I thought, what's happening at the middle school level?

[03:41:49] because they were not at 90%. So I dug a little bit deeper and I went to schooldigger.com and realized that School Digger says that Lake Ridge Middle above 72.1%, 7217.17% of middle schools in the state of Virginia.

[03:42:12] And that is number two in Prince William County, according to US News and World Report. because U.S. News and World Report used a different ranking. It put us, put Lake Ridge Mill like number

two. The only school above it, hey, ladies, you're distracting me.

[03:42:30] I'm too old, and I'm looking at you. I'm sorry. But it was that it was number two in Prince William, but the only school above it was the traditional school.

[03:42:45] So I went to Lake Ridge, and I gave them a couple of gratitude, and I just wanted to say that all the schools in my district are killing it and i want to thank you and everyone on this board for everything that you've done during my tenure i know it was rough on you tonight but you know i've sat around and i waited and waited and waited but i had to say what i had to say tonight thank you miss zagraper thank you miss wall this is going to be pretty short uh so on sunday i got to go to um the sixth center

[03:43:20] it is in the coals district uh they were doing a celebration of diwali so i was uh really grateful to be invited to that and I want to also mention that this is a group when we were working on the religious holidays that we're going to be off on the calendar I know some people love this and some people it's contentious I reached out to the Jewish community the Muslim community the Sikh community the Sikh community has some holidays and and they were very happy that we we even you know that we asked but the one that they that they mentioned that they're not going to take a day

[03:43:56] off for it's it's gonna be on November 27th this year it's they celebrate the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji hope I said that well enough so I wanted to make sure I mentioned that here because it is an important observation and I'm grateful for the invitations when they do have things briefly about the election I want to thank mr. spiker for running such a great campaign he ran on issues and it was fantastic to have a good person to run against that stuck to issues and you know we just talked to voters and I eked one out I hope Mr.

[03:44:36] Spiker that you stay engaged because you have some awesome ideas and when you would come to talk at the school board meetings you had really fantastic ideas and things to say so I hope we'll keep in touch I'm glad to be back I am grateful that this election season is over it was long for the new people who are joining us on the board I can't wait to get started I know I've reached out to all of you and I hope to build relationships and and continue the work that we've been doing on this board and Adele I'm gonna miss you sister if you

[03:45:12] don't know Adele she's one of the hardest-working people I know she loves her community she loves the kids she wants the best for them and I want the

[03:45:23] best for you. Jackson. Take your time Ms. Jackson. Goodness. Thank you Ms. Agapur. I love you for that and I love you also. This is Jessie and now I'm crying so thank you. It was really sweet. Hey, you're going to be known as a crying board member. All right. Election season did keep us all busy and I'm grateful for my family and friends' support and congratulations to Erica Trudenik. Yesterday I was able to attend the Gainesville High School advisory meeting. Thank you to those who

[03:46:00] attended and for the warm atmosphere congrats to the against role girls cross-country regional championships who go to states this Saturday I also learned earlier this week that the girls cross country the first ever Gainesville high school sports team to make it to regionals that's what I was told and the marching band has outstanding finish to their competitive season and we're crowned 3a VA state champs thank you to attendance officers support professionals and school psychiatrists also thank you again our board members for saying such kind things as many may be a world where world events are

[03:46:39] impacting many of our students and staff safety and security have remained my number on priority over the last four years including my votes during COVID to support and evolve to advocating for clarity and change in the code of behavior specifically as it pertains to harassment and discrimination however the key ingredient to creating a culture of inclusion acceptance which increases the likelihood of feeling safe are the individuals in the classroom teachers the students so given world and national events I'm just reminding everybody you know we have avenues of reporting incidents of bullying harassment and discrimination and to please speak to someone at school while reporting

[03:47:18] directly to your school administration is a good option that we also have a tip for reporting this or reporting you know other concerns and it is my hope the school division will continue to track data on incidents of any discrimination or violence or threats and will adjust course as needed as it if it needs as it correlates with world and national events as needed so well words and actions have consequences and so I'm just going to quote Abraham Lincoln

[03:47:47] whatever you are be a good one and have a good night miss wall thank you miss Jackson we got one more meeting with you so I'm going to save my comments for next time and enjoy telling you some of my thoughts next time so what's happening in Gainesville I enjoyed a visit with battlefields new principal Dolores Lucas and I appreciated the chance to welcome her officially and just have a sit down just kind of a good chat getting to know her it was really a

[03:48:26] lovely hour spent and I wish her again a welcome to Battlefield and look forward to working with her. I attended a specialty information night at Battlefield with prospective students interested in CASET and the Air Force J-ROTC. It was an awesome event. The highlight for me was that there was a student panel of students in the programs and they fielded questions and you know students listen to students and it was awesome to see the younger students interested in those programs listening to those juniors and seniors talk about the realities of the program why they joined it what was hard for them

[03:49:02] and why they would do it anyway so I commend the leaders of the program there at battlefield for putting that on I was able to attend public school leaders network meeting of leaders of regions school division of the school divisions in our region and we discussed the Virginia Literacy Act and strategies for understanding the law and the implementation so that our youngest readers can benefit. Literacy is of extreme importance to me. It's one of the most important things I think that we do is help our students be able to read and read fluently. I also was able to attend the classified professional development

[03:49:38] conference on the 7th. It was election day and I was running unopposed so I got to be the speaker, one of the speakers, which was fabulous and very fun. My thought on that was how grateful I was to the school division for investing in such high-quality professional development the keynote speaker was awesome and I came away so ready to be in the 212 Club and I got a lot out of that presentation and I've listened to a lot of motivational speakers but I just thought it was a really great conference and I heard a lot of positive things so I just wanted to commend those who organized it I think the attendees got a

[03:50:14] lot out of it so it's cool to see the investment in our staff oh my gosh what happened to my time. Okay, so I attended a Gravely PTO meeting last night, always a pleasure. I went to two different Veterans Day events. That's a very special holiday for me because my two grandfathers fought in World War II, one in the Pacific and one in the East, in Europe.

[03:50:34] And also my father-in-law was a veteran of the Korean War. So thank you to all of our veterans. I think I'll just highlight, Mountain View and Gravely Elementary School were the two, and they have a

high community involvement a lot of veterans and there were veterans there and we had parades and and things like that and there was one veteran who said he was so touched by the children lining the halls and waving flags and chanting usa and he said you know i've been over 20 years in the service and i've been you know multiple tours to afghanistan and iraq he said this is my very first parade and you know in the past like in history that was something that we did you know when people came home from

[03:51:14] from wars, we threw him a parade. So he said, you know, all these years in service and this was my very first parade and it was so touching to have the children cheering for me and saying thank you. He was overcome by how special it was. And so I just wanna say to leaders and PTO and staff who go beyond their usual, you know, contract hours and whatever they're supposed to do to put on these kinds of events that really help us achieve our strategic commitment of community and family engagement.

[03:51:42] It's just such a great example. There was such a great camaraderie and feeling in the room or feeling in the school, both of those schools. And I know other events happen across the school division like this. I just wanna say thank you. Thank you to all of our volunteers, our staff, our leaders who really go the extra mile.

[03:51:59] You are so very appreciated and the community appreciates it. And I will end by saying happy Thanksgiving to everybody and have a safe drive home. - All right, well, thank you, Ms. Wall and everyone. Happy Veterans Day. and thank you to all our tremendous veterans for all the work that they do and have done for us and the sacrifices they've made.

[03:52:20] Happy Diwali, it was Sunday for the Hindu Sikh communities and the broader Indian diaspora here in America and in India. Happy Thanksgiving coming up and happy end of the election season. So for those who were reelected, congratulations.

[03:52:35] And for those who stepped up to run and make an effort to get their voices heard, we thank you. and we appreciate all of the effort that has gone into this season to help try to bring forward the ideas that will help benefit our children.

[03:52:51] So I do thank all the candidates who've run on behalf of trying to make our school division better and I am grateful for them. You know, we recognize in our Launching Thriving Futures some tremendous, tremendous folks and I was very happy to see that we recognize Fahd Abdul Razak today.

[03:53:10] he's a West Point Cadet and winning the Rhodes Scholarship. The Rhodes Scholarship's an extremely rare award to win and I'm very proud of this. Many of you know I speak a lot about competitions, programs, student success, and getting our students the opportunities to get themselves in a position to do well, whether it's getting into college, whether it's finishing college, whether it's going to community college, whether it's getting a trade, whether it's going to the academies.

[03:53:41] We have enormous numbers of students, and I don't know if there's a study, but our county sends a lot of students to the military academies. And these are among three of the best public universities in America. And then when they go there, they succeed. I mean, one of the students that I wrote a reference for three years ago or four years ago, he's just graduated.

[03:53:59] He was the number one student at the Naval Academy all four years running. He was a Prince William County student. And so I'm just very excited about that. And yes, we do spend our time at the beginning of these to recognize some of our top performing students. But I would go further and have you all in the community look at our websites, at our individual school websites, at our scoop.

[03:54:20] We honor all of our students as much as we can. We honor them on stage when they're in plays, when they're on chorus activities. We recognize them in all the great work and the extracurricular activities they do. And so this is a school division that really does try to promote every aspect of where our children come from and what they're trying to do and encourage them to really take advantage of the opportunities that are here.

[03:54:43] And so we really are excited. You know, and I talk about this, you know, you read about the news every day and everything in the news is bad, it's, you know, it's awful and, you know, it's about crime, it's about this, it's about earthquakes, it's about war. You know, I'm very happy to report, if you take a look at the Inside NOVA Facebook page on the story they did on the Road Scholar, Cadet Abdul Razak, it has the most likes of anything that they've done all week right now.

[03:55:08] And it's going really fast because why? People love the good stories. They love to see the good work that's coming from our community, from all of you, from the moms that are in this room that matter, from the parents that are in this room that matter, from the teachers in this room that matter, from all the folks who contribute to everything we do here every day, the community loves to see it.

[03:55:32] And that community cares deeply about their schools. And you'll see that if you just go through that and you'll see. I mean, I don't know what better example of that is than to look at that. Listen, folks, FAFSA forms open up on December one. We are still in college admission season, very important.

[03:55:49] I wanna thank Jen Wall for attending the Virginia literacy, the, what do we call this? The regional public, what do we call it? We have a network of the nine superintendents in this region and chairs and vice chairs that discuss some of the important issues that affect all of our schools in a regional basis.

[03:56:08] I wanna thank Dr. McDade for stepping up and taking a leadership role in that program, in that effort, and it was a really terrific meeting on some of the work that we have to do on the Virginia Literacy Act that is actually being mandated to school divisions across the Commonwealth. With that in mind, it is 11:01, and this meeting is adjourned.

[03:56:27] I will have more to say about my dear member, Adele Jackson, she's not done yet, We still have over a month to go. But I will say if ever anyone accuses me of having a shadow board member on this board come January 1 forward, it will be Adele Jackson, will be the shadow member.

[03:56:50] Thank you, Ms. Jackson.

