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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Date	Tuesday, December 5, 2023
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	4h 55m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iXH9ub5Xkk
- 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.

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

[00:00:17] - Any discussion, please vote. All those in favor, say aye. Any opposition? Okay, no opposition. Moving on to the motion to enter closed session. Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons. One, to discuss with staff the appointment, transfer, release, assignment, and promotion of specific officers and employees pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A1. Two, to discuss and consult with legal counsel regarding requests for religious

[00:00:54] exemptions pertaining to specific students under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A2 and 8. Three, Three, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation of specific legal matters involving specific staff and students pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A7 and 8.

[00:01:12] Four, to discuss with division counsel specific legal matters involving collective bargaining pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A8. Five, to discuss the award of a public contract to employee's 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 of negotiating strategy of the public body, and six, 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

[00:01:47] the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711A19. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarpur. Second. Any discussion?

[00:02:15] Okay. Please vote. The vote is six yes, two absent, Wilk, Raulston, motion passed. The school board will now enter closed session and return in open session in approximately one hour.

[00:02:25] Okay, the Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session.

[00:03:36] Closed session certification is on the agenda at 8.01. A motion is in order, Vice Chair Jennifer 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 December 5th, 2023, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:57] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies. And 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.

[00:04:22] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarform. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:46] - The vote is six yes, two absent. - Raulston, Wilk, motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action items. A motion is ordered for 9.01. Approval of appointments, releases of specific employees. Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases

[00:05:01] specific employees as presented in closed session. Do you have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarford. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is six yes, two absent, Ralston, Wilk. Motion passed. On to 9.02, request for religious exemptions from compulsory school attendance. A motion is in order. Vice Chair Wong. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board

[00:05:39] approve the request for religious exemption from compulsory school attendance for case number RE23-21. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarpur seconds. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is six yes, two absent. Raulston, will? Motion passed. Okay, next we will be doing the pledge of allegiance. We have Isabella Avarsano from Gainesville High School as our student rep.

[00:06:14] She'll be leading us in the pledge this evening. To the flag, the United States of the United a nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:06:37] - Okay, thank you. On to our thriving futures focus. It's in our 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.

[00:06:54] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognize students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or 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.

[00:07:12] Tonight, the school board will recognize two state championships, one from Colgan High School and one from Woodbridge High School, as well as a James Madison University Outstanding Music Educator Alumni Award recipient. These championships and prestigious awards reflect the exceptional quality of talent in Prince William County Public Schools.

[00:07:32] We begin our recognitions with Mrs. Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District, who will introduce our first honorees. Take it away, Mrs. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Coles District would first like to recognize Charles J. Colgan Senior High School Strengths Teacher, Ben Bernstein.

[00:07:55] Mr. Bernstein has been awarded the 2023 Outstanding Music Educator Alumni Award by James Madison University. This award is presented to a JMU undergraduate or graduate music education alumnus or alumna who has taught for at least 10 years and who exemplifies JMU's commitment to musicianship and pedagogy. Criteria for this award include excellence in music teaching including the development of comprehensive innovative programs and curricula, service to and sustained leadership in the profession of music education, continuing relationship with and support of the music

[00:08:31] education program at JMU. Congratulations Mr. Bernstein for earning this recognition. Would Would you care to say just a couple brief words? - I'm gonna speak on his behalf. Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, and Dr. McDade.

[00:08:49] On behalf of Dr. Healy and Colgan High School, it gives me great pride to recognize Mr. Ben Bernstein as the recipient of the James Madison University Outstanding Music Educator Alumni Award. As you said, Ms. Zargarpur, this award is given to one individual annually who exemplifies JMU's commitment to musicianship and pedagogy.

[00:09:08] Mr. Bernstein has worked his entire teaching career and Prince William County Schools. He is currently our director of orchestras at Colgan and has been since the school opened in 2016. Prior to coming to Colgan, he has worked both at the elementary and middle school levels for 14 years.

[00:09:24] Mr. Bernstein's orchestras have consistently earned numerous accolades and superior ratings at district assessments. The Colgan Philharmonic Orchestra performed at the Virginia Music Educator Association's annual conference in both 2018 and this year in 2023.

[00:09:39] Mr. Bernstein is also a composer and arranger for orchestral music and has been commissioned by Manassas Symphony Orchestra, the Old Bridge Chamber Orchestra, as well as several middle and high schools. His orchestral works have been premiered at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, James Madison University, the Richmond Convention Center, and George Mason University's Hilton Center for the Performing Arts.

[00:10:01] I know I speak for our orchestra students and families when I say how lucky we are to have Mr. Bernstein as part of our Colgan community, and we are so unbelievably proud of this tremendous accolade and of all of his accomplishments.

[00:10:19] - Thank you, Ms. Riddle. - Thank you so much, and I wanna thank Jennifer and Lisa both, thanks for coming to Richmond for our performance. - It was an amazing performance, wasn't it? And just so everyone knows, this is a person who empowers leadership in his students.

[00:10:36] I watched an amazing performance, I've seen many amazing performances at the school, but in Richmond, he shared the podium with students, with other conductors, with other schools, where Osborne Parks Madrigal sang with them too. It was an amazing performance, and it's a testament to your leadership and what you develop in others.

[00:10:56] Thank you so much. - I feel the need to say a few words. I've had the lucky opportunity to observe Mr. Bernstein for a long time. So he was the music teacher and orchestra conductor at Marshall Elementary School quite a number of years ago when my oldest was there, and that might be 12 years ago.

[00:11:25] And you've been in the school division a long time, and we've been very proud of the tremendous success that you've brought our schools, our children, our students, and launched them into their thriving futures. We can't thank you enough, Ms. Bernstein. Thank you very much. And to all our music instructors out there for all the dedication and work you all do, this is your time of the year with all your concerts in the winter, and so for the public out there, go to your concerts, go to your school concerts, please support those efforts.

[00:11:52] They're doing great work. Thank you again. - Ms. Zargarpur, carry on. - Oh, I will. The Coles District would also like to recognize Colgan High School's competitive cheer team on their second consecutive cheer state championship.

[00:12:14] Colgan won the Virginia High School League 2023 class six state championship, making them co-champions with Stafford High School, but that is not all. The board also wants to recognize Ava Wilson and Riley Owen for being named Allstate First Team, as well as Matthew Allen and Charlotte Coach for making Allstate Second Team.

[00:12:34] In addition to being named Allstate First Team, Ava Wilson was named Class Six Cheerleader of the Year. Colgan High School is represented tonight by 2023 Class Six Coach of the Year, Coach Michelle Bordelon.

[00:12:59] Would you care to say a few words about your champions on behalf of the team? - Yes. - Good evening, sorry. Good evening school board, Chairman Lateef, and Dr. McDade. Thank you so much for having us back here again. I am Michelle Bordelon, the head chair coach at Colgan High School, and I am proud to present to you your state champions.

[00:13:27] Not only is this team the first in our school to win two state championships, they did it back to back. The accomplishments of these athletes could not have been possible without the support from each of you, our friends and family, and our school.

[00:13:43] I would like to thank our administration, Dr. Healy, our principal, Mr. Staples, our director of student activities, and I would like to say a special thank you to Ms. Riddle, who is also here with us tonight. One of the many hats that I wear at Colgan, in addition to being a coach and a teacher, is I'm also the department chair for mathematics.

[00:14:00] And it just so happens that Ms. Riddle is my supervising administrator. So since she's here tonight, I wanna say thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Riddle, for always being supportive of me, of my

team, and for understanding the crazy in the fall when all the balls are in the air. Now, since you heard from me already last year, I thought maybe you wanna hear from someone else.

[00:14:20] So I would love to introduce you to our Class 6 Cheerleader of the Year and one of our senior captains, Miss Ava Wilson. - Hi, good evening, Prince William County School Board.

[00:14:40] It is with immense joy and pride that I stand before you to recount the journey that led us to this recent victory. From the very beginning as a team of new and old, were unsure of many things but we had one mutual goal. Each practice, each routine, each moment spent perfecting our craft was made from pure dedication to outdo ourselves from our win in 2022.

[00:15:02] The countless hours of practice were not just about perfecting our routine but about growing a bond, a bond that stemmed from teammates and transformed us into a family. Standing as state champions we realized that every drop of blood sweat and tears was completely worth it but this This victory wouldn't be possible without the ample support from our principal, Dr.

[00:15:23] Haley, and our athletic director, Mr. Staples, our friends and family that came to watch us at every competition, our talented and supportive coaches, Michelle Borderline and Veronica Owen, and all of you standing before me. To my teammates, each one of you has contributed to this remarkable achievement in your own very unique way.

[00:15:46] For every one of you, I cannot be more thankful. Our victory means more to me than you'll ever know and my own personal achievements would not have been possible without you all Thank you everyone for being a part of this incredible journey and for creating one of the best memories of our high school careers With my with pride in my heart. I say to you. We are Colgan. Thank you So thank you miss portal on and all the team for their dedication hard work and commitment to excellence

[00:16:21] Representing Colgan high school tonight is assistant principal Karen riddle. Would you care to add to the remarks here? She's like, no, she's like, I'm good, I'm good. All right, thank you. Well, congratulations to you all.

[00:16:36] - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Argafore. Please stick around. We'll do some pictures here shortly. We have next Ms. Lily Jessie from the great Occoquan district who will recognize our next honorees, Ms. Jessie. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Occoquan district is very proud to recognize Woodbridge High School boys cross country team for winning the 2023 VHSL class six state championship.

[00:17:02] Woodridge High School is represented tonight by state championship coaches Kelly McGreal and Andy Andrew McCarthy and members of the championship team Miss McGreal would you Would you introduce our state champions and share a few words on behalf of the team?

[00:17:27] Thank you all for having us here tonight to recognize on this amazing achievement that these boys have accomplished I'm coach McGreal of course. This is coach McCarthy here. I would like since we have a smaller group I would like to just introduce the boys really quick.

[00:17:43] This is Bradley Jones, he is a freshman. We've got Nathaniel McMahon, he is our only senior, so we have a strong team coming back next year. We have Owen Rehnquist, who is a junior. We have Hayden Goodman, who is another junior. Cameron McDuffie is a junior. Devin Roberts is a junior.

[00:17:59] And Colin Kehan is also a junior. So, just like, congratulations, cheer by the way, that was amazing. Just like the Colgan girls, the cheer team, we too are gonna try to get that back to back next year.

[00:18:19] So we share in your words. That was awesome what you said. But I just wanna really just, I don't really wanna talk too much about me or the program. I just want to give all the glory to this team right here, these boys, because it is so hard to convince people to get up and train in the summer and get up at six in the morning beat the heat and to put in 10 and 12 mile runs before anyone else is even out of bed and they did that I mean their training day started it started July 1st

[00:18:56] and they were relentlessly dedicated to making sure they were gonna like do everything they could to try to secure a state victory they came in came off the last year season we play seventh place at states last year and we kind of like Talked about it and we said we're coming back. We're going to be strong We know we can we can get top three we can possibly win and we had we came when they would continue to with track season We in the track season great had a short little break and then July 1st. That's when it started We handed in the training plan. We didn't see these boys again until tryouts

[00:19:35] Which was August 12th? What was it 14th this year or something August 12th or something? so really it's on them as coaches and We gave you a tool. I love the fact that these boys bought in and trusted us and believed in us enough to just say, I'm just going to turn it over to our coaches and do everything they say.

[00:19:57] But they did it. They did it. They implemented the plan. They did the runs. They did the training. They stayed accountable. And as the season progressed, we got stronger and stronger and stronger. And to be honest, man, we just held it together, tried to stay humble, tried not to get overconfident, but still maintain a sense of confidence that you need to take a state champion.

[00:20:20] And, you know, I'm proud of you guys. All the glory goes to this team right here. So, you know, it's just been the most rewarding coaching season I have had because you can come here with a state champion team, you can come here with a state champion individually, you can come here for many reasons, but when you come with a team that put in the work and they just bought into the coaching philosophy, it just is very validating and very rewarding.

[00:20:55] So I thank you guys for doing that because that makes everything worth it. And we all know that coaching's not easy. It's a lot of hours, but that makes everything worth it. So thank you guys.

[00:21:11] Coach McCarthy. And I think Coach McCarthy has a few words to share. And we've been coaching a long time, So, awesome, proud to do it with Coach McCarthy. - I just wanna thank the board, and thank you, Miss Brooks-Jones.

[00:21:28] She's my, like the Colgan coach, she is my department AP and my former track athlete. So, it's great to have a former athlete as a boss, 'cause, so, but also, first off, so, I just wanna throw the thanks around to the board for the support for Coach McGreal, came on shortly after I started coaching and has made Woodbridge Track and Field and Cross Country what it is.

[00:21:56] It is a state championship team with six of seven returners. These young men, I want to thank them because they look really cool and tough in their state shirts, but they are the funniest, weirdest bunch of guys I've ever met. And they make every day such a pleasure because they always have such high spirits and such a competitive spirit.

[00:22:17] So they take on, they take on the challenge with alacrity and big smiles. I mean, look at these smiles. So they really are just a wonderful group of young men and makes coaching just that much better.

[00:22:33] So, and I just wanna thank the parents because parents make a team, parents make all the difference. And I really mean that by the parental engagement, by the parents coming, driving all the way down to Richmond or driving all the way up to Loudoun County to go to all the cross-country meets.

[00:22:54] You know, it can be a pretty lonely sport when you're out there running three miles by yourself, you know, in the woods, and there's, you know, rocks and mud and wolves, and gosh knows what else is out there. And just the name of the sport, cross-country is not a good advertisement, but they did it.

[00:23:12] And congratulations, boys. - Congratulations. Tonight we have Ms. Marion Jones-Brooks, Woodbridge High School administrator here also. - Would you like to share a few words?

[00:23:27] - I'm sure you would. - I think Coach McGreal and Coach McCarthy summed it up very well. I just want to say thank you to everyone and congratulations to everyone being recognized tonight. The accomplishments are amazing. It's a lot of hard work and dedication. So the support is appreciated by the division and the community.

[00:23:45] Thank you very much. - I want to thank Coach McCarthy for a reminder. Let's have the parents of all our athletes for both teams, please stand in recognition for the tremendous support and effort you all do.

[00:24:01] Let's turn those fabulous smiles from that team back to their parents and thank them. And as Coach McCarthy said it, we can't do this without you all. Thank you so much and excellent.

[00:24:16] Congratulations, Miss Jessie into the Woodbridge High School. Congratulations to all our winners. And before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words and she's a marathon runner. So there's some expertise behind some of these words. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef and congratulations to all of our honorees recognized here tonight.

[00:24:34] achievements of our brilliant Mr. Bernstein, the talented Colgan High School cheer team, and the victorious Woodbridge High School boys cross-country team really are a testament to the talent and dedication within the Prince William County schools. These accomplishments ranging from prestigious awards to state championships not only highlight individual and team excellence but also reflect the overall quality and commitment of our school district. So thank you to everyone involved for your hard work your passion and for positively representing our schools your achievements are a source of pride and we are PWCS proud congratulations to you

[00:25:13] all thank you dr. McDade at this time I'd like to request our honorees to come forward with a photo of the school board receive a small token of our appreciation we will start with a photo with mr. Bernstein and then our second photo will be with the Colgan high school cheer team and third with the

[00:25:30] the Woodbridge High School cross-country team.

[00:28:39] - That's me.

[00:29:57] - Definitely should have been there.

[00:30:18] - Smile, I know, right?

[00:32:12] - Wonderful, well that was fantastic. It is always exciting to celebrate our students and our faculty and our staff. Thank you so much for that. Moving along, so this is the, we have this kind of meeting once every four years, and that is the closing of a school board term.

[00:32:32] And so we are going out of order for a couple of things this evening. I have a motion from Vice Chair Wall. Vice Chair Wall. - Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approved the resolutions commending board members, Adele E. Jackson, Brentsville District, Diane L. Ralston, Neabsco District, and Lily G. Jessie, Occoquan District.

[00:32:55] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Oh, Ms. Williams first. - I second. - Wonderful second. So for the, I'm gonna ask the board members to read each of the resolutions. We will start with Mrs. Zargarpur, first reading for Ms. Adele Jackson of the Brentsville District.

[00:33:12] Ms. Zargarpur, take it away. - Resolution in appreciation of Mrs. Adele Jackson, whereas Ms. Adele E. Jackson, a dedicated public servant and advocate for high quality public education began as the Brentsville District Representative on the Prince William County School Board on January 1, 2016, and whereas Ms. Jackson, a Northern Virginia native and product of public schools, holds a sociology degree with a fine arts minor from St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, and has a distinguished background as a social worker and educator.

[00:33:43] And whereas her 15 year career in special education across various districts, including Prince William and Fairfax counties, along with her master's in special education and special education leadership certification from George Mason University, exemplifies her commitment to education.

[00:33:59] And whereas Ms. Jackson has actively supported key initiatives as a school board member, including increased funding for disadvantaged students, creation of special education department chairs, expansion of social worker and teacher assistant roles, and enhancement of gifted services and technology access, and whereas her focus on policies fostering equity and inclusiveness aligns with her commitment to ensuring a safe, respectful environment for all students, thereby enhancing educational outcomes, and whereas Ms. Jackson champions multiple success paths through career and technical education programs, recognizing the potential of every student in Prince William County schools,

[00:34:37] and whereas her advocacy for competitive salaries and benefits for all school staff demonstrates her understanding of the factors affecting staff retention and recruitment, and whereas Ms. Jackson's efforts in improving communication and engagement with families, including those from multilingual backgrounds, has significantly contributed to the inclusiveness and accessibility of PWCS.

[00:35:01] And whereas her commitment to student safety and mental health, as evidenced by her support for additional security measures and mental health resources, underscores her dedication to the wellbeing of the school community. Now therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby recognizes and commends the four years of dedicated service committed to our students, staff members and community, values her friendship as a colleague and shares best wishes for Mrs. Adele E. Jackson and extends its best wishes for her future endeavors improved by the Prince William County School Board

[00:35:38] on December 5th, 2023. - Next, I will read the resolution in appreciation of Ms. Diane Ralston. Whereas Diane L. Ralston began as the Prince William County School Board Representative for the Neabsco District on January 1, 2016, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to advocating for quality, equitable, and collaborative education.

[00:36:01] And whereas Ms. Raulston's advocacy for education began in 1966 as a high school student in Monterey, California leading to significant policy changes in the local school district. And whereas she

attended Kansas State College and majored in English and journalism.

[00:36:17] And whereas her advocacy efforts were recognized by the US Department of Education with the Parent Leader Advocate Program Award in 1990, and her appointment to the State of California Education Committee for two five-year terms. And whereas since moving to Dale City, Virginia in 2007, Ms. Raulston has been an active member of various local and civic organizations, including the Bel Air Women's Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1503, Dale City Civic Association, and the Prince William County Lassie League.

[00:36:50] And whereas her leadership roles have included chairing the Neabsco Budget Committee and serving on the Prince William County Disability Services Board, the Discover Prince William and Manassas Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Board of Directors of the Prince William County Boys and Girls Club.

[00:37:06] And whereas Ms. Raulston's dedication to community service has been recognized through congressional recognition of volunteerism awards from Congressman Gerald Connolly and US Senator Mark Warner, and whereas her tenure on the school board has been marked by significant achievements, including renovating schools to eliminate trailers, advocating for higher teacher and staff compensation, increasing on-time graduation rates, expanding CTE programs, ensuring full accreditation of Niabsco schools, enhancing parent and community engagement, and increasing pre-K spots for Niabsco students.

[00:37:43] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby recognizes and expresses its profound appreciation to Ms. Diane L. Raulston for her impactful service, steadfast commitment and lasting contributions to the Neabsco district and the broader Prince William County educational community and extends her best wishes for future endeavors will be soon approved here by the Prince William County School Board on December 5th, 2023.

[00:38:15] Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am proud to read the resolution in appreciation of Ms. Lily Jessie. Whereas Ms. Lily G. Jesse, a dedicated educator and leader, has served the Occoquan District on the Prince William County School Board since November 7th, 2012.

[00:38:34] And whereas Ms. Jesse, having served as the Vice Chairwoman of the School Board in 2016 and 2017, and as Acting Chair in 2018, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to the educational community.

[00:38:51] And, whereas, her esteemed 35-year career in Prince William County Public Schools, including 20 years as principal of Elizabeth Vaughn Elementary School, led to the school's recognition as a national model professional learning community and its achievements in closing the achievement gap.

[00:39:11] And, whereas, her educational qualification, including a master's degree in communication disorders from Northwestern University, a bachelor's degree in speech pathology from South Carolina State University, and an administration certification from the University of Virginia, highlight her extensive expertise and dedication to education.

[00:39:31] And, whereas, Ms. Jessie is a nationally recognized author and educational consultant, contributing significant works as the collaborative principal, the collaborative teacher, and it's the principle of the thing, with her writings and programs influencing educators nationwide.

[00:39:51] And, whereas, she is the creator of the Martin Luther King Youth Oratorical Contest, a 32-year award-winning program and chaired this collaborative effort for 17 years impacting thousands and reaching beyond the local community to the White House and the governor's mansion and whereas her numerous awards including recognition on the Prince William County Walk of Fame and numerous leadership and community service awards reflect her profound impact on education and the broader community and whereas Miss Jessie's contributions to the Prince William County School Board include initiating studies to reduce trailers

[00:40:30] in schools, founding the Parent Summit, bringing national education consultants to the district, co-leading the naming of several schools, and advocating for numerous infrastructural improvements in the Occoquan District. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby recognizes and commends Miss Lily G. Jessie for her remarkable dedication and significant achievements and enduring contributions to the prince william county school board and the broader community and extends its heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for her future endeavors thank you miss williams at this time i'll ask the board to vote on these resolutions and then afterwards and

[00:41:09] i know they weren't expecting it i'd like to hear some words from both miss jackson and miss jesse they will also have words and board matters this evening at the end of the evening but we would encourage them to share some of their thoughts with us tonight please vote the vote is six yes

[00:41:37] two absent Ralston will motion pass first ask Dr. McDade to make some remarks and then we'll hear

[00:42:10] from the board members thank you Dr. Lateef to Ms. Jessie Ms. Jackson and Ms. Ralston I want to personally extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your years of service on the PWCS school board as a servant leader to your schools and communities for a combined 23 years as school board members, I would imagine today is bittersweet as your work has undoubtedly been a labor of love for the children, staff, and families of PWCS. The role of a board member is challenging beyond the

[00:42:46] imagination of most as you are not only a board member but a leader, a confidant, an advocate, a problem solver, and to many a friend. From policy governance, constituent engagement, school advocacy, polarizing politics, late night meetings and events, and financial management, to name a few, you have led with grace, integrity, courage under fire, and most importantly, passion. You each believe with your whole heart that every child can graduate on time with the

[00:43:23] knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. Because of this belief, you have been staunch advocates for all students, regardless of race, gender, zip code, country of origin, or ability. You remain steadfast in your conviction that every student can succeed if afforded access to high-quality educational opportunities, and you have often been the loudest voice for those that may be the most vulnerable.

[00:43:58] on an even more personal note one of the many responsibilities as board members is the hiring of the superintendent i want to thank you for not only selecting me to serve as superintendent of pwcs but also for your continuous support encouragement and love you have modeled for me what it means to live your core values served as a listening ear given sage advice and challenged me to always drive for excellence for every child every day.

[00:44:29] Thank you for your belief in PWCS students, in families, in schools, in me as the superintendent, and for your unwavering support. Now it is time for you to enjoy the next chapter without our lengthy board briefings, policy development, marathon board meetings, 10-page memos and emails, and my favorite, and your probably least favorite, my late-night phone calls.

[00:44:59] Thank you each for sharing your time, talent, and passion with the PWCS community. You have each left a long-lasting impression on the hearts and minds of us all, and your legacy will have a positive impact for generations to come.

[00:45:17] Congratulations to you both, to all three of you, the two that are here and Ms. Raulston that's absent, on a job well done. We salute you. And on behalf of Prince William County Public Schools, I would like to present you with a token of appreciation and acknowledgement of your tremendous service and dedication to PWCS.

[00:45:36] And I would ask that the board members please join me, deputy superintendent, and our chief of staff who serves as the board liaison to present a few awards to our outgoing board members.

[00:45:50] - We'll do it right up front here, guys.

[00:48:11] - Dr. McDade, I wanna thank you for those great words. And let's give a round of applause for our outgoing board members. - Well, we'll do it this moment 'cause we hadn't really planned it out, but I'll have each of the board members just make a couple quick remarks, keep it short, and we'll do this some more at the board matters, and then I'll have Ms. Jessie and Ms. Jackson say some remarks as well.

[00:48:33] So we'll start with Ms. Zargarpur. - Very short. Ms. Jackson, thank you for being a leader in conscience and integrity, and always thinking about everybody's needs, from the staff, to the students, to the parents, - Community members who've brought concerns, thank you for everything.

[00:49:01] Ms. Jessie, I remember hearing your name long before I ever thought about running. You're legendary in my brain. I knew you had been a principal. I love hearing how you came into Prince William County Schools, the different jobs you've done, and the mark you have made in this county, even before you became a board member.

[00:49:24] It has been a true honor knowing you. Thank you for everything you have done. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say to Ms. Raulston, who is not present, it has been an honor to serve with you.

[00:49:42] I appreciate all of your perspective and from sharing your life adventures with us and helping us to grow and gel as a board, even when you are not physically present. I appreciate that. To Ms. Jackson, it has been an honor to serve with you.

[00:50:04] We had lengthy discussions earlier, but I do want to say that you have truly been the heart and soul and conscious of this board. And I consider you to be one of the nicest, most humble, most caring human beings I have ever had the pleasure to work with.

[00:50:26] And it has been an honor. And I will miss the glue that you provide that holds us all together, especially in our times of strife. can't help it but you deserve all of this and more because you're an amazing human being so thank you for your service you will be greatly missed and I appreciate the time that we have spent because you have definitely held us together more than just a board but sort of like as a

family so I appreciate you and Miss Jessie to my otherwise known as school board mentor from the day that I

[00:51:04] decided to run you have been instrumental in shaping who I am as a school board member and I will never forget that you have left a trailblazing trailblazing legacy that is untouchable in Prince William County Schools from your time as a principal to your time as a school board member and I don't think your shoes could ever be filled we should just make a mold and put them on a shelf somewhere. I will truly miss you during your meetings and all of your I was as I was a

[00:51:39] principal and all of your other taglines. I appreciate you taking me under your wing to show me so much. For those who do not know when we first got when I first got on the board there was no orientation. Miss Jessie was impactful in preparing board members for the future and from always giving us a lens as a principal and as a dedicated servant to our community.

[00:52:01] I thank you for everything, and it has truly been an honor, and I hope that we will continue this relationship after your service is done, so thank you so much. Ms. Wall. All right, Ms. Jackson, it's been a pleasure serving with you.

[00:52:18] We came on to the board together and had to wade through the first weeks of the pandemic together as brand-new board members, which was I'll never forget. I'll never, ever forget, and since your district shares a long border with mine and many students in my district attend your schools and vice versa we've had the opportunity over the last four years to collaborate on solving problems from the very specific small individually based problems to the large problems as well and that's been a real pleasure and we put forward a number of projects together the most recent being universal design for playgrounds so we've worked closely on those really important issues and I would say your commitment to

[00:52:56] students is absolutely commendable you clearly care about students you clearly care about staff and they trust you to listen to their concerns i've seen that over and over where staff will seek you out to talk to you because they know they'll find a listening ear and a strong advocate um so this whole board will miss your perspective and expertise that you bring as an educator especially a special educator i mean you really are irreplaceable on that and you know advocating and understanding students with disabilities so um we'll miss that a lot but

[00:53:30] But we do know that your family is very lucky to have a little bit more time with you. And your children are absolutely darling, and your husband is great. So I know you'll miss us a little bit, but they're going to love you a lot.

[00:53:46] And that will be worth it, I think. So I wish you all the best. And Miss Jessie, you have served as the longest member on this board. You have more stories than any of us, and you know where all the skeletons are buried in this building. You were first elected in 2012. That's over a decade ago. That's a very distinguished career of public service. I've seen you fiercely advocate for your district and for its students and staff. I've seen you advocate for all of the students in Prince William County. You go out of your way to show appreciation for those individuals who you see as extraordinary, and that's a very gracious and generous aspect of your personality,

[00:54:24] which is lovely and I know you'll continue to do that. You know, over 35 years in education, or I think you said it was longer than that. Anyway, you have a very distinguished career in education for much of that time has been in leadership, which is remarkable and you're also an author on books of leadership

and education, which I didn't know until I was looking at some of the information about you, which was impressive, truly a distinguished career.

[00:54:53] It's been a pleasure to work with you on this board of the last four years and I wish you all the best and I hope you enjoy extra time with your family and friends and maybe some traveling as well. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. I'll wrap up and then we'll hear from our members.

[00:55:10] First, Ms. Jessie, you know, courageous, absolutely competent and committed unapologetically for her district and for the students of this county and the staff and the teachers and over a long period of time.

[00:55:31] First as a teacher, principal, administrator, and then as a school board member. I'm not sure anyone will be able to match or rival that level of service coming here in the future and certainly not rival it in a way that you have impacted our school division and our students.

[00:55:55] And I think there will be an incredible void in Prince William County Schools and the school board once we say goodbye. And so I wish you all the best and I can't thank you enough and I'll have some more words to say later on.

[00:56:12] Ms. Jackson, I've said this many times. I believe she's the conscience of the school board. She's absolutely diligent and I've learned a great deal from her. I know no one who's able to weigh multiple perspectives in the way she does and bring that advice, counsel and support to the school board.

[00:56:33] I've leaned on her greatly during these last four years. This has not been the easiest four years for anyone to serve on a school board anywhere in America, and certainly not here. And without her support, advice, and counsel, I'm not sure I would have made it through.

[00:56:48] This chair to my right will never be filled in the way it's been filled over the last four years. And it makes me very sad to see you go, but I know you won't miss some of the things that we have to deal with here. And so I wish you the best, and I think your public service is marked by truth, honesty, compassion, and a contagious, sparkling spirit.

[00:57:14] To both of you, we love you dearly, and we wish you the best. I think I'll turn it over to Ms. Jackson. You can go first, and then we'll go to Ms. Jessie. And then you'll have time for further remarks in Board Matters.

[00:57:30] - I really wasn't expecting this, and I'm glad that there's more time to talk during Board Matters, 'cause I think I'm gonna need a little bit to recover.

[00:57:47] It has been an honor of a lifetime. Ms. Jessie, thank you so much for your mentorship and your commitment to education. Ms. Rauston, thank you for your continued service, a lifetime of service.

[00:58:04] Thank you to my amazing board members. I love each and every one of you. Thank you to amazing Brentsville staff. Why am I crying? And in part to support principals and the staff in this room, I admire all of you and your dedication to make this world a better place.

[00:58:24] Thank you, Dr. McDade, for your kind words and your being who you are and your commitment to the North Star. It's admirable, and I admire you. And I'm gonna miss everyone, and I wish everybody the best on the next journey, and I will elaborate further during war matters after I have a moment to recover.

[00:58:44] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Jackson. Ms. Jessie. - I have to tell you, I didn't expect B. Simpson. You knew all of this was gonna happen, didn't you?

[00:59:02] I did not expect this at all, but I will say what I said again on, I think two weeks ago, when the Omegas gave me the Citizenship Award.

[00:59:18] I have been very blessed because people have always seen something in me that I did not see in myself. And I know you've heard the story of Mr. Scott, who chased me up and down the hall every week.

[00:59:33] He would say Lily May, which is my name, by the way. You cannot use that, May, though. But he'd say, Lily, May, you're going to college. And he would chase me. And I think Dr. McDade had someone similar. And people in this audience, you always had someone who helped you.

[00:59:51] And he chased me up and down the hall. And then I went to Illinois, where I met my husband. Worked at a hospital for mentally challenged individuals. And they, too, saw something in me I didn't see in myself.

[01:00:10] They said, you're going to Northwestern. hadn't planned on going to northwestern they paid for everything i came to prince william county and jeanette brown who is my principal saw something in me i didn't see in myself and she says you're going to be my assistant principal but herb saunders whose daughter is here tonight said there's a three-year rule he met me he liked me and suddenly i was a supervisor of title one

[01:00:42] after being in the county less than a year i could not believe it but i have always had a couple of things in mind that i think helped me with my success first of all i had a strong work ethic i came from the cotton fields of south carolina and you could not outpick me because i hung out with people smarter than me i hung out with miss louise miss louise always got 200 pounds so i hung

[01:01:16] out with her and when i came to prince william county the same thing happened how and i tell people you always hang out with people who are smarter than you and better than you i came to this county and then i was in i was i left the school system because i was doing some consulting work dr defore saw something in me and said listen your your school is a national model

[01:01:47] i didn't see that but he saw that then i came to the board i was a national consultant i was making good money and then clarice torian called me and said you've been called to serve and i said by whom and she said you know who and so i i thought about that and i she said i had done mlk for 17 years my family we never had christmas because i did it for 17 years and i thought if i asked my

[01:02:27] husband he's going to say no don't take that board member don't run he didn't so i called my best best friend one of which is in the audience rachel paniel she didn't rachel english raise your hand you know who you are i said should i do this she said yes then i call anita fleming she said yes and so i came into this thinking that i would do a lot for kids who had different abilities and

[01:03:03] closing the achievement gap and that was my goal and i ended up closing the equity gap in infrastructure for buildings i've named i don't know 10 buildings i think and then the final straw was it was a public meeting so i guess i can say this i was a fourth person to say no to the

[01:03:31] contract of the superintendent dr waltz and guess who i got this lady dr mcdade and i always said Nobody can outwork me until I ran into Latonya McDade.

[01:03:52] She is wonderful. So I think that maybe God did have a plan for me. And I want to thank everyone that has been able to mentor as principal, as several people who came out of my school as principals.

[01:04:10] And there's about eight or 10 people who are associate superintendent that came to my home. So to Mr. Scott, I think I paid you back. Thank you. - Ms. Jessie, so as Ms. Wall reminded us earlier that you have an extraordinary ability to recognize and show gratitude to people.

[01:04:33] And many of those folks have been impactful in your life and frankly for our school division. And I know you've asked that during board matters, you would like to recognize them with your TCAP. We'd like you to do that now. And yeah, as you get prepared for that, as you prepare for that, 'cause I know you weren't expecting us to do that to you.

[01:04:53] I do wanna recognize Ms. Raulston hasn't been here due to sickness for a number of meetings and Ms. Raulston has served this board with distinction as you heard in our resolution and for my sake, and I think speaking for the board, she was a critical aspect of helping us navigate the pandemic, providing critical votes at times we needed them to get this division moving.

[01:05:19] Ms. Raulston was absolutely critical in helping us hire Dr. McDade. And without Ms. Raulston service for the, in her commitment to the children of the Neabsco district, I think they were well served by a wonderful school board member who cared deeply about their children.

[01:05:36] Ms. Jessie, if you'd like to do that now, we'll be happy to do that. - I'd love to, wow. - I'll use my privilege as chair once in a while. - Okay, thank you. I'm asking the people, media, please put the first slide up.

[01:05:52] I think I have a slide. I always have a slide. And first of all, I want to thank the board members. You know this, did he put up the slide, the cups? These are, okay, these are the cups.

[01:06:10] When you look at me on video, you'll see this wall that I've got all these awards and all these things. But this is the window I look out. And I started giving these Demetaz cups to teachers in my school every Friday. And then on the left, you will see that they secretly decided to give back one of their cups.

[01:06:33] And these cups are on my wall now. And I started giving these cups to teachers. And then when I came on the board during the pandemic, I realized that teachers needed recognition. So I started giving cups to teachers and I started giving cups to board members.

[01:06:50] And each of you, would you hold up tonight, I gave you a Demetass cup. And when I first started giving these Demetass cups, I thought it was my idea, but I realized very few of us have original ideas. And I walked through my dining room and realized that these Demetass cups came from my husband's 100-year-old cousin.

[01:07:12] He had not, my husband comes from a mixed background, and it's a long story, but he met his 100-year-old cousin, and she started these Demetass cups. So, I want you to know that I stand on the shoulders of giants, and I thought, here's my opportunity to recognize people who have not been recognized.

[01:07:38] And I want you to know that the cups tonight that I'm going to give to those people, that they were paid for by me out of my money and Justin Wilkes. So, I'm going to ask my husband to unveil the cups.

[01:08:02] These cups are blue and white, your color. I think you'll love them. don't know if i'm going to get through this uh the first cup goes herb saunders accepting on his

[01:08:32] behalf is his daughter barbara woods miss woods would you please come forward your dad was mr prince william he made all the personnel decision and other consequential decision that was his public public persona most did not know that he made the most crucial decision for prince sweeten county desegregation the desegregation of schools the school system in 1964. he appointed

[01:09:06] just you can just give us a cup and let her hold the box put the box oh whatever okay i'm sorry guys he honored these four women by making them honorary pallbearers which you told me that he said he wanted these women to be his honorary pallbearers i saw them at his funeral later that i understood the full impact when i named fanny fitzgerald school she screamed on the phone and

[01:09:38] she said it's been 40 years she was one that would later be called part of the courageous four thank you you can remain up front the second please remain okay i can never come back the second cup goes to mary porter one of those four women accepting on her behalf is her daughter gwen washington many know frantic stories but few know mrs porter's story she taught at the cabin branch

[01:10:15] the all-black three-room school in dumfries she was later assigned to teach at washington reed elementary school from 1950 to 1964 when the cabin branch school became overcrowded she was assigned to dumfries elementary by mrs saunders as one of the courageous four next up goes to marion washington and marjorie reed two black women who owned the land which washington reed was

[01:10:49] built accepting the cup on their behalf is curtis porter and gwen washington ms reed was their great

[01:11:01] great grandmother they had once now i've known this lady for quite some time because we sit together at church thank you we sit together we sit next to each other at church all the time and

[01:11:41] i never knew much about her i was at woodbridge high school i saw her picture on the wall lorraine ghost was the first black teacher at woodbridge high school and like fanny she never talked about her her contributions to the system but i think woodbridge did recognize her at a

[01:12:06] certain point thank you the next cup goes to denise mcphail accepted on her behalf is vernell

[01:12:29] wilson denise mcphail sent out a letter saying we want to name the school for fanny fitzgerald and she said she sent to 100 people and i was the only one to answer she and i took different roles

[01:13:04] for naming fadden fitzgerald i was to get the history but it was not me who named fadden fitzgerald who had the idea was denise mcphill she also wrote the play in corn the name the courageous forward many people don't do not know that in 1970 when 71 when herb saunders made the The next assignment was for me, and that's when I met Rachel English.

[01:13:46] She became my coordinator assistant principal, principal of Ann Ludwig, where the school was named an unofficial school of excellence because no one thought those kids could learn, but Rachel did. She assisted me in publishing, you have the book, the first hardback book written for students, by students.

[01:14:15] It's called Patches of Sunshine. And inside that book, do we have that slide? Okay, Rachel, can you open that? That is a sunshine on the inside cover.

[01:14:37] Barbara is a picture of me with Mrs. Saunders. He came to every event. She also made history has been the first. She and I also made history as being the first administrative team because they didn't think they could put two blacks together and be successful.

[01:14:55] Which Rachel and I worked together and we were very successful. Thank you. Eman and Joe Fletcher, Vera Fletcher, please come forward.

[01:15:13] Vera and Emmett. Emmett, I know you're wearing your Omega colors, but you can come up. All right. One cup.

[01:15:31] They are the naming committee for George Hampton Middle. He works behind the scenes. They work behind the scenes using the Fannie Fitzgerald template and naming that school. They removed the name of Mills Godwin from that school because Mills Godwin was a member of the Massa.

[01:15:56] he implemented the massive resistance which kept black kids out of school for five years and you have not lived until you work with him. Ms. Joanne Bonarese. Joanne Bonarese is the founder of the first MLK celebration 39 years ago. I was a person who actually implemented the oratorical but it was

[01:16:31] Joanne and her husband. Joanne is our matriarch and our cheerleader. She's everywhere. She called me one day at school and they said someone's calling from the white house and i said i said they said is it really the white house i said did she say a white house or the white house it was the

[01:16:56] white house because joanne knows everyone and she is a community leader paulette jones accepting the cup on our behalf is miss jennifer jesse i'm sorry no it's not your cup jennifer it's paulette's

[01:17:31] cup when we started the mlk our total we weren't sure it was going to really work and paulette jones made that happen because paulette jones was a winningest mlk orator oracle coordinator in the history of mlk 15 years she had a winner tim t walt tim t walt is a talented graphic designer

[01:18:06] and designed the covers for mlk he would take my ideas and make them into real reality for example malcolm and martin's two roads to freedom please hold that he said that's his favorite design for for the cover.

[01:18:28] You know, sometimes we have great ideas, but we don't have talent. And he would say, "Here comes Lily Jessie." Thank you, Tim.

[01:18:44] I'm not sure Ms. Torian is able to, is she here? She said she had another meeting, but she is a person who actually implemented my, started this thought of running for the school board. But she's also an educational pioneer as the first black woman to become director of student services.

[01:19:04] And finally, there are two more additional people. Teresa Pope, please come and bring your cup. Teresa Pope, Supervisor of Nursing.

[01:19:20] The previous administration hired so many nurses, they were very proud of them because you know why? They put them all on a classified scale. Teresa and I worked in this boardroom and we would place those teachers on a professional scale.

[01:19:40] How long? 17 years. Turn around and take a picture. Isn't that a beautiful red cup, Dr. McDade?

[01:19:58] And tonight I'm giving out the first, thank you, Adelaide Hand tea cup. And it is the original cup from my collection of cups.

[01:20:21] And look at those colors, pink and green. Calm down. Please open it, Jessie. Can you open it for her?

[01:20:38] Dr. McDade, you said I picked you. - Yes, I did, because I knew that you would do the work. Thank you, and I said earlier, take care of my babies.

[01:20:58] Thank you. The final cup returns to Dr. McDade's staff. I think I gave your cup to Mr. Wallingford, and he kept it, so please give that to Dr. Flanard.

[01:21:17] - Thank you, people.

[01:21:32] - Thank you, Ms. Jessie. You have been-- - Dr. McDade? - No, what do you need? - Can I take a picture? - Yeah, yeah, sure. - Ms. Jessie, you want a group picture, or just talking to me date, she wants a group.

[01:21:52] - If the cup recipients could come to the front

[01:21:54] for one picture.

[01:24:32] - Mr. Chairman, while everyone's getting seated, I just want to say one last thank you to Ms. Jessie for the fact that you have consistently recognized and honored not only the African American history in Prince William County schools, but other minorities.

[01:24:49] And that is extremely significant because even as I sit here this evening, I have learned yet again, something new. And I think you should be applauded for that. As a student from, as a Prince William County School student, there was so much history that was not mentioned, and we did not have the opportunity to learn.

[01:25:09] And being a woman of African American descent myself, I just want to take a moment to say thank you, because it's important that we all learn our history, but this is important history for the entire community and for Prince William County Schools.

[01:25:26] So thank you so much. Thank you. I will say that Rachel, when we Rachel and I were talking about one of her students who wrote a book and was writing and she asked him the question, what's the best book you've ever read? And what was his response? Rachel, the book, the child said, when you ask him, what's the best story you've ever read? The one he's writing right now. Our kids are bright. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Jessie for being our unsung hero. Thank you. I think Ms. Williams said it. Thank you, Ms. Jessie for taking

[01:26:05] us through another tour of our history here in the county and the tremendous accomplishments of members of our community who are here this evening so thank you again that was wonderful we will move next to recognizing oh well we have another motion miss wall vice chair thank you mr chairman i move that the prince william county school board approved the resolutions commending Prince William Board of County Supervisors, Chair at Large, Ann B. Wheeler and Brunsville District Supervisor, Janine M. Lawson.

[01:26:42] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Okay, discussion. So I'm gonna have Ms. Wall read Janine Lawson's resolution first. And this is just, you know, the Board of County Supervisors have been tremendous in funding our school division for the last four years.

[01:27:00] As we complete this four year term, We've seen historic raises in funding for schools from the county and they have done a tremendous job and we are grateful for their support for the school division and, you know, doing such great work.

[01:27:16] The great work we've been able to do is because of them. So Ms. Wall, please. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a resolution in appreciation of Janine Lawson. Whereas Janine Lawson, a devoted community leader and advocate for smart growth and preservation in Prince William County has served with distinction as the Brentsville District Supervisor since her initial election on December 23rd, 2014 and subsequent re-elections.

[01:27:42] Whereas, Supervisor Lawson has made the Brentsville District her home for over 25 years, raising two children who attended PWCS and demonstrating a steadfast commitment to the community through active involvement in Grace Life Community Church in Bristow. Whereas, her dedication to preserving the natural beauty and historical heritage of Prince William County is deeply rooted in her character and her passion is reflected in her tireless efforts to maintain the quality of life in the district.

[01:28:09] Whereas she has earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Northern Iowa. Whereas Supervisor Lawson has leveraged her expertise to serve on various regional boards and commissions, including the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Virginia Railway Express Operations Board, and as chair of the Innovation Owners Association in Innovation Technology Park.

[01:28:31] And whereas her leadership extends beyond her official duties, having held elected positions within her major political party, served as a Bridlewood HOA board member and actively supported organizations focused on family, faith, and conservation. And whereas Janine Lawson's commitment to the community is further demonstrated through her contributions to the Glen Kirk PTO and as a chair for the Prince William Safe Schools Council.

[01:28:56] And whereas her advocacy against unrestricted development and for smart growth policies has been crucial in preserving the rural crescent and fostering a balance between development and quality of life in the district, and whereas her support for the location and construction of Gainesville High School and Innovation Elementary School demonstrates her passion for providing first class education facilities to the students in the Brentsville District.

[01:29:19] Now therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County Schools extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation to Supervisor Janine Lawson for her outstanding service and dedication to the Brentsville District and the broader PWCES community, which includes its educational settings.

[01:29:35] be it further resolved that this resolution be entered into the official records of the Prince William County Schools and that a copy here of be presented to Supervisor Janine Lawson as a token of the highest team in which she is held by this board and the community at large.

[01:29:52] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Neither Ms. Lawson or Chair Wheeler can attend, Supervisor Lawson or Chair Wheeler could attend this evening. They have their meetings as well. Unfortunately, it so happened that our two meetings coincide on the same night. I'll be reading a resolution in appreciation of Mrs. Ann Wheeler.

[01:30:10] Whereas the Prince William County Schools recognizes the exceptional dedication and service of Chair at Large Ann Wheeler to the community and the county. And whereas Chair Wheeler's extensive

experience and contributions spanning over 19 years have significantly benefited the residents and institutions within Prince William County.

[01:30:27] And whereas her active participation and leadership roles on various boards, including the Hilton Performing Arts Center Board, the Board of Social Services, and the Prince William Committee of 100 have demonstrated her deep commitment to the welfare and development of the county.

[01:30:44] And whereas she earned a degree from Tufts University in mechanical engineering and earned an MBA from the University of Chicago specializing in finance, whereas Chair Wheeler's educational background and professional experience in engineering and finance have provided her with a unique perspective and skillset that greatly enhances her effectiveness in her role.

[01:31:03] And whereas her dedication to volunteering and community engagement, as evidenced by her involvement in numerous civic organizations and advisory councils, reflects her deep commitment to public service and community improvement. And whereas Chair Wheeler's support for public education, as acknowledged by Dr. Lateef, chairman at large of the school board, has shown her unwavering commitment to the students and teachers of Prince William County.

[01:31:27] And whereas Chair Wheeler's daughters, Elizabeth G. Wheeler and Christina M. Wheeler, both attended and graduated from Prince William County Public Schools, having attended Mountain View Elementary School, Alvey Elementary School, Gravely Elementary School, Unity Braxton Middle School, Battlefield High School, and Virtual Prince William and Alvey Elementary School, oh, so we'll do it again.

[01:31:49] Alvey Elementary, Gravely Elementary, Bull Run Middle School, Pennington Traditional, and Battlefield High School respectively. Now therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board values her friendship as a colleague and extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation to Chair at Large Ann Wheeler for her outstanding service and dedication to the community and its educational institutions.

[01:32:11] Be it further resolved that this resolution be entered in the official records of the Prince William County Schools and that a copy hereof be presented to Chair at Large Ann Wheeler as a token of the high esteem in which she is held by this board and the community at large. Any discussion?

[01:32:27] Please vote. - The vote is six yes, two absent. Ralston and Wilk, motion passed. Thank you.

[01:32:43] I wanna thank the communications department for doing some of the background work on the resolutions this evening and for the board members who've helped to come write all of them. Thank you very much and we'll leave some time at the end in board matters to comment on the great work of both Lawson and Chair Wheeler.

[01:32:58] Okay, moving on, we're gonna move on to the adoption of the consent agenda. Vice Chair Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. any discussion? Please vote. Oh, yeah, Ms. Wall. I just wanted to mention one thing. One of the items on the consent agenda is the 2024 internal audit plan. And I wanted to thank our chief internal auditor who is here tonight, who is largely responsible for all of the work, I would say, in the internal audit, Office of Internal Audit, and thank him for his service to Prince

[01:33:37] William County. And this is a great audit plan. And we've been doing some great things in audit to bring added value to the school division. So I wanted to thank him for being here tonight, first of all, and just commend him on the work that went into the development of this audit plan.

[01:33:55] Hear, hear. Ms. Williams. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to draw attention to our agreement with Northern Virginia Community College for dual enrollment. It is the time of year where students will begin to think about their schedules, and I would just like to thank Nova and Dr. McDade and her administration for keeping this program alive.

[01:34:16] I believe it is a very valuable alternative to our AP classes and serves our students well. So I'm glad that we are still able to continue working collaboratively with Northern Virginia. Thank you. - Okay, please vote.

[01:34:32] - The vote is six yes, two absent. Ralston and Wilk, 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 here for the regular school board meetings is one hour. Citizens may speak to the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS.

[01:34:50] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruptions of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have 20 citizens signed up to speak.

[01:35:07] When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. I will call the first five up and they can grab the seats up front. We have Shannon Coriel, Richard Jesse, Erica Weiss, Emmett Fletcher, Andrea Bortner.

[01:35:30] Shannon Coriel. - My name is Shannon Coriel and my address is on file. Negotiations for employee contracts ended on December 1st and the outcome of these negotiations has left me questioning my future as an educator with PWCS.

[01:35:54] Dr. Lateef, you stated that the school board's tentative agreement with PWEA quote, will ensure we are the best place to work. Members of the school board, I am not confident that we are the best. According to the Virginia Department of Education, staff vacancy and report statistics, our total number of unfilled positions by FTE for the 2022-2023 school year was 1,132.

[01:36:20] Clearly we are not the best at staffing. According to VDOE's 2022-2023 salary survey, our average staff salary is $73,250, which puts us about $5,000 behind our surrounding counties and staff pay.

[01:36:36] In a county ranked as the 11th most expensive place to live in Virginia, it is no surprise that staff are struggling to support themselves and their families. This is why the proposed 6% increase is an essential start to creating equitable wages for staff.

[01:36:53] So thank you. Your proposal for staff with the 12 to 18 years of experience states, they will get a maximum 9% increase. There's a stated maximum, but no defined minimum. What guarantees do veteran teachers have to avoid zero, one or 2%?

[01:37:09] What incentives will teachers have to stay? Your proposal for classified staff states there will be a 3% increase between steps, not 6%. Yet classified staff are not any less essential to keeping schools open.

I'm also concerned about the proposed stipends for extracurricular duties.

[01:37:28] Does this include all other duties as assigned? Teachers at my school are required to work after-school detention, three games or concerts, three events, and 27 after-school meetings a year. Will we be compensated for these doodles duties under the new proposal? Or does this proposal apply to activities? My current stipend for sponsoring NJHS equates to $3.38 an hour for five hours every week. Lastly, what I do not see addressed at all is protected planning time.

[01:37:58] Because our planning time is not protected, I am forced to work 10 hours of overtime every week just to do the bare minimum for my students. Just like our overtime, it costs you nothing to give us protected planning time by writing it into our contracts.

[01:38:15] I implore the school board to reevaluate the proposed salaries and stipends and write protected planning time into the contract. PWCS might not be the best place to work now, but I believe that if the school board can meet the collective bargaining demands of PWEA, it will be.

[01:38:32] Thank you. Richard Jesse. Good evening. My name is Richard Jesse, and my address is on file. I want to talk about the school naming proposal policy you have coming up here.

[01:38:50] There are four major concerns I have. First, in the current policy, the person has to be dead for three years before they can be considered. Second, an individual cannot be related to a board member on the board.

[01:39:07] Second, the third is that the principal has to sign off on the policy, the naming. And the fourth thing is that five members of the board must agree to even have it on the agenda.

[01:39:23] I think these things are inappropriate. First of all, let's deal with the one I have. You know, I remember when Lily first ran for the school board. She had just had a name of the building put on the school, and the board said she was a rock star.

[01:39:44] And then the election came for them to nominate the person to fill the seat temporarily, and the rock star did not get nominated, OK? Lily also had a great career, but she also applied to be associate superintendent three times and did not get selected.

[01:40:07] So when you say that the person has to be, cannot be related to somebody on the board who is qualified, I think that's a disservice to the person. Your votes will say whether you agree if the person is or is not qualified.

[01:40:25] The one statement on your policy that I don't see anymore said something about the person has to have made a significant contribution to the school system. That should be included on there. but these four things I disagree with.

[01:40:42] As I spoke at the last meeting, I also disagree with the citizen time. I think it's too restricted, and I would like to see those change. I don't understand why you need, some of you will say, I don't think a person's name should be on there.

[01:41:03] First of all, I supported John Jenkins' name being on the board. I supported Dr. Lateef running, but I do not understand why, on one hand, you rushed to put John Jenkins' name on the board, and now you say that you don't support somebody's name being on the board.

[01:41:23] I just don't understand that, thank you. - Erica Weiss. - My name is Erica Weiss, and my address is on file. As I've stated in some of the previous speeches, I'm a proud parent and community member in Prince William County.

[01:41:41] I'm also a veteran teacher that works for Prince William County Schools. First of all, let me say I do appreciate that PWEA was able to negotiate multiple important gains for certified and classified staff and secure a tentative agreement from the school division's bargaining team.

[01:41:57] I sincerely hope that the employees, as well as the school board, ultimately ratify this agreement. I think most employees understood that the first negotiation was going to be a learning process and that it would be built upon in future negotiations, especially considering, from what I understand, that the Deherney the division hired to lead the bargaining team had no prior experience negotiating an education contract.

[01:42:22] But like I said, I do support the passing of the collective bargaining agreement that resulted from these negotiations, even without the division being willing to actually negotiate on wages. Hopefully, since the collecting bargaining agreement contains a yearly reopening of negotiations on wages, and from what I've been told, there are some unfair labor practice charges that will be ruled upon by then, be negotiating a much fuller and fairer contract for next year. Maybe some of you will be willing to come to the table yourselves. Before I wrap things up, I want to add a quick observation pertaining to the amendment to the citizen's comment time policy you discussed at the last

[01:43:01] meeting. I was curious how true it was that PWEA is snatching up all 20 speaking slots before the community members and students have a chance. So I asked some PWEA members who are speaking tonight when and at what time they signed up.

[01:43:17] One person showed me via their confirmation email that they received that they signed up at 8:40 a.m. on Saturday and they were approved. Another tonight speaker signed up at 9:15 Saturday morning. But here's the kicker.

[01:43:32] One of the PWEA members speaking tonight didn't sign up until 6:15 p.m. yesterday evening. Clearly you don't have an outlandish number of people beating down your door to speak at these meetings. So certainly not enough to make it justifiably harder to do so.

[01:43:50] Thank you. Emmet Fletcher. Good evening. My name is Emmet Fletcher.

[01:44:06] My address is on file. I'm here to address the issue with the proposed policy on the naming and renaming of schools. One of the major issues I have here, it says be a person or group or someone deceased for three years.

[01:44:24] And I disagree with that because Mr. Jenkins was a good friend of the whole community and a good friend of mine as well. And to have a situation like that, that we would have to wait three years to get a name on a school that he loved in his district, I felt that it would be unjust if we passed this proposal to wait three years.

[01:44:49] And everyone in Prince William County agreed to the naming of Mr. Jenkins, the school, elementary school, as well as the library. And thanks to you, Dr. Lateef, it was a great idea. No one in Prince William County would ever vote against naming a school John Jenkins for all the work that he did, not only in the education field, but for the county government as well.

[01:45:15] So please revisit that issue as well. The other issue I have is that the consideration of school board members to make recommendations for people to be, the school to be named after individuals.

[01:45:34] I believe that the way the policy stands now, I believe is great. The fact of it is, I think it's working and we need to be able to, the community need to have more input as far as the naming of the schools and the renaming.

[01:45:51] we don't have to go through too many more renaming but the fact of it is we have a good school board we have good elected officials also the um three board members i think that should stand i think that's fair to everyone i we don't want this to become political um it's a non-partisan organization we would like to keep it non-partisan and i want to thank you for that also uh my conclusion this evening is i'm here with my purple blazer because we'll make a sci-fi and we would like to thank

[01:46:27] the board dr mcdade the teachers of prince green county school the employees for allowing us to participate in the school we thank you for your service this last year and this year we've donated book packs to the school books also donations for like musical instruments and we really we feel good to do that to give something back to the community so we want to thank the board as well as we also have presented our scholarships to graduating seniors that will be going off to college and we just really appreciate you opening your doors and

[01:47:07] let our organization in to give back to the community thank you so much Andrea Bortner okay - Okay, the next five, Curtis Porter, Christine Ware, Kaitlin Abdale, Jared Gay, and Emily Cherry.

[01:47:33] Curtis Porter. - Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Superintendent McDade, my name is Curtis Porter. My address is also on file. I'd like to share my opposition to the proposed revised school naming policy.

[01:47:53] A particular concern to me is the proposed requirement that in order to name a school or facility, the individual must be deceased for at least three years. As a native of Prince William County with over 200 years of family history in the county, I've had the honor of personally knowing a number of individuals who have made significant contributions to our county who have deservingly so had a school named after them while they were living.

[01:48:23] Unity Braxton. Carol Braxton was a high school classmate of my father at Manassas Regional High School, segregated public school in Manassas, serving black students from Prince William, Warren, Fauquier, and Fairfax County. Celestine Braxton taught with my mother at Jenny Dean School and at Marsteller. Senator Charles Kogan, who I worked with as president of the Prince William NAACP on various pieces of legislation, as well as getting the first woman and African-American appointed to the bench in Prince William County. Betty Covington, who taught with my aunt,

[01:49:00] Mary G. Porter, one of the Courageous Four who taught at Dumfries Elementary School; Fannie Fitzgerald, one of the Courageous Four who also taught with my mother; Dr. George Hampton, who I worked with as NAACP president to get the first African-American judge appointed to the bench in Prince William County; John Harper, who I worked with on a number of community activities. Finally, a single school board member should be able to put a naming request on the agenda thank you for your time and your consideration of my comments christine ware

[01:49:40] hello my name is christine ware my address is on file i'm a career prince william county educator i'd like to talk to you tonight to explain why it's in the best interest of the county to provide a fair

contract to our employees through the collective bargaining process some data i could float your way is probably not new 391 that's the number of current vacancies on the county employment page yesterday. 55.7 percent drop in number of teacher preparation enrollees

[01:50:16] over the last decade or so in Virginia. 5,482 the deficit in Virginia between newly licensed teachers and teachers leaving the profession as of the 21-22 school year. But let's zoom out beyond the county region or state level. Indulge me, one of my um one of my background is teaching social studies. Peter Zion is a geopolitical strategist with ideas that are so thought-provoking.

[01:50:46] Things like the future of the global and the U.S. economy and, more relevant to the topic at hand, U.S. demographics and changes in the labor force. Right now about half of the baby boomers, that big generation of workers born between 1946 and 64, have already retired and the rest are are heading that way soon.

[01:51:07] Meanwhile, Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, are entering the workforce, but they're a much smaller generation than most of the preceding ones. Zion predicts that the labor shortage across the economy will increase every year for the next decade.

[01:51:24] 450,000 workers now, climbing up to 900,000. What's the connection? There isn't just a shortage of teachers, there's a shortage of workers for all professions. that shortage will increase over the next decade.

[01:51:41] That means that Prince William is not only competing to acquire and retain employees with neighboring counties, it means that Prince William is and will be competing with the entire economy for college-educated adults with the skills that teachers have.

[01:51:59] Written and verbal communication, project management, multitasking, technology, and you know, throw in a mean PowerPoint as a bonus. Prince William will also be competing with the entire economy for the wide range of skills our classified employees bring. The labor supply won't get better till millennials' children start to enter the labor force at least a decade away.

[01:52:19] That's long enough to impact nearly the entire K-12 educational career of our current students as well as their young siblings. It's not about politics or a battle of wills. This is demographics. There will not be a better time to invest in the teachers of today at all points in their careers and of the next decade than there is right now.

[01:52:41] Thank you. - Katelyn Abdale. - My name is Katelyn Abdale and my address is on file. I am a preschool special education teacher.

[01:52:56] So many of us are tasked now with extra duties, such as extra home visits for our doubles teachers. Students that are not on our caseloads. This has been difficult as many of the families that we have been seeing do not have adequate manipulatives or toys in their houses.

[01:53:13] Also, it takes away planning time the students we do have on our caseloads. This includes being able to plan fun and engaging lessons for inside the classroom as well as being able to prep those lessons for both our students inside the classroom and outside the classroom. It was written in policy that we are required to have planning time yet many of us don't get it because we're pulled in so many different directions.

[01:53:40] I have personally spent a total of $5,250 on supplies to be able to uphold my job duties such as buying things from my classroom, buying things to go to home visits and resource visits, gloves, tissues, and many more just to make sure my students have the necessary supplies they need to be successful. So many of us are tasked with these extra things and do not receive an unencumbered or duty-free lunch time. Many of us eat in our cars as we drive from house to house, daycare to daycare to service our resource and home visit students. A few of my colleagues have

[01:54:19] also told me in confidence that they have felt unsafe in these situations for some of the home visits. We need to revisit a policy to be written to help us feel safe by having two staff members come to some of these homes and house visits. We are also asking for planning time and a duty-free lunch. Thank you for your time. Jared Gay. My name is Jared Gay and my address is on file with the the clerk tonight I like to correct the record regarding several inaccuracies

[01:54:58] that were in a recent inside NOVA article with the headline Prince William County Public Schools reaches partial tentative agreement with teachers union first of all the school board's bargaining team didn't offer or propose a deal on wages they introduced the wage policy months ago told our team that it was their quote first last best and final offer admitted that it was the wage policy that the school board and superintendent always intended to include in next year's budget and ultimately threaten to kill the entire collective bargaining agreement if we did not concede to it and sure enough after we set aside that section on wages without coming to agreement for the sake of protecting the gains that we had been able to secure through

[01:55:35] negotiations the division announced that they are indeed going to pass the wage policy that they always intended to that type of bad faith bargaining is at the heart of our unfair labor practice charges against the school board that will be heard in third-party arbitration on December 14th also by their own admission their pay proposal would not make us competitive with other school divisions in Northern Virginia while PWEA's would have. You see the divisions wage proposal was not a 6% average salary increase for most employees it actually averages to around 5% for the majority of employees 2% of which comes from the state a little over 2% is the actual cost of living adjustment which

[01:56:13] still comes nowhere close to keeping pace with inflation and the rest is comprised of the step increase that employees should already accrue upon completion of an additional year of service. But the most egregious error is the claim that PWEA "held steadfast throughout negotiations on request for a 17% wage increase." We offered the division's bargaining team multiple counter proposals that were cost-neutral relative to their proposal. We tried to negotiate a more equitable distribution of wage increases to spread them out amongst all employees impacted by the division's wage compression in past years though, so that teachers with 19 plus years of

[01:56:50] experience which are the group that are most behind on the pay scale would receive relief as well. 17% was our initial proposal. Unlike the Prince William County Schools bargaining team we always understood this to be a negotiation and we actually negotiated in good faith. We attempted to meet their bargaining team halfway to respect what they claim to be their sticking points with multiple cost-neutral counter proposals while the superintendent on the other hand told her bargaining team to dictate terms and refused to negotiate any alternative to the decree that they handed down on wages at the bargaining table. I'm requesting that the school board and school board members

[01:57:29] and division leadership refrain from making false public statements about the collective bargaining negotiations or agreement especially considering that not a single one of you took us up on our invitation to come to the table yourselves despite the fact that your bargaining team made it clear to us that you were always the people with whom we were actually negotiating.

[01:57:46] Fortunately Inside NOVA is writing an update after talking to me and I do thank them for that Emily Cherry hello my name is Emily Cherry and my address is on file in the past when I've written speeches to come speak before you to tell my story the writing was really easy the words just soared from my pen and onto the paper but today's speech was harder I think that's because every other time I've spoken in this room one story was always on the tip of my tongue and kind of wedged in the back of my throat it was the story of being diagnosed with PTSD as a result

[01:58:25] of my experience teaching in Prince William County Schools. Last month, a year after my initial diagnosis, I shared the story of my experiences publicly for the first time and with this board. For me, my trauma story was hard to share because I felt so much shame about my experiences.

[01:58:44] My trauma told me that if teaching was getting harder and harder every day, it was my own fault. I should just give more of myself. I should just cut myself open, pour my heart out into my work. if I was depleted and empty, a shell of myself at the end of each day, that was my own fault.

[01:59:03] Not only was I a bad teacher, I was a bad mother too, for not always having enough of myself left over at the end of the day for my own family and for spending so many long nights in school board meetings or outside of bargaining rooms begging for a better working environment for myself and my colleagues instead of being there to tuck my own kids into bed at night.

[01:59:23] But an amazing thing happens when you share your truth. The darkness of shame vanishes and the light of community takes its place so many colleagues reached out to me with encouragement with kindness and with so so so many experiences that were the same as mine unfortunately the response to hearing my story and similar stories of my colleagues did not elicit such encouraging response such an encouraging response from this school board instead the board brought forth a emotion to limit citizen comment time and you made it clear it was because employees like me are

[02:00:03] to quote lori williams weaponizing the system by having the audacity to take up too much space and time by telling our stories brene brown said quote there is no courage without vulnerability it's the ability to open up and be seen it's the ability to be brave when you can't see the outcome the teachers and other employees in this room have shown so much courage over the last several years they organized when no one thought they had a chance to collect enough signatures they organized when you set impossible election standards they showed up to the bargaining table again and again

[02:00:40] even when they weren't met in good faith and they came to this room month after month with the bravery to be vulnerable to tell their story even in the face of possible retaliation tonight I'm asking the board to show the same courage to please reverse course on limiting citizen comment time. Thank you. Next five Kimberly Wallman, Teresa Koning, Gabriel Dallaire, Jane Coburn, Heather Oberle. Kimberly Wallman. Good evening.

[02:01:16] My name is Kimberly Willeman and my address is on file with the clerk. Last meeting I was concerned by what I heard about the proposal calendar from Dr. Sullivan. Mr. Wilk mentioned in his statements the need to revisit our length of the instructional school day and give teachers more of their

time back to complete their work. The duties outside of just teaching students, but the duties of grading, professional development, planning, and everything else that's been assigned down the line. In this presentation that we heard, the state requires

[02:01:47] 180 days or 990 hours of instructional time. 180 days or 990 hours. 180 days times our six-hour instructional day that's 1080 instructional hours that our students are banking each year. 90 extra hours beyond the requirement of our state. Divide 90 hours by a six-hour day and that's 15 extra total school days that we are banking with our students in extra instructional time each year. So So what's the true rationale for having a code orange day?

[02:02:25] Fairfax and Arlington aren't doing it. Why are we? I'm a parent of a kindergartner and a third grader. Our children are resilient. They shift and adapt, especially when supported in these new learning situations. From virtual, to hybrid, to in-person, you name it, my kid's done it.

[02:02:45] However, I'm currently perplexed by the code orange policies in place that put a schedule in place for five-year-olds to be on iPads for almost four hours a day. Who thinks that's going to work? Why would that work? Developmentally, it's inappropriate. And personally, it's not something that I'll support in my home, especially when we bank 15 extra school days worth of instructional time in our school year. Our on-screen learning was lambasted, and educators have been raked over the coals for what they've encountered, but we're going to do it on an

[02:03:22] inclement weather day? 180 days, but you've built in 15 extra. What better way to encourage our students to be creative than to reward them with a weather day? 15 extra instructional days banked? All of it is time that my kindergartner student may or may not continue to have understaffed classrooms. Time where we wait to see when a TA position will actually be posted online for her class of 26 students who should have a full-time TA daily, but it doesn't. Time where I watch as her amazing educator pivots and adjusts to different substitutes each day,

[02:04:00] and often, with over 14 hours this year, no substitute aid at all. We bank time with our scheduled days, but what's the point if we don't provide thriving situations for our students and our teachers in those classrooms? As of 12-4, we have 241 certified positions open.

[02:04:18] We need to do better by our students. Give 'em the snow day. - Good evening, my name is Teresa Koenig. I am a Prince William County educator. My address is on file.

[02:04:35] I'm a veteran teacher with more than 30 years of experience. My past 10 years have been in Prince William County. It was very hard for me to do this. I am not a public speaker. I can speak in a group of students, but I do not enjoy speaking in public.

[02:04:52] However, as I was going to writing this speech, I was thinking I would give you the reasons why you should provide a fair and equitable contract. Then I thought the bottom line is ultimately the people who are being hurt by all of this are the students.

[02:05:10] When a teacher resigns in the middle of the school year to poor working conditions, it impacts the students. When you can't fill vacant positions and use certified TAPOTA teachers, it is affecting our students' education.

[02:05:30] Currently, there are 261 certified positions vacant in Prince William County, with approximately 25 students per class. That is about 6,525 students today who are being impacted because

we cannot find teachers to fill the positions.

[02:05:50] When employees, all employees, are out overworked, underpaid, and not treated with respect, it affects our students. Bottom line, teaching is a gift. To teach, we teach and we touch many lives of our children, but how can we provide learning and achievement for all when the district is not able to attract and retain teachers?

[02:06:21] - Gabrielle Dallaire. - Good evening, my name is Gabrielle Dallaire. My address is on record. I am a junior at Charles J. Colgan Senior High School. Tonight I will be speaking in support of the changes to school board policy number 134, citizen participation.

[02:06:42] I signed up for the last board meeting at around 5:00 PM the day it opened, but all the slots were filled. I'm the student that wrote to the board about the no-bag policy. Thank you to Ms. Zargarpur for raising my concern. It was especially disheartening when I wanted to speak and there were people that didn't show up.

[02:07:01] While I still believe that the bag issue needs to be addressed, I found a bigger issue. The same people were speaking at every board meeting. Because of the way speaking slots are assigned, only the first people to sign up receive a slot, leaving everyone else without. For the 2023-24 school year, Almost all speakers have spoken about the teacher negotiation or school board election.

[02:07:25] While this is an important issue, it is not the only issue impacting our schools. Sign up starts at 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday, and students are less likely to sign up at eight in the morning due to competing priorities, including clubs, sports, and even SATs.

[02:07:42] I understand that you are not supposed to have someone else sign up for you. However, I had to have my mother sign up for me this time because I was taking the SAT and I was afraid that all the slots would have been filled by the time I got home. The policy should try for inclusion of all voices, not just the loudest, or in this case, the ones that wake up early on a Saturday morning.

[02:08:04] Teacher issues have dominated citizen times so far this school year at the expense of student voices. While both are important, we shouldn't have to sacrifice one or the other. We do not need 20 people talking about the same thing, meeting after meeting after meeting.

[02:08:20] Controversial issues are going to come and go, but they shouldn't dominate. Issues that I hear students discussing include the no-bag policy, security, and the lack of presence of administrative staff. If you adapt a more inclusive citizen time policy, you may get to hear about them too.

[02:08:40] Part of the Prince William County Public Schools mission is commit to inclusive practices and equity with an expectation of excellence from every student and employee every day. Our board policies should reflect this, thank you.

[02:08:57] - Jane Coburn. - Is there no clock? Sorry, I'm still not seeing clock. There it is, thank you. Good evening, Dr. McDade and members of the board. My name is Jane Coburn, my address is on file.

[02:09:13] So I'm here again, hi. I stand here before you. We've finished collective bargaining negotiations. I have to tell you, I'm incredibly proud of the job that the employees of this division have done in accomplishing something incredible with collective bargaining.

[02:09:30] We stood by our profession, we stood by our livelihoods and our commitment to bettering the working and learning conditions in Prince William County. I'd also like to thank the dedicated PWEA

bargaining team and the divisions bargaining team for their time and effort. It was a big deal and they did a great job in coming forth and meeting with each other.

[02:09:48] But unfortunately, agreements on salary weren't made and we've already heard from Mr. Gay why that occurred. That's because something was put out and basically no negotiation occurred on the divisions part. It was simply here's what we're giving you, now be quiet. So, an unequitable pay increase, some get more, some get less, is not really in line with the division's philosophy on how we're supposed to be treating people.

[02:10:13] Not only that, but stating that you will not in any way, shape, or form authorize a raise for those with 20 years of experience or more, Dr. McDade, it sends a pretty clear message to your employees like myself who I now have 24 years in education and the message is we don't value you your expertise your skills your experience is not important to us and it's all about a body in a room and you're an expensive body and we don't want to pay you more this statement was made through your

[02:10:50] bargaining team that the reason why we don't want to offer raises of double steps to those in the highest those of us who have been compressed the most was because that would make these employees at the topest range the highest paid employees in the area why is that bad I'm like somebody help me out with this like why is that a bad thing I thought we wanted to be the best but you don't want to pay us to be the best you just want us to work to be the best without getting paid right so just to be very clear I am in that 20 and above and if I

[02:11:27] left this store right now and walked over to Fairfax which would take me by the way because they're now accepting up to 27 years so don't feel so comfy with your veterans, okay? If I walked out that door, I would get a $10,000 raise today. That's how far below you are to your competitors. So sitting there and telling the division, bargaining team telling us, hey, we're not going to pay the top 10 additional step because, wow, that would just make them get too much money. Like, we can't do that. That's not really realistic.

[02:11:59] Not to mention, an employee coming into the division right now, we'll just give her a name, Marla. So Marla walks into the division door, gets hired 12 years of experience. Oh, I'm out of time. You kind of know my point. Heather Oberly? You didn't tell her to stop, so I thought that's what she was saying. Hi, my name is Heather Oberly and my address is on file. In 1999, I began working for Prince William County Schools. At that time, I was told that since teachers cannot get Christmas

[02:12:34] bonuses, performance raises, and we can't petition our administrators for a raise, we were promised a yearly step increase and a COLA if the budget allowed. In my time in Prince William County we have had two step freezes. One lasted three years and one two. Recently the steps were compressed.

[02:12:52] What this means is I should be at step 25 for 25 years of teaching but I am at 19. With the current pay scale that is a $20,000 difference. It may not mean anything to you but for my retirement and my daily life, it means a lot. In 2019, Lateef's first year as chair, the board voted to double their pay, an increase that was needed because there had not been an increase in 19 years.

[02:13:17] Not only did they receive this pay increase, but they are also reimbursed for mileage to and from school board functions and activities outside their districts. I don't get anything for having to live outside of Prince William County to get here driving 30 miles each way. They get meals for working meetings you have teachers here who don't have time to have a meal that they pay but you get reimbursed

for working meals you are reimbursed for internet and related technology none of us were reimbursed for anything like that for covet that came out of our pockets and i'm

[02:13:54] now twenty thousand dollars less because you keep compressing and i also called fairfax county and they are matching full years at this point. Miss Jessie, did you receive double your salary when they increased the school board budget? Yeah, I know you did. My question is why? You were on your way out. You did not run during this most recent election, which proves you were done being a school board member. Shouldn't your increase have been put towards getting a new, younger school board member? That's what veteran teachers are told as to why they are not receiving the same

[02:14:31] salary increase year after year think about this miss jesse you heard all of those amazing things and i had this written before i knew that was happening tonight you have touched so many people how would you have felt if you were told nope you're not getting that because you've been around too long latif do you realize that your part-time job as chair is higher than a full-time certified employee in Prince William County. When Lateef claimed that his re-election campaign that over

[02:15:05] the past five years teachers received a 30% pay increase, not all teachers did. You're misleading when you say that happened when it's up to. Veteran teachers bring years of earned experience to the table that help students achieve the world-class education that Prince William County Schools promises. Shouldn't we be compensated in a similar fashion as our newer colleagues?

[02:15:30] I believe yes Bethany Moore generally Smith on and decide Matthew Reed's wig and Maggie Hansford Bethany Moore good evening my name is Bethany Moore and my address is on file my husband and I are both veteran teachers of Prince William County Schools 13 years into our careers as highly qualified and certified teachers in the county our family of four lives in a 1,000 square

[02:16:09] foot apartment built in the 80s most days it feels very very crowded our Our complex of small apartments is home to many PWCS teachers and their families. I'm not just talking about brand-new first-year teachers, but also veteran teachers of over a decade who are well-established in their careers and have been loyal to PWCS.

[02:16:31] Many of my veteran colleagues live with their parents in their 30s and 40s, not because of making reckless financial choices or gambling their money away, but because it's all that can be afforded with a PWCS teacher's salary. It feels discouraging and disrespectful this far into our careers, having been loyal to this county to barely be able to make ends meet.

[02:16:55] It's hard to repeatedly hear "do it for the kids" when we're not sure what our salaries can do for our own children. Will we one day be able to give them a home with a yard in our school district? Will we be able to afford the extracurriculars they deserve? Will we be able to help with college?

[02:17:12] Without proper compensation, we won't. we won't be able to provide the necessities, much less the extras for our boys. The honest discussions going on amongst your staff are how teachers are spending their weekends job hunting for a career change or a county change.

[02:17:28] Some of the best teachers I've ever known are applying for jobs in other counties or are leaving teaching altogether because they're tired of not being compensated like the highly qualified professionals that they are. As a mother, it's devastating to hear my son's phenomenal teacher Wonder how much longer she can afford to work in the profession that she loves and excels in.

[02:17:50] As her friend, I empathize and wonder, too, how much longer can we sustain this? Can we afford to retire as teachers in this county? It was so disheartening to hear that at the bargaining table, PWCS did not want their veteran teachers to be the most highly paid in the state.

[02:18:07] That this thought was a negative for them philosophically and that any improvement to the pay scale was their line in the sand. You already have many classrooms without certified teachers or any teachers at all, and yet you refuse to pay us fairly for the work that we do. How do you intend to retain our most experienced staff when you don't compensate them accordingly?

[02:18:27] I wish we were all on the same team, wanting what's best for the staff, students, and community in PWCS, but the message your teachers are hearing right now from you is loud and clear, that you're positioning yourselves in direct opposition of the staff that you should be supporting. Thank you.

[02:18:44] - Jenilee Smith. - Hello, my name is Jenna Lee Smith and my address is on file with the clerk. Just for the record, I'm a first time speaker and I signed up on Sunday, so there was plenty of time this time.

[02:19:02] You might say that I have been in Prince William County Schools for the last 24 years. In fact, that statement is true on multiple levels, figurative and literal. I'm a Prince William County native who attended Prince William County Schools from kindergarten all the way through my senior year of high school, go Bruins.

[02:19:19] I have been a kindergarten teacher in Prince William County for 11 years, and all of those 11 years were at the elementary school that I also went to. And to top it all off, I'm a security resident at another school in Prince William County.

[02:19:36] In case anyone's wondering what a security resident is, it is an arrangement in which a person agrees to live on school grounds in exchange for free or heavily discounted rent in utilities. Thank goodness, honestly, for me. I've probably logged more than enough physical time in Prince William County Schools to qualify for some sort of platinum level certificate of attendance.

[02:19:59] So why would I choose to live in a school in Prince William County? To be honest, that's one of the only ways I could afford, my husband and I really can afford to live in Prince William County with the pay I receive for teaching. I have continued teaching for the last 11 years because I love teaching and I love my students and the people I work with.

[02:20:18] But over time, the stress that has built up from teaching in a division that has increased demands on employees to a far greater degree than they have increased their employees' salaries has become too burdensome to continue. I'm tired of being overworked and underpaid, so next year I will be switching to a specialist position in hopes that it'll help some way.

[02:20:40] As much as I love my students, I finally realize that my life and well-being are more important than my job and the stresses it brings. I urge the school board and division leadership to listen to their employees and trust their experience and expertise, capitalize on the negotiated contracts that you will soon vote on, and grow this process into a true vehicle for working with your teachers and staff to reverse the trend of rapid veteran teacher turnover.

[02:21:09] It's what your employees deserve, it's what your students deserve, and that's what our community deserves. Thank you. - Anand Desai. - Hi, Anand Desai from Bristow, address on file.

[02:21:26] I'm here to support Citizens Time, oppose agenda item 19.02, which would further restrict citizens' time, and suggest improvements. Citizens' time provides information and recommendations. Citizens' time holds power to account by putting government on notice and helping good ideas take root among the interested community.

[02:21:46] Some people feel more able to communicate by speaking, and even our highest courts appreciate the credibility, nuance, and confirmed attention of oral argument. And hearing us out, especially when you respond perceptively, helps build a positive working relationship even when we disagree. Citizen participation is particularly important for the public schools because they dominate so much of our young people's lives, including career prospects and student debt to fill the gaps.

[02:22:11] So much of our budget and so much of teachers' lives, and not just in terms of salary, but also in terms of a worthwhile, fulfilling career. And the voices of your few bold citizens here are particularly matter because school environment can tamp down dissent.

[02:22:26] The kids can shun and bully. Grading is often subjective. The central office was opaque with the Waltz scandal and insists on billing for occasional minor FOIA requests, and teachers' pay is very back-end loaded and their working circumstances dependent on a system that practically shuts out charter, religious, and private alternative employment.

[02:22:46] So I spoke at the county board to support teachers having a union to stand up for their rights to speak their mind. So all in all, the school board should have more citizen participation than the county supervisors, not less. Please consider working more slots into your schedule or special sessions.

[02:23:04] Please also consider a message board, like the supervisor's "Speak up Prince William" to post for you and for one another to see. Please comment about it at the board meetings to confirm you've read. Second, banning repeat speakers would stack the deck with school board employees because they have a deep bench, well organized, with immediate financial interest, and largely right here or easily over here by 7.

[02:23:27] I do want to hear from them and I appreciate them, but credibility also depends on accessible balanced representation. Repeat speakers could do with less time. Big news takes only a headline to break. Repeat speakers should at least be able to register for remaining slots a day later. So, Board Member Wahl, save us from alienation and thought control. And Democrats, support democracy with the robust, accessible, and

[02:23:53] visible citizen input options. Thank you. Matthew Reed Swig. Okay, Maggie Hansford. Hi, my name is Maggie Hansford. My address is on file with the the clerk, I first want to give a shout out to my favorite Brentsville Tiger, Sebastian Hansford.

[02:24:23] CBass, number 70, did a great season and he's a senior this year and we're very proud of him. I'm here to talk to Wade Anderson and the school board and Dr. McDade. We spent a long time together since April and your messaging could have been a million things.

[02:24:45] Could have been a million things of how you all determined how you would push out your communication of working with staff. What you could have said is what we did together, but you didn't.

[02:25:02] What you did was try to villainize us again, talk about what we didn't do. You said that we failed. You used all of such inappropriate language instead of highlighting what we did achieve. We got rid

of the broken sick bank for years that nobody did anything about.

[02:25:23] We did that. We came together and we figured out a short-term disability plan for all employees. Why couldn't you all celebrate that? Why is that a bad thing? But you didn't want to do it, did you? Just like you didn't want to do collective bargaining altogether.

[02:25:41] There was so many meaningful things that we were able to achieve together, like thriving futures, those music teachers that never received any compensation during all of their performances and everything they do for our students. They never once received compensation until now, until this contract.

[02:26:01] You could have said that. You could have talked about the coaches, all of our coaches having to split their stipends because there's not enough coaches helping our kids. You could have talked about, instead of splitting their stipends, we actually increased stipends for all of our coaches.

[02:26:20] You could have celebrated that, but you didn't. You could have talked about when we negotiated for 15 hours on December 1st. And we couldn't come together. You said it was a philosophical difference between us.

[02:26:38] I say we're respecting equity, not just for our students, but for our staff too. And so we decided that we TA'd everything, but the issues that we have pending charges on. Everything else, everything else was TA'd.

[02:26:55] You could have celebrated that, but you didn't. There's five charges that are being heard on December 14th. Everything else is TA. You could have said that, but you didn't. At some time, you all are gonna have to decide to work with.

[02:27:14] There's nothing wrong with this process. It's a good thing. - Thank you. - Celebrate it. - That concludes citizen comment time. We'll move on next to the Office of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Information and Action.

[02:27:31] - On 1501, the annual school, the 2024-25 annual school calendar, this item is for action this evening and in a motion is in order, Vice Chair Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve option A for the 2024-25 school calendar.

[02:27:50] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? - Yeah, I would like to say something. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, I recognize that this calendar isn't perfect for, you know, some people want more of this, less that, whatever. I do wanna say, I'm just gonna make it fast.

[02:28:06] Moving forward, I do think it would be worthy of consideration of those half days that Mr. Wilk brought up last time. We brought it up in our two by two. Maybe putting in some half day work days once in a while so that teachers can get caught up on grades or whatever they need to do.

[02:28:23] And I know it's, like I said, it's not gonna make everybody happy, but we are aligned kind of with regionally so that works for families who, you know, one teacher may live in one district and work in another.

[02:28:39] But I wanna thank everybody who did offer comments and suggestions and things like that. Thank you so much for the time that was spent in the division to come up with this. - Ms. Wall, or yeah, Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[02:28:58] For those who've looked at the three calendars that were proposed, the differences are very slight of the three offered up for consideration. And I just, first of all, want to thank those who worked on the calendar committee. I know it's a big lift. There's a lot of, there are a lot of meetings that go into it.

[02:29:14] There are a lot of regulations that have to be complied with. A lot of holidays that are federal and state and Prince William County, and then just community holidays. Personally, as a parent, I would prefer a calendar that ends two weeks earlier to more align with SOL testing, AP testing, the fatigue that sets in the last couple of weeks of school and the difficulty for our staff for keeping learning relevant.

[02:29:43] So if it were before me as an option, I would do that, but that was not any of the three options that were here. And I understand the math and the, I understand the formula. It's almost like a calculus formula. And so those options were not presented.

[02:29:59] Clearly, you know, as Ms. Zargarpur alluded to, there are many comments that are out there, you know, that we have a lot of holidays and they're not wrong. We have a lot of work days that they're also not wrong. The sticking point is whether to allow all of those different things or whether to compress the calendar.

[02:30:19] Some kids appreciate the breaks, the random breaks, because it allows them to get caught up on work. It allows for scheduling of doctor's appointments, families. There are a lot of reasons why this calendar does work for some people. Overall, the effect is with lots of days off that it's a little harder to get into routine.

[02:30:37] The flow of learning is a little bit more interrupted we have lots of days off but on the other hand you know we are honoring very significant cultural holidays for our communities and we are providing staff work days throughout the school year this is a long way of saying i think that option a is the best option of the three that are presented for us because primarily it was the supported at the greatest level by the community and that's very important to me that we when we ask for community voice that we consider community input.

[02:31:10] So that is why I believe that option A is the best calendar. Thank you. All right.

[02:31:25] Thank you. All right. So the last meeting we discussed that there has been increased planning time on the calendar proposed, but I do remain concerned that just in general about planning time, especially given the ever-changing culture of education, including trainings, including the many that come from the state that I know personally I've taken more times than I can count I know that adding planning requires time community staff stakeholder involvement because even the slightest shift impacts everything from childcare to bus schedules I also know that we need a new calendar in order to

[02:32:05] start the new year in order to make preparations for the next school year so I go to support of the calendar that the community supported by popularity vote and but I am hoping that my advocacy for planning time is heard and considered thank you miss William thank you I'm also going to support calendar a for the same reasons I believe that the public overwhelmed well not overwhelmingly but by majority support this calendar I do feel that you know we after SOLs and

[02:32:44] finals there's still so much learning to be done and I don't like the rhetoric hanging out there that after SOLs that we should just end our school year because we're supposed to be learning all year long you know we have summer programs there's there's so much and I don't like the idea that we could leave hanging out in the air that we only teach to a test because we don't teach to a test I do think that we need to

be more creative and flexible with our professional development days our parent-teacher conferences I have been

[02:33:19] here long enough to see some of these days evolve in the way that we implement them but we no longer live in a world where we have stay-at-home moms or room moms and that sort of thing so I think it is worth maybe the division asking our staff what works best now in today's times and if we could make some changes that would be accommodating not only to our staff but to our parents I spoke to to a teacher yesterday about parent-teacher conferences for days, for example, touch base, which is my least favorite parent-teacher conference day, like split shift days, doing half in the morning

[02:33:59] and half in the afternoon, or something to that nature, and expanding the time, because three minutes is not enough time to discuss your student's progress, nor should you just be waiting until touch base to do that. But I do appreciate all the hard work that went into this.

[02:34:14] I know that we had teachers, community members, staff put in their comments for this calendars like boundaries uh like citizen comment time and so many other things will never make anyone 100 happy it is also not our job to align with surrounding divisions so i do appreciate all the work that went into and i will be voting for calendar a so thank you okay please vote the vote is six yes two absent

[02:34:51] ralston and wilk motion passed okay moving on to student representative time we have tonight Isabella Alvarsano on the dais. Isabella is a senior attendant Gainesville High School. Miss Alvarsano. - Good evening to the school board superintendent in Prince William County community.

[02:35:07] I'm excited to serve as one of your student representatives and grateful for the opportunity to speak this evening. First of all, Gabrielle, are you still here? In the back, I really appreciated you speaking up for the student perspective. I'm not really allowed to react from here and it's a very ominous crowd to face, but I would have thrown those up if I could.

[02:35:26] Now tonight, I would also like to extend my congratulations and gratitude to Ms. Jackson, Ms. Raulston, and Ms. Jessie for their dedicated public service. I was really nervous to start this position and every now and then I can still feel myself sweating up here. The thought of sitting up here amongst you guys was really intimidating, so I never could have imagined that you guys would be the most welcoming people in the room.

[02:35:45] Ms. Jessie, there's no one I'd rather sit next to and I'm honestly a little nervous for the new arrangement. I read up on all your profiles before my first meeting and yours absolutely blew me away. I had to scroll multiple times just to make it halfway through your accolades, and that's when I realized that you're the creator of the Martin Luther King Youth Oratorical Contest.

[02:36:04] That was the very first writing and leadership program I remember being introduced to back in elementary school, and I'm here now, so. It's rare for younger students to be exposed to opportunities that open their minds to public service and human rights, and I can only imagine how many other students you've impacted as a result.

[02:36:19] Ms. Raulston's advocacy dates to high school, and as a current student leader, it's motivating and inspiring to see how far she has taken her passion. Ms. Jackson, as a Gainesville High School student, I can say you've done an awesome job serving the district. It was exciting to have you at our principal's advisory committee meeting, and I honestly couldn't believe that you hauled it all the way out there on a Monday night.

[02:36:38] Morning traffic is our most controversial issue, yet you easily assuaged people's concerns, answered their questions, and vowed to keep working on a solution. A meeting or two ago, I watched you respond to a derogatory comment that was made about your disability. You are also a special educator, so I can't imagine that was easy for you in any regard.

[02:36:55] On top of that, I watch you guys get flamed for an hour every month, and you can't react. Still, you set a classy example of how to clap back and stick up for yourself and the people you represent. You all have been amazing role models to me and other student leaders across the county, and I'm proud to have learned from you these past few months.

[02:37:12] On that note, the Student Senate met yesterday with Ms. Brown and Ms. Good to discuss specialty programs. The past few months, access and exposure to specialty programs has become a hot topic amongst the Senate and student voice committees. We've noticed that there are discrepancies between schools and the amount and kind of programs that were advertised, especially GovSchool, pre-gov and whatnot and a lot of high schoolers have expressed regret and a desire for more information starting in middle school the Senate also met with Miss McKnight to discuss our feedback and thoughts around the vaping and schools issue I'm sure you all are well aware so all I'll say is that we've all seen it we've all heard it and we're doing our best to stop it thank you for

[02:37:48] your time and that concludes my remarks thank you Isabella excellent remarks thank you moving on a superintendent's time dr. McDade thank you dr. Lateef I I want to begin by congratulating the Freedom High School football team who once again earned a spot in the Region 6 state championship after defeating James Madison in the state semifinal game this past weekend. The Eagles will play Highland Springs at 11:30 a.m. on December 9th at the University of Virginia. Although the state championship run for the Brentsville District

[02:38:25] Tiger football team came to an end last weekend, I want to congratulate the team on a successful season overall. I am proud of the accomplishments of our student-athletes. I'm also proud of the Battlefield High School girls volleyball team who battled triumphantly in the state semifinals and valiantly in the state championship. Congratulations to a team of dedicated, determined, and talented ladies. This week PWCS honors Computer Science Education Week, an annual call to action for the importance of inspiring our K-12 students to learn computer science, to advocate digital equity and and celebrate the contributions of students, teachers, and partners in the field.

[02:39:03] PWCS has taken this call to action earnestly. In partnership with Micron, SPARC, the Education Foundation for Prince William County Public Schools, we held the first Girls Going Tech event in the Northern Virginia region. It was truly amazing to see so many brilliant and eager ladies learning about STEM.

[02:39:24] Women have made impressive gains in the fields of business, law, and medicine, but still make up only 34% of the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and math. The gender gap is particularly high in some of the fastest growing and highest paid jobs of the future, like computer science and engineering.

[02:39:43] PWCS wants to expand participation in advanced courses, provide more opportunities for post-secondary credit, and prepare all students to create a thriving future for themselves and their communities. In addition to our work with students, we also want PWCS to be a destination those in the IT field. On November 27, Foundry's Computer World named PWCS as a 2024 best place to work in

information technology. We ranked ninth in diversity among large organizations, challenging our staff while providing great benefits and compensation. The award is a testament to the

[02:40:20] incredible dedication and hard work our technology staff members demonstrate every day in support of students, colleagues, and families. And I want to congratulate our Chief Information Officer, Matt Guilfoyle, who heads up all of our IT work in Prince William County Public Schools, as well as Director A.J. Phillips, who oversees our technology team, for their leadership and support of staff, and our entire technology team across Prince William County Public Schools for all of their hard work and dedication, which is what makes Prince William County the best place to work.

[02:40:53] Our achievements and success are due to the consistent and reliable foundation of showing up every day, every hour. And our students know this very well. In our first ever school attendance theme competition, Forest Park's Samuel Noor slogan, Knowledge is Power, Attend Every Hour, was voted as the best theme by more than 4,000 high school students.

[02:41:17] I hope this will be a reminder in the last weeks of the calendar year that ending strong is just as important as beginning strong. make it a priority to attend every hour of every school day this applies to every pwcs student as this week is national inclusive schools week i emphasize our core value of inclusivity in creating a positive climate and culture research consistently reports that a positive school climate increases students self-esteem and self-conception decreases absenteeism reduces behavioral issues and disciplinary actions and increases school competition school completion

[02:41:53] an inclusive school is not just about feeling good but knowing you can do good for yourself and others a rising tide lifts all ships and launching thriving futures takes our collective strength i would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season and i encourage you to take this winter break to relax recharge and spend time with loved ones and friends i look forward to continuing our work together in the new year and the endless possibilities for an even brighter future for all pwcs students we can't wait to see our students return to school on january 2nd at this time i would like to welcome dr tim neal our director of research accountability and strategic

[02:42:32] planning to present the two 2023-24 quarter one update dr latif school board members dr mcdade good evening it's my pleasure tonight to do a broad overview of our first quarter data so similar to last year this presentation is going to touch on enrollment data our attendance data, we'll briefly cover our Virginia growth assessment information, and then we'll spend the bulk of our time looking at our elementary performance as measured by grades and reading

[02:43:06] levels, and our secondary performance as measured by grades and our failing course analysis. So this table shows our enrollment as of the end of the first quarter. You can see it's similar to what we had last year, although there has been a slight decrease in overall enrollment.

[02:43:26] When we look at our attendance, the table on the left shows our quarter one average daily attendance for last year and the current year and across the board from k-12 you see a general increase on our average daily attendance until we get to high school where at the senior level it levels off and is the same as it was the line plot on the right shows our average daily attendance rates from the beginning of school to november 3rd and you can see that line although there is a little bit of variability from day to day it's fairly steady although there is a slight down crease from the or decrease from the

[02:44:05] beginning of the quarter to the end of the quarter the increase in our average daily attendance is also reflected in what we would consider our chronic absenteeism rates as a reminder chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of the school the membership days in the first quarter we had 49 days which means if you missed five school days you would be considered chronically absent the table on the left shows the chronic absenteeism rate broken down by grade level you can see from kindergarten through grade 8 we had a

[02:44:42] decrease in our chronic absenteeism rates when compared to last year the first two years of high school 9th and 10th grade we had the same rates and then our 11th and 12th graders we had a slight increase in our chronic absenteeism rate overall division-wide this amounts to a decrease in the percentage of students that we would consider chronically absent when compared to last year I would point out that and looking at the data today that downward trend seems to be holding the table on the right shows the number of absences and the percentage of students that have missed those number of days so

[02:45:19] zero is the really important one to look at you can see last year at the end of quarter one, we had 28% of our students that had missed no school. That has increased to 32% this year, so you can see our attendance rates, again, are improving.

[02:45:36] This same pattern holds true when we break it down by level and student group and race ethnicity. So across the board, we generally see a decrease in our chronic absenteeism rates when compared to last year.

[02:45:55] Moving on to the Virginia growth assessment, as a reminder, this was an assessment that that is required by legislation. In fall of '22, the students were assessed on the current grade level, so a fourth grade student, for example, would take a fourth grade test. There are not passing and failing scores as there are for SOLs, but instead a vertical scale score that ranges from 900 to 2000, so it captures the entire range of performance.

[02:46:24] For the current year, most third through eighth graders are expected to participate in both the fall and winter administration of the VGA. The fall one has been completed, but in contrast to last year, students were tested on the prior year's content. So a fourth grade student would have been tested on third grade material this year as compared to last year where they were tested on fourth grade material in the fall. However, because it is scored on a vertical scale score, what we find is that students are scoring about where expected.

[02:46:58] So when we look at the reading average vertical scale scores from last year to the current year you can see they're fairly similar, which is what we would expect knowing that a third grader at the beginning of the year is going to score in roughly the same place on the vertical scale score.

[02:47:14] And that same holds true for math. And so you can see, although there is a little bit more of an increase, in general these scores are fairly similar to what we saw in the prior year. It is worth noting that our eighth grade students do not participate if they are in Geometry Algebra 2.

[02:47:37] Moving on to grades, first quarter grades as a reminder can be amended if students demonstrate mastery of the material and our grading regulations do allow teachers to override the mathematical average if that student has demonstrated improvement and mastery of the standards.

[02:47:53] So there are a lot of numbers on this slide. On the left-hand column, what you will see is the content area. Across the top, you will see the grading scale, and then in bold face and directly beneath it

you will see the school years.

[02:48:11] So for our elementary students, we issue letter grades in grades three through five, and you can see, although there is some fluctuation when compared to the prior year, for all intents and purposes, the grade distribution is largely similar to what we saw last year.

[02:48:30] This would be expected, these fluctuations would be normal, given that we have some new teachers, we have influx of students, we have mobility amongst those groups, so we would expect some variability in the way these percentages break out.

[02:48:49] In terms of reading levels, I'm going to share three different metrics with you. One is our report card reading level. These are multiple data points that teachers use to assign a reading level on the report card. HMH Literacy Assessment, which is administered three times a year. The students have taken the beginning of the year assessment. And the last is our Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, which is also done three times a year in the fall and the spring. It's a benchmark assessment, and in the mid-year, it's a diagnostic.

[02:49:22] So this table shows our elementary reading levels, the percent of students who are on or above grade level. Those are in the blue column, so that's where we should take a look. We see quarter one for last year, 22-23, compared to the current quarter.

[02:49:38] And again, those percentages are very similar to what we saw in the prior year. This means that students, roughly the same percentage of students, are coming in reading on grade level at the beginning of the year as they were in the prior year.

[02:49:55] When we look at our HMH literacy screening, this is a comprehension assessment. Again you can see that same pattern holds true, the percentages for students reading on or above grade level again in the blue columns are very similar to what we saw in the prior school year. This table shows the percent of students that have met the PALS benchmark in contrast to the prior two which we're looking at either reading comprehension or overall reading ability. This is measuring basic phonological skills and you can see what compared to quarter one last year we do

[02:50:32] have an increase in the students that have met those early literacy skills benchmarks. I should point out that grade 3 is not the same as K2 in that we are only assessing a portion of those students so in grade 3 typically it's the students who need additional support and reading that are getting assessed with the PALS screening and therefore the percentages don't break down quite the same way for the other grade levels moving on to middle school very similar to our elementary school grade distributions again the left-hand column you can see the subject areas

[02:51:10] the grade distribution across the top and then the bold faced rows are the current quarter one grades and you can look and compare and see that again in general the grade distributions are very similar to what we saw in quarter one last year again we can account for this by changes in teachers influx of students changes in curriculum and so forth and again high school i'm going to to repeat myself here again the grade distribution very similar to what we saw in terms of patterns

[02:51:44] for last year we also looked at the percent of students who are failing zero one or two or more courses both at the middle school and the high school levels there is a comparison so the current school year for quarter one is on the top the prior school year is below and again when we compare both middle

school and high school we can see that the percentages again are similar to the percentages we had last year when we looked at the percent of students who

[02:52:18] are failing zero one or two or more courses. We also broke this down by student groups so you can see our English learners our special education students and race and ethnicities again quarter one for the prior year is on the left quarter one for the current year is bold is on the right and again you can see the percentages of students failing zero one or two or more courses at the middle school level are very similar to what we saw in our student groups in the prior year and that same pattern manifests when we look at the high school

[02:52:58] level so again the current school year is in bold type student groups are on the left-hand column and you can again see that the percent of students that are failing zero one or two or more courses again very similar to what we saw in the first quarter of last year that concludes the overview of our quarter one data I'll now entertain the questions that you may have so I'll be - Quick, Mr. Neal, Dr. Neal, thank you so much for the breakdown comparison of last year.

[02:53:30] And I don't know how much that's necessarily a fair assessment for some teachers typically will say, "I'm gonna give so many A's, so many B's, so many C's," and they're consistent along that each year. And so that may account for some of the lack of movement. I think the main reason I wanted to look at that, and I really appreciate you breaking down, is to make sure we're not seeing a trend.

[02:53:50] So last year would've been the real first full year out of the pandemic, this would be the second full year, and then next year we have third, so we're looking. I'm very excited. If you wanna go back to the slide on the PALS testing, I think those are great numbers because those are standardized testing that's not sort of as subjective necessarily as grading and retakes and grading and retakes and grading and retakes.

[02:54:16] The, what slide was that? Where is that? PALS. Someone help me here. - 16. - 16. - Yeah, so are you, I mean, that data looks really good, you know, I'm excited by that data.

[02:54:36] Dr. McDade, I mean, have you, any thoughts on that? That, I mean, I know I probably shouldn't make some big grand, you know, assessment of quarter one from last year to quarter one this year, but that data is looking pretty good. Am I allowed to be happy about that?

[02:54:52] - I think you're allowed to be happy about that. I think any improvement is one we all are definitely proud of. But I do think that a lot of the practices are taking place in our early childhood classrooms are taking root and we're seeing the results of that i'm excited about the work ahead with the virginia literacy act and the implementation of the science of reading i think it's all definitely research-based of course but i think it's all going to be beneficial for us in the long term as we see stronger students coming through the pipeline we know that that early early childhood education and our the early years are the foundation

[02:55:28] of um of you know this a student's successful career in prince william county so if we have strong students k3 coming through the pipeline which is why we set the goal of read by by third grade because we know how critically important it is to make sure the students are reading by third grade and so i think this is evidence of of the tremendous work that's happening in our primary classrooms i do think i've covered it all dr sullivan but i'm she's She's given me the eagle eye, so that must be, I covered everything.

[02:55:57] And I think she would say and her team would say that they're really proud of what we're seeing happening in the classrooms. I think a benefit too has been the reading specialists that have been supporting, providing coaching and feedback and training for our teachers.

[02:56:15] So I think this is very promising data. Certainly we still have a long way to go in some areas, but definitely this is showing us that, you know, in continuous improvement, we're always looking for data that shows evidence that the strategies are working. And so I think this is clear data that many of the strategies that are taking place are actually moving us in the right direction.

[02:56:36] - That's excellent, Dr. McDade. I really appreciate that. And I appreciate the work that the teachers and the staff, everyone across the division is doing. It's really tough to move the ship in any direction, but it looks like we're moving in a positive direction. And then, you know, congratulations.

[02:56:51] You know, we have targeted, you know, absenteeism, you know, last fall, we made that a high priority. And it looks like we are really doing better almost across the board, except kind of our 11th, 12th graders, but, you know, holding somewhat steady there.

[02:57:07] And I think that's really good. And I really appreciate that work, 'cause we do know if you're here, you're gonna learn and that's critical. So congratulations to your team, 'cause some of that work I think is, we're seeing some fruits in that as well. Okay, great report, thank you. anybody else okay miss Jackson thank you for all the hard work that you've put into all these presentations and I believe it appreciated the increase in transparency over the last four years and I know that these are numbers and they don't tell the story but I appreciate everything that your team has

[02:57:44] done and the conversation tonight can I visit the BGA yes I know you touched on this that I just want to touch on it again so you discussed how the standards have changed from like last year if you're in third grade you took third grade standards correct did you revisit that really quickly if that's okay and then also just should we take that into account when looking at the change in standards I know I got lost in the weeds but I left understanding later and just for the public so that they would know what if you change the standards like

[02:58:21] what should we take that into account when we view in the VGA scores so I think when we look at the because of they put it on a vertical scale score the the data is going to be informative to us whether we use the current grade level material or the prior grade level material what will what is different is what the teachers will be able to use to guide their instruction so from a parents lens I'm going to have a good sense from my students score where they are whether they took the current year or the or it was the prior years material they were tested on but what we have done is we have then developed reports

[02:59:00] and gone back and done some work with our staff so they can use this information to help guide their instruction and so so the the content change from from our perspective is is important to understand but it is not the most important piece I appreciate that and then I guess can continuing on their parental guardian perspective when we're reviewing the data that we get from the schools on the VGA I know that there was a delay and how at one point from video we and how to interpret the data has there been more information and

[02:59:36] how to interpret the data for the VGA and as a parent how do I use the data that is provided by the school to make predictions or to provide interventions at home in preparation for the SOS thank you

for asking that question so so I So I would encourage not making any predictions based on this data as in terms of future performance.

[02:59:59] However, if the score does indicate that your student, for example, may be struggling with some reading skills, that we would want then to look back at those parental reports and say, okay, here's what I can do as a parent. I can work on these same skills or dialogue with your child's teacher and they'll be able to help provide some of that same guidance.

[03:00:20] If that doesn't work, my office is always available to answer questions. I appreciate that. Thank you so much again for the presentation. Thank you. Ms. Williams. Thank you, and thank you for all your work on this.

[03:00:35] I love the fact that we are very transparent with our data. I only have one question, because Ms. Jackson took almost all the rest of my questions, which is wonderful. If you could explain for our public what a vertical scale score is, I think that would be very impactful.

[03:00:50] I don't know that every parent or guardian at home would understand the difference. Thank you. Sure. So a vertical scale score, typically when we look at our SOL scores, they are bucketed by the content material for that grade level.

[03:01:06] So a third grader is going to receive an SOL score that's a 400 to 600, and that's true for any grade level, right? It's going to be, or that 400 to 600 is the passing range. What the vertical scale score does is it takes all of the grade levels and essentially stacks them together and so we have a continuum that we can look at and so that a third grader for example could take this adaptive test and their score actually puts them in a different range that shows they're performing towards the upper end and it's similar to a score where perhaps another another grade maybe they're performing towards that lower end but you can

[03:01:45] see where they're comparable so it's all on that same scale thank you i appreciate it mr wall or - Or Ms. Zargarpur. - I just wanted to tie into something Dr. McDade talked about when we were at the Virginia School Board Association Conference.

[03:02:02] One of the sessions I attended was about the Literacy Act, and we listened to what other divisions were talking about and how they implemented their teacher training and things that they were noticing. And I do think that we're gonna see the fruits of those labors, but also what future of the people who are going and getting education degrees, they are gonna be required in their undergrad to be doing this.

[03:02:27] So in a couple of years, we should have people ready to go. So our workforce will be really well prepared as we're already preparing. So I just wanted to put that little comment out there because that was something positive that I had learned in that session.

[03:02:43] And there's something that we say in elementary school that from K to three, they learn to read and then on up they read to learn. It all starts at home though. You gotta sit down and read to your babies. So every time there's a book fair, I'm always grabbing up books for my grandson.

[03:03:00] And I just encourage people to do everything you can. Read cookbooks, read maps, read atlases, whatever. Just read, read, read, read. - Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Oh, sorry.

[03:03:16] Did you say Ms. Wall? - All right, thank you. I wanted to say thank you for giving us this quarter one update. I think the data shows that We are making incremental progress.

[03:03:33] We have arrested the slide from the pandemic and now we're kind of climbing back up, which I think is great. I mean, there's no doubt that the data we have now is different from the data that we had in 2018, 2019.

[03:03:52] And we're just, it is what it is and we are where we are. So I appreciate the focus on trying to help students learn. I think we're seeing an uptick in the reading scores on the Virginia Growth Assessment, that's good news, and good gains on the math Virginia Growth Assessment, especially in the late and elementary and early middle timeframe.

[03:04:14] I wanted to ask about some of the plans that we have for coming up for implementing the Virginia Literacy Act to highlight some of the things that are coming, because I know a lot of people agree with me, but that those learning, children learning to read is like the most important thing that we need to do, is that literacy.

[03:04:39] So, because then they can become masters of their own learning and when they extend into very difficult classes in middle and high school, they can be more self-sufficient. So, would that be all right if we talked a little bit just about some of the things for the Virginia Literacy Act because I think it's exciting and I'm very hopeful that it will, what we have, what we are putting into place will start to bring big dividends for our students.

[03:05:05] - Dr. Sullivan, you want to give some details on it? - And while you're getting ready, Dr. Sullivan, as you're walking up there, I think this is probably a good topic for a meeting, just in general, on the Virginia Literacy Act, Dr. McDade, so at some point, maybe this is something we do early in the new year.

[03:05:22] Thanks, Dr. Sullivan. - Yes, thank you. First, I'd like to underscore one of the points that Dr. McDade made about the reading specialist. Having reading specialists in every school, having them well trained and focused on direct coaching with teachers is one of the cornerstones of the Virginia Literacy Act.

[03:05:42] Our fleet of reading specialists was trained extensively this summer directly by the Virginia Department of Education. And we continued with training here on site. We're really fortunate to have partnered with a leading professional in the work of the science of reading who is a member of the Virginia Literacy Act team.

[03:06:05] We brought her in this fall to continue training at a higher level than received by the Department of Education. And we included all of our reading specialists, our English language learners team, as well as our Title I coaches.

[03:06:20] We wanted to make sure everybody involved in that early childhood footprint was receiving that same training. We actually have a training on Monday with all of our principals, where we're going to get into some very clear work around look for strategies that amplify outcomes for students and those that might hinder those outcomes for students.

[03:06:42] And so we are continuing with that on Monday. In working towards the robust training for all of our staff, we're really fortunate in Prince William County, we have a program called SPOT. Please don't ask me to say the acronym.

[03:06:58] but we have a intensive week-long reading training for teachers, it has actually been going on in Prince William County for 20 plus years. In the last year, actually I would have to say in the last two

years, they have modified that training to be aligned with the science of reading.

[03:07:16] And this year, due to the VLA funding that we received, we're gonna be able to expand enrollment into it and compensate our staff. It has been a voluntary program previously and we're gonna be able to compensate our teachers for completing that training. The flagship, really, of the Virginia Literacy Act is students receiving direct, focused instruction, utilizing high-quality instructional materials.

[03:07:42] Those two things together are really what make the difference. We are fortunate, or not fortunate, I would say prescient, that our adopted curriculum is one of the ones identified by the Virginia Department of Education as being a high-quality evidence-based instructional program.

[03:08:01] And we are waiting on the final list on intervention materials from the Virginia Department of Education, but we typically use Lexia, and the state has given lots of indications around the success of Lexia, so we're quite confident.

[03:08:18] One of the things we do need is a reboot on the power of that curriculum to ensure fidelity and alignment with it. So we are working with our representatives to come back out and reboot the power of that curriculum, train our principals in understanding how they can utilize it to monitor.

[03:08:36] And again, everything works with fidelity. And so we wanna ensure that. We have additional plans for the mandatory DOE training for this summer. We've written into our all-in funds for VLA, the ability to compensate all teachers to potentially complete that training this summer.

[03:08:57] DOE has not released the final list of what will constitute that training. We know they are putting together a Canvas course and that coupled with additional options. All teachers are required, all teachers pre-K three are required to be trained and we've set aside funding time and effort and energy just waiting on final word from the Virginia Department of Education. They haven't finalized some of those plans yet. One of the other things that is critical to the plan is each division have a comprehensive literacy plan that has been underway in our division and we are close to completion well completion of the first official

[03:09:36] draft of the literacy plan for our division that takes a targeted approach for the next two years including this year so we will have that available of course would be public and opportunities for our public to engage in that as well I mean you did mention the teacher preparation program they will have the same training as reading specialists actually get so we're really motivated by that in our classroom observations our team that's going into classrooms is tracking strategies aligned with the science of reading and we are seeing

[03:10:15] those optimistic practices that those practices that we know are giving us optimism in the scores and so we are pleased to see an increase in that and so I from what I've seen our our division is well positioned we have a lot of teachers with a tremendous amount of skills and a culture for prioritizing reading instruction and so for us it's amplifying that now and adding additional focus so we are we are fully prepared for implementation in 24 25 one thing that

[03:10:53] hasn't been mentioned is what is helpful is the state did prioritize resources financial resources for vla implementation we were originally prepared on the cheap so we are really pleased to be able to utilize some of those resources to make sure we compensate our teachers appropriately for their time utilize the best training available and do it robustly throughout the organization thank you that was great

information and i really appreciate it i appreciate all of the focus and the effort and i love the word amplify that's great it sounds like we have foundation yep you just need to like

[03:11:29] we're going to amplify it which is amazing it's great analogy um i appreciate that information i think that's good for us to hear and i think that's good for the public to hear whoever's out out there listening, for the few that are here in the room and anybody who's online, I think it's good information.

[03:11:47] And I agree with Ms. Zargarpur, like reading with kids and just time spent with written material is also really important that we can do a lot in school, but there's a lot of time outside of school and a whole world out there of material that children can use to learn.

[03:12:07] So I appreciate that, thank you very much. - Thank you. - Ms. Jessie. i am i've heard so much about the virginian literacy act i'm very concerned that perhaps we don't go to the other side of the bell or the you know we're going i i'm concerned that we're looking at phonics and too much emphasis on phonics and not really looking at a balanced approach i went to a workshop and they said we talked about findings we talked about that early

[03:12:42] literacy and you're getting all these great scores at K2 and then it doesn't transfer into three where the reading really happens so I I'm just cautioning you to be aware of that because reading and literacy has to do with the reading and children have to be read to on a regular basis and this county started to spot to program a long time ago and that program really worked well I know you're modifying it I'm just asking you to be very cautious that you don't take the bell the other way and that you don't move into phonics that you don't move

[03:13:21] away from balanced literacy and that you don't become more of phonics phonics drill and kill the other thing is that you know the research is pretty clear about the importance of writing writing and I hope you're gonna do that to cut the combination of reading and writing on a daily basis that that's important especially when it comes to nonfiction writing. I don't know if you're familiar with the research of Doug Reeves and his research on the importance of writing

[03:13:56] because teachers don't know how to teach writing and you have to teach them how to teach writing. This book was 1977 and this bumper sticker which we had as a a title one bumper sticker talks about reading is everywhere we had billboards we had everything because we knew that these kids needed to have saturation of reading so I'm just making a comment when I looked at the 69 percent with the k3 and then I looked at third grade and fourth grade reading I'm I'm just very concerned that we're moving that we're gonna throw out the baby with the bath

[03:14:36] water that's all I want to say I don't want to report back from you I've just said, be cautious and just look at reading as reading. Children need to be read to on a regular basis from the womb to the classroom, so thank you. - Yes, ma'am.

[03:14:54] - Excellent, thank you guys so much. And I think Dr. Neal, you touched on a great point that a lot of these test scores and a lot of these things are tools to help parents understand where their children are at. And you can always call your teacher, email your teacher and ask them, what does this score mean?

[03:15:09] What can I do to improve the student? Where are the resources? There's a lot of resources the teachers are listing on canvas and we can just really encourage our parents to take advantage of those resources. Sometimes they need to push the kid a little bit to take advantage of some, but there's a lot of resources that the teachers have been providing that I think you really touched on it.

[03:15:29] These are tools to help the parents and help the teachers understand best, how best to make the movement for progress. Thank you so much. Okay, Dr. McDade, anything further in superintendent's time? - No, that concludes superintendent's time. - Okay, we're moving on to 1901 revisions for policy 422, property classifications and inventory.

[03:15:48] Oh, I'm sorry, committee updates. Yeah, committee updates make that short and sweet, right? We have first up Ms. Williams, Governor's School. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Governor's School Innovation Park met last on November 9th. The major highlight was the budget was presented.

[03:16:09] We will be voting at the next meeting on December 7th on the budget. Just wanna share a few highlights from that very quickly. 2022, 23 student achievements, 77 graduated seniors accepted to 84 different colleges, one national merit scholarship awardee, six governor school IP teams received first place awards for the regional science fair.

[03:16:33] Two teams went to state science and engineering fair and won first place. One team earned honorable mention. Two students were semifinalists in the National Bio-Olympiad, and one team won the Real World Design Challenge for Virginia and were third nationally.

[03:16:50] Three students participated in the 2023 Aspiring Scientist Summer Interns. The budget priorities for this year are to continue to maximize the utilization of resources to support the Governor's school mission and vision, provide necessary resources to sustain student, current student enrollment and provide opportunity to grow and to look for more collaborative opportunities with George Mason University and I just want to make a final mention the Alumni Day will be on 12:15 this year the

[03:17:24] research symposium is on May 3rd if you are a science nerd or aficionado like I am I highly encourage you to check it out there'll be further updates after the the December 7th board meeting when we vote on the budget.

[03:17:40] So thank you. - Ms. Wall. - Thank you. I'm going to give an update on the internal audit committee. We met on November 14th and Ms. Jackson and I sit on that committee with, well the membership is going to be changing, but it's a good committee.

[03:18:03] We talked about Title IX athletics audit. It was a kind of a base level baseline audit, gave us some really good information upon which we can build and make some improvements that will help us with the way that we keep records and getting a better understanding of how things are going in our division.

[03:18:23] We also got an update on every year there are a series of audits that are done on schools, their financial and PTO and things like that, so generally turnover audits when we have new principals, new staff, so we got an update on that.

[03:18:41] We also discussed the internal audit plan that we voted on earlier this evening, which is great. And we have some enterprise risk management provisions in our audit plan, which will be great because that helps us understand the risks that we face as a school division and address them proactively.

[03:19:00] So I'm really looking forward to that. International Fraud Awareness Week was November 12th through 18th. This is very important. we have a huge amount of money that flows in and out of this school division and we want to make sure that we're careful with all of the funds because those are taxpayer funds those hard-earned dollars we need to be fiscally responsible we need to be careful and it's really

important that we we have the proper checks in place to make sure that we're using those monies appropriately and lastly we discussed the policy 190 update which we voted on at a previous meeting

[03:19:35] to make a few changes in the way the audit committee is set up so if you're interested in policy go take a look at the new policy 190 and we that represented a good effort of the audit committee over the last six months or so so the audit committee will next meet on february 21st and i look forward to good things coming out of this committee in the future okay thank you - Thank you, Ms. Williams.

[03:20:06] And I serve on that Governor's School Committee with her excellent summary. They're doing some great work over there. And Ms. Wall, I'm happy you're watching our money. Okay, moving on next to 1901 now, revisions of Policy 422, property classification inventory, first reading, Shaquille Youssef up for information.

[03:20:27] And Mr. Youssef, if you wanna take us through what this is about in like less than a minute, welcome. Dr. Lateef, Dr. McDade and school board members. - It looks like three attachments here would probably be longer than a minute.

[03:20:45] - I was actually looking for the time. - Yeah, I see, I see. - So the revisions to policy 422 really was spurred on by the last time we revised this policy was in May of 2019 and it was really spurred on by the student devices that we have issued since then and also changes, some accounting changes that we've come through.

[03:21:12] And these changes are more associated with the regulation. The policy itself has basically two major changes. One is obviously the numbering has changed from 422 to 350.02 to make it part of fiscal services.

[03:21:30] And the other major change on it was the title of the Associate Assistant Superintendent financial services and risk management was changed to chief financial officer but in terms of the overall changes we've just in the regulation we've expanded definitions for classification of property we update updated new references to new electronic devices and these new tracking systems that are in place and there are two essentially types of inventories going on one that

[03:22:02] is led by IT and the other one that is led by the finance department. - Excellent, and as everyone, because we don't have, I think we have a break here and maybe three to four weeks before the next meeting, please take your time to read through the policies and if you have any questions or concerns, get them over to Shaquille Youssef or Dr. McDade and we'll get clarification and then this will be up for a vote in the first January meeting, is that correct?

[03:22:32] - Yes. - Excellent. - Okay. Thank you, sir. 1903, revisions policy 854, naming of school facilities. This is on for a motion. - 1902. - Oh, what am I, sorry? Where am I at?

[03:22:50] Oh, moving on 1902, revisions of policy 134, citizen participation, which is on for action tonight. A motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman, it's late. I totally get it. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the substitute policy 134 as attached in the meeting agenda.

[03:23:12] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - A second. - Any discussion? At this point, Ms. Wall, do you wanna just tell us what the substitute motion is and what changes were made from last week's? - I would be happy to. So based on citizen comment and addressed comments addressed by the public through emails and phone calls and conversations or suggestions made by board members, we

have made several significant, well not significant, but amendments to what we had proposed for information last time.

[03:23:49] The changes improve access to citizens comment time and increase, they increase the number of speakers, improve fairness and provide additional ways to interact with the board. So they do provide an equitable solution for everybody and should make it so that overall, we should be able to hear from everyone who wants to speak.

[03:24:08] I'll speak specifically. One of the changes is that we have increased the number of potential speakers to 30. If more than 20 citizens request to speak at a meeting, the time allotted to speak will be adjusted to two minutes each. If fewer than 20 citizens request to speak, it will remain at three minutes.

[03:24:26] This will be a sliding scale. It will allow for an additional 10 people beyond what we have in the policy right now, which I will point out when we came on this board, we changed it from 10 speakers to 20 So now this will allow for 30 speakers and it will be dependent on how many people are asking to sign up because before before recent times, we had an average that was like 10, 11, 12 speakers.

[03:24:53] So, you know, if we kind of return back to those times, we should have no problem. But if we get a really hot topic or we we continue in the pattern that we have now, you know, this will be really beneficial to us. So the changes also reflect that, you know, from 20 to 30.

[03:25:09] Um, we also determined that it wouldn't be a good idea to leave any speaking spots on the table. So we have added a provision in here where in the event that there are unfilled speaking spots remaining after all qualified speakers have been selected that we will backfill, um, any spots that are open so that, um, in the order in which they signed up.

[03:25:30] So a person who has spoken at a previous meeting, um, they can still go ahead and sign up. They'll just go to the back of the line and we'll fill them, we'll backfill them in until get to 30 so i think these are a lot of positive changes obviously this is a work in progress policies can be changed i think we have seen the evolution of trying to find something that works for us and works here in prince william county and i'm positive i appreciate the feedback from individuals in the community individuals on the board to help us find something that works and and that we can get behind.

[03:26:03] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Any, who's next, Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, pardon me, excuse me there. I think it's important to note that as Dr. McDade sometimes discusses educational practice as reflective and we have to look at what data tells us and maybe have that inform some of our decision making.

[03:26:30] We do that as a board and we have with citizen comment time. when people are upset about something, we definitely hear from it, hear from the public. And we often, our motives are to make it better. So this, what Ms. Wall just read about, represents a lot of back and forth discussions of ideas that have come up to ensure that we are hearing from the public.

[03:26:56] In addition to this, people can always email us. And just so you know, this board, I know we're gonna have some newer members coming on, But we tend to work like this. The first meeting of the month, there's things that come up on maybe for reading. And then the second meeting of the month is when we vote on it.

[03:27:14] And we do wanna hear from the public. You can come and speak, but we also, I appreciate emails as well, just because it gives me time to reach out, ask questions, talk with other board members,

because that does take time. So we're trying to make sure that the public has many ways to access information, board members, the division, division staff.

[03:27:38] So this is just one way. We're being iterative. We are looking at what people are asking of us and working together to come up with a compromise or a solution that's gonna work. - Ms. Williams.

[03:27:53] - Go ahead. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So when it comes to citizen comment time and modifying our policy, I can absolutely testify that this is, This board has done more work towards being inclusive and allowing more participation from the public than the previous boards that I have sat on.

[03:28:21] I will always have an issue with citizen comment time in person, mostly because there is a great portion of citizens who can't get here. We do have a bus stop, but no bus that runs during citizen comment time. So I am very appreciative of the fact we have the public has the ability to email us to utilize the less talk feature I believe it was this board that added the availability of receiving video comment this board also added additional time for interpreters when

[03:28:55] citizens come speak which I petitioned for for a very long time I would just like the public to be mindful that citizen comment time is it policy is sort of someone said it best and forgive me because I don't remember who did I think it was Miss Zargarpur it's a it's a it's more of a living document it always changes based upon the needs and the feedback provided from the community and it's only continued to expand since I've been on the board I will say there's always an ebb and flow and we have controversial issues it is really hard to get a sign up on a speaking spot speaking slot but when there are no

[03:29:35] controversial issues very rarely do we have more than 10 speakers here so while I think it's important to continue to modify this this policy I am in agreement with the changes I think there were some really good compromises that were made and all of our voices are represented here I just want the public to be reminded that it is not the only way to reach a board member or to provide commentary it is impactful to be here in person but we do read our emails at at least I know this board does.

[03:30:05] And I'm sure that that will continue in the future, but please do not think that the only way that you can provide commentary is to show up and speak in person, although I do enjoy hearing from our public. So I'll be voting in support of this, thank you.

[03:30:21] - Ms. Jessie. - I somewhat agree with Ms. William that in the past we have not had as many slots. However, in the past, when there were people in this room, I recall that sometimes we went up to 30 speakers because the chairman made sure that everybody who wanted to speak, speaks.

[03:30:44] I don't know how we rephrase this, but somehow the public needs to know that we're not trying to minimize their access. I also wanted to know about the person, the rule that how we're going to handle those people who can't, who for some reason have an emergency, they can't get to the boardroom that night.

[03:31:07] don't call but they have an emergency are we how are we handling that in that in the new ms wall do you have that answer um i think the question whether um if someone missed if they missed the meeting because of an emergency would they be able to speak at the next meeting um there is a provision that allows them to get in contact with with our board clerk and if they do so she'll be able to if they do so in time for her to get somebody else into a speaking slot yes they'll be able to speak at the next meeting there's there's a policy and a procedure in there where hey i i'm sick i can't make it tonight if they do if they if they let her know by noon which

[03:31:46] is when she needs to notify the speakers of their actual time then it will be fine they can speak the next time okay and am i to am i to understand that you won't be penalized for two meetings but only one that is correct we changed it from two meetings to one but we have a backfill so you can still probably speak assuming that there is we increased it to 30 speakers first of all and you just go to the back of the line and any available spots you can still speak so my my belief is that we're rarely going to turn anybody away now with this system i think my concern was that you you

[03:32:23] put something on the agenda and the person speaks and then you can't speak at the next meeting when you're actually going to vote on it and that that was my concern that we're maybe punishing people who really just want to speak on an issue and then follow up on that issue, I think where we say you cannot speak.

[03:32:44] I think anything where we say we cannot speak is always very difficult and I also think that we should not react to this temporary situation that we have with these people from the PFBA.

[03:32:59] It's very difficult. tonight I I don't know if there's something for a disrespectful but when they called Dr. Lateef Lateef I just think that's disrespectful and it's been very difficult for me to listen to teachers disrespect members of the board because I know as a principal as I said earlier if I talk to teachers the way they talk to us then my job would be jeopardized but I think that the new system I will sign I will support it however I think you guys really need to look at a at the door sign up for some people

[03:33:37] because some people cannot get up. They for various reasons are not home at eight o'clock in the morning. They can't get on the agenda. So something at the door, I think would help down the road. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Jessie, Ms. Jackson.

[03:33:54] - I just want to thank the board and Ms. Wall for taking the time to collaborate. I am disappointed in the way the changes proposed during the last meeting have been portrayed, but understand that tonight is an opportunity to increase clarity and also restate and revisit.

[03:34:11] Prior to revisiting, I just want to offer a tiny little disclaimer. I continue to support increasing access to citizen comment time, as I said last time, and commend those who come and share their stories, as I said before. So my vote tonight is a result of collaboration of board members to improve and address concerns heard and to assure you that it is not a reaction.

[03:34:35] I firmly believe that citizen comment time create a forum for citizen voice but maintain productive meetings as I had said last time this policy has proven to be a living document and this is the third change to reflect the changing needs of our community in each case the board has increased community input avenues and ways to ensure the policy is followed moreover the motions tonight reflect additional input received and given by board members which increases access to more forces monthly and I I, again, want to thank everybody for collaboration.

[03:35:10] I will also add that citizen comment time is just one way, as Ms. Williams mentioned, and Ms. Jessie I believe too, I think almost everybody said this, to provide feedback. And I believe that the amendments provided tonight will increase avenues for diverse feedback while promoting a fair process.

[03:35:28] After the new board comes and gets acclimated, they may elect to revisit and amend this again. As I said before, inclusion is not multiple choice and I will always support including more voices. Lastly, every time this board has made a change to this policy over the last few years, it has reflected community feedback growth and I will add compromise.

[03:35:48] So I just appreciate our ending on a good collaborative note. Thank you. Ms. Wall. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree, you know, it is good for individuals to be able to come and speak on a first reading and then maybe follow up when we go to take a vote on a policy.

[03:36:07] One of the ways we tried to address that is to increase the number of spots from 20 to 30 and to prioritize those who haven't spoken. The data shows that we do often go over the 20, but we don't overshoot it by a ton.

[03:36:24] We're still below 30. And so I think with these changes, we should be able to allow people to speak on policy changes. we will notice as of the last well since we voted for collective bargaining that's kind of been the topic du jour um and when we have a policy it's hard for folks who want to come speak to the policy to get in and so um this will actually improve that it will increase the chances that a person who wants to come and speak on a policy vote will be able to get in because they'll be prioritized if they haven't come and spoken you know in previous meetings um so i appreciate miss jesse's

[03:37:01] concern and i do believe that those changes we put in place will allow those folks to be able to get in because they're not necessarily going to be speaking on the hot topic of the day they'll be speaking on like a policy proposal that's coming up for a vote um so you know we'll monitor it and see how it goes and if it's not working we can change it or even improve it further um but i do feel confident that this will increase the equitable access of multiple voices on multiple issues for our board which i think will be good because we do like to hear from citizens mr anderson thank

[03:37:36] you mr chairman i did want to point out one technical fix we might want to consider before the board votes if you look at the substitute motion at line 77 on the second page that change as proposed says that what we will do if there are more than 20 speakers and less than 20 but not if if there are 20. So as a technical amendment, we would, I think, want to say 20 or less speakers. Okay. Make it happen. Does anyone have any opposition? So I'll say this. Does anyone

[03:38:14] oppose Wade Anderson's fix to line, what was it? It's line 77. It would be instead of fewer than 20, it would be 20 or fewer. Okay. Any opposition to that change? Okay. So let's make that edit and we'll vote. Whatever motion we vote in, we'll include that edit. Yes. According to legal - That's the legal counsel.

[03:38:33] - Correct. - Good. Okay, well, are you done? Okay. You know, first I wanna thank Gabrielle Dallaire. You know, she sent an email about a topic about bags to the events.

[03:38:49] And you know, it's important to recognize that, you know, you can send an email to us, we'll immediately work on that. This board has been excellent about getting to work on an email, getting it over to the superintendent's office, getting it over to staff, and making sure the issue is addressed. You don't have to wait the two weeks or three weeks or the one week before the next board meeting and hope to get a slot.

[03:39:09] So I think that whether we come to a conclusion on the email, that's another matter. We're working on that. And sometimes we get to a satisfactory conclusion, sometimes for the complaint that we don't, but we're constantly working on it. So I think that's important.

[03:39:25] I think her comments this evening outlined some of the major concerns we're hearing from citizens that we hear ones who may be afraid to come here and talk, ones who email us, ones who call us, ones who grab us at the grocery store and they tell us similar concerns.

[03:39:42] And so I think we tried the, when we made the last change a couple years ago, we had an agenda number of slots and a non-agenda. And we found that sometimes the agenda slots just weren't being used. And so we reformed that really, I think maybe two years ago to say, okay, let's just have it all topics because we weren't getting the folks to talk about the topics at that meeting.

[03:40:06] If we, you know, and then it's been working out pretty good except for the last few months that we feel like we're not getting those folks. I think increasing these numbers, I fully support. I think the sliding scale is good. I can tell you that Loudoun County has used a sliding scale for a long time. They even dropped down to a minute if there's more speakers, especially during the pandemic, they were doing things like that.

[03:40:25] So I think these changes are good and I support them. And again, I think Ms. Jackson said it very nicely at the last meeting that many of our policies are living documents or changes. And this board has been quick, not too quick, because I think things have to be thought through to sort of look and see what is working, what can be made better.

[03:40:47] And so I appreciate the board's input. This was a lot of work. Thank you, Ms. Wall, Ms. Zargarpur, Ms. Williams, Ms. Jessie, Ms. Jackson on the work on this. So I will be voting in support of this. So if we can call for a vote, please vote.

[03:41:04] No, we should, we're voting on this to be, so I guess, are we voting on this to be the substitute motion or we're actually motioning this tonight? So once I vote, we can vote on this, it passes, right? We're good with that, Mr. Lawyer?

[03:41:21] Yes, okay. A motion is to adopt the substitute. Okay, okay, and we've had a second on that. We've had a discussion. So the vote now will be on the acceptance of this motion to substitute. Excellent, and to substitute and accept the substitute as the motion, excellent.

[03:41:42] - Excellent, that's so amazing, quick, fantastic, 1041. - The vote is six yes to absent Ralston and Wilk. Motion passed, 1903.

[03:42:00] - Moving on 1903, policy 854, naming of school facilities, a motion's in order. Ms. Wall. - All right, I have, the motion is this. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the substitute policy 854 as attached in the meeting agenda.

[03:42:20] - And do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. Ms. William Seconds, and then I'll have you also review because the board worked on this over the last couple weeks. Can you summarize the changes that were made from the prior one and how you got to those?

[03:42:36] - Yes, thank you. So this substitute motion incorporates feedback from both the community and board members. And walking through some of the changes, we added stadiums to the list of things could be named or renamed so now it's tracks stadiums fields laboratories libraries auditoriums media centers and gymnasiums we took feedback on the requirement of a renaming to have a minimum of four additional members and we reduced that to two which is in line with our standard practice of

[03:43:15] getting items on an agenda so we we conformed that with our standard practice we also hold on let me scroll through here we spelled out the Virginia code section 2.2-3101 of the Virginia state and local government conflicts of interest act to define relative and that's so it's it's more clear and you don't

have to go look up the Virginia code in order to understand which I think is good for the public in particular we included stadiums as things that could be

[03:43:53] named or components um we removed the requirement and somebody spoke on that tonight in citizen comment about a letter from the school principal expressing support for the naming we decided that it would be better not to have the principles in the midst of this one way or another and then we adjusted the percentage of signatures to 15 to show a community driven support for a naming of a component a name or renaming of a school component which i think is good public

[03:44:25] policy and we also added school ceremonies dedication of plaques for new schools because it was in a regulation part of the problem with this policy was that the policy didn't have any meat everything was in regulation so this policy in the original revamping of it was to take things that were in regulation and put them into policy so that the board would own the process and dedication of plaques for new schools was incorporated because it had been left out and so now everything sits in one policy and there are no changes with our prior practices

[03:45:01] it's just incorporated in here and then we made sure to know note that my my majority vote the board may suspend any requirement in this policy so for in the instance that the board's all agreed on a particular name and we all think that person is the perfect candidate for a school for instance if they were still alive the board could still by majority vote suspend that clause which has been the subject of some feedback and and do what the public wants us to do um but um we uh of note um

[03:45:38] we benchmarked our policy with other policies around the area and there is precedent for um the things that are in this policy so those are the major changes yes um and discussion - Ms. Zargarpur.

[03:45:57] - Yeah, of particular interest to, are we okay? - Okay, council. - Yeah, okay. Of particular interest to me was the getting the community that the school sits in involved.

[03:46:13] And I'm saying this because there has been, a lot of people like to participate, but it's the people who go and work in those schools and live in those communities that I think should have, what is the word, deference, right?

[03:46:28] It's their community, and I don't want it to feel like someone else is coming in and assigning a name to a school or a wall or a stadium or whatever. So that's been, I know, we joke about the Jen wall, so we're going to name a wall after Jen.

[03:46:48] Anyway, it's late, and those are our jokes, my friends. The Jen wall wall, yes. So that was really important because I feel like it gives the community agency in it and it gives community The the it centers the community in which the school is Miss William. Thank you. Mr. Chairman. I just as anyone who's followed knows that I am Not particularly a fan of naming schools after people

[03:47:20] personally, but as I've always known to say that there's a big difference between my personal opinion and my job as a board member and I feel like at this point in time while I appreciate the collaborative effort behind this policy Definitely the the inclusion of each board member's voice. I'm still not satisfied to where this Policy is and so I'm not going to be supporting it I did give greater thought to The community involvement piece of it, but I it made me think of schools like independence where is the community for that because it's a school that draws in from students across the division and

[03:48:01] The community support I think is in an integral part, but we no longer live in a school community where our students necessarily go to the school in their own community and I think some of this policy still needs to be modernized and that's where I have issue with it I also have issue about the naming of for people excuse me the um having to be deceased for three years i understand the

[03:48:33] logic behind it because it gives time to sort of air out of someone someone and something someone something occurs in someone's past but when i had to sit down and really look at how we have gone about this process and how impactful it has been when we did name schools even partially after citizens who were alive and the involvement that came from that and the recognition that came from that and like Hampton is a good example we still have a fraternity that's very actively involved that would not have

[03:49:09] had a place so while I think we're on the right track I don't think that we're quite there yet and I just still have some problems with that those those are my two major issues with it I'm happy that we reduced the amount of board members in order to start a renaming from five down to three I think that's very equitable it does give the the the right perception that we have not selected a name already and that we're willing to hear from the community and

[03:49:45] board members but I'm just not ready to agree quite yet on this policy I hope that if it does pass that we will continue to work on this and be more inclusive overall for all of our student body when it comes to that and I'm sorry because that you know we do spend a lot of time on this I know that this is something that over a year ago probably two at this point we wanted to discuss and just other things came up and that took more priority I do appreciate that some of my changes that I sent in were taken into account and also the last thing I wanted to add was I did hear from a constituent which I

[03:50:23] thought was a really good idea the opportunity to look at naming portions of schools or like hallways or stadiums for financial gain there are a few school divisions that do include that in their naming policy and i can't say enough since we are not a revenue generating source overall that might be an opportunity for us down the road to generate some revenue for a particular school working through spark our educational foundation i think

[03:50:54] it's something this board should highly consider moving forward so thank you miss jesse this has This has been a very difficult task for me because I've been involved in the naming of Fannie Fitzgerald, Hogan, Covington, Hampton, Old Bridge, Unity Braxton, Independence Traditional with Bob Icorn, Independence Traditional with Renee Lacey, the Randy Dasher Maintenance Building.

[03:51:29] I met Randy and Randy had done all the architectural design and he didn't have a degree and I felt that building should be named in his honor, Potomac Shores, Hildebarge, and of those 10 buildings I've been involved in, only one person was deceased before naming, so to me, I'm not sure why this deceased, what you're saying is that, well, he doesn't have to be deceased for three years, but maybe we prefer that he be deceased. I'm not sure why we're going there, because I think is an insult to those people who are living legends

[03:52:06] in this community who have schools named after them. And the whole idea of this renaming and George Hampton, I'm sure that we did not want a guy who, a governor who was part of the massive resistance that kept kids out of school, we did not want that name on that school.

[03:52:27] However, I think the process needed to be addressed. There were some concerns about renaming in the costs. And I recall when we renamed Hampton, I asked, there was a big thing about it.

[03:52:44] They were gonna spend $250,000 on it. I asked him, how much money did you spend on the new school? They spent 28 million. Well, you spent $70 million on the name for Gainesville. And later we found out that he was a slave owner.

[03:53:00] I don't know how you can document what's gonna happen down the road. We didn't take the name off. In fact, we named another school in this place. So I think the public is going to have a lot of problems with it. People in, I have to say, in my community are very concerned about this.

[03:53:19] They think that it's an insult to those people whose names have been placed on these buildings that we now feel that we're kind of giving the impression that they should have been deceased before the name took place. The other item in there was that we don't want, is that still in there?

[03:53:40] I'm not sure about the pastors. They should not be a pastor of a church. Did you take that out? It's still in there? In section B2, it says be a person who is primarily identified as a religious leader.

[03:54:00] Well, Martin Luther King was a pastor, and you have a school named King. I'm not sure we should get into who we can name it for. The idea I had a stadium. I sent you an epistle. I know you just for the point of order. That's been in there That's been the policy long before we we arrived just but I don't think it's a good policy because sometimes pastors make Contributions to education like dr. King, so I think we should and then politicians is not politicians is not in there And you have senator Kogan. I just think this whole policy needs to be revisited and looked at again

[03:54:38] because even the delineation of where you what parts of the building can be named so the jennifer wall wall may be a wall but as we look at the modernization of school we have staircases i was in you know there may be a staircase there may be hallways i'm not sure we should tell them which building which parts of the building can be named and you never addressed the fact that mr wilks and i it took us 11 months and that's why i asked to be on this committee or not on

[03:55:13] this committee i asked to be involved in looking at the policy that's never been addressed i i think that no matter what we say and how you how you couch it and how you when you say that the person has to be deceased before we can name a building and that person honor and you have all these buildings that have been named by people who are not deceased and it meant a lot to Fanny Fitzgerald and to George Hampton. Fanny Fitzgerald lost her memory. The one thing she did did not lose. She lost the fact that I had anything to do with it although she had been sending me Christmas presents

[03:55:53] for years but she I think I told you this story where she rolled the card window down when I took her back to the nursing home and said did you know they named the building after me. That meant a lot to her and I think that what you're doing does not speak well for us, I don't know what other people are doing, I don't care what they're doing, but as a system all these people you saw here tonight were here because either their names were on a building or they helped name a building or like Mrs. Porter never got her day because everything revolved around

[03:56:32] so I think for me it's always recognition of people and the legacy of the living so for me it's very I just think you're making a mistake if we go ahead with this policy tonight I think it needs to be revisited and I think that I'm not sure how that can be done I also don't like the idea of the relative on the board cannot have a school named after him now I didn't take that personally but my husband is going to be on

the board I'm not asking for my school to be named after me but why should His being on the board keep me, if it came up, from having a school named in my honor.

[03:57:12] His position on the board has nothing to do with that. I think that he would have to say I would not vote for that because we have something written for that. And I also understand why you're concerned about the person's name.

[03:57:30] And so I think there should be, if there is a name, I think you need to put a vetting process in there. I think we need a vetting process to vet it, make sure that person's background has been checked. Most of the people whose names are on these buildings, Fanny Fisher, she worked for the school system, Colvin was a politician, Covington, Harper, military people, Hampton, military people, Anita Fleming, 11 years of a school that was a school of excellence, Braxton, Mr. Braxton was a Malfa Point Marine, Bob Icorn.

[03:58:02] These are people who have done great things and I think it's an insult to them. So that's my position on it, thank you. - Ms. Jackson. - All right, I just wanna say I appreciate the discussion tonight and the collaboration.

[03:58:20] This is a long time coming and board members gave feedback, I think a year ago. It was, I was fine with delaying at this because of the introduction, the new policy would have happened right before the new school innovation. And in my opinion, it would have created confusion and the potential for miscommunication.

[03:58:40] I know that Division Council, Carol Marchant researched this in local divisions, but one of the reasons that I support the changes is because the process prior to the changes tonight was not specific, and community voice is not explicitly outlined.

[03:58:55] Moreover, the changes from last meeting include board member feedback and community feedback, like including stadiums and items to be named, and the requirement of more citizen feedback demonstrates the collaboration of this board and the citizens they represent.

[03:59:12] I've supported the revision policy for a long time to cement a policy that specifies a clear process, a policy that withstands political divisions and promotes civic engagement while instituting checks and balances. So I will be voting in favor, although I do appreciate the discussion.

[03:59:29] - Ms. Wong. - Thank you, I appreciate the discussion as well. I'll begin by pointing out that we could still name a school after a living individual if the board majority decided they wanted to suspend that provision.

[03:59:44] That's always the prerogative of the board and the board can still do that if that was the majority sentiment. So I feel like if that is the way the board wanted to go, we could do that. We have a vote of the majority. We can suspend any provision, including the deceased part.

[04:00:01] - I'm sorry Jennifer, should that be in writing? - It's in the policy. - It is, it's in the policy at the very last line clearly stated and applies to the entire policy. Also, the relative portion, I wish to point out that that is in line with conflict of interest laws, which are important in government because we always want to make sure that we're transparent and that the public understands that we're doing things in the public interest, not for a benefit of a family member or a close friend or anything like that.

[04:00:34] That's good conflict of interest principles. And then I wish to point out, you know, the cost of renaming is very expensive. I mean, I know we've done it historically, we've done it a few times, but it's expensive and it can be very disruptive to the community.

[04:00:51] And historically, there have been some very disruptive renamings. So this puts in some guidelines, some signposts, so the public is more on notice of how this should proceed, and if we want to change it, we can do so, right?

[04:01:09] but at least we have an expectation of how this ought to go so it's fair for everybody um and and i do i do i am sensitive to the fact that you know we have had a lot of names named after um real people i mean not real people alive people live people people who are alive sorry living there we go um it's late um but you know no one should think that what was done in the past is somehow negative about what we're doing now i mean that those were that was appropriate in the past and that reflected the will of the board at that time and the people and and you know the advocacy efforts the lobbying efforts whatever went into it i wasn't here so i don't know um you know it

[04:01:46] it should be commended and it should be valued um this is just you know sometimes we make changes based on a new climate and a new culture and so i would just say like you know i mean we named unity braxton while i was here and that was the right thing to do at that time and no one should think that what was done in the past is now negated but what we're doing now this is just a little bit shift and I do wish to state that requiring or preferring an individual consider for the naming of any building or component to be deceased is actually fairly common and we did some benchmarking when we asked not me but when our division councils department did or office of division council helped

[04:02:25] us a while ago and we we've tried this two or three different times benchmarked other divisions policies and in our area there is precedent for this requirement it's actually pretty common in a lot of school policies for their naming policies to have a requirement like this for good reason. Loudon requires a person to be deceased. Fairfax requires the person to be deceased or retired. Arlington requires the person to be deceased for five years. Chicago requires a person to be deceased in order to get their name on a building. Montgomery County in Maryland has a preference for deceased individuals considered for naming. And Chesterfield County requires the person to be deceased.

[04:03:01] So it's not like we're out on a limb here. This is actually a fairly common policy for good public policy reasons. I mean primarily considering that people's people change. Sometimes if you name a school after somebody and then they change and you're stuck and for a number of other reasons too. So I feel like it is a good thing to do and I understand the reasons why folks would not like it but I also understand there are a lot of people who do support this. Ms. Jessie. I'm sorry

[04:03:38] this is very emotional for me but the only place where we have spent money on a building has been george hampton and that's what we're really referencing to because the group that voted for george hampton later came back and said we're going to spend money on hampton and did not want to spend the money yet we spent 70 million dollars on gainesville and we knew that the name on that building was the name of a slave owner and when i brought it back to the attention of this group

[04:04:14] you wouldn't even let me put it on the agenda so no i cannot vote for this but understand i've said this before because you said talk to like the teeth said lily jesse is often i'm not apologetic i don't apologize for this because we don't have a problem with people being dead or alive and we're i don't think that we will have a problem because i think we're going to be really good about looking at uh the actual

background of that person prior to that and i think the board could but if the board could why do we even need to state that the person we

[04:04:51] prefer that you be deceased and I don't care what Fairfax did I don't care what Chicago did all I care about is the people in Prince William African American people if you are middle-class and you have lots of money you could put your name on anything if you're African American most of the time you're going to see your name you won't see your name it'll be on a headstone that's the only time and I think that these people who made contributions should be recognized I cannot vote for it but winning for me is all I have said this before winning for me is not always numerical in other words if I don't get

[04:05:30] to vote I'm okay with because I feel I still win because I will stand by my principles I see no reason for you to change this policy to even mention being deceased because I think it's an insult to people whose names have been on those buildings they have not they were they were alive thank you thank you miss Jesse finish by wrapping up and just clarify a few things were said maybe in citizen common time and other places I do and I think it's been reported in the paper I philosophically opposed name naming anything after somebody it's just how I was how I am and in my belief and I share that with Miss Williams that has

[04:06:09] nothing to do with anybody in particular that's just my philosophical belief that being said I've been part of five namings and three of them included names you know and and and so I typically lean towards what the public wants if the public has a big desire then you know I vote that way and they're the constituents and so I've done that and I think this policy adds in some best practices it does clean up a lot of what we do at the end of the year in the beginning years to clean up our policies and regulations which is something that we've traditionally done since I've become chair because there's been a lot

[04:06:46] of stuff that needed to be cleaned up here and so as far as making this all in one policy addressing some of the things that haven't been addressed before and then also having the valve at the end that says look if the public chooses to you know if the board chooses to suspend the rules they can do that at any time and obviously you would need five votes to name something somebody so you would have those five votes to suspend the rules and I think that's important for everyone to understand that I'm supporting this because it has built-in safety valves and it also

[04:07:21] addresses some of the long-term fixes that we've needed to do and and and and so from for my belief that's where it is um and and and so I will be supporting the resolution and with every resolution that I have supported we are a living breathing document we will bring back changes if there's certain aspects to it I'm happy to look at it for amendments but this should not be taken in any way an insult to anybody again the board has in reserves and will always have the right to name it anything the board wants to nothing gets named anyways without a majority vote so that's you know it's it's in here nothing is

[04:07:55] changing in an actual practical sense if the board chooses to move in a direction and so that's why I'm gonna choose to support this because I think they've a lot of work has gone into this and we have been looking at this for a a number of years and so I think it's important that, you know, this should not be taken as any type of insult.

[04:08:15] This is something that I think we're working very closely with each other on trying to make this the best it can be and you know, and that's my stand.

[04:08:24] So at this point, I'll ask the board to vote.

[04:09:35] - All right, so the vote is four yes, Lateef, Wall, Zargarpur, and Jackson. Two no, Williams, Jesse. Two absent, Ralston, Wilk, motion passed. - Okay, with that, I think we are in Board Matters. And I think at this point, yeah, yeah, yeah, Ms. Jessie, I'm gonna turn the meeting over to you to start out with Board Matters.

[04:09:59] - Yeah. - I, you know, I don't know, is she still here? - Not here. - Okay, but let's turn it over to Ms. Jessie and-- - I don't have anything other than the fact that when we changed the time, we didn't, I don't think Ms. Torian was in contact with you, So she didn't know about the change of time.

[04:10:20] And she said that she couldn't come until later. - Can you tell us about Ms. Torian then? - We'll make sure. Well, I think I did tell you about Ms. Torian. - Oh, did you do that already? - I did. - Okay, okay. - But anyway, I will make sure she gets her cup. - Okay. - How about that? Thank you. - Do you wanna begin with remarks this evening or do you wanna end?

[04:10:37] I will leave it up to you, Ms. Jessie. - No, I think I've said enough and I'm done. And I wanna thank you. And I'm sorry that I ended this meeting with all the controversy. you did not. Don't worry. No, no, no. I'm not worried about that. It wasn't controversial for me. Remember that it wasn't, it was only controversial for you guys, not for me, but I do want to say that, uh, I am, you know, you talk about difficult meetings, watching those teachers being out there. That was the most difficult thing for me in my career.

[04:11:08] It wasn't a COVID. It was watching people disrespect, uh, our leaders and not being professional. So thank you very much. It's Mr. Jesse, you're in now. I will not be sitting in the audience for you. - Vacation.

[04:11:29] - Thank you. And Ms. Jennifer Jesse, no, there's not gonna be a rule that the justice cannot run for anything. She wanted them to come up with a rule. And I wanna thank you guys for everything tonight because it really meant a great deal to me. Thank you very much.

[04:12:04] - Jackson, or do you wanna go at the end? Do you wanna go at the end? - No, it's okay. - As you wish, I mean, we're gonna say nice things about you. So you'll probably be crying by the end of it. All right, these past four years have been an honor of a lifetime and I'm thankful for those who've helped during the election, reached out with words of kindness and support, and those who came tonight to engage and participate in productive discourse. Tomorrow is the JET meeting, so I can't contribute to the board updates on committees, but I will try to post something

[04:12:41] online. I was able to attend the 4-H annual engagement and outreach last week and then also attend the semi-finals for Brunsfield District High School and cheer on the Tigers and I want to congratulate them on I know that the results weren't what they wanted, but they had a successful season and I'm proud to have represented them along with the other 19 schools well, I guess 18 of Brunsfield District. I want to thank my fellow board members for being partners and governance the last four years and so in alphabetical order and short and sweet because I hate goodbyes

[04:13:19] I'm going to quickly say thank you but please know that my words of summary does not is not equate all my all my actual thoughts and praise and love to Mrs. Jesse you have dedicated your career to education your experience is unmatched and I love you for it to chair Lateef I'm very grateful for your collaboration these past four years and the tremendous support you gave me in 2019 with the goal to bring teachers to the school board this allowed for an educator's

[04:13:55] voice to to be here during an unprecedented time in our nation's history and I'm grateful for that miss roston I want to just say thank you for your service vice chair wall or sometimes we sat on opposite sides of an issue I greatly respect your commitment to collaboration and solid governance during a time when many use political differences as a reason to avoid discussion and kindness. Ms. Williams, I will always admire your lifelong commitment to principles

[04:14:32] I hold dearly and the principles I know you do too, inclusion and equity, and I value your friendship. Mr. Wilk, I'm really sorry I was unable to thank you in person, but I greatly appreciate your input over the last few years. Ms. Zagrapoor, you are the last current teacher on the board, sorry, that as a parent and current teacher, I appreciate your service so much, and I know personally that this isn't an easy journey, and I love and respect you for your service.

[04:15:15] I want to also thank the student reps, student senate, and of course, wonderful Isabella. You have an amazing heart, and I can't wait to see where you go in life. I know these past four years have been hard, divisive at times, but I am so proud, truly proud of the collaborative efforts at this board and committed staff any of them still here at 11:15 which resulted in increased pay for all staff increase addressing the pay scale bringing the sustainability initiative increasing staff voice opening new skills schools in Brentsville along with other

[04:15:53] infrastructure and improvements thank you and including improving security increased opportunities for student engagement parental engagement and many more ways to access for students to access their lifelong goals I feel extremely privileged and so grateful for the opportunity to use my experience as a special educator to advocate for change by creating a position for a secondary special education department shows stipend for this year for educators with an IEP case load increased special education TAs and I am so excited dr. McDade to see the change that's going to come from resection

[04:16:31] special education there is more work to do and I am so grateful for those sitting here because I know they have the dedication and skills to do it there is a set of school board ethics that sit at our desk right here many of which I've read from before and then I committed to four years ago these are found also on the webpage in case you want to read them and include reorganizing recognizing that decision-making exists are made by majority vote and then once made they should be supported by board members that we have a right to have different opinions that we acknowledge that board members have no authority to direct

[04:17:08] division staff we've and that we do not surrender our judgment to special interests or partisan groups and then of always remember that our first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare and academic performance of all students attending public schools without ethics we can lose sight of, as McDade likes to say, or North Star.

[04:17:33] I believe in the importance of deliberation and reflection, and I hope I demonstrated that these past four years. I believe that advocacy is not just governance, but also stems from hard work and consistency. It's acting with integrity and speaking up with purpose. It has been my responsibility to advocate for all constituents, and I took that to heart.

[04:17:53] I have a duty to use this opportunity tonight, just really quickly, to ensure that many are aware that there were local outside influences that acted with purpose and intent to impact and in my opinion intentionally mislead voters in the Brentsville district school board election I don't want to take away from the reflection or celebration to discuss campaign events further from the diets but I do feel the majority is

unaware of what happened and as such I have an obligation to acknowledge this influence if nothing else in hopes to prevent it will happen the prevention from happening again I I struggled to find

[04:18:31] the right words to express how incredibly grateful I am for Prince William County School's amazing staff. Our students access a thriving future because of the educators in the school system. I am really thankful for the partnerships that I've developed over the years and thankful for those who have consistently advocated for all. I've remained consistent in my appreciation for strong advocates for students, families, and staff. So again, once more, thank you

[04:19:06] to all staff. Dr. McDade, no words, but I'll try. I am so thankful that you are here to continue to guide us to our North Star, and I am incredibly grateful for you. So with that, I hope that I led with love, and I will pass my baton on to Ms. Tudeneck, for whom I remain a proud Brentsville resident of, and if she needs any guidance, I'm here to collaborate with her. I also want to say I could not have done this without the support, an unconditional

[04:19:43] love of my family and friends and to my boys I did this for you along with your friends and my family and their friends and their families and their educators and I will see you out there Brunsville love and respect to all you all hey who

[04:20:17] wants to follow that stuff Miss Zargarpur so I'm gonna start we want to thank the public for their patience I like I said at the beginning of the meeting it's once in four years we do this okay once in four years I'm gonna to start by reading a Brene Brown quote. It says, love her too. It says, if you're not in the arena getting your bleep, your patootie kicked on occasion, I'm not interested in or open to your

[04:20:55] feedback. There are a million cheap seats in the world today filled with people who will never be brave with their own lives, but will spend every ounce of energy. They have hurling advice and judgment at those of us trying to dare greatly. Their only contributions are criticism, cynicism, and fear-mongering. If you're criticizing from a place where you're not also putting yourself on the line, I'm not interested in your feedback. I start with that because this is a job where before you get it, you spend a lot of time. When I get there, I'm going to do the thing and the thing and the thing and I'm going to do the thing. And then you get here and you find out we have ethics we got to

[04:21:33] follow and board members we got to get along with and that quote reminds me a little bit of my fellow board members but especially Adele when I think about how hard you work the life you've led that puts you here in this moment and the work that you're doing with the voice you carry from yourself your family and others from your career path from your educational path this division

[04:22:08] was really lucky to have someone like her in this seat i will be asking you for advice on special education by the way um and i don't know if the public realizes we're double colleagues we both work for fairfax county public schools so sometimes when she's like did you check your email i don't know if she means school board or she means fairfax um but i i i um i'll miss you in this capacity but i know um i have a lifelong friend a sister i have a lot of respect for um

[04:22:47] everyone who puts themselves out on the line like this but i know that you've had some particularly challenging things and um i am so grateful to have known you i there's so much more i want to say but i i'm miss jesse you know earlier i said that uh you know i had heard about you i heard your name and the footprint you left behind and I keep thinking my god I didn't do any of this right and then we

just ended this meeting where you were like I'm standing on this and this is who I am and you taught me that I remember one of the

[04:23:24] first things you told me as a board members like you got to sleep at night whatever decisions you make you got to sleep at night you're kidding this this job is not easy I listened I know it doesn't always that I don't always act like I do, but I did. I listened to you. And I look at the trail you've placed, the people that you brought in tonight, the things that you've witnessed in your lifetime, and you sit here ending this part of your career, because I know you're doing other stuff. I know we're going to

[04:24:00] be hearing more from Miss Lily Jessie. I hope that I walk a little bit in some way that you have, because you've meant so much to students and families and staff.

[04:24:20] Policies that we've made, policies you've stood up for that maybe we didn't agree on. I hope I can be like that. You've inspired me. Thank you for your service. Thank you for sharing your husband with us.

[04:24:38] Well, we'll see. So thank you. I can't even recall all the things that I've done. I'm going to keep the rest of this short. I just want to kind of center students actually. I want to think about like what do we learn from our students?

[04:24:57] We have students who do write us emails. They do come and speak. They get awards. They do amazing things. The ones that we come in and we celebrate that they've won academic awards or musical competitions or the athletic events. One of the things that I think about is

[04:25:18] They're the lucky ones, right? They're the ones that have experienced failure at some point and got through it to a point where it was practice and now it was, this is what they do. And I hope that all of our students get that time in their lives to practice something and figure out how to figure it out, right? They learn through these failures how to be successful. They learn resilience. These are lifelong skills.

[04:25:47] We can learn from our students that being dedicated to something, robotics, athletics, academics, whatever, it makes them excel in some area.

[04:26:04] Lily Jesse did say something earlier tonight about always hang out with people who are smarter than you. I think that's good advice for all of us. But tonight when I was just reflecting on the students who've come through here all year, the students who've spoken or write to us or whatever, I just was reminded that they have something to teach us.

[04:26:25] Our student rep said something tonight that made me think about how they talked about how there's recent discussions about kids getting involved in the higher level courses. When I was in high school, we had something called teen counseling.

[04:26:41] We would go over to the middle school or an elementary school, and we would have some topic we would talk about with students. I remember we were seniors and my friend Emily Johnson and I, we were the team and we went to talk with a group of kids about what our journey was like applying for college.

[04:27:01] And later on, I found out that that had been impactful to one of the other students. We ran into them some other time and they just said that was a good time to hear it. There might be something that the students could do. You in high school could go into those middle schools and reach into their lives and say, hey, I was you three years ago.

[04:27:20] Look what we're doing now. That was just a thought for you. All right. I hope everyone has a great whatever your break is. We've got Hanukkah coming up, Christmas. We've got Kwanzaa, New Year's, people who celebrate Christmas afterwards because they're Orthodox. We've got so many holidays.

[04:27:36] Whatever it is you're doing, enjoy with your family and your friends. See you next year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by saying that I feel that it has been an honor a privilege to serve with everyone on this board um this has been i think the most progressive forward-thinking inclusive collaborative history-making board that i have had the honor and

[04:28:11] privilege to sit on and i am so very proud to have been able to work with everyone on this board and i look forward to taking continuing the legacy of working collaboratively with the new members who um will be joining us in january um see if i can get through this without crying although i'm already losing that battle i don't cry a lot and i'm not particularly fond of it um miss jackson um i meant every word that i said and i will continue to um say that you are

[04:28:48] absolutely one of the finest human beings i've had the pleasure to know this board will um miss your voice and and worldview and lens I highly encourage you to take some time and not think about us but when you come back around to continue to always share your perspective with us there are so many of us sitting here that are more than willing to continue to hear from you we will not have the lens that you represent which had been a missing lens from the public eye and a very important

[04:29:23] important one for a very long time. I am glad to have met you and consider you family as above friends and I will look forward to our continued collaboration and I think it will be really important for you to answer your phone the upcoming budget session because you've always had some great ideas when it comes to special education and I appreciate that greatly. Miss Jessie I can't just I just don't have enough vocabulary to accurately describe how impactful getting to know you and working with you has been in my life I

[04:30:03] think that you often say that someone always saw something special in you and I think you are a living reminder of that in my life because you always call and say Lori what are you doing for your district Lori have you thought about about this. Lori, you can continue to do this. And I'm over here in left field somewhere. And I appreciate that you have modeled what it means to be a good board member and a thorough, dedicated board member. I appreciate the lens that you have brought this board being a principal,

[04:30:38] a teacher, and a special education educator. You are irreplaceable. And as someone of African-American descent I will always be eternally grateful for your continued education of how African-Americans have impacted our school division bringing it to the spotlight as a former Prince William County student that was always the excuse me the missing link in my education and I think the way that you

[04:31:15] have done it has been so impactful and a good model for us to follow for other individuals and minority groups who also deserve the recognition that they have not had from our school division and I will thank you for that again as I said earlier even tonight I was still learning things about a place that I've called home for several decades and a school system that I went through so and I will also miss you telling me I have to tell you I did not know about I will

[04:31:54] greatly miss our collaboration but I will still be calling to harass you so appreciate I know you so I appreciate your willingness to always keep us on our toes and I also appreciate your tagline as a board member to always talk about the good the bad and the ugly Dr. McDade I do believe emulates that always with her transparency and I know that that is something that you pushed hard for and so I appreciate that I'm just very thankful thank you Miss Jessie

[04:32:30] appreciate you I love you too to finish my keep it really quick it is as I was just saying almost budget season yesterday we had our joint legislative breakfast and I bring that up because the general assembly will soon be open for session the school division will start talking about budgets the board of county supervisors will start talking about budgets and this is important it

[04:33:06] is all of our responsibility if we would like more money to be to be funneled towards our schools that we take an active role in advocacy with our state and local legislators because I cannot say it enough I might actually get a t-shirt we are not a revenue generating source we are limited as a public school entity on to uh how much money we have in our pool to spend and uh we consistently spend over 80 percent of our budget on staff and salaries uh i think that is noteworthy and uh excuse me

[04:33:43] uh we had a speaker actually let me take that back uh we have several speakers over the past several months when it comes to collective bargaining who highlight salaries um i think it's important to note that uh since we are not a revenue generating source that's even more the reason why we should be in constant contact with our elected officials i do want to speak to that briefly but just to say that for anybody who is interested in wage proposals and things going on with collective bargaining there is an faq page for the public to be able to review i know

[04:34:21] a lot of teachers were emailing me and I directed them there as well I think it's important to recognize that collective bargaining is a process and I'll just leave it at that please check out the FAQs wrapping it up I just want to congratulate Dr. Jason Calhoun the director of the governor school eighth grade science teacher Scott Malarkey and at Fred Lynn and third grade fifth grade teacher dr keaton beaumont who were recognized for outstanding science contributions while since our last meeting all of us just about attended the vsba annual convention i did not get to attend as

[04:35:01] many sessions because i was the delegate but i look forward to us being able to collaborate and share information from that especially with our new board members coming in fl was able to attend the FFL regional day for robotics important issue was brought up there which I did mention to some of our legislators which is the ability to take our CDL test in multiple languages as we are becoming a more and more diverse community I think that has become a hindrance to employment for some of our families who would like to drive buses or do things of that nature that they cannot do because English is not their first language and there are only two

[04:35:40] to DMV locations in the state, I believe, where there are interpretation services available. And that is an equity issue. And I think something that maybe this board could get involved where the next coming board could get involved with, definitely help us get more school bus drivers.

[04:35:57] And the next racial and social justice meeting will be on December 7th, which will also be the Governor's School Innovation Park meeting. And I look forward to lunch next week. I wanna give a special shout out to Miss Johnson, who attends King Elementary, who mounted a campaign on LinkedIn, Facebook, email and even had her dad send me a video.

[04:36:23] So I want to encourage her advocacy. She would like to see changes for recess and lunch. So I will be meeting with her at school for her lunch next week. And that is the kind of student advocacy that I love. I appreciate all of our student representatives for the insight and viewpoints that they bring to us.

[04:36:41] And I wish all those who celebrate the holidays upcoming, happy holidays. - Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. Good evening, everyone. It's been a long meeting. I know everyone is tired. So I do notice we don't have a three minute clock here.

[04:37:03] So I did prepare. - One in four years. - One in four years. - So I'm gonna highlight a few events and then I'll discuss just, you know, thoughts about board, et cetera. I attended the VSBA annual convention. It was awesome to mingle with school board members from across the state because we're kinda in this exclusive club where we only, we all kinda know what it's like and nobody else quite knows what it's like.

[04:37:27] I enjoyed a lunch conversation that I had there where we talked about collective bargaining with other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. It was extremely cathartic. And it was just cool to compare notes with what we've been experiencing with what other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia are experiencing.

[04:37:44] So I just wanted to highlight the advantages of going to conventions like that and collaborating with other members across the state. I loved the Virginia Music Educators Association's conference, Osborne Park and Colgan, Osborne Park Madrigal Singers and Colgan's Philharmonic Orchestra were absolutely amazing.

[04:38:03] It's just a cool thing to see. not only do we excel in sports and academics, but also in the performing arts. It was just, it was awesome. The level of performance, guys, it was amazing. I hardly could believe it was high school. I loved being able, I was able to attend the state competition for volleyball, for battlefield.

[04:38:22] I commend the Lady Bobcats for making it all the way to the state championship, and I can't be more proud of them, although it didn't turn out how they wanted it to turn out. It was just awesome to be there. So congratulations to that team. And on November 18th, I went to the first Lego League event at Osborne Park and saw the Super Tyler Tomcats and the Alvi Raybots.

[04:38:42] And wow, if you've never been to one of those events, it's just like overwhelming. It's stimulation overload. But the kids loved it, and there was a lot of hands-on learning going on. So I encourage parents, if they have children who are interested in that kind of thing, to get involved. I caught the region final football game with Freedom at Woodbridge and Battlefield.

[04:39:01] It was a tough loss, very tough loss for Battlefield. but to have your only season loss be against the reigning state champs who are headed to states again is not a bad deal so not a bad season at all so you know congrats to battlefield on an amazing season and good luck and we're all praying for freedom woodbridge because they bring honor to our school division so i really hope i have full confidence in them they were amazing they just crushed us um so students from local gainesville district schools were chosen to to participate in the Haymarket Youth Government program.

[04:39:36] This was just a cool, what a great way to learn about how local government works. So Bull Run, Addison, an eighth grader from Bull Run got to do this. From Reagan, it was Rhea, Samir, and Taylor who were eighth graders. Sophia, Braylin, who are seventh graders. Ivy, Emogen, and Charlotte, Rhea.

[04:39:53] And Rhea, who were sixth graders from Reagan who got to do this. And there were a couple of kids from Gainesville. I didn't write their names down, sorry. But these kids got to work alongside officials and be a part of making some decisions for their community that had to do with parks and open space and it was just really cool to see the collaboration between education and local government so good job Haymarket town of Haymarket. On November 29th through the second Battlefield Theatre students presented 12 angry jurors and I was out of town so I could not attend it I was hearing my own daughter who was a music student here in Battlefield perform on a huge stage but I hear that their performance was fabulous so good

[04:40:31] job. I encourage families to show up on December 13th to Silent No More. That's at 6 p.m. at Unity Read. It's a dynamic presentation on drug awareness. Drug use and abuse is devastating to children and families, and this is a community problem, a school problem, and a family problem. It's all of our problems, and we need to we need everybody to be more aware and engaged if we're going to make a difference on this issue. So please come. That's Wednesday, December 13th from 6 to 8 p.m. for it and I'm gonna switch gears a little bit for the record I do not want a gen

[04:41:04] wall although I do enjoy the play on words and you know many many middle class folks I consider myself in that category you never get their name on anything but you know for for the record also I do this not for me but to serve public services an act of love and an act of service Gainesville High School when we did that naming um that that was not named after a person it never was named after a person it was never ever suggested to be named after a person it was named after the community the community

[04:41:38] that i live in the community that i represent um and so i just wanted to make that clear this board has been at times incredibly fun um i didn't feel that way the first six months or so when we got on the board and two months into it we had a pandemic or maybe two and a half months in um and that was slightly horrific um but it was totally horrific actually i will amend my statement um but you know at times we've had fun times we have laughed and joked and

[04:42:13] we have lots of inside jokes guys lots of inside jokes and it's been it's been a pleasure serving with every member of this board and while i might not agree with everybody and in fact i'm usually the one if somebody's not gonna agree it's probably me I under I respect the right to disagree and I enjoy the banter and I enjoy hearing somebody who has a completely different viewpoint from me and I think that's important and I think when we do that we are doing our job so you know starting out with Miss Jessie often we're on opposite sides of some things but you know I love your you are

[04:42:49] a force of nature. You are a fierce advocate for your positions and I respect that. I really do. So I'm going to miss you. And I know Mr. Jesse will be fun to work with because my husband says he's great because they have worked together at the polls and have become good buddies. It's true, right, Mr. Jesse? It's true. Mr. Wall and Mr. Jesse are friends.

[04:43:20] yes and it's late miss Jackson we have had some great times I one of my favorite memories of Miss Jackson is when we were working on the innovation naming we met up and we drove all around and got to know some of the neighborhoods that we overlapped with like some of your neighborhoods and some of my neighborhoods and we were out like scoping the neighborhoods and trying to get a feel for like what does this community look like because we just kind a scene some of them we hadn't actually kind of been into and so we did like

[04:43:54] serious Intel and it was really really fun and I'm very very good at obeying the rules so we didn't have disguises or anything but you know it was it was good and and and because of that I'm just using it as an example because of that collaboration the boundary process for innovation was a win-win-win that's a reference to a famous TV show it was a win-win-win and I think the kids won we won everybody won

[04:44:31] and we had a policy I mean we had a boundary process that that really benefited everybody so that's just an example of my memories with you we'll never ever be able to quite capture that but you know it was it's just it's been awesome often I go to Adele when I want to understand a teacher perspective I also go to Ms. Zagraper as well I don't have that perspective that's something that she brought to this board and it will be greatly missed I do listen to teachers they just don't know if they want to talk to me sometimes so like having this special ed background is awesome so please teachers I am open

[04:45:07] minded I promise so I you know we have good times ahead there are changes coming this will be a different board whenever you even change one person it's a different board and but I look forward to continuing to work on the good things that we have going in Prince William County our strategic plan is solid our goals are clear if we continue to work together we can start we can see great things and and keeping in mind that we are here for the students and that is the thing that unites us and I with that I will just close with some final

[04:45:47] thoughts there is it is said that no man is an island no man stands alone and we so very much need help and encouragement and strength from one another we have a responsibility here to strengthen one another encourage when I'm speaking of PWCS in general encourage one another lift one another look for the good in another and emphasize that good so I would encourage us all educators included not to partake of the trend of our times to complain criticize or tear down but but rather let us be builders.

[04:46:16] Let us look for the good and build on it. In the words of a wise theologian, Gordon Hinckley, don't be a pickle sucker. There is so much of the sweet and the decent and the good to build on here in Prince William County Schools. So finish the month out strong, enjoy time with your family and friends, and remember the reason for the season.

[04:46:37] And with that thought, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, until we meet again in 2024, good night. - Mr. Chairman. - My God. Yep, Ms. Williams. - I'm sorry. between the tears I don't usually cry and the science that I love.

[04:46:53] I would be very remiss if I did not congratulate Freedom High School football team, the band and the cheerleaders. I know they'll be leaving Friday because the game is at 11:30 at UVA. - At UVA in Charlottesville, 11:30. - And I will, I unfortunately will not be able to attend and I will be cheering them on.

[04:47:14] The game was great on Saturday And I just wanted to thank a former, I think he's a commander's player again. Sports, gotta get with it. Santana Moss was in the audience encouraging our players. So I have been told that he comes on occasion to provide some encouragement and inspiration for our team and our players.

[04:47:36] So I just wanted to say that I look forward to seeing them here in January when they bring home the second state title. and I promised to learn something else about football by that time. And I also want to congratulate Tristan Trujillo, thank you, on breaking the state record for passes, is it passes?

[04:48:02] No, carry it, touchdowns. Yeah, I'm gonna get it together one year, I promise. But I'm always honest about my non-athletic selves. So, but it's important, I know, it's horrible. I even had a son who was an athlete. Chairman Porter's not happy. But I try, my son played basketball, I still don't know what a foul is, so he was my own kid.

[04:48:20] So I just want to congratulate them on all the hard work and effort and energy that they put into being a team, playing collaboratively, the good sportsmanship that they demonstrate, and congratulations again, and look forward to seeing you in January. - Okay, it's between my talk and your door out.

[04:48:41] So listen, when I got on this board in 2018, We struggled with a lot of different things, and there were a lot of challenges. It was a dysfunctional board, it was dysfunctional for a variety of reasons, and you know, polarizing times.

[04:49:03] And when the new board took over in '19, that I was happily a part of, and Ms. Jackson, and Ms. Wall, and Zharapur, and Williams, and Ms. Jessie, and all of us got together, so we gotta fix it. And together, we put the Prince William County School Board of Ethics, Together, it's at our desk here.

[04:49:23] It's in closed session room. It's something that we share with each other. And I believe it has been the first step that this board, as we wrap up, can be most proud of the work that I think allowed us to then focus laser-like on the work that really needs to be done.

[04:49:42] And that's the work for the children in the school division. And I think this school board has succeeded by every metric in the work that we've done in the last four years. And that includes, you know, my good friend across the aisle, Jen Wall as well. I mean, all of the work that we have committed to working with together has gotten us to this point.

[04:50:02] We, this board led through a pandemic. We're the only division to open for special ed in-person learning. We're the only division not being sued in a class action lawsuit in this region for that. This board spent a lot of time cleaning up some of the policies and regulations needed to be done to make this board.

[04:50:21] This is really one of the longest meetings since the pandemic and for that, I apologize. But again, I said once in four years. You know, we've given historic raises to our faculty and staff. We were the first to vaccinate our teachers fully.

[04:50:37] We have spent a lot of time working on improving opportunities for students across the board. I think that this board has been a success. I think as we look back on its legacy, It's important for everyone to recognize that.

[04:50:54] I think that's really important. Election night, while I was happy, I guess I won. I was more sad that we lost Adele Jackson. I felt more personally saddened and impacted by that loss.

[04:51:09] I think the school board needed her more than it needs me. I think it's a better place because of her, not because of me or any other one of us. She's a beautiful soul in and out.

[04:51:25] And I've said a lot of great things about her this evening. And I just, it was a very tough night. I mean, while I did win, I felt like we all lost. And I mean that from the bottom of my heart, I really do. I think losing Miss Jessie to retirement is also a massive loss.

[04:51:44] So you combine the two, it's a big void that we need to work on to fill in the upcoming months and years. and I think it's important. Losing Diane Ralston as well has been tough.

[04:51:59] She has worked really hard and like I said earlier in the evening, highly committed to kids, highly committed to students and demanded that of me in every conversation, every discussion, every vote. She always asked, is this the right thing for kids? That was her guiding principles and force.

[04:52:18] Ms. Jessie, we may have been on opposite sides of a few things and she said, if you didn't hear her earlier, if you didn't hear her earlier, she said, "I'm so used to voting yes." So I want, for the record, I'm gonna say that this board has more unanimous votes in four years than any other board in Prince William County history.

[04:52:43] And that doesn't happen by accident. That happens because we all work together offline, online, you know, in public, out of public on getting it right and not putting something on the agenda unless we had a majority to support it.

[04:52:58] And for the vast majority, 98% of the time, Ms. B, is it right? Eight zero or unanimous. And so that is, if that's a metric by which one can measure the success of this governing body and its oversight and compliance work, I think we got an A plus, 4.0 on that.

[04:53:19] And I give this board high regards. And I know I'm babbling on here, but I think it's really important to know as we wrap up this historic four years. I think I need to clarify a couple things from since the comment time.

[04:53:36] There was some, you know, allegation that the school board gave itself a raise. The last raise was four years ago that we did not give ourselves a raise this year. And so there's none of that. I just wanna be very clear on that.

[04:53:51] And then I said this last year at the end of football season. I'm gonna say it again. if you're a division one, two, three, four football program, HSBU, HCBU, I don't care where you are in America.

[04:54:10] If you care about your football team, you should be recruiting from Prince William County Public Schools. We have the best football in Virginia, and we have, I believe, the best football in the United States. We had Battlefield and Freedom play in the, well, Battlefield and Freedom play in the semifinals.

[04:54:28] So the state semifinals were two county schools. and not Fairfax, not even close, Mr. Yusuf. They weren't even, not even there. We, and we have Brentsville district who was also in the state semifinals. We have a great place. So if there's any scouts listening tonight, you should be in Charlottesville on Saturday.

[04:54:47] I'm not allowed to recruit on behalf of any institution. I could go to jail. And I think NCAA rules forbid us from pushing our students to be recruited by name, but damn it, you should be looking at all of our students, our volleyball players at Battlefield, the girls, the ladies team, outstanding.

[04:55:09] We are the best place in the state for sports. We're gonna be the best place for academics and we are committed to doing that work. I wish you all wonderful holidays and arts. Well, we're there, we saw Mr. Bernstein, our arts and theater are off the chart from elementary up to high.

[04:55:29] And so I wanna thank our staff. It's been a great four years. It's been a great two years, it's been a great one month for whoever's new and joining us. You know, we thank you, this board thanks you, this work that we have done could not have been done without you, your patience tonight is duly noted.

[04:55:47] Thank you very much and have a great night. This last meeting of the year 2023 is adjourned.



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