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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Date	Wednesday, January 3, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	1h 24m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADsvnpJit90
- Official School Board page (PWCS): https://www.pwcs.edu/about/school_board/

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-02. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] We will now call the Prince William County School Board to order a motion is ordered for the approval of meeting agenda Madam Vice-Chair Wall Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. Do you have a second?

[00:00:17] Mr. Chairman. Ms. Zargarpur. I second. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is eight. Yes. Motion passed.

[00:00:59] Wonderful moving on to the motion to enter closed session as a motion is order. Madam Vice-Chair Wall. Mr. Chairman And 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.

[00:01:20] 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 review disciplinary matters for specific students that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the scholastic record for individual students and to receive legal advice regarding same as provided by Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, two and eight.

[00:01:49] Three, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, seven and eight.

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

[00:02:25] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Zarapur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:02:48] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Excellent, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session

[00:02:53] and return to open session in one hour.

[00:03:54] A motion is in order, Madam Vice-Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3712, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of January 3, 2024, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:04:14] 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 the certification resolution applies and to 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.

[00:04:38] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:58] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action items. A motion is ordered, Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams.

[00:05:14] - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed.

[00:05:31] - Okay, what is 902, what is that? Do we do that now? Okay, oh, I see, got it. Moving on to 9.02, approval of closed session consent agenda item. Motions on our order, Madam Vice Chair Wall.

[00:05:47] - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the closed session consent agenda item as presented in closed session. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:08] - And the vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Wonderful. Next up is the Pledge of Allegiance. We have Isabella Aversano, our student representative from Gainesville High School to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. - To the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:06:43] Okay, fantastic. Okay, well, we will welcome everyone to our first school board meeting of the 2024 year and the first school board meeting of our new school board. We will jump right into thriving futures focus.

[00:07:01] Today, well, hold on here. What do we have? Thank you. Today we're gonna have our thriving futures focus and let me jump into that. I am sorry, all over the place here. Very special today. Thriving Futures Focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that

fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:07:28] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor or an award at the state or national level. We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County Public Schools, and the school board is proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments.

[00:07:44] Tonight, the school board will recognize the 2023 Virginia High School League Class Six football state champions, the Eagles of Freedom High School. This is their second, second, mind you all, consecutive state championship.

[00:08:10] And we begin our recognition with Lori Williams, the Woodbridge District, who will introduce our fine young state champions. Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Chairman LaChief. The Freedom High School football team secured the second state title in school history with its 42-34 win over Highland Springs High School.

[00:08:30] This win capped off another undefeated season for the Eagles with a 2022 season at 15-0 and the 2023 season at 14-0. The Freedom High School football team has also been recognized on the U.S. House floor by Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger.

[00:08:49] great honor our school board would like to recognize the Freedom High School varsity football team. Representing the Freedom Eagles tonight we welcome Principal Chevelli Smith, Director of Student Activities, Thomas Azunada or Mr. A as we belovedly call him, Assistant Coach Mr. Jeff Overton, as well as the players coaches and families who made the second consecutive championship

[00:09:24] possible. Principal Smith, please introduce the coaches and share a few thoughts on these outstanding student-athletes. Thank You Chairman Dr. Lateef, school board members, superintendent... Can we check her mic? Is it on? Is your mic on? Is there a red light on there? It's on. It's on. Thank You Chairman Dr. Lateef, school board members, and Superintendent Dr. McDade. I appreciate you taking the

[00:09:59] time to celebrate our football team and coaches. I am so proud of them. They are simply amazing. At this time, I'm going to ask Mr. Nunziata, our athletic director, to come and introduce our coaches and our football team. Thank you, everyone. First off, on the left, Chris Davis, our offensive coordinator baron taylor our special teams coach uh charles gates is our defensive

[00:10:36] line and demetrius amerson is our blind backers and running backs coach um at this time i'm going to ask walter hughes to come up and introduce his teammates um our quarterback tristan evan Treos. Offensive linemen MAUI Tallahai. Quarterback Caleb Tucker. Athlete Justin Gordon. Justice Gordon. Linebacker defensive back Isaiah Harper. Defensive

[00:11:11] back Ja'Kai Jackson Hughes. Offensive linemen Marcus Cox. Godovan Lewis linemen. Who behind you? Oh Jaden Austin defensive linemen. Linebacker Braxton Hunt. Receiver Antonio Ellum. Offensive - Offensive lineman, Justice Robinson.

[00:11:34] Receiver, Benji, Benji. I think I got everybody. - I got, I called Justice, that's right. - Oh, offensive lineman, Daylen King.

[00:11:58] - I definitely said Bradshaw. - You did not say Bradshaw before I said Bradshaw. - I'm aware, even though I am horribly negligent in the world of sports, that there was also a state title that was broken,

I believe too, by one of your players.

[00:12:16] - That's definitely worthy of mention. - There were two records over two years. Tristan Evans, the all career scoring record, 962. And then he also had the single season touchdown record as well, so.

[00:12:43] - Well, thank you, Ms. Williams. Congratulations again to our VHSL state champions. And I can tell you that I attended a number of the games and every single one of the players on this team a leader every single one of you acted in a way that made sure this team won all those 29 games and and just have impressed the heck out of everyone in the Commonwealth of Virginia and across the United States the articles written about this team the work you all have accomplished and have done are make us all very proud here and we're excited to have you guys go on and do this again

[00:13:22] next year no pressure I'm sorry no pressure at all the football season you know it may have included but not your work I challenge each of you tonight to go back into the halls classrooms and activities of Freedom High School and become leaders and champions in your school bring your passion determination and discipline to your academics your goals and your peers and to quote the Hall of Fame coach Mark Levy football doesn't build character it reveals character in each of you showed that each game every time you played and I mean that with all sincerity each of you as a leader in in every aspect of the work that you all did this was truly a team effort and congratulations to all

[00:14:01] of you and and to quarterback Tristan Evans Trujillo I really you know we're very proud of the records you've accomplished but I know you couldn't have done it without this amazing squad you have there in front of you they are fantastic another round of applause for our folks here did I read dr. McDade's - Oh no, all right, Dr. McDade.

[00:14:25] - All right, thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well one, congratulations on behalf of the Prince William County Schools to the entire team, coaching staff, and even our parents. I know as a parent myself, the time and energy that it takes to support our student athletes and get them to practices and get them to games.

[00:14:45] And so congratulations to each and every one of you for all of your hard work in the second consecutive state football championship. PWCS football teams have not experienced this level of success since the 1998 and '99 seasons, and we're incredibly proud of you.

[00:15:01] The hard fought lessons you and your teammates have learned on the field echo the skills represented in our profile of a graduate. Skills like critical thinking, innovation, collaboration, and resilience. Thank you so much for representing not only Freedom High School, but Prince William County schools with excellence.

[00:15:18] Congratulations. - My apologies, Dr. McDade. We will now invite the team up to the front, have a board, a picture with the school board and Dr. McDade.

[00:15:32] Thank you.

[00:18:40] - Okay, well thank you. That was fantastic. So, fantastic. Next we will move on to once a year in the January meeting, we have what's called our organizational meeting. We will have that, but again, I wanna thank everyone and welcome everyone to this new school board.

[00:18:58] We have new members and returning members. To my left, we have Erica Tredenic of the Brentsville District. I'm gonna get it right, Tredenic. Erica Tredenic, I'm sorry.

[00:19:13] And then we have Mr. Richard Jesse of the Occoquan District. We have Madam Vice Chair Wall of the Gainesville District returning, Ms. Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District. We have Ms. Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District, Mr. Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District, Ms. Isabella Aversano, our student from Senior Gainesville High School, and of course, Superintendent Dr. LaTanya McDade, and we have Wade Anderson, Division Counsel, and we have, oh, Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District down there as well.

[00:19:48] I cannot forget him and Ms. Williams, who are, I think, our senior members now, right? Look at their gray hair, and Wilk is showing, and he's certainly mature. So now we are now moving on to 12.01, the approval of the annual organizational meeting agenda.

[00:20:07] Madam Vice Chair, Wahl. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the annual organization meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I'd like to second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:20:31] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, next, moving on to 12.02, nomination for vice chair. So tonight we will be moving through a number of motions that are really very exciting. And we'll try to get through those as quickly as possible. Nominations are now in order for Vice Chair of the Prince William County School Board for the year 2024.

[00:20:49] Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman. - I move that the Prince William County School Board elect Lisa Zargarpur as Vice Chair for 2024. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Laurie Williams. - I'd like to second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:21:16] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Thank you, moving on to 12.03. - The motion is ordered for the clerk appointment. - Mr. Chairman. - Madam Vice Chair Wall, yeah, yeah, yeah. - I want to make the nominees. - Oh, for what, oh, I see, okay.

[00:21:32] - I move the Prince William County School Board appoint Bea Simpson as the clerk of the Prince William County School Board for 2024. The salary for the clerk shall be currently as budgeted. - Any second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote while we're waiting.

[00:21:51] Congratulations, Madam now Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur. Very excited and I'll have some nice words to say about our retiring vice chair here shortly. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. - Thank you, thank you.

[00:22:06] Moving on to deputy clerk appointment, a motion's in order, Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board appoint Anna Udayetate as deputy clerk, did I say that right? - Very good, wow. Yeah, that's pretty good. - Of the Prince William County School Board for 2024. The salary of the deputy clerk shall be as currently budgeted.

[00:22:24] - Any discussion? Or in a second, any second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams, any discussion? - I'd like to second. - Please vote, excellent.

[00:22:41] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. - Okay, moving on to 12.05, a motion's in order. Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board require a corporate surety bond of $10,000 for the clerk and the deputy clerk to the school board conditioned upon the faithful performance and discharge of their duties with the premium for such bonds to be paid for by the school board.

[00:23:02] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zargarpur. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:23:21] - And the vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, next, a motion's in order for the dates, times, locations, school board meetings for 2024. Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board establish the location of its regular school board meetings at 14715 Bristow Road, Manassas, Virginia, which are typically held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, January through June and September through December.

[00:23:48] Meetings shall convene at 6:00 p.m. and immediately following the approval of the agenda, the school board will enter closed session until 7:00 PM, at which time the public meeting will resume. Adjustments to the meeting calendar are made to accommodate scheduled holidays, spring break, and the annual Virginia School Boards Association conference as necessary.

[00:24:07] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Zaraport. - I second. - Any discussion? - Please vote.

[00:24:23] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - 12.07, superintendents designee to attend school board meetings. Madam Vice Chair Wall. - Mr. Chairman, I move that Dr. Carol Flanard, deputy superintendent to be appointed as the designee of the division superintendent to attend meetings of the school board in the absence or inability of the superintendent to attend through December 31, 2024.

[00:24:46] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - A second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:25:05] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - And on to 12.08, a motion is in order for membership in professional organizations and appointment of representatives. Madam Vice Chair, Wahl. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just looked at this list. - It's a long one.

[00:25:21] move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments for the organizations and committees as follows one continue membership in the Virginia School Boards Association for 2024 to elect Robert Lateef to serve as delegate to the Virginia School Boards Association annual convention in Williamsburg Virginia in November 2024 three elect Jennifer Wall to serve as alternate to the Virginia School Boards Association annual convention in in williamsburg virginia in november 2024. four appoint tracy blake to serve as representative

[00:25:55] to the national alliance of black school educators for 2024. five appoint lori williams to serve as alternate to the national alliance of black school educators for 2024. six appoint richard jesse and jennifer wall to serve as representatives to the prince william county school prince william county and schools joint audit committee for 2024. seven appoint erica tradenik to serve as alternate to the prince william county and schools joint audit committee for 2024. eight appoint tracy blake to serve as the representative on the head start advisory board for 2024. nine appoint erica

[00:26:32] tradenik and justin wilk to serve as representatives on the student school health advisory board for 2024. ten appoint jennifer wall and justin wilk to serve as representatives on the safe schools advisory council for 2024. eleven appoint bobber lateef richard jesse and jennifer wall to serve as representatives to the PWCS internal audit committee for 2024. 12. Appoint Lisa Zargarpur to serve as alternate to the PWCS internal audit committee for 2024. 13. Appoint Tracy Blake, Richard Jesse, and Lori Williams to serve on the school board disciplinary committee for 2024.

[00:27:10] 14. Appoint Erica Tredenik to serve as an alternate on the school board disciplinary committee for 2024. 15. Appoint Lori Williams to serve as the representative on the joint environmental task force, replacing Adele Jackson.

[00:27:27] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I noticed that the Washington area Board of Education is no longer listed. Are they, have they just stopped inviting us? - They're defunct. - Okay.

[00:27:42] - Yeah, they don't even have a website. - Yeah, I know they didn't have any of all of last year. I wasn't sure if they had given us another update or not. - If they reconvene, we'll certainly appoint to that.

[00:28:03] - That's what I thought. I just wanted to make sure. And it's something that I think the public is used to seeing on here too. So I wanted to make sure that we also address that. And then I'm not related to this, but I'm sure that'll impact us for our reporting and things of that nature too. So thank you for the update, I appreciate it.

[00:28:21] - Any further discussion? Okay, please vote. So as we wrap up, that was the last vote on the organizational meetings. I want to thank Jennifer Wall for her service as vice chair this year.

[00:28:39] I think I speak for the board when I say We really valued your service, your commitment to the school division, to the students, to the families of the schools, and it really made my work as chair really much easier and we continue to look forward to work with you.

[00:28:57] And you've represented your community and the Gainesville District extremely well and they should be very lucky to have you as their representative. Thank you, Ms. Wall. Round of applause for Madam Vice Chair Wall. - And the vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed.

[00:29:14] - Okay, thank you. And we now welcome Madam Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District to assume the Vice Chair position for the year 2024. We have now, we'll now move on to adoption of the consent agenda, a motion to order, Madam Vice Chair Zargarpur.

[00:29:31] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Okay, please. - Mr. Jesse. - I'd like to do this on the clerk appreciation week.

[00:29:52] I'd like to say that I was very impressed with the retirement ceremony you put together. Then you did our installation ceremony and I think you guys did all the work and you did a wonderful job, thank you.

[00:30:17] I know, yeah. And Mr. Chair? - Yes. - Also I believe at the bottom we have the adoption of the minutes from last December. And I think it's only appropriate that since I was not here on the board that I abstain from that.

[00:30:39] - Julie, darling, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to, because we're starting the year off fresh with the new board in January and organizational meeting, just to remind the public that what we put on the consent agenda is generally for the month upcoming and not for the month of January.

[00:30:59] and I want to express my excitement for the upcoming Career and Technical Education Month because I love CTE and I love CTE programming and I think it's just always good to remind the public that we're one month ahead 'cause sometimes we do get citizens who come in and say we didn't celebrate this or we didn't celebrate that, but we try to be very proactive and placing these on the agenda ahead of time, which I'm grateful to McDade's administration for making the change, so thank you.

[00:31:28] - Okay, very good. We will now vote, did we already vote on this? Okay, and if you want to abstain, go ahead and do that, Mr. Jessie.

[00:31:58] - So the vote is seven yes, two abstain, Mrs. Trudinick and Mr. Jessie, motion passed. - Okay, very good, moving on to citizen comment time. Those citizens who've signed up in advance of the clerk with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and the citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:32:21] 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, jeering, to avoid disruptions of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order tonight. We have five citizens signed up to speak.

[00:32:36] When I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record. The first five, we will just go ahead and call up. Eileen Devereaux, Catalea Claros, Zoe Obi, Chrissy Falls, and Troy Payne. Eileen Devereaux. Greetings, I'm Eileen Devereaux from the Gainesville District. I'd like to congratulate you on your election for the 2024-2024 school board. I would like to thank you in advance for all the critical, impactful, and meaningful work that you will do on behalf of Prince William

[00:33:14] County. You have the honor and responsibility of preparing, shepherding, and empowering the future leaders and you must be intentional and value our children in the diversity of culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, socioeconomic status, language, religion, zip code, ability, and so much more.

[00:33:33] And this diversity comes with an array of talents, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Our children, their history, books, tradition, interests, even idiosyncrasies are all important and they have a place in this county, in this school system, and it's your job to make sure that that place is secure, sacred, and seen. Yes, secure, sacred, and seen.

[00:33:56] Some of you may fail to do this, maybe because of inexperience, it could be because of ignorance, it could be because of arrogance, but it mostly would be because of a lack of moral courage to do what is right. You have to choose and say no, I'm not going to listen to the dog whistles or the culture warriors. Instead, I'm going to serve children. There are no blurred lines. It's either children or not. You either value all the children and all humanity, but you can't remain indifferent to the plights of African-American students or immigrants or special education students, yet still believe that you're a responsible public steward. Indifference, intolerance, and inaction

[00:34:33] is inexcusable. For those that do choose children, don't let the bright lights blind you or bind you. There will always be people that are louder, more powerful, more organized, but you also have to listen to those voices that are even silent voices. There'll be parents that'll never come to a school board meeting or a PTO meeting or even a parent teacher conference but their hopes and dreams are just as important we have to make sure that we value their children as well so I'm asking you to choose to see children first you must choose to acknowledge and then you must choose to act

[00:35:08] and it won't always be easy because it may require you to embrace something that is radically new or different something in an unfamiliar way you may have to leave your comfort zone you may have to go against the status quo but if you are serious about launching thriving futures you must look up you must reach deep and you must push far i hope for each of you as you serve your term you will look up you

will reach deep and you will push far and you will choose to value everyone from those that are front and center to those that have been systematically ignored undervalued and underserved

[00:35:45] and you choose to be intentional and make a place that is secure sacred and seen for all children in prince william county thank you thank you katalia claros and you can pull the microphone down a little closer thank you hello my name is katalia claros and my address is on file and i'm here again to talk about middle school recess from the last time you saw me and to now

[00:36:21] i have made a lot of progress i formed a committee that has seven students we meet every saturday at 11 p.m i mean a.m at panera bread off of off of 234 for anybody who would like to join we have a an online petition that has over 200 signatures my quest for middle school recess is because something my friend Chloe said. She's in middle school and she told me cherish your

[00:36:55] recess time because in middle school you won't have any. I don't know what people were trying to do by eliminating recess in middle school, but studies have proven that kids that have recess do better on tests than kids that don't. Here are the benefits of recess: improves memory, attention, and concentration; helps kids brains work and develop properly, helps kids decompress and absorb what they recently learned, reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom, improves social and emotional development. So that's why middle schoolers should have

[00:37:34] recess. It doesn't have to be long, just 15 minutes and you don't need a whole playground, just free time. And it doesn't have to be running around and/or playing. Thank you Cateleas Claras. Next we have Zoe Obi. Hello my name is Zoe Obi and my address is on file. Middle schoolers need recess because how are

[00:38:13] fifth graders supposed to make the transition? Recess improves memory and tension and concentration, helps kids brains work and develop properly, helps kids decompress and absorb what they've recently learned, reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom and improve social and emotional development. That's what I say to do the best on tests you must give students recess. Thank you for listening and have a great evening. Thank you Zoe. Chrissy

[00:38:46] Falls. Good evening Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, board my address is on file.

[00:39:03] January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and more education about this subject is needed and at a younger age. Virginia Department of Education and human trafficking overview states the children at risk are not high schools not just high school students studies show that the average age a child is trafficked in a commercial sex trade is between 11 and 14 years old the traffickers may target minor victims through social media websites telephone chat lines after school programs and other and through other students who are used through traffickers to regret recruit other victims right now this school system does not

[00:39:41] have a comprehensive human trafficking prevention curriculum that meets the Virginia standards of learning despite being awarded a grant to implement the just-ask prevention curriculum to grades 6 through 10 which not only meets the state standards but also but is also being used by Loudoun County Fairfax Manassas City Manassas Park City Schools and is set to be implemented in Stafford and Warren County in 2024 discussions about this grant started with Prince William County Schools in 2022 and a partnership agreement drafted by Prince William County Schools was signed.

[00:40:19] Prince William County met with ATI on several occasions in 2022 and resumed a new set of talks with different administrators in 2023. The final MOU, which was edited by Prince William County Schools and agreed to by ATI was never completed. And yet another school year went by with only ninth graders in Prince William County Schools getting prevention education.

[00:40:41] Prince William County schools are falling behind in providing life-threat, life-saving curriculum to students for reasons that are not understood. The curriculum teacher administrative training, parent awareness events, and technical support for the entire program is paid for.

[00:40:57] More importantly, the Virginia Standards of Learning, which set the requirements for what children are to be taught are covered on the topics of human trafficking, healthy relationships, consent, internet safety, trapping, grooming, exploitation, manipulation, sexual violence, and prevention. It is clear that younger children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials and violence online that normalize abusive behavior. These children do not have the vocabulary or understanding to know what is normal and what is not. This is why it is imperative that the schools are making prevention

[00:41:34] education a priority. Are you waiting until you get to the point where there is nowhere to turn and the damage has become out of control, oh wait, you're already there with drugs, aren't you? You've been warned. You were warned back then. We're warning you now. But is it too late?

[00:41:51] The numbers are up. Your numbers are up and have been climbing. When will you take prevention seriously? You can't help parents and their children prevent what they don't understand. Troy Payne. Name's Troy Payne and my address is on file. Good evening, members of the board.

[00:42:26] Tonight, I'm addressing the board as a concerned father. It has come to my attention that there immediate concerns within the noakesville school administration the areas of concern are staff and administration accountability special education physical education policy my primary focus tonight will be staff and administration accountability and the physical education policy i'd like to refer you to physical education safety policy 403.09-1 and i'm going to shorten some of this

[00:43:05] so I don't have a lot of time it says the following safety practices shall be implemented doesn't say may doesn't say maybe under paragraph 3 says students shall be properly dressed for physical education class each day appropriate dress may require students to change is the board aware that students are not given time to change nor is there consistent access to the gym locker room At TNS, under paragraph 3, subsection C, it says a system shall be in place for borrowed or rented gym attire.

[00:43:45] There is no such system at TNS, and students are being disciplined for the teacher's opinion of appropriate wear. This decision was made, by my understanding, by school administration and gym teacher.

[00:44:05] And the Prince William County Code of Conduct states that acts for which students may be disciplined. In the first sentence, a basic element of effective prevention of misconduct is the setting of division-wide rules which are implemented in a consistent manner.

[00:44:26] Is this T&S practice consistent county-wide? In closing, should we hold the students accountable when the staff and administration are not held to the same standard?

[00:44:45] will the board ensure the physical emotional safety and the rights of students are met how is this possible when the administration is not held accountable thank you thank you that wraps up citizen

common time for this evening we are now moving on to 1501 I'll turn it over to dr. McDade thank you dr. Latif at this time I'd like to introduce Vern Bach our chief operating officer to share information on a recommended amendment

[00:45:22] to the 2023-24 school year calendar. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Good evening, Dr. Chairman, Dr. Lateef, school board members, and Dr. McDade. I'm here to present to you, excuse me, our proposal to adjust the calendar for the upcoming Super Tuesday primary election.

[00:45:45] I do wanna express my gratitude to Dr. Eagle and Dr. Sullivan for their collaboration in this proposal as well. Currently, I think 78 of our 97 schools serve as polling locations for the Prince William County Elections Board.

[00:46:05] With the upcoming primary election, there have been some concerns raised from the primary, the Prince William County Election Board. With the increases of traffic onto our campuses, there will be an increased risk of safety and security.

[00:46:21] Obviously, we have a lot of folks coming onto our campuses who are not going through our registration system in the main office and bringing a lot of folks onto campus which increase security risks with students and employees. Obviously, there's some logistics concerns centered around the election.

[00:46:39] With a lot of our polling sites being our elementary schools, there's very limited parking and that poses some challenge there with congestion. If classes were in session, there would be a significant disruption to learning at our sites and the Prince William County Board Elections Board recently reached out to us asking us to consider closing schools for that day I do want to just call attention to the board back in 2020 the school board did approve a modification to the school

[00:47:13] calendar on February 19th of 2020 to change March 3rd 2020 primary election day to a student holiday and a virtual workday for PWCS employees except for essential personnel and our SAC childcare services were provided and operated on that day. What we are recommending to the school board is that for March 5th of this year that we change the day to a student holiday and a workday for all PWCS employees. You can see there we have some additional criteria that school

[00:47:49] grade 12 staff, which are teachers, nurses, librarians, and counselors, and teaching assistants, can choose to report in person or work virtually that day. We do recognize that some folks, their internet connectivity or their resources are at school and may want or may prefer to report to work to complete their workday at work, so giving folks that option. All other school-based staff are to report in person except food services who will receive additional direction from their respective supervisors for the expectations of the workday.

[00:48:24] And then all non-school-based staff are to report in person except for transportation services, and we'll provide additional direction to our transportation staff for that workday. The employee work calendar for 195-day, 200-day, and 200 and 209-day instructional personnel would also eliminate the June 12th as a workday with this proposal.

[00:48:47] And we again are proposing that our SAC childcare services will function that day on March service, March 5th as a service to our families. So that concludes my presentation to the board and I'm happy to answer any questions that board members might have.

[00:49:02] - Mr. Bach, since I'll take the blame on this, that we did this in 2020 and we did it again now, maybe we make a note somewhere that when we vote on the calendar for 2028 that we take into consideration, Do we do it Super Tuesday in Virginia every time?

[00:49:21] Is it always Super Tuesday? - Yeah, it's every four years, I believe it's Super Tuesday. - But we always do it Super Tuesday. - Yeah, yes. - Okay, so I think we should probably put that on the radar this time so we don't have to make it, but so I'll take all the blame for this and I guess I'll take all the credit for giving these kids a day off that day.

[00:49:38] I'm just joking. - Mr. Chairman, to your-- - No, no, no, the board will vote on this. - To your comment, that was a recommendation and we have made mention of that to the calendar committee of making sure that that's taken into account the next primary election and building that into the calendar. - Excellent, and then you will communicate this to everybody as soon as we vote on this tonight?

[00:49:57] - Yes, sir, there will be a communication plan. We've already-- - Okay, great. - Oh, I'm sorry, this is for information tonight. I meant to call attention to that. This is for information tonight. If the board chooses to approve it tonight, that's the board's prerogative, but we do have it on for information tonight.

[00:50:14] - Okay, we'll vote on it the next meeting. Technically, we should probably public notice this business, right? Ms. Wall, oh, Ms. Williams, go ahead. - Thank you, I just wanna make sure that what accountability measures are we gonna be putting in place to ensure that our staff know that they have the option to do virtual or in-person.

[00:50:35] I know as we continue to grow and progress that we have upped our game in terms of operating with fidelity across the division, and I'm extremely delighted and proud of that. It's very hard in a division this large, but I do just wanna make sure that we'll have some sort of chain of communication for our staff so that they're aware, 'cause I know meetings are important, but again, if we are gonna provide the option to be virtual, wanna make sure that we're ensuring and holding our staff accountable.

[00:51:06] - And we have discussed that, and that would be a part of the communication plan. - Thank you, I appreciate that. - My comments will be brief. I just leaned over to Dr. Lateef and said, didn't we do this four years ago? - Yes. - Well, we did, I was like, I'm pretty sure we did, then of course it was covid so anyway we it turned out to be a strange year hopefully this year won't be like that but um i do think um the the trade-off for eliminating that june 12th work day is great that's a great thing i think that means our last work day would be the 11th yes right okay so i

[00:51:41] think that seems like a good way to work this um i think staff will appreciate that and um yes let's put a note if possible for 2028 we've done that yes ma'am okay awesome thank you very much mr jesse i think we talked about this in our two and two but uh i know that some teachers uh had parent workshops or coming in and i know you said that wasn't supposed to happen but i know it did happen during this last election in a few places and i think this would be advisable that they be made

[00:52:19] made aware that they should not hold parent meetings during that day, thank you. - Yes, sir, thank you. - Yeah, I am just a quick question. Thank you, Vern. Regarding classified staff, I know obviously the pandemic was a very different time, but they were able to do their jobs virtually.

[00:52:40] And I know we've enhanced and increased the technology components where they can answer phones, even from their laptops or computers. Was there any consideration for giving classified the option of either an in-person or a virtual day? - The proposal is for classified staff to report to the work site.

[00:52:57] - But they don't have an option for a virtual? - Not in this proposal. - Thank you. - Anything else? Okay. Thank you for that, Vern. We really appreciate it. - All right, thank you. - Dr. McDade. Okay, moving on to student representative time, we have Isabella Alversano joining us at the Dias tonight from Gainesville High School.

[00:53:15] Ms. Alversano. - Good evening and happy new year to the school board superintendent in Prince William County community. Today's citizens' comments were really refreshing. I really enjoyed the first two of you got up and spoke and I hope you advocate for high school recess next do it I don't need a playground either just please um also welcome to miss tradenik mr. Blake and mr. Jesse I look forward to hearing your new perspectives and if you need anything let me know I've been at this longer than you have two for two man

[00:53:52] killing it tonight however I have never struggled more while writing my remarks than I did today I'm pretty sure I've written more essays for college applications these past two weeks than I ever have for school. A fairy dies every time I have to open a new Word document. That being said I'd like to congratulate all my fellow seniors for wrapping up college application season. Waiting is the second hardest part but personally I feel confident in the quality of our education and the opportunities that have been available to us in PWCS since elementary school. As a Senate page over the summer I interacted with student leaders from all across the United States yet no one I spoke to knew of a

[00:54:29] student representative or student Senate within their school system. Only two states require students to serve on school boards and Virginia isn't even one of them. PWCS has voluntarily recognized students as key stakeholders in the education and therefore created incredible leadership opportunities that connect the student body and their input directly to the school board. On that note, the Student Senate is preparing to host another student leadership workshop next week. It is so exciting that there is a place where student leaders from every single high school can come together to collaborate. I've attended these workshops the past two years and I still carry the vast array of diverse student input with me that I gathered from those days. The feedback was crucial

[00:55:06] as we built the framework for student voice committees and identified the concerns they needed to address. This year the committees have successfully been implemented at every single high school. The committees accept feedback from absolutely anyone so I'd like to encourage students to get involved and ensure that their opinions are heard on school specific and district level policies. The Senate has been making a lot of progress and as a senior I'm I'm proud to have been part of a group that actually took action to positively impact PWCS students for years to come.

[00:55:35] Thank you for your time, that concludes my remarks. - Thank you, Ms. Aversano. And I thought it was that an angel gets his wings every time you do your, your, your. I don't like dying fairies, I like angels getting wings.

[00:55:52] Okay, moving on, next we have superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. - Let's see if you can top that. - I can't. - Good evening and happy new year and I also would like to commend our two student speakers for coming before us this evening and speaking so eloquently about something that you're passionate about.

[00:56:12] The new year brings us to new and returning school board members. Congratulations on your election or re-election to the Prince William County School Board. Our first meeting of the new year marks

a significant milestone for Prince William County Public Schools. It's a moment that embodies both change and continuity, reflecting our community's enduring commitment to launching thriving futures.

[00:56:34] Your willingness to serve exemplifies the spirit of community engagement and dedication that is essential to the success of Prince William County Schools. A successful school board thrives on diverse insights and feedback from all stakeholders. To the members of our community, parents, teachers, and staff, and students, your engagement and support are invaluable.

[00:56:55] Stay involved, attend meetings, and share your perspective as we work together towards our common goal of preparing our students for the future that they will create. Together we can build on the achievements of PWCS and tackle the challenges ahead. I look forward to working with each of you and fulfilling our vision to see every student graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:57:22] Congratulations also to Vice Chairwoman Zargarpur. I appreciate you accepting this important leadership role. Before closing, I want to remind everyone of two important upcoming events. The division will host a live virtual session from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9th, that will focus on a free application for federal student aid, also called FAFSA.

[00:57:47] It's a walkthrough and a demo account for students and families. This is a great opportunity to attend as you research financial options for your child's education beyond high school. For those who are interested in joining the PWCS team, I also want to encourage you to participate in our virtual instructional job fair, which will be held on Wednesday, January 10th, from 2:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

[00:58:10] Registration is required, and the registration deadline is Monday, January 8th. And you may register for both sessions on our website. Finally, many PWCS students are currently applying to many of our 37 specialty programs offered in elementary, middle, and high school that focus on career exploration, subject area concentration, and college and university preparation.

[00:58:33] Throughout November, Prince William County Schools held specialty program information sessions, offering an overview of each program as well as the application process. And as a reminder, applications open November 1st and will close February 1st, except for the Center for Fine and Performing Arts, which closed December 14th.

[00:58:53] Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report and Happy New Year to all. - Thank you, Dr. McDade, and I think it's important to reiterate the June 9th meeting for FAFSA. FAFSA opened late this year, so they were delayed, so families could not fill out the FAFSA application until I think, was it December 1 or December 31st?

[00:59:16] So this meeting's really critical and I recommend that all parents, and I would even consider if you're a junior parent as well, jump on that call. I think it's very important. There's a lot of great information and there have been a lot of changes and we're also late in the season now.

[00:59:33] So please take advantage of that opportunity and we thank you, Dr. McDade and the administration for putting together that call. We will now wrap up with board matters and we will start to my left with the veteran member, Justin Wolk of the Potomac District.

[00:59:49] - Oh, how about we'll go to Ms. Williams, the senior member, while your hair whitens some more on that speech. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm kind of digging this senior veteran thing going on.

[01:00:05] Excuse me, happy holidays, happy new year, and I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday season, no matter what the celebration was in your home. I'd like to echo Dr. McDade's statements on the specialty program application you have till the end of the month. There are specialty programs ranging all the way from our elementary all the way up through our high school.

[01:00:26] I encourage all of our families to take a look at them. There are still some specialty program nights that will be held, I know specifically at the middle school level, 'cause I just received a notice from one on the 11th. So there is still time to do your research and apply if you would like.

[01:00:42] It's only your top three selections. Very easy application and I highly encourage it. I have one student who, one former student, 'cause he's now graduated, went through specialty programs for math and science and then culinary, and one that we have just applied for middle school.

[01:00:59] So I'm very excited by that. Before the break, I was able to meet at King Elementary with school board member elect, Mr. Blake, as young student, Ms. Johnson, who was also petitioning for recess.

[01:01:14] Her petition was for extended recess at the elementary school level, and brain breaks, so I'm glad to see this evening that there are other students who are catching the recess bug. I know at one time during my tenure, we did have a small recess for sixth graders, so I'd love to see the student advocacy and maybe something to consider for years to come.

[01:01:37] Next up on my announcements, I am still looking for a representative to the Superintendent's Council on Equity for the Woodbridge District. So if you are interested, please reach out to the clerk's office. Upcoming, I plan to attend VSBA Capital Conference and I bring this up because it is the day that we lobby our General Assembly members.

[01:01:58] I highly encourage those who feel that schools are underfunded, which should be everyone, including the JLAC report, that you also reach out to your elected representatives at the Virginia General Assembly and voice your concerns. I still see, I think our young ladies, I'm a little short, but I see a headband back there.

[01:02:16] You may also want to reach out to your delegates as well. This is the time when they are alert and paying attention as the bills and all legislation are coming before them for discussion and consideration. I look forward to going down to meet with ours and I would like to give a shout out to our newly elected new 19th district representative Roja Henderson, Henson, excuse me.

[01:02:38] But again, this is the time to join forces and to advocate for what you'd like to see legislation wise coming out of the General Assembly. A few upcoming announcements, we'll have the annual MLK celebration on the 15th. There's a whole new slate of parent engagement series and for those in elementary and middle and high school, we'll have upcoming parent conferences.

[01:03:00] Hopefully you are staying attuned to your students' progress on ParentVUE and look forward to our next meeting, thank you. - Mr. Wilk, Potomac District. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I was not here at our last meeting in December, I just wanted to highlight the many events and school visits I made throughout the month from the Forest Park Winter Choral Concert and the student performance of the Polar Express to Potomac High School's annual Breakfast with Santa.

[01:03:31] The Potomac District provided outstanding holiday events for families in the greater community. I also enjoyed visiting a number of my schools on the Wednesday before the holiday break.

These schools included Covington Harper, Triangle, Graham Park, Henderson and Patty.

[01:03:48] Just wanna wrap up this because given the significance of professional development in the context of calendar changes, I wanted to make some early suggestions the division may consider as they prepare for the next school year. I propose the integration and prioritization of the mandatory state and division professional development during the allocated in-person professional development days.

[01:04:13] I believe this strategic approach will aim to alleviate the workload for teachers and staff outside of school hours, fostering a more streamlined and efficient learning experience. Furthermore, I would like to express gratitude and commendation for the district's proactive efforts in reassessing and enhancing the mandatory online modules.

[01:04:34] The initiatives involves more of a meticulous review of the length of each course, ensuring a precise and realistic time allocation for every division module. This comprehensive approach not only demonstrates a commitment to quality, but also emphasizes the division's dedication to optimizing the professional growth of its educators.

[01:04:56] And that's all I have for today, thank you. - Erica Trudenik of the Brentsville District. - Thank you all for being here tonight. First and foremost, I wanna express my deepest gratitude to the constituents of the Brentsville District.

[01:05:12] Your trust in me to represent you is an honor and I don't take it lightly. A few years ago, I made a promise to my children and to many of you that I would not allow damaging decisions our children had to endure during the shutdowns to be repeated. We've witnessed the lasting effects on our children as individuals and their education. My commitment is to make a positive difference and to address the issues that need fixing. In the Brentsville district we are fortunate to have outstanding schools but no one is perfect and there's always room for improvement. I'm eager to take a front row seat and learn more about the fantastic specialty programs, sports teams, student achievers, dedicated

[01:05:48] educators and supportive parent volunteers we have in our district. I'm here because you chose me to represent you, which means I work for you. I'm committed to being your voice, and I want to help you in any way that I can. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with your concerns and your ideas.

[01:06:06] They matter. I extend my gratitude to all the individuals who attend these meetings, dedicating their time to make a difference in their children's education, also to the students that attend as well. you for your continuous efforts and advocating for the best for our kids. A special thank you to everyone who spoke tonight. Your voices are crucial and I appreciate you coming out and talking to us. My hope is that we can rearrange this room a bit, bringing us closer together like before, because you all are way too far away still. Moving forward, I plan to visit every school in our district, taking the time to get to know the principals, teachers, and students along the way.

[01:06:42] If you see me, please don't hesitate to say hello and let me know if there's a special event or something I should see or visit at your school. My goal is to help to provide the absolute best for our students, representing you with all integrity and dedication. I wanna see our students become successful world changers in the future.

[01:07:00] I look forward to collaborating with Dr. McDade, Dr. Lateef, and my fellow colleagues on the school board to bring positive changes in Prince William County schools. Let's go do big things this year. Thank you, guys. - Thank you, Mr. Denik. We have now Mr. Richard Jesse of the Occoquan District.

[01:07:19] - Thank you, and I also would like to thank everyone that supported me in my election, and those who didn't, I want to support and work with everybody that I possibly can. I also want to agree with Mr. Wilkes about the training and that it should be on our time and not on the responsibility of the teacher.

[01:07:46] But if there's a reason why, then let's have that discussion. - You know, I am the type of person that listen and react to things that I hear. And so what I wanna do this evening is talk about some of the stuff I heard.

[01:08:04] The first one is the discussion about the traffic pattern at Rockville Elementary School in the morning. It is really a issue that is dangerous needs to be resolved and I asked the superintendent staff to look at that and they have but I also asked that they include the police department to see if the police department could do something in that area and I would like to be

[01:08:41] included if they do the other thing I talked about at a event was the actually a voter when I was knocking on doors says I was bragging about the fact that we my wife and I got the football field over at Woodbridge High School and the guy says you didn't get the softball and fast you know regular baseball field fix and it needs fixing so I heard that and again I presented that to the

[01:09:13] superintendent now what my goal is not to have things come up and blindside the superintendent their staff I plan to in advance talk to them about it and ask for their support, I also want people to know that you need to talk to your principal.

[01:09:33] It should not come to the principal surprise that you have this problem that you're complaining about. They can't fix something if they don't know about it. And I'm also, for example, for the football field, I don't expect that to be instantaneous.

[01:09:49] It has to be done right away. But I'd just like to know that it's aware and where it will be potentially fixed in the future so people have an idea the other thing that I'm looking at the time I I just want to say thank you again I will listen to you I will try to advocate for you and I would do my best to be a good board member for you thank you thank you Mr. Jesse Miss Jennifer Wall Gainesville district thank you Dr. Lateef welcome back everyone and happy new year I find it remarkable that we're

[01:10:27] looking at 2024 when i think back four years ago i reminded at how things can change in an instant and i'm hopeful that 2024 will be great but not unprecedented unless it is in the category of remarkable results for students i'm okay with that kind of unprecedented um i want to begin my comments by addressing the world languages credit by assessment which will go into effect this week the regulations have been finalized and those regulations govern how secondary students in grades 7 through 12 can earn high school credits

[01:11:02] toward either a standard or advanced diploma by taking approved and approved external assessment in a language they already speak and write I'm very excited about this we piloted this last year we were piloting it and I'm very excited to see that this is something that is coming into fruition for our students I I think this is going to be amazing especially for students who already speak and write in another language.

[01:11:30] So I'm looking for good things for that. That's awesome. Parents might not be aware of that but I'm sure there will be more information coming and I just wanted to highlight it in this forum. Also the nomination window for Outstanding Educators Award Program is open so I've been told.

[01:11:47] I know we have some truly outstanding educators in our division. My three college kids stopped by their alma mater today and visited some of those outstanding teachers. When you have a college kid on vacation that wants to stop by their high school and say hi to their teachers, you know you have an outstanding teacher because they've set them on a path towards their future career goals, their ambitions, and they feel like those teachers have become their friends.

[01:12:13] So parents, students, community members, you can nominate your outstanding educators and so be thinking about that. January 14th through 20th is Virginia School Principals Appreciation Week. That's coming up. Being a principal is very important and at times very heavy responsibility.

[01:12:32] I've never been a principal, but I do see as a member of our board governance team, you know, we as a board and the superintendent rely on our principals to do the heavy lifting as they provide key instructional leadership in their buildings. and so I'm sure they will appreciate a pat on the back or a kind word during that week.

[01:12:53] I know in my association with principals across the Gainesville District that we have some especially fine principals, and I want to thank them for all that they do for students every day. And wow, I'm almost out of time. In closing, I wish to share the passing of Alma Gravely.

[01:13:10] She's the wife of Admiral Samuel L. Gravely, the namesake of the school. My children attended Gravely Elementary, And in fact, we were one of the families that opened up that school, and I served there on the Principal's Advisory Council under the leadership of Michelle Salzano. Alma passed away last evening.

[01:13:28] She turned 102 years old on December 22nd, so she was 102 plus a couple of weeks. And one of the things she shared was, tell all my Sea Dogs that I love them, which is just the coolest. She was the coolest person. So my condolences to her family and those who knew her.

[01:13:47] She was involved with the school as much as possible for as long as she could be. I leave you with one of my favorite thoughts on the new year. I'm cutting, I promise. I'm cutting from this in my remarks. The quote is this. Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.

[01:14:08] And as we go forward into 2024, my hope is that we start from now, regardless of what has happened in the past. That we start from now. We work toward our goals. And we accomplish together far more than what we could accomplish individually.

[01:14:25] Thanks, everyone, and have a good night. Thank you, Ms. Wall. Mr. Tracy Blake, Neabsco District. Happy New Year to everyone. As we usher in this new year, I'm filled with a profound sense of hope and just excitement.

[01:14:42] It's a great honor and privilege to serve as your representative on the Prince William County School Board, a role I hold in the highest regard. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire Neabsco community for your unwavering support and active engagement.

[01:14:59] Our collaborative journey towards educational excellence is built upon your dedication. It is your vision for our children's future that drives my commitment and shapes my decisions. I'm eager to continue and build upon the work that Ms. Raulston has started.

[01:15:22] This year promises to be one of collaborative effort and shared goals. I'm enthusiastic about working alongside each board member and together we are committed to enhancing the lives of our families and students, fostering a supportive and enriching environment in our schools and ensuring every child has the opportunity to realize their fullest potential.

[01:15:46] Once again, Happy New Year. I'm profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the Neabsco community, United in our efforts, we are dedicated to forging a future where every child has access to a thriving future.

[01:16:03] Thank you. - Ms. Williams, you had a couple extra 10 seconds. You can have my time. - I think Ms. Zargarpur still has to go to you. - No, go ahead Ms. Williams. - I just wanted to, very quickly, since this was already on the theme for the evening, I just noticed that Jeff Overton Jr.

[01:16:20] was selected as Gatorade Football Player of the Year, and I just wanted to bring that up because that has not happened in Prince William County since the 2017-2018 season with Hilton grad Ricky Slade. So since we celebrate them tonight, I want to make sure that Mr. Overton Jr.

[01:16:36] was also recognized as well. Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Ms. Zargarpur, Vice Chair. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Ms. Wall, thank you for your service as Vice Chair. I hope we have similar sized feet here 'cause your shoes were pretty good ones to fill there.

[01:16:52] So it's been a little while since I've had an opportunity to go to my schools during this during the day and I took that opportunity in December I got to visit almost all of my schools and got to drop in on classrooms and watch all the activities that the kids were doing and it was it was just fantastic and I went back one of the days to go and do a sing-along at Westgate Elementary the entire student body was prepared and they all sang together and it was so much fun Locke Lohmann I got to meet a special guest whose name is Santa Claus and I became I walked in and was an honorary elf I got

[01:17:29] to help hand out gifts it was fantastic I it's been so many years since I've met Santa so it was great and remember kids the security guard was outside Mr. oh I forgot his name already but he was outside it wasn't he that wasn't Santa Claus got to read to students at Signal Hill I believe as a second grade class they were awesome, had a great time there. When I visited Colgan, a girls choir was just happened to be caroling through the building, so that was a lot of fun to listen to, and my niece was among the kids in that group. So I don't get an opportunity too often to go visit during the day.

[01:18:04] When I do, it's awesome. I got to see amazing teaching, and I know it was those last couple days of school. I know those are hard days, but everyone was engaged, they were working on things, they were kids were happy to share and I hope everyone had a great break I want to tag onto something that Mr. Wilkes said if we're considering things that would lighten teachers loads if we can consider any pre-testing of regularly scheduled yep there you got a thumbs up over there because if you can test out of a couple of trainings that you got to take every single gosh darn year it's just nice yes oh I love it I heard on it did I hear on it I heard on it I got thumbs

[01:18:43] up. All right. Before we leave this evening, I want to take a moment. We had a teacher who was very loved. He worked at Osborne Park High School and he worked at Hilton High School. His name was Greg Huddleston and he passed away from injuries he sustained in a car accident. His wife was also in the car accident. She did survive. She was also one of our teachers. And I know he left quite a legacy behind

because I found out about it through, you know, people I still keep in touch with and the memories that they hold of him are very dear.

[01:19:20] So anyone who is an educator, Henry Adams once wrote, a teacher affects eternity. You can never tell where his influence stops. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Well, welcome again to the 2024 school year.

[01:19:39] I wanna thank the constituents of Prince William County for reelecting me as chairman at large. and I recognize, truly recognize that I represent everyone in the county. I appreciate Jennifer Wall's service. Again, I wanna say her commitment to being bipartisan, pan-partisan, the legislation that this school board worked on over the last year had her fingerprints all over it, whether she voted for it or not.

[01:20:06] And I appreciate all the time and effort you have given and the spirit with which you have worked to do what's good for our children. So I appreciate that again, once again, Ms. Wall. I look forward to working with everyone on the school board, new members, returning members.

[01:20:22] I hope that these four years will be different than the last four years, which started off nicely, but then quickly deteriorated into pandemic city. And so we don't want that to happen again. And so I really do look forward to working with everyone.

[01:20:41] For our students who are applying to colleges, early decisions came and went, Early action or early action decisions are coming up and regular decisions and many of our state schools and schools across the country still are accepting applications. Many have rolling admissions. And so I want you to please take advantage of the extra time to do that work.

[01:21:00] And our community colleges still accepting applications. Again, remind everyone about FAFSA needing to be filled out now. Last night I had the honor of attending the swearing in ceremony, the Board of County Supervisors. we are welcoming essentially new board of county supervisors also with some returning members and new members and we look forward as this board and working with them when it comes to budget time and all the efforts we need to do to make this county move forward.

[01:21:26] And so I congratulate all them. I wanna take a special moment to congratulate Delegate Luke Torian who has been appointed chairman of the House Appropriations Committee for the General Assembly. This is a very significant committee chairmanship and the Virginia budget passed by General Assembly Senate and the governor will have his fingerprints all over it.

[01:21:52] And I think we are here in Prince William County, grateful that he is our representative. And I know he committed, he commits every day to making sure our schools are as funded as well as they can be. So I congratulate him and wish him all the best and Godspeed in the work he has to do for all of us.

[01:22:10] I wanna thank B Simpson, our clerk, Anna and Liliana for the work that they do. They put together a great end of the term set of events last year and I didn't get a chance to thank them for our swearing in ceremony that we had the other night.

[01:22:26] I was so nervous that night, I forgot to thank them and I wanna thank them for all their hard work putting together a great event to welcome our new members and our returning members and so I wanna thank them. Thank Dr. McDade, I look forward to working with you and your team over this next year.

[01:22:43] And we are excited to continue to work on the strategic plan and the effort that this school division has committed to. I'll leave with just one thing. You know, when I was appointed to the Board of Visitors at the University of Virginia eight years ago, the president at the time, Terry Sullivan said to me, she called me when I got appointed and she said, in a very stern voice, she said, you know, welcome, congratulations.

[01:23:09] you will be now sitting in the chair that Thomas Jefferson sat in, President Monroe and Madison sat in. These are chairs and seats that are difficult to fill, but require your daily effort and commitment to the students of the University of Virginia and to the Commonwealth.

[01:23:28] United States of America is uniquely a country that has an elected school boards. We were the first in the world to do this. And the responsibility to sit on a school board something that is really uniquely american something that our community elected us to do and the responsibility is heavy as we saw in the last four years decisions that were made were incredibly consequential every vote that we took pre and post and during the pandemic was critical

[01:24:04] and um and had a consequence and so you know as i remind the community and our new members and our or old members that this is a uniquely American responsibility that is heavy with a commitment to represent your community, the students and the work that we have to do to make this a better place to go to school, better place to live and better place to enjoy your life.

[01:24:35] So I welcome you all. I look forward to working with you all and congratulations and let's move forward onward 2024. This meeting is now adjourned.

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