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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Date	Wednesday, March 6, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	2h 43m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOJOuzB0tDE
- 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 2026-11-01. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] All right, I'd like to call this meeting of the Prince William County School Board to order. Motion is in order for approval of the meeting agenda. Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second?

[00:00:17] - I second it. - Mr. Jessie seconds.

[00:00:20] Any discussion, please vote.

[00:00:58] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - Moving on to the motion to enter closed session. A motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, 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.

[00:01:18] 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 the individual student, and to receive legal advice regarding same as provided by Virginia Code Sections 2.2-3711A2 and 8.

[00:01:42] Three, to discuss and consult with legal counsel regarding requests for religious exemptions pertaining to specific students under Virginia Code sections 2.2-3711A2 and 8. Four, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving specific staff and students pursuant to Virginia Code sections 2.2-3711A7 and 8.

[00:02:04] Five, to discuss with division counsel specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice pertaining to A, the Freedom of Information Act and School Board Committees, and B, Policy 470.08, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711A8.

[00:02:20] 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 the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A19.

[00:02:38] Do I have a second? I second. Mr. Jesse seconds. Any discussion? Please vote. The vote is seven yes, one absent Latif.

[00:02:59] Motion passed. Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session and return to open session in one hour.

[00:03:05] chairman lateef is unable to be here this evening so i will be running tonight's meeting i know

[00:04:14] right a motion is in order for closed closed session certification miss wall miss zagraper miss madam chairwoman i move that pursuant to virginia code section 2.2-3712 closed session of the prince william county school board meeting of march 6 2024 be certified by adopting the following resolution now therefore be it resolved that the prince william county school board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge one only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification

[00:04:50] 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 do i have a second madam chairwoman ms uh williams second any discussion please vote around the vote - The vote is seven yes, one absent.

[00:05:29] Lateef, motion passed. - Moving on to the closed session action items. A motion is in order for approval of appointments and releases, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session.

[00:05:46] - Do I have a second? - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams second. - Second. - Is there any discussion? - Please vote.

[00:06:07] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you, on to 10.02, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that for the reasons set forth in student management and alternative programs developments, SMA PD letter of January 29, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approved SMA PD's recommendation to reassign student SRH 24-079 to the computer-based instruction CBI program via remote access only based on charges of unlawful acts in the community.

[00:06:39] - We have a second. - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Any discussion? - Please vote.

[00:07:07] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - On to 10.03, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that for the reason set forth in the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's SMAPD letter of February 5th, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approve SMAPD's recommendation to reassign student SRH 24-086 to the computer-based instruction CBI program via remote access only based on charges of unlawful acts in the community.

[00:07:38] - I have a second. - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:07:54] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you. On to 10.04, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that for the reasons set forth in the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's SMA PD letter of February 7th, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approve SMA PD's recommendation to approve the early readmission of student ES23-198R to Prince William County Public Schools and that the board also approved the recommendation and conditions for the students to return to a traditional school setting.

[00:08:26] - Do I have a second? - Madam Chair. - Ah, Mr. Blake. - I second. - Seconds. Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:08:50] - The vote is five yes, two no. Tredenik and Wilk, motion passed. - On to 10.05, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that for the reasons set forth from the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's SMAPD letter of February 22nd, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approve SMAPD's recommendation to reassign student SR24-096 to an alternative education setting not located on the property of any traditional Prince William County public school to be determined by the student's IEP team based on charges of unlawful acts in the community.

[00:09:29] - I have a second. - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams. Ms. William's second, and is there any discussion? Please vote.

[00:09:45] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you, and moving on to 10.06, the motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the request for religious exemption from compulsory school attendance for case number RE-2322.

[00:10:06] - Vote a second. - Madam Chair. - Mr. Blake, seconds. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:10:24] - The vote is seven yes, one absent. Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you, and moving on to our last closed session action item, a motion is in order, Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the closed session agenda item as presented in closed session.

[00:10:42] - Do I have a second? - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Ms. Williams second, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:10:59] - The vote is seven yes, one absent Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you, this concludes our closed session action items. We will now stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. There are several students in the audience tonight. you would like to lead us in the pledge come on up to the podium. I pledge allegiance to the flag

[00:11:31] 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. Thank you all of you for coming up. We're moving on to our thriving futures focus. Thriving futures focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community. We dedicate this

[00:12:11] time during our meetings to recognizing 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. First tonight the School Board will recognize our two winners of the Harry F. Byrd Jr. Leadership Award. The Harry F. Byrd Jr. Leadership Award program was established in 1994 by former US Senator Harry F. Byrd Jr. It was Senator Byrd's hope that the award would create a desire for excellence among

[00:12:48] students and provide recognition and financial support to students with outstanding leadership qualities. Every year winners are selected from each of Virginia's 11 congressional districts. It is exciting to share that two of the 11 statewide winners are PWCS students and each student will be awarded $25,000.

[00:13:16] These prestigious awards show exceptional efforts to prioritize the school commitment to launching thriving futures. We begin our recognition with the Coles District tonight, our first award winner. Maraki Yalakul of Osborne Park High School.

[00:13:34] Thank you. Maraki is represented tonight by Assistant Principal Ms. Artis Gill. And we are so proud of your tenacity, dedication, and academic prowess. You represent the absolute best of our PWCS profile of a graduate.

[00:13:50] Critical thinker, digital citizen, innovator, visionary, resilient, and a global collaborator. Maraki, would you care to share a few words about your accomplishment? - Hello everyone, I'm Maraki, and I wanted to first say thank you so much for having me here today.

[00:14:09] And I just, I know I could not have done anything without my parents here, and my grandparents who are not here today. And thank you so much to the Harry Bird Foundation for giving me the opportunity to receive an award of this honor. I'm extremely privileged to even say that I've received this award, and I know this means so much to me and my family, being a first generation student here, and I know this is gonna go so far in my future, and I look forward to using this award in my future, pursuing a career in global and public health policy and international affairs.

[00:14:41] - Thank you so much. That's leadership there too, this is amazing. Congratulations on your well-earned recognition. Mr. Blake, the representative of the Neabsco District, would you please introduce your honoree this evening?

[00:14:56] - Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. The Neabsco District is proud to recognize Anjali Gumpfokhan, awardee of the Harry F. Bird Leadership Award. Anjali is represented tonight by her principal, Garfield High School's Matt Matheson.

[00:15:16] Anjali, would you care to share a few words about your recognition? Yes, sir. Thank you. Good evening, everyone. My name is Anjali Gumpfokhan, and with the award, I would just like to say that, of

course, my gratitude goes out to those on the committee, those who put effort towards the award.

[00:15:37] but also, I would not be the person I am today without all those amazing individuals who have helped shaped me, first and foremost, my family, my dad especially, and then also all of my wonderful teachers that I've had from elementary school to high school who have helped shape my mind, helped create the person I am today.

[00:16:02] I really appreciate them and everything that they've done, and I look forward to going to college, double majoring in computer science and international affairs. Hopefully to get into a career in intelligence, but I appreciate all of you, all the work that you've put in, and the work of all those amazing individuals.

[00:16:27] - Well said, Anjali. Congratulations to you for receiving this prestigious award and symbolizing the accomplishments we strive for in Prince William County Public Schools. Congratulations to Anjali, Principal Matheson, and the entire Garfield High School community.

[00:16:46] - Good job. - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Are your parents here tonight? Your families at all here tonight? Could you all stand for just a second? Congratulations on this. I know you must be incredibly proud.

[00:17:04] All right, tonight the school board would also like to recognize two outstanding coaches. Mr. Jesse of the Woodbridge District, we will begin with you. - Thank you. The Aquaconda District is very proud to be to recognize Woodbridge High School track and field and cross-country coach Kelly McGrill.

[00:17:28] Coach McGrill has been named the U.S. track and field and cross-country coach Association Virginia Outstanding High School Cross-Country Coach of 2023. McGrill was recognized for her exceptional contribution to the Woodbridge High cross-country team, specifically the team performance, including their state championship.

[00:17:55] Coach McGrill received her recognition for coaching Woodbridge High School VHSL class and state championship at a previous board meeting, but she could not be here with us tonight.

[00:18:13] Still, we wish to acknowledge our outstanding coach. - Excellent, thank you, Mr. Jesse, and congratulations to Woodbridge High School. I now invite Jennifer Wall, the representative of the Gainesville District.

[00:18:33] - Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. On behalf of the Gainesville District, it is my pleasure to recognize Michael Spudick, head wrestling coach of Battlefield High School. Coach Spudick has been named the 2023-24 Virginia Wrestling Coach of the Year by the Virginia chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

[00:18:52] Coach Spudick has been a high school wrestling coach for 26 years, including the past 20 in Prince William County. As head coach at Osborne Park for 13 years and at Battlefield for the past three, he has amassed almost 250 career wins.

[00:19:13] In the past three years at Battlefield, Coach Spudick has won three district titles, has been region runner-up twice, and has won region title. Coach Spudick is here tonight with Principal Dolores Lucas. Coach Spudik, would you like to share a few words on the meaning of this award to you?

[00:19:31] - I actually start with, I brought gifts for everyone. I didn't wanna come empty handed. I am a CT, I teach physics as well as some CT classes and I have a graphics class that my students design and sell

products from our class to other schools and everything.

[00:19:49] So I brought gifts for all of you. They're water bottles designed by our students. And so they thought it would be a great opportunity to showcase what they do.

[00:20:05] I just wanted to say thank you. I'm very, very lucky with the support of the administration I have with Miss Lucas, Mr. Jason Koch, our Athletics Activities Director. We have a lot of great coaches at our school.

[00:20:21] Two other coaches, Brian Schafer and Ray Bernat, assist me quite a bit. But the biggest thing is we have just wonderful students. Prince William County students are the best, And I couldn't have been coaching 26 years of wrestling if it wasn't for such great students in our school system. Thank you very much.

[00:20:43] - Mr. Spudick, congratulations to you and the entire Bobcat community and to Ms. DeLore Lucas as well. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Congratulations again to our outstanding coaches, Coach McGreal and Coach Spudick. And congratulations to our amazing Harry Byrd Leadership Award honorees, Maraki and Anjali.

[00:20:59] If there are any other family members here from any of these other honorees that you wanna stand up and be recognized as well, Coach Spudick, did you bring your significant other? Yeah, these are... Families go through this too, right?

[00:21:19] Before taking pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. - Thank you so much. Congratulations, Meraki and Anjali. What an amazing accomplishment. Your achievement earning the Harry Bird Leadership Award really demonstrates what a commitment to learning and achievement can accomplish for students as you strive to create a thriving future for yourselves and your community.

[00:21:41] I'm so incredibly proud of each of you. Also, congratulations to our coaches of the year, Coach McGreal of Woodbridge High School, who couldn't join us tonight, and Coach Spudick of Battlefield High School. And I think you said it best, Coach Spudick, about all of our coaches and the significant impact that they have on the lives of our students.

[00:22:00] And they go above and beyond. I just heard you say you teach CTE and physics and you coach. So this is really just giving of your heart and your passion to our kids. And I just want to thank you for sharing your time and your talent so that our students can soar each and every day.

[00:22:16] Additionally, I do want to provide a quick update from our September launching Thriving Futures where we honored two 2024 National Merit Scholarship finalists, which was Sky and Joseph from Osborne Park and Patriot High School respectively. And I am so proud to announce that both Sky and Joseph have advanced and now are no longer semi-finalists, but 2024 National Merit Scholarship finalists.

[00:22:43] So really excited. So congratulations to each of you for your tremendous accomplishment. And I also want to thank both of our principals for being here tonight, because we also know that our principals, as we talk about when Mr. Spudick talked about, you know, being able to do the work that he does, it takes strong leadership to support the opportunities within the school and to help advance different programming in the school.

[00:23:11] So I wanna thank you for that creating the conditions for teachers, for educators, for coaches to do their best work on behalf of students and for being here to support your students as well tonight. Congratulations, we are PWCS proud.

[00:23:30] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time I would like to request our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and to receive a small token of our appreciation. We'll start with one photo that includes our two Harry F. Byrd Junior Leadership Award winners and the second photo will include

[00:23:44] our wrestling coach of the year.

[00:26:23] We're all back, all right.

[00:27:06] So we're now moving on to adoption of the consent agenda. A motion is in order. Ms. Wall, you okay?

[00:27:37] - Madam Chairman, Chairwoman. - I would request that item 13.07 be moved from the consent agenda to board matters. - Okay.

[00:27:52] - All right, that being the case, that will take a few minutes. So give me a minute and I'll let you.

[00:27:57] - Okay.

[00:28:33] - Yeah, mine says it too.

[00:29:09] - All right, all right, so Ms. Wall. - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do we have a second? - Madam Chairwoman.

[00:29:24] - Ms. Williams. - I second. - Ms. Williams second, any discussion? So we're gonna do a hand vote.

[00:29:39] So show of hands, all in favor. - Vote is seven yes, one absent Lateef, motion passed. - Thank you, moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions, we need a motion.

[00:29:55] - Madam Chairwoman, I move that the Prince William County the school board approved the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended. - I have a second. - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams seconds. Any discussion? - Madam Chairwoman. - Ms. Williams. - I just wanna say that I appreciate the recognitions being spelled, well we can't see it now, but that they're now spelled out for the public to be able to see what it is that we're voting on.

[00:30:17] Thank you very much. I know that was a lot of work. - All right, any other discussion on this? - All right, so a show of hands, we'll vote on this.

[00:30:33] - It is six yes, one abstention, Tridentic, one absent, Lateef, motion passed. - So moving on to citizen comment time. Those citizens who have signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they are called to the podium.

[00:30:54] The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of PWCS. Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you will be asked to step aside.

[00:31:10] We ask that the audience please be respectful each speaker and refrain from any clapping cheering or jeering to avoid disruption of the meeting if you do not the board will recess and I will ask the

board that the boardroom be cleared to restore public order tonight we have 24 citizens signed up to speak for policy 134 citizen participation the time allotted to speak will be adjusted to two minutes for each speaker as more than 20 citizens signed up for this evening's meeting when I call your name Please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record

[00:31:47] So I have first five I have Harry Wiggins Jay Claros Kata lay a cow Claros Michelle Fontaine and Lily Jessie Thank you madam chair board members. My name is Harry Wiggins 3525 Woodbridge Excuse me. What is in trail?

[00:32:08] Lake Ridge Virginia a couple things and it's mostly about the proposed new high school or lack of proposed new high school and I took a look at the report that you were relying on to delay the high school.

[00:32:28] The report was written by Hamilton Lombard, who has a B.A. in history. This building is filled with Edds and Ph.D.s, and yet we're relying on a young man who has a B.A. in history to extend the building of this new high school.

[00:32:50] He speaks about Louisa and Goochland counties. I'm very familiar with both of them. Keep in mind they have 5% growth, 5% is zero, it's still zero. The county demographer, and I know you're all familiar with the county demographer and uses data from time to time.

[00:33:13] From 2020 to 2023, the county population increased by 13,000, 13,000. There's no indication that it's slowing down. That 13,000 is 2.7%, which is essentially the same for the last 20 years, about 1% a year.

[00:33:36] The other thing I wanna mention, and this is kind of off topic, but I understand there's some bullying going on by some board members to others, and that there's a quid pro quo going on. If I vote against the school, I'll get something. That may be great in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago.

[00:33:54] It's not great in Prince William County, so you need to stop it. Thank you. - Che Claros.

[00:34:15] - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members. My name is Che Claros and my address is on file. I'm a third grader at Kyle Wilson Elementary School and I'm here to talk about the benefits of recess. Recess helps kids do better on tests and improves social and emotional skills and reduces disruptive behavior.

[00:34:36] When I do not have recess, I have a lot of energy and cannot pay attention without it. Middle schoolers do not have recess and I think they should have time to play and be kids. This is why middle schools deserve a 15 minute recess period.

[00:34:51] Thank you for your time. - Katalea Claros. - Good evening, Dr. McDade and school board members.

[00:35:09] My name is Katalea Claros and my address is on file. I'm here again for the fourth time to talk about middle school recess. Since the last time I was here, I have had another member join my committee. We made a Panera Bread off of 234 every Saturday at 11:00 a.m. for anyone who wants to come.

[00:35:27] We have been asking people to email the board members and have collected over 200, 295, 295 signatures. We have received signatures from people that live in Haymarket, Dumfries, Woodbridge, Bristow, and other areas all over Prince William County.

[00:35:54] Again, I am advocating for a 15 minute recess period, break period for middle schoolers. Recess plays an important role in not only maintaining proper physical health, but mental health as well. Recess lowers risk of depression and lowers anxiety, helps self esteem and confidence.

[00:36:15] So us at the middle school recess committee would like to change the instruction policy to get middle schoolers recess. What policy needs to be changed?

[00:36:31] - Michelle Fontaine. - My name is Michelle Fontaine and my address is on file. I believe middle schoolers should have recess because it gives them a break and time to calm down and reset their minds so they can concentrate on learning.

[00:36:49] It helps them improve their social development so they can have better communication with people and also helps reduce their disruptive behavior in the classroom. It also increases their level of physical activity and social development so they can practice socializing with different people and make social connections.

[00:37:07] From my research, I have found out that recess can also help different people, recess can also help with people who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, also known as ADHD.

[00:37:23] A few symptoms are being able to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings, constantly fidgeting and being unable to concentrate on tasks. Students with ADHD, recess can result in them experiencing better results, and they can even have reduced symptoms.

[00:37:42] In the classroom, taking away recess for kids with ADHD can have a negative impact on them. Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics says that recess is essential to children's health and development. It provides a much needed break from the structure of a classroom, which leads to many cognitive, social, emotional, and physical benefits.

[00:38:02] So those are my reasons why middle schoolers should have recess in middle school. Thank you for your time. - Lily Jessie.

[00:38:17] - Good evening, my name is Lily Jessie and my address is on file. I came here to be an advocate for those unseen. This is not right, to ask teachers, parents, and students in a school that has 2,700 students, the second largest school in the county, small physical space because it was built in 1975 with 19 of its classrooms on wheels or rovers as they're called.

[00:38:47] Apparently, this program was put in place about 15 years ago. And to ask them to be on wheels for another five years is just not right. The same, you may ask why these rovers are not here tonight. The same reason they did not complain about not having upgrades in the stadium for more than 45 years at this school.

[00:39:06] The same reason they didn't complain when they didn't have whiteboards and they were using blackboards. The same reason I found 14 trailers at three schools 37 kindergartners jammed into a small classroom in 2015 along Route 1.

[00:39:24] The same reason in this report given to you that shows that this, at this time, this is the report I gave to you. Please look at it. In this report, you'll see that at one point, there were 10 trailers on one side of the county and 125 on the other.

[00:39:42] The same reason I didn't complain about the Meals on Wheels at Vaughan Elementary. i got my food from across the street from woodbridge high school the same reason after being on this board 11

years i did not even know there were rovers at woodbridge high school and you the rovers exists because and the reason they're not here is because no one told them that they had the right to ask for anything at these schools they fear retaliation the number second reason they're not here is because they've always that's the way it's always been they just make it work thank you

[00:40:20] thank you thank you our next five speakers are bonnie fahey kate olson flynn tara hatch dennis cavantes and patty mcnealy the first up we have bonnie faye mr agapur that's faye thank you for the past 33 years i've lived on hedges run drive my house is 1.2 miles from woodbridge high school this isn't the first time i've addressed the board the first time was in about 1996. my kids were in

[00:40:58] 5th and 10th grades, the older at Woodbridge. I was the PTSO president and served on the advisory council. Woodbridge High School was overcrowded. Woodbridge High School has been overcrowded many times, sometimes with as many as 3,000 students.

[00:41:14] Back then there were trailers. Principal Pam Brown referred to the trailers as the academic village. The solution they came up with, let's change the boundaries. The proposal for Woodbridge placed the boundary at Mohican Drive.

[00:41:29] Anything west of Mohican, beginning with Hedges Run Drive, remember we're talking 1.2 miles from the school, would be sent, the kids would be sent to Osborne Park, about a half an hour away in Manassas. Obviously this wasn't a good idea and parents convinced the board that it wasn't a good idea.

[00:41:48] And both my kids did graduate from Woodbridge High School. I've often said, if you want parents to show up for a meeting, tell them it's a boundary meeting and they'll turn out in droves. So now, 30 years have gone by. Woodbridge is overcrowded again.

[00:42:04] Or should I say still, I don't know. Currently, there aren't any trailers, those highly visible symbols of overcrowding, but there are 19 teachers on carts. That means there are no classrooms available to them. I understand that teachers are asked to take turns, giving up their classroom every couple of years.

[00:42:23] Even those who do not have their own classrooms often have to share for part of the day with the nomads. Educators are incredibly resilient. Having been a teacher myself, I can imagine it. I can't imagine it. I now have five grandchildren who live within the White Woodbridge High School boundaries.

[00:42:41] The building itself is more than 50 years old. So after years of overcrowding and inadequate and failed attempts to address it, our kids deserve-- - Thank you, thank you. - A new school. - Thank you, Kate Olson-Flynn.

[00:43:02] - Good evening, school board and Dr. McDade. My name is Dr. Kate Olson-Flynn. Thank you again for the privilege of speaking to you tonight about the CIP and the plan to postpone the opening of the 14th high school. Thriving futures are something that we all want for our children. Our goal should be that every student receives the same quality of education by attending a school facility that has equal and adequate access to space and conditions for a thriving future.

[00:43:27] Unfortunately, that still isn't the case. I started my advocacy for equity in 2017 when I noticed the incredible disparity in the state and availability of facilities, technology and space for students between the high schools. I wrote an extensive letter to the administration outlining 30 minimum conditions that needed to be met to rectify these inequities at Woodbridge High School.

[00:43:49] It turns out that number nine and 10 on my list of issues was classroom space and roving teachers on carts, which has never been remedied due to overcrowding. In fact, this overpopulation was one reason for building Colgan and taking the CFPA program from our school in 2016.

[00:44:08] And it was justification to put the 14th high school in the East in 2017. Woodbridge has never been under capacity. Now, Board of County Supervisors have approved 2,043 units to be built in our community in the next few years.

[00:44:24] This is fact. That means that at least 2,000 plus more students will have to attend Woodbridge and Garfield. Right now, Woodbridge has 19 roving teachers Garfield has 14 roving teachers. This 2,000 plus student increase will necessitate Woodbridge and Garfield to have even more teachers on carts and less space, technology, and time to provide a quality education. We all want thriving futures for our children no matter where we live in the county.

[00:44:51] Please reconsider the postponement of the 14th school and make it at full capacity for 2,500 students as it had been promised for eight years. I thank you for listening and for your time in considering the well-being of our school community. Thank you. Tara Hatch. Good evening school board and Dr. McDade. My name is Tara Hatch and my address is on file. I'm a parent of two kids who have gone to Woodbridge High School, one of which we sent away his senior year to finish his education and get a better experience. We have an

[00:45:27] incoming freshman and then we have two more that will also be going to Woodbridge. I'm very concerned about the proposed delay in the start of the 14th high school. I would like to share some of the conditions that my children have had to endure while at Woodbridge High, so that you know why a new school is so important for the students and teachers' safety and well-being. We have 19 roving teachers on carts, as others have said.

[00:45:50] This affects the well-being and potential achievement of our students. Because these teachers have to navigate the halls to get to their next classroom, our students get less instructional, academic, and social personal time with teachers before and after class. And there is additional stress on teachers to have to traverse the hallways with 2,800 students at the same time.

[00:46:14] The classrooms themselves are also overcrowded and outdated, so much so that the teachers can't dismiss students altogether. They have to dismiss them by row, much like departing an airplane, so that the students don't trip over each other. Because of lack of available space, there are very few spaces for our kids to congregate, but in the overcrowded hallways.

[00:46:35] The library is closed much of the time due to testing because there is no other place for the students to test. The cafeterias are so crowded that we have to have five 25-minute lunches to allow students to eat. And many students feel very uncomfortable and unsafe smashed in a cafeteria setting like that.

[00:46:54] These are just some of the issues that this old outdated building has had, has on the safety and well-being of the students and teachers at this school. We have been promised a new high school since 2018. Please don't make us wait another five years.

[00:47:09] - Dennis Caravantes. - Good evening, my name is Dennis Caravantes. My address is on file. I'm a father of two and concerned about the continued delay in the building of the 14th High School in the Occoquan District.

[00:47:26] Where I work, I have a saying, more work for us doesn't mean we shouldn't do what is right. Building the 14th High School now is the right thing to do. Continuing kicking the can down the road a few more years looks like you, or the superintendent, are trying to avoid the work, and it looks like you're passing the buck to someone else.

[00:47:48] We elect you and hire you to do this work. You see, Garfield and Woodridge High Schools are over 50 years old. Freedom High School is now 20 years old. It was people like you that chose to act, to do the work, to do the right thing.

[00:48:04] I exhort you to have a legacy and build the school now. Building materials are getting more expensive, and new residential projects have been recently approved in the area. Seven out of the 13 high schools are at over capacity already. The other six have less than 25% availability.

[00:48:22] The three schools in the area use trailers or classes on wheels, as others have mentioned, to deal with the lack of proper facilities. We need to redistribute the load and build additional capacity now. Don't wait three more years to begin. Help our high school staff realize Dr. McDays' strategic plan vision that students and schools will only be successful through authentic engagement with family and community as partners in education.

[00:48:48] Let staff authentically engage with students and their families by reducing the number of enrollments. It is very hard for them to not have an assembly line approach towards students and their families when they are managing over 2,000 people daily.

[00:49:03] Most of them, all they can do is manage the flow, keep the students moving, give them some general direction to navigate the chaos, but it's not feasible to build lasting relationships under those conditions. We thank you for your service to this county and for making decisions on our behalf.

[00:49:21] So please listen and start building the 14th high school now. - Patty McNeely. - Hi, my name is Patty McNeely. I have been a PWCS elementary school counselor for 19 years.

[00:49:41] I'm also a mother of an awesome eighth grader at Lake Ridge Middle. Tonight, I would like to talk about equity in our world-class school system. I've worked in these buildings all over this county with all socio-economic levels and backgrounds.

[00:49:58] Being a school counselor, I am well aware that fair is not always equal. However, the decisions being made about building plans as well as salaries for our staff are beyond not fair. They mock equity. Recently, I attended events at Potomac Shores, Middle, and Patriot High.

[00:50:18] I felt like I was walking in buildings on elite college campuses. It was amazing. How lucky for those students. Yet looking at the socioeconomics of those schools, luck has nothing to do with it. Meanwhile, Garfield and Woodbridge are dangerously overcrowded and obsolete.

[00:50:37] Woodbridge High School is so short on space that the library is closed 20 weeks out of the school year for testing. The kids don't have access to the library. Equity means fairness and impartiality should guide our decisions.

[00:50:54] I'm advocating for the 14th High School to be open by 2026. This ensures that decreasing overcrowding for Garfield and Woodbridge, delaying construction, denies diverse and disadvantaged students the opportunity for equitable and excellent education.

[00:51:12] Additionally, addressing equity and teacher pay is vital. Awarding raises only to certain staff, undermines principle of equity, worsening the teacher shortage and morel for all these staff that work so hard for these children providing fair and equitable pay raises is essential for the benefit of all our students their success and overall health thank you for our thriving future our next five speakers are magali hurtado lena guerra guerra please tell me how to say that when we get there cheryl mcbeth kimberly melman masco and and Sonia Dorland, Megali Hurtado.

[00:51:52] - Good evening, I'm Megali Hurtado, I'm Edith's on file with the clerk. I am here again to address some of the concerns about the proposed delay in the 14th high school. Did you know that the 14th high school was mentioned in the 2015 budget 10 years ago for a projected 2021 opening?

[00:52:09] Fair to say that school is long overdue. The capacity data that is presented to you is at best inaccurate. It is misleading and quite frankly irresponsible to say that Garfield is under capacity. Did you know that at least 10 teachers in Garfield are in carts?

[00:52:26] How is that under capacity? There is at least 19 teachers at Woodbridge also in carts. I know that the academic program has been approved for Woodbridge High School, but I am nervous that once you move to program capacity methodology, you will use that as an excuse to the privacy of the academic program as well.

[00:52:42] Decision-makers should visit these schools unannounced during transition times, during dismissal times. Go to the small classroom where students are dismissed by rows. Don't announce your visit to the principal stress trying to impress you. Go when you can witness the actual challenges that they are facing, like having to close the library at least 20 weeks of the academic year.

[00:53:06] It is time to set aside the old style, the old west style politics and the way things are being handled sadly reflect that stereotype. Like the veil threats when they think nobody's listening about how we better watch it or we'll end up with nothing.

[00:53:22] Our students deserve better than that from our school board chair. Pressuring school board members to look the other way by dangling improvements to their school districts, manipulating you into ignoring the long-standing needs at Woodbridge, it's not okay.

[00:53:38] I am probably too naive, but I am still holding out hope that our school board members will do the honorable thing and consider the needs of all students, including Mr. Wilk who's ignoring me right now, to do the right thing and avoid being manipulated or threaten that the district will get nothing if they don't last.

[00:53:57] - Lena Guerra, I would like to know how I'm supposed to say your last name. Thank you. - Good evening, school board members and doctor, I don't know how to say it.

[00:54:17] My name is Lena Guerra and I'm a fifth grader at Kyle Wilson Elementary School. My address is on file and I'm here again to share my beliefs of continuing recess at middle school. My brother Lucas currently attends Saunders Middle School at Prince William County and he has shared how much they missed recess and how they wish they could still get some fresh air and play basketball or soccer.

[00:54:49] I'll be going to middle school next year, and I'm really sad that recess may not be an option for me. Recess may be the only time to get some fresh air or some exercise or have a chance to play a sport

with friends. According to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, over 40% of children get the majority of their total physical activities of recess.

[00:55:17] There are many benefits of having recess during middle school, like it improves memory attention and concentration, it helps kids' brains work and develop properly, it helps kids decompress and absorb what they recently learned, it reduces disruption behavior in their classroom, and it improves social and emotional development.

[00:55:41] These are very important because not a lot of kids express themselves in the classroom. Recess is a time to be free. I think that recess is a great idea because it brings back childhood memories. You can do a lot of activities and get vitamin D, which many people don't get enough of, and it's healthy for you and great for your body and mind.

[00:56:03] Last April, the Fairfax Country Board voted to update its student staff health wellness policy. - Thank you, thank you. - Thank you. - Yeah, we have a shorter time tonight. Cheryl Macbeth.

[00:56:25] - Good evening, my name is Cheryl Macbeth and my address is on file. Again, I beseech the board to reconsider delaying the 14th high school to 2029. We've heard about the rovers at Woodbridge and Garfield. These teachers deserve dedicated space and I will remind you that just because you don't see trailers outside doesn't mean the schools aren't overcrowded.

[00:56:43] The CIP data regarding reduced local birth rates, projected housing construction and residency are not in concert with the stressful reality that Eastern high school students and staff live each day. Mr. Blake, you say you wanna bring a fresh perspective and informed decision making to the table.

[00:56:59] So I charge you to become informed on this matter by doing your due diligence and go with your fellow board members to visit Woodbridge High School. Walk the halls during passing time and peek into classrooms during instruction to see the kids packed like sardines. Ms. Trednick, you said you wanna avoid repeating past mistakes.

[00:57:15] Don't allow another delay. Historical budget and CIP files on the board's website document that this school was slated for a 2021 open in the FY15 budget. in the fy 16 cip confirmed a delay to 2022 the fy 17 budget delayed it again to 2023 the fy 19 approved budget delayed it to 2024 2021 cip delayed it to 2025 and the 2022 cip delayed it to 2026. the school has been in the plans for at least 10 years now and you are proposing not to open it for another five years it should not take 15 years and six delays to open a school Prince William County can and should do better than that.

[00:57:54] There is no need to delay construction any longer on the basis of redesign since the price model building design was selected long ago for the 13th and 14th high schools. Further delays are not needed to explore new designs with stakeholders. Your stakeholders here tonight implore you to utilize the existing design and build a school forthwith for a 2026 open.

[00:58:15] The county has the land, the design, the need. With the increasing cost of construction, postponing again would be a shameful and expensive mistake to repeat true some of you were not on the board in those earlier years of planning but you are accountable nonetheless to follow through on the commitment that the board collectively made regarding thank you Kimberly Melman Orozco Kimberly Melman Orozco

[00:58:41] all right so our Sonya Dorland good evening long time no see I'm Sonya Dorland my address is on file I am here to advocate against the delay of the opening of the 14th high school our schools are overcrowded and I know this I know this because year after year at Lakeridge Middle School, each new class that enters our middle school is larger than the previous one before. And guess what? Those kids go to Woodbridge

[00:59:19] Senior High School. That means it just continues overcrowding at Woodbridge Senior High School. The studies that you use to argue that there will be a population decrease is misinformed about population trends in this part of the county. With two military bases families, families continue to buy houses in this area with pride i might add because it is a highly seeked area because they love lake ridge and as do i and with the five multi-unit developments that are already approved by the board of county supervisors the occoquan area will continue to grow and the population

[00:59:58] within our occoquan woodbridge area not only for woodbridge senior high school but probably garfield as well needs to be alleviated because they're on rovers as well as you've heard from all of my other pwc friends in fact we already see and i can skip that cip decisions should not be based on studies that have been unfamiliar understanding of the demographic context but this board should work with the board of county supervisors to ensure that your plan is aligned with theirs as we used to do in the past this construction delay only sends the message to our community that once again

[01:00:36] and our needs come last to the mid and western sections of the county. Since 2010, they have had three high schools built in their area, and we have had zero. I am also a parent of a ninth grader at Woodbridge Senior High School.

[01:00:52] I have no doubt my son is getting a good education, thanks to his teachers and administrators. How Ms. Abadie meets-- - Thank you. - The challenges-- - Thank you. - Thank you. - We have our next five are Marian Jensen, Cheryl Thompson, Wesley Macbeth, Jennifer Jesse, and Zoe Obiokoyi, Zoe, please tell me how to pronounce your name properly.

[01:01:13] So, Marianne Jensen. - My name is Marianne Jensen, and I'm here to talk about an ideology that is based on the unscientific opinions of a select few partisan elites. It's a dysfunctional adaptation of a politically charged concept which has taken our schools backwards and not forward.

[01:01:30] This board's misguided focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Those three words are quite noble. True diversity can strengthen knowledge and understanding. True equity is defined as fairness with impartiality, and inclusion, well who doesn't want to be included in life's pursuits?

[01:01:50] Unfortunately, those words have lost their true meanings through this board's progressive agenda. Example, Ms. Williams walking out during my speech. The term diversity is misused to deceive children into following a system that fosters division based on demographics and beliefs. the term inclusion is warped to justify the exclusion of anyone or idea that dares to disagree. Hmm, interesting. And this doublespeak has taken the impartiality out of equity, instead using fairness as a weapon to attain unrealistic outcomes. Maybe there's a place for social science experiments, but it's not in public schools. How can you focus on a woman who advocate diversity

[01:02:28] and inclusion theme this month when many educators refuse to define a woman? How How can you celebrate inclusion where children are forced to use ridiculous pronouns based on sociological

and psychological trends? This logical mess is a result of your misinterpretation of what it means to be diverse, fair and inclusive.

[01:02:48] You have spent $1.5 million on an equity office that has not improved academics outcomes by a single measure and has instead embraced a militant obsession with wedging itself between parents and their children. What metrics show a resulting academic improvement? There is none.

[01:03:04] on, its mission is based on a fallacy. Your job does not include running politically motivated social experiments. Use the DEI money to actually improve grades so that once again Virginia public schools can be the envy of the nation. Cheryl Thompson.

[01:03:20] Good evening. My name is Cheryl Thompson and my address is on file. I'm speaking tonight to voice my opposition to the proposed delay of the 14th high school. My family is a military family we moved here in January of 2018 for three years my kids were four and six we were relocating from Washington State and my biggest concern was finding a rental house zone for the best elementary school and we chose to rent this house because of the elementary school fast forward a couple of years later and we decided to buy and stay in our current neighborhood we knew a new high school was going to be built and we lived close to the proposed site we

[01:03:59] thought our kids would be attending a state-of-the-art high school I never thought that I would now be advocating for that school to be built in 2025 instead of opening in 2025. My kids are now 12 and 10. My seventh grader will not be attending a new school.

[01:04:15] His choices are between two 50-year-old schools that are overcrowded and have teachers that rove around because they don't have classrooms. If the delay happens for five more years, my fifth grader will not attend the 14th high school. Now, like so many other families, we are looking at leaving our friends and community and relocating to the western part of the county.

[01:04:35] A delay in the opening of the 14th high school is not a good idea. Families, teachers, and students on this side of the county need to know that you care about them enough to improve their working conditions and their learning. Kids do not do well in overcrowded spaces. New technology needs to be a county-wide standard, not just on the west.

[01:04:53] All students and teachers matter. Military families are living and will all be living in Prince William County. We can't control our job placement, but we can control where we live. We can make sure our children have access to the best education they can get. Military families make up 12% of your population.

[01:05:11] We bring in funding, we will not be migrating south because we still report to commands. If there's anything, we will be more of us as the housing market is less affordable in places like Fairfax and Loudoun counties. We need the 14th High School and we need it now.

[01:05:26] Prince William County School Board, we can do better. We must do better. Vote no to delay the high school. Wesley McBeth. - Good evening, my name is Wesley McBeth and my address is on record.

[01:05:41] I'm here tonight as a middle school student who asked you not to delay the 14th High School opening in 2029. I was and have been looking forward to going to the new high school since I would likely be zoned to go there. If it is postponed again, I won't get to attend.

[01:05:57] I hope that students who were originally supposed to go to the 14th High School do not get disappointed the same way I did. Now that there have been several delays, such as the delay stated in the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan that delayed the building of this new high school another year.

[01:06:13] Another delay would cause so many hardworking and deserving kids to miss out. And I find that unacceptable. I'm amazed that this 14th high school's opening date was originally 2021 and the idea of this new high school was originally proposed in 2014 when I was three.

[01:06:29] I am here to tell you that further delay will impact many people living in the zoned area of this new high school, including me, because now I will most likely have to transfer to a different high school to have a program of my interest in risking putting a lottery if many students apply or else attend an already overcrowded school.

[01:06:47] Assuming this new high school opened in 2021, it was like it was originally planned to, students on the Eastern side of the county could have been offered more specialty program choices and this would most likely attract some students zoned for an overcrowded high school.

[01:07:02] Please take what I have said into consideration and do not delay the building of this 14th high school. - Thank you, Jennifer Jesse.

[01:07:18] - Jennifer Jesse, my address is on file. You don't actually have an overcrowding pop up problem. You have a transfer to overcrowding pipeline. Most of the student parents that I talked to as an admissions consultant, parents at Freedom, Garfield, Hilton, Unity Reed, Woodbridge, call me and ask how can I transfer to Colgan, Battlefield, Patriot, Forest Park, Osborne Park, Should I move?

[01:07:50] Should I go to a private school instead? So a lot of the problems that you're having could be resolved with the 14th high school because a lot of the students know that they're not gonna get the letters of recommendation that they need. They're not gonna get the technology that they need.

[01:08:06] They're not gonna get all the APs that they need at certain schools. And even though Woodbridge is a great school, and I'm saying this as a Garfield grad, so I think that should count, even though Woodbridge is a great school, We can't keep asking us to go back.

[01:08:21] I had a lot to say, but I'm to the point where I'm tired of this. I feel like we're always pitting the East versus the West and the West versus the East. And we're not recognizing that if we solve a problem in the East, we could solve it in the West.

[01:08:39] If we start moving, creating a space that people want to go to, they're not gonna feel like they have to move. They're not gonna feel like they have to go to private school. Our students, our students here, these, very adorable by the way, the students here that you will have promised us this new school since 2015, 2016.

[01:09:02] There are kids that graduated and you all are pushing it back to 2029. None of you, your terms do not last till 2029. We deserve a solution with this board. And I ask not only that you vote for the school, but I ask that somebody second the motion so that it's at least a discussion.

[01:09:21] Thank you. Zoe Obi Okoye, and please correct me on your last name. - Hello, my name is Zoe Obi Okoye, and my address is on file.

[01:09:37] Former students, I am here because middle schoolers don't have recess. How are fifth graders supposed to make their transition? Recess is important because it improves memory, attention, 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 and that's why I say To do the best on tests. You must give students recess. Thank you for listening and have a great evening

[01:10:12] Our last speakers for the evening are Gwendolyn Brown, Carrie Coleman Prosk Henry Robert Henry Thompson and Hugh Donnelly, so we'll start with Gwendolyn, Gwendolyn Brown. Carrie Coleman Please tell me your last name

[01:10:45] Good evening. My name is Carrie Coleman-Pruksh and my address is on file. I have two children at Woodbridge High School and I'm concerned about the overcrowding at Woodbridge and I support the building of the 14th high school. To highlight the impacts of overcrowding on different student populations, I compared Woodbridge and Colgan High Schools, which on the surface appear to be very similar. These schools have similar square footage, number of students, number of classrooms and staff members. Yet when we look closer at the student demographics and student outcomes, we can see why overcrowding is having a significantly greater negative effect on the students at Woodbridge and how different populations have different

[01:11:23] needs. The number of economically disadvantaged students at Woodbridge is more than double that at Colgan and the gifted population at Woodbridge is less than half than that at Colgan. Considering student outcomes, nearly three times as many Woodbridge students are suspended as Colgan students. Absenteeism is similar for both schools but the academic success rates differ greatly. Considering graduation rates every year approximately 42 fewer students will graduate from Woodbridge than Colgan. Only 45 percent pass advanced classes at Woodbridge versus 65 percent at Colgan. There's also a significant difference in

[01:11:58] SOL pass rates with history having the worst pass rates 55 percent at Woodbridge versus 71 percent at Colgan. These outcomes don't just impact now but have future consequences for our community well-being and students career and college readiness and I've seen this in my professional work both at Northern Virginia Community College and at George Mason I believe the best solution would be to build a new high school well in advance of 2029 to decrease overcrowding at Woodbridge and also Garfield and to provide smaller class sizes and better academic support to increase student outcomes at both high schools thank you

[01:12:33] for your time this evening Robert Henry Thompson good evening school board members and dr. McCade my name is Henry Thompson and I live in Woodbridge and my address is on file I am in seventh grade and I attend Fred Lynn Middle School where I am taking Spanish and IB program I think the Hulu high school should not be postponed one because this high school will bring in more revenue to the side of the county just like Colgan people want to go to the newer

[01:13:08] schools in the area and so if we choose and so if we choose to create the high school it could increase the amount of revenue that comes on this side of the county it can also help with school zoning so people don't have to travel as far to get their high school which means less time on buses and more times for after-school activities and also a lot of families moved here because they thought that the high school was going to be built when their child was going to be in high school I was also hoping that and my friends but we no longer

[01:13:47] have that opportunity anymore because the school has been delayed multiple times if construction starts this year my brother will be able to go and he is two years younger than me and starts middle school in the fall my mom and I have started looking at high school specialty programs in the winter and I will more than likely attend Osborne Park which also has an overcrowding problem but in closing I want to go to the school that will give me the best chance to go to university with a scholarship and the new school helped me

[01:14:21] achieve this goal. Hugh Donnelly. My name is Hugh Donnelly. My address is on file.

[01:14:39] This March is Women's History Month which focuses this year's there's a main focus on women celebrating who advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Online you can find this information and open stories about these women's and their beliefs. For example, Bertina Love is an advocate for abolishing the police and removing all SROs in public schools. She also supports the idea of abolishing capitalism due to its racial inequities. Another influential figure is Gloria Lanson Billings, who is known for her work in creating culturally responsive

[01:15:15] instruction. In her foundation article titled "Towards a Critical Race Theory of Education," she highlights systematic racism present in our education institution and society in general within our own community maria burgess serves as the county's equity director in a previous position with prince william county schools she publicly stated that she understands a marcus marxist framework is the key to comprehending it comprehending its influence in education in 2020 governor youngkin issued an executive order to remove diversity

[01:15:51] concepts and critical race theory from public schools. However, as we approach the third anniversary of Prince William County's equity statement, school statement, and continue to allocate millions of dollars annually to support DEI, the concerns arise about the ideological foundations of this approach, which has been labeled as a neo-Marxist ideology. The community seeks transparency from the board regarding the stance on this matter why hasn't this been a public statement denouncing this Marxist ideology and why

[01:16:28] are we implementing the framework that turns our students into social justice advocates rather than focusing on merit-based education parents and taxpayers have a right to know why this is being politicized thank you and that wraps up citizen comment time unfortunately our student rep is unable be with us tonight so we will be moving on to superintendent's time. Dr. McDade. Thank you Ms.

[01:16:52] Zargarpur. PWCS provides multiple opportunities for students to participate in performance and production with fine and performing arts. March is Arts Education Month which encompasses music in our schools, theater in our schools, and Youth Art Month. Arts Education Month highlights the value of arts such as dance, media, music, theater, writing, and visual arts in a student's well-rounded education. Our schools recognize the educational value of the arts to teach abstract thinking, innovative practices, and understanding empathetic reasoning.

[01:17:27] Our teachers work to nurture the unique talents of our students, encourage creative exploration, and develop comprehensive skill sets transferable across the curriculum. The strategic plan sets a goal of increasing student participation by 5% through access to opportunities like auditions, concerts, and exhibitions. We want all fine and performing arts students to participate in at least three extended learning experiences per year. I invite all the PWCS community to attend at least one of our

many school events so you may witness the depth and breadth of talent here in our classrooms. March is also

[01:18:05] Women's History Month with International Women's Day recognized on Friday, March 8th. The historic day founded in 1911 by the International Conference of Women was established to reflect, appreciate, and celebrate the contributions of women throughout history.

[01:18:20] The theme this year for the International Women's Day is Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress. The theme underscores the pivotal role of empowering women economically and socially to catalyze rapid advancements in our global arenas. As the United Nations declares, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is not just a goal in itself, but a key to sustainable development, economic growth and peace and security.

[01:18:47] Be sure to look for features from the division and our schools throughout March as our schools, staff members, and students recognize the barrier-breaking achievements of women in history. Speaking of breaking barriers, this week is celebrated as National School Social Work Week.

[01:19:03] The first full week in March is an opportunity for our community to acknowledge the challenging work of our school social workers and thank them for their heartfelt compassion in changing lives every day. With a history steeped in improving attendance and making connections between home and school, the National Association of School Social Workers designate this week to recognize and celebrate the women and men who help students with mental health, social challenges, and provide family supports and resources.

[01:19:32] Often unsung heroes to students in crisis, I want to thank our school social workers for their transformative work with our students and the countless contributions to our community. At this time, I would like to introduce our Director of Research Accountability and Strategic Planning, Dr. Tim Neal, to present data from the first semester.

[01:19:52] We have been, over the course of the last two years, sharing quarterly data on student performance in terms of grades as well as attendance, and so we are sharing the first semester today. He will be joined by Dr. Stephanie Sullivan, Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Denise Huebner, Associate Superintendent of Student Support and Post-Secondary Success, will share next steps to further support student achievement attendance based on the data that you will see this evening. Two key takeaways that I would like to highlight before Dr. Neal presents include the improvement of our chronic absenteeism numbers based on this time last year and the data

[01:20:29] driven work in PWCS. Last year at this time chronic absenteeism was reported at 25 percent. Currently we are reporting a 17 percent chronic absenteeism rate. Certainly not yet where we we strive to be in reducing chronic absenteeism, but a great distance from where we were.

[01:20:47] Those results are based on strategic communication, building relationships, and data-driven initiatives throughout the county. Throughout Dr. Neal's presentation, I want to keep top of mind the strategic plan goals, the data-driven focus, and the continuous improvement that we are striving for every day.

[01:21:02] Following the formal presentation, we will facilitate a question and answer from the board so that we can share any additional information that may be requested. At this time, Ms. Vice Chairwoman, I would like to bring Dr. Neal. - Thank you.

[01:21:18] Good evening, Ms. Zagarpur, School Board members, and Dr. McDade. Tonight, I'm gonna provide a brief overview of our second quarter or first semester data. We're gonna hit on our current enrollment as of the end of the second quarter, attendance data, assessment data, our elementary and secondary course marks, and our secondary failing course analysis.

[01:21:40] So this table shows the enrollment counts at the end of the second quarter for all active students. It's overall, and also broken down by student groups. You can see that if you compare this with our first quarter, we're pretty similar to where we were. There is some fluctuation as we go throughout the school year.

[01:22:00] This table shows our average daily attendance. Pay attention to the blue bars. Those are our current school year, with the white bar on the left as a comparison. The far right blue bar shows the average daily attendance through the end of quarter two.

[01:22:16] When you compare that with where we were last year at the same time, you can see we've had an uptick in our average daily attendance rates. The line plot on the right actually shows this data where you can see there are fewer peaks and valleys in the first half of the year, but as is typical when we get towards the holiday seasons, we do see those dips in student attendance.

[01:22:40] What's really exciting is that this has manifested an improvement in our chronic absenteeism rate. So as a reminder, chronic absenteeism means that a student has missed 10% or more of their membership days. So if a student is a member of Prince William County Schools for the entire year, that's 180 days. That means they have to miss 18 days of school to be considered chronically absent.

[01:23:01] Chronic absenteeism also counts both excused and unexcused absences. So the reason for missing school in this calculation doesn't make a difference. It's whether they were present at school or not. And lastly, chronic absenteeism is a component of the current accreditation system in the commonwealth.

[01:23:21] So when you look at the table on the right, again the blue bars are where we want to focus, you can see we've had a considerably strong improvement over where we were at the end of quarter last year. In many cases that can be four, five, six, seven percent. In fact, Prince William County through the end of the second quarter was at 25 percent last year, we're at 17 percent this year. When we look at the same data, breaking it down by level, student group and race and ethnicity we see similar rates of improvement um we should note

[01:23:57] that the rate of improvement at the high school level is smaller than those of the other levels but then again that is that is something we see manifesting in other pieces of information moving on to our assessment data princeton county students have participated in the virginia growth assessment this was an assessment that was required by legislation passed by the General Assembly. In the fall, students took the growth assessments on content based on the prior year's material. In the winter, which concluded just a few weeks ago, it was

[01:24:34] based on the current grade level material. These tests are adaptive, which means that they adjust the questions that students receive based on how they respond. It's the same content as the SOL tests, but the tests themselves are much shorter.

[01:24:51] Performance is measured differently. It is on a vertical scale score ranging from 900 to 2000, so all students are on the same scale, meaning we can track growth over time. The Research Accountability

and Strategic Planning Department has provided support to schools and staff to interpret and utilize the VGA data, and I would encourage anybody who wants to learn more to go to the VDOE's website.

[01:25:17] There's a parent and caregiver resources page that has very good information about how you can use this information. So this table shows the VGA scores for reading, the average scale score for reading in the fall and in the winter.

[01:25:33] We would expect to see an increase in this vertical scale score, which when we look across the grade levels is in general what we see. Mr. Neal, if you could, please, could you talk a little bit about what a vertical scale is just very quickly? Sure.

[01:25:49] Is there anybody listening who has no clue? - Absolutely, so when we administer the SOL test, every grade level has its own, every test has its own score. So a third grade reading score has its own scale that it uses, a fourth grade reading has its own scale that it uses, and you can't really look at a third grade score and compare it to a fourth grade score.

[01:26:11] The vertical scale score, in essence, puts it all on the same continuum so that we can look at a second grader and a third grader and a fourth grader and it will all be on the same measurement type. You're welcome. This table shows our math average vertical scale scores.

[01:26:29] Again, we would wanna see an increase from the fall to the winter average, and that is when we look across the grade levels, what we see in general. It is important to note that our advanced students in mathematics in eighth grade do not take the VGA.

[01:26:47] We also have several measures that we use to look at literacy. The two we're gonna look at tonight are the HMH Literacy Assessment, which is administered in grades two through five, three times per year. So they have a beginning of year, mid-year, and end of year. It assesses reading comprehension and provides a Lexile score.

[01:27:07] We'll also look at the PALS, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, for their mid-year diagnostic assessment. So this table shows our elementary reading levels as measured by HMH.

[01:27:22] The blue column on the right shows the beginning of year and mid-year change. So you can see we have had an increase across grade levels. The bar just to the left of that shows a comparison for the prior year at the end of quarter two.

[01:27:43] So in the first quarter presentation, we did do an update on where we were with our PALS scores, and that was a benchmark score. The mid-year PALS is different in that it serves as a diagnostic for student progress, so teachers can use this to make instructional decisions.

[01:28:01] So PALS provides a mid-year range for each domain, and the student is either on target for meeting the benchmarks at the end of the year or not on target. So this table shows the elementary mid-year PALS for our kindergarten students.

[01:28:17] Kindergarten students have five different domains: rhyme, beginning sounds, alphabet recognition, letter sounds, and spelling. And you can see the blue row is the current year with a comparative year just beneath it and you can see in general we are either higher or on par with where we were with our mid-year diagnostic last year.

[01:28:43] Our first through third grade students also participate in a mid-year PALS diagnostic. It is important to note that our third grade students, it is only a subset of all students. So first and second grade,

all students in those grade levels take it, third grade students, it's those students who are monitoring for additional support.

[01:29:02] And so you can see the blue column is the current year. The column to the left is where we were last year at this time. And again, similar to where we were with kindergarten, we are on par with where we were the prior year.

[01:29:19] Moving on to grading, just for context, grades can be amended over time if students demonstrate mastery of that material. And the PWCS regulations do allow teachers to override the mathematical average if they feel the student and have evidence that the student has demonstrated improvement in the mastery of those standards.

[01:29:37] So the next series of slides is going to show the grade distribution at the elementary, middle and high school levels across the content area. So this slide is for our elementary students, which is grades three through five only, kindergarten first and second grade do not receive letter grades.

[01:29:57] You can see the quarter two is on top, it's bold. Quarter one is directly beneath it for comparison. What we see when we look across all content areas is a slight shift towards the middle, so we have fewer percentage of students receiving A's, slightly increased percent of students that are in the B and C range, with very little change in the D and F range.

[01:30:21] This pattern holds across all the content areas of the elementary level. We see that same pattern when we look at the middle school level. Again, the grade distribution shows a shift towards the middle, and this also persists across all middle school content areas moving on to high school this high school is broken into two slides because high school also has a semester grade so the semester grade is at the top it is bold quarter two is directly beneath it quarter one is at the bottom similar to our elementary and middle school we do

[01:31:01] see a movement to fewer percentage of students in the A and B range at the high school level we do see an uptick in the percent of students that are receiving Ds or Fs. When we look at the semester grade, which is an indicator of mastery of material, all the content material to that point, we do see an improvement over the second quarter.

[01:31:24] And this pattern does persist across all subject areas at the high school level. So moving on to our failing course analysis. So these tables show the percent of students that are failing none, one, or two or more of their courses. So the first table here shows our middle school students quarter one and quarter two and our high school students semester quarter one and quarter two again the percentages of students receiving these are I'm sorry the percent of students failing one or

[01:31:57] failing two or more courses is similar to what we saw in the first quarter at the high school level we see a similar pattern again there's a small ink an increase in the percent of students that are failing two or more courses when we look at the semester level those rates also drop. We further broke this information down by student group and race and ethnicity similar to what we found in quarter one our English learners our special education students and our Hispanic students have a higher percentage of those populations that are

[01:32:36] failing one or failing two or more courses and we also see that at the high school level. So at this point I'm going to turn the presentation over to Ms. Huebner to talk about our strategies.

[01:32:57] - Good evening. So we are really working to support our school leaders and attendance teams, not just with ideas, but actually the implementation of the strategies that create the positive climate culture. I'd like to recognize really the work of our school leaders, teachers, all the teamwork in the schools and at central office, really helping kids understand it's important to be at school and educate the adults that lead our students to come to school, that we can only learn if we're here present in the building.

[01:33:25] So the team in Student Health and Wellness has been making a targeted effort, not only to look at the best practices, but to go on site to give some support to schools and give some ideas about how things could be streamlined in order to make it a little bit easier. They're holding Motivation Matters Zoom sessions.

[01:33:42] So teams, school leaders can come, hear ideas, share strategies and talk about what's working and what we need to tweak a little bit. Our students have been provided the opportunity to actually talk about attendance and we're listening. So our focus groups are offering some insight on barriers and motivation for student attendance and engagement.

[01:33:58] We had some interesting discussions around the why. So we've recognized that there is the avoidance of school due to academic challenges. Some have responsibilities to provide for their families either by working for their families or for themselves or for presenting some child care support, either for their own child or a sibling.

[01:34:19] Mental health issues directly related to chronic absenteeism include stress, grief, loss, trauma, anxiety, and struggling to make socialist connections. I recently had the opportunity to listen to a panel of students talking about chronic absenteeism. And one young man said, we are young and naive, but kids know when adults are actively listening.

[01:34:38] Adults like to put out advice. They don't pay attention to our specific needs. And that's different for every kid. So we're really working to listen and respond to what our students are saying to us, truly listen, and act on it. We've received advice on incentives for attending school.

[01:34:54] What do the kids want? What would motivate you to come to school? Working to create opportunities for social connections for our students' engagement in school buildings, and considering how we can meet kids where they are and using their input. We've modified our attendance letters. Our attendance letters will no longer be sent for missed periods.

[01:35:11] That's based on stakeholder feedback. And we will continue our text messages, which encourage and notify parents for safety reasons of if their children are in school for period by period, those are sent at the end of the day parents will continue to you know be notified by letters but this is with the goal of helping supporting students in attending 66% of our students who received a first attendance letter did not need a second one so it shows us that the letters are working it's getting the message across that attendance in school is important and the school is really a gentle reminder of the importance of being in school our parent liaisons continue to be a critical support they make the important

[01:35:50] connection between home and school as a part of our efforts to know each student by name and need. Our parent liaisons are working with parents, helping parents understand and recognizing that there are cultural differences around attendance and the importance of attending in a way that's non-threatening but encouraging so that we all understand and can be on the same page. So we do have a high

school students who are at risk and they are being monitored closely and not just monitored but being supported on time graduation task force which is led by our awesome high school associate superintendents mr. Hood and mr. Wolfe through that task

[01:36:27] force we continue not just to identify the problem looked to put supports for students in place to ensure that every student achieves success we provide opportunities for credit recovery social emotional and mental health support as well as success coaches who are working on academic needs for students so one example is a student who has a success coach was so excited about the academic success that he was experiencing that he invited his friend to come along so hey come on so we really do feel like this is effective and it's getting the message to kids that if you need help we are here for you there are adults that are willing to help you please reach out ask us we'll be there for you and we're going to find you even if you're not asking our school counselors continue

[01:37:07] to collaborate with administration and other staff to remove the barriers to learning this is done through a comprehensive counseling program so we believe that that makes us stronger in our group counseling, individualized counseling, crisis counseling, resource counseling. And I just want to say, if you have a need, if you're a parent who's listening or a student who's listening and you want or need some help, talk to your school counselor. Find a trusted adult in your school building. The adults in the building are there to help you. They care about you. If you can't find an adult in your building, please reach out to me. I'll make sure that you do get connected to someone who cares. So our families and students that are in need of support, there are a lot of and we are here for you.

[01:37:45] And I'll turn the microphone over to Dr. Sullivan now. - Thank you, Ms. Huebner. Good evening, board members. Gonna take a few minutes to explain just a few of the strategies that we are using to focus on improving outcomes for students.

[01:38:01] We know from data and research that when struggling students receive content that is rigorous and aligned to the standards, coupled with high teacher expectations, that they improve at a rate even more rapidly than their on-track peers.

[01:38:17] And sometimes that's counterintuitive for people. We want our students at all levels of achievement to be receiving high-quality curriculum implemented from teachers who are skilled in instructional strategies with high expectations for student learning.

[01:38:37] One way that we can assess students that need additional support is through supplemental instruction to help students recover credits, accrue credits, and engage in credit support. Beginning this school year, all high schools have a credit recovery platform to help students complete units or courses, along with getting additional support.

[01:39:02] Each school has developed opportunities for students to work alongside certified teachers to complete these programs. And this is an important shift. We now have a consistent division-wide platform with expectations for excellence for all of our schools so that students do have an opportunity to recover, but they are recovering using curriculum and strategies that are proven.

[01:39:28] The structure approach ensures that all students are required to complete the rigorous requirements of the standards while getting that differentiated approach. Each of our elementary and middle schools has prioritized providing tutoring opportunities for their students that would benefit from additional instruction.

[01:39:48] The support sometimes precedes a unit or it may provide reinforcement after content is taught. Tutoring also allows for students to fill in instructional gaps as a result of changing schools or other factors that may interrupt the learning process.

[01:40:05] We've also launched digital platforms for parents to be able to monitor and support from home. We believe that parent-school connection is vital. Alexia is a well-researched literacy tool, and Zearn is an evidence-based platform that supports math instruction.

[01:40:23] Both of these platforms are available to all students and families K-8. We encourage parents to work with their schools to make sure they have the information to access these tools. All K-8 students have those, and again, they can be used at home or at school.

[01:40:41] Also excited to share that we have finalized an agreement with Varsity Tutors. provides individual assistance for all students K-12. Students can reach out 24/7 for help with specific questions or concepts.

[01:40:56] These tools have been particularly helpful for advanced math and science courses, because I know some of us run out of the ability to help our students in some of those classes at certain grade levels. And so this provides them an opportunity to reach out and get some of that specialized support.

[01:41:14] The L Instructional and Sustainability Team have worked closely with school administrators in providing data, scheduling support and interventions to assist schools in providing needed opportunities to our students who are still mastering English.

[01:41:30] Every student is monitored and tracked to ensure that their needs are properly identified and interventions match those needs. We have found that this approach this year, again, ensures that students aren't left behind. This happens at every one of our schools.

[01:41:47] They get routine visits from a division level person who has done much of the behind the scenes work for them. And that way, the time spent at the school is meaningful and focused. Similarly, our special education team, led by Dr. Ryer, has developed a process for cluster school support, assistance with the identification of students, and work around helping schools target the strategies identified in each student's individual education plan.

[01:42:19] Teachers are supported in understanding inclusive best practices and in strategies to ensure that co-teaching elevates student outcomes. Our student learning team has created an immersive model for professional learning based on site-based collaboration sessions.

[01:42:36] I am very excited about this. Credit goes to Dr. Julia Renberg and Sarah Plumatalo for developing this program. Prior to each unit, they go into a school, work with not only the teachers at the school, the L teachers, the SPED teacher, the instructional coaches, but more so they invite teachers from the surrounding area schools that have the same challenges.

[01:43:06] And so what happens is this cadre of people work on professional development for the specific unit that is upcoming, and they strategize on the instructional approach. Data has indicated great success.

[01:43:21] We are seeing those schools that participate in this collaborative process, their data is showing significant levels of improvement for this student. And this is what we've known all along, that teachers collaborating make magic happen.

[01:43:36] Teachers having an opportunity to have time to discuss, I wanna really credit the principals who are providing that release time for their teachers. We have replicated this model in math and are looking forward to replicating in other subjects areas as well.

[01:43:54] And so again, these are just a few more strategies that we are using to be on this continuous quest to improve student outcomes. Thank you very much. - Is that the end of our presentation? No.

[01:44:09] - Yes. - It is. - Oh my gosh, it was so-- - Thank you so much. That concludes the formal presentation we will open up for questions. Ms. Williams. Thank you Vice Chair. First let me start by saying I appreciate all the hard work and effort that was put into this. As I mentioned from time to time all of you who work towards gathering this data for us interpreting it and making it easily digestible for not only board members but the public I think are highly unrecognized so I just want to say thank you for all of the hard work that you do i have a few questions and some of

[01:44:49] them do not need to be answered now i don't think they can be answered now but i would be very interested to know how our new student profiles profile of a graduate that data and that tool can be incorporated to helping support student strategies in the future how they tie together because I think that it's a very good resource and it is an equalizer across the county and I think it will also contribute to lowering some of the workload from our counselors and spreading it amongst all of the individuals who service our students.

[01:45:22] So maybe this time next year after we have it kicked off and rolling, I'd like to see that sort of incorporated into our strategies. I want to applaud the division for our continued growth in listening to our students It's really hard to solve student problems if we don't ask them what it is, so I really appreciate the work that is done in that arena as well and I would encourage us to continue to do so not only for our older students but also our younger students as well.

[01:45:53] I did a question regarding the identified schools and the success coaches and the strategies and plans that are currently at those schools. is there expansion for that program or the strategies that the program is using for all of our schools?

[01:46:11] - So we do have, we are targeting our three high schools with the highest absenteeism rate or highest need and really our L population as well. But we do have opportunities with schools need extra support or particular students need. They can reach out to our office of student services on post-secondary success and we can align them with a success coach.

[01:46:29] And so our success coaches are our teachers who are doing extra on top what they're already doing but we will connect students with success coaches if it's in need and how are we sharing that information with our population sure we have routine directors of school counseling meetings and counseling meetings so we put that out there we have our SEL coaches also receive that information and so we do notify those who are the ones that are supporting our students in need so they have that process in place thank you and then the last thing that I'd like to learn a little bit more about well actually have two more but this one is for gifted students historically they are left off

[01:47:07] this student support strategy as far as commentary and recognizing them but we know that gifted students who don't receive the services that they need also contribute to a high dropout rate so I was wondering in the future if we can incorporate some more information about how it is that we're targeting our gifted students because we do have an unequitable gifted population countywide and I know that

we've been working hard I say that knowing full well as the person who is triumph this that we are improving and we have continued to improve so I don't want to say in a negative way but I do know that those students also require additional support especially at the high school level yeah

[01:47:45] that is a very timely comment in the past month we've done a deep dive into our at-risk student population that is simultaneously gifted and looking at how we are identifying those students for support the first thing we had to do was changed some of our data systems for the early warning systems tracker that you've heard about it was not targeting gifted students and so we stumbled upon that worked with technology and our student service department and that's being changed I have task sounds kind of mean but I have asked our gifted a team

[01:48:24] to place a priority on developing improvement plans for students in those spaces because data does show that students who are gifted are oftentimes not the task completers that people might otherwise believe and so we are launching a priority effort in that space and again really timely just talked to dr. Flannard about it a couple weeks ago and it's very important I think it's important for there to be no blinders in general right and so no blinders for who needs more acceleration and opportunities for it you know

[01:49:04] enrichment no no blinders for students who need support the support may look differently for a student who has strong cognitive abilities but it's essential nonetheless so thank you for bringing that up thank you I really appreciate that because I think the average person's perception of a gifted student is that they're straight-A students who turn in all their work and my own personal story of not being accepted as a gifted student and then later finding out as an adult helped me to understand why I graduated the way that I graduated.

[01:49:34] And I would also say as a parent of a former Prince William County student who was gifted, not in this context right now 'cause it's not the topic of discussion, but to really look at the services we provide high school students and not labeling classes just gifted or especially programs as gifted because all students aren't, it's not equitable for all of our gifted students and a lot of our high school students drop because they don't wanna be pulled and the class isn't really truly meeting their needs for gifted.

[01:50:01] And the last thing, if you could just talk a little bit more about varsity tutors versus paper, so we have a little bit of understanding about that and then I'm done, thank you. - Yeah, very similar platforms. The state, I applaud the Virginia Department of Education, The state entered into a contract with Varsity Tutors where we were able to add on to that contract and they are providing this service free for all students in the state of Virginia.

[01:50:31] So it is a very similar platform where students will go in and access for a problem or support. Very parallel programming. This is an opportunity that we at this point are entering into a contract free to Prince William County students through 2030.

[01:50:49] And so it is significant cost savings with similar services. - Thank you so much. - Yep, I know Mr. Jesse had a question.

[01:51:04] - Not so much a question, I just wanna thank you for your presentation. I think it's very, very well done. The only thing I would say, and I don't know if it's possible 'cause I'm sure some of this is time sensitive. there's any way to break it up and do some not as much in one time I think I you know I try to

listen and my attention span after a while it just sort of phases out but the information we're presenting is excellent it's good to see

[01:51:39] that we are achieving a lot of our goals I just like to know if possible somewhere we can break it up into more than one session at one time thank you Ms. Wall, you had a question?

[01:51:56] - Thank you very much. This was a great presentation. I always look forward to the time when we get to talk about data and student achievement because that's kind of the number one priority, at least for so many of us, right? And for me personally. And so thank you. I do care a lot about this and I know it is the culmination of a lot of hard work among a lot of our staff members.

[01:52:17] And I know there are many people who, you may call them like people in the last wagon, who work really hard for students every day and don't necessarily get the recognition. But when we put all this data together, we can see that we are making strides.

[01:52:34] I can see areas of improvement, and I know that means that a lot of people are very quietly and without any recognition working hard. So I just wanna say that up front. It does, I did have a couple of questions. One, I was intrigued by what you were saying about how high school students were pulled together kind of have some you know asking students like what's going on and why are you not coming to school etc because i do see that we have we still have kind of some persistent rates of absenteeism and i am curious to just dive a little bit more into that what are some of the top things that students are saying is it is it that technology makes it easier to keep up on class so they don't

[01:53:11] feel like the stakes are as high to miss or there are other things that are going on if you if there's anything that you can share to add beyond what you've shared sure i kind of um hit on the broad things and so I have yet to have a student say I've just got you know so many resources at home that I'm not coming to school really more when we're talking about academics they're just talking about a little bit of it's kind of hard I'm kind of not you know I'm not into it that's one of my favorite I'm just not into it like okay but really if I had to anchor in on the most persistent theme it would be related to anxiety mental health and a lack of

[01:53:48] of social connectedness if I could you know the big buckets would be thank you actually that's pretty elucidating I appreciate that so anxiety mental health and not feeling necessarily connected to school or to their peers or to their teachers or the subject I'm just social connectedness in general you know no one I I can definitely go on there's you know we've got this person it's very individualized the reasons are very individualized but one thing that we are listening to strongly is the what would make you want to come to school and it's surprising that even adults you know kids are adults high school kids they want to get together they want to play games in the morning before school they

[01:54:26] want to have opportunities to have you know great off the off the record conversations with teachers you know connect with people in a personal way and just feel a part of something big bigger than what you know just themselves so we're listening to that and providing those opportunities so we're buying some incentives so that schools can keep some you know different activities that kids can join in and create those opportunities thank you I appreciate that um i do think um from something that we really learned during covid and everything that we tried to do afterwards was that kids really missed connecting with each other that was the thing you know they were like you took the way one thing away that i loved the most which was

[01:55:03] hanging out with my friends and connecting with my friends you know hanging out in the band room before school starts or you know whatever it was you know lunch activities sports all that so i that's interesting and i appreciate that um i had one more comment or question uh the strategic collaboration the content area professional that that piece um and you said that students were showing significant improvement i'm really glad to hear about that um in particular was that because teachers were collaborating and i mean i'm i'm excited about this because i i like when i can hear like hey we're doing something that's really making

[01:55:41] a difference what can you give me a little more deep dive yeah we calm our collaboration days and we work with our level associates to utilize data and identify clusters of schools that have similar academic needs.

[01:55:58] Our team goes in and focuses on professional learning and planning towards the next instructional unit. And again, what we're doing that's different is A, it's embedded, it's job related, we're really trying to take more action sort of into the proper workplace the they're including everybody that supports students and that's also important oftentimes our sped teachers or l teachers are are not a part of the planning process for instructional units as principals are also directly involved and then based on

[01:56:36] where this site is all these other schools are also invited so those teachers are getting substitutes and their principals are actually coming. So now we have a large forum of people in a room focusing on unit development and lesson planning for the upcoming instructional units.

[01:56:56] One thing that I feel really strongly about is whether students need additional help or we need additional support, the more that you can front load so that the student can be more successful in that tier one instruction. So the teachers plan, they implement the unit with science and math, we have unit assessments.

[01:57:16] And so we're able to see this progression of increase in the unit assessments against potentially sites where this isn't occurring. Not that we don't want it to occur everywhere, but really focusing on those priorities. So the data is looking very strong on that targeted planning and high quality instruction is yielding results in students' data.

[01:57:41] And so right now we're working in elementary schools in this space, and like I said, we started in science. We have now begun a replication of the approach in math, mindful of the fact that our elementary teachers are often the same math and science person.

[01:57:57] So we do have to take a very cautious approach in working with our elementary teachers to not overtax them with all the different subject areas. - Thank you, that was really interesting, and I learned a lot from that, so I appreciate that.

[01:58:12] and then the plan is to move this out. - Yeah, we're looking at how, we're doing a modified version of it in secondary, but not with true fidelity to the model, but we are working on how we can expand that. Right now, like I said, math and science, with VLA coming next year, we're gonna be doing a lot of work around reading instruction, the scientific-based research approaches, so that's gonna take a whole different level of focus.

[01:58:41] - Thank you. Well, it looks like it's bringing results, and so I'm really pleased about that. - Really proud of the team, thank you. - Thank you. Mr. Blake, you had a question. - Madam Chair, not a question. I

just wanted to thank you guys for this focused dedication to addressing the diverse need of our student population through these carefully crafted support strategies.

[01:59:03] And I just think that it reflects a profound understanding on the complexities involved in fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment, and I just wanted to say thank you. - No question. - Mr. Wilk.

[01:59:19] - Thank you, first of all, for this. I appreciate the presentation and the work you guys put into this. I know you put on 30 minutes, you come up here, and it looks like it was a quick, easy, but I know a lot of work goes behind extrapolating that data and putting it together. So thank you for that.

[01:59:36] A couple things, and this first one is not a question. This is just a general comment on slide five, chronic absenteeism, And I think we always go through this, Ms. Huebner, about the balance between chronic absenteeism and disciplinary policies.

[01:59:54] And I understand the conundrum, in some sense, that districts are in, not just ours, but others across the Commonwealth, because on one hand, we're saying we need to enforce codes of behavior in student discipline, which I think you all know I side more heavily on than absences, but we also then have to make sure we're not having kids be chronically absent.

[02:00:17] And I understand, I believe out of school suspensions count towards absent, right, right? For disciplinary, you are absent if you are-- - Toward chronic absenteeism, yes. - Okay, so all I was really saying there is no more, not really a question, but I just put that out there as it's a balance of things to look at.

[02:00:37] I always stay vigilant on discipline because it is something very passionate of mine. It is something I feel I've had an influx. You know, if I was to look at my Let's Talk and there is a feature where you can actually tag the topic, I use it, and you can run reports. The vast majority of my issues, as of like the last three weeks, have dealt around the enforcement of the code of behavior.

[02:00:57] And so, just the perspective, I understand with the community, but again, I'm a stickler for enforcement of the code of behavior. And of course, look forward in June to revisiting that as well, as you know, one of my favorite times. But that was about that.

[02:01:13] And so, no really questions there. slide 21 percent of students failing courses so with the special education population I know a big thing happening right now in the Commonwealth is the enforcement of the federal and state policies of 1% cutoff rate for the VAP and the rubric that districts are now having to do to determine if a student is eligible still to take the VAP if when we're looking at first of all the scores and the percentages that you put up are we including just level 2 students with those

[02:01:50] percentages for failing or is it also including level 1 students as well so these percentages would reflect any student who is identified in our student information system as having an iep okay so students who are in a self-contained room would probably it's not a traditional type of four courses and stuff like that in that sense but i'm imagining that is not necessarily factored into you that would be correct okay failing with that okay so one thing you know again i'm thinking of is and again under the auspices of saying that it's all about inclusion which i am all for it's

[02:02:27] a great buzzword and i think it has many benefits however when you have students who probably should fall into the vap category but because of a very difficult um rubric let's just say that really makes it hard in a sense for a child to qualify for the VAP so then you're taking SOLs and your grade levels

behind your general ed peers so you're trying to find modified support but once again being grade levels behind you're expected to try to pass an SOL or pass a general education course so is is I'm sure there's discussions occurring um right now about how

[02:03:05] to factor that in because potentially it could lead to more students failing depending on the the severity of how many years behind that student may be. So if it's a sixth grade student, but actually at a third grade reading level, we're gonna probably see an influx potentially of failed courses, depending unless we have obviously, you know, a plan, which I imagine we will have in place, but it's just something on my radar and a concern because I know this is coming.

[02:03:32] And I know if a student doesn't have the VAP evaluation before I think June, it's going to be under the new guidelines. and of course districts can do that now anyways, but it's gonna be much harder for a student to take the VAP versus taking an SOL.

[02:03:52] - Mr. Wilk, I might be able to address your question. So just to clarify in terms of the CAP, the state, the Virginia Department of Education has defined students eligible for participation in the VAP when they meet the criteria for a significant cognitive disability.

[02:04:08] However, right now approximately 1.5% of our students are participating in the VAP. It really is an IEP team decision. So it's not like we have a set number of students that we can qualify for the VAP. So I just wanted to clarify that point.

[02:04:23] But when you look at the percent of students failing courses, that is gonna be inclusive of all courses. And some of those are designated and have adaptive ways of modified grading according to what the student's projected profile is after high school.

[02:04:41] - And just for clarity, I know the IEP teams determined that, but the state and the federal government is trying to make it as 1% or less as possible for your entire student population, is that-- - That's correct, however, any student that takes us over that 1% cap, we provide justification for it, and as long as that justification shows that that student meets the criteria for significant cognitive disability, then that can still be clarified as an appropriate IEP team decision.

[02:05:09] - Okay, thank you. - And Mr. Denick? - It's okay, you don't have to get up. I don't have any questions. I am now aware that this timeframe can also be just for comments and not for questions. So I just wanted to give the division credit because we do receive this presentation orally and visually in a Zoom call, 'cause this may not be public knowledge, prior to this meeting.

[02:05:39] And we are given the ability to ask questions as board members to make comments, to also send emails ahead of time to get information. Although I know because I also struggle a little bit to sit still and pay attention all the time, that hearing the presentation for a second time while we sit here provides us all the opportunity to listen again and maybe come up with more questions and or just comments if we like to hear ourselves talk.

[02:06:05] So I just wanted to thank you for the time that you put in to present this to us multiple times. - I wanna thank you all. I hope that our public is seeing, We see this as a very global 30,000 foot view and the context in which we see some of these things is not necessarily every student everywhere.

[02:06:32] If you have a concern about your child, please talk to your child's teacher. We have so many supports available. I am really happy to hear about all the things that we're doing and the thing with

involving teachers in a collaborative effort.

[02:06:47] Just real quick, are we giving them PD credit for that as well? There's a nod, yes. Okay, I have no questions, just thank you for all the work. It was fantastic. Anything else, Dr. McDade? - Well, that concludes our report.

[02:07:03] - All right, so moving on to committee updates tonight, we have three committee updates. We'll start with Ms. Wall and an update on the internal audit committee. - Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. The internal audit committee met on February 21st.

[02:07:18] The audit committee meets quarterly. Dr. Lateef and Mr. Jesse serve on the committee with me. I was voted to be the chair of the audit committee. I'm happy to continue in that role. At our last meeting, we did that. We were given a status update of audit activities, including completed school audits.

[02:07:36] There were eight school audits and a turnover audit for the CFO position that were conducted during this last quarter. And we were given a chance to review the revised compliance best practices checklist for booster clubs and parent organizations. This is one of those areas that we have been targeting to try to improve our practices and compliance with our policies and regulations.

[02:07:59] We also discussed some in-progress audit activities, upcoming audit activities, and further developing the audit's efforts towards enterprise risk management, which will bring added value to the PWCS organization as a whole by identifying and managing risks.

[02:08:18] The recruiting of an internal audit manager is ongoing. We have an office of one currently, we have our internal auditor, so that will double the size of the office. And there will be an upcoming peer review of our audit office with the support of the Association of Local Government Auditors, and that is penciled in for this summer.

[02:08:37] Lastly, the audit committee will meet again in May. - Thank you. Moving on to Ms. Williams, who will provide us with updates on the Joint Environmental Task Force and the Governor's School Joint Board. - Thank you, Vice Chairwoman.

[02:08:52] I attended the first joint environmental task force meeting of the year. The original meeting was postponed due to not being able to maintain a quorum. At the meeting, the old business included finalizing the JET annual report to the board because this is a predominantly Board of County Supervisors task force.

[02:09:13] The topic of the meeting, in addition to introducing new members, was to discuss compost and sustainability throughout the county and the school division. It's a very short meeting, and I hope to have more information at our next meeting.

[02:09:29] And then moving on to the Governor's School Innovation Park. We met in February. The board discussed the budget. We had our last updates. We also discussed the admissions calendar, the school year calendar, which follows George Mason and Prince William County schools.

[02:09:47] In addition to that, some upcoming highlights will be their research symposium on May 3rd, which is open to the public at the GMU Science and Tech Freedom Center. If you have the opportunity to check it out, it usually starts about nine o'clock in the morning and runs till about 11 or 12 o'clock.

[02:10:03] There are various students that come and present their research project. Typically, it ranges everything from automated cat dispensing to astrophysics projects. If you love science and technology, I

would highly encourage you to attend. This year's graduation has been set for May 18th.

[02:10:19] It will be at Manassas Park High School Auditorium. Prince William County Schools continues to have the highest amount of enrolled students at the Governor's School this year's, excuse me, this year I am the vice chair and it is Manassas Park that is the chair.

[02:10:38] So thank you, our next meeting will be April 18th. - Thank you, we are moving on to board matters. We have 1901 proposed rezoning that was taken off of consent by Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Ms. Agriper.

[02:10:53] proposed rezoning is in the gainesville district it's a project that i've been watching for a very long time and very familiar with the location um it's it's one i'm very familiar with because it's very very close to my my neck of the woods um and i believe this request for development impact statement is premature we don't have the most um up-to-date data in this report um the applicant's report relied on data from the 2022 uh 23 school year as opposed to data for the current year um And while I understand, you know, there's a delay and I don't know why, it's a rapidly changing environment with a number of rezoning projects being proposed.

[02:11:31] And that changes the numbers. It's an ongoing thing. So I recommend that we postpone considering this impact statement indefinitely and give the applicant time to update its impact analysis using current data. And so my motion would be that I move that we postpone the development impact statement for the Smith crossing rezoning item 1901 indefinitely.

[02:11:55] - We have a second to that motion? - Second. - Erica Trudenik seconds, any discussion? - Are we waiting for a new updated new data or just indefinitely never wanting to talk about this again?

[02:12:10] - No, I think they'd just give, I don't know when the applicant will be able to come up with like make a new filing. just is indefinitely meaning i don't know what it's not to a time certain and those are the two options for the motion um but it doesn't mean that it's killed or anything like that it just means that the applicant decides when they get their analysis together and they they'll resubmit because they have an interest in having this come before the board sorry would you be open to a friendly amendment to change indefinitely to upon when the applicant submits new data i would have

[02:12:44] to ask division counsel if that's okay i'm just asking to change the uh out the word indefinite into when the applicant submits new data because that's what you're looking for if i'm correctly understanding as well it would be easier to well she could do it indefinitely she her motion was to do it indefinitely upon receipt of the information adding it to a subsequent board agenda um if she's willing to change her motion to a date certain the first meeting for instance after receipt of the information.

[02:13:24] - That would be okay to me if we say the first meeting after the receipt of the applicant's revised application. - Thank you. - Correct. - So, that's fine. - All those in favor of amendment to the motion.

[02:13:39] - All right, so all those in favor. - Can we have a discussion on that? - Oh, you want a discussion on the, okay. Sorry, so Mr. Jesse. - Yeah, my understanding these zoning issues are in support of action that the planning board is gonna take.

[02:13:59] So I'm a little concerned that we're saying, let's delay something when we're not sure whether the planning board, if I'm correct, we are doing this to send to the planning commission and to the board of supervisors.

[02:14:14] They have their schedule. So I'm not sure we can delay responding back to them. - Ms. Wall, so the applicant proposes, is looking for our approval or disapproval, the case may be on this impact statement so if we say we're going to postpone this and we ask them to come back with more accurate numbers it's all it was always on them to come forward and say we want your approval in the first place if i'm not mistaken so it just the continue the burden is

[02:14:53] still on the applicant to make the application and they have an incentive to make the application what i'm saying is they they delayed so long in getting this to us that they used old data and i would like them to use current enrollment data so that it is accurate i just think it's important that our data in our impact statements have fidelity with the current facts since this was 2022-23 school year and we're almost to the end of the 23-24 school year so i it's not that we're trying to kill it or anything like that we just need better data and that will become part

[02:15:26] of the public record so i think that's important thank you um i appreciate your ask as well as the senior board member who has spent like eight nine to almost my entire tenure dealing with county school division relations when it comes to land and planning and plan and all of the things our impact statement is only one factor that the county uses to make those decisions and it is at least in my years serving has very rarely been a make or break um key component to their their decision making, and that is after years of serving on joint audit committees

[02:16:04] where we did not have any conversation back and forth, and because of that previous committee, joint land committee, I can't think of the name of it, I'm so traumatized from serving on it, but that's how we got our revised development impact statement and was able to get it in a timely manner to the BOCS.

[02:16:21] So I appreciate asking for proper data because that does make a difference on our decision whether we approve it or not, but it has almost no bearing on what the BOCS does. So I appreciate that. - Trigenic.

[02:16:36] - I just can't, to sit up here and say that our decision making has no bearing. It literally, like, I don't know why we're sitting up here if it has no bearing. What we say, how we vote, every single vote we take as an elected official, we were put here by the people to serve the people, to do a job.

[02:16:56] What we say and what we vote on matters. These impact statements matter. They impact you as constituents in your communities. They impact your schools, the amount of children in your schools. They impact where these neighborhoods are.

[02:17:11] It matters, people. It really, really matters. And so my vote matters when it comes to an impact statement. My opinion is going to the Board of County Supervisors and they review it and they take it into consideration. It is not for nothing. It comes before them.

[02:17:27] They look at it. They read it. They care. The general public cares what the school board votes on when it comes to these projects. It matters. Clearly it matters. You heard these people in the room talk about what matters to them. It matters. Mr. Jesse. First of all, I do agree with Ms. Wall that the data, if the data is flawed, that that's the issue. Again, I just go back and I do agree with you also that it does matter.

[02:18:03] What I'm saying is that I don't know if the process, perhaps if we could say that we don't want to render an opinion because we're concerned with the data being outdated, but I don't know what the process is.

[02:18:21] So at this point in time, I will probably, I'm not sure what I'm going to do at this point in time, but it's important where is this going and who are we sending it to and when is it due to them?

[02:18:42] Is there any more discussion? Yes, could we call the vote, please? And just remember you're voting on the friendly amendment. So, Ms. Wall, do you want me to restate?

[02:18:57] Please. Okay. So I move that we postpone the development impact statement for the Smith Crossing rezoning item, which is item 1901 to the meeting after which a new development impact statement is received and entered onto a school board agenda so we do we're gonna have to do a hand vote right we can do a hand vote so if you agree raise your hands to change it on the friendly moment the friendly amendment to change the motion vote yes aye only voting on changing the motion it's changing the

[02:19:31] motion all right okay so now the amendment now there needs to be a vote on the main motion now Ms. Wall, can we have a motion?

[02:19:53] Okay, so I move that we postpone the development impact statement for the Smith Crossing rezoning item 1901 to the meeting after which a new development impact statement is received and entered onto a school board. It wouldn't be entered onto the agenda. It would just stop it. You would just stop it. You're postponing it to a date certain, which is the first meeting after receipt of the application with updated data.

[02:20:16] Okay, to the first meeting after which a revised application is received. - Do I have a second, Madam Vice-Chair? - Can I ask a question real quick? - No. - Ms. Williams seconds. Hold on, we can do a discussion. Ms. Williams seconds.

[02:20:34] - I just have a question for Wade. Can we ask them to do what we're asking them to do with this motion, which is resubmit an impact statement? Is that a, no, thank you. - Sure, thank you, Mr. Dunnick.

[02:20:50] We're asking in the sense that if they wish us to consider the application, they will have to submit a new application updated data if they do not do that then it will not be considered you're really making me get out my book tonight i mean this is really i mean dr latef needs to get back yeah dr latef leaves and then all this happens all right so thank you wade for your help so mr jesse yeah the vote has been called i don't think we can have discussion after the vote i i motioned my motion was for the now

[02:21:27] for the regular motion the first vote calling was for the amendment and we haven't actually called the vote yet have you yeah that's what yeah we're on discussion that's what yeah are there is there anyone else who would like to discuss anything seeing no one no discussion let's vote show of

[02:22:03] hands all those in favor as in favor of the motion as amended raise your hand thank you all right thank you so now moving on to board matters i started i believe i started with miss wall last

[02:22:36] time let's start with mr. Blake thank you thank you madam chairwoman good evening good evening everyone these last few weeks have been super exciting in our community we've all come together showing off our skills and supporting each other in a big way there's a bunch I want to share about what's been happening in the Neabsco district especially because it's a national school social social work week this week we really want to shout out those amazing folks our school social workers they're the ones behind the scenes ensuring our children have the emotional and mental support they need it's

[02:23:16] because of their dedication that our kids can tackle challenges both in the classroom and outside of it okay so I attended the VHSL girls open state wrestling meet at Garfield High School or this past couple weeks witnessing nearly 500 girl athletes compete with such determination and excellence was nothing short of inspiring. It's a testament to the power of providing platforms for all of our students to shine. I also had a chance to take part

[02:23:50] in the first ever Achievers Museum at the Dell City Elementary School. It was really special to share my experiences and hear and hear what the kids were dreaming about. It's clear how much a little support and having a good role model matters. And for Read Across America Day, I enjoyed reading a few books to the first graders at King Elementary School. It was a fun way to show how important and exciting reading can be. And then, last Friday, I had a chance to attend the Friendship Dance at Minnieville Elementary School.

[02:24:26] It was a fantastic community event with food, face painting, a 360 photo booth, and music. It's gatherings like this that really show us what our community is all about. And I can't forget the basketball game between Potomac and Patriot High School that I got to attend with Mr. Wilkes and Mrs. Tredenik. It was a great game full of energy and showed the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship. All of these events shine a light on our kids' talent and the solid support system we have here. Let's

[02:25:06] keep this energy up and continue to bring our community together. Thank you for everything all of you do and for being a part of this journey have a good evening miss Williams thank you madam vice-chair I was honored to be able to attend our first aerial drone competition I'm just gonna keep talking about it because I believe Prince William County Schools is one of the only divisions that has now land air and sea robotics I was an awesome event and I can't wait to watch this program grow for all of our students it is a little bit different

[02:25:44] than the National Guard, correct? The National Guard program, which is also another opportunity for students to be able to participate and learn about drones in the classroom, but they are not competition drones. I was sorry to miss the underwater robotics event that was held at Colgan High School.

[02:26:04] I usually am able to go, but I do know that it was an amazing event, 'cause it always is. I was able to attend the VSBA Title IX Best Practices webinar to continue to keep my education up to date on Title IX and all of the goings on that pertain to that.

[02:26:23] Sorry to miss this coming week, actually tomorrow, the School and Food Nutrition annual event. It is a great event. If you've not been, I highly encourage you to get it on your calendar. It is an opportunity to share your opinion directly with our School Food and Nutrition Office on what you think is good and not good for our school lunches and meals.

[02:26:42] I do know they take your opinions into consideration as I had a son who went every year and is now a chef. And I am excited to be able to attend tomorrow the drama club play at Featherstone. It's actually three short plays that they will be performing for parents and guardians.

[02:27:01] On Saturday, there will be a mental health fair at Freedom High School. I encourage all those who are available to attend. Upcoming, we will have a title one math and science night That will be on March 12th. I hope that you are able to sign up and to learn more about Title I, math and science.

[02:27:20] I think that overall, we offer a lot of parent engagement activities throughout the division. Some are in person and some are virtual. I highly encourage parents to attend. Oftentimes they are geared towards parents' ability to help their students progress academically or to learn more about the programs that we have internally within the school division.

[02:27:41] I just want to send out a final reminder to those who need to accept, I think, actually, it might have been yesterday, for the specialty programs. The cutoff either was yesterday or it's tonight, so if you haven't gone in, please do so. I think specialty programs are what set us apart from our surrounding counties and allow for our students to traverse throughout this county to take advantage of different academic programs and CTE programs.

[02:28:09] It's worked for my family and I'm excited for my youngest to participate in a specialty program next year doing IB. Just wanna thank all of our staff again for all of their hard work and dedication to improving the outcomes for all of our students and our employees.

[02:28:26] - Go down all the way to Mr. Wilk. - Thank you Ms. Zargarpur. Just highlighting some of the events I went to and a couple comments. First of all, although Fernanda's not here, Forest Park last Friday had their annual multicultural night, which was outstanding.

[02:28:49] It was well attended and what I loved most about it, it was completely student driven. So from the planning to the setup to the running, the agenda, I thought it was phenomenal. I think there were over 50 different cultures represented.

[02:29:04] So that was a great job to Fernanda, who's not here tonight and her entire team. Thank you to Dr. McDade and Mayor Derek Wood for attending that event. I also, shortly after, was back here at the KLC. I was honored to and invited to present the Presidential Medal to the Student Ambassador Ceremony.

[02:29:25] One of the students who was up here, recognized from Garfield High School, was there. And it was organized by my neighbor and friend, Doressa Pickett, whose children actually started the Ambassador Program a number of years ago. So that was a great event.

[02:29:41] Also very appreciative of schools doing their reading and literacy nights. For people who don't know, the Virginia Literacy Act, which passed a little bit ago, a couple years ago, I think, is coming into full effect and districts have to submit their plans and action to promote literacy.

[02:29:57] And I really enjoyed attending Ashland's reading night, which again, you know, focused on, you know, obviously some of the foundations of literacy and reading. So that was a great event. Congratulations are in order, Mr. Tracy, Mr. Blake, mentioned already, but Ms. Tregenic, her Patriot pioneers, did defeat my indefatigable and tenacious Potomac High School Panthers.

[02:30:27] Bittersweet, Patriot played very well, but I'm still very proud of my Potomac Panthers. Definitely want to recognize TJ Bethea and Kenny de Guzman, who were first team all regions. So best of luck, Patriot, as you continue your journey through states.

[02:30:45] And last but not least, I do wanna thank the Board of County Supervisors in the honor and for appointing me to as the member at large representative to the Prince William County Committee for students with disabilities.

[02:31:01] It is an honor, obviously representing our school system as a special needs parent and as someone who is very passionate about transition services and the opportunities that will afford our

students with other disabilities, including the various MD, ID, ED, the various programs that we have to support them.

[02:31:23] I'm excited to lend my feedback and support to see how we can expand these opportunities for our students throughout the county. Thank you. - Thank you, Mr. Jenick.

[02:31:40] - As we step into the month of March, I'm thrilled to share some incredible highlights from the Brentsville district. Over the past few weeks, I've witnessed the sheer excitement as Patriot High School emerged victorious in their quarterfinal basketball game, propelling them towards the 6A state championship match.

[02:31:56] I'm excited to watch them bring home the win this weekend in Richmond. I also got to participate in the advisory councils for Haymarket Elementary School and Gainesville High School. It was truly inspiring to learn about the remarkable achievements and initiatives happening within each of these schools. I also attended the Black History Month Assembly at Ellis Elementary School.

[02:32:15] Getting to watch kindergartners sing the incredible performances by other students and the fun game show was such a joy. I continue to be actively engaged in conversations with the school division regarding teacher pay. Your dedication and years of service to our schools have not gone unnoticed. I'm committed to ensuring that your concerns are heard and addressed effectively.

[02:32:33] I extend my heartfelt gratitude to those teachers who have reached out to me placing their trust in me to help advocate for their needs. Tonight after listening to some of the speakers talk, I just wanted to say a few words. First of all, pitting the East against the West side of the county achieves nothing.

[02:32:53] Growth, not comparison, should dictate the need for a new school. Our focus should be on continuing capital improvement projects to address aging schools countywide. With homes being built across the county, some districts may see more growth than others.

[02:33:08] Continuing with the East versus West rhetoric undermines our goals, providing quality education to all students. I'm sure that every school in our county is equipped to help prepare our student for a thriving future. The other misconception that I heard is that there's a lack of diversity represented on the west end.

[02:33:31] I unfortunately am not a mathematician. I did get some stats from the division that came to me. Patriot High School is 53.3% minority. Unity Reed High School, which is also in the Brentsville district and on the west end of the county, is 92.1% minority.

[02:33:49] I did not get Gainesville and Brentsville, but I do know that they are close to what Patriot is, if not more. So those are just my points. I'm super excited about going to watch three drama performances this weekend, one of which my baby is in, so I'm very excited.

[02:34:05] Can't wait to watch that, and of course very excited to go with Miss McDade to Richmond this weekend to watch our Patriot Pioneers bring home the win. Thanks, guys. - Mr. Jesse. - Thank you.

[02:34:20] I'm not gonna spend a lot of time talking about where I went, but I will say that at the drone competition, Woodbridge High School and Lake Ridge Middle School were in the finals competing with each other. And the girls Lake Ridge Middle School team beat Woodbridge High School.

[02:34:44] So that's something to brag about. Now, let me go back to what's really important to me. Starting in 2021, we were supposed to get this new school. Seven, seven times, this school has been postponed.

[02:35:04] And what we're saying, that's enough. Every time we look around, there's an excuse to delay the school. Something else have to be built. Number one, I support the Potomac Shore Elementary School.

[02:35:19] That needs to be done now, okay? So I'm not saying, I don't know, you know, the issue why we can't do both, but probably money is the main issue. So the recommendations of what we're doing, as Ms. Wall was just saying here about the data, our data is a piece of mm.

[02:35:42] The data you use to determine if a school is over capacity under is outdated, you know it's outdated, and why you're making an important decision on this data is beyond me. When you have 110 people you say is the over capacity at Lake Ridge, I mean Woodbridge, and you have 19 teachers that do not have a classroom, how does that relate to not being overcrowded?

[02:36:14] When you have five, 25 minutes lunch periods, and kids are still in line 15 minutes into the lunch period and haven't eaten yet, why is that not overcrowded? How you can figure it, we need to really look at this data.

[02:36:33] this school is overdue and thing yes we compete with the east and west most of the building in this county has always been on east most of the building will still be on the east and the buildings around minneville and telegraph and and caden hill road are happening if somebody says there's 2 000 units it's not going to be 2 000 kids going into the high school but there will be kids and it's important for us to keep that in mind just thank you the last thing I want to say

[02:37:10] my wife received another award from the Senate yesterday down in Richmond which included being a member of this board she was recognized on the state floor so thank you thank you Ms. Wall thank you I want to start out by saying I appreciate the students who came out tonight and some of them are actually still here I think which is pretty impressive and it's impressive to see students advocate for the things that they want even if you don't necessarily get what you're advocating for it is absolutely awesome they are

[02:37:47] here advocating and I want to commend you for that I also want to thank those who came to talk with me during office hours that I held last month I appreciate that opportunity to sit and have a chat one-on-one about challenges or one-on- two however it is about conversations and concerns of my district I want to you You know, at issue, an important issue in the Gainesville District is development.

[02:38:10] And while this development in the Gainesville District has slowed down in recent years, over the last 20 years that I've lived in the district, I'm well aware of how rapid, large-scale development on the county level stresses the school system. And I know in Gainesville, residents experience rapidly overcrowding schools with large numbers of trailers.

[02:38:28] Battlefield once had 24 trailers, they still have 11. And multiple boundary shifts were very hard for families to adjust to. battlefield not too long ago actually was a hundred fifty percent capacity and it's now at 103 percent capacity which is still overcrowded however it is in par with Woodbridge which is also 103 percent capacity or actually our most overcrowded school is Colgan High School it is at 142 percent capacity and Freedom Forest Park and Osborne Park are all in the one around average of 112 percent over

capacity battlefield and Woodbridge are at the same level of overcapacity which is 103 percent where we really need a new high school is in

[02:39:07] the Colgan Osborne Park area so I'm very interested in seeing wise planning and accurate forecasting to the best of our ability with the most accurate data possible and recently we have seen strides in the data that we're using our team has made efforts to get more accurate data including birth rates per zip code things like that so that we can try to be more accurate because in past years because of inaccuracies we're kind of in some of the problems that we have now where we were shooting a little bit in the dark and we have schools that are over capacity and we have schools that are under capacity and yes it does make an impact on school i know because my kids were at battlefield when it was 150 capacity that being said these decisions about where to build

[02:39:47] new schools require careful analysis and we do need to attempt to right size our schools if we're going to build a 250 million dollar high school that sits half empty taxpayers will not be kind to us nor should they be we build schools because the numbers justify them not because we want them or people feel like they're owed them or they were promised them in the past we owe it to the taxpayers to build responsibly so again the most overcrowded school is colgan at 142 percent of capacity i feel sorry for those kids and i feel their pain um garfield that was mentioned tonight that's actually 86 capacity i don't know what's going on at woodbridge to have teachers that many teachers on carts but that doesn't seem like a new high school problem that seems like there's

[02:40:25] something else that can be discussed and i'm out of time have plenty to say on this topic so maybe you'll get it next in two weeks but thank you very much uh thank you all for this evening for uh your thoughtful discussions and passionate discussions uh i want to start off by recognizing the osborne park girls basketball team while they did not get into the states they did have a fantastic season they are an awesome group an awesome team led by a fantastic coach and it was great thrilling to watch them play um and i i'm sad that they're not going to be in richmond but

[02:41:03] uh i will be cheering patriot on march is music in our schools month it is youth youth art month and it is theater in our schools month uh hilton high school is putting on the first musical in over a decade they're going to be doing mama mia this week i believe no next week next week so um should all come out and support them um i want to thank all the the teachers that did the really hard work of getting the elementary art show here at the kelly center this was the program and i asked the artists that i met to autograph my program for me and they they did it was they

[02:41:42] had beautiful works of art i i was impressed with the the quality uh the number of different things that they had I went to the drone drone competition which was really fascinating and and first time I'd seen something like that I after that I went to all County chorus the elementary elementary all County chorus was in the same building and they were so well prepared it was such a great show the teachers worked really hard parents thank you so much for getting those kids to rehearsals

[02:42:14] it paid off it was a really really great performance it also went to assessment at Colgan the band assessment I didn't get to hear too many bands but I did hear Hilton Gainesville Manassas Park and Colgan and all of those performances were fantastic and it just brought me back to that time when I sat in a band and I remember playing that high quality music and feeling very proud of myself very accomplished I hope the kids just keep that with them always when a before end here tonight I want to mention that Ken Krieger was a teacher and a soccer

[02:42:52] coach and he just passed away he's also the father of Ali Krieger he coached at Osborne Park when Hilton opened up he coached there and he coached at Forest Park and he just passed away he was one of the top winning coaches ever I had him for a PE teacher as a freshman in high school and we played a lot of soccer and PE. He also coached girls basketball and I know he will be missed. My condolences to his family. And with that, nothing more coming before the board, I now declare the meeting adjourned.