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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Date	Wednesday, March 20, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	2h 48m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAb4gGJqgp4
- 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] - I would like to call this meeting the Prince William County School Board order. A motion is in order for the approval of the meeting agenda. Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - I second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? Please vote. All in favor?

[00:00:16] - Aye. Any opposed? No opposition. Moving on, motion to enter closed session. Motion is in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that pursuant to sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons.

[00:00:35] One, to discuss with staff the appointment, transfer, release, assignment, and promotion of specific officers and employees pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A1. Two, to discuss with division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff and students pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A7.

[00:00:57] Three, to discuss with division counsel specific legal matters pertaining to civil rights pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A8. And four, to discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities, and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A19.

[00:01:23] - Do I have a second? - I second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? Okay, please vote. You want us to click this one? - Okay, all in favor, aye, aye. Any opposition, none, so motion passes unanimously.

[00:01:41] At this point, the Prince William County School Board will now enter closed session,

[00:01:43] return to open session in one hour.

[00:02:47] The Prince William County School Board is now returning to open session from closed session. A motion is in order for 7.01 closed session certification. Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the closed session of the Prince William County School Board meeting of March 20th, 2024 be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:10] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting, to which this certification resolution applies, and two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:03:32] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:03:51] - The vote is eight yes. Unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to closed session action item. A motion is in order for the approval of appointments and releases, Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session.

[00:04:09] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Wow, Ms. Wall, any discussion? Please vote. - The vote is eight yes, unanimous.

[00:04:25] Motion passed. - Okay, at this time, we will move on to the Pledge of Allegiance. - That concludes our closed session items, and we don't have a student here. Dr. McDade, you can lead us in the pledge tonight.

[00:04:41] - United States of the Republic, which is one nation, under God, indivisible, liberty, justice. - Thank you, and moving on to our Thriving Futures Focus folks, we have a lot going on tonight.

[00:05:01] 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 time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor award at the state or national level.

[00:05:21] We have quite a bit to celebrate this evening. As our students are excelling in academics, the arts, and athletics tonight, the school board will first recognize exceptional choir students. We begin our recognition with Ms. Lori Williams of the Great Woodbridge District, Who will introduce our first award winners?

[00:05:40] Ms. Williams. - Well, thank you chairman at large, Latif. The American Choir Directors Association or the ACDA is an organization dedicated to inspiring excellence and nurturing lifelong involvement in choral music for everyone through education, performance, composition, and advocacy.

[00:06:00] Elementary, middle, and high schools from across 11 states submitted over 1,700 auditions to participate in the Southern Region Honors Choir as a part of the 2024 American Choir, is it Choral, Choral, excuse me, Directors Association Southern Region Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

[00:06:18] 19 Prince William County School students, choir students were selected, having the opportunity to sing in advanced choral ensembles led by prestigious guest conductors while making positive connections with other students from across the region. With great honor, Whip Ridge would like to recognize first three student, excuse me, would like to recognize the first three students among 19 winners, Rippon Middle School students, Abigail Dawin, sixth grade Youth Treble Choir, Natalia Quinones Ortiz, sixth grade Youth Treble Honor Choir,

[00:06:56] and Yossarin Massacoy-Gartman, and please forgive me if I mispronounce your name, I would love the correction, sixth grade Youth Treble Honor Choir. The Woodbridge District would also like to recognize Directors Daniel Kribos and Julia Stubbs.

[00:07:13] Representing Rippon Middle School, we welcome Assistant Principal, Dr. Tom Alexander. Congratulations. Are those the students in front of you, Dr. Alexander?

[00:07:30] Are those the students in front of you? We have so many students. If you could just raise your hands from Rippon so that we could thank you so much and congratulations. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. From the Coles District's Vice Chairwoman, Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, Please introduce our award-winning students.

[00:07:48] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Coles District recognizes the following Charles J. Colgan Jr. High School Choir students. That's a mouthful there. Abigail Barnes, 12th grade, Advanced SATB Honor Choir. Maddie Byrne, 10th grade, Advanced Treble Honor Choir.

[00:08:05] Hope Carey, 12th grade, Advanced Treble Honor Choir. Destiny Cahan, 12th grade, Advanced SATB Honor Choir. Alyssa Keffer, 12th grade, Advanced SATB Honor Choir. Raelle Melvin, 12th grade, Advanced Treble Honor Choir, and Anika Thompson, 11th grade, Advanced Treble Honor Choir.

[00:08:25] I would also like to recognize Director Carrie Staley, and unfortunately, she is unable to be here this evening, so we will welcome Karen Riddle from Colgan High School. Congratulations to you all.

[00:08:45] - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Ms. Erica Trededic, please introduce our award winners from the Brentsville District. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, from Gainesville Middle School, we would like to recognize Isabella Nicastro, eighth grade youth SATB Honor Choir, and her directors Alton Peters and Alexandra Bertke.

[00:09:06] Representing Gainesville Middle School, we welcome principal Mary Catherine Graham. If you guys wanna wave, Gainesville Middle School. From Gainesville High School, under the direction of Christina Shepherd, we have Mara Servan, 12th grade advanced SATB Honor Choir, Alexis Cottrell, 10th grade advanced treble Honor Choir, and Isabella Laxon, 10th grade Advanced Treble Honor Choir.

[00:09:33] Representing Gainesville High School, we welcome Principal Neil Beach and Assistant Principal Adam Daniels. And from Patriot High School, under the direction of Elizabeth Selby, we have Megan Bergeron, 9th grade Youth SATB Honor Choir, Liana Cruz, 9th grade Youth SATB Honor Choir, David Jensen, 9th grade Youth SATB Honor Choir, Cameron McGee, 9th grade youth SATB Honor Choir, and Beckett Wessel, 9th grade youth SATB Honor Choir.

[00:10:11] Representing Patriot High School, we welcome principal Dr. Michael Bishop. Thank you and congratulations to Gainesville Middle, Gainesville High, and the director, Elizabeth Selby.

[00:10:27] Thank you, guys. - Wonderful, thank you, Mr. Denik. I wish to invite Dr. Anna Marie Bolino, supervisor of the arts, to share a few words on behalf of the students' accomplishments. - Hi, good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the board, Dr. McDade.

[00:10:45] I'm delighted to be here once again with you to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our talented singers. The ACD Honors Choir is an amazing opportunity for our students to sing with other highly motivated singers from across 11 states in the southeastern part of the country.

[00:11:01] I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our amazing choir teachers, thank you, thank you, for their guidance in nurturing these wonderful singers. Without our educators and without the support of our building administrators, our students wouldn't have access to these incredible opportunities.

[00:11:17] It is with immense pride that we share in your compliments, students. And may your melodies continue to inspire and resonate with us all. Do you like that little musical tidbit? Yeah. Thank you. - Wonderful, thank you so much.

[00:11:38] We're always very excited to have our art students succeed at such tremendous levels. Thank you very much. Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District will now, oh, hold on, no, first. Would the teachers, family, and friends please stand in recognition and support? All of our families, teachers, and supporters, please stand to be recognized.

[00:12:06] These students certainly wouldn't be here without you all, and we can't thank you enough for the support you do for our students and for our choirs and for our schools. Thank you very much. Mr. Justin Wilk, next, of the Potomac, the wonderful Potomac District, will introduce our next award recognition.

[00:12:21] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. As a part of the University of Cambridge in England, Cambridge Assessment International Education partners with schools and districts around the world with a shared goal of making education transformation a reality. Students in the Cambridge program participate in an innovative international pre-university curriculum and examination system that can be tailored to their interests.

[00:12:46] Courses are based on an investigative approach to learning with students using initiative and creativity in problem solving. Cambridge has recognized six PWCS students with their prestigious Cambridge Scholar Award for outstanding scholastic performance on the 2023 exam series.

[00:13:06] Only 3,500 awards were distributed to students for their academic success in the US and the world. On the behalf of the Potomac District, it is my honor to recognize Potomac High School and five Cambridge scholars, Anthony Vu, M.D. Raman, Selena Che, Vanessa Thomas, Sarah Doan.

[00:13:34] Representing Potomac High School is Specialty Program Coordinator, Jeffrey McDonald, and my favorite, Michigan Wolverine, Principal Brandon Bowles.

[00:13:51] - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. Ms. Tredetic, please recognize your Cambridge Scholar. - Thank you. From the Brentsville District, I would like to recognize Brentsville District High School's Aiden Partridge for earning the prestigious Cambridge Scholar Award.

[00:14:12] Representing Brentsville District High School, we welcome Principal Dr. Catherine Meintz and assistant principal, Matthew Carbo, who is also the coordinator of specialty programs. Congratulations, Aidan.

[00:14:34] - Outstanding, thank you, Ms. Trudenik. I would like to invite now Kelly Brown, supervisor of advanced academics and specialty programs to speak on behalf of our brilliant students. - Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity this evening to highlight the accomplishments of our Cambridge program students and to share more about the Cambridge program in Prince William County schools.

[00:14:54] This is one of the advanced academic opportunities our students are afforded and Brentsville District High School and Potomac Senior High School are the only two high schools in the state of Virginia that offer students the opportunity for this internationally recognized curriculum. The program allows our students to tailor their academic journey based on their interests and their abilities. Whether they're budding scientists, future diplomats, or aspiring artists, students can find what works best for them and they can find that passion for education in this curriculum. Our students are encouraged with an

[00:15:31] investigative mindset and rather than just absorbing the information shared with them, they have the opportunity to question, explore, and seek answers fostering that critical thinking and creativity. Our students develop oral communication, teamwork, and project management abilities and they apply that knowledge in real-world scenarios preparing them for the challenges of higher education and the professional life. The Cambridge program is about nurturing curious minds, fostering resilience, and shaping future leaders.

[00:16:04] We're excited this evening to be able to recognize some of the hard work that our students have put forward and again we'd like to thank the school board for recognizing those student scholars as well as providing congratulations to the students, their families, and the teachers that have supported them along the way. Thank you. I would also like to take a moment to recognize the family members of the who contributed to the success of our six Cambridge students.

[00:16:38] Would you please stand to be recognized? All the family members of our scholars. Thank you all for your tremendous support. Next in recognition of our state championship athletes I return the spotlight to the Potomac District and Mr. Wilk. Thank you sir I'm back again. The student athletes here tonight represent the zenith, ooh, there we go, Diana.

[00:17:07] The zenith of talent, dedication, and perseverance among the 23-24 winter athletics. Each student placed first in state competition. Having triumphed over a competitive field, our PWCS students showcased exceptional skill and master in their sports and embodied the PWCS profile of a graduate, a pursuit of excellence through continuous improvement.

[00:17:32] On behalf of the Potomac District, It is my honor to begin with our state champions from, once again, the Potomac High School, Tyeek Bui, Indoor Track Boys Triple Jump, and Mahayla Adams, Girls Wrestling.

[00:17:55] Unfortunately, Tyeek, Coach Jeff Foy and Director of Student Activities, Melissa Bankert, were unable to attend this evening. We wish Tyeek the best of luck as he is currently on a recruiting trip to Hampton University. Congratulations, Tyeek, no, no, oh, Mr. Jesse told me.

[00:18:14] - Thank you. - Oh, sorry. - Let the record stand, sorry. Let's go back, we wish Taik the best of luck as he is currently on a recruiting trip to Hampton University. Congratulations Taik Mahayla, Jafoy,

Coach Matt Munoz and thank you Principal Bowles for representing them.

[00:18:33] Thank you. - Wonderful, pretty good Mr. Wilk. Zenith, triumph, mastered excellence, good job. I now invite Jennifer Wall, representative of the wonderful Gainesville district.

[00:18:49] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. On behalf of the wonderful Gainesville district, it is my pleasure to recognize three student athletes from Battlefield High School. We have Ryan Grottoff for gymnastics, floor, and Alyssa Sagal swimming, girls 50 yard freestyle and 100 meter backstroke, and Ava Rice for indoor track, girls 55 meter hurdles.

[00:19:14] Battlefield High School is represented tonight by Principal Dolores Lucas, Director of Student Activities Jason Koch, and Coaches Scott Baker and Mary Henry. Congratulations to you all on your historic accomplishments.

[00:19:35] - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur, please introduce our award-winning students from the outstanding Coles District. - The Coles District would like to recognize two Colgan High School athletes, Natalia Shirley in gymnastics for the vault, and Alex Gruholski, swimming 500 meter freestyle.

[00:19:56] Colgan High School is represented tonight by Assistant Principal Karen Riddle, Director of Student Activities, Nathan Staples, and Coach Taryn Thornton. Coach Kristen Vesendicek is unable to be here this evening. Congratulations to our state champions.

[00:20:24] - Okay, that is great, Ms. Zargarpur. Now on to the amazing Occoquan District and Mr. Richard Jesse, who will recognize our four state champion recipients over there. - Yeah, I can just be very proud to recognize Woodridge High School boys four by 800 meter relay team.

[00:20:46] Owen Winchrest, Nathaniel McHolm, Cameron McDuffie, Hayden Goodman, Cameron, where are you Cameron? Okay, Cameron is the only one of the team who could attend tonight as the rest of the athlete and Coach Kelly McGrill are at a track meet.

[00:21:10] Also representing our champion athletes tonight, we have Director of Student Activity, Kyle Jake. It is a true honor to recognize such amazing students, especially when they have achieved as a team.

[00:21:35] - Excellent, thank you, Mr. Jesse, and congratulations to Woodbridge High School. Next up, I invite Ms. Lori Williams, again of the Woodbridge District, to speak on behalf of her champions. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. With great honor, the Woodbridge District would like to recognize our four student athletes from Freedom High School, who captured the state championship in the girls four by 400 meter relay.

[00:22:01] Amanda Boateng, did I say that right? All right, Ariana Thomas, Nyla Asteria Anderson, and Sam Jones.

[00:22:21] Representing our team athletes tonight, we have Principal Chevelli-Smith, Director of Student Activities, Thomas A. Coaches, Kenya Hanford, Joe Williams, Keith Riley, and Darrell Harris. Congratulations to the Freedom Team for representing the very best of Prince William County Schools.

[00:22:46] - Thank you very much, Miss Williams. We are now on to the Brentsville District. And Mr. Denik. - I'll say it again, the Brentsville District is showing up strong with these state champions. We're recognizing eight of you from the Brentsville District.

[00:23:03] First, from Gainesville High School. I don't see you guys. Gainesville High School under the Director of Student Activities, Jason Rittenhour, and coaches Connor Lee and Sarah Joyner. We have Trent Daniels with the impressive boys 1600 meter run and the 3200 meter run, that's two things, great job.

[00:23:23] And Caroline Tribbett, the girls 3200 meter run. Representing Gainesville High School, we welcome Principal Neil Beach and Assistant Principal Adam Daniels.

[00:23:41] From Patriot High School under Director of Student Activities, Brad Qualls, we have Henry Burge, Boys 1000 Meter Run. Representing Patriot High School, we welcome Dr. Michael Bishop and Coach James DeMarco.

[00:23:58] - Great job. - Great job. And from Brentsville District High School, under Director of Student Activities, Seth Cameron, oh, and Coach Tondra Beckman, who is at a track meet, I hope.

[00:24:22] We have Kayla Smith with the impressive indoor track, 55 meter dash and 300 meter dash. Side note, Brentsville High School is a 3A school. Ms. Kayla Smith is crushing records even on the 6A level. So I just have to say that as a side note.

[00:24:40] She is an impressive runner there. So great job, Kayla Smith. All right, we also have, representing Brentsville District High School, we have Principal Dr. Kathryn Meitz and Coach Brett Stein.

[00:25:01] And I'm gonna go back and talk about our wrestlers. We have May Kyler, Kyler, who is a girls wrestling state champ. Two-peat or three-peat? Three-peat state champ, May Kyler.

[00:25:21] And we have from Boys Wrestling, Evan Sinati. Great job. Thank you and congratulations to our students, our coaches, the Gainesville Patriot and Brentsville District High School's community.

[00:25:38] - Thank you, Ms. Tredenik. Next, I would like to invite Dr. Martin Grimm, Director of Student Activities and Management, to speak on behalf of our absolutely brilliant and fantastic student-athletes. - Great, thank you. evening and thank you for recognizing our student-athletes today and I could not agree more with the word Zenith. As we all know it is rare error to have a state champion. Our state champions have experienced a lot of victories and some some defeats and all through the way they've had to show perseverance to become state champions. They have spent countless hours and I can't emphasize

[00:26:14] this enough countless hours practicing conditioning studying before after practices and games and sacrificing time with family and friends and all these commitments usually go unnoticed and not around people cheering for them but due to hard work and commitment to their goals and we are immensely proud of you as we celebrate this accomplishment today I'd also like to recognize the support systems the coaches the teachers the parents who have made sure that they've been able to get to practices get home from practices that their grades are up that they're feeling good when they win but not too high and feeling not too low when they

[00:26:53] lose and are ready to go after it again the next day. That can't be understated and if I could just address the athletes for a second. To you, our student athletes, I can express how proud we are of your achievements. You have shown through hard work, perseverance, and commitment to excellence in everything you do and you are truly world models for our peers and for us as well. Congratulations on your remarkable accomplishments, your dedication and determination have set you apart, and all of these will serve you well through your academic career and beyond.

[00:27:26] Thank you for being shining examples for all of us. Thank you. - Thank you, Dr. Grimm. I'd like to once again take a moment to recognize all the family members who supported our student athletes along their journey to their respective championships.

[00:27:44] Please rise, all family members and friends, to be recognized.

[00:28:00] Before we take a few photos, Dr. McDade will share a few words. - Doc. - Thank you so much, Dr. Lateef. Congratulations to all 19 Southern Regional Honors Choir students for your exceptional accomplishments. This accomplishment highlights not only your musical talents, but also the vital role of the arts and education, enriching your academic journey and personal growth.

[00:28:21] Congratulations to our six Cambridge Scholars Award winners, and we're so proud that we have the only two high schools in the Commonwealth offering this opportunity to our students. This prestigious honor is a testament to your academic excellence and relentless pursuit of knowledge.

[00:28:36] And it also underscores the importance of high educational standards and critical thinking skills in shaping informed, innovative, and responsible global citizens. Bravo to our 23 state sports champions. Your triumph encapsulates your hard work, discipline, and teamwork.

[00:28:53] The essential role of physical education in developing resilience, leadership, and a healthy lifestyle complements your academic endeavors and personal development and can be applied to all facets of your life. Congratulations to all of our exceptional students across all of these categories.

[00:29:11] To our dedicated staff, we thank you, and we also thank our supportive administrators and our amazing families for all of your support. We succeed when we all achieve, and we are PWCS proud of each and every one of you. - Thank you, Dr. McKay.

[00:29:33] At this time, I'd like to request that our state champions to come forward for a photo with the school board and to receive a small token of our appreciation. We will begin with the choir students first, then we'll be followed by the Cambridge scholars, and then we'll conclude with our athletes. Diana Gulotta will direct you.

[00:29:49] She's right up front in the purple.

[00:32:50] - Denny.

[00:37:11] - Let's start with Jennifer Wall's district. So that would be battlefield sports and who else? Okay, so let's start with the battlefield group. Sorry about that.

[00:37:36] Okay, this... this picture should just be battlefield yeah get in there we go all right this is battlefield with the whole board all right you got it all right next up is going to be the coles district so that'll be colgan hilton who else wouldn't be freedom okay no all right next is coles district

[00:38:16] so that's colgan maria yeah but i'm trying to make sure they didn't have any other than the

[00:38:29] whole group okay um that was wonderful again congratulations to all those tremendous students

[00:44:32] and student athletes and student artists we are now moving on next to vice chair miss lisa zargapur would like to share a few words um miss zargapur about lillian orlick i'm sorry thank you dr latif um i have the privilege and honor to recognize uh to recognize miss lillian orlick or Miss O, as she was called.

[00:44:55] True legend of Prince William County Public Schools and a foundational pillar of the Osborne Park High School community. I'm gonna read from, went to her memorial service on this weekend.

[00:45:11] I'm gonna read some of what was here. It says, "Miss Orlik grew up in Manhattan, New York, and moved to Manassas in 1950 to start her career in education. Her accomplishments, awards, and honors received throughout her lifetime are too numerous to mention. Her influence and many attributes offered to the students of the Manassas and Prince William County areas will be present for generations to come.

[00:45:32] I believe they said that she taught six generations of students. She was my guidance counselor when I was a senior and two of my daughters had the pleasure of knowing her as well because they went to Osborne Park.

[00:45:47] Those who knew her will appreciate that she made the following requests that in her obituary would include the following statement. I am survived by the many lives, helped and touched by my teaching, loving, and caring. And it's notable, we were awarding students tonight with the Cambridge Award.

[00:46:07] She was one of the first people to bring AP to this county as well. So it is with a grateful heart that I ask for a moment of reflection of this true superhero educator.

[00:46:35] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. Okay. Superintendent Dr. McDade, would you like to conclude tonight's Thriving Futures with some words about Ms. Orlick?

[00:46:53] - Yes, thank you, Dr. Lateef. Ms. Zargarpur, I appreciate your touching tribute to Ms. Lillian Orlick, or affectionately known as Ms. O. Ms. O is an inspiration to all, and her dedication, commitment, and love for education and her students will be remembered as her legacy.

[00:47:11] My thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends, and I know her legacy will live on through the many memories that she has left behind. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Okay, moving on to the business part of the meeting.

[00:47:27] Thank you. We will move on to adoption of the consent agenda. Motion's in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second?

[00:47:42] - Dr. Lateef. - Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion? Okay, please vote.

[00:48:05] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Now moving on to 12.01, approval of acknowledgements and recognitions. It's on for action, Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended.

[00:48:21] - Do I have a second? - Dr. Lateef? - Yep. - I second. - Ms. Walls second, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:48:52] - The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tradenek, motion passed. - All right, moving on to citizen comment time.

[00:49:09] Those citizens who signed up in advance with a clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings

is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of the PWCS.

[00:49:24] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or cheering to avoid disruption of the meeting. If you do not, the board will recess. I will ask that the room be cleared to restore public order.

[00:49:40] Tonight we have 12 citizens signed to speak. When I call your name, please come up to the podium and state your name and address for the record. I'll call the first five up. They will be Chris Barker, Amanda Locklear, Bernice Ashitae, Belinda Ashitae, and Emmett Fletcher.

[00:50:00] Chris Barker. - Good evening, I'm Chris Barker. My address is on file. I'm here to ask this board, this board, to start construction of a 14th high school immediately so it can open in 2026, excuse me.

[00:50:21] Woodbridge High School is dangerously overcrowded. To make matters worse, the Board of County Supervisors has already approved construction of 2,000 more dwelling units in the Occoquan and Neabsco districts, which means more families moving in and more crowding at Woodbridge High. There's been talk recently about the 19 roving teachers at Woodbridge High who do not have permanent classrooms and instead teach from carts.

[00:50:43] In the Virginia Department of Education's design guide for high schools, the number of students that a school can serve is based on the number of permanent teaching stations in a building, actual classrooms. Each typical classroom can accommodate 25 students.

[00:50:58] The fact that Woodbridge High needs to shackle 19 teachers carts with no permanent station at 25 students apiece means Woodbridge High is over capacity by at least 475 students. Those are 475 extra students packed into the hallways every day.

[00:51:14] My son's currently in eighth grade at Lakeridge Middle School. He'll start at Woodbridge High in August and I'm concerned. Not academically. My wife and I are very lucky. Our son's a great student. He'll succeed wherever he goes. No, I'm concerned for his physical safety. Speaking with staff and students at Woodbridge High School have heard universally that bathrooms and hallways are crowded and unsafe, fights are common, teachers and staff have been threatened and assaulted, and the library is closed 20 out of 36 weeks of the year for testing because there's nowhere else to put the students.

[00:51:47] My wife and I recently spoke with two of our neighbors, young ladies who are students at Woodbridge High, about the overcrowding. Their response was that my son, he's tall so he'll be okay because he can see over the crowds in the halls and see where he's trying to go these ladies who are somewhat short often feel trapped in the hallway crowds in fact they even said that the crowds are so densely packed that they've quite literally been pulled up off their feet and carried by the crowd through the halls like they were drifting with a wave at the beach this is not safe you the prince william county school board are neglecting

[00:52:24] your duty to keep our children safe by allowing these conditions to exist if there were a fire or some other emergency our children would be in more danger from the crowds than from the actual event itself. The continued residential development throughout the county contradicts the studies used to justify postponing the new high school.

[00:52:42] Additions to Colgan and Forest Park are nothing but an expensive band-aid while the building of a new school now will be a much more appropriate long-term solution. Admittedly starting construction today would not help many of the current Woodbridge High students because they'll graduate before the new school opens. However for today's fifth sixth and seventh graders the new high school would allow this board to fulfill its obligation to keep our

[00:53:06] children safe. Thank you. Thank you. Amanda Locklear. Hi my name is Amanda Locklear and my address is on file. This is the 12th or 13th time I've come and spoken at a board meeting. The first time about a year ago all of them had been in regards to issues we've faced in Prince William County with special education. The first time about a year ago I explained that I had worked my way from the bottom up. I told you the people that I had reached out to organizations departments. I mentioned that you

[00:53:41] You needed to look at the policies, procedures, best practices surrounding special education. I invited you to reach out to me to use my son as a case study so I could help you. I heard from no one.

[00:53:56] After spending about $35,000 of my own money this summer, trying to work it out with you all and get my son what he needed, this summer I started filing state complaints. In the matter of six months, Prince William County was found out of compliance on at least eight issues. There's still no remedy. So I've initiated a due process hearing. It's open to the public. I'm here today to invite each and every one of you to that due process

[00:54:29] hearing at the Spring Hill Suites on April 8th, April 9th, April 11th and April 12th starting at 9:00 a.m. No one was willing to call me last year to work this out as a team. So now I invite you to come listen to the story.

[00:54:47] There's always three different sides. Their side, your side, and the truth. Come listen to the evidence and form your own opinion. I hope to see you there. Thank you. - Bernice Ashutay.

[00:55:04] - Good evening, my name is Bernice Ashutay and my address is on file. I am currently an IB student at Garfield High School and this is my final year. And quite frankly, over the years, the number of students at Garfield has increased substantially.

[00:55:22] I feel that the school has become overcrowded despite published claims of un-enrollment. An example of this persists at overcrowded lunch times in which students are packed into lunch periods where they are unable to receive an adequate amount of time to eat their food. This is not due to a lack of accommodation by the cafeteria, but in fact, there are not enough seats and not enough accommodations for students due to the large number of students present at the lunch period.

[00:55:48] This year, a five minute reduction time has been imposed on our lunches. The large waves make it difficult to secure a lunch and eat it in a timely manner. In some cases, I myself must scarf down my food in order to ensure that I make it back to class on time. Such an obstacle has even dissuaded my own peers from lunch due to the inconvenience imposed by crowded lunch shifts.

[00:56:08] Quite frankly, transition periods have become a constant battle due to the overcrowded hallways with students moving in different directions. These problems can not only be fixed by building the 14th high school, but putting time, effort, money into Garfield.

[00:56:24] I believe that once this occurs, the wonderful things that occur at Garfield High School can not only be acknowledged, but can be improved upon. The staff do their best to create a safe learning

environment. The connections I fostered have opened up new opportunities for me.

[00:56:39] Students can only thrive in this environment by ensuring that their needs are met. I encourage you all to visit Garfield for at least a week. And if a week is too much, then a day. And if a day is too much, then one hour to witness the mistakes that you all are ignoring. Thank you. Belinda Ashutay.

[00:57:00] Good evening. My name is Belinda Ashutay, and my address is on file. I am also an IB student at Garfield High School, and I'm also a senior. At the start of this school year, Garfield had announced that they had hired a significant amount of new teachers.

[00:57:16] While I recognize the efforts that the existing staff are making to ensure that the new staff adjusts to their positions, teachers forfeit their classrooms during their planning periods. They have defaulted to bathroom security, hall duty, which does not realistically afford them time to plan their lessons as they must check that every student has a valid pass.

[00:57:35] Additionally, some teachers have forfeited their classrooms altogether, forcing them to teach out of cards and in other teachers' classrooms. To the teachers who forfeit their classrooms, it becomes difficult for students like me who have pressing questions to find their teachers. We are made to wander the halls, taking time that would have been dedicated to our lunch periods to find our teachers.

[00:57:56] When the effort has become futile, our questions either go unanswered, or we must either allocate time after school to find our solutions. Garfield, Woodbridge, and other schools alike bolster specialty programs that allow students to challenge themselves.

[00:58:11] These challenges are posed by our teachers, and when they are unable to create them, the integrity of programs such as the IBE program can be diminished. These programs also allow students to foster long-lasting student-teacher bonds, which provide guidance, as we discuss post-secondary plans, college experiences, and career paths.

[00:58:31] I believe that a failure to keep the 14th high school on the previously approved schedule of a 2026 open sends the message to the eastern side of the country that the board does not support their needs if they are choosing to allocate funds to schools like Colgan. It is not fair for the board to delay the building of the high school without visiting Garfield to witness the conditions, because I can assure you that the statistics that detail under enrollment do not exist at Garfield.

[00:58:56] Thank you. Emmett Fletcher. - Good evening, my name is Emmett Fletcher.

[00:59:11] Mr. Chairman, school board members, Dr. McDade. The question is about Woodbridge High School. It won't go away. As the gentleman said, approximately 19 or more teachers do not have classrooms. They are called rovers, using cots as classrooms for the last 15 years.

[00:59:34] That's a long time. Woodbridge High School has been waiting more than 15 years. That's a long time. want someone to solve their overcrowding condition at their school, and the problem still exists.

[00:59:50] It seems like they just keep the can further down the road, but as the citizens said here this evening, we're not gonna go anywhere, we'll be here. Prince William County have new resources, I saw it somewhere, I read in one of the communications, says Prince William County have new resources in the budget, and it says learning and achievement.

[01:00:15] Now, you have overcrowding conditions, and you have 19 rovers in the hall. I don't know how you're going to learn very well with that. It's pathetic. And we talk about getting better teachers and new

teachers. If I was in the education field, and you told me I had to teach from a cot and look for a classroom, I would go to Fairfax or some other jurisdiction.

[01:00:39] In years past, we said we were world-class education. That faded out. And then we said, I think one of the communications said that each student achieves learning and achievement for all.

[01:00:56] Learning and achievement for all. Is that true? I see the board members sit up here every school meeting and as citizens talk, it's like you're not thinking about what we're saying.

[01:01:12] This is serious. Even more important with kids in the hall, what happens if it's an emergency, major emergency, and kids, it's already out of control at Woodbridge. What happens if you have a child that's disabled, physical challenges, and has to go somewhere for safety in an overcrowding school?

[01:01:36] I think what's happening is you're setting yourself up for liability. I believe that. As a member of the Occoquan community, I want to thank Mr. Jesse for standing up.

[01:01:52] Sometimes you have to stand up alone. Dr. King stood up alone many times. And a lot of times, you have to do the same in your local community. Can Whitbridge teachers effectively do their job? I don't think so.

[01:02:08] And we'll be back later until we get it done. Five years is just too long to wait. Thank you, Mr. Fletcher. Next five, Rachel Freeman, Elijah Porter, Jennifer Gilley, Curtis Porter, Clara Freeman.

[01:02:28] Rachel Freeman.

[01:02:37] Hello, my name is Rachel Freeman, and my address is on file. By all accounts, it appears as though the elected school board will once again kick the can down the road regarding the current overcrowding at Woodbridge High School.

[01:02:56] It also seems as though the Center for the Performing Arts Specialty Program that was ripped from Woodbridge without replacement will continue to be an unresolved, gaping wound. Inside of the last five to eight years, I have witnessed school expansions justified and made at both Old Bridge Elementary and Lake Ridge Middle.

[01:03:15] Both schools are feeders right next to the high school and the schools my children have attended since 2004. My youngest two are slated to graduate in 2028 so I've been around for a while. I do not know what logic increases the square footage of these feeder schools but denies the eventuality of either increased space planning or population remediation at the high school level. The school division has continued to cite biased future population studies convenient to their own desires while the students they are supposed to serve suffer the consequences. There is a problem to fix right now. It should be

[01:03:54] driven by the school board and that plan should be made known. Everyone is tired of hearing an undetailed we are working on it especially when no results are in sight. This seems to have been a pretty effective stall tactic. What I've heard about are budgetary constraints and the impeding population collapse that is supposed to happen over the next ten years. None of you are probably going to be around at that time leaving a wake of missed opportunity for our students. I wish a majority of you would be accountable enough to step up and assume the responsibility of fixing these issues right now or hiring someone who

[01:04:33] will. Elijah Porter. Good evening members of the board my name is Elijah Porter and my address is on file. I'm a member of the military and I own a home in Lake Ridge near Woodbridge High

School.

[01:04:54] I've been in the area for several years and the military plans to keep me here for several more. I currently have two children attending Woodbridge High School and we'll have another one attending in a couple of years and then another after that. And if we stay here longer, another after that and another after that.

[01:05:11] I would like to address the decision to delay the building of the 14th high school based on enrollment projections. The school board must reject the proposed budget and build the 14th high school now. Woodbridge High School is overcrowded and attendance will increase in the area as in the area the new school will serve.

[01:05:30] I'd like to add my voice to many who have already expressed frustration about neglecting to include planned housing developments in the area. In addition, enrollment is likely to increase because Woodbridge is a prime area for military members seeking easy access to I-95 and affordable housing compared to housing closer to other military employment locations.

[01:05:54] I see the effects of overcrowding at Woodbridge and it should not continue. Getting into school takes longer. Students wait to pass metal detectors. Woodbridge has five lunch periods starting as early as 10:00 a.m. to accommodate overcrowding. There are no gathering spaces because there are too many students for the antiquated layout of the school.

[01:06:12] Not only will the new school help Woodbridge, but it will ease overcrowding across the district. I know several high schoolers in the proposed 14th high school boundaries who have chosen to attend other high schools, such as Colgan, based on the allure of newer facilities and equipment.

[01:06:27] The new high school will attract students from other areas and decrease overall overcrowding. I urge you to reject the proposed budget and build the 14th high school to address overcrowding and provide opportunity on the east side of the school district. Stop overlooking overcrowding in the east side of the school district.

[01:06:47] We need a solution, not another postponement. Thank you. Jennifer Gilley. - Good evening, my name is Jennifer Gilley. My address is on file.

[01:07:04] I'm a mother of four, three graduates from Woodbridge High School. A military spouse of a retired Air Force officer and a homeowner in East Prince William County. I became a concerned parent after seeing other high schools in the county while my boys played football for Woodbridge. The disparities in school was disgraceful, so we decided, we started advocating for the Vikings and other schools that had also been overlooked by the school board.

[01:07:26] We were told that we were heard and that things would change for our community. The sports things changed. We got our turf field for our school and the others in the county. We also got a new basketball multi-purpose gym at both Garfield and Woodbridge. I hear the windows that our 50-year-old school has never had will be coming soon as well.

[01:07:45] We were also promised a new high school to be built on the eastern side to alleviate the overcrowding at Woodbridge. My boys all endured the overcrowding classrooms, some where kids had to stand against the wall all class period long because there wasn't space for another desk. They also had the roving teachers as well.

[01:08:03] We advocated for our new high school back in 2016, but are now being told we are stuck with at least another four more years of even more overcrowding with no relief or faith that you all are doing anything about the situation. Your excuses, I hear that you are stating the number of children are leveling out in our area, but don't base your data on birth rates in the area.

[01:08:23] Many of us military families that come to the area already have children that will attend school immediately when they arrive. They are already born. I had three elementary school-aged children when I arrived in the area. Do you look at that data too?

[01:08:38] You need to revise your numbers based on military housing, not the numbers of children just born in Prince William County hospitals. You're probably thinking, lady, you said your kids graduated. Yes, I did, but I still own a home in the Prince William County area. And we all know people with children will move to the good school area.

[01:08:56] We are the first high school, as was stated, as you come over the county line off I-95, a great place for military families to live. A 50-year-old school with some updates just doesn't compare to a brand new school with all the bells and whistles. Our kids deserve the bells and whistles too.

[01:09:15] - Curtis Porter. - Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Superintendent McDade, my name is Curtis Porter and my address is on file.

[01:09:34] 50 years ago, I took to football field at Woodbridge High School as a defensive end for the Osborne Yellow Jackets, not the Osborne Park Yellow Jackets. But that's another story. That night a halfback by the name of Russell Davis ran all over us in their 63-6 victory.

[01:09:54] That night was not all bad for us, though. We were one of the few schools to score on Woodbridge that year. So never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be here in support of current and future students of Woodbridge High School and their parents.

[01:10:11] The school board must not delay in building the 14th high school in Prince William County. According to the Prince William County Demographics Office, Prince William County's current population is 495,000 and still growing.

[01:10:27] The median age of Prince William County residents is two years younger than the DMV, three years younger than those in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and three years younger than those in the United States of America.

[01:10:42] A younger population adds up to more children. The residents of the Occoquan Magisterial District cannot wait another five years for a new high school to relieve the overcrowding at Woodbridge High School. Therefore, I urge the Prince William County School Board not to delay in the construction of the 14th High School.

[01:11:03] Thank you for your time. - Clara Freeman, and then after her will be Isabel Eaton and Kate Olson-Flynn. Clara Freeman. - Hi, my name is Clara Freeman, and I'm a senior at Woodbridge Senior High School, and my address is on file.

[01:11:22] Woodbridge is one of the most populated schools in Prince William County and has been for the longest time. We do not have enough classrooms or spaces. For example, in my English class, we have 36 kids in a small triangle classroom that is shared by three different teachers.

[01:11:38] My current English teacher floats between multiple classrooms throughout the school day. If I need to speak to her outside my own class period, I'm not sure exactly where she will be located. So if I ever need to talk to her or make up work, I cannot find her. We have 19 roving teachers on carts.

[01:11:53] This affects the potential achievement of their students. These teachers must navigate the crowded halls to get to their next classroom, which all but eliminates instructional time with us before and after class. As a student, being able to have spaces other than classrooms to study or focus on school is important.

[01:12:11] At Woodbridge, we do not have access to this other than our library. Our library is closed often because of testing, especially second semester. Last year alone, it was closed 20 weeks. 20 weeks of the actual school year.

[01:12:26] When the library is closed, it not only creates lack of study places, but it also closes our tech shop. Our tech shop is located inside the library, so when testing happens, and you have a problem with your laptop, you cannot do most of the work assigned. As a student athlete, I travel to other schools.

[01:12:42] When walking through them, I see all sorts of different areas where kids can work. It doesn't seem right. In my four years at the school, I haven't seen any work towards making our situation better at Woodbridge. Why are other schools and new schools that have recently been built getting these resources while we sit here trying to make the best with the situation, while other schools who do not need them have much more room?

[01:13:04] We haven't promised a new high school since 2018. Since you aren't going to give us a new high school now, what will you do to improve the school? Isabel Eaton. Hello, my name is Isabel Eaton, and I am currently a senior attending Woodbridge Senior High School, and my address is on file.

[01:13:34] Today I would like to address the overcrowding and lack of programs at my school. Over the past four years, the population at my school has severely increased. It went from being crowded to completely overflowing. It has gotten to the point that my teachers do not even have a classroom to teach in.

[01:13:51] They are forced to share with their fellow teachers or be considered as rovers around the school. By some of my teachers not having their own classroom, it affects the number of resources they can provide to help benefit my learning. For example, in my AP research class, my teacher is a rover teacher who goes all around the school.

[01:14:11] In my class, there are many technology issues with setting up presentations and projecting online materials on the projector board. It creates this problem because of the switching of different users from teacher to teacher and students' computers. In turn, this results in portions of class time being cut and losing teaching time.

[01:14:29] In this specific class, we also use previous research students' work to reference certain research methods. My teacher had over 100 different poster portfolios hanging up along the walls that he had in his previous classrooms, which I've been in in previous years.

[01:14:46] He would ask us to reference these all the time during class, but now all of these scholarly poster portfolios are sitting in storage because he does not have a classroom. Since I was in middle school,

we have been advocating for other academic programs, yet we are with only one academic program, AP Scholars.

[01:15:05] However, this is not specific to Woodbridge because all of the other schools have AP classes. I've had friends leave Woodbridge to pursue different academic programs at other schools because my school didn't offer anything. As a student athlete, I would also see firsthand the impact of my team's success as these students leave and go to other county high schools for different programs.

[01:15:26] I know by stating these issues, it will not impact me further, but my goal is that it might help younger students at Woodbridge. Thank you for your time. - Kate Olson-Flynn, Kate Olson-Flynn.

[01:15:44] - Okay, that will conclude citizen comment time and we'll move on next to 14.01, the fiscal year 2025 budget and CIP approval. That is next, and I will turn it over to Dr. McDade.

[01:16:06] No, sorry. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The budget team and school board have worked together to develop the fiscal year 2425 budget and capital improvements program. We have aligned our investments in continuous support of our vision 2025 launching thriving future strategic plan.

[01:16:22] In early February, our team presented the fiscal year 24/25 proposed budget and CIP to the school board. The school board held a public meeting on the proposed budget on February 12th, followed by a public hearing on February 21st.

[01:16:38] On March 13th, we conducted a work session for the final markup of the fiscal year 25 budget. I want to thank our school board members for your time, attention, and collective input throughout this budget process. The board has reviewed and analyzed the proposed budget and provided critical feedback and suggestions for improvement.

[01:16:57] Their proactive involvement and thorough review of this proposal ensures its continued alignment with our strategic plan. Based on board member feedback, a few additional investments have been added at markup, including student telehealth services for all students to support mental health needs across all schools, an additional assistant STEM and robotics coordinator, software and consultancy services to support e-discovery and document review, retention, preservation and production to support Freedom of Information Act work and records law compliance.

[01:17:28] An additional position within the school board office aiming to achieve a more effective one to two support ratio for each school board member. Additional funding for the communications department to promote respective school specialty programs through a variety of marketing strategies.

[01:17:44] An additional human trafficking specialist. An additional language arts supervisor in student learning, the student learning department to support the Virginia Literacy Act, and additional administrative interns at all of our middle and high schools, an additional 3% step increase for teachers with 19 and 20 years of experience.

[01:18:05] The proposed budget includes increases for teachers with 12 to 18 years of experience, and now it will be extended from 12 to 20, and then lifting the experience cap for years of teaching service to 25 years. These additional investments will add approximately $8.3 million to the proposed budget.

[01:18:24] Our chief financial officer, Shaquille Youssef, and chief operating officer, Vern Bach, are here to answer any questions that the board may have on the proposed budget and CIP for fiscal year 24-25.

[01:18:40] - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Motions in order, Vice Chair Zargarpur. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. I move that the Prince William County School Board 1 approve the fiscal year 2025 CIP by project and the fiscal year 2025 school board school division budget in the total amount of $2,025,286,245.

[01:19:05] And further to approve the revenue sharing agreement between the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and the Prince William County School Board that provides 57.23% of general county revenues to be transferred to the school division for the operations of fiscal year 2025, and further, three, direct the superintendent to forward the requested school budget by funds total, fund totals to the Prince William County, sorry, Prince William Board of County Supervisors, and further, four, request the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to approve and appropriate

[01:19:44] the fiscal year 2025 school division budget by lump sum appropriation in the amount of $2,025,286,245 by fund totals as in previous years. - Do I have a second?

[01:20:01] - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - I'd like to second. - Any discussion? So at this point, we'll move on to discussion. So I'll see who's taking first. Any, sure? Well, first, if anyone has it. All right, why don't we start with Tracy Blake.

[01:20:17] Do you have any comments or if not, move on. Okay, all right, Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a few comments. First, I'd like to thank Dr. McDade and the staff as well as the support and the public for all the commentary and time spent in developing this budget, making it accessible to anyone and everyone throughout the county, all the hard work.

[01:20:39] I know that this starts from the moment we approve it for the next year and there are so many dates in between, including September 30th, which is our drop dead date for enrollment and some other physical needs. I'm very excited that this budget contains additional support staff for robotics, as someone who's advocated that for the past few years, as well as additional staff for our school board office as this role as a board member continues to grow and change.

[01:21:10] I appreciate the forward thinking that has gone into supporting that office. Also, what I'd like to address, too, is the CIP portion and the 14th high school, because I believe that there has been a lack of entirety of communication to the public when it comes to this school.

[01:21:31] The main reason if this budget is approved by the board, because we haven't voted yet, that the school will have to be delayed is because it will be a smaller footprint. We do not have building plans for a smaller high school and therefore it will have to go through the entire bid process to develop an accurate building site plan and all the things needed to ensure student safety.

[01:21:54] I also want to remind our public that in addition to Woodbridge, Freedom High School, Osborne Park, Colgan High School, and some of our other high schools all are overcrowded. One of the main reasons that I am supporting this is because we, for the first time since I've been sitting on this board for 10 years, will have the opportunity to study our enrollment in a research data-based approach that will give this board the ability to make an extremely informed decision on our boundaries, how we utilize not just Woodbridge, and I'm a graduate of Woodbridge,

[01:22:33] and it was the same student population when I was there. So in addition to all that, and being the person who sat on here for seven years, advocating, fighting for, attending meetings, giving hours of my life for the land that the 14th High School is sitting on, I am proud that we will have data and

information to make an informed decision moving forward that we have never had the opportunity to do as on the school board, at least not since I've been a member and not before.

[01:23:00] And that's important because one of the things for me in giving up all of that time in my life, not only sitting on this board, but on joint committees, driving around, looking at trailers, sitting with Ms. Jessie, our former board member, serving on those committees with her, we've never ever had the opportunity to really do a deep dig.

[01:23:20] And this is important 'cause it not only affects our teachers, but it affects our staff. the morale, and every other member of this administration that deals with facilities, or planning, or student enrollment, it's also a smart decision when it comes to being physically responsible, because if we continue to build high schools and then do boundaries in a piecemeal fashion, we will have what we have now, which is inequitable boundaries.

[01:23:45] We will have overcrowding in some schools, under crowding in others. We will not be able to acknowledge, we need to come up with a better system of acknowledging what happens if the Board of County Supervisors approves development after we decide to make a school, we have no backup for that.

[01:24:02] And it's far past time for us to be able to make those decisions, to look at those instances and be smart about it. Because the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. And that's exactly what we've been doing. And it's not fair to anyone who has to set foot in their high schools.

[01:24:20] So I'm very proud to be able to vote in support of this. I hope that we never find ourselves in a situation in Prince William County where we build a school and it continues to exacerbate inequitable boundaries, space usage, and funds for our students and impacts our staff and our student morale.

[01:24:45] So I hope that our budget passes as it has been voted on. I thank you for your time. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. Ms. Wall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My reflections on the budget generally are that it's a great budget. It's a good CIP.

[01:25:00] It places priority on strategic investments and promotes learning and achievement and will help us further the school division's mission and vision. Many of the things that I advocated for are in here, including things that were added on in the add-ons, and I appreciate that, the inclusion of those things.

[01:25:17] I'm particularly happy to see the new spending in the budget for teacher salaries and the other things in the learning and achievement category. 125 new special education teacher assistants, 15 and a half new reading specialists, administrative interns at the elementary, middle and high school level, 23 new kindergarten teacher assistants, new assistant robotics coordinator, and then the other funding commitments to safety and security and family community engagement, the magnetometer leases, additional social workers, the new global welcome center, human trafficking specialists, and additional drug prevention specialists.

[01:25:55] These are all, oh, and additional assistant director of student activities at each of our high schools. I think these are all things that will directly impact the experience for our students. They will promote learning and achievement for all of our students and will create more opportunities for our students to be successful in whatever level they're at.

[01:26:14] And so I think those are things I really like about the budget. I do appreciate all of the attention to detail reflected in the budget and CIP. I know taxpayers appreciate that we are being mindful of where our money comes from and that it is their money and that we're working hard to make sure we're putting it where our greatest needs are and not engaging in needless spending.

[01:26:33] So overall, I think this is strong, advances our strategic priorities and helps us ultimately improve education for children, which is our goal. And so I will be in support of this budget. - Mr. Jessie.

[01:26:48] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to tell the public why I'm voting no on this budget. Before I do, I wanna say this also, because I exposed the 19 rovers at the Woodbridge High School does not mean that the Woodbridge needs or want trailers.

[01:27:08] If the executive staff is now considering this, please meet with all the past and present teachers who are or have been rovers and get their opinion. They are the stakeholders and the people who will be impacted.

[01:27:23] Now to why I am voting no. The CIP reported Woodbridge High School was overcrowded by 110 students this year and by 2030, 31 will be 130 students under capacity. Both numbers are based on the planning capacity method, which the Office of Facility Service know is not correct.

[01:27:49] Their presentation to the board in 2017 clearly documented that the older the school using the program capacity will show significant increases in overcrowding. For a non-school related example, a two-bedroom home can be overcrowded or not, depending on the four members living in the homes.

[01:28:14] If you have a husband and wife and two teenage boys or two teenage girls, it can work. The parents sleep in one room and the kids sleep in the other bedroom. So it works. It's not overcrowded, per se.

[01:28:30] But if you have a husband and wife and two teenagers, one a boy and one a girl, it's probably not going to work because what you would end up doing is have the parents sleep in one room and then you have a teenage girl and a teenage boy sleeping in the second.

[01:28:49] so that house is probably overcrowded and that's the same thing that we happen here in school program capacity will determine how each room is to be used and when there isn't enough room for the class the school is overcrowded the fact that Woodbridge High School has 19 teachers without a classroom came as a shock the central office facility staff and senior staff appeared to not

[01:29:25] know that. Both seemed unaware of the widespread use of rovers not just at Woodbridge High School but throughout the county at most of our schools. Most board members in particular did not have any idea about the number of rovers. Trailers are shown on the CIP but not rovers and it has been suggested that they will not be shown on the CIP. I don't understand the rationale for that. It's

[01:30:00] not clear what is included in the calculation of the facility condition index score. However, in the calculation or somewhere else, trailers help determine if a school is overcrowded. So should the number of rovers. Regardless of what is or isn't going to be done, Woodbridge High School has been and will continue to be overcrowded for at least another five years.

[01:30:29] I support 99% of the budget, but not the portion delaying Woodbridge High School and the CIP data. This is the eighth or ninth delay for the 14th high school.

[01:30:44] There is no guarantee that the 14th high school will be relieved of overcrowding, even if the school is built. Because until the boundaries are done, we don't know which school will lose students to the 14th high school.

[01:31:02] Also, newer high schools are being considered for additions. There is no plan for Woodbridge High School if, for some reason, we don't build the 14th High School or the boundaries are such that most students are not coming from Woodbridge High School.

[01:31:23] We would still, but there is no second alternative. It appears once that the Prince William County at one point got the UVA study and then they went to two sources to support it they didn't collaborate with any of the County Planning Department staff and didn't include the county opinions in their presentation to the board numerous citizens have presenting pending developments that should have impact on our data and if I recall correctly my

[01:31:59] colleagues to my left here and she's gonna kill me for pronouncing her name wrong this trend in the neck question the non consideration of a large development in her area trailers are returning to occoquan elementary school we fought hard and long to get rid of the trailers and we added three additions but this uh increase appeared to be the increase in special needs pre-k students in elementary school and a lowering of classroom capacity to

[01:32:39] due to the, I think it's called a pre-K grant. This should also mean that future high school will have to house less students per classroom, which will raise the program capacity number. Lower classroom size require more classroom, not less, and special needs classroom require more classroom with fewer students.

[01:33:04] Yes, there are some high school that are not overcrowded now in the CIP planning capacity method, But I'm willing to predict that they will not be under crowded once the program capacity is done and is used and also many of them probably have rovers.

[01:33:27] Yes, the transition of students especially program can have a county wide impact. Don't believe that the enrollment of regular classes zone for either the 14th high school or Woodbridge High School has a significant impact on the entire county.

[01:33:46] It does not. A domino falling only has an impact on the other dominoes if it is close enough to impact the other one. If not, it simply fell and that's it. I hear that it is being said that Mr. Jesse only worries about Woodbridge High School and isn't concerned about the other school.

[01:34:08] I publicly supported the Pontomac Shores Elementary School. and questioned the delay for the renovation of the Princeville High School, even though I knew that neither of my two colleagues were going to support me. I do not and will not support adding addition on to other new schools that have been built unless the overcrowding at Woodbridge will be taken care of one way or the other.

[01:34:36] I am saying I have I am saying on behalf of the parents, the students, the teachers and particularly the rowers that enough is enough as one of the colleagues stated last week the cip is a living document and inferred that it cannot it can be changed without official public discussion and vote why should anyone trust that it will be executed as voted upon if that is the case most importantly

[01:35:11] woodbridge is in my district and particularly when i believe that from an equity point is not being It is being sure change, you can expect to fight. Thank you. - Mr. Denik.

[01:35:30] - Okay, sorry, that's a lot to cover. I'm gonna start by saying, I know a lot of you that are in the room probably did not watch the budget hearing that we had. It's recorded and not live. And so I did state that I was going to re-ask a couple of things that I said, just to, 'cause I think it's valuable for the public to hear one of the questions that I asked in regards to the budget.

[01:35:55] overall I'm happy with the budget and where we've gotten to I did have a lot of questions because it is my first budget season and it's my first time going through the budget so I had some questions um one of the questions that I know I field from people in my district too is about the certain increases and decreases in the budget and one of the main ones being the increase of 48% to the diversity equity and inclusion department which was a $817,000 increase um can i just i know that the time for questions was before but again sorry sure no

[01:36:31] problem so the so the dei office first i want to make sure everyone is aware is a comprehensive office that doesn't just focus on one one area of diversity equity inclusion but the entire school system meaning that in addition to our diversity equity inclusion framework to ensure that we have a positive climate and culture where all students have not only a sense of physical safety but social emotional and psychological safety as well we also

[01:37:01] house our federal title six and title nine departments in DEI so you'll see there in the budget several things that are under the DEI office such as that's That's a part of that increase that you just mentioned, the 800 plus thousand dollars.

[01:37:24] There's an increase in funding to support compliance investigator training. So every year making sure that our investigators are trained to report on reporting, writing, and compliance for titles six, seven, and nine.

[01:37:41] And then also where anything that has to do with policy or students having access to to opportunities where we see disparities throughout the system. We fund through the DEI office, for example, we added $65,000 in off-cycle investments to the DEI office, which is a part of that 800,000 that increased funding to support high school equity team supplemental pay.

[01:38:05] And these are teams that are supporting students who are first time advanced course seekers to make sure that they have the support to not only get access to that opportunity, but also succeed. We also for the first time covered funding to support in-person SAT prep for high school juniors.

[01:38:24] This is the first year that we made sure that every single student had access to take the SAT, that all of that work and we cover that cost and all of that work is housed under the DEI office. That was to the tune of about $256,000. We also increased funding to strengthen educator and system leader capacity to remove the barriers for belonging and success in secondary school rigorous college preparatory coursework to the tune of $281,000.

[01:38:52] That was a new investment from the equal opportunity schools which we previously funded with ESSER dollars, but now the ESSER is going away. We're picking that up in our operational dollar cost and it is housed in the DEI office.

[01:39:07] We also included an additional $50,000 to support translation and interpretation services compliance case management so where we have cases that might come in and we have to send reports home we have translation services which is pretty costly for the for example just one case translations to Cambodian cost us seven thousand dollars so we have to put significant funds there we also increase

funding to support our family engagement series so that we have educational series monthly for all of our families and we have transcription of recorded sessions that's

[01:39:43] posted to the website and interpretation services for any families that sign on for those trainings and in addition for all of the salaries in that office there was a three percent increase for inflation for salary increases so all of the the raises were covered there you see that across all the departments as a matter of fact not just dei when we increase salaries you'll see those budgets go up and then there was a three percent increase for inflation on contracts and collectively all of those different categories equal up to the 800 plus thousand actually it was a

[01:40:18] little bit under eight but that was where the increases came from so DEI is throughout the entire organization it's not this standalone elusive idea but it is the way that we undergird the entire system to make sure that we're addressing inequities in policy and practices in student access in academics So across the board, that's the role that the DEI office serves, and our federal compliance departments are also a part of that.

[01:40:48] So those are all of the things that make up the increases. Thank you for that. So in part of the budget process, we as school board members get to talk to the division and put in requests, and some of our requests happen, some of them don't.

[01:41:05] One of the ones that I'm most excited about is the additional 3% step proposed budget. 12 to 18 year gap, they were able to add the 19 and 20 year teachers and ultimately hopefully if we get more funding we'll be able to add the 21 through 25.

[01:41:21] So I'm really excited about that and I hope that the teachers are as well. Another huge excitement, and I know a lot of this is going to be repetitive, so my apologies, but each of us have our own excitement. So the new Global Welcome Center is huge for me. I was able to visit them and they definitely need a new space and because they're outgrowing that current facility and they do amazing work, they provide service unlike any other.

[01:41:45] So if you haven't researched that, I suggest that you do because it's a really, really cool place and the way we welcome our families that are coming in. I think another great addition, as someone else mentioned, is the student director of student activities.

[01:42:01] The addition to that, I think it's going to make a huge difference for students and activities at the high school level and is much needed. always at the top of everyone's mind so adding a bus driver sign-on and referral bonus will hopefully help a little bit with that and and getting more bus drivers for us it's no secret i'm a huge fan of brentsville district high school turf and agriculture program provides a unique career path and skill set for students that can take them far in life i'm excited that we're adding a turf management facility at brentsville high school so they can grow that program even more And it's an award-winning program as well.

[01:42:38] So the additional human traffic specialist, much needed, and I can't wait to see what else they're doing with that. The administrative interns is also a great add. I do want to address, since it did get brought up, the CIP, I have said this multiple times through this process, reiterating my concerns in regards to the CIP and how we plan for our future schools.

[01:43:04] The school division is aware of the things that I'm saying. I know that they're working towards new solutions and figuring it out. Prince William County is growing as far as incoming development.

That's a fact. Like I've said before in the planning process, now we have over 4,000 units and homes in the Brentsville district alone that will come before the board in the next year.

[01:43:26] Currently the way the schools are districted, this will cause overcrowding at our elementary, middle school and high schools in the Brentsville district. Redistricting could solve some of this, but part of the problem is what we have planned in the CIP. If we wait until all these developments are voted on and they start building them, it could be too late and we'd be facing some of the same problems that we've had in the past.

[01:43:49] The incoming growth and major overcrowding, we need to prepare and plan. I know that, like I said, the school division is aware and we're working on things and we're trying to come to a resolution to protect and prepare for the future. I know and I trust that the plan is to be more proactive instead of reactionary.

[01:44:05] And overall, I'm really excited about the budget and all the things that we've worked towards as a team. And I hope that we can move it forward. - Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, sir.

[01:44:21] In the efforts of not being too loquacious, I have broken down these a little bit more. So I wanna hit on some of the key points that we've been talking about here, not to be repetitive or redundant here. But from a broad standpoint, and I'll talk specifically about the Potomac District in a second.

[01:44:39] You know, if we look at our budget and we look at our core values, breaking it down with equity, which I think Dr. McDade just gave some very poignant examples, answering Ms. Trojanic's questions. Inclusion, I think, you know, inclusionary practices are broad.

[01:44:54] They go all different, whether it's different socioeconomic groups, different ethnicities. For me as a parent of a special needs child, you know, I look at our inclusionary practices, not just with level one students who are in pull-out and resource room, but I look at our inclusionary practices with our level two students who are our self-contained students like my son.

[01:45:16] When I was at back to school night at Potomac Shores, my wife and I were just completely astounded by the opportunities of inclusionary practices for our level two students. I was in awe knowing that we have encore classes, whether it's chorus, band, the, I apologize, I'm gonna call it shop class, but I know there's a better term for it, but different programs that even my son at his level can still be a part of the general ed population.

[01:45:50] So the more we're pushing with inclusionary practices, as long as it benefits the students, I'm very happy with inclusion. Innovation, I don't know where, you can see this anywhere in our county. I mean, of course, you know, we look at Colgan and the performing arts programs.

[01:46:07] If we look at any of our other specialty programs, Cambridge was in here from Potomac today. Our IT programs have evolved and now encompass, you know, graphic design, gaming, different things that are more up to speed with what our students are learning on today.

[01:46:23] You know, and I like, you know, where we're heading, especially with the arts programs. I think we, again, have to reevaluate some of our resources to look at How do we further innovate our arts programs at our schools? Integrity is another core value. I think this budget process has been very transparent.

[01:46:42] We've had work sessions, we've had the markup, we've had citizen comments that come and speak about the budget alone. So that's resiliency. Every year, we continue to focus on helping our students become more resilient, whether it's adding a college and career advisor, more counselors to the building, social workers, psychologists, and so we're doing a great job, I think addressing resiliency, especially of our students.

[01:47:07] And then the wellbeing, of course, we can think of that tied with the wellbeing of our students, but looking at our staff and the raises that we've been able to compile and focusing on some of our areas of the kind of the middle step group of offering additional step to try to get more in competitive nature with our other surrounding jurisdictions.

[01:47:31] we've also added increase to stipends. So these are all areas, again, that I think we're focusing on, not just the wellbeing of our students, but our staff. Our commitments remain learning and achievement for all, which I think is reflective in our budget, positive climate and culture, family and community engagement.

[01:47:50] Mr. Jenik brought up one of the great programs we're rolling out with the Welcome Center and organizational coherence. I said it last meeting at our markup session, That is online on YouTube. And if you are so bored, you can go look at it.

[01:48:07] But looking at organizational coherence is, one thing I applaud our system on is that when we hire a lot of these positions that are often designated as central office positions, again, using the word innovative, we have an innovative approach to that because although these people are classified or categorized as central office, they're not actually working here.

[01:48:31] They're out and about in the schools, helping coach teachers, demonstrate best practices, run professional development. And so when I look at organizational coherence, yes, we are growing. We are a large school system in a lot of our areas.

[01:48:47] I think before Dr. McDade came, like our human resources department, we saw during the pandemic that it was definitely understaffed. And so we're catching up and I really appreciate the organizational coherence, you know, and I want to specify since, you know, we've all talked a little bit about our own districts, you know, the Potomac district as of today had a countless number of classrooms throughout our district.

[01:49:14] We have the fastest growing community on the Eastern end of the county, which is Potomac Shores. At our elementary school, which is only seven years old, Covington Harper, we currently have five modular classrooms with an anticipated additional 150 to 300 students next year, adding three more modular classrooms to this community.

[01:49:36] This is an extremely diverse community with currently 2,152 residents within our Potomac Shores, but the plan is to reach 3,987. There is a stark need with the overcrowding and future overcrowding with the Potomac Shores community.

[01:49:57] This proposed CIP does include the plan to build Potomac Shores Elementary and move it up an additional year, as it was always planned, but now the funding is freed for purposes of that. I am fortunate that our division and our County Board of Supervisors were able to streamline this process to make this a reality.

[01:50:19] I can't make this speech without giving thanks to my counterpart on the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Andrea Bailey, who helped streamline this process and get us through what would be kind of the bureaucratic red tape of this so that we're able to build this school one year sooner because this school there is actually the physical evidence and the data to show there is immediate need to address the overcrowding in Potomac Shores.

[01:50:47] Ultimately in the end, our goal, as we say on our profile of a Prince William County graduate is to ensure students have the habits of mind to create a thriving future for themselves, their community. Every PWCS student will develop the knowledge and skills throughout their pre-K to K-12 experience, excuse me, to graduate with all the qualities vested in our profile of a graduate.

[01:51:14] And so as I conclude every year with my statement, pursuant to the Virginia State of Local Conflict of Interest Act, I'm required to declare the following regarding adoption of the budget. Number one, my wife is employed as a teacher in our school system, and I therefore have a personal interest in this transaction.

[01:51:32] Number two, I'm a member of a group of three or more persons affected by the transaction. And three, I'm able to participate in the adoption of the budget fairly, objectively, and in the public interest. Thank you, sir. - Thank you, Mr. Wilk, Mr. Zargarpur.

[01:51:48] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, I'll keep this very brief. Thank you for all the work that we, you know, that the whole division, every department puts in. I think several board members mentioned that this process starts early. There are people who have emailed recently, very recently, as in like a couple days, asking if we can put certain things in the budget.

[01:52:07] It's really, this isn't the time to ask, but we can start thinking next year. And I want people to know that, you know, not everybody gets what they want, and not everybody gets what they want when they want it, and getting what we need, it can be a challenge too.

[01:52:24] As the representative of Colgan High School, I would like to just briefly point out that we not only have trailers, but we have over 20 roving teachers as well. So overcrowding is a problem in a very new school.

[01:52:40] And I'm not aware of any additions being mentioned for my school, I've never heard that. But I think this is also an opportunity to make sure that we're making the best decision we can with what we know about our demographics.

[01:52:56] I also have Hilton High School that is, enrollment is lower than it should be. So there's some potential of some solutions that we can look at with boundaries. We can look at different programming, but it's a bigger discussion than just at these board meetings.

[01:53:16] We need to talk to our communities as well. Thank you, Dr. McDade for listening to concerns of board members. Last time I spoke about having the telehealth is gonna be really important. That's something that I'm hoping will help some families.

[01:53:35] It is hard to get appointments, it is hard to be seen, and if it helps alleviate someone's suffering and help some families along, it's well worth it. Thank you for making sure that our teachers are taken care of, and I know there's more we need to do.

[01:53:51] There's only so much money that comes in, But we have heard tonight that if there's a little bit more that comes to us in the budget, there's plans to address more of the teachings, the pay scales. And the human traffic position is vitally important because these things are happening to our middle schoolers and our high schoolers.

[01:54:12] And it's something that we've had people in our community advocating for, for a very long time. Thank you for all of that. I am done, Dr. Lateef. - Okay, great, I got a couple quick questions. - Dr. McDade, if the conferee budget, which is the budget that the General Assembly passed is signed by the Governor, do we have any idea how much more roundabout we may get?

[01:54:33] - We don't have, the calc tool is not up yet. You wanna take that, Mr. Youssef? The calc tool is not available with the specific school by school amount. We are anticipating that we would get some additional dollars, an exact dollar amount. I don't have, but Mr. Youssef is better positioned to answer that question.

[01:54:51] - I think you're right, Dr. McDade. We do not have the calc tool and that is the gold standard of determining it. We do have a sheet that gives us a dollar amount but that would be premature to rely upon because without the calc tool there are certain required local matches that we have to come up with.

[01:55:15] So to give a net number it would be very premature and it would not be accurate on our part. Okay, but the current budget that we are voting on this evening is, those numbers are solid. We don't expect anything, even if the governor were to veto the budget and it went back to the conferees, would we lose any money based on our current, what we're voting on today.

[01:55:38] So what you're voting on today is based on revenue from the governor's budget. Okay, from the governor's proposed budget. From the governor's proposed budget. fine and also from estimates from the county and to my knowledge the governor will be reconvening the the general assembly on april 17th i believe and then obviously this will be dependent on if the county changes their tax rate or does anything that can impact the current budget we're voting on yes they they are also having a mock-up session

[01:56:14] on a recap session on April 9th. So if there are any changes, we will definitely, through Dr. McDade, bring it back to the school board. - Perfect, thank you very much for that. I really appreciate that. This is, you know, I'll be voting in support of this budget.

[01:56:33] This will be my seventh budget overseeing as chairman of the school board, and it has been a budget that has been historic in one way or the other every single year since I've been here. We've had record increases in teacher salaries over the last seven years.

[01:56:54] We have, you know, made that a strong commitment of the work that we do here in this budget. It continues to address increasing salaries to try to catch up to our neighbors. It addresses changes in scale at different levels and we're trying to increase those and improve those.

[01:57:18] It is worked on improving benefits. It is also worked in consideration of the collective bargaining agreement that we've all signed. And we have spent a lot of time over this year committing to our staff and our teachers and being the largest employer in Prince William County, this is absolutely critical.

[01:57:38] So I appreciate the investments that the superintendent has proposed in the budget. And I fully support them when it comes to teacher pay, salaries and in investment. But you know, investing in our

schools is investing in our future. And it is absolutely clear in this budget that we've committed to do that along all four commitments in the strategic plan.

[01:58:00] The budget remains in strict fidelity to the plan. It is strongly aligned with the work that we have been doing and the work that we need to get done and where we're going. And so I'm very proud to support this.

[01:58:16] I wanna point out that, you know, I want to thank the superintendent and our staff for addressing the mental health issues. I think this telehealth work will be absolutely critical. You know, this is continuing to be a larger and larger problem. You know, we're gonna try to step up some stuff with, we added somebody to help with drug enforcement, drug counseling, and in the human trafficking, we already have a first in class operation that the attorney general visited us about a year ago on our human trafficking program.

[01:58:49] It's highlighted our program as one of the first in class programs maybe in the nation and people come here regularly. And so we're gonna strengthen that and continue to invest in the things that we're doing very well. So I'm very proud of the work that we're doing here.

[01:59:05] I do recognize the concerns of the folks who've come meeting after meeting and remember Mr. Jesse about the delay in the 14th high school. I recognize the concerns and I understand them. And while, you know, as chairman at large, I have to represent the entire division and the concerns I have that have been brought up by the proposal, by the staff, in numerous meetings that we've talked about, I feel justify the delay of the 14th high school.

[01:59:40] It will be built, but it'll be two years later. That is the goal. And that's what we're gonna try to commit to here in this CIP, that's what the CIP has. And so I'm committed to that work. And so it is really important for the board to take the advice and counsel, the superintendent, the staff valuing and looking at all the data that is available for us to make these decisions.

[02:00:08] And so based on that, I will be supporting it, but I do recognize the concerns and have asked the superintendent and the board to look into what we can do in the meantime, whether it's adding, as Mr. Jesse said, if we're gonna add trailers, we should ask the community and find out what we can do there in the short term.

[02:00:28] But I have heard that. So at this point, I don't have anything else to offer, and I think we should take the vote. Mr. Blake, yes.

[02:00:43] - I was just gonna say that I will be voting in support of this budget. This is also my first budget, and I want to say I'm happy with the investments in the new students and schools especially. You know, my heart is for the little kids, the pre-K, and I love the investments in the special education, pre-K enrollment, and that's it.

[02:01:11] I think that this budget aligns well with our strategic commitments, like everybody else has said. It shows integrity and it shows that we care about these kids and their futures, thank you.

[02:01:28] - Anything further, Dr. McDade? - Nothing further, Mr. Chairman. - Okay, please vote.

[02:01:45] - The vote is seven yes, one no. Mr. Jesse, motion passed. - Moving on to 1501 student representative matters. Tonight we have student representative Fernanda Morante Escobedo joining us on the dais tonight. Senior at Forest Park High School, Ms. Fernanda.

[02:02:02] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Good evening, well, good evening, Dr. McDade, school board members, and Prince William County community. I want to start by acknowledging and wishing everyone a happy Neurodiversity Celebration Week. This is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences.

[02:02:23] It aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools, universities, and organizations with the opportunity to recognize the many talents and advantages of being neurodivergent while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

[02:02:44] I encourage students to take this time to reflect and really take a second this week to celebrate and unify as a student body. As you may know, some of our neurodivergent friends are part of the special education programs in Prince William County Schools. The special education department supports our county as they provide an equal educational opportunity for all students.

[02:03:06] And for those who are interested, there's a special education advisory committee. They determine the needs of children with disabilities within the county. They develop priorities and strategies for meeting those identified needs. And they advocate for special education teachers.

[02:03:23] They hold meetings monthly here at the KLC and allow for citizen common time as well. And for more information on how to participate, you can visit the special education advisory committee section on the PWCS website. On another note, I would like to share what the Student Senate has been working on for this past month.

[02:03:43] One of our goals as a Student Senate is to create a Student Bill of Rights to present to the Prince William County Schools community and eventually put in use by all students at PWCS. As of now, we have curated a tool with a specific set of criteria that these rights should follow.

[02:04:00] They go from is this right even legal to what do the stakeholders think, would potentially think about that. And we also developed the categories that these rights might fall under in the structure of the Bill of Rights.

[02:04:17] We also have been planning the upcoming Student Leadership Workshop to be held here at the KLC on April 3rd. During this workshop, we will start brainstorming and drafting these rights using the analysis tool to drive our discussions that the Senate has previously created.

[02:04:33] I would like to give a shout out to Ms. Viola Askey, Dr. Shaver and Mrs. Shaw, who have been part of this exciting process. It's been really hard. There's so many things to take into account, it was crazy, but I think we have a very good team in the Senate and with our advisors.

[02:04:52] So I'm really excited for this upcoming leadership workshop. Similarly, it is part of my duties to advocate for students in the county and their thoughts and ideas. If you remember from the last school board meeting, we had the pleasant visit of some of our elementary school friends advocating for middle school recess.

[02:05:12] I see Catalea over there. Hi. They have created a committee and they meet at the Panera of 234 every Saturday at 11:00 a.m. And this past weekend, I attended one of their committee meetings to hear more about their initiative.

[02:05:30] I met with Catalea, who's here tonight, as well as Zoe and Michelle, All three of them are fifth graders from Kyle Wilson Elementary School. And they started this middle school recess initiative last school year when they were in fourth grade.

[02:05:45] They are well aware of the diverse studies providing the benefits of recess and have done high level research on the topic. It's very impressive. They have like a file with all the studies and everything that they've read.

[02:06:00] It was very impressive. They have also collected hundreds of signatures from community members, students, teachers, and parents in support of middle school recess. They believe that recess will only benefit both students and teachers eventually and could be implemented as soon as next school year.

[02:06:19] Together, we produce a proposal that they will soon share with the school board members and other county officials, as well as their soon to be middle school principals. All three of them have already reached out to the principals of their future middle schools, asking questions, asking for statistics, and some of them have gotten a response.

[02:06:39] And what we meant, we thought about a plan that would allow the students having a recess while still keeping a good amount of their instructional time. I'm sure they will share more specific details in future school board meetings, but one of our ideas included reducing class periods for about two minutes, so all that time combined would give you about 10 to 15 minutes for recess.

[02:07:08] My brother, he's a sixth grader at Putumak Shores. He has seven class periods that, and if we cut those periods by a couple minutes, then he has like 14 minutes of recess. So there's a lot of stakeholders, a lot to think about, but the fact that these three fifth graders came up with the idea, it's really impressive, and I was really proud of them.

[02:07:35] As a high schooler, sometimes I need a mental break from classes and activities, so I cannot imagine much middle schoolers need that break as well. This initiative is not advocating for full-on recess, like let's go to the monkey bars and play sports and play tag or stuff. It's more as a mental break from their learning journey so they can feel more relaxed and motivated throughout the school day.

[02:07:56] We thought about recess being held in the library or outside if it's nice out in the the auditorium or just places where class is not in place. So I think it's definitely doable and I strongly encourage all stakeholders involved with these types of implementations to evaluate the benefits in enactment of middle school recess.

[02:08:26] Catalaya, Zoe and Michelle and the whole middle school recess committee, I am extremely proud of you all for taking leadership and speaking up about what you're passionate. I have no doubt that I will see some of you sitting in this student rep chair in the future, and the work that you guys have put in is amazing, and I really appreciate the initiative.

[02:08:48] It's, I'm sure it's, I hope it's gonna make change in the county. Speaking of which, applications to serve as the next student school board representative are still live. Applications will be open through April 2nd, and all rising juniors and seniors are encouraged to apply.

[02:09:06] Serving as this year's student rep has been an honor, so definitely check out this opportunity. And this is also a chance to be part of next year's Student Senate and participate in the implementation of Student Bill of Rights. So, and applications are live in the website.

[02:09:23] Also, I want to wish the best of luck for all our juniors who will be taking the SAT tomorrow during school day. The SAT is a good opportunity to demonstrate your academic abilities and a good score improves your chances of being accepted into an educational institution post high school.

[02:09:42] However, if standardized tests are not your strength, I get it, believe me, I'm not a great SAT test taker, don't be so hard on yourself. Everyone has different abilities and strengths. Maybe test taking is not yours and that's completely fine.

[02:10:00] But just do your best and that is more than enough. Remember to charge your school-issued laptops tonight. I've gotten like a million emails about it, So don't forget to charge your laptops as the SAT will be digital. As seniors, we have an asynchronous day, but we still have assignments to complete and these will be used for attendance.

[02:10:21] So if you do not turn in those assignments, you will be considered absent and attendance is mandatory tomorrow still just online. Finally, I'd like to remind students and parents that the end of the third quarter is soon coming to an end.

[02:10:37] So make sure you're turning in those assignments on time. keeping up with your readings and doing one last effort before spring break. To go back to the work that the DEI does that Dr. McDade was talking about earlier, I wanted to offer a little bit of my student insight on how I can see these improvements at my school and around the county as well.

[02:10:58] I have heard a lot from my fellow classmates about how grateful they are that they get to take an SAT for free and during the school day, especially those who are economically disadvantaged and the fact that it's on a school day makes it extremely easier for them.

[02:11:16] Usually SATs are on a Saturday and if you don't drive or if you don't have someone that can take you, that's a problem. So the fact that it's during the school day, during school hours, it's really beneficial for all our students.

[02:11:32] As an immigrant student, I immigrated from Peru at the start of my 10th grade. The DEI programs were extremely helpful for me to make a smooth transition to the US school system. And the translation portion of the work that the DEI implements is also extremely vital for the support that my family provides me to succeed.

[02:11:52] My home language is Spanish, and I have never once had my parents ask me to translate some communication that they get from the county because they get them directly in Spanish. And if your family speak a language other than English, you probably know how much it means to get an official communication in a language that you can understand, so I can definitely see and feel the work that the DEI office provides and I'm very, very grateful that this department's being included in the future steps regarding our education in our county.

[02:12:22] Also, the work that the Student Health and Wellness Department does regarding drug and substance abuse prevention is also evident in high schools. A few weeks ago, my classmates in the senior class and I received training on how to identify a person who's high in opioids and how we can help them.

[02:12:42] They even offered us the, there's like a device that can save someone's life. They offered us for free. Yeah. So they offered it to us for free. We have all the tools. So I think that the work that is being put in besides like our class time, it's extremely helpful as well.

[02:13:04] And I truly believe that these implementations are adding to the efforts to create a thriving future focus for the PWCS student body. Thank you for your time and have a wonderful spring break. - Thank you, Fernanda, fantastic.

[02:13:20] Excellent comments and a lot for us to think about. Tonight, we are moving on to superintendent's time. Dr. McDade. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. During the first weekend of March, 140 of our students who are part of the PWCS Growing Our Own Teachers program, along with their teacher leaders, participated in the annual Educators Rising Student Leadership Conference and Competitive Events.

[02:13:44] Educators Rising Virginia is a career and technical student organization focused on training and teaching future educators in middle school, high school, and college. And I'm proud to share that PWCS had 25 first place winners from C.D. Hilton High School, Charles J. Colgan Senior High School, Gainesville, Osborne Park, Unity Reed, and Woodbridge High Schools, and 15 second place winners from Colgan, Forest Park, Gainesville, Garfield, Hilton, Osborne Park and Unity Reed High Schools.

[02:14:13] First and second place winners are eligible to represent PWCS and our Commonwealth at the Educators Rising National Competition in June. And I'm very proud of our future teachers, our program graduates who return to our classrooms and our teacher leaders for their amazing contributions to our schools.

[02:14:33] The Kelly Leadership Center bustled with excitement this past weekend as PWCS hosted Prince William Manassas Regional Science Fair. The PWCS vision 2025 launching thriving future strategic plan includes a goal of increasing student participation in regional, state, and international science and engineering fairs. 235 students, 79 judges, and 21 outside organizations participated in the science fair. There were 182 projects on display. Among the standout projects were five representing five schools for grand prize winners each addressing

[02:15:10] important issues with creative and scientific rigor and the five schools that will be advancing two students are from Colgan one from Battlefield one from Osborne Park and one from Patriot High School and we'll be acknowledging those students by name and their project and their project titles in a future meeting next week our students and staff members will observe a well deserved spring break and I hope our staff members as well as our students and their families enjoy a restful break and take advantage of the time to recharge and those of you who are traveling please be safe mr. chairman that concludes the superintendent's report thank you dr. McDade moving on to

[02:15:50] committee updates miss wall has an update on safe schools advisory council thank you mr. chairman I'll be really brief safe schools met a week ago Monday and we had a quorum finally so thank you anybody or everybody who got their representatives to show up to that meeting and we attacked the bylaws so we it's in the bylaws it says that we will annually review our bylaws and so we attempted to do that and we got quite far into it and the committee was tasked with they were given access in order to finish it given access to the document

[02:16:26] and are encouraged to make comments on improvements and suggestions and amendments to the bylaws so that's kind of where the committee is right now and that's pretty much all that we were able to accomplish but it was good progress on an important thing that we need to get done, so that's all.

[02:16:42] Outstanding, thank you very much. At this point we'll go to 1801. On the board matters agenda, ratification of collective bargaining agreement which is on for action, a motion is in order. Ms. Zargarpur.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board ratify the collective bargaining agreement with an effective date of July 1, 2024. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Mr.

[02:17:06] - Mr. Blake. - I second. - Thank you, sir. Any discussion? Ms. Trudenik. - I understand that the collective bargaining agreement has been voted on and approved by the past board. Tonight, we're being asked to ratify this agreement.

[02:17:21] I'm not a fan of collective bargaining for public service employees, but I'm a huge fan of paying teachers more, and I'm glad we were able to do that with this budget. I firmly believe that this raise could have and would have been accomplished without this agreement. I believe there are certain aspects that need to be protected in regard to management rights, and I worry this agreement can put those at risk.

[02:17:40] Because of these reasons and because of the fact that I wasn't part of the initial vote implementing collective bargaining, I'm going to be voting no tonight. - Thank you. - Okay, any further comments? Ms. Wall.

[02:17:55] - Thank you very much. I will begin by stating that I recognize and support the specific benefits that are included in this agreement for our teachers, such as the historic salary increases in supplemental pay and stipends.

[02:18:12] And while I greatly laud the positives that this agreement has yielded, I continue to express my opposition to the process. My position should come as no surprise to anybody who has been paying attention to this issue for the past year.

[02:18:29] Back in 2023, I expressed my opposition to heading down this road, and I expressed my support, and I expressed at that time my support of the then existing process of meet and confer, which was working well, and which was serving our division admirably.

[02:18:45] And was also, may I note, highlight or an exemplar for other divisions around Virginia they would often be consulting with our staff on how we did meet and confer and we were a model of how it should work so as I have said throughout this process I maintain that collective bargaining is bad for the school system and particularly for kids and I encourage the board not to go down the path of collective bargaining encouraging might be a nice way to say what I was doing actually so while I applaud our staff and all on the bargaining team for the

[02:19:21] thousands of collective hours spent on this and all that they have endured and getting us to this point it was painful and difficult and unpleasant to say the least thank you for doing what we asked you to do and I'm sorry you had to do it what I saw over the last year was not the best of what Prince William County Schools is I have detailed many of my concerns with the process in past comments those are public records you can go back and see what I had to say and and I add those concerns to those concerns my current observations many of our teachers were

[02:19:56] highly distracted over this last year by this process a fair number were seriously distressed by the level of vitriol and negativity which reached an all-time high at the height of the conflict and we saw that in our boardroom week after week after week it seems distant now that's how memory works over time you forget how bad something was but as a board we endured months of negativity and reputational disparagement and I also think I'm putting that nicely it is my opinion that many inaccuracies prevailed

[02:20:31] in the public narrative due to this process and much reputational damage was also done to PWCS as a result of choosing to engage in the collective bargaining process I predicted that entering into the path of collective bargaining would lead to increased negative feelings between teachers and school division leaders which did in fact occur I also expressed concern about increased negative perceptions by the public about the teaching profession as a whole which also occurred many people asked me why our teachers were so miserable and why would anyone want to be a teacher after what they were

[02:21:10] hearing here in our boardrooms and I truly regret that because we have many wonderful teachers who love what they do I predicted that misinformation of data would be rampant and it was was very hard for us to win the news cycle with the headlines and the stories that PWA was constantly putting out I predicted the education would be politicized and it was we experienced that here on the board I predicted that children and the quality of their education would not be the priority through the collective bargaining process and it was not it was never mentioned, to my recollection.

[02:21:49] Again, while I support the gains in salary and other financial benefits, I maintain that we should not have gone down this path in the first place, and had we not, I strongly contend that we would have accomplished the same result with a lot less cost, effort, time, and reputational harm had we stuck with meet and confer.

[02:22:08] This is because the previous board, and I believe this board as well, recognizes the need to attract new and veteran teachers, keep our excellent teachers, and compensate them well in order to compete in our region for the best talent. So again, while ultimately teachers do benefit from this agreement, I continue to feel that the how we have chosen puts us on the wrong path, and I am certainly willing to bring forth a motion to rescind the resolution at any time, and I'm making that as a public announcement.

[02:22:35] Thank you very much. - Okay, any other comments? Okay, well, you know, I'm just gonna say that this is fairly historic for Virginia, for teachers, for large school divisions to, I think we may be the first, I'm not positive.

[02:22:56] We're big, I'm talking about big. They're like a little rinky dink little place. I'm not, I'm just joking. The, no, no, no, for, did they ratify? They were, okay, so yeah. So we are, so we're one of the biggest districts to ratify a collective bargaining agreement.

[02:23:16] And I think this is, it's a good first step. I have always stated that collective bargaining is a tool for us to improve our ability to achieve what my ultimate goals were and have been is to increase our salaries and our benefits for our teachers, which has been something that I've been consistent on for the last six years that I've been here.

[02:23:39] We continue to be competing with richer districts who continue to also pay their teachers more, and so it becomes extremely difficult for us to catch up. we've made extraordinary strides, especially under Superintendent McDade, where we are catching up and we are doing a better job.

[02:23:59] I think the CBA that the staff has spent a lot of time on, as you've heard, and the Superintendent has spent a lot of time on, and the PWA has spent a lot of time on, and I wanna thank the PWA for their work in being at the table. It was not easy, as you've heard.

[02:24:17] It has been difficult, but I come from Ohio and I don't know many places where collective bargaining is the easiest thing to do. It is by its nature adversarial and difficult, but if done well, we can

reach an agreement tonight.

[02:24:35] I'm proud to support and ratify the CBA that we did come to an agreement on and I'm excited that the PWA has also ratified it. So I will be in full support of this and I continue to believe that the CBA and collective bargaining is a good tool for us to really work towards making sure us as the largest employer in the county is doing the best we can for the folks that are teaching the most valuable assets and the most valuable assets that the country has and the county has, and that's our children.

[02:25:05] So I will be supporting in full support of the collective bargaining agreement. So at this point, please vote.

[02:25:26] - The vote is six yes, two no, Tradenek, Wall, motion passed. - Sorry, moving on to board matters. We are gonna start with Justin Wilk.

[02:25:42] - I'll be quick, Mr. Chairman, for brevity here. - Excellent. - Yes, I'll just state, you know, I'm gonna continue my commitment to being very concerned about bullying in our school division. The last couple of weeks I have been inundated with a lot of examples, anecdotal examples of bullying happening across all ethnicities, all ages.

[02:26:07] And it is something, you know, I'm looking forward to addressing with the Code of Behavior later on this year. You know, I continue soliciting feedback from teachers, parents and having conversations with my principals.

[02:26:24] You know, it's something again, I'm resolute about. It's a passion of mine and something I'm committed to fixing. But in the effort of not being all negative, I never thought I would say this five years ago, given the search situation, but I have a lot of great principles.

[02:26:42] But tonight I'm recognizing one, Ms. Yoshika Walker of Grand Park. This lady, we wanna talk about code of behavior, she does not play. Her military background, her extensive years experience as an AP at Grand Park, it's unbridled energy.

[02:26:59] She's personable, energetic. I just can't say enough about her management. And so I will put out again, one of my recognitions tonight of one of my principals in my district. I'll talk about events in two weeks, so thank you.

[02:27:17] - Ms. Trudening. - This last weekend, I attended the annual transition fair, which I've never heard of before. It's hosted at Colgan High School. It helps families learn more about employment opportunities for youth and adult students with disabilities as they plan for life after high school.

[02:27:36] I was personally invited by Tate Jordan, a Gainesville High School student. He wanted me to come and watch as he presented the opportunities that our CTSOs provide in middle school and high school. He talked about great organizations like FBLA, Future Farmers of America, and the skills that these organizations provide to students with disabilities to help them future their careers and decide what they wanna do next in their life.

[02:28:04] And I just thought that that was an amazing presentation. So I wanna personally say congrats to Tate Jordan on taking initiative and calling me as your school board member to come. Thank you for doing that. I also went to Cedar Point and watched Aladdin.

[02:28:20] Huge, huge kudos to Mrs. LaFleur for directing such an incredible show. I did happen to watch three that weekend and so I just think she does a phenomenal job and she really turns those kids into

future stars. I also went to Piney Branch and watched the Willy Wonka musical which those kids could sing and that place was packed.

[02:28:41] not a seat left in the house um i also went to marsteller to watch annie jr where my favorite performer happened to be officer ward he's super cute happens to be my kid too so um he did a great job i went down to richmond to watch patriot boys basketball unfortunately they lost come on guys we can do it next year i'm sure of it um also one of my favorite things that i did this month was it was actually this week was tour the transportation depot um super exciting they did say that they had never had a school board member before so i'm going to go on record saying that out loud okay

[02:29:18] everybody should go visit it's a really cool place they have a lot of long-standing employees there uh it's awesome to see the great work they do they're they're the ones that get our kids to school safely and home and i think that that's extremely important to us as parents i can't wait to keep learning more i'm happy tonight that we voted unanimous unanimously to appoint members of the Brentsville District to multiple committees and boards.

[02:29:40] I believe that I've chosen a strong list of parents who have been involved, present, and advocated for students, teachers, and parents for many years. I'm excited to see the work they can accomplish during their term. I will say that I do wish that as school board members we had the opportunity to appoint both students and teachers to these various committees, as well as parents, because I believe having a variety of perspectives from each district would come in handy.

[02:30:02] And I appreciate all the students that have reached out to me who would like to be appointed. I have talked to the school division and we're trying to figure something out, especially for the ones that we're sitting. I'd like to wish everyone a happy spring break and Easter Sunday and that the students and teachers enjoy a much-needed respite and have a lot of fun.

[02:30:19] May you enjoy celebrating with family and friends and rejoicing in the resurrection of Jesus. It's almost the last quarter. Let's finish strong. Mr. Jesse. I'd like to just say that for many years I used to wonder why you look at politicians and you very seldom see their spouse with them.

[02:30:42] And after going with my wife for 11 years to most of the events, I know why. It is a lot. We go and we attend a lot of things. We get paid basically nothing. But we still go.

[02:30:59] And one of my goals is to go to some of the events that people don't normally go to. And I want to see some of the things that stuff. And my wife is, you know, as I went with her, and you might be saying, well, shouldn't she come with you?

[02:31:20] And she deserved to have a rest, and I want to make sure she does that and she's doing some other things. So I'm not going to list all the things I did, but the one thing I do want to say is that I did attend Mrs. O ceremony at the high school.

[02:31:39] It was very well attended. The lady would get up at 3, would be at school 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning all day long. And she was just a wonderful person, and I was thrilled.

[02:31:55] And a few months, a month or so ago, I attended the ceremony funeral for Mrs. Gravely, and that was an honor to be there also. So we get to do a lot of nice things. We get to see a lot of nice things, but it is a lot of work, but it's something I volunteer.

[02:32:14] I do not know how the people who have jobs survive this year after year, because it is a lot of work to do. Thank you. Ms. Wall, right?

[02:32:30] Yes, Ms. Wall. I will take it. To start, I want to say, I'm sure all of our thoughts and prayers are with the driver of the bus who was injured today by that tree that fell during the windstorm that we got this afternoon.

[02:32:45] I really hope that bus driver is going to be okay. I wanted to start also say the artwork that is on display here comes from Battlefield's AP Portfolio Prep Class and from Battlefield's Art 1 classes. So great job all the students who made these amazing artworks.

[02:33:04] The 3D book projects are to help them understand the creative process that they will utilize in their AP course next year. And the others, these Art1 Picasso-esque sculptures are to help students explore the elements of line, color, and shape and form.

[02:33:21] So I have artists in my family. One of my PWCS graduates was an AP art student, so it's really fun to see it decorate the boardroom. good job everybody. Last week I had the privilege of attending the arts, sorry, the award ceremony for the Principal of Manassas Regional Science and Engineering Fair, and I want to give a big shout out to Dr. Julia Renberg, Supervisor of Science, and her entire team for all of the hard work that they put in and making sure that that happened. Furthermore, I want to congratulate all of the students who participated and especially congratulate those first place winners and the students, the five overall winning projects that will advance to national

[02:33:58] international competitions this is really exciting science fair is hard and it takes a lot of extra effort but it's real learning and it's so valuable so it's really neat to see I also recently attended unity Braxton's content night and science fair and Jaguar night both of these unity Braxton events were awesome and they brought so many parents and family members into the school to engage with learning I thought this school is working really hard to improve the lives of its students and I thank you for allowing me to see this in action. Last evening, I attended a pyramid concert at Bull Run, and it was with fifth and sixth graders, and it caused me to reflect on how important music education is in its music education

[02:34:38] month, anyway, and how fun it can be. And on the topic of fun, one of the songs that was composed by our very own Mr. Sam Renolfsson, it was called the Rubber Chicken Dubstep, which really brought the kids alive, and it gave me a chance to reflect that my own bass player, who only seven years ago was in a concert just like that um and who incidentally was his first bass teacher was mr sam ronolfson so kind of a cool circle um children can't always see it but they really do change and learn and grow so much over the course of just a few years and um it's really exciting and now for instance my son is a bass principal bass player in a concert orchestra at a four-year

[02:35:17] university so that's the value of a principal in county education um dr seuss is credited with saying sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory. This fourth quarter, soon we're gonna have many students crossing that graduation stage once and for all.

[02:35:32] So from a mother who's been down this road, I say emphatically, cherish every moment. - Ms. William. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we close out the month of March, which is Women's History Month, the theme this year is Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

[02:35:54] I would just like to acknowledge a few women who practice this, live this, and advocate in our society and our county at large. Myself included, that has been my primary focus the entire time that I've

been on the board. I would like to also honor a few, in no particular order, but of course our outstanding superintendent, our three board of supervisors members, Supervisor Franklin Bailey and our new chair, Jefferson.

[02:36:23] I'd like to also recognize Maria Burgos for all of her hard work, both as a former school employee, now as a county employee, and constant collaborator. Makaya Little, Denise Carroll, our female student representatives that have served us on the board and have served us well that continue to give me hope for the future, as well as our fearless recess advocates who have been coming here that I know will carry the torch well into the future for all of our women.

[02:36:56] And then lastly, I think there's a picture that I asked communications to put up. I just want to honor this young lady, Ms. Erica Ortiz. She is a Woodbridge District resident. She is the first in her family to participate in a dog show.

[02:37:12] She won the first time out the Junior Handler Who Speaks for Herself Righteous Bully Award. So she is the 2024 recipient, first time ever entering a dog show, won and is super proud. She is one of our elementary school students in the Woodbridge District.

[02:37:31] So I just wanted to pay her special mind 'cause that is an outstanding accomplishment. And then for events, there were so many that have occurred within the district, but I just wanna give a special acknowledgement to Fred Lynn Middle School's Girls Varsity Basketball.

[02:37:47] They had an undefeated season and they were champions. Thank you to Amazon for allowing us to get a sneak preview of the future science lab that will be coming in Loudoun County that our school division students will be able to tour. Big shout out to Featherstone Drama Club, the drama teacher, Mrs. Garu.

[02:38:06] I have never seen a teacher encompassed by all of her drama students and yelling and screaming and get more standing ovations than the actual students who participated in the plays. So congratulations to her. There will be no JET meeting this month. On Thursday will be racial and social justice.

[02:38:24] And I would like to just make sure that the vote for the consent agenda was recorded correctly 'cause I did not vote in favor for it. And I hope everyone has a wonderful spring break for all those who celebrate all the religious holidays that overlap spring break.

[02:38:40] And I would like to continue to advocate for this board to learn more about our process of building buildings and the CIP, thank you. - Wade Anderson. - Ms. Williams, I just want to circle back on something you said about your vote being incorrect on the consent agenda.

[02:38:58] If that's the case, then you need to, because you voted yes, you need to either move to reconsider or ask if there is an objection to changing your vote to correct the correct vote. - I would like to do that because the-- - So I'll ask it, 'cause I'm the chairman.

[02:39:16] Does anyone have any objection to Ms. Williams changing her vote to no on consent agenda? Okay, as seeing none, it's done. - I just asked, is it on a specific item on the consent agenda? - At this point, she doesn't, I mean. - I'm just asking.

[02:39:31] - Sure, I'm happy to answer it. So the information that was presented, I was not aware of the way that certain items were pulled off the consent agenda. So there were several items that I did not agree

with. And so I wanted to make sure that that was recorded accurately. Thank you. - Mr. Blake.

[02:39:47] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the past couple of weeks, I've had the privilege of attending several events within our community, each contributing to the enrichment of our educational landscape and fostering valuable connections. The 32nd annual food show held at Cogan High School provided a platform for showcasing culinary talents and innovation.

[02:40:11] I believe that nurturing our students with quality nutritious meals is fundamental to their success both in and out of the classroom. A heartfelt thank you to all the talented individuals involved in bringing this vision to life. Your commitment to excellence is paving the way for a brighter future in school nutrition.

[02:40:31] And my favorite dish there was the challah burger. And then at Garfield High School, they had the 46th annual Prince William County Spelling Bee was held and it showcased the remarkable spelling abilities of our students, witnessing their dedication and proficiency in spelling was a testament to the quality of education and support provided by our schools.

[02:41:01] And we also, so the winner was a repeat winner. She won last year and she's won again this year. And she will be representing Prince William County at the Scripps, Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. And another highlight was witnessing the Team Central Collaboration Day at Manyville Elementary School, where it was the fifth grade science teachers.

[02:41:26] And it was actually seeing what Dr. Sullivan had described to us in the prior board meeting, the power of collaboration, professional development, and seeing the tangible results it produced further underscored the effectiveness of such initiatives.

[02:41:48] This collaborative effort emphasized the importance of teamwork and interdisciplinary learning in fostering a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. And the teachers were like ecstatic to be there. I know they had more teachers than were expected.

[02:42:07] It was just a great thing to see. And then I went to Miniville Elementary's SEL night, which exemplified our commitment to family engagement and positive climate and culture. This event provided a platform for families to engage in meaningful discussions and activities aimed at nurturing social emotional skills and fostering a supportive school community.

[02:42:31] I also had the pleasure of chaperoning a field trip with Ms. Stebbins' second grade class to the Science in the Park at Lake Ridge Park. Despite the brisk weather, the experience provided invaluable hands-on learning opportunities, reinforcing classroom teachings on adaptation, migration, and habitat, for example.

[02:42:52] And then, like Ms. Williams said, I attended the Lancaster Future reception that was hosted at the Amazon headquarters and the Northern Virginia Science Center. And it highlighted their invaluable partnerships between our schools and businesses.

[02:43:09] The event underscored a myriad of opportunities available that will be available for our students in the future. And I just thanks to support of organizations like AWS. And in conclusion, these events represent the diverse array of opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the holistic development of our students and the strengthening of our educational community.

[02:43:35] I look forward to continuing to support and participate in such initiatives that enrich the lives of our students and enhance the educational experience within Prince William County. Everybody have a great spring break and good night. - Ms. Zargarpur.

[02:43:53] - So this weekend I had a chance to see the Science and Engineering Fair and because I wasn't sure what time we were gonna be able to see the displays of the projects that the kids worked on, came a little bit later than I should have but I did get the opportunity to talk to several students and I learned I learned a lot some of our students are taking very rigorous classes in subjects they don't necessarily want to go on and study but they know that the practice of learning how to research and

[02:44:27] design a study and learn everything about a topic and present it and come up with a conclusion and think about the application of it is a really important skill for whatever they're going to study so I appreciate all the students that I met who took the time to talk about their projects and I learned a little bit more about what they do in their daily classes some of these projects were capstone projects some of these are just interests that they've just had and and they were curious about I got to go to a chess tournament

[02:45:02] Mr. Wilk the I think the elementary kids were they were beating us weren't they we can't compete we cannot compete I went to the PWCS food show there were so many delicious things to sample there I really liked the breakfast waffle that was very delicious and I want to thank the the food services for finding halal meat we have a very diverse community and looking for halal and kosher food for our students for those students who uh have religious dietary um interests i i really

[02:45:38] appreciated that they were able to sort of branch into that i know it's not on the menu permanently but thank you for doing that um i also want to mention that i went to hilton high school's first musical in like 16 years and the the the joy of not just the kids but the audience was was just excited the staff who are helping we're so excited congratulations on a fantastic performance of Mamma Mia and what I thought was really cool about what was going on at Hilton is last year one of the teachers mr. Troyer started this as just an after-school club and over a hundred kids showed up and now

[02:46:16] it's three classes that'll be offered next year yes I know it's this is outstanding and again we're providing spaces for these kids for their interest this is gonna build on skills they need for whatever they do. So I hope everyone enjoys their spring break.

[02:46:32] Come back refreshed to get through the end of the school year, and I'll see you on graduation stage. - Okay, wonderful, thank you. Great evening, we passed a major budget. This is the first time I think, well, I mean, is this the first time we've crossed the two billion mark all in?

[02:46:51] So that's a big deal. We will now move to the Board of County Supervisors to present our budget in the first week of April and look forward to, you know, making sure this passes.

[02:47:08] I look forward to seeing that the governor's budget, well, that the conferees budget gets passed. I think it's absolutely critical. Speaker Don Scott, leader Scott Surveille, delegate chair Torian, chair Lucas, have spent a lot of time on working on that budget. That is absolutely critical.

[02:47:24] That's more money for schools across the Commonwealth. It's a significant bump for us as well. It will allow us to do some of the things we still need to do in this budget that will help us get to the strategic plan endpoints sooner and faster. And so I'm hopeful that they will come to a resolution in Richmond relatively soon so that we can see, you know, that we can get more money to do the things we need to do that you've heard about.

[02:47:53] And so I am excited and thrilled about the budget. I think tonight's news is really this budget. This is an incredible amount of work that has gone into this. I wanna thank the staff. I didn't thank them earlier, Shaquille Youssef, Dr. McDade, the whole team, finance, everyone, all the budget holders in the division, all the folks who put the time and energy into putting together this work.

[02:48:17] This is absolutely critical and I can't thank you all enough for doing that. Since our last meeting Ramadan began, so Ramadan Mubarak to everyone who's celebrating, Happy spring break. Today is Nourouz, which is the Persian New Year.

[02:48:33] So Nourouz Mubarak, happy new year for our Persian community and Afghan community and all those who celebrate Nourouz. We have Easter coming up. I want everyone to have a wonderful Easter and enjoy the holidays, enjoy their spring break.

[02:48:49] And I'm very excited. So let's adjourn this meeting and go home.

