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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Date	Wednesday, September 18, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	2h 27m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F1AwyxiMEE
- 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 2026-10-31. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] - I'd like to call the meeting of the Prince William County School Board to order. A motion in order for the approval of the meeting agenda, Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the meeting agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - I second it. - Second by Mr. Jesse. Any discussion?

[00:00:17] All in favor? We can do that or do you want us to wait for the, you want to get some practice and put the vote up?

[00:00:33] They, well, needed to be refreshed, but I think we should go with the healthy snacks. - The vote is six yes, two absent, motion passed. - Oh. - To not present, vote, I apologize. Motion passed. - Okay, you guys all voted to approve it, right?

[00:00:50] Everyone, okay, no objection. Motion to enter closed session. Please read the motion, Ms. Earp. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that pursuant to Virginia code sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712, the Prince William County School Board entered the closed session for the following reasons.

[00:01:06] One, to discuss with staff the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body pursuant to section 2.2-3711A1 of the Virginia Code.

[00:01:23] Two, to discuss and consult with legal counsel regarding requests for religious exemptions pertaining to specific students under sections 2.2-3711A of the Virginia Code. Three, to discuss with the division counsel and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other civil litigation involving the school division under sections 2.2-3711A, seven and eight of the code of Virginia.

[00:01:50] 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 section 2.2-3711A, 19 of the code of Virginia.

[00:02:10] - I have a second. - Mr. Jessie seconds, all in favor say aye. - Aye. - Any opposed? No opposition noted. Motion passes. So that it, is that it? Yep.

[00:02:26] All right, Prince William County School Board

[00:02:26] will now enter closed session, return open session one hour.

[00:03:31] Evening, I would like to call the Prince William County School Board meeting to order. At this time, we need to have a motion for closed session certification. Ms. 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 September 18th, 2024, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:57] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies. And two, only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard and discussed or considered by the school board.

[00:04:19] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chair, I second. - Ms. Wall seconds, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:04:47] - Eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to closed session action item, motions in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in closed session. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams.

[00:05:02] - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:05:22] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Next, the motion is in order for religious exemption. Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the request for religious exemption from compulsory school attendance for case number RE24-8. - Do I have a second?

[00:05:39] - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Ms. Wall, any discussion? Please vote.

[00:06:16] - Vote is eight yes, motion passed. - Motion passes. At this time, it will be the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Blake, can you lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance? - Pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:06:42] - Thank you. Okay, well, I missed the first meeting, so this is my first meeting for this new academic school year. I'd like to welcome everyone back to the academic year 24-25. We're very excited. We wanna build on the strengths and successes of last year and the work we've done on our strategic plan.

[00:07:00] And that is a record graduation rate last year, record scholarship dollars won, record decrease in chronic absenteeism and improvement in SOL scores across all levels. So it's very exciting.

[00:07:15] We had a very exciting last year. We wanna build on that this year. I wanna thank the school board, which is a new school where there was inaugurated back in January and they've done a tremendous job in getting up on board and getting together with the community on the priorities that we all share and are striving for and the success we continue to look forward to.

[00:07:38] We wanna thank Dr. McDade for all her strong work and her team. And we look forward to another great school year. And so far it started off really well. We are now gonna start into our thriving futures focus, which is our tradition that we do. It's an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills and habits of mind necessary that create a thriving future for themselves and their family.

[00:08:05] We dedicate this time during our meetings to recognizing students, staff members, and schools that have earned an honor and award at the state or national level. We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County schools and school board, and the school board's proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments.

[00:08:21] Tonight, the school board has much to celebrate by continuing our recognition of our spring athletes. And the reason we do this, by the way, is 'cause a lot of spring sports and after our school board meetings are completed for last school year. So we will continue to recognize them.

[00:08:36] We begin our recognition with Ms. Erica Tredenik of the wonderful Brentsville District who will introduce our first award winners. Ms. Tredenik, take it away. - Thank you. The Brentsville District would like to recognize two state champions, both phenomenal athletes.

[00:08:52] First, we acknowledge Gainesville High School's Trent Daniels, who won first place in the state competition in the 3,200 meter run. I would also like to recognize Principal Neil Beach, Assistant Principal Adam Daniels, Director of Student Activities Jason Rittenhour, and Trent's coach, Connor Lee.

[00:09:10] I invite Coach Lee to share a few words on behalf of Trent and his award. - Thank you. First and foremost, I'd like to again congratulate Trent on his win in the 3,200-meter run.

[00:09:27] He's been an athlete that has been surprising us since the moment he stepped on campus, and it's been a lovely experience watching him compete. at a high level like he does. And it's lovely to see athletes from his local community as well, from other schools racing alongside him, pushing him to compete, pushing him to get better and representing the county well.

[00:09:48] So again, congratulations again to Trent for a 903 30 turn a meter this spring. - I didn't see this on here. Trent, what year are you?

[00:10:06] - Are you a sophomore, junior? - Junior now. - So you're gonna do this again in the next year too, right? Outstanding, thank you. Mr. Denning. - Congratulations, Trent. The Brentsville District would

also like to recognize Patriot High School's state champion, Henry Burge, for his first place finish in the 800 meter run.

[00:10:25] I would also like to recognize principal Dr. Michael Bishop, director of student activities, Mr. Brad Qualls, and Henry's coach, James DeMarco. I invite coach DeMarco to share a few words on behalf of Henry and his championship. - Members of the school board community here, thank you so much for honoring us tonight.

[00:10:44] Henry, only a junior, so he won his second state championship last year and winning the 1,000 indoor and then came out and won the 800 meter race at 152, also breaking our school record at Patriot. He's also just a athlete that strives for excellence in everything he does.

[00:11:03] He's in our AP Scholars Program at Patriot High School, has a 4.2 GPA and brings that personality and that dedication, that drive in the classroom and on the athletic field. So excellent athlete to coach.

[00:11:18] Very fortunate to be his coach. Thank you. - Thank you. - Congratulations to Henry and Trent, our student athletes in our schools. We have one more honoree from Patriot High School.

[00:11:34] At this time, I would like to acknowledge Ms. Amy Dignan for being awarded 2024 Virginia Driver Education and Traffic Safety Course In-Car Teacher of the Year by the Virginia Association of Driver Education and Traffic Safety. This association's mission is to improve quality of driver education and provide effective instruction to new drivers in the Commonwealth.

[00:11:57] We are so proud of Ms. Dignan and we're so proud Ms. Dignan was recognized for her outstanding knowledge and instruction in and out of the classroom, or in her case, on and off the road. Ms. Dignan, would you care to share a few words about what this award means to you?

[00:12:13] - Good evening, everyone. Thank you. Being awarded the 2024 Vidette's In-Car Teacher Award is such an incredible honor. I am humbled by the nomination for this award by my colleague and Dr. Bishop. Their recognition of my work is incredibly motivating and reinforces my commitment to providing the best driver education program in Prince William County.

[00:12:35] It validates the dedication and passion that I bring to my teaching every day, and it motivates me to continue fostering safe and skilled drivers. Knowing that each lesson contributes to their safety and confidence on the road is so rewarding to me and my teaching career and being able to witness their progress from the apprehensive beginners to confident drivers is one fulfilling thing to see thank you excellent congratulations to all next the united states congress is honored two prince william county public school students

[00:13:11] with a congressional award gold medal the congressional award is a public private partnership established by the u.s congress to celebrate and encourage the achievements initiative and service of American youth aged 14 to 23. The prestigious award recognizes outstanding leadership and dedication to community service.

[00:13:31] Our first recognition is from the Brentsville District. Ms. Trudetik. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Evan Kinsel, senior at Gainesville High School for winning the 2024 Congressional Award Gold Medal. Representing Gainesville High School tonight to support Evan is Assistant Principal Adam Daniels.

[00:13:49] Evan, we are so proud of the work you have done for your school and your community. Mr. Daniels, would you mind sharing a few words on Evan's account? - Members of the board, thank you very much. Gainesville's Evan Kinsel will travel to Washington DC on June 12th to receive the Congressional Award Gold Medal for the highest recognition presented by the United States Congress to young Americans.

[00:14:15] Evan is being recognized for his exemplary public service and leadership as he has served the Washington DC, Northern Virginia region for over the past several years. He's tallied over 700 hours of community service. Evan has worked with his community churches, food banks, and homeless shelters to collect and distribute food and supplies to the regions less fortunate.

[00:14:36] Evan has earned his degree Eagle Scout, and he earned that with Palm Distinction. Evan has enjoyed his time at Gainesville High School, and he's also loved his time with our Project Lead the Way group. Upon graduation, Evan hopes to major in mechanical engineering. Thank you.

[00:15:00] - Thank you, Mr. Daniels, and congratulations, Evan. Uh, now we turn to the Gainesville district represented by Ms. Jennifer wall. Thank you, chairman Latif. The Gainesville district is proud to recognize Yashvir Sabaharwal from battlefield high school for winning the 2024 congressional award gold medal representing battlefield high school tonight is principal Dolores Lucas and assistant principal is not here.

[00:15:23] It looks like, okay. So principal Dolores Lucas, Yashvir, we are so grateful for the work you do for battlefield and the entire community. Ms. Lucas, would you speak on behalf of Yashvir and the entire battlefield community i think yash is going to speak as well so i'll just say something different good evening school board members dr latef and dr mcdade when i picture a person who has taken his or her learning wrapped it around all content areas and applies it globally yash is the student that comes to my mind

[00:15:55] yash understands his life assignment to have a positive impact on a global society to consider how his education can be utilized to spark excitement in others and to encourage those around him to take the impossible and turn it into I'm possible Yash is the model of what it means to be a student of learning in Prince William County Schools he sees his opportunities he takes advantage of them and he makes sure that he represents our division well by participating in some

[00:16:32] phenomenal global opportunities with students, introducing them to STEM projects. They started a robotics club over in South Africa and I believe they came to the United States and they were so happy and so proud of that moment and I believe that they zoomed with you, am I right? So he's very a talented young man.

[00:16:55] Battlefield High School is extremely proud of Yash and all that he has accomplished and he's only 17 so i don't even know what's going to happen by the time he's 22 and beyond but mr and mrs soberwal you guys have an amazing kid and yosh we are so proud of you thank you thank you so much for the school board and for my principal miss lucas for inviting me over here tonight to speak on behalf of my achievements i'm so grateful and just incredibly thankful for the opportunities that the united states congress has given to me especially my representative representative of Wexton, as well as our two senators,

[00:17:34] Senator Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, and I'm so incredibly thankful for it. I want to congratulate my fellow student, Evan Kinsel as well, for achieving this award, and it's not any small feat. It requires a testament of our abilities as teenagers. It requires at least 400 hours of community service, 200 hours of professional development, and 200 hours of physical fitness just to qualify for the award.

[00:17:56] Then it has to be approved by Congress in order to actually receive the award. So again, congratulations to Evan Kinsel. I'm so proud of his achievements and I'm so happy to be able to you know spread my love of science and technology to kids in South Africa. Actually under our mentorship you know they never had any robotics team at their school right so we were able to donate over 200 supplies to them as well as teach from robotics curriculum and we actually in their first year got to bring them to the United States to participate in their first international competition for robotics. So so grateful for as well and thank high school and again thank you so much for the school board

[00:18:32] and have a great night thank you member of the school board i'd like to say thank you for the recognition i'd like to thank my mom for helping me through this process and everything that i've gone through here um i'm glad to have made a significant impact on the communities in dc and virginia whether it's bristol or alexandria making an impact on the veterans communities and the women's shelters communities you know communities that are food insecure and spanish speaking communities making a large impact to help others in need because that's the life i want to live i want to live a life full of service that's the model that i've always tried to live by and

[00:19:12] that i will continue to live by in my life i appreciate and i'm thankful for assistant principal daniels and a principal beach for helping me along this process and i'm just thankful for the the opportunity and thank you to all. Have a great night.

[00:19:39] - First of all, can we ask the parents of both Evan and Yasfir to please stand up and be recognized as well? Thank you very much. I've read about both of you all and all the reports that come out, whether it's in the press or in the PWCS news.

[00:19:57] I thank you both and all of you students up there who've competed and as we heard tonight, each of you are not just doing your either sporting event or you're well-rounded in every aspect you're doing and you represent the very best of what we have to offer here in Prince William County Schools.

[00:20:15] And we can't thank you enough. Very well-earned. From the Coles District, Vice Chair, Ms. Lisa Zargarpur, please introduce our award-winning students. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, I would love to. The Coles District would like to recognize sophomores Isabelle Rojas and Devin Wanchu, two outstanding students from Osmore Park High School and first place winners in the high school category of the NASA Dream With Us Drone Challenge.

[00:20:41] As first year high school students, these two brilliant engineers captured the top prize in their field at NASA. The challenge theme for this year focused on responding to natural disasters with new aviation. Students aged 13 to 18 were tasked with enhancing NASA aeronautics disaster response efforts by introducing new aviation capabilities.

[00:21:05] The designs and improvements focused helping reduce natural disaster risks mitigating the situation during a natural disaster and or building after a natural disaster has occurred the engineers designed a wildfire fighting drone called push pack in their design the drone features thermal cameras to

detect hot spots and missing persons while the light detection and ranging camera will map out the area and assess the health of vegetation the drone will provide data for preventative and and rebuilding efforts.

[00:21:38] Pushback will be equipped with a holding tank that can be filled with extinguishing substances and fire retardant for preventative prevention efforts. The drone will also be supplied with planting seeds and a distributor for rebuilding after wildfires. It's truly amazing.

[00:21:54] Osmond Park High School is represented tonight by their mentor, Mr. Wyatt Streisner. Mr. Streisner, I invite you to the podium to share a few words on behalf of our honored engineers. Thank you for inviting us here and honoring these students for what they've done.

[00:22:11] They had an incredible submission to the NASA Dream With Us Challenge. We're all really proud of them. As a science teacher, my ideal student is one that can take the science that we teach them in school and apply it to a real world scenario. And these students have risen to the occasion and shown they can do exactly that.

[00:22:27] And we can all be proud of them for that. Thank you. - Thank you to you both, students. Sophomores, oh my gosh. And thank you to your mentor, Mr. Streisner.

[00:22:42] - Excellent, thank you, Ms. Zargarpur. I invite the staff, family and friends of our state winners, award honorees to stand in recognition of your support for these wonderful students. So ask all the parents for all of our honorees to please stand so we can recognize you as well.

[00:23:03] Before taking a few pictures, Superintendent Dr. McDade would like to share a few words. - Thank you so much. Congratulations to our track and field stars who earn state championships, which only come through sheer grit and perseverance. It's also incredibly wonderful to see our staff recognized.

[00:23:19] So congratulations to you, Ms. Stegman. Thank you so much for your commitment, for your passion, and for your unwavering dedication to our students to help them create a thriving future for themselves and their community. We so deeply appreciate you. I am truly inspired by our Congressional Award Gold Medal recipients.

[00:23:41] This is such a prestigious award and a testament to your leadership and service to your community. And big congratulations to our Nassau Dream With Us winners. You exemplify the grounded creativity needed to tackle global challenges.

[00:23:56] Thank you to all of our families, coaches, mentors, and friends who have supported these incredible scholars that are here with us this evening. Your contributions are invaluable to the success of our students. And to each and every one of you, congratulations on your achievement.

[00:24:12] And as always, we are PWCS proud. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. At this time, I'd like to request our honorees to come forward for a photo with the school board and receive a small token of our appreciation.

[00:24:29] We will start, the first photo includes our individual state track champions. Second, we'll take a photo with our 24 Virginia Driver Education Traffic Safety course in car teacher year, and then transition to our congressional winners before closing with our NASA recipients.

[00:24:43] Okay, thank you all for allowing us to do that.

[00:31:38] As you can see, we have a tremendous group of young people in our school division. and we are always excited to celebrate that. At this time, we will now move on to the adoption of consent agenda, 12.01. A motion is in order.

[00:31:53] Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the public meeting consent agenda as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams. - I have a second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:32:23] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions. A motion is in order, Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommend. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams.

[00:32:38] - Second. - Any discussion? - Mr. Chairman? - Ms. Williams. - I'd just like to remind the public that we vote a month ahead of what is usually the month that we're celebrating. So, 'cause last school board meeting, I think someone missed the Hispanic Heritage Month, but that was done in the spring, so thank you.

[00:32:55] - Got it. Please vote.

[00:33:15] - The vote is seven yes, one abstained. Tridentic, motion passed. - Moving on to citizen comment time, is that correct? - Yep, those citizens who signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:33:36] Please use proper decorum and manners while at the podium or you'll be asked to step aside. We ask that the audience please be respectful of each speaker and refrain from any clapping, cheering or jeering to avoid disruptions of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I will ask that the room be clear to restore public order.

[00:33:51] Tonight, we have three citizens signed up to speak. When I call your name, please come to the podium, state your name and address for the record. Our first speaker is Ashley Abney.

[00:34:13] - Good evening, Ashley Abney, my address is on file. - As stated, my name is Ashley Abney, and I'm a certified athlete empowerment and mindset coach. I work for a company called Assist Athlete Services, and we empower student athletes to achieve their fullest potential by addressing the most important opponent they will face, their mental health.

[00:34:30] Personally, I was a student athlete just up the road in Fairfax County, a former collegiate basketball player at Longwood University and now a mom of young student athletes in Prince William County. My mission is to ensure that high school athletes have the resources, confidence, and resilience required to navigate the highs and lows of sports.

[00:34:45] At the professional level, across many sports, we've recently seen famous athletes share their ongoing personal mental health challenges. In college athletics, last year, more than 80% of coaches reported spending significant time discussing mental health with their athletes. This sparked athletic departments across the country to add support roles to support athletes outside of the game.

[00:35:05] Given these challenges begin before college, it makes sense to start offering support for these athletes' most vulnerable times, which can be high school. We know high school can be a challenging time for students as they navigate self-discovery, social pressures, social media influence, and of course, academic achievement.

[00:35:21] Then, when we combine those factors with the performance and mental health components of sports, we have a unique and specialized challenge that needs to be addressed. Studies also estimate that up to 60% of high school athletes experience moderate to extreme psychological distress, with around half reporting that stress negatively impacts their performance.

[00:35:39] This can stem from performance anxiety, fear of failure, self or external pressures, burnout, and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Unfortunately, less than 30% of high school athletes who experience mental health issues actually seek help. This illustrates that there's a gap in accessing support.

[00:35:56] Reasons for not receiving help despite wanting it are that they're unsure of where to go, they fear judgment from others, they lack access, potentially financial difficulties, and also feeling a little bit embarrassed. Because of this, half share that they'd rather talk to a friend versus a parent or a coach.

[00:36:12] Traditionally, the athletes reflected in these numbers are your elite athletes who dream of playing on a bigger stage beyond high school. Many have been playing since they were younger, and their sport really is their identity, which leaves very little room for failure or disappointment. I think of the state champion that was here at the last meeting a couple weeks ago, and she shared that at some point she wanted to quit.

[00:36:29] I don't know her specific reasons, of course, but the reality is some kids will. We should strive to make their experience one where they are thriving in sports and capturing all the intangibles that sports offers and not just surviving. Assist Athlete Services, we offer programs such as team workshops, one-on-one coaching for those who need customized support or group coaching so athletes can be amongst their peers.

[00:36:50] Our programs create supportive environments and resources and offer specialized guidance on managing their academic and athletic commitments. My mission and my ask is with your support that we consider rolling this out and piloting across our high schools within our county. We could pioneer this offering and be a model for the state and potentially others across the country as well.

[00:37:09] Student athletes need to know they're supported and having an unbiased outlet can be critical. With our programs, they can go into their next phase more mentally prepared. Myself and the team at Assist Athlete Services, we're all current or former athletes. We're composed of sports psychologists who creates our programs and we're 100% committed to changing the game.

[00:37:27] - Thank you. - Thank you. Lori Fox. - Hello, my name is Lori Fox. I've come today about my daughter, Sparrow, who was supposed to start school in the middle of August and we had finished her IEP.

[00:37:49] We had everything straightened out since May. And then the Friday before school supposed to start Monday, we had to have another meeting where they said she could not go to school now with her private duty nurse that was in the IEP and her health treatment plan. Now they've said, you cannot do that.

[00:38:04] they said that the school can provide the services. The problem is they said that the nurse that they would provide would not be with her as the health treatment plan stated by her doctor during that whole time in school that she would be, that it would only be as needed. And the IEP has already stated, it's not being in compliance.

[00:38:22] It's already stated her nurse is to be with her at all times and they've taken that away. And she has not been able to go to school now for the last five weeks. This is the fifth week of school. She has not been able to go. They asked when I told them this is not what's in the IEP and it's not in compliance anymore, asked for home visits, which while we're waiting have not been addressed.

[00:38:41] They're either ignored or don't get addressed at all. We had additional letters sent from the doctor to school in August after that happened, and they still denied it, and we keep being denied. I requested an emergency IEP meeting to address this situation, and they sent me a new one saying, oh, well, we just changed the dates, but we didn't remove anything off of there.

[00:39:01] but come to find out they have an amendment that they put on there to remove the nursing services from home health care nurse to come and one of the things that was really an issue they wanted me to sign off on even though they said they never changed it and removed it was that whoever they would assign would this individual would have to perform the procedure despite the child's pain discomfort and physical opposition which as a parent that doesn't sound comfortable to say oh we're going to give your child pain even if they don't want it um after they we've been told this through the early childhood special education services that it's being denied right now and through the school we sent the doctors in another letter

[00:39:39] more in-depth because they said it wasn't clear enough they need more information and each time I send them something they still find a reason to say oh her nurse can't come to school with her so now we're at a standstill so I wanted to come talk about this today because it's very important as her parents that this gets addressed because she's missed five weeks of school because they keep saying they can't do it, even though her IEP that is signed off says her nurse is to go with her, her nurses provide her services.

[00:40:04] The doctor said a regular school assigned person or the school nurse cannot do it because she has to have her nurse at all times. So now they're asking for some more stuff and they're just running around, but they're not actually addressing anything with us. And our mission is just to have her get her education and we're to the point where we're being offered substandard care with what they want, but that's not what the doctor is saying.

[00:40:29] She has congenital heart issues, developmental delay of genetic syndrome. She gets G-tube feedings and we're being told that we can't bring her nurse still even though it's in the IEP. Thank you. - Thank you. Angela Stouffer.

[00:40:54] - Hi, good evening, Dr. McDade, members of the board. My name's Angela Stouffer. I teach at Osborne Park. I'm a veteran teacher of 31 years, 21 in the county. And I'm also a resident and a parent two Prince William County graduates that are being are successful at this point so yay before I talk about what my concern is I want to thank you all for compensating us veteran teachers when we have to teach a sixth period it used to be that we got paid as a first-year teacher even though we've had

[00:41:32] 20 or 30 years of experience which you know I just got to say my 30 years experience does show up in the classroom. So thank you for fixing that. However, I'm a little disgruntled to find out that fixing that problem caused another problem. I teach with another teacher. She's been in the classroom for four years, and she's got a BA plus 15, and she is also teaching a sixth class, And she's being asked to teach this year for $800 less because of the fix that you all did.

[00:42:12] And I just find it kind of upsetting. I'm giving more money. This is not about me. But I don't find it to be creating thriving futures for all of us if you're being asked for people at the lower end of the level, you know, the lower end of the salary spectrum, who have the least amount of extra money to do the same work that they did last year, to have one more year of experience, yet you get to do

[00:42:44] this job for $800 less. You could say that, well, we chose, we didn't. We were told we needed to do this because we were down a fax teacher, and all fax teachers at my school are taking an extra class so we haven't signed our contracts in fact we've been doing this job since the beginning of august we haven't signed our contracts yet for the extra class i they usually come out november

[00:43:15] or december so in my mind there's still a way to fix this um i can't imagine that there are so many teachers in the county that this affects i can help you out one is at op i don't know where the rest of them are you all have the ability to find them my ask is that you go figure out who you're asking to work for less money this year than last year even though they have one more year experience and fix it what's up thank you please fix it it's frustrating thank you okay that concludes citizen

[00:43:52] comment time uh for this evening um we will now move to 1501 a motion is in order mrs zagapur i move that the Prince William County School Board A authorize the completion and submission of the application to Virginia Public School Authority VPSA for the fall 2024 standalone bond sale in the amount of $144,500,000 to finance certain capital improvement projects for school purposes

[00:44:28] B authorize the superintendent or such other officer as she may designate to submit such documentation as is required by VPSA. C. Request the Board of County Supervisors to authorize the completion for a Fall 2024 VPSA standalone bond sale and to take such other action as may be necessary to complete the bond sale. And D. Direct that this resolution shall become effective immediately. Do I have a second? Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blake. I second. Okay.

[00:45:08] - Just for note or on the discussion, the list of items or projects the Prince William County School Board will authorize the superintendent and staff to work on are listed in 1501.

[00:45:23] The biggest items are the elementary school, new construction for the Aquan Elementary School, the elementary school Potomac Shores, renovation, large renovation at Grant Park Middle School, renovations at a number of additions at a number of other schools.

[00:45:42] So if you are interested, take a look at that, please look at that. I just have one question, I guess, is Mr. Yusuf here? Is he here today? - No, he's not here, but we do have two members from his team that can answer any questions that-- - Okay, I mean, it's a simple question.

[00:46:00] Yeah, today's rate change, interest rate change, will that impact our ability to borrow at a lower rate? So the response of the bond purchasers will depend on the competitiveness of our bonds relative to the other things in the market.

[00:46:16] Hopefully it will. Can't say for sure what the impact will be though. - It certainly will be higher then. - Shouldn't be any higher, no. - Okay, great. - All right. Any other discussion, questions, concerns on the VSPA bond sales? Ms. Wall. - I have just one question. So obviously this is a reduction of $169 million to $144 million.

[00:46:36] sorry if I missed it but is this just what is the it's a good thing it's a good thing and so typically each year as staff works from facilities through finance and budget to look at the size of the bond sale we look at what the most current estimates are for the projects what other resources might be available in terms of cash and this year the most significant change is because of the use of additional money from the county as part of true up that we put towards cash funding some of these projects.

[00:47:09] - Okay, that's great news. So the county was able to give us more funding and we were able to apply that to make a smaller amount for a borrowing. - Yes, ma'am. - Fabulous, thank you. - Thank you, please vote.

[00:47:42] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous. Motion passed. - Okay, moving on to, we're gonna skip over student representative time. Our student has not been able to make it this evening due to an unseen event. So Superintendent Dr. McDade, it is your time. Dr. McDade.

[00:47:58] - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. want to start by addressing safety. Safety remains our top priority in Prince William County Public Schools and last week I sent a letter to our community about the uptick in unsubstantiated threats that were being received by PWCS schools. While none of these have been credible, I want our families to know that we treat all threats with the utmost level of seriousness and PWCS will not tolerate any form of prank or joke messaging related to threats of violence or school disruption. These actions certainly create a level of fear and

[00:48:36] anxiety as they should among students staff and families. They disrupt our educational environment and place unnecessary pressure on our staff as well as our law enforcement. Students and individuals responsible for such actions will face disciplinary measures as outlined in our school policy and and will be subject to legal consequences as the Prince William County Police Department is taking this matter very seriously.

[00:49:03] I continue to ask our parents and guardians to speak with children about the serious nature of these actions and the importance of making responsible choices as digital citizens. Our commitment is to maintain a positive climate and culture where learning can take place without disruption.

[00:49:21] And I want to thank all of the students who have stepped up in reporting these unsubstantiated threats and the cooperation of our parents in working with us to keep our schools safe. Back to school nights have begun across all Prince William County schools and will continue through the month of October.

[00:49:39] I want to personally invite our families to attend back-to-school night and the many school-based events and activities throughout this school year as family community engagement is one of our key commitments within our strategic plan. I also encourage our families to get involved in the school advisory councils, which is also something that we're prioritizing in our strategic plan to bolster our school advisory councils.

[00:50:04] also be on the lookout for two-way communication from our teachers that are translated directly through school status and that translation happens via phone email or text message last year this

tool brought us together and provided a great opportunity to improve communication in support of student achievement by the end of the school year last year our schools and office teams made 71,587 calls. We sent 5.8 million emails, 6.9 million text messages equaling a total of about 12.9 million communications via school status and this increased overall communication

[00:50:44] better helped to support or bridge the gap between home and school and ensuring that our students and communities are connected to what's happening in their local school and in PWCS. We're also introducing new mental health telehealth support as an available resource which the board voted on in our last budget cycle to improve an investment in student mental health and so this is a resource that will be available to all parents and guardians to be able to provide access to this support to their children this initiative provides access to hazel health which is a well established telehealth provider and it is at no cost to our families our

[00:51:21] Our partnership reflects the growing need for accessible mental health support, especially for young people facing anxiety, depression, and stress, and their service will provide critical support to families who may not have access to other resources and can ensure that their students still are assisted and assisted very quickly.

[00:51:41] In order for families to take advantage of these services, parents or guardians must first opt in through ParentVUE and share their child's information with Hazel Health to qualify for the free services and then the parent or guardian can initiate services by registering with Hazel Health. The opt-in process began last week with communication going to parents and guardians through different means the scoop being one from schools and that communication will continue to be ongoing.

[00:52:09] We are committed to ensuring that all students have access to the mental health resources they need to thrive in a positive climate and culture. Every year between September 15th and October 15th our nation celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month. This is a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American Latino community.

[00:52:34] This month inclusively celebrates the Independence Days of several Latin American countries which include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile. Our students will soon be taking the preliminary SAT or PSAT. This test can provide the baseline for improving an exceptional understanding of scholastic content. As the PSAT approaches, please join us for our Family Engagement Series webinar, which will be held tomorrow, September 19th starting at 6:30 p.m. And you'll be able to receive valuable information about the PSAT,

[00:53:12] its purpose, and how it is reviewed. And as we continue to support student success, I want to invite students and families to mark your calendars with key webinars throughout the school year. Our family and community engagement series will be offered throughout the year and you can go to www.pwcs.edu to find out more information on the topics as well as the dates and times that we'll be hosting these informational sessions pwcs is proud to announce the national merit scholarship program has named six of our students as semi-finalists so congratulations to daniel choy alan pung from battlefield high school isabella carter from charles j cogan

[00:53:52] senior high school alexandra whalen from osborne park high school james yauntz from patriot high school and benjamin eikenberry from forest park high school we're so incredibly proud of their accomplishment. I invite you to read more about our semi-finalists in the scoop and while you're there please make sure you mark your calendars with the graduation date for if you have a high school senior

because we did post the graduation dates for all of our high schools for the for the school this school year. When the division is working together properly communicating as a unified school system with common objectives goals and vision the outcome is success for every single student. I want to thank each and everyone who has

[00:54:32] worked so diligently to get this school year off to a successful start as I've said in the in the past weeks it's been a great start to the school year and we were keeping that positive momentum and as we approach the midpoint of the quarter families should continue to check in on your child's progress through ParentVUE and check in with your child's teacher to ensure that they continue on this successful path. Mr. Chairman that concludes the superintendent's report for this evening. Thank you Dr. McDade truly appreciate at all of those remarks.

[00:55:01] Moving on next to committee updates, Jen Wall. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. I wanted to report on the Governor's School Innovation Park. The joint board met on September 5th over Zoom and this is Prince William County's turn to be in charge of the joint board, which we get that honor every three years.

[00:55:21] So I'm excited to be on this committee, learn more about the Governor's School Innovation Park and also promote the school and hopefully we can innovate and do some great things while we, Prince William County's in charge, but we had a meeting. We discussed some updates from Dr. Calhoun about the enrollment and faculty preparations.

[00:55:42] The first couple of weeks of school, they're back to school nights. And we also discussed a five-year plan, recruiting efforts, and some really great things on the calendar, such as December 20th is alumni day. The research symposium is set for May 2nd.

[00:55:59] That's gonna be at the GMU SciTech Freedom Center. And I've heard this is really great. So I'm excited to go to this year. And then also graduating class number 14, it says, here it will be May 17th, 2025. And that will be at Colgan High School. So we have a lot of high hopes for Governor's School and for all the kids that are there.

[00:56:19] We really, we're here to support you. And it was a great first meeting. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Moving on to board matters, 1901 revision of policy 264, student housing boundary planning process, first reading. I guess, do we have a motion on that?

[00:56:36] No, no motion, there's a first reading. Dr. McDade. - I'd like to invite Mr. Verne Bach and Matt Cartlidge to come forward to provide an update. And I do believe you'll introduce our consultant.

[00:56:51] - Absolutely, Dr. McDade, thank you. And good evening, Chairman, Dr. Lateef and board members. As per policy 102, which is our formulation and adopting policies and regulations, we're required to conduct a five year review of our policies. Tonight, we will be reviewing policy 264, which pertains to the student housing boundary planning process.

[00:57:14] So as part of a cyclical review, revisions were identified to be necessary and consistent with recent advancements in law and best practices. To ensure a thorough and inclusive review, our facilities planning department, has partnered with the National Demographics Corporation.

[00:57:33] They've facilitated an engaging process involving multiple stakeholder groups from across PWCS to gather feedback and suggest revisions. Obviously, I'd like to invite Matt and his team, Dr.

Cartlidge and his team, to join us.

[00:57:48] And we've got Dr. Cartlidge and Scott Halsey. A special thank you to both of these gentlemen for leading this effort. As I said, it's been a very engaging effort. and we also have to have dr doug johnson from the national demographics corporation with us here tonight so with that i'm going to turn the ball or toss the ball to matt to begin the presentation so matt good evening dr mcdade and there's a school board senior staff i first of all just want to say thank you so much to dr mcdade and the board for the support that they have given

[00:58:26] to this process both financially as well as the level of engagement the board has offered us over the summer. Also want to thank senior staff, school staff, and of course our community members who were in attendance for three community meetings. So at this time I want to turn it over to Dr. Johnson who's going to go through a slide deck sharing with you the findings and the recommendations as we consider proposing a new policy for 264 student housing. Thank you, Dr. Johnson. Thank you very much and I want to say it's a pleasure to be here in person to meet with all of you, I met with many of you

[00:59:05] and many of your various stakeholder groups over Zoom, but it's always good to be here in person. Again, I'm Doug Johnson from National Demographics. I'm representing our team on this, which included Shelly Labkoff, Kristen Parks, and Jeff Tilton, and all of us really enjoyed getting to know your district very, very well, as I'll talk about in a moment.

[00:59:26] And I do echo the previous comments about your staff have been fantastic to work with, Dr. Cartlidge, Scott, and Atonia have just been a fantastic team to work with, so we've really appreciated their help through this process.

[00:59:41] With that introduction, I will jump in. As you just heard, this was an extensive process. We did lots of listening at the very beginning. We held three town hall meetings, two at the beginning and one at the end. They were open to any interested member of the PWCS community.

[01:00:00] We also did a series of nine stakeholder engagement sessions where specific groups within the PWCS organization were invited, principals, special ed, all different kinds of groups that have a stake or that are impacted by this process were asked to share their thoughts on the current process and what they would love to see.

[01:00:23] We also did an extensive review of best practices both of other school divisions and of the academic literature and studies that have taken part in this field. As you've seen, note on the slide, we reviewed 82 different academic articles and case studies.

[01:00:39] So a lot of research, a lot of listening, all went in to bring the product that's before you today for your consideration. What we learned through all this was a lot. I'm definitely summarizing here, and there is an appendix to the report that's in your packet that has a lot more detail about the specific things we heard.

[01:01:00] But at the big picture, what we heard, number one, no surprise, full transparency is vital. You know, the stakeholders, both at the schools, at the district office, and in the community, all wanna know that they're getting full transparency and openness throughout this process.

[01:01:20] The thing that also came up a lot was the importance of involving folks early and often, whether it's board members yourselves, the division departments, the local division staff, your principals

and site staff. And of course, the parents and the other community members wanna be involved early and often throughout this process.

[01:01:41] And I think we've come up with a suggested process that does that very well. The other piece, and this came a lot out of the academic research and the case studies from others, is the importance of acknowledging and incorporating that feedback. It's one thing to hold a town hall, it's another to show the community members that you've heard them and taken their considerations into consideration and you've taken their input into consideration and that's one of the pieces that's now incorporated into the regulation in particular is reporting on what's heard acknowledging what's heard and making sure that that that reception is is clear to the people who share

[01:02:16] their thoughts on the process side one of the things that came up a lot is the parent committees and their role and is that the best structure to involve parents and the community obviously it can be very productive useful process and it's a wonderful way of getting a group of parents very very involved but there were also concerns from past projects about there can be controversy over the membership and the process and the specifics and a lot of that what we found both in listening here and in doing the research came out of the formality of the voting and the

[01:02:51] formality of the membership structure and so one of the key things in in this revision that you'll see is that the importance of the community voice is vital and we actually I think increase the voice of the community in this process and the new rules by taking that away from a formal specified membership committee and moving it to a much more flexible focus group process where any different sets of groups can participate in that process it's not limited to just that committee, and then also offering multiple options for input. So those town halls, that

[01:03:29] committee is not the only channel from which you are hearing from the community. There are multiple options for people to weigh in. And then on the criteria, on the specific things that we're targeting when drawing these maps, we heard a lot of varying opinions. As we looked at case studies, there were lots of options out there and lots of variety in how people weigh different options.

[01:03:54] And so we came up with kind of a structure we think is pretty clear to understand, but that keeps the flexibility that is so important as you go through these individual projects. So that's a very high level, what we went through and what we heard.

[01:04:10] In terms of a summary of recommendations, one key change is changing your current process has one process for elementary and middle schools, and then a different process for high schools. This would combine those two so that all school redistricting projects would go through the same rules.

[01:04:29] Whether they go through the full process or kind of an expedited process depends on the size and the scope of the change now in these rules, not on the level of the school. So that's one key change. As I mentioned, there is also a significant expansion of the outreach efforts that I'll talk about later on.

[01:04:47] And then the big picture change, I think, is the replacing those formal 15-member committees with the more open, flexible, and relaxed parent focus groups and then adding additional channels where parents and community members and staff can share their thoughts.

[01:05:05] One idea actually we borrowed from one of the other divisions is also the idea that when a recommendation or a recommendation on terms comes to the board, if the board makes a significant change to that map, and we did give a very specific definition, that's the asterisk, if the board makes a

significant change where you're moving a neighborhood that was not previously mentioned, that obviously is within the board's power and rights, but that suggested change would then trigger a need to go back out and hold another hearing so that there will be the chance for that neighborhood's residents to weigh in prior to final board action on that decision.

[01:05:44] So we keep the board's authority and the board's flexibility to act as the board sees fit, but we do add that one kind of safety valve making sure the community has a chance to weigh in on any big changes where there is a new neighborhood brought into discussion that wasn't previously in the discussion and then we also clarify the the criteria in ways that i'll specify as we go through it in more detail so turning to those criteria i'm not going to read all the current proposed language you have that before you but if there are questions we can certainly refer to it but the the key thing in the

[01:06:24] criteria is that we refine them into four categories so number one is optimized capacity and these are not in a specific order number two is local geography which is a category that covers a lot of things that covers walkability that covers trying to have kids go to their closest school it covers trying to have feeder patterns maintained it covers all the kind of geographic factors are captured in that then student demographics that we'll talk about a little bit later on and then student stability obviously we don't want to be moving kids frequently and so

[01:07:00] And so we've gone from a very general and kind of haphazard list that's in the current policy to these four categories that are defined in much more definition in the regulation.

[01:07:15] And turning to the regulation, we do set optimizing capacity as the quote top priority. The main reason is the goal of and what triggers this in most situations is a capacity issue, either a new school needing to be filled or a school that's gone over capacity.

[01:07:34] So that is a change where we give that optimizing capacity the top priority in the process. And we change how the capacity limit is measured. Currently it's a plus or minus 15 percent.

[01:07:51] It used to be 10, it became 15 percent. Now we're switching. The real concern here is, of course, overcapacity. When schools get overcrowded, you get all kinds of impacts from that. So rather than having it be plus or minus 15, we're being more specific and saying the The goal is to not be over capacity by any more than 5 percent.

[01:08:12] Obviously ideally everything would end up at ideal capacity, but where we need some flexibility for transportation or other issues, we can go over a little bit over ideal capacity. Under capacity can also be a problem if you don't have enough students for certain programs and that kind of thing, but it's not as immediate and detrimental an issue as over capacity is.

[01:08:31] So the goal is to get between 20 percent under and no more than 5 percent over. So that is a change that came out of talking and listening to the various stakeholder groups here and looking at the other research that we did.

[01:08:47] In terms of student demographics, it's largely the same as the current rules. We do add a consideration that not just the demographics of the schools but also the neighborhoods may be considered during the process. And as was mentioned in kind of updating the language to reflect the current legal situation, We have a specific reference to as permitted by the applicable law, including the Equal Education Opportunities Act.

[01:09:14] So this one is largely unchanged, really just updated to reflect the current legal situation with this issue. Student stability, again, not a large change. Essentially the goal is the same.

[01:09:29] No student should be moved twice in any school level. So no more than once at the elementary school level, no more than once at the middle school level and no more than once at the high school level obviously we don't want to move any student three times in their school career but that is the criteria listed but we do add one variable they came out of really hearing from a lot of folks about their frustrations of different of past projects here and in other districts or other divisions where sometimes folks are unhappy with the change that happened and may want to be moved again so it does we do put in the

[01:10:06] regulation the ability to move someone or move a community if that community wishes to be moved back so again it's it specifies at their request so those those criteria are not large changes where there is a larger change is in the local geography category we take the three different considerations that are in the current policy I'm sorry in the current regulation and we group them into this local geography section which really allows the balancing of these

[01:10:41] various considerations from project to project so you can see listed there we got you know a proximity of communities to schools keeping them contiguous analyzing transportation patterns and topography you know we don't want to be trying to cross a railroad track or a hill or something like that that doesn't make something walkable and of course you can see mentioned in there as well minimizing splitting neighborhoods and considering opportunities to improve the feeder pattern continuity between the elementary, middle, and high schools.

[01:11:17] These are all put together as essentially equal considerations so that whatever is key for a given situation, a given community, can be factored in at that point. So none of these are prioritized over others, but they are all listed in the criteria in that local geography category.

[01:11:37] So that's the criteria. And then I mentioned now the process would be broken up by scale rather than by education level. So standard process, most of what I'm gonna talk about for the rest of this presentation is for changes that involve either 250 or more students or that involve 15% of a school's average daily attendance.

[01:12:02] So those will all go through the standard process. If it's, well, 16 to 250, it would go through some expedited process that I mentioned, and if it's below 15, we'd go through an even more expedited process. I'll touch on those at the end.

[01:12:18] But just keep in mind as I go through what's to follow, we are looking at the larger projects. So there's a lot in this process flowchart. I will go through the key points in follow-up slides, but we wanted to summarize all that language and all those words of the regulation in one key easy to review flowchart.

[01:12:42] So you can see at the left, the process is triggered either by opening or, God forbid, closing a school or by the board's initiative following a capacity study report or other report to the board.

[01:12:57] So there's two ways these can be triggered, by that opening of a school or by the board's initiative. Right off the bat, we get involved in two things when we kick off the project. First, notifications. Lots of folks get notified.

[01:13:14] Executive cabinet departments, the principals get notified. And then we go right into two steps. The first is meeting with the principals. There's a lot of local details that are hard to know from the central

office.

[01:13:30] So we go out and talk to the principals and get their input on what are the neighborhoods, what are the walkability concerns, just making sure that there's a good understanding of where the areas are and what the factors should be considered when the plan is drawn. There's no plan at this point. Simultaneously, we start working on that engagement plan.

[01:13:48] Then draft plans come out, and as I'll talk about a little bit later on, There's board briefings. Principals get to weigh in right off the bat. Really the goal when the draft maps are released is to let the principals flag any whoops.

[01:14:03] If there's a mistake that the local knowledge really can see that wasn't known to the central staff when they drew the plan, we wanna get that right off the bat. Then we go into the engagement strategy, lots of input. I will note, and I'll come back to this a little bit, town hall meetings, obviously.

[01:14:21] A key addition is the role of the parent liaisons. this has been a new but everything we heard is kind of glowing and excellent about this program so we really want to use that opportunity to reach out to previously under-involved communities who may not felt that they were comfortable standing up at a town hall or participating in a committee but may be open to sharing their thoughts through the new parent liaison channel and then sharing everything online and offering folks the opportunity to respond online if they don't want to stand up at a meeting then you can see for the the large

[01:14:59] projects it would go to a parent focus group and that area arrow back is at each stage of this process staff can be updating the maps so and whenever they hear you know if they hear from the first round of outreach they can update the maps and take the updated maps to these focus groups where those who have been involved in the process earlier are invited to participate then it comes to the board you can see the the option for the board to make a significant change triggering another hearing or just go through board consideration and adoption so that brings up

[01:15:34] the board's role as i mentioned one of the things we heard is to involve the board early and often and so obviously the board is involved in starting this process the board gets briefed before the maps go public under the regulations and policy so you will be aware of this before you start getting calls from your constituents yes and then of course all these plans come through the board either directly in the usual process of consideration and adoption or if necessary with this additional public hearing swing and just to uh spell out the the trigger that i talked

[01:16:12] about those significant changes if there is a neighborhood that has 10 or more students that has not been proposed to be changed throughout the whole process but then in the board's discussion it is proposed to change that is the trigger that would then say we can certainly do it but it has to go out for a hearing before the board adopts that change and then the community engagement part i know this is a big piece of interest so i do want to touch on these things i mentioned the principals engaged early and often and then expanding that input so same town halls that you would expect are still there but that traditional outreach to the underrepresented

[01:16:50] families online comment forms for those that aren't comfortable speaking up at groups focus groups would essentially become multiple committees just more informal advisory role rather than a voting group and the flexibility one thing we kept throughout this regulation and policy is flexibility if

there is an opportunity if there is a need that comes up in the process staff have the flexibility to add to the outreach efforts touch on this a little bit but just you you have the details here of the initial review.

[01:17:25] I should note that very early hearing before there's really public engagement, the principals are not drawing the plan. The principals are sharing their input on their areas. If we know their school is likely to be impacted, the principals are sharing their input on that area and what should be considered when the plan or proposal is drawn.

[01:17:44] Then comes the second stage, which is when the plans are ready. The plans get released on the project website, it's announced that the plans are available, and the first step before we hold a town hall is to meet with those impacted principals and get their feedback their input one of the thoughts we heard a lot is that your principals are good reflections of their communities and have a good finger on their the concerns and thoughts of their communities so that's a great way to get that ahead of time and and have an anticipation what's

[01:18:16] coming at the town halls and focus groups the town halls this is a town hall everyone's pretty familiar with this there's not a lot of surprises or difference in this open to everyone widely advertised they may be virtual or and or in person depending on the scale of the change involved one of the things we saw in this process our our in-person town hall had about four or five people come and our virtual ones had you know 15 to 30 come depending on the that so depending on on the audience and the community being impacted those could be virtual or in

[01:18:54] person or both and again the number held would be decided based on the scale and the level of interest in the pro in the proposal I touched on this a little bit you're probably familiar probably more familiar with me than with your parent liaison program but this is something that we heard a lot about that this is a big effort that so far everyone seems very enthusiastic about and it does seem like a great way to engage those families that traditionally are not as as engaged in this process and in other issues.

[01:19:25] But it's a way to reach out and just hopefully one-on-one or in small groups have those parent liaisons who are trusted messengers talking to folks who may not be as comfortable coming to a town hall or that kind of thing. So they are involved at every round of revisions as well.

[01:19:43] And then online, we also heard comments that some folks just wanna share their thoughts, they don't wanna stand up, they don't wanna take their evening and go to a town hall, they just want the opportunity. So all the information, as somewhat is already happening, I think your web team has been great throughout this process, everything would be online, plus there will always be the opportunity, sometimes a survey, always at least just a blank share your thoughts option online.

[01:20:12] And then the specific engagement from the committee approach, we'll switch over to these focus groups. And one of the key things to think about is, one of the reasons the committees are contentious, we heard about is, well, they're gonna vote at the end. So who's on the committee?

[01:20:27] How many people are from each school? All of these things become keys because there's a formal vote at the end. By making these advisory and by making the opportunity to have option for multiple focus groups, it takes away that pressure.

[01:20:42] It makes it much more of an open brainstorming, sharing of thoughts, and you don't have to battle over who's right and wrong. Each person's thoughts are valid and welcomed. And as I mentioned at the beginning, and a key thing is hearing and reflecting that input.

[01:21:02] So this is talking about the, I mentioned that. So that brings us back to the flowchart. Just with those details that I mentioned, you can get a little more perspective on this, but it really is a kind of gathering information, making sure everyone's aware this is starting, starting and spreading the information widely, really expanding the outreach to engage more avenues of communication with your community, and then putting those all into as many rounds of revision as necessary before it comes to the board.

[01:21:35] Then last piece to touch on those small projects, if there's just 15 to 20, I'm sorry, 15 to 250 students, the only real change is that the parent focus groups become optional. There may not be enough controversy or issue where you need to do that additional round of parent focus groups.

[01:21:55] There would still be town halls, parent liaison outreach, online engagement and hearing from the community. It just, if it's small enough, then staff would not have to then do the additional step of parent focus groups, but would still have all that community engagement. And then for zero to 14 student changes, most of these I think are actually zero, these would simply be a notification.

[01:22:18] There'd be four weeks notification, unless the board waives that notice because there's some emergency. Four weeks notification, chance for folks to weigh in in that, but the notification would come in the regular school communications. So there wouldn't have to be an extra communications effort for something that small scale.

[01:22:37] But the key thing to remember is all the changes will come to the board, so there is always that opportunity for the public to weigh in and be heard and for you to confirm everything. So just to review, take us back briefly. The summary of the changes are standardizing the port for all school levels and making the approach based more on the scale of the change on the type of school impacted expanding the outreach efforts taking us from a formal committee structure with an official vote to a much more informal engaging focus group approach and then adding that one consideration where if

[01:23:16] the board does make a significant change and involve a new neighborhood it would go back out and and then adding that the last piece is perhaps the key piece which is making now primary that consideration of capacity so that's our presentation and the flowchart and I'm happy to answer any questions and of course your team is here as well it's Williams thank you thank you for all of your your team and yourself your all of your hard work as well as our division staff as well I just want to ask my usual question about program capacity

[01:23:55] and to make sure that they that is going to be included when we talk about a school capacity if you could just address that because it's my favorite subject back by popular demand program capacity so we committed earlier this calendar year to the board that we're going to bring program capacity to the only level of schools that currently do not have it and that is high school we're working on that actively we intend to conclude the draft of program capacities for high schools by December 31st we'll share a briefing with the board with our preliminary findings and then those figures would then be plugged

[01:24:33] into our CIP that will be created next fall one year from now so then all three levels will have program capacity reflecting the space requirements of the programs that are actually present in the building the joy that brings my heart um it really truly because when we're talking about boundaries and how many students we're gonna fit in a building the programs in the building absolutely make a difference and so that's why I continue to raise that question and alert public because it's not just the what the fire

marshal says for for example um the second thing i wanted to ask is how do we or how does the public people participating in this process

[01:25:14] account for specialty programs when it comes to capacity that's a question we get asked a lot for boundaries and i just want to make sure that that also will be factored in for all of us who are decision makers for sure so especially programs kind of comes in a two-fold approach one if the program provides specific capacity restrictions, then that's reflected in the capacity of the building.

[01:25:41] The other part then kind of ties back into our optimizing facility usage, where we're saying every school should be utilized between maybe 80% and 105%. So if we are putting a new specialty program, for example, in the 14th high school, we might not know initially how attractive that program's going to be.

[01:26:03] But what my team can provide to you is what is the resident student population within a proposed attendance area. So maybe the board approaches that in a two-tiered approach where let's open the 14th closer down to 80%, see how attractive the program is, see how many transfers come in, and if it's not highly sought after, then the board can come back and do a little minor adjustment and add some more neighborhoods to the school later down the road.

[01:26:33] But it could potentially prevent opening it with too many students in boundary and then widely attracting students from outside for that specialty program. - Thank you, I appreciate that because it wasn't some area of focus in previous years and it absolutely is later once the boundaries are done and the school is overcrowded and there really isn't a good understanding, I think, from general public of what that means and how it impacts the boundary in a school performance.

[01:26:59] And then I have one question and one statement. So my last question is in relation to the conditions that trigger for a neighborhood to want to be reassigned. I just want to make sure that all members and parties who are participating in this will understand what that is later on down the road once we approve this, 'cause it's not really in depth here, but I wanna make sure that people know, it's not just any sort of reason at all.

[01:27:28] So if you could address that, and then I'm just gonna finish talking and then add my request. In here, we talk a lot about parent focus groups, but we're asking parents, legal guardians, and students to participate. So if you could please make it very clear, because this is actually going to be the first opportunity we are intentionally including students and their voice makes a difference because how they matriculate through school is much different than our perception of adults as how students matriculate through school.

[01:27:55] So I wanna be sure that they feel welcomed to participate in this and they're acknowledged, as well as the fact that everyone does not have a parent that isn't responsible for them. It may be a guardian or uncle or some other family member. And I noticed the past several years, a lot of our families who come from outside the county or outside the country, if they're not spoken to, they don't unnecessarily always perceive that that is an opportunity for them to share their voice.

[01:28:25] So I just wanna make sure that we're being very intentionally inclusive and when folks are reading this, that it applies to them as well. So I don't have the perfect language for it. If you wanna do all three or Prince William families or however, but I just wanna make sure that people know that we want to hear from them, whether it's a student, uncle, grandma, whoever, because their voice is important.

[01:28:46] Thank you. - Mr. Wilk. - Oh, if I can just respond. - Yeah, sure. - I just wanna clarify that I referred to parents just for presentation shorthand. - If you look at the regulation and the policy, it's all community.

[01:29:02] It is the expansive language in all the regulations. We never refers just to parents as participants. - Exactly. - Mr. Jesse. - Well, first of all, I'd like to compliment your organization for listening.

[01:29:20] Particularly from my perspective, some of the things I wanted to have included in here, I feel that you have in fact taken them into consideration.

[01:29:34] Particularly, I want to say that it's very important that the school board is involved early because in the past what happened, we were involved at the end and then there are some things that we wanted to do, but it was sort of awkward because the committee had already voted on it, Matt has already done his things and had three different proposals.

[01:30:03] and then the board members come in and we change things and so I think it's really appreciate the fact that we are involved early I think it's also a great idea that the principals are involved at the very beginning I think that's critical and I also think it's very important the other thing I said that I've been involved with the boundaries for 12 years even though I'm only been on the board one year and uh it always irked me that on the night of the vote the school board

[01:30:42] made a change and then the community had to accept that change because there was no other options so i'm very thankful for putting that in there this year the one thing i will say that's not related to your organization but it was related to the vision is as Mr. Williams said the program capacity I think is vital and you know I think I hope that is done sooner than later and

[01:31:22] that it is taken into consideration in the CIP coming up this year because it I think it's going to make a significant difference so i i just ask for that consideration the other thing is we keep saying we can't uh make any change and we shouldn't be making any change until we have boundaries hearing so my my ask to the board uh is that we get if we're going to start doing

[01:31:57] boundaries let's start doing them i know we got the woodbridge elementary school coming up here the Occoquan school that's coming down the road so parents realtors everybody wants to know as soon as possible and I know Matt said that when we go further out like five years instead of the year or two before it's not as reliable but it is still needed and I think is recommended we can always say this is a

[01:32:33] is a tentative, but we need to have it. But I do compliment you. I do think, and I'm very impressed that you guys listen to parents into the board, at least to me, and I appreciate it.

[01:32:51] - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. Mr. Wilk. Thank you all for the presentation. I appreciate the amount of time you put into it. Thank you for the in-person and the virtual town hall. I wish more people would have showed up, but you know how it is when it's not the hottest topic, you know, you don't get the necessarily the biggest turnout on things, but hopefully we can generate some more interest down the road.

[01:33:15] So that leads me to my point, 'cause I know quite a few of my constituents comprised the 15 people who attended the virtual presentation, residents from Potomac Shores and Covington Harper Elementary School.

[01:33:31] So I have some items, I believe it's germane to the optimizing capacity discussion. And this really isn't, these are more just comments and feedback, but to kind of set the stage for this, I have a

couple of questions. I don't know who wants to answer them, but I can propose them.

[01:33:48] And again, we may not have the immediate answers right now, but I can put there out on the table and see this. So how many current trailers are at Covington Harper Elementary School? - I believe we have eight trailers at Covington Harper.

[01:34:05] - Okay. Do we know the estimated current amount that will be coming next year with an increase? - We don't, Mr. Wilk, we generally, you know, enrollment will stabilize and we'll report out to the board here on September 30, and we begin the planning process after that.

[01:34:22] We generally really get into the significant planning phase for trailers in the early spring. So we do not know, we don't have any estimates yet to report out on what that would look like for next year. - Okay, maybe one can assume as they continue making their developments, as it is an ongoing process, although we don't control that, obviously, that more students will be generated from these developments.

[01:34:49] Unlikely it's going to drop in Covington-Harper anytime soon. Correct. I'm guessing. Okay. Do we know how many trailers are in the immediate surrounding elementary schools? We do. We did a quick benchmark of some schools in the area.

[01:35:04] I think we have Enterprise that has 10 trailers in the area. think we have uh fitzgerald that has eight trailers in the area as well we've got colgan high school with 10 freedom with 12 so we we did uh those are some numbers in the general vicinity okay i guess i should have um given more detail on the proximity i was thinking more swan's creek mary williams river um 28 total for the schools that you're mentioning river some i'm sorry i can't think river oaks thank you laurie yeah um so yeah those were the ones i was thinking okay off the top of Okay, thank you.

[01:35:37] - 28 total for the ones you just mentioned. - Okay, thank you. Okay, so I guess my feedback is I understand and I support when we had our discussions, you know, I wholeheartedly support, you know, the idea of, you know, neighborhood schools, diversity, proximity, equal access.

[01:35:54] But I do have to obviously speak up for my community. That is my role and my position. And I can't avoid what I see every day when I drive down River Heritage Boulevard, which is a massive growth of trailers that again, I'm not saying we can confirm this yet, but although that school is opening in three years, I'm very aware of that in 27, with the current growth rate, there will be more than eight trailers probably within the next two to three years.

[01:36:30] I think that's a safe assumption, but yeah, again, we'll wait till the data comes out. So, and I want to preface this too as well, like I do not believe that the quality of education is deteriorated by students being in a modular classroom.

[01:36:45] I just want to be very clear on that. And my own son last year was in a trailer for the entire year and I had no qualms about that. He had a great year, he loved his teacher. So, you know, I think that, but, you know, I do feel that exorbitant amount of students and trailers does create excessive strains on the school that ultimately does impact the quality of learning for the students.

[01:37:13] And I can go into a litany of issues that come with having that type of capacity or overfill into the building, but I think we can make our own supposition as to what the effects of that would be. And I don't need to outline that here and how that impacts the daily schedule for these students, the arrival, dismissal, going in and out from the schools.

[01:37:34] and we all know those. So, I mean, and I think we talked about this, Dr. Cartlidge, you know, and I think my colleague, Mr. Jenik, talked about it for another area of the county that she represents that, you know, although I think you told me that Covington Harper will not be in the boundary considerations for the new Woodbridge Elementary, is that correct?

[01:37:57] Okay, okay, appreciate that. Okay, so yeah, and just to say that I'm going to, at that time making a motion, whether it fails or not, that's fine, a majority vote. But I do think it is appropriate at that time and applicable to look at possible mitigation plans, not saying that we have to vote on them, but to draw up a few possible mitigation plans to look at addressing overcapacity and even some of those other buildings that you mentioned.

[01:38:33] I mean, I'm speaking just for Covington Harper, but again, as we look at a trajectory and we see, I do have the fastest growing community on the east side of the county. That is without a doubt. We can look at that topography map or whatever, those colors and those things, but in Potomac Shores, it is the fastest growing community on the eastern end of the county.

[01:38:57] So I believe again, with that in mind, I think at least options could redress. what I think are the inefficiencies related to the capacity management of Covington Harper Elementary. So I'm just putting that out there.

[01:39:12] So there are no surprises because again, I have to represent my community. And as you guys heard probably loud and clear from them, although it may not have been the appropriate venue for them to put that information out there. And I know about this 'cause they came back to me, of course, but people are very upset back there and very concerned.

[01:39:33] So I think I would be derelict in my responsibilities if I didn't at least make a commitment to try to help them in this issue. And I guess that's all I have to say. And I appreciate your comments and answers to my questions.

[01:39:51] - Mr. Dedek. - Thank you guys for this presentation. You know, I've asked a lot of questions since we've started and you've presented to us a couple of times. Much like Mr. Wilk, my school that attended your virtual, that was mainly attended by people from Haymarket Elementary School because they share similar concerns to what Mr. Wilk was talking about and neighboring schools around there being under capacity while they are well over capacity.

[01:40:25] So I think the discussion that we were proposing to have would be looking at something sooner than before the start of next school year to help mitigate that immediate need that's been talked about for a while.

[01:40:40] And I do believe Mr. Cartlidge, when I mentioned it to you, you had a response to that of kind of how the process goes. And I know it was probably detailed in the presentation, but could you tell us again how that would work? - Yeah, happy to do so. And just for, you know, I'm a numbers person, so I have to set the record correctly.

[01:40:59] There were 52 community members who attended the most recent town hall meeting for the redistricting process. So many of them, like you said, Mr. Wilk, were from Covington-Harper Attendance Area or Haymarket, but we did have a really good turnout at the most recent one.

[01:41:16] So for the process, when there's not a capital improvement needed, so we're not needing an addition, we're not needing a new school, the process can begin with the board putting onto the agenda, directing staff to initiate the redistricting process for select schools.

[01:41:37] that can come out of our capacity study that we provide the board after we do updated projections in October, but it doesn't have to, the capacity study is optional. So if we're already seeing September 30th enrollment, as you're saying with Haymarket, some of the surrounding elementary schools, the board could then put that on the agenda, direct staff to begin the process, and we could provide a recommendation, the board could receive the recommendation, and if you approve it, then it could be effective for the following school year.

[01:42:12] And then based on how many students we are proposing for reassignment, that would determine the level of engagement through that standard process or one of the more abbreviated ones. - Thank you. - Yeah. - Dr. McDade, let me go to Ms. Walke, then I'll go back to the second one.

[01:42:35] - All right, thank you. I appreciate the work on this. I think it's something we've needed to do for a long time, so I'm really excited about it. and in my own experience of having been a community member on a committee twice, I'm glad to see that we are slightly changing our approach.

[01:42:54] So that's one of the things that I do like about this proposal. I also have similar issues to Ms. Trudanik and her district and some of my schools are near her schools that are overcrowded and mine are under crowded. So this would help. I mean, there are a number of things that I like that are in this policy that I believe will be good for the Gainesville district and are uneven levels of capacity, I guess, or use, utilization of our capacity.

[01:43:22] So, but I have a couple of questions and then just a few more comments. One question is on slide 28, you know, streamlined for small projects. And I just wanted a clarification for in situations where we have land that doesn't have any houses on it, but the property itself has been zoned for a particular school, is that going to fall under this or could it be, is it going to be outside of it?

[01:43:46] Meaning, can we just take an undeveloped parcel of land that is now kind of, you know, county supervisors have done something with it. And now we're gonna build townhouses. Can we just, do we go through the expedited process or is it outside the process to redistrict that piece, that parcel of land that hasn't been developed yet?

[01:44:05] - Yeah, the thresholds identified are referring to current students. So with a proposal of a new rezoning for residential, if there are only a few current students there we could go through the more abbreviated process the thing with the proposed policy is that it's flexible we can always do more engagement if the if there's a need for the project and if the project hasn't been developed yet but it's proposed for future development so there aren't any students on it would we still go through an expedited process we could or would we just say we're just going to do that put it on the consent

[01:44:43] agenda and move it i have to weigh in with the legal division on those elements i don't quite know okay scenario if it would be extra like extra what's the word beyond the policy beyond the scope of this policy or whether it would fall into the policy i actually don't know the answer and that's why i'm asking the question but okay that's i can accept that answer just one comment on that too the reason for zero to 14 is if you have like two farms the developers putting together in one development there might be

two farmhouses on it so there might be a student you're infected so that's why it's zero to 14 but yes that is exactly okay so it is the scope of this is

[01:45:23] income it's encompassing the idea of like a parcel of land that used to be a farmhouse and now we're going to build a million townhouses on it okay all right that sounds good um my last my second question and then a few comments is is this policy as as proposed unique to us where we or or do we how do we have a substantially similar sister district with a district policy um i'm just wondering like how unique is this this really is it's unique in that it's picking the best pieces so we looked in in there is a list of the in the details backing it up is a list of the nine

[01:46:00] local divisions that we looked at i think seven or eight are virginia and then two from maryland plus we also looked at some national case studies so we really picked kind of the best pieces for each one and what worked and what didn't work in the different ones so it is not the same thing you'll find anywhere else but the individual pieces you will see signs of them from other neighboring jurisdictions okay thank you so i like that we're being innovative and also also there's there's a little bit of risk right when you're being doing something completely new but that's good to hear that you feel like you've found the best of what everybody's got out there um so i do

[01:46:38] like the focus on maximizing capacity I think that's important based on what I hear and what I've experienced I like the approached priorities where they're not necessarily in a hierarchical numeration but that we can be flexible with that I like that we're getting feedback from principals up front although I do know that that could be fraught with politics if the principals stay involved you know people might try lobbying their principal to kind of get their way but I like if they're up front I think before the process starts I that will mitigate that risk. I just don't want principals to be in the crosshairs of neighboring

[01:47:14] competing communities but I think the way it's structured I think getting their input up front and then letting them kind of take a back seat as the process goes will help. I am concerned a little bit that the focus groups could get unwieldy if we get too many and they're too big but I guess we'll kind of see how that goes because it's designed to be flexible and I also am a little concerned about as many rounds of revision as necessary because we don't know how long that will take before we finally settle on you know settle on a boundary but um we'll see how that goes um i think the flexibility will probably be appreciated by the community i know boundaries are

[01:47:53] important it's important to get it right and the future consequences can be serious so that's why i feel like if we we need to work on it until we feel like we get it right because boundaries are you don't want to it's it's like buying a house you don't want to just keep doing it every year you want to get your house and love it for a long period of time so thank you for all your work on this and i don't have any further questions miss williams thank you um so what mr wilk just um spoke on is a very huge concern of mine and actually it was the third question that

[01:48:32] i asked was conditions for triggering um small changes because um and i'm going to pick on mr Wilkes district for example because it borders mine when you have a particular school that's overcrowded and then my district is all title one schools and we are locked that's why we're building a new elementary school I don't know that I think that we could potentially have problems down the road with this particular thing and this is why I was asking for more information on exactly what triggers that because in Potomac Covington Harper is it to pick on his district for example

[01:49:09] there is a plan in place right to reduce overcrowding with Potomac Shores Elementary School while it might not be this year there is a plan in place and I think it's important that if we're going to have this option that we put in some more specific conditions because when you change a boundary to an existing school it can affect a lot more than just the surrounding schools and so while I appreciate Mr. Wilk advocating for his community I can already tell right now we're we're gonna bump heads because I'm gonna vote against it.

[01:49:38] Right now, I can say that for sure, because I have landlocked schools, we're already overcrowded, they're tight in one schools, my buildings are some of the oldest, not to exclude other, there's absolutely older schools in the county. But this is, we're already starting to have a problem before we even vote on the new boundary process.

[01:49:56] So this, I think, is something that we may, the board should really think about and consider before we bring this up for vote at our next meeting, because while members of his district absolutely have a right to advocate for a less crowded school, here is where we come into conflict already.

[01:50:13] We haven't even started. And I think, I appreciate Mr. Wilk advocating for his community because we don't talk about Covington Harper, for example, a lot of the comments that we've been getting is there's so much percentage overcrowded. Why aren't the other schools, you know, some of the other schools have smaller class sizes and populations, but the average lay citizen may not understand, well, that's because you're surrounded by Title I schools, but you're not a Title I school.

[01:50:37] Or in a year or two, there's going to be relief for your area. So how do we encompass those situations into this new adjustment for policy? And if we don't have an answer, I would highly encourage all of us to take a step back and to really re-examine that part of this policy before we vote on it, because we already have conflict and we're not voting yet.

[01:51:01] And I don't also want a particular neighborhood or a group within a district to then do the same thing our focus groups used to do, which is hijack the process. And now we're solely focused on that group of individuals and we're not accounting for the surrounding areas, which is partly why we have the boundary problems we have right now, Colgan, for example.

[01:51:25] So if the idea is to improve and grow, this is occurring right now, maybe we should take a pause in this process and reevaluate some of those things before we come to vote next meeting. And this is not up for information because we can already see cracks in the system, right?

[01:51:43] And so I don't think that's very beneficial unless I'm missing something, which please let me know if I am. But I think that's worth consideration and maybe some greater feedback. I don't know that we have to discuss that tonight because tonight's not about the specific boundary in a specific neighborhood, it's the overall process.

[01:52:01] But this is very clear that it's creating conflict and we haven't settled it yet. So if you have any input, that'd be great. Or if we could delay this process until we are able to work through that, I think that's very important. 'Cause we're gonna vote. We're gonna have immediate conflict. Thanks.

[01:52:18] - Yeah, thank you, Ms. Williams. A couple of things I want to mention about the process. - Hold on, hold on, Matt. - Just real quick, I wanna say that, you know, what the team has put together was based on feedback from the board and from stakeholders. And so if there's anything, any adjustments that the board would like to make, then the team is ready and willing to do that.

[01:52:39] I do want to caution that, you know, every five years we do have to, we have to update the policy. So it does have to get updated. So I don't know how much further we can continue to push it back. But what I will say is that this is all driven by the, directly from feedback. So, you know, whatever it is that the board feels is missing, the team's job is to codify that they've gotten and put together what they believe is the best representation of what they heard from you and from the constituents that they've engaged and and that's solely what they're doing tonight so this isn't anything that they're bringing forward from personal view this is all

[01:53:18] driven by the objective perspective of board members and from our diverse constituents that were stakeholders that were engaged so and to add on to what dr mcdade said i'd remind the board this This is a first reading. They have been working on this for months.

[01:53:34] The board has been fully engaged on this. If there's any concerns about the words in the policy that we're gonna vote on at the next meeting, those need to be brought up to the superintendent and to Dr. Cartlidge and team and worked on and figured out if that's how we're gonna amend this or not.

[01:53:54] But look at the language, I'd encourage everyone, if there's any language in this document on the policy change that you're unhappy with, please find that language and work through it with staff over the next couple of weeks.

[01:54:09] That's how we always do it. And so tonight's not necessarily a night for debate or it's just, I'd really encourage any further questions the board might have to ask them and then work on the policy and the language. So then we can see what language concerns you may or may not have that you feel like that does not work out.

[01:54:28] Okay, Dr. Carlish, did you have an answer for anything or where are we at? - I was gonna mention in the current draft that we have before you, the element of student stability is one of the key four criterion that's being considered.

[01:54:44] So in a situation where you would be reassigning neighborhoods, the same neighborhoods multiple times over consecutive years at the same school level, we as planning would advise against that because that would be in contradiction of the student stability element.

[01:55:03] However, there is flexibility in the current draft before you where a particular neighborhood could, even if they were previously reassigned recently, could advocate to be considered for reassignment in the future. But in general, specific to the northern and southern Route 1 corridor, the board has approved two elementary schools for that region because there is a need for two elementary schools.

[01:55:36] have mr jesse and then mr work first of all i for i think in a way we are mixing two things up this is a policy for us to determine that we need to to do boundary changes the disagreement i think that mrs williams has and uh mr wilkes is a boundary issue that could be triggered by the policy saying we need to do something and as i said earlier if we are concerned with boundaries

[01:56:15] we need to start taking the policy and we start asking the board saying we want to do a boundary hearing on this and that so this is a policy to me simply saying this is how we're going to do it but it does not eliminate the conflicts that we have within the boundaries itself so i think that's very important to to keep in mind uh the other thing and this is just a question when we talk about developments a development can be approved by the county today and that

[01:56:54] that gives them the right to build but they might not build for 20 years what triggers the building is when they start asking for permits and what i would say once they start asking for permits then that should be included in the potential boundaries because we have an idea then what's happening but before then they could just sit there for 20 years and that's they have and when

[01:57:26] pandemic happened buildings stopped and now i mean it's like potomac shores has this gone crazy in a good way but the parents don't doesn't realize you can build a community out but to build a school is you can't just build that overnight like you can add 3 300 homes in an area you can do that in a year but you can't build a school that quick thank you mr will yeah i just

[01:58:01] want to um respond to my colleague miss williams in a sense that so this this presentation is not the impetus for what i was going to do anyways this could pass this could go through and i was still going to make the motion um so i don't want to delay this but i would have made the motion anyways um because i feel again that's what i need to do for my community um and so again whether the board even agrees to look at mitigation plans that's a whole thing there i mean i respect the the board and their opinions on that.

[01:58:36] What comes out of that? I will put it forward. If we do, if the majority of the board doesn't believe we should even entertain this, then that is that is that. And when I say mitigation plans, I'm not talking about one that's three years down the road.

[01:58:53] I'm talking about something more actionable within the near future. I think you said next year potentially or something like that. I also want to be very clear that I 100% understand Title I schools.

[01:59:08] I know the ratios, I know 24, whatever the class sizes, I would never want to impede or violate that. I do believe you can still have those, maintain those class size numbers with modular classrooms in a school assigned to a school.

[01:59:24] So while I respect the Title I schools, my son goes to a Title I school, I don't think that completely eliminates that possibility of tweaking some boundaries for a neighborhood like you guys mentioned, if there is a need, and I believe there's a need.

[01:59:41] Whether my colleagues do, that's a whole nother story, but this is the world I live in and what I see daily, and it's something dear to heart at a lot of my residents. So anyways, I just wanted to clarify a couple things. So it was on record that I'm not using you guys as my impetus.

[02:00:01] In fact, I believe I came to our meetings already fired up about this. So, so yeah, anyways, thank you. - Mr. Denik, then Mr. Blake. - Thank you again. I know you guys have done a lot of work and to echo a little bit, I just heard a couple of things about schools and you know I've said it and I'll say it again because I still think some of my constituents believe that I'm not engaged enough and aware of what's going on despite where I work, but it's fine, that we have a lot of homes coming to the Brentsville district.

[02:00:33] things are getting built, things have been approved, things are in the pipeline, such as 6,000 homes, okay? It's a real number, on their way, not approved yet, so things could change, like you said. Like Mr. Jesse said, a lot goes into a school.

[02:00:49] The fear in our district is that we're gonna repeat the same mistakes that we've done in the past and not have a school in the plan, which we've already talked about, and I know that that's up and coming in the fall, that we're gonna see some new things that are presented to us. So I know that you guys are

doing the work behind the scenes, even if we can't see it yet, we're going to hear about it, it's going to come up.

[02:01:08] But like Mr. Wilkes said, I think there's some communities that we can't wait on right now because they're feeling and experiencing a burden that we may want to try to address sooner than later. Whether it's a, I don't think that there is a issue per se at those schools, but the community is chattering to us and that's who we work for and need to address their issues.

[02:01:34] And so I think that that's kind of what we're talking about. But I do know that you guys have said that you're getting the ball rolling, you see those schools, you know what's going on. So possibly this will get mitigated with whatever you send our way within the next couple of months too. Thank you. - Mr. Blake.

[02:01:50] - Thank you. I just wanted to thank you guys for this presentation. Again, I thought it was, I liked the policy, the first reading, I think it's flexible, it's really inclusive, and it's responsive to our diverse needs of our community.

[02:02:10] I really like the fact that, you know, the intentionality of reaching out to the underrepresented communities, groups, because in my district, we have quite a few of those, so that will help out.

[02:02:25] And I think you did a good job optimizing the school capacity with the needs of the community. So I don't know how the rest of, you know, everybody feels, but you guys did a good job. - And thank you.

[02:02:41] - Anybody else? Okay, so real quick, couple of questions. First of all, thank you, this was great. And remember, this was a compilation of what this board asked and requested. That's what's in here. Please take a look again at the policies. Any lines, any concerns you might have, please bring it up with either Council McDade or Dr. McDade or with staff.

[02:03:03] Second, the board always, it's important to remember, retains full authority to waive any policy we have. Right, Mr. Anderson? - We have full authority. If we don't like something, we can waive it. We can change the policy.

[02:03:20] We can do it at the last minute if we want. Not necessarily good practices, but this board retains full authority to at any point redraw lines if they so desire and the votes are there. I think that's very important for everyone to understand. So if board members have concerns about issues, I think we should bring them up with staff, with the superintendent, and we can take a look at what we can do for whether it's mitigation or whatever.

[02:03:44] But it is very important that we have a policy. This policy is coming after many years of sort of, the last few reboundaries, frankly, have been very good that we've done. Very sort of really crickets were in the audience. I mean, it was really like very well done both in Mr. Wilkes district and Ms. Williams districts.

[02:04:04] We did some really good reboundering and redistricting. And so I expect that we'll continue to have that same attitude. And I think this process will only make it easier and better. But remember, this board always retains full authority to do what it would like to do and waive whatever policy we have.

[02:04:24] Again, not necessarily a good practice, not what I'm advising here, but it's something that, you know, for those of you who are anxious about anything, if you have the votes to do it, you can do that. So

that's very important. Very important if we're putting in a policy, Spend the next couple of weeks reading this document.

[02:04:39] If you have lines you're not happy with, let's fix them. Let's work on them. Please work it out with staff. Okay, thank you all very much. I really appreciate it. We'll move on. Okay, I think we move on to board matters. Last week, we started with Mr. Wilk, right?

[02:04:55] So this time we're gonna start with Mr. Blake. - All right, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. - Timer. - As this school year begins, I've had the privilege of attending several back to school events. and I just wanted to share my reflections from a few of those experiences.

[02:05:13] At Beville Middle School, which is starting a new chapter under fresh leadership, I could immediately feel the difference. The atmosphere was more open, welcoming, and inclusive. There was a positive energy, and I saw a real sense of connection between staff, students, and family.

[02:05:30] This kind of environment is one where students feel safe and supported, and I commend leadership at Beville for fostering this sense of community from day one. It reminded me why I'm so proud to represent this school. At Hampton Middle School, I observed the dedication of both staff and parents all focused on helping students succeed.

[02:05:49] There's a steady effort being made to engage families and ensure that students have the support they need to thrive while every school year brings its own challenges. I'm confident that Hampton's community will continue to build on the progress they've made.

[02:06:04] I look forward to seeing how the school continues to grow this year with everyone working together to support the students. And then finally at Garfield's, Garfield's open house was another reminder of just how ready students are for the future. I spoke with several seniors who were excited about what lies ahead.

[02:06:22] I could see the hard work the staff has put in to preparing them for their next steps. The school had a vibrant energy full of opportunity and I'm excited to see what this year holds for Garfield as well. They're doing excellent work to ensure every student is prepared not just for graduation, but for the future.

[02:06:44] Across all these schools, what stood out to me was a sense of community and shared commitment. Whether at Beville, Hampton, or Garfield, students, teachers, and families are all working together towards a common goal, making this year one a growth and success.

[02:06:59] That unity is what makes our community strong and is something I'm incredibly proud of. I just wanna thank the staff, families, and students at Beville, Hampton, and Garfield for welcoming me into their schools and for reminding me of the strength of community.

[02:07:15] I'm excited for this year ahead, and I look forward to supporting all the work we do together to make this a great one. Thank you. - Ms. Williams. - Thank you. I'd like to start by just saying Happy Hispanic Heritage Month.

[02:07:33] It overlaps between this month and October, and I believe it just started officially on Sunday. So excited to celebrate that. I also have been able to attend back to school. Most of my back to school nights will be in the coming weeks, but I was able to attend for Freedom.

[02:07:51] Want to give a big shout out for Freedom and their achievement of a 7% gain in their writing SOL, which was the largest gain in the county for high schools. And then just recently, I was able to attend not only a staff meeting at Fred Lynn, but also back to school night.

[02:08:08] I want to give a tremendous shout out to Mr. Romero and the entire Fred Lynn staff and community. Fred Lynn is fully accredited with no warnings and the tremendous lift from everybody involved, from students to teachers, everybody in that building is amazing to have accomplished that in one year.

[02:08:28] They have their target goal set for this year, which I absolutely have no doubt that they will achieve, but it was an amazing celebration at the staff meeting. It was a joy to see the staff cheering, Mr. Romero cheering, and by the end of it, We were crying tears of joy.

[02:08:44] It is a tremendous accomplishment due to the fact that Fred Lynn and many of my schools have high English to the second language population as well as SPED, not so much at Fred Lynn, but it really shows the commitment to learning and growth from everybody involved.

[02:09:01] And I just cannot be prouder of Fred Lynn and I'm a former Fred Lynn student myself, so it's near and dear to my heart. I'm just very, very excited to celebrate with them. And the last thing I'll just wrap up briefly this evening is I would encourage our school families to attend back to school nights, make sure that your information is correct within the school systems that you're receiving all of our many, many communications.

[02:09:26] And for those who attended Title I school, Title I Parent Family Camp is going to be in October. Registration closes on October 4th, you can sign up. A lot of times they have displays at back to school night for some of our parents, the information is there, or you can go to the main PWCS website and sign up, just put in title one family camp in the search box.

[02:09:50] It'll be very easy to find. So I'll be looking forward to attending the rest of the back to school nights here in the next week or so. Thank you. - Ms. Wall. - All right, back to school nights are still continuing.

[02:10:07] I've loved seeing families at Battlefield, Reagan, Bull Run and Unity Braxton so far. I went to Unity Braxton last evening, wow, wow is the word. It was an amazing back to school night. So I had a lot of fun and there was a really great crowd, really great crowd of parents.

[02:10:24] I'm looking forward to elementary school, back to school nights, that's always a lot of fun. I'm interested in your thoughts about the redistricting policy. Please reach out to me and let me know what you think. On the topic of safety, we're serious about keeping students safe at school.

[02:10:40] As proof in point, The new security operation center is up and running and I visited the SOC last week and we've got a great team there and I'm so glad to have everybody on board. That facility, that security operation center will provide a single operational nexus for our school division that will help us be aware of security situations, help us monitor complex operations and manage critical incidents.

[02:11:06] We've also improved how consistently and quickly we're communicating in a crisis. So I'm really excited about this. met this last weekend to perform a keyboard function one of the most important things that we do and that is reviewing the superintendent schools in a goal-setting conference that was a really great event and I was pleased with the results of that I'm looking forward to even greater

achievement from our students over the next year I'm set some really wildly ambitious goals and I'm really looking forward to it thank you to the teachers and staff are working so diligently on the division and school goals this last year I know it was a heavy lift but you know the the work is paying off and we're better benefiting

[02:11:44] students as a result coming up I will be attending a unified sports kickball event at Reagan looking forward to that I'm going to be out of X robotics fund day I'm looking forward to the groundbreaking for the new Occoquan elementary net zero school and some Hispanic heritage celebrations at Sinclair suddenly and Bull Run and so and also tomorrow I'm looking forward to attending conversation with the first lady of virginia and jonathan hate the author of the anxious generation how the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness i'm looking forward to the discussion especially with regard to cell phones in schools and what school leaders can do

[02:12:23] about it because it's wild to be in a seat where you can actually make a policy change but it's really a great responsibility i'm deeply honored to be your representative for for the Gainesville district and our schools are fantastic.

[02:12:38] Our kids are great. Please reach out to me at jwall@pwcsedu if I can be of any assistance. And with tonight, I'm gonna leave you a quote, not that I always adhere to this, but the quote is be brief, be brilliant and be gone. And that is attributed to Woodrow Wilson.

[02:12:58] - Mr. Jesse. - Well, I'll try to be brief and be gone also. But no, Ms. Wall's covered a lot of things I wanted to talk about. did also get a chance to go over to the security uh i call it command center it's sort of like looking at uh you know 9-1-1 tv show and stuff worth and the uh it's it's amazing and i think it's very important for us to realize particularly this week last week that prince william county

[02:13:37] has put the money into the system to protect our kids my wife used to say i can you know your kids might not be learning and you get upset but if my kid get hurt at your school then that's a real problem we don't want our kids to get hurt at schools we want them to be safe and i have to commend i think this school system has done a tremendous job making sure that our kids are safe We have spent the money and we have spent it wisely it costs money so that's yeah I think your taxpayers money has done well

[02:14:17] I've been to a lot of events and I also am going to the event Thursday night with the Governor's wife. I think for me the school board has dodged a bullet because the governor came out and said this is what will happen and so we don't have to have the about what we're gonna do if I understand it correct the governor says this is what you will do so whether we like it or not that's the law and we will abide by that if I'm incorrect let me know but again I'm looking forward to

[02:14:56] the school year I'm looking forward to meeting with all my principals and teachers and I got to figure out something to do besides give a cup out out to people, so any ideas, let me know. - Candy, candy, cigars, vape cars, no, I'm sorry.

[02:15:14] Erica Trudenik. - I have been to quite a few back to school nights, Patriot High School, Pennington Traditional, Noakesville, Gainesville Middle, Marstellar Middle. I also attended a community meeting at Unity Reed and a promotion ceremony for Prince William County PD staff.

[02:15:36] All wonderful events in the district And the schools all had great back to school nights, very informative. It was great to meet the parents and the students. I loved connecting with people that have

only emailed and then came up and spoken in person first time meeting.

[02:15:52] Very great. This week starts the start of homecoming for our high school students. And I just hope that you guys are gonna be safe and have a lot of fun. The excitement that goes around all the activities of homecoming is truly memorable for parents and kids and teachers alike.

[02:16:14] I am extremely excited to be celebrating with the Brentsville turf program, a new partnership that Dr. Miller has worked very hard to get. I still love that program so much, I think they do so much for these kids, bring them on amazing trips and show them things in the world that they would never get to see and opportunities at NFL fields, things like that it was kind of really cool i was at noakesville to hear teachers talk so strongly about this program and how great it is and what it's done for their kids what they've seen it do for other kids what it's done for my son it's an excellent program and i just cannot wait to

[02:16:52] celebrate the new partnership the field looked amazing last week especially while the tigers brought home a win at home so that made it even more sweet it seems like people are settling into our cell phone policy that we have put into place i know that the governor's policy goes into place in january but it seems from the teachers the parents i'm i'm getting a lot of thank yous i'm still getting not a lot of thank yous from the teenagers that live in my house but everything is fine you will be okay i'm loving it because i'm getting a lot of less text messages during

[02:17:27] the day and it seems like the focus is easier for teachers and for this faculty and staff that have have talked to me as well. I also wanted to address the concern raised that a teacher had during public comment time about getting paid less for teaching an extra section.

[02:17:44] I just wanna clarify that those rates are set in the collective bargaining agreement and cannot be changed outside the negotiation process. This is another reason why I am not a fan of collective bargaining and would not have voted in favor of it, and I believe that that just further proves the point that we can't do anything.

[02:18:06] Thank you, have a great week. Go Tigers. - Mr. Wilk. - Thank you for that transition, Mr. Genick. Always a good one. Just real quick, I talked a lot tonight, so I did have the ability to go to a number of events.

[02:18:23] Potomac High School had a back to school night, was able to go there. Henderson had a great night literacy, reading under the stars, well attended from the Montclair community, went to a Forest Park football game, I went to back to school nights, Potomac Shores Middle, Potomac Middle, Potomac, wait, Grand Park, mixing 'em up, sorry.

[02:18:47] And then I was invited to a Covington Harper PTO meeting. It was very nice. Everyone was very welcoming. The topic of boundaries did not come up. It was very relaxed. And then I did go to Potomac High School. I'm rotating every Friday, trying to go to my two high schools and be as unbiased and fair as possible.

[02:19:06] I would be remiss, last week my head was fully here and I'd never mentioned the tragedy that happened at Appalachee High School, which had just occurred before that school board meeting where two students and two beloved teachers were killed in another gun violence incident in school.

[02:19:29] You know, tragic, I 100% and horrible, and my prayers go out to those families and we obviously need to address a number of things, including the accessibility to some guns. But my point here

is when the superintendent and the story went out in Inside Nova about putting and installing, putting the weapon detectors at the sporting events, it was gratifying to see the amount of comments on these threads on our Facebook, on Inside Nova, people praising and lauding the school system

[02:20:06] for having these weapon detectors in place in our schools, and now we'd already been doing a lot of the games already, but coming to fruition, and it's nice to see that because in the short run, yes, there were people blasting and saying, we're spending all this money on these things, and they're not gonna be effective.

[02:20:24] Well, I think the proof is in the pudding. They've been very effective, so it's nice to see that come to fruition. And it's great to see, people have asked me as I see principals for the first time, how's the year going, how's it going so far, and stuff like that. Honestly, I think, what is this, year number nine?

[02:20:42] God, I don't have, I mean, it's great. I honestly feel like things are, in some sense, cruise control. The plan, the strategic plan is in motion.

[02:20:58] The security is in motion. The academics are improving. It's nice to kind of sit back and see the fruits of what has been accomplished. And that goes to credit to our superintendent, to all the staff. I'm just thrilled for this positive aspect that's happening right now.

[02:21:16] So thank you, appreciate that. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are about halfway through the first quarter. So parents and students, make sure that you are checking in. And if there's anything bubbling up, any concerns, make sure you're addressing them now, 'cause that's what we wanna do.

[02:21:35] We've learned that this process of continuous improvement, While it's a district-wide thing that funnels down into our classrooms, we can think of it as individuals. This is a time for you to reflect, make sure that you're on track, and if not, find ways to get on track.

[02:21:51] I hope that you continue to work hard and we continue to make more academic improvements, but always remember, ask for help when you need it. I wanna just touch on the topic of the back-to-school nights. I have a few coming up where I literally have three schools in one night and they're all over the place, So if I don't get to see you, hi.

[02:22:15] So it's just, if that's what it feels like, it's so difficult when they're on the same night, but I will definitely do my best to make sure I'm hearing people. I have had the opportunity to meet with parents, meet with community members, even with a couple of students to talk about issues that are coming to the forefront in their lives to help them either problem solve or take feedback that I need to bring back to this school division.

[02:22:39] So if there is anything that you need to let me know, please reach out by our Let's Talk. No, what is it called? Let's Talk, yeah, Let's Talk. You can email me at lzargapur@pwcs.edu.

[02:22:54] Zargapur is spelled Z-A-R-G-A-R-P-U-R because I think sometimes people may not always have all the letters there and I do respond when I get your emails. So I'm excited about the beginning of the school year. It's one of my favorite times of year.

[02:23:11] And I'm hoping that you guys are getting your friendships rolling along, your relationships with your peers and your teachers. And buses are running smoothly. Yeah, Mr. Wilk, I agree. This has been a much more comfortable start to the school year and may it continue.

[02:23:27] Have a great rest of your week. - Okay, thank you everyone. I'm gonna break up my remarks into three categories. What I'm grateful for, what I'm proud of, and what I am hopeful for. I am first grateful for our students and families for continuing to stick with Prince William County Schools.

[02:23:43] We're excited to have you back. We are thrilled to have you back and we're excited to embark on a new year. I'm excited about our teachers and our amazing staff and administration and how hard they worked last year and years prior and all the great stuff they do to continue to make our school division wonderful.

[02:23:58] I'm grateful for our superintendent, her commitment to instructional leadership, her commitment to safety and security and her commitment to improving our transportation system, which has dramatically improved over the last really year. I'm grateful for this board and for the hard work they do to get a lot of work done behind the scenes that a lot of folks just don't see that gets done.

[02:24:20] And I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for the elected officials in our county and our general assembly who continue to put funding for schools as a high priority. I'm proud of, I'm proud of our graduation rate, 94.3%. I'm proud of our lower chronic absenteeism rate.

[02:24:35] I'm proud of our SOL improvements. I'm proud of our record scholarship dollars. Dollars won by families is essentially putting money in the pockets of our families. So the better we do at helping guide you all to getting scholarships when your children go off to college, that is money savings for you all and money savings for your children and less loan and burden on everybody.

[02:24:58] So I'm very proud of that work that we've done and we're gonna continue to keep up that good work. I'm proud that our Evolve system made sure we had zero guns found in the schools last year. I think that's terrific. I'm proud of the fact that we have fidelity to our strategic plan and that great fidelity keeps us on track to have the improvements we're seeing.

[02:25:18] I'm very proud of the fact that this next few weeks we're launching our effort with Hazel Health, as you heard from the superintendent, to address needs for mental health support in our community. I cannot think of a higher priority in work and I hope that next year I sit here and report on the fact that Hazel Health really made an impact to help all of our students who are involved with that.

[02:25:41] I think we're doing it at the high school level and maybe middle school, but high school for sure to see where we can get with that. I'm very proud of our students. You saw a lot of them here tonight. We have great students across the division and the county and they continue to impress us with all the work they're doing.

[02:26:00] I'm proud of the fact that, you know, we've been working on our cell phone policy that so far has been going very well. We have increased student engagement. We're seeing student performance improve. But one of the great things we saw, especially at the middle school level and our pilots was less cyber bullying, less harassment online.

[02:26:18] That is critical. It's great for the mental health of our students. It goes a long way. Small things make a big difference in their lives. So I talked about what I'm grateful for. I talked about what I'm proud of. What am I hopeful for? I am really hopeful that we really do as much as we can to improve the mental health of our students and our staff.

[02:26:39] I care deeply about them and I wanna see that get better. I care about hitting our 95% goals. I know I'm out of time. I care about even more scholarship dollars. And I care about that the federal government doesn't screw up FAFSA again, although it will probably be screwed up. So I warn all of your families get on it now because it's not gonna be easy.

[02:26:59] And I'm hopeful for students taking advantage of our counseling departments. And I hope our families start thinking about phone-free childhoods. And I think, and I'm very hopeful for the continued success of all our students. And last, I hope that our parents take full advantage of our back to school nights.

[02:27:16] They are have been incredible this year. Thank you very much. At this time, the school board meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

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