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Prince William County School Board Meeting, Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Date	Wednesday, October 2, 2024
Place	Prince William County School Board, Virginia
Length	1h 49m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXmL3iYQ5Cs
- 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.

[00:00:00] - I'd like to call the meeting and the Prince William County School Board to order. Motion is 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. - We have a second. - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:00:26] All right, all in favor? - Aye. - Show of hands. Any opposed? No opposition. Motion passes unanimously. Moving on, closed session sort of whatever, closed session motion. Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. move that pursuant to sections 2.2 dash 3 7 1 1 and 2.2 dash 3 7 1 2 of the code of Virginia the Prince William County School Board enter closed session for the following reasons one to discuss with staff the assignment appointment promotion performance demotion salaries disciplining a resignation of specific public officers appointees or employees of any public body pursuant to Virginia

[00:01:00] code section 2.2 dash 3 7 1 1 a 1 2 to resume to review disciplinary matters for specific students that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the scholastic record for the individual students, and to receive legal advice regarding the same as provided by Virginia Code sections 2.2-711A, two and eight.

[00:01:21] Three, to discuss and consult with division counsel regarding requests for religious exemptions pertaining to specific students under Virginia Code section 2.2-711A. Four, to discuss with division counsel

and staff actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters involving staff, students, and other civil litigation involving the school division under Virginia code sections 2.2-3711A, seven and eight.

[00:01:43] Five, consultation with division counsel regarding a public contract requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A, eight and six. To discuss and receive briefings by staff members related to the security of school facilities, the safety of persons using such facilities and actions taken to respond to such matters where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the security of such facilities pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2-3711A19.

[00:02:14] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - I second. - Ms. Wall, any discussion? All in favor, raise your hands. Aye, any opposed? No opposition, motion passes unanimously. At this time, the Prince William County School Board

[00:02:26] will enter closed session and return in approximately one hour.

[00:03:28] William County School Board will now return to open session. And at this time, a motion is in order for 8.01, which is a 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 October 2, 2024, be certified by adopting the following resolution.

[00:03:54] Now therefore be it resolved that the Prince William County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, one, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed meeting to which the certification resolution applies. 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.

[00:04:17] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Mr. Blake. - I second. - Mr. Blake seconds the motion. Any discussion, please vote.

[00:04:34] And this is the vote on the closed session certification. - There it is. - The vote is seven yes, one absent vote.

[00:04:51] Williams, motion passed. - Moving on to the closed session action item, motion and order for the approval of the appointments and releases. Ms. Zargarpur. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. that Prince Williams County School Board approved the appointments and releases of specific employees as presented in the closed session. - Do you have a second? - Mr. Chairman, I second. - Ms. Wall seconds a motion, any discussion?

[00:05:08] Please vote.

[00:05:27] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to the apparent appeal, the SMAPD, recommendation of motions to honor Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that for the reasons set forth in the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's letter as of September 10, 2024, the Prince William County School Board approved the Student Management and Alternative Program Department's recommendation to reassign student SR 25-023 to independence non-traditional school based on charges of unlawful acts in the community.

[00:05:59] - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion, please vote.

[00:06:22] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Moving on to the request 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 RE 24-9. - Do you have a second?

[00:06:38] - Mr. Chair. - Ms. Wall. - I second. - Any discussion? Please vote.

[00:07:08] - The vote is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - This time we will have the Pledge of Allegiance and we will have our student representative, Ala Rashid, who's a senior attending Unity Reed High School to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:07:31] - To the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, liberty and justice for all.

[00:07:47] - Okay, excellent. Moving on to our thriving future focus. Thriving future focus is an opportunity to highlight the exemplary work being accomplished in our schools that fulfill our vision that every student will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[00:08:12] We dedicate this time to our meetings recognizing student, staff, members, and schools that have earned an honor award at the state and national level. We appreciate how these honorees have positively represented Prince William County Public Schools, and school board is proud to recognize them publicly for their accomplishments. Tonight, the school board will recognize the 13 Prince William County public schools that have earned the Virginia Naturally Schools designation from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

[00:08:35] This is the official environmental education school recognition program in the Commonwealth. Schools applying for this award must show their effort both in the classroom and beyond to increase the environmental literacy of their students. Our 13 schools receiving this award have embraced PWCS's commitment to improving environmental awareness and stewardship by educating students and staff.

[00:08:55] They continue to work toward the school division's dedication to sustainability, the environment, and reducing the carbon footprint. We begin our recognition with Mr. Tracy Blake, representative of the Neabsco District, who will introduce our first award winners.

[00:09:10] Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. The Neabsco District is proud to acknowledge four schools, Garfield High School, Bel Air Elementary School, - Dale City Elementary School and Neabsco Elementary School. Representing Garfield is Assistant Principal Leroy Millett and students John Eckman and Catalina Lee.

[00:09:33] Principal Matt Matheson was unable to attend this evening. Representing Bel Air Elementary School, please welcome Principal Jason Pinsler and Assistant Principal Debbie Qualerbaum and the third grade teacher Carrie Romp.

[00:09:50] Dale City Elementary School is represented this evening by principal Brian Slater, assistant principal Chantelle Baldwin, and fifth grade science teacher Kenton Beaumont. Representing Neyabesco Elementary School, we recognize assistant principal Teresa Carrington, school social worker Cory Corbin, and special education teacher Jessica Oswald.

[00:10:15] Unfortunately, principal Brooke Levechi was unable to attend this evening. Congratulations to all four schools in the Neyabesco district.

[00:10:32] - Thank you, Mr. Blake. I now invite Ms. Jen Wall, of the representative of the Gainesville District. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. On behalf of the Gainesville District, it is my pleasure to recognize Mountain View Elementary School and Mullin Elementary School. Mountain View Elementary School is represented tonight by Principal Adrian Harrison, ESOL Teacher Julie Grace, and Kindergarten Teacher Stephanie Clement.

[00:10:57] Mullin Elementary School is represented by Principal Jennifer Hoffauer, and gifted teacher and green team lead, Janice Pfeiffer. Congratulations to you both, Mountain View and Mullen Elementary. - Thank you, Ms. Wall.

[00:11:15] I'd like to now invite Woodbridge District Representative, Ms. Lori Williams, to speak on behalf of her schools. - Thank you, Chairman Lateef. With great honor, Woodbridge would like to recognize Freedom High School and Belmont Elementary School. Representing Freedom High School, tonight we have Administrative Coordinator of specialty programs, Dr. Jessica Dwarren.

[00:11:37] Principal Chevely Smith was unable to attend this evening. And representing Belmont Elementary School, we welcome Assistant Principal Constance Robinson, Administrative Intern Emmanuel Hill, and Gifted Resource Teacher, Dr. Kathy Lamont.

[00:11:55] Principal Joy Green was unable to be here this evening. Congratulations to Freedom and Belmont. - Thank you, Ms. Williams. We'll move on to Mr. Justin Wilk of the Potomac District.

[00:12:10] Mr. Wilk. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tonight, we have two Potomac school districts being recognized. We have Forest Park High School and Henderson Elementary School. The great Forest Park is represented tonight by Principal Richard Martinez, Assistant Principal James Smith, Special Education Department Chair Holly Back, and Special Education Teacher Ashley Tayon.

[00:12:31] Henderson Elementary is represented by the Assistant Principal Michael Duggar, STEM teacher, Shannon Eddy, and preschool teaching assistant, Catherine Connor. Principal Amy Schott was unable to be here this evening. Congratulations.

[00:12:50] - Thank you, Mr. Wilk. From the Coles District, Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur, please introduce our award-winning school. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Coles District would like to recognize Coles Elementary School. Coles Elementary School is represented by Principal Gretchen Drafutsky, second grade teacher, Karen Wolf, and Director of Elementary Schools, Catherine Forgus, who is the former principal of Coles Elementary.

[00:13:12] I'm excited to share that this is Coles Elementary School's 11th year to earn this designation. Congratulations. - Excellent, Ms. Arpore. Ms. Erica Trudenik of the Brentsville District, please.

[00:13:30] - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Brentsville District is proud to recognize Patriot High School. Patriot High School is represented tonight by Assistant Principal Chris Brown and Earth Science teacher Cassie Weathersby. Principal Dr. Michael Bishop was unable to attend this evening. Congratulations to the entire Patriot community.

[00:13:56] - Indeed, from the Occoquan District, I welcome Mr. Richard Jesse. Mr. Jesse. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. The Occoquan District is proud to acknowledge Rockville, Rockledge Elementary School. Rockledge is represented tonight by Assistant Principal Kamala Dill, grade five science teacher, Linda Sigum, and Echo Eagles artisan teacher, Irlanda Hester.

[00:14:26] We are so immensely proud of you. You're all for your recognition. - Thank you, Mr. Jesse. At this time, I would like to ask Jessica Wymer, supervisor of energy management and sustainability of the facilities department to step forward and share a few words on behalf of our 13 distinguished schools.

[00:14:52] Ms. Wymer. - Good evening, Dr. Lateef, members of the school board and Dr. McDade. My name is Jessica Wymer, as Dr. Lateef said, supervisor of energy and sustainability in the facilities department. And on behalf of PWCS's 13 Virginia Naturally schools, thank you for recognizing their outstanding achievements this evening and for celebrating their dedication to fostering environmental literacy and sustainability within our division-wide community.

[00:15:21] The Virginia Naturally program is managed by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and it is the Commonwealth's official recognition program for environmental education. Schools can earn Virginia Naturally more than once by demonstrating continuous progress in environmental literacy year after year.

[00:15:37] Our 13 Virginia Naturally schools exemplify this commitment by integrating environmental education in their activities and lessons and using their buildings as teaching tools. These schools model the core values of PWCS's Vision 2025, launching Thriving Futures strategic plan, all while seamlessly integrating environmental literacy into their curriculum and embracing project-based learning.

[00:16:02] They incorporate these priorities in their daily activities, they provide sustainability education, and they inspire students through environmental stewardship. We are incredibly proud of each school's efforts. All 13 schools also participate in the PWCS Energy Challenge, which is our annual incentive-based program that encourages energy conservation and sustainability related behaviors.

[00:16:25] Their efforts also contribute to the division working toward our goal of reducing our carbon footprint. Thank you again to the school board and Dr. McDade for recognizing all of these schools tonight for Virginia Naturally Recognition. Thank you to all of the administrators, staff, and communities of this school for their unwavering dedication to environmental education.

[00:16:46] Their commitment is instrumental in providing our students with the knowledge and skills they need to build a more sustainable future. Together, we are creating a framework for a resilient and environmentally conscious PWCS. Thank you.

[00:17:09] - Ms. Weimer, I couldn't say it any better than you just did. So thank you very much. It is almost five years to the day that we voted on our energy and sustainability initiative unanimously by this board that's part of the work that you continue to carry on in your office and all the work the schools are doing and we can't congratulate you enough.

[00:17:31] Dr. McDade has some words, please, Dr. McDade. - Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations to all 13 of our Virginia Naturally Schools. Coincidentally, I got a chance to visit one of our Virginia Naturally Schools today, Mountain View. I had an amazing time at Mountain View.

[00:17:46] Got a chance to see the beautiful garden and they've got trout in the house. So yeah, so it's really amazing to see. The kids are excited about it. And so I just wanna congratulate you, but also thank you for your investment and commitment to sustainable practices, which really makes a difference.

[00:18:06] It is a part of our strategic plan. We also have a goal to have five or more green ribbon schools. And so I'm expecting to get some green ribbon winners out of this group. So one of our 13 that are here

tonight, hopefully will be coming back with the green ribbon.

[00:18:22] So thank you so much for all of your work in your commitment and creating such incredible and sustainable environments for our students to learn and to grow. Special thank you to Ms. Weimer, to our energy management and sustainability team, because you are such a force of support for our schools.

[00:18:40] I know you have such a passionate vision for this, and we couldn't do the work without you. So thank you so much for your dedication as well and all the support that you give to our schools.

[00:18:56] - Thank you, Dr. McDade, and 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. We will start with one photo that includes all the elementary schools and the second photo will include the high schools. We'll start with the elementary schools first.

[00:19:11] Thank you.

[00:20:27] - All the board members.

[00:24:00] - Hey, thank you everyone. At this time, we'll move on to the adoption of the consent agenda. A motion is in order, 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 second.

[00:24:15] Any discussion? Okay, please vote.

[00:24:39] - It is eight yes, unanimous, motion passed. - Okay, moving on to acknowledgements and recognitions. Ms. Zargarpur. - Mr. Chairman, I move that the Prince William County School Board approve the acknowledgements and recognitions as recommended. - Do I have a second? - Mr. Chairman. - Ms. Williams. - Second. - Any discussion?

[00:24:54] Please vote.

[00:25:13] - Vote is seven yes, one abstained. Trudinik, motion passed. - Thank you. Next is citizen comment time. Those citizens who've signed up in advance with the clerk may address the school board this evening when they're called to the podium. The citizen comment period for regular school board meetings is one hour and citizens may speak on the agenda items or other topics germane to the operations and policies of Prince William County Schools.

[00:25:32] 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 disruption of the meeting. If you do not do so, the board will recess and I'll ask the room to be cleared to restore public order. Tonight we have five citizens signed in to speak and when I call your name, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

[00:25:54] I'll actually call all five you can come up to the front there are seats up there and then we'll go from there. Brandy Melvin, Oveta Scott, Pedrius Prater, Marianne Toll Hill and Kyle

[00:26:08] Ellingson. Brandy Melvin, Brandy Melvin. Okay. Oveta Scott. Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the board. Mr. Chairman, Dr. McDade, my name is Oveta Scott and my

[00:26:42] address is on file with the clerk. Y'all can see my outfit, right? I want you to know I did not wear this outfit to be disrespectful to you, but to show you an example of what my colleagues and I must look at

every day for my young ladies. Some of my colleagues, especially males, can't address these situations without it being taken out of content. My male students wear their pants so low that it's off their butts, so when staff, like me, requests to the student to pull up their pants or please zip up their hoodie, it is met with resistance. Also I wore this

[00:27:17] tonight in hopes that our if any parents are watching this is how your daughter comes to school every day. My question is what happened to the dress code and the code of behavior? When did schools become a place of come as you are instead of a place of learning for youth? How can I set high expectations, develop critical thinkers, or elevate the learning environment if students can come dress inappropriately, speak to adults disrespectfully, and misuse the

[00:27:49] technology given to them. Next, I know we have a collective bargaining agreement, but it did not fix the culture of the teaching community. There has been a lot of administrative changes, and with that comes a lack of real leadership experience. Here's what I'm implying. Just because on paper someone has an admin certificate, does that mean they are fit to lead or assist in leading a building so far this school year i have received calls from teachers across the county on how school leaders are misusing their power in various aspects of student versus staff circumstances

[00:28:29] when did students get more rights and protections than staff there are always two sides to every story but to automatically punish the staff member is not the answer i am an advocate for due process for both students and staff.

[00:28:47] In the end, if we want to continue to launch Thriving Futures, it is more than this summative assessments, benchmarks, SOL data. It is about the culture, the learning environment, and the value of this profession.

[00:29:02] Thank you, and I didn't mean to disrespect you. - Thank you, Pedrius Prater, Pedrius Prater. Okay, Mary Ann Toll Hill.

[00:29:19] - Good evening, hello, my name is Mary Ann Hill. I'm here this evening as a parent of three students here in Prince William County schools, all three of them are blessed with dyslexia.

[00:29:35] On behalf of them and all residents of Prince William County that see the world through this neurodiverse lens, I thank you for the recognition and proclamation of October as Dyslexia Awareness Month. I am also here tonight to introduce myself as the chair of Decoding Dyslexia.

[00:29:53] This is a national grassroots movement in every state with groups in individual counties. Our counterparts in Fairfax and Loudon have had groups for over a decade. With the VLA now in place, several other parents and I felt called to create a group here in Prince William County.

[00:30:13] Our mission is to build awareness, respect, create support, and to empower those living with dyslexia. We call upon all parties, school boards, teachers, supervisors, libraries, businesses, churches, everyone that is involved in raising our children to do three things: care, listen, and learn.

[00:30:38] It is an unseen, misunderstood disability that needs far more than just a monthly spotlight. To achieve our mission, our chapter is partnering with the Virginia branch of the International Dyslexia Association, the three Prince William school systems, the Prince William libraries, and businesses with the Prince William Chamber Foundation. We are a busy group and we are already just getting started. I

want to thank Dr. McDade for letting us already work within the special education department. Nobody knows this disability better than those living with it or the parents of

[00:31:15] those who have children living with it. I also look forward to using my new position on the SEAC committee to continue to keep the discussion of dyslexia active long after the month of October. Since I only have three minutes, I can only highlight a few quick facts. I implore you to read more about dyslexia so i've provided handouts with some highlights but the two facts tonight i'd like to leave you with is it is the most common disability in school systems but it is the most unidentified and number two one in five of this population is affected that translate in prince

[00:31:53] william county to 18 400 students there are only currently 13 600 students in all of special education so again they are the least identified i will wrap up tonight by saying dyslexia is complicated and contributes to the ongoing literacy crisis in virginia and our nation tonight i am calling to meet with each one of you individually and have us work together to address this population thank you for your time and thank you for honoring my children and all the children

[00:32:27] with dyslexia thank you kyle ellingson kyle ellingson okay that wraps up citizen comment time we are now moving on to 1501 energy management sustainability program update dr mcdade i would like to invite our chief operating officer mr vernon bach to come forward and i know our energy management and sustainability team is also here we heard from

[00:33:02] ms weimer earlier we'll be hearing from her again and they do have their annual presentation to the board on our program update thank you dr mcdade and good evening dr chairman lateef and members of the board you did a really nice job of teeing up jessica weimer earlier i'm excited that she and dr doran are here with us tonight and dr doran is our chair of our superintendent's advisory Council on Sustainability. I just want to say and give this team a big shout out because virtually the whole team is here tonight. It's a small team, but it's a very mighty team. And you're going to

[00:33:42] hear about tonight all the accomplishments of this team in reducing our energy consumption, saving the division's significant cost, but also reducing our environmental impact. And also about uh imparting uh knowledge and skills with our students on environmental sustainability so and being good stewards of our environment so without further ado i'd like to invite jessica to please

[00:34:06] join me and uh and share with you this update jessica thank you again mr bach for the introduction good evening again everyone dr latif members of the school board and dr mcdade there is much to celebrate this evening in the world of energy and environmental sustainability So in addition to just having honored our 13 Virginia Naturally Schools earlier, we would also like to acknowledge that October is Energy Action Month.

[00:34:46] So this is really an ideal opportunity for us to be able to present to you our annual program update this evening and share progress on division-wide energy and sustainability efforts. So PWCS's path to sustainability is steered by program-specific policies and regulations.

[00:35:06] So at the onset of our program, the focus was on energy conservation and utilities operations. Over time, we added recycling as an approach to waste reduction. And just a few short years ago, our program expanded to include sustainability.

[00:35:23] As Dr. Lateef mentioned earlier, thank you again to the school board for passing the sustainability initiative in June 2020, and to Dr. McDade for including sustainability in the strategic plan.

So these policies and regulations outline strategies that support our commitment to healthy learning environments for all schools.

[00:35:42] And by using a holistic approach to sustainability, we create a framework for resiliency in our built infrastructure and the outdoor environment. So let's expand a bit on how we support healthy learning environments. First, the focus is on building and maintaining efficient infrastructure, followed by conserving energy and water, when and where possible, of course, and then by reducing our emissions and waste.

[00:36:09] These pillars rest upon the foundation of education and engagement. So all of these are functional areas and they are combined to help us continue down the path to a more sustainable PWCS. And along the way, we will see evidence of efficiency, continuous improvement, and cost savings.

[00:36:31] Our work is also connected to the vision, mission, and core values of PWCS. We support students being able to have a healthy and livable planet for a thriving future. And we promote hands-on experiential learning to help students solve real-world problems, all while modeling actions for environmental and fiscal stewardship.

[00:36:54] We are also connected to the strategic plan through commitment to positive climate and culture. So here we have sustainability-specific goals and priorities related to environmental literacy, using the building as a teaching tool, and reducing our dependency on fossil fuels.

[00:37:14] This past year, we saw evidence of significant division-wide progress in energy and sustainability. So starting with high performance facilities, we place an emphasis on energy conservation and infrastructure. And I'd like to highlight a few of those projects now.

[00:37:30] So beginning with the geothermal HVAC renovation at Bel Air Elementary, we can report that this project is nearing substantial completion. So with this renovation, we're projecting significant savings, including a 43% reduction in Bel Air's utility costs an energy use intensity or energy use per square foot of 30 whereas before the project it was 90 so that's nine zero next we're continuing with our LED upgrades throughout the division and have now reached 50% completion then we have the design for Occoquan's replacement building that is now

[00:38:09] complete this will be a state-of-the-art net zero energy facility that will feature solar panels and a geothermal well field and of course last week we We had Occoquan's Rising Ceremony that celebrated the start of construction, so we're very excited about that.

[00:38:27] And finally, we have the first phase of our solar panel installations at six schools. Those schools are Battlefield, Beville, Gainesville High School, Kilby, Kyle Wilson, and Forest Park. So the size of the arrays do vary among the buildings and depend on the roof type, size, and structure.

[00:38:48] So for example, Battlefield High School is the largest array at 770 kilowatts. Kilby will be the smallest at 170 kilowatts. We can really appreciate the scale of these arrays and the pictures on this slide and then on the previous one.

[00:39:04] But I would like to draw your attention to the bottom left of the slide. This is a screenshot of Bevel's solar dashboard. It gives teachers and students access to making real world connections to their building. They can see current and total energy generation from the panels and better understand the array's environmental impacts.

[00:39:24] So each of the solar schools will have a similar dashboard. - Jessica, where do we find this dashboard? Is it on the school website or on the Prince William County's website? - I believe, let me ask Jennifer. - I mean, is this available for the public? - Is this a public dashboard, Jennifer, or?

[00:39:44] - Right now, it's accessible to the school, but we can look into that. - Not to the public. To the students it's accessible? - Yes, to the students and staff. So each school will have their own unique. So continuing down the path, we come to environmental literacy.

[00:40:02] This past year, we achieved several significant outcomes, including publishing a division-wide environmental literacy plan to help guide our efforts. I would like to note that we are one of only three jurisdictions or divisions in the Commonwealth to have one, and we are the largest.

[00:40:22] We also expanded our network of environmental community partners, which really enriches our programs. And we introduced targeted and extended, I apologize for a second, I lost my place.

[00:40:48] Sorry about that, it's technology. Trying to be sustainable and not having papers. So we introduced targeted and extended learning opportunities for both students and staff to deepen their understanding and empower them to take action.

[00:41:03] So these milestones mark important progress in our quest toward a more sustainable and environmentally literate community. So our team really thrives on being able to provide opportunities for student engagement through sustainability education.

[00:41:20] This past year, we saw a significant increase in participation in our annual incentive-based program. So 71 schools participated in our annual energy challenge. So really highlighting their creativity and commitment to sustainability.

[00:41:36] And for the first time, we partnered with community organizations host a girls in steam event that was focused on energy education so encouraging young women to explore careers in energy and sustainability we also had the eco hero show that was transformed into a concert-like experience at the hilton performing arts center this past october we'll be doing it again this october where we integrated cross-curricular connections to the performing arts making it more engaging and impactful for our students these initiatives not only educate but also inspire our students and they foster a generation of environmentally conscious leaders

[00:42:16] we're also supporting schools with various sustainability activities some of which include implementing public data dashboards for transparency in our energy and resource usage creating outdoor learning environments for hands-on sustainability education upgrading our recycle bins throughout the division to enhance our recycling efforts and expanding our compost program where schools can turn their food waste into valuable compost for gardens and last but not least this past april we celebrated dale city and mullen elementary schools as being recognized as green ribbon schools thus highlighting their exceptional

[00:42:55] efforts in sustainability and environmental education so here is a dashboard snapshot of our energy and sustainability data for this past year on the left we show that since 2012 our energy savings measures have resulted in nearly 80 million dollars in cost avoidance and then if we move down the left side we present energy data through different lenses including an energy cost per student of 266 dollars and an average eui so that's the energy use intensity of 69 for our entire building portfolio in the middle we can see the breakdown of our greenhouse gas emissions by

[00:43:34] scope and on the right our solar energy production recorded just through June for the purposes of this slide is showing really promising results so for context bevel and battlefield did not come online until the very end of FY 24 and just from some of the the bills and reporting that we've seen we've already seen some significant reductions so our landfill diversion rate which includes both recycling and composting from all of our facilities reflects our dedication to waste reduction and at the bottom right we've also captured some environmental equivalents since

[00:44:12] 2012 that highlight our broader impact of energy savings so at the beginning of this school year 24 25 we're already making strides in several key areas and do have plans to implement some new strategies we will continue with our led lighting upgrades to enhance our energy efficiencies and we're committed to finding additional ways to reducing emissions so very soon we will begin a study to explore the feasibility of electrifying 444 of our white fleet vehicles so at this time

[00:44:46] the study will not include the bus fleet later this year we will realize the full impact of our solar arrays and we will also expand our compost program to 12 schools and in the spring we're very excited that we'll be able to showcase student environmental action projects highlighting innovative ideas that will certainly contribute to a more sustainable world for future generations and also not on this slide there's a sneak peek into what is coming soon we are excited to announce the evolution of our annual incentive-based program so formally known as and i've already

[00:45:23] referred to it twice this evening as the energy challenge we have reimagined it so that we can better align it to our virginia naturally program so we are confident that with this change this will lead to more schools earning virginia naturally recognition this time next year we hope so next week we will be sending out communications to all schools and we will unveil it what is now going to be called the EcoQuest and with that said I would like to take this opportunity to thank the amazing group of people that I get the privilege to lead every single day the energy and sustainability team who are all sitting

[00:46:01] right behind me here do you guys want to stand up for a second not everyone was able to make it tonight but it's it's almost the entire team so we believe that every school can be a green school and this team consistently lives out this collective vision every single day through their dedication and all of the work that they do we would also like to thank the facilities department our assistant director our chief operating officer all of the sustainability liaisons at all the schools and every single collaborator because

[00:46:41] there has been a lot of fantastic collaboration this year throughout the division that we've worked with and so we just want to thank every one of them and together through our collective efforts we are making significant progress in energy and sustainability and a key ingredient to this success has been the work of the superintendent's advisory council on sustainability or as we like to call it sacs so through this engagement the sacs has made timely and impactful recommendations for continuous improvement in sustainability the council is chaired by dr jessica doran who is also the specialty program coordinator at freedom high school we thank dr

[00:47:20] Dwaran for her continued leadership and expertise both of which have been essential to the success of SACS. So at this time I am pleased to invite to the podium Dr. Jessica Dwaran to present to you the SACS report. Thank you Jessica.

[00:47:40] Good evening Dr. Lateef, Dr. McDade, members of the school board. As Jessica mentioned I am Jessica Dwaran from Freedom High School. Before I get into the annual report, I would like to provide an overview of the SACS. The council is dedicated to advancing our division's sustainability goals. We are

composed of a diverse group of community members, staff, and students. The council consists of a total of 22 appointments, 19 voting members, and three student alternates. These appointments are made by the school board, the superintendent,

[00:48:17] and the energy and sustainability team all members are considered based on their expertise and commitment to sustainability within the council there are two subcommittees education and high performance the education group discusses sustainability education it focuses on integrating environmental literacy into our k-12 curriculum and making place-based connections to to student learning.

[00:48:46] The building group discusses potential projects that are aimed at reducing energy consumption across our facilities. It also explores emerging technologies that could potentially improve PWCS's equipment and building efficiencies.

[00:49:02] And while it's not a formal subcommittee, the SACS appoints a member to serve on the county's Joint Environmental Task Force, also known as JET. The JET representative, along with the subcommittee chairs, share accounts of each group's progress at the larger full council meeting.

[00:49:23] During the full council meeting, all members collaborate to develop strategic plans, evaluate current practices, and propose innovative solutions to enhance our division's sustainability efforts.

[00:49:39] As we reflect on the first three years of our council, which began in 2020, I am proud to share the significant strides we have made. Our recommendations have not only been well received, but many have come to fruition. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the energy and sustainability team and division leadership.

[00:50:00] I would like to highlight some of the major accomplishments. JET expands our potential for innovative solutions and help us make broader connections within our community. Additional staff for energy and sustainability team help PWCS better address growing needs and challenges in energy and sustainability.

[00:50:23] Sustainable design principles for high performance buildings help to establish guidelines for new constructions and major renovations, ensuring that our buildings are not only efficient, but also environmentally friendly.

[00:50:39] LED replacements show evidence of energy efficiency as we continue to replace traditional lighting with LED alternatives, thus reducing PWCS's carbon footprint and operational cost.

[00:50:55] Considerations for site-specific design and geothermal solutions have been considered where feasible. These factors will help maximize sustainability and efficiency of the new buildings.

[00:51:10] EV fleet feasibility study, as Jessica mentioned earlier, They are in the beginning stages of a feasibility study for an electric vehicle fleet with focus on the white work vehicles. This initiative underscores PWCS's dedication to reducing emissions and promoting clean energy.

[00:51:32] These achievements are a testament to the division-wide community and their collective efforts in unwavering commitment to sustainability. The council has also made several important recommendations to the superintendent for this past school year, which Dr. McDade has recently approved.

[00:51:52] First, the energy and sustainability team will be requesting additional resources to support the expansion of the food waste to compost program. This initiative is crucial for reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices in our schools.

[00:52:09] Additionally, the council will be seeking resources to incentivize participation in EcoQuest, formerly known as the Energy Challenge. This program encourages students and staff to engage in environmental literacy and place-based activities.

[00:52:25] The facilities department has made strides in reducing PWCS's carbon footprint by replacing a few small engines with electric models for some of our landscape equipment. This transition to electric models is a significant step towards more environmentally friendly operations.

[00:52:45] Looking ahead to this school year, the council has set ambitious goals. We aim to contribute to the development of a comprehensive guide for outdoor learning environments with a goal of enhancing our outdoor educational spaces. Last, we will continue to stay informed about trends and emerging technologies in energy and sustainability.

[00:53:07] This ongoing learning will ensure that we remain at the forefront of sustainable practices and can recommend the most effective sustainability solutions for PWCS. In conclusion, through collective efforts of all stakeholders in PWCS's dedication to sustainability, we are paving the way for a brighter, greener future.

[00:53:33] By embracing innovative solutions and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship, we are not only enhancing our community, but also setting a powerful example for others to follow. We will strive towards a shared vision of a sustainable and thriving environment for generations to come.

[00:53:54] Thank you to the school board for your unwavering commitment and support. Thank you to Dr. McDade for providing guidance for sustainability through the strategic plan. Thank you to our energy and sustainability team for being the model of a successful school district's sustainability program.

[00:54:15] And thank you to past, present, and future members of the superintendent's advisory council on sustainability. Thank you. - Mr. Chairman, this concludes our report and we're happy to answer any questions.

[00:54:33] - Okay, so let me start because I'm just thrilled. And thank you, Jessica, for correcting me. It was four years ago, actually 2020. I feel like it was 2019, but it was 2020. And I appreciate that. I think the division long before we did that initiative was already working on this work, as you pointed out, 2012, the cost savings that we've realized, which I believe is very conservative.

[00:54:59] I may quibble with those numbers, but that's great. But I think the framework you all have put forward and the work that we're doing really does have dividends. The only thing I would ask, and I really appreciate, and we've had our discussions on identifying barriers that keep you all from doing what you wanna do.

[00:55:22] So I think it's important that with the school board with the superintendent that you always, we appreciate when you can tell us the barriers you may be facing in getting something accomplished, whether it's working with a certain energy company or whether it's working with whoever, or there's resources you may need.

[00:55:41] For this board, I know, and at least for me, this is one of our highest priorities when it comes to facilities management. There is real savings here. You mentioned that we're seeing some savings already with the Battlefield Solar Array, can we give context to that so the public can understand like in dollars and numbers, what you might be able to offer?

[00:56:02] - Absolutely, so Bevel and Battlefield have both, in that short time period that I marked on the slide, produced 540 megawatt hours. It's a total savings of about $4,374. So that's really just for a couple of months.

[00:56:20] We're projecting for Bevel Metal School that over the course of this school year, we'll be saving approximately $7,300 and for battlefield an estimated savings of about 10,000. And for context, that's because we are engaged in the PPA.

[00:56:37] So we don't necessarily own the panels. And so we are having to pay some fees for the PPA as well. But overall, that's our offset. - So the savings at the smaller schools seems like that's a lot more than battlefield seems a little bit under or lower.

[00:56:55] So 7,000 and 10,000, and you're saying Battlefield is 'cause we're paying more for the PPAs? - Battlefield is a larger array, and so we're able to produce more energy and generate, so our savings are a little bit higher than Bevel, and Bevel's savings will be higher than what the elementary schools are.

[00:57:12] We don't have the projections on those numbers yet. - Bevel's a middle, okay, got it, got it. Yeah, I was thinking better. - Bevel's a decent size array considering. - Okay, okay, very good. we had a lot of space for that one. - Yeah, and so how many schools do we have the solar rays on so far?

[00:57:28] - We will have six by the end of the year. We actually very exciting news. We just, Kilby and Kyle Wilson came online just very recently. So now we have five schools that are actively generating energy through the solar panels and Forest Park should come online by the end of the year.

[00:57:46] - End of the year, meaning the end of? - End of the calendar year. - Calendar year, fantastic. Thank you so much. Questions, anybody else? We'll go to Ms. Williams and Ms. Wall. - I just wanna start out by saying thank you to your small but mighty team. As someone who's been here long enough to have recommended solar panels and be told we have flat roofs and it won't work, to seeing the solar panels up and working, I am ecstatic.

[00:58:10] As a member of the JET committee, I just want to applaud you, Jessica, for all the hard work that you do on the committee and for doing, Justice Chairman Lateef says, for helping to bring back that information so that we can work collaboratively with some of our partners.

[00:58:26] Of course, special shout out to my Freedom, Jessica, 'cause there's two of them this evening, for all of the hard work that you do, because this is really your livelihood in more ways than one, because you're also a SINs coordinator at Freedom for the Environmental Studies program there.

[00:58:42] So I just appreciate all of the talent, all of the hard work and energy and hours that go into this. Mr. Bach, I appreciate you leading the team, As you know, and most of the public, I say on you about HVAC and all of the wonderful things that contribute to cost savings, really, and quality of life because we're in our buildings, eight hours or plus a day, and it does make a difference.

[00:59:04] And I just really cannot cheer enough the amount of work that's been accomplished in a short period of time. And I appreciate you continuing to evolve the challenge. I know it's not a big deal sort of to

us as adults, but it just sounds really cool now. So like I can imagine as a young student, It's much more like, "Oh, what is this? Let's do it."

[00:59:23] And continuing to expand our sustainability practices, not only outside and inside a building, but into the academic life of students. I love having an integrative approach because it gives real-world life experience to what they're learning in the classroom, which we know makes it stick more.

[00:59:40] I'm very excited about the outdoor classroom space expansion. We've kind of dabbled in that back and forth, and I know that's also important to our students and our staff's quality of life. So thank you very much for all you do. I look forward to more updates, and I look forward to continue serving on Jet.

[00:59:56] - Thank you, Ms. Williams. - Ms. Wall. - Thank you, very interesting presentation and some really good information here. I had a couple of questions. One is regarding the Energy Challenge, and if I, let me make sure I understood. You said it's called Energy Challenge now, but it will be called EcoQuest, so we're gonna rebranded or make it.

[01:00:15] - Rebranding to EcoQuest from Energy Challenge. - And then can you describe to me, so i can get my understanding more solidified of what eco challenge is or what eco quest will be yes so there's gonna because i'm not really 100 sure about this so this is our incentive based program that we've been running for the last 10 years and we felt that the rebrand was really going to help us align to virginia naturally so that we could get some additional recognition but as we have in the past students and staff will be able to have opportunities to

[01:00:51] contribute to division-wide energy savings environmental impact etc so one of the things that students will be able to do is they'll be able to engage in things like energy audits we have several categories this year where it's not just a one-size-fits-all approach where schools can kind of pick and choose from two different tables and we'll be unveiling all of that more next week but it's just a opportunity for us to connect and align more to our environmental literacy goals as well as virginia naturally so they'll have opportunities for project-based learning some other additional activities that they can do that are hands-on and experiential

[01:01:28] and it's just all in the name of environmental literacy okay that makes sense so it's kind of a way to incentivize the schools to yes participate and getting kids involved and learn some things and save us some money in the process or meet our sustainability goals absolutely it is incentive based so schools can earn up to two thousand dollars the sustainability liaisons at the schools are also compensated for all of their work because that is a lot of effort that they put in whether it be with a class a green team an eco club okay yeah so it might look a little bit different at each school depending on it does look a little different at each school but that's what's

[01:02:06] unique so that they can all participate but that we offer multiple ways that they can do that so it's not just a one-size-fits-all approach okay thank you for that additional information and then i was curious um so we have the six schools with the solar arrays do we how many are we moving forward are we going to kind of sit with six or we're going to can you give me a little bit more understanding of where we're going with that or if this is like a let's just stick with six for a while or maybe we'll add a few more i imagine it's intensive to get these solar rays on the schools and six is a big accomplishment it's it's been an interesting process so we are also

[01:02:45] exploring some additional ways to procure solar we do know that we're going to have solar on the occoquan net zero school it's looking like some of the other schools that are under project right now are also going to have solar at this time we haven't determined what phase two looks like yet but we are starting to work on what that might look like for us okay great i imagine i know battlefield had a roof replacement so it seemed like a really good time to do it and and it was a disappointment all the freshmen think you know the seniors tell the freshmen that there's a swimming pool on the roof it's not true solar arrays public announcement anyway there is

[01:03:25] something interesting on the roof of battlefield um okay well that's cool um and i imagine there might be some cost savings maybe out there too to get these solar arrays for i don't know who Who knows, the market is always changing.

[01:03:40] The walkability and bikeability, I can think of at least two schools where we have built schools right across from populous neighborhoods, but because they're on highways, nobody can walk to the school. Are we partnering with, or will we, how is it going in partnering with the county to increase like sidewalks, bridges, crossing guards so that kids, a bus isn't needed.

[01:04:07] I don't know where I'm going with this. Exactly. But I know if we have a goal to increase walkability and bikeability, we're going to have to use county resources to help us with bike trails and walking trails and maybe crossing guards or any bridges, anything like that. Yeah, we collaborate, Ms. Wall, very closely with the county and advocate for those resources as much as possible.

[01:04:28] And when we do design schools, we take all of those factors into consideration and try to maximize all of those factors as much as possible. Obviously the more walkability decreases the load on our transportation system, also has environmental impacts for the community, for our schools.

[01:04:45] And so we really do try to leverage that as much as possible. I think we've got a wonderful working relationship with the county and there's a lot of back and forth engagement between us and the county in those areas. - Okay, that's great to hear. My very last question is the outdoor learning environments.

[01:05:02] And I don't actually think, I didn't write a question down. So maybe I just have a comment. I know kids love to be outside. I know my kids love the field trips that they took to the wetlands and to the creeks like Bull Run, on Bull Run, the national battlefield, places like that.

[01:05:18] The outdoor learning environments though, that's specifically to create outdoor learning gardens and other places on our school properties so that kids can be outside more learning about plants and composting and I don't know, anything you wanna elaborate on that? - Well, Dr. Dwaran does have some excellent outdoor learning environments at Freedom High School, as do so many of the schools.

[01:05:39] we we'd like to use that term because i think it encompasses everything that's outdoors so whether it be outdoor classrooms opportunities for watershed experiences on the school grounds and or and gardens greenhouses and things of that nature so we're kind of putting it all under that one thing and so an opportunity with sacs this year is to help us develop a guide for that so that schools have some additional resources in their planning okay that's wonderful to hear i do know one of my students took an environmental AP APS environmental AP environmental AP environmental design I'll get it eventually and her favorite part of the

[01:06:19] day was leaving the school and going down to the water areas that are near battlefield and just spending an hour and a half in the mud so I think if we can and we have a lot of resource we have a lot of environments like that on our school properties I believe so I'm excited to hear that that also is encompassed by this outdoor learning environment as well as like actually taking the kids outside and learning outside I think that's good for everybody all right thank you thank you miss wall had mr. Denik demonstrate so

[01:06:53] we rent the arrays the solar panels it we entered into a solar power purchase agreement and yes we do rent the arrays we don't own the equipment there are some benefits of being in a PPA because any maintenance to that equipment we're not responsible for and it's a 25-year lease and so there is an offset to some of the savings with that lease and jessica referred to that earlier but yeah we're part of the solar power purchase

[01:07:24] agreement 25 years 25 years okay yep vern you're gonna stay that long then um uh geez what would - We'll be saving money long after he's had. - Yeah, I'll be 78 up here. - I'm just joking.

[01:07:40] Mr. Jesse. - I had the same question. - Right. I just said we should be saving money long after Vern's gone and we're gone. Mr. Wilk and then Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, it is more of a compliment. Thank you all for being here tonight. I appreciate it.

[01:07:55] I know it gets late and stuff like that. I mean, the evolution of this, I can remember when this commenced in 2012, I was a teacher and I can remember still the consternation of some staff saying, oh my God, we have to unplug the refrigerators over Christmas break. So it's great to see kind of where this has gone, not only from the micro level, but the macro and the savings that this has provided the division.

[01:08:15] So thank you all very much. - Ms. Zargarpur. - Yeah, I just wanted to point out that this seems to be a very unique opportunity for localities to take on what they wish. I know our students are very concerned about environmental everything.

[01:08:33] Like I teach in elementary school, kids talk about this stuff all the time, especially when there's weather events or the no snow winters, things like that. So they're very aware of this, but I'd like to also just point out to the public that this is a nice opportunity to show what a locality can do for itself.

[01:08:50] We didn't have to wait for the federal government to tell us to do it or the state. We just did it. So thank you to everybody who's been working behind the scenes to create an environmental literacy plan, to create these spaces for our children to learn in and to go to, and we know that there's a connection, well, between mental health and being outdoors.

[01:09:10] I know I have a constituent who would like to talk about play in middle school. So, but all of these things are really important and they will connect with our SOLs that we're expected to be teaching our kids. There's careers that can be launched from these activities many years down the road.

[01:09:28] So I just wanted to make sure people understood this was a really unique opportunity to be able to do something like this. Thank you. - Okay, so I'll just wrap up. Thank you for your leadership. I think our leadership in the school division has pushed the county to move forward, especially with JET and working with them.

[01:09:46] That has been fantastic. And then I would leave you with one charge, Ms. Weimer, Mr. Dwaram and Mr. Bach, that we'll be redoing our strategic plan in the next couple of years. And so I think we should

be very aggressive with the goals moving forward in the next strategic plan and reevaluating how aggressive we need to be to get to net zero.

[01:10:07] So I would really challenge the committee and challenge your office on this work. I think this board is committed to doing this work and we're willing to listen and we wanna hear, you know, aggressive approaches to doing the best we can.

[01:10:25] Thank you very much, okay? - And Dr. Lateef, I did hear a desire from you maybe to see if we can get these energy dashboards forward facing so that's something we can investigate to see. - That would be terrific. - Yeah, yeah. - And the other, I guess a couple of quick questions. Do you know the other two schools that have environmental literacy divisions?

[01:10:42] Jessica, you said we're one of three. Do you know the other districts? - Clark County and Arlington County. - Okay, and then there was another question, and I know this might not be a popular question, but I have to ask you. I know we have this incentive program, you know, the EcoQuest thing.

[01:10:58] I mean, why aren't we mandating it, Dr. McDade, and all the schools? - I think the presentation time is up. - Oh, I see. I think the board would like to see - Certainly more schools doing it. So if any schools are out there listening, please take advantage of the incentive opportunities.

[01:11:15] Thank you. Thank you guys very much. - Thank you. - Next, we will move to student representative time. Thank you. Tonight we have joining us on the dais is student representative Ala Rashid, who is a senior attending Unity Reed High School.

[01:11:33] Please, Ms. Rashid. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef, sorry. Good evening to the Prince William County community, school board members, and Dr. McDayton. My name is Aula, and I am excited to be back in the dais representing my fellow peers.

[01:11:49] I'm yet again honored to be up here as one of your student representatives. As we enter week seven of the school year, I want to just push on the idea of inclusivity in the division as it is something that is very necessary and important. Our student voice committees are used to implement this as they are growing student leadership and community growth.

[01:12:07] I can't wait to continue my work with them throughout the school year as the year progresses. Now, in regard to the new and final cell phone guidance from both Governor Youngkin and the VDOE, there has been some feedback from students as it has been a big topic of public opinion.

[01:12:22] After reaching out to students, not only at my school, but other schools via the Student Senate, many feel that the new guidelines are one, unnecessary, as the current guidelines put in place from the school division is working well enough for them to be more productive, and two, unsafe and impractical, as many high schoolers who have responsibilities outside of school, whether they are work or familiar ones.

[01:12:47] For middle and elementary schoolers, though, these new guidelines are necessary as they are young and they don't really need cellular devices outside of school and they don't have the same responsibilities as high schoolers. But high schoolers have many things unassociated with school, such as familiar responsibilities, jobs, and volunteering roles.

[01:13:07] And these roles require the skill of communication and that's used using cellular devices. And I feel as if, after speaking to the Student Senate, the current policy enacted by the school division is

something that is seen to be more practical and beneficial in the eyes of students, as it allows us to gain more time management skills with our usage of cellular devices, because it gives us certain points of day, allowing us to gain the skills needed to be more time management, time management, sorry.

[01:13:40] It gives us a better idea of cell phone free learning, because we're allowed to then balance our time with us being able to use phones during lunch and balance our time needed for when we need to communicate with our outside school activities. And cell phone use is growing everywhere with jobs, using them now, also volunteering roles.

[01:13:58] So giving us a chance to grow from it and getting better at how we learn with cell phones rather than without cell phones is more beneficial and needed. Another note on this topic would be the fireside chat that was hosted at Old Bridge Elementary School. I personally was unable to attend, but the alternate representative, Kaylee Tome, was able to attend.

[01:14:17] And the First Lady of Virginia, Ms. Youngkin, and Dr. Jonathan Hayden, sorry if I pronounced that wrong, had hosted it together to provide further insight on why they feel the policy was needed and why it was needed to be enacted. And the open dialogue between the community provided more insight on the new guidelines and the reasoning behind it, as it allowed families to be able to express their concerns and hear more of why the governor and Dr. Hyda and other larger people in the state felt it was needed.

[01:14:47] And this event had also highlighted our county's strength and adaptation as well as the growing community we have present because many students and parents were present as well as admin. Overall, the new guidelines do have beneficial aspects as technology can be crucial and harmful in some ways with social media being very harmful and causing insecurities and things like that 'cause I can tell you I've experienced that myself but it can also be beneficial as technology is growing in the world with AI and just in general QR codes everywhere is just growing so I think that we need to also just take charge with that and I do think that what the

[01:15:23] county and the division has now is very beneficial but the new guidelines then do have some parts that aren't practical just as I said speaking of events throughout the county with this fireside chat being a stellar example of community education as it had provided more insight we've had various This opportunity is for growth as eight high schools in the county are now partnered with George Mason to give an opportunity for direct admission for eligible seniors.

[01:15:47] This has given seniors a very easeful year, a little bit more with college applications as it makes their lives less stressful with mine being an example. But it also gives an opportunity for growth as it provides a way for an easier access to college resources with many of the schools, including my own, being Title I schools.

[01:16:06] So I do urge all eligible seniors to apply and I'm very thankful that we were able to have this opportunity. College resources are also pushed even more with there being two upcoming college fairs on October 9th and October 17th. And I've spoken to the Student Senate and a lot of them and their peers are planning on attending and they do think that's very nice that we're hosting though for those this year.

[01:16:26] The one on October 9th is at Hilton and the one on October 17th is at OP, so very exciting. Also, as Hispanic Heritage Month comes to an end, I want to just highlight some of the events that occurred in

the county with Garfield hosting a showcase that had food and performances from all the various cultures present.

[01:16:43] I was told that it was very fun and a lot of the students enjoyed it with a couple of families coming 'cause it was right after school. And it allowed students to show the beauty of their culture, so I'm very happy that they hosted that. And Unity Read, as I mentioned in my last remarks, my school hosted a Hispanic Heritage Night, which was another beautiful way of hosting a very big cultural showcase as we had performances and foods and games and karaoke.

[01:17:06] And our lovely Brentsville District Board member, Ms. Erika Cretanik was also there. It was very nice to see her at this event. It was amazing to have her present. But now looking into October, it is Billing Prevention Month as well as Dyslexia Awareness Month, as mentioned earlier, and it was very insightful to hear what you had to say.

[01:17:23] Thank you. As well as Custodian Appreciation Week from October 7th to October 11th. So I do hope everyone takes time to be more aware of these different things, especially with Dyslexia Awareness Month. I'm pretty sure it's awareness, but yes, 'cause it was very nice to see the handout you passed out.

[01:17:40] It was very insightful as someone who doesn't really know all the things regarding dyslexia, but it was very insightful to see. Sorry if I'm talking a little fast. I hope everyone takes time to be kind to one another and reach out to others to be more knowledgeable and insightful through this, and I'm very excited to see more about this.

[01:17:57] And to wrap up some of the upcoming county events, Homecoming is also this month for many schools except for Battlefield and Brunsville. I think they were the two that had it already. So I hope to see some beautiful pictures and feedback from the student senate and I hope to bring that back the next time up here on the dais.

[01:18:14] And furthermore, I just want to remind everyone how necessary it is to be present and that the idea of change can only occur when you are there to make it happen. As I feel it's very important to be present and to be there if you want things to happen. So I hope that anyone who wants to be present in change joins their student voice committee and I'm very excited that we have these and I hope through these committees, people reach out to their student senators or they can try to reach out to me directly so I can provide you guys, the board, as much feedback as possible.

[01:18:43] And that'll be all from our works this evening, but I also just wanted to add in the sustainability talk, I don't think they're here right now, but it was very insightful to hear as a student, 'cause I currently take an environmental sustainability class, and I don't take AP environmental systems, but I take IB environmental systems, so basically the same thing, but it's very, I do enjoy taking it, and the outdoor learning, if you guys, it's very fun.

[01:19:05] Like I've gone, I think through, so far, I've taken three or four trips this year. It's very fun. So it's very nice to do. I think it is really beneficial 'cause it makes kind of, it wakes me up. And thank you so much. And I hope everyone has a restful day off tomorrow for Rosh Hashanah. And for those who celebrate, I hope they have an amazing day spent with close ones.

[01:19:21] Thank you. - Thank you, Ms. Rashid. We really appreciate it. Moving on next to superintendent's time, Dr. McDade. - Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I wanna again congratulate our

13 Virginia Naturally Schools and their efforts toward reaching our strategic plan goal of hopefully green ribbon status for some of the schools that were here tonight, because we do have a goal for green ribbon.

[01:19:46] We set a goal for five, but at the rate that we're going, I'm expecting that we're going to surpass that goal with the showing that we had here this evening. I also would like to acknowledge T. Clay Wood Elementary School for their prestigious honor. The US Department of Education has named T. Clay Wood Elementary School, a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School.

[01:20:07] T. Claywood Elementary is one of only 356 schools across the nation and one of eight in Virginia to be awarded the Blue Ribbon designation. T. Claywood was recognized in the category for Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools.

[01:20:26] We plan to recognize T. Claywood, their principal, Mr. Andrew Buckeye, and the amazing staff at T. Clay in an upcoming Thriving Futures segment here in the boardroom. Congratulations to the T. Claywood teachers, staff, students in support of parents and community.

[01:20:43] In preparation for securing thriving futures for our students after graduation, college and career counselors in every high school are scheduling university visits, college and career planning, Naviance work sessions, scholarship and financial aid opportunities, and career and self-discovery exploration.

[01:21:00] And so I wanna encourage all families and students to take full advantage of these opportunities. We already heard from our student representative about the college fairs. We'll be hosting two college fairs in October. I'm just excited that you were fully aware of it and your peers are aware.

[01:21:17] The first is at Hilton High School on October 9th and the second is at Osborne Park High School on October 17th. And both will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. These college fairs provide an excellent opportunity for students to begin the planning process for post-secondary education.

[01:21:37] There'll be tiny talks, meet and greets with in-state and out-of-state college and university representatives, free application for federal student aid, which is also called the FAFSA. That information will be available and so much more. So for more information and registration, I encourage you to review the PWCS College Fair webpage, which is on our pwcs.edu website.

[01:22:00] If you go to departments, The department that's responsible for all of these engagements is our Student Services and Postsecondary Success Office. And if you go there and navigate to College and Career Readiness, you'll be able to get to the PWCS College Fair landing page.

[01:22:19] In addition, as we talk about college preparation, I want all families to know that all grade 9, 10, and 11, PWCS students will be taking the PSAT or preliminary SAT on October 9th.

[01:22:35] Grade 9 will take the PSAT 8, 9, and grades 10 and 11 will take the PSAT and NMSQT. The PSAT is a diagnostic test of future performance on the SAT and provides students opportunities for potential scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Program that's the that's what the NMSQT is and that happens during their 11th grade year of high school. The PSAT also helps guide academic planning for participation in advanced coursework and a qualifying PSAT math

[01:23:10] sub score can also be used as a substitute test in place of the Algebra 1 SOL as a verified credit toward graduation requirement. So the PSAT is an important milestone when it comes to opportunities for

our students. Please be advised of the available dates for students to register and take the SAT and PSAT, I mean SAT, the SAT and ACT is too many letters here.

[01:23:36] Both tests are academic measurement tools used by some institutions in the college admission process. But more importantly, the assessment gives us information about whether or not our students are prepared to be successful in college courses when they leave Prince William County Schools.

[01:23:54] All grade 11 PWCS students will take the SAT in the spring on April 2nd, 2025. That'll be SAT day. This test is given at no cost and we will share more information as we get closer to the date. While you're planning events and checking dates, be on the lookout for our PWCS 2025-26 calendar survey, which will be released in the coming week.

[01:24:18] Every year, we seek feedback from students, families, staff, and community stakeholders to inform decisions around the first day of school, winter and spring breaks, and the last day of school. Whether we're providing post-secondary planning, course selections, dual and certification enrollment, internships, or mentorship opportunities, PWCS is here to help navigate the path ahead, ensuring that every student graduates on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

[01:24:50] Mr. Chairman, that concludes the superintendent's report for this evening. - Thank you, Dr. McDade. Next, we'll go to revision of Policy 503, Code of Conduct. It's a first reading. Dr. McDade.

[01:25:12] - All right, I'm sorry. Dr. Eagle is gonna come forward with some revisions related to the Code of Behavior, and this one is for employees. Good evening. The Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation were sent forth for revisions to ensure that we incorporated language from the new regulation 910-2 regarding PWCS websites and use of social media. So we've made those changes and the changes on the policy itself were minor. The regulation just

[01:25:48] incorporated the additional language out of regulation 910-2 regarding specific instructions on how staff is to use only school sponsored websites and social media accounts in communicating with our students and of course email thank you dr. Eagle so over this next couple weeks this is a first reading any members have any concerns red lines the public should take a look at this this is up on the website the school board website and board docs please take a to look at it.

[01:26:20] If you have any concerns, please email the school board members and or the staff. And I expect if any board members have any concerns, please forward those to me, Dr. McDade or Dr. Eagle. - Thank you. - Okay, moving on to any questions, concerns, thoughts. Okay, great.

[01:26:36] We're moving on to board matters. We will start with Mr. Justin Wilk. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. - Thank you, sir. I have quite a few things to say, so I'll try to get this done. And of course I will get it done in three minutes. So tonight we did pass in the consent agenda policy 264 that talks about the redistricting and process initiation to open close or expand capacity when the school board potentially otherwise directs.

[01:27:02] So I already mentioned that I'm not ambivalent to the fact of the rising number of trailers being put on one of my particular sites. And so, you know, my goal is to make sure that the rising student population doesn't encumber on the overall learning environment of that school.

[01:27:21] So maybe next meeting or in two meetings, I will be putting a motion forward to ask and direct the division to make contingency plans, options, not voting on those, but options to look at the possibility

of relieving some overcrowding, because I'm doing this because I was propitious in thinking that when we were doing the new elementary boundaries for the new Woodbridge school, that Covington Harper would somehow be stretched in there, but it did not to my chagrin.

[01:27:50] So unfortunately, this is kind of the action I'm taking. I believe Erica is going to put Haymarket in as an option too, to talk about that for her side of the county. So summary, I will be seeking the probation of the majority of my board members to make sure that we can pass this and get some plan in action.

[01:28:10] So at least we can vote. And so the residents of the Potomac Shores community or whatever ones we put on this amendment, know that the board at least looked at the options and the opportunities of what we can do to relieve some of that overcrowding. So that was that real quick suicide awareness walk.

[01:28:28] It's done traditionally every spring at Forest Park. This year it was moved to the fall. So that will be actually Saturday, I think starting at 8:00 AM, I will be there. That's happening. I put a plug in this for every election year, every presidential as speaking as one board member, not collectively as a board.

[01:28:47] I do wish Classified had the option as a virtual day as well to give them more opportunity to vote and participate in the democratic process like our certified staff. But that's just my plug for that. And also congratulations to Rebecca Smith.

[01:29:03] She won the Reader's Choice Prince William Times Award at Covington Harbor, topic tonight apparently, for the best teacher. So congratulations, that is quite an accolade and for her work and dedication to the students. I've been in her room before when visiting the building.

[01:29:18] She's a phenomenal teacher. Lastly, my events really quick. I did go to a lot of back to school nights, which have wrapped up in starting back like a month ago at high school. I do appreciate how the division does space them out. And so I attended Mary Williams, Ashlyn, Covington Harper, Henderson, Triangle, and Patty.

[01:29:39] So great events, happy to be there. And wow, I wrapped up all that in three minutes. There you go. Ms. Erica Trudenik, Brentsville District. Sorry, I didn't mean to do that. - Wow, I think I need extra time 'cause of that. - Anyone else could?

[01:29:55] - Wow, I just wanted to thank, first of all, Ms. Hill and the girls for coming. I do think because we have a day off school tomorrow, dad should bring you to get milkshakes on his way home. That's just my opinion. Thank you guys for being here to educate us on this important topic.

[01:30:15] and I look forward to working with Ms. Hill over the next three years on this and bringing more awareness. So thank you for coming and talking and thank you for being brave and standing with mom, girls. Dr. McDade took my thunder on the T. Claywood Timberwolves.

[01:30:31] I am an original Timberwolf and I will always be one. So I am so excited about the Blue Ribbon School. Can't wait to have them here next month and I hope that they are allowed to bring some of the kiddos to come and celebrate with us as well. I also attended a lot of events over the last two weeks.

[01:30:51] BDHS Turf and Ag Dinner, where they announced a partnership with Toro. That program is extremely close to my heart. I adore it and all the opportunities that it provides for students that attend that program.

[01:31:06] And if you have not heard about it, I encourage you to read into it. The life skills that the kids get in that program far beyond just turf and agriculture and I encourage people to look. I also was able to go and see all of the cool new tools that they got from Toro on Friday night at the homecoming football game. That was the most exciting part of the football game and I also got to attend a lot of back-to-school nights. Cedar Point, Haymarket Elementary School, Chris Young, Piney Branch. I was incredibly impressed with Piney Branch and the way they ran their night. Kudos to you Piney

[01:31:42] branch Ellis I got to meet a lot of the teachers who are part of the participate learning program a couple of teachers from the Philippines and I got to impress them with my very little bit of Tagalog that I know I also met a very nice new pal student from Jamaica whose name I don't remember but he came to Prince William County with his mom who is a teacher there as well and I can't wait to go back and visit him because he was quite the character I also attended Unity Reads Hispanic Heritage Night where Miss Millie Polanco just knocked it out of the park.

[01:32:16] What a night. It was so entertaining. The students put on amazing shows. I missed the food because I was at a back-to-school night, so I'm hoping that no other back-to-school nights conflict next year because, man, it smelled good, but I missed it. I also got to attend a See You at the Pole that morning and hear students praying for their classmates, teachers, and being thankful for their schools um and that was really touching and probably one of my favorite events um i also attended the igniting community commitment for literacy and that was great radika did a great job i also wanted to say happy new year for those who celebrate rosh hashanah thank you so much

[01:32:55] mr jesse thank you very much uh every month we put in the uh monthly newsletter that we put out where we and I usually list every place I go to and things I've done so I'm not going to go over those tonight but going back to what something with Mr. Wilkes was the same I believe we are supposed to be looking at some boundaries issues for the new Woodbridge High School soon so I hope

[01:33:27] we get to do that I also would like to remind the staff that the program capacity study is underway and two high school that I was very interested in.

[01:33:44] I think hopefully it's done at Woodbridge High School and the Garfield High School program studies. As soon as we could get those, I would love that. So those are the thing, but I do think that we need, we talk about doing boundaries and I think we need to have a plan when we're gonna do those so that we can get going on those.

[01:34:08] Thank you. - Ms. Wall. - All right, thank you. I'll start out by thanking the citizens who came and spoke tonight. First of all, about what kids are wearing. I do hear this from kids and teachers.

[01:34:24] So I think that's an important issue that is being raised among other issues that Ms. Scott raised. And I'm also thankful to Marianne Hill and her kids. And they actually stayed for the whole meeting, which is quite impressive. Thank you so much for your spotlight on dyslexia. It is a real concern and a very big challenge.

[01:34:42] I'm excited about the VLA. I also know that we need to intensify our efforts to make sure that we help every child learn to read. So it's that important. So thank you for your advocacy. I have enjoyed the back to school nights. I was able to visit all of my schools, minus one, just because of scheduling.

[01:34:59] It was so great to see everyone. It is tough with multiple nights and multiple events all on the same night. One issue that was raised to me was why we have, why we do high school, middle, and then

elementary. And I'm actually not sure about that rationale, but a lot of the elementary school parents, you know, because it's so late in the year, they kind of are not quite sure what they're doing there.

[01:35:19] But I think there are ways that elementary schools are getting around it, but I would be interested in knowing if it would be worth switching them. So elementary's first, but there's probably a rationale, and I'm interested in learning about it. I attended on the 19th, the Sinclair Parent Advisory Council, and there was a huge turnout, so I'm really excited.

[01:35:35] That's in our strategic plan to promote parent engagement through the Parent or Principal Advisory Council. I'm not sure if it's parent or principal. Either way, I guess, P-P-A-C. It was really exciting to see so many people. So if you're a parent and you're out there interested in serving, that's a great place to get involved with the way the decisions that are made at the school level for running the school.

[01:35:57] Wow, I'm losing time quickly. I also attended the discussion between First Lady Suzanne Youngkin and author Jonathan Haidt. That was a powerful discussion as a policy maker. I take that very seriously, the decision-making power that we have to influence policy.

[01:36:13] I thought it was provocative and I have a lot to think about. I have also attended the Patriot High School VEX Robotics Funday, it was hosted at Patriot, sorry. That was really exciting. I'm looking forward to a great robotics season. The igniting community support for literacy was awesome.

[01:36:30] We got to hear from the three superintendents across our region, including our own Dr. McDade. Let's see, I'm gonna skip ahead. Congrats to the Battlefield football team their homecoming game win over freedom south riding last week and battlefield cheer also took first in a regional competition i'm looking forward to some really awesome events one is unified kickball tournament in at reagan that's going to be this coming friday on the fourth and on the 14th there's an event on the george mason manassas campus called nano technology day that's a day where we don't have school so parents this is a great day to take your kids

[01:37:08] to an awesome event. It's family friendly, the hours are 10:00 to 2:00, and it is free. Again, it's on the George Mason campus. And for those who celebrate, happy Rosh Hashanah. - Thank you, Ms. Wall. Ms. Williams. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01:37:24] I would like to start out by saying happy National Custodians Day. Today is the day that we celebrate it. And without custodians, we'd all be in a world of trouble, and they are part of the group that does not get the recognition they deserve for keeping us all going. So I just want to say how much we all appreciate you, myself in particular, and I'm sure the rest of the board.

[01:37:44] Also happy to Rosh Hashanah in advance, 'cause it does start, I think tomorrow at sundown, if I'm not correct? Tonight at sundown, I always get it mixed up, that's my fault, but thank you for educating me again. To all those who celebrate, I was able to attend multiple back-to-school nights, Kilby, Ripon, Featherstone, River Oaks, Marumsco, Porter, all of the schools that I attended had decent turnout I do think this year it did feel a little bit late with the elementary schools and high school, I think felt really early back to back.

[01:38:16] So, but it changes every year. I would encourage all of our school families to continue to attend because each event at a school, even though it may sound the same, there's lots to learn and different information and parent engagement or family engagement is critical to our school division and in supporting your student.

[01:38:33] I am remiss because I was not able to make Belmont, Vaughn and Leesylvania for back to school night, but I will be coming to future events. I would like to announce VEX, I'll be at VEX Robotics Funday. It'll be for the Eastern end of the county on 10:05, which is this Saturday.

[01:38:53] I am excited because in all the years that I have been involved in robotics, this is the first time that I get to go, not only as a school board member, but also as a coach. So if your school does not have robotics, I highly encourage you to speak with a member of the staff. You do not have to be educated in robotics.

[01:39:09] You do not have to know how to build a robot. You just have to be there to support because thank you to this board. Last year, we added a coordinator in the robotics office who was amazing. She is a former Fred Lynn teacher and robotics coach and she will be available at your disposal to help you learn robotics to support the students at the school.

[01:39:28] Also, I'd like to remind everyone, if you have not signed up for Title I Family Camp on October 19th, please do so. I've gone every year for several, several years and every year I go there is something new to learn. Parents and guardians, there's activities for your student, so you can come and bring your students with you.

[01:39:48] They have entertainment, snacks, and the whole shebang, so it is a worthwhile experience for students and for adults. And lastly, I would just like to say to my fellow board members, particularly to Mr. Wilk and Ms. Trednik, I am excited to support your idea. However, since it is coming up on budget and CIP time, which I know seems kind of crazy right now at the beginning of October, that it'll be here really, really fast.

[01:40:11] For us as board members, we don't generally get the information until later, but staff is already working on that. So while I do believe that your idea is worthwhile, I hope that maybe we could have a discussion with facilities or some early talks so that we're not duplicating some of the work that they're going to be preparing for us during the CIP.

[01:40:30] That's generally when we talk about those types of plans and remediation, and I know there is already plans and works for some of those sites. So thank you, and I hope everyone has a wonderful evening. - Mr. Blake. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. So I just wanna talk about over the past few weeks, I've had the privilege of attending several key events that highlight the incredible work happening here across the district.

[01:40:53] First, I attended a VSBA Legislative Advocacy Conference where we discussed key legislative priorities for education. These discussions reaffirmed the importance of securing essential resources such as mental health funding and early childhood education support.

[01:41:13] We also discussed the cell phone policy. I also participated in the Head Start Policy Council, which focused on the ongoing commitment to early childhood education. This program is critical for ensuring that our youngest learners receive the foundational support they need to thrive.

[01:41:34] And then I also attended the fireside chat it a lot of my board members and it was very powerful it really changed my opinion because I was in the camp of we should keep things the way they are but he made some really strong arguments for why we should change them so I you know I'm up in the air right now but it was very good it was very good and it and I think the discussion ties directly to our district's focus on our students

[01:42:09] well-being in our mental health support so I was really I really liked that event and then I also attended the igniting the community for literacy event which was a stakeholder luncheon and it featured dr. McDade and three other or two other super area superintendents and document day was answering all the questions so and then this this event emphasized our collective responsibility to improve literacy outcomes for all students, highlighting the partnerships necessary to foster a culture of reading and

[01:42:46] learning in our community. And then in the spirit of community engagement, I attended the Dell City Christian Church annual community outreach event with Dr. Lateef, he was there, and it was a wonderful opportunity to see our community coming together to support families, students, reinforcing the importance of partnerships and education and then I also attended many back to school nights so Neabsco, Minnieville, Penn, King. It was great to meet with students teachers and parents as we participate as they begin to prepare for

[01:43:23] this school year and enthusiasm and dedication from our educators and families were clear and I'm excited about the positive start to this year. Lastly, I attended the rising of the Octoquine Elementary School, which is gonna be our district's first net zero school.

[01:43:44] And you just had our sustainability presentation and it was just, it's really awesome that our kids are gonna get to go to school and learn in such a environmentally responsible building and environment.

[01:44:00] But thank you, my time's up, so. - Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mrs. Zargarpur, vice chair. - Thank you, Dr. Lateef. Let's see, I did get to go to a couple of different back to school nights on the Yorkshire Elementary and Westgate were this over this past week.

[01:44:16] I also spoke to the Manassas Women's Club about how we are doing as a county. Some of the people were from Manassas City, Manassas Park. So that gave me an opportunity to also talk about some of the changes that are coming from VDOE concerning school, what is the, not the, let's say the evaluations of our schools, it's the accreditation and accountability measures.

[01:44:39] So there's a lot of information that has yet to be kind of pushed down into the divisions, but we know that it is coming and that there will be some changes. So we did talk a little bit about those changes that we do know of. I did get to go to the fireside chat with Dr. Height and the first lady.

[01:44:58] And I have a child, I have three daughters And my youngest was the one that I thought I could protect from the evils of the internet. And I found that there were things that she could work her way around.

[01:45:13] I take this very seriously because I know how it affected my child. So when I hear high school kids talk, I have the parent perspective. And I am very worried about our kids, especially since there's a lot of things out there.

[01:45:30] I'm also worried about our adults. I'm reading another book by Dr. Haidt, and he talks a lot about being able to critically think and to be able to get valuable information and how to evaluate it and understand it. So I've done a lot of reading in the past couple weeks. I met with some constituents not too long ago about the use of our tracks at our high schools.

[01:45:50] We currently allow Forest Park and Colgan High School are open for the public. There's ours and it's on their websites. I would encourage Prince William County Public Schools maybe find one out

west and maybe another one out east because I know Forest Park isn't too far down the road from Colgan and that still feels a little more centralized so I hope we can look into doing that and to those who celebrate I hope you have a very wonderful Rosh Hashanah and I can I yield my time fantastic you've heard a lot about our net zero please watch the video we had a great

[01:46:30] groundbreaking for the new Occoquan Elementary Rebuild, very exciting. And I think we're along with Arlington County Schools in the Northern Virginia area leading the way on energy and sustainability. This month we'll be implementing the new Hazel Health mental health services that are open to all students.

[01:46:50] Students and parents must opt in. And if your students are experiencing mental health challenges, concerns, they can get a mental health appointment with a mental health specialist virtually within a couple of weeks of signing on to the program and that service will help guide you to resources that may be available here and further resources online with this new program that we're implementing.

[01:47:16] This program has done well in other school districts across the nation and we're hoping to see that effect here. Please go to the website and learn about that. Third, I'm very proud we've achieved a number of accolades since Dr. McDade has come here. The niche rankings for school divisions came out on Monday.

[01:47:33] Prince William County Schools has moved up to 14th best school division in the Commonwealth. We were started at 26 when I started on this board and we have significantly made considerable improvement. And that is based on a holistic view of how our schools are performing and how our students are performing and how our teachers and staff view the schools and how they perform.

[01:47:55] So I'm very excited about that. Regarding cell phones, I appreciate First Lady Suzanne Youngkin coming to Prince William County Schools, holding a fireside chat with former UVA professor, Jonathan Haidt, who has written a best-selling book that's still on the best-selling list called "The Anxious Generation."

[01:48:12] I would encourage all parents, all students, to read that book. I will, you know, from time to time, I telegraph my positions from up here on where I'd like to see the school division go. You know, for example, early start times or later start times for high school, that's always been a thing, I haven't been able to get that done, but I will tell you that on the cell phones, I do have full agreement with the Virginia Department of Education's bell-to-bell policy at all levels.

[01:48:40] And I will be moving forward to push for that as well. I'm happy to speak to the student senators, student members of the school board regarding my position on that, and I'm happy to hear others' concerns regarding that. But again, the research indicates that bell-to-bell is the right way to go.

[01:49:00] I enjoyed attending the Brentsville District High School's program to accept the donation from Turo with Erica Tradenek, it was an excellent program. And please listen to Dr. McDade's encouragement of you taking the PSAT, PSAT is a critical test, a critical first entry into taking your college admissions test, and I think it's very important to take that seriously.

[01:49:26] I wanna thank Ms. Hill and her efforts with decoding dyslexia and we look forward to working with her over the next few months and years. And that is it, good night. Happy Rosh Hashanah for those celebrating and school starts on Friday morning.



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